**Poster Presentations**

Vanessa Zörrer, Tim Domke, Marion Behrens, Arthur Jacobs, & Pascal Nicklas: The answer, my friend….: Affective and aesthetic responses to Bob Dylan’s lyrics – an exploration of literariness

Giulia Grisot: Reading difficult narratives: an eye tracking study of Virginia Woolf’s free indirect style

Hany Rashwan: Rethinking the notion of “literariness” in the ancient Egyptian and Arabic literatures

Maria Kraxenberger & Winfried Menninghaus: Affinity for poetry and aesthetic appreciation of joyful and sad poems

Liz Finnigan: Literary spaces, spatial patterning and syntactic decelerationJana Lüdtke, Teresa Sylvester & Arthur M. Jacobs: When Stephen King picks up Margarita: Eyetracking in self-paced reading of passages from novels

Torsten Pettersson & Olle Nordberg: How does literariness impact reader response

to a text depicting brutal violence?

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**Vanessa Zörrer (Johannes-Gutenberg-University), Tim Domke (Johannes-Gutenberg-University), Marion Behrens (presenting author; University Hospital Frankfurt), Arthur Jacobs (Free University Berlin), Pascal Nicklas (Johannes-Gutenberg-University): The answer, my friend….: Affective and aesthetic responses to Bob Dylan’s lyrics – an exploration of literariness**

**Pascal Nicklas teaches Comparative and English Literature at Mainz since 2010 and is research group leader in the Anatomy Department. His most important recent publication is: “(Neuro)-Aesthetics of Adaptation and the History of Rhetoric” (with Arthur M. Jacobs). *Poetics Today* 38.2, 2017. In January-March 2018, he will be Fellow at the IAS in Durham.**

**The answer, my friend….: Affective and aesthetic responses to Bob Dylan’s lyrics – an exploration of literariness**

Good lyrics – with a high ‘literariness count’ - evoke both affective and aesthetic responses in listeners/readers, even without the corresponding music. This is the working hypothesis we test in the present research. In terms of the Neurocognitive Poetics Model of literary reading (Jacobs, 2015; Jacobs & Willems, 2017; Nicklas & Jacobs, 2017), this means that good lyrics combine the right background and foreground elements, sometimes even within a line, that theoretically drive the affective and aesthetic reader responses. As concerns the ‘right’ background elements, they should evoke fiction feelings in readers via processes of theory of mind (ToM), mood empathy, or identification. Foreground elements like metaphors, in turn, should interrupt the flow of reading by inviting readers to discover new meanings by adapting their cognitive schemata or affective scripts. Take, for example, the line from ‘Hurricane’: Cops said, poor boy like you could use a break. In the context of the previous lines, the ‘poor boy like you’ image offers the background for empathy, while the word ‘break’ provides a (metaphorical) foreground element (i.e., break = opportunity; Steen, 2006). In this study, we analyse reader responses to a selection of Dylan’s lyrics at several levels of observation (i.e., neuronal and experiential) to test our working hypothesis and explore the appreciation of literariness in borderline cases.

**Giulia Grisot (The University of Nottingham): Reading difficult narratives: an eye tracking study of Virginia Woolf’s free indirect style**

**Giulia Grisot is a second year PhD student in Applied Linguistics at The University of Nottingham. Under the supervision of Dr. Kathy Conklin and Dr. Violeta Sotirova, Giulia’s research investigates empirically how readers deal with difficulties in literary texts, combining Stylistics with Psycholinguistics.**

**Reading difficult narratives: an eye tracking study of Virginia Woolf’s free indirect style**

Virginia Woolf is considered one of the most experimental modernist writers, especially because of the techniques she adopts in the presentation of consciousness: free indirect style and interior monologue. Previous studies show that the numerous shifts in perspective and between modes of consciousness presentation resulting from the use of these techniques represent a challenge for readers. However, almost no empirical evidence exists, which demonstrates if and how these features are actually perceived and processed during reading.

Building on the assumption that such shifts represent a challenge for readers, the present study combines stylistic analysis with eye tracking. It explores the reading strategies adopted by readers when reading selected passages from Woolf’s two major novels To the Lighthouse and Mrs Dalloway by comparing them to modified versions of the same passages, where the difficulties have been removed.

