

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

:SCIENCE WITH/IN LITERATURE

Chungbuk National University, Korea
December 16(M), 2024. 14:00 - 17:30
College of Humanities (Room 123)



Elisabetta Di Minico
Complutense University of Madrid, Spain



Lilith Acadia
National Taiwan University, Taiwan



Myles Chilton
Nihon University, Japan



Neil Addison
Japan Women's University, Japan



Sumin Kim
Seoul National University, Korea



Scott Jordan
Illinois State University, U.S.A

International Symposium: Science with/in Literature

Department of English Language and Literature

Chungbuk National University, Korea

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===== Program =====

◆ Opening address (14:00~14:10)

◆ Session 1: (14:15~15:45): Margins, Mutations, and Posthuman Futures

Chair: KwangTaek Han (Chungbuk National University, Korea)

🇺🇸 Elisabetta Di Minico (Complutense University of Madrid, Spain)

“The Mutant Metaphor: Margins, Otherness, and Science in the X-Men”

🇺🇸 Lilith Acadia (National Taiwan University, Taiwan)

“Cyberpunking Trans* / Posthumanism”

🇺🇸 Myles Chilton (Nihon University, Japan)

“Trust, Truth, and the Stakes of Scientific Knowledge in Atwood’s MaddAddam Trilogy”

◆ Session 2 (16:00~17:30): Literary Science: Poetics, Politics, and Culture

Chair: Gi Taek Ryoo (Chungbuk National University, Korea)

🇺🇸 Neil Addison (Japan Women’s University, Japan)

“The Complex Science of Tennyson and Wilde: Poetic Evolution in the Nineteenth-Century”

🇺🇸 Sumin Kim (Seoul National University, Korea)

“The Political Impact of Jules Verne’s Science Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Korea”

🇺🇸 Scott Jordan (Illinois State University, U.S.A.)

“‘We’re being invaded!’ Science Fiction, Wild Systems Theory, and Culturally Sacred Boundaries”

◆ Closing remark & Commemorative Photo (17:30~17:40)

Elisabetta Di Minico
(*Complutense University of Madrid, Spain*)



[Abstract]

The Mutant Metaphor: Margins, Otherness, and Science in the *X-Men*

In dystopian realities, “other” often comes to be interpreted as “dangerous”. Mutants, aliens, women, rebels: those who don’t fit the racial, sexual, religious, or socio-political standards of power undermine the conservative and patriarchal idea of a static and fixed national identity. Thus, they have to be subdued or erased for the safekeeping of the authority. Dystopian politics and media spread alarming fake news (including scientific news) and anxiety to justify the limitation of civil rights and the use of brutal force against their enemies. Influenced by propaganda, also people go from fear to hatred and desire of exploitation, and from these to violence. Why are we frightened by otherness? Why dystopian authorities need to transform diversity into an element of crisis and trauma? Nowadays more than ever, these questions are not simply about imaginary worlds, they deal with the increasing racist, misogynist and homophobic drift of our society. Yearning for civil rights, the *X-Men* universe can be interpreted as an allegory for discrimination and violence against minorities. The presentation will analyze the *X-Men* saga through the study of selected comics (*Days of Future Past*; *God loves, Man Kills*; *Uncanny X-Men #235*; etc.), using the mutant metaphor to clarify the prejudices, the rhetoric and the methods that contribute to the increasing racist, misogynist, and homophobic drift of our society and the perpetuation of hate crimes and social tension. The four main focus will be:

- the construction and otherness and the representation of mutants’ roles, identities, and images;
- the control and the repression perpetrated by dystopian powers and/or individuals on “discordant” bodies;

- the influence of media, politics, stereotypes, science and traditions on the perception of the identity of minorities and vulnerable groups;
- the spaces of relations and conflicts between self-considering “right” people and powers and the “others”.

The aim is to stimulate dialogue on democracy issues, to promote inclusiveness, and to suggest actions and educational approaches against stereotypes and violence.

[Biography]

Elisabetta Di Minico is a UNA4CAREER postdoctoral researcher with a project on the "Enmity of Otherness" at the Complutense University of Madrid (Faculty of Political Science and Sociology). Her studies focus on the relation between fiction and history. She deals primarily with dystopia, control, otherness, and violence (racial and gendered). She uses novels, comics, movies, and TV series to provocatively analyze the real “bad places” of contemporary society on a historical and sociological level. Ph.D. *Cum Laude* in Contemporary History from the University of Barcelona, she also teaches Comic History at IULM-Free University of Language and Communication of Milan and is part of the HISTOPIA research group. Among her publications, stand out the monograph *Il futuro in bilico* (Meltemi, 2018), the chapters “Utopía y distopía del cuerpo femenino” (in *Lugares de utopía. Tiempos, espacios y estrías*, eds. Juan Pro Ruiz and Pedro José Mariblanca Corrales, Libros Polifemo, 2019), “X-Men Saga and the Dystopian Otherness: Race, Identity, Repression and Inclusiveness in the Mutant World” (in *Utopia and Dystopia in the Age of Trump*, eds. Barbara Brodman and James Doan, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2019), and the articles “Entre el malson i la realitat. Reflexions distòpiques sobre la societat contemporània” (in *Quaderns de Filosofia*, 7/2, 2020), “Spatial, linguistic and psycho-physical domination of women in dystopia: *Swastika Night*, *Woman on the Edge of Time* and *The Handmaid's Tale*” (in *Humanities* 8, 2019), and “*Ex-Machina* and the Feminine Body Through Human and Posthuman Dystopia” (in *Ekphrasis. Images, Cinema, Theatre, Media*, 1/17, 2017).

Lilith Acadia

(National Taiwan University, Taiwan)



[Abstract]

Cyberpunking Trans* / Posthumanism

This presentation places cyberpunk in playful conversation with trans*, and posthuman theory—notably Donna Haraway, Jack Halberstam, N. Katherine Hayles, and Apolline Taillandier, arguing from two core representative works that the genre reflects core concerns from this theoretical network, while presenting compelling trans* imaginings for how we might envision brains, bodies, and hybridity in the future. The analysis compares a transpacific pair of contemporary queer cyberpunk texts by science fiction authors and scholars: the 2017 novel *Autonomous* by Annalee Newitz from the US and the 1996 novella *The Membranes* (膜) by Chi Ta-Wei (紀大偉) from Taiwan. Through the trans* cyborg characters as well as the broader narratives, both Newitz and Chi engage with debates regarding the boundaries of the human, changing relationships between brains and bodies, authenticity and autonomy, cyborg writing, and anthropocentrism.

[Biography]

Dr. Lilith Acadia is an assistant professor of literary studies at National Taiwan University with a PhD in rhetoric from the University of California, Berkeley. PI of a lit lab funded by the Taiwan National Science and Technology Council researching AI in SciFi, Dr. Acadia has received fellowships including Fulbright and Marie Curie, has recently published academic articles on [Taiwanese queer modernism](#), [smart homes](#), [orientalism in animation](#), [religious pretext and Anzaldúa](#), [queer theory](#), and [xenophilia](#). Connect on X and Instagram: @acdialogue

Myles Chilton

(Nihon University, Japan)



[Abstract]

Trust, Truth, and the Stakes of Scientific Knowledge in Atwood's MaddAddam Trilogy

I begin with the question of why Margaret Atwood switched from a realism of socio-historical authenticity to blending realism and a kind of speculative fiction heavy with scientific knowledge. In her MaddAddam trilogy – *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013) – as well as *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and *The Testaments* (2019), Atwood joins ruminations on global warming, genetic manipulation, and neoliberal capitalism by other globally prominent science/speculative writers such as Kazuo Ishiguro, Philip K. Dick, and William Gibson. Yet she also pits the imaginative terrain of the realist novel against the social locations of scientific knowledge in order to displace its self-referential origins. Like certain of her characters who eke out an existence in a post-apocalyptic world by recuperating the values and praxis of a pre-modern world, Atwood seems to be fashioning a mode of fiction that takes us back to the novel's emergence as a form that mixes fact and fiction. Atwood's 'scientific turn', then, calls out to the reader to put the affective, emotion- experiencing self in dialogue with the cognitive, rational-seeking self, under the sign of epistemological solidity based largely on science – a world of knowledge and fact