Eye-tracking allows for natural reading and provides a metric of processing effort, whilst indicating where readers are focusing when they encounter difficulties. These data confirm where readers encounter difficulties in identifying perspective within Woolf’s novels, and how they cope with them.

**Hany Rashwan (American University of Beirut): Rethinking the notion of 'literariness' in the ancient Egyptian and Arabic literatures**

**Hany Rashwan is Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for Arts and Humanities, in the American University of Beirut. He holds a Ph.D. in Cultural, Literary and Postcolonial Studies from SOAS, University of London. He specializes in Comparative/Historical Rhetoric. His studies offer new criticism to ancient Egyptian literary devices based on Arabic-Semitic methodology. He is publishing a book with AUC University Press titled 'Literariness and aesthetics of ancient Egyptian Literature: Arabic Jinās in Postcolonial Poetics'**

**Rethinking the notion of 'literariness' in the ancient Egyptian and Arabic literatures**

This paper investigates the possibility of offering new, closer, analytical readings of Ancient Egyptian concept of literariness based on Arabic literary rhetoric. Arabic balāgha explores the verbal literary techniques and devices through which the author creatively uses to penetrate the hearts of the receiver. It studies the different forms of each literary device and how they can be creatively deployed in various types of genres and still generate the reading pleasure. The creative interaction between the imagination, 'poetic form' and 'eloquent content' is the main essence of defining the Arabic literariness, not the literary genre.

The creative use of such literary devices is what creates the particular style of every author and thus affect the emotional reception of his receiver to be considered as 'a piece of art.' The paper examines the ancient Egyptian literary feature of Jinās, often equated with European paronomasia or pun, approving the existence of 35 forms of wordplay in ancient Egyptian literature. The knowledge of this textual practice plays a great role in clarifying how the ancient Egyptians effectively employed poetic resources to affect judgments, hence attitudes and actions.

**Maria Kraxenberger (presenting author) & Winfried Menninghaus (Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics): Affinity for poetry and aesthetic appreciation of joyful and sad poems**

**Maria Kraxenberger: I am a researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics, Frankfurt /Main, Germany. Although I am trained in Comparative Literature, I try to build a bridge between the ideas of philosophical, humanistic treatises on poetry and empirical methods as used by the social sciences, and by psychology in particular.**

**Affinity for Poetry and Aesthetic Appreciation of Joyful and Sad Poems**

**Winfried Menninghaus is Director of the Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics (Frankfurt am Main). Fields of research: classical rhetoric/poetics, philosophical, evolutionary, and empirical aesthetics. His books include studies on the role of Disgust (2003) in aesthetics, on The Promise of Beauty (2003), Hölderlin (2005) and Aesthetics after Darwin (2011).**

**Affinity for poetry and aesthetic appreciation of joyful and sad poems**

Poetry and aesthetic evaluations of joyful and sad poetry have received only little attention in empirical studies to date. Further, no empirical investigation has considered aesthetic evaluation(s) of poetry in light of readers’ affinity for poetry. In the study we would like to present, we considered readers’ general affinity for poetry as a trait variable that may influence their appreciation of given poems. In more detail, we hypothesized readers’ self-reported affinity for poetry to be positively related to their aesthetic evaluations. Further, we expected higher aesthetic appreciation for sad poems than for joyful ones.

To test these hypotheses, we collected beauty and liking ratings for 24 sad and 24 joyful poems from 128 participants. Following previous studies, we computed an integrated measure for overall aesthetic appreciation based on the beauty and liking ratings to test whether readers’ responses are related to their affinity for poetry. Further, we tested for differences in appreciation between joyful and sad poems.

Our analyses show that the higher readers’ affinity to poetry in general, the higher their positive evaluations tend to be, independent of a poem’s emotional content. Furthermore, results show that sad poems are rated significantly higher for aesthetic appreciation than joyful poems.

**Liz Finnigan (Southern Regional College): Literary spaces, spatial patterning and syntactic deceleration**

**Literary spaces, spatial patterning and syntactic deceleration**

In this poster, I report a discovery about visual spatial pattering within verbal narrative. I offer a psychological explanation on what this patterning is and why it appears in literary texts. Sequential patterns appear in literary texts within certain spatial frames. These frames are a set of schemas for describing setting, places or people all of which are organized by principles which I explain and demonstrate. Typically atemporal and absent of action, they pause the progression of the narrative in order to render the detail of what is being viewed by a character or narrator. My discovery is that they produce a pattern of spatial representation which is determined by their category (setting, place and person). The sequential patterning within the frames assumes a very specific meaning related to a particular model of global to local visual processing (Chen 2005) where wholes are processed as opposed to parts of an image. However, the existence of spatial patterns, which are embedded at a subconscious level, are only rendered visible in literary texts by the slowing effect of translating mental visual schemas into textual narrative – ‘syntactic deceleration’ – as it will be referred to. Therefore, I argue that literature performs a special function because it slows the processing of visual schemas during textual descriptions and thus enables the detection of subconscious visual patterns.

**Jana Lüdtke (presenting author), Teresa Sylvester & Arthur M. Jacobs (Free University Berlin): When Stephen King picks up Margarita: Eyetracking in self-paced reading of passages from novels**

**Since 2009, Dr. Jana Lüdtke works at the department of Psychology and Education at Freie Universität Berlin. In her current position as lab leader she focused her research on reading by using more natural, ecologically valid stimuli and tasks to foster the development of more realistic process models about (literary) reading.**

**When Stephen King picks up Margarita: Eyetracking in self-paced reading of passages from novels**

Iser (1972) described reading as a creative act co-determined by features of the text, the reader and the reading situation. Surprisingly, until today only a few studies have used eye tracking during reading of literary texts to study this complex interaction and resulting key phenomena, such as immersion or aesthetic appreciation. Since recent models of literary reading, e.g. the Neurocognitive Poetics Model (NCPM, Jacobs, 2015), offer specific hypotheses about reading behaviour, eyetracking is a valuable asset to ‚objectively’ test them. In this study we manipulated reading task (reading for understanding vs. proof reading) and combined this with the presentation of two excerpts from literary texts differing in text complexity, suspense and overall emotional tone. The results indicate that textual features, reading task, self-reported reading experiences and readers’ personality traits influenced different aspects of the reading behaviour, e.g. reading speed. The latter was positively correlated with self-reported immersion but not with text difficulty. Our results are discussed in the light of the NCPM.

Iser, W. (1972). The reading process: A phenomenological approach. New Literary History, 3(2), 279-299. Jacobs, A. M. (2015). Towards a neurocognitive poetics model of literary reading, in Towards a Cognitive

Neuroscience of Natural Language Use, ed R. Willems (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 135–159.

**Torsten Pettersson & Olle Nordberg (Uppsala University): How does literariness impact reader response to a text depicting brutal violence?**

**Torsten Pettersson is Chair Professor of Literature at Uppsala University, Sweden. He has written numerous studies of literary theory and history, and, since 2010, empirical studies of reading. 2011–14 he directed a Swedish Research Council-sponsored empirical project, and 2013–15 he acted as invited advisor on the Digital Reading Network sponsored by the Research Council of the United Kingdom.**

**Olle Nordberg has recently been awarded his doctoral degree at the Department of Literature at Uppsala University, Sweden. His dissertation (listed as Nordberg 4) combines three studies on the reading of fiction among Swedish teenagers under the conditions of the digital society.**

**How does literariness impact reader response to a text depicting brutal violence?**

As decades of theoretical reflection have shown, literariness is not defined by any one quality. Nevertheless, among constitutive elements of modern Western literature, fictionality is a key signal of literariness found in most genres except documentary novels and aphorisms.

But what is its impact on readers? Fairly weak, according to many empirical studies, including Pettersson 1 below, where the same text was read by two comparable groups receiving, respectively, the instruction that it was fictional or factual.

An intriguing additional result, however, was the respondents’ frequent answer to a general question: that fictionality matters above all when the text is violent and disturbing (unlike the text read by them or by participants in other studies). This study therefore analyses the impact of fictionality in a violent text, an extract from Truman Capote’s In Cold Blood. As part of a documentary novel, it was capable of being presented – in May 2017 – to two groups of 17-year-olds as fictional/literary or as factual/non-literary. Results include a marked difference in reaction depending on the text’s ontological status of (non)fictionality, as well as the respondents’ general comments on the influence of violence in the media and in computer games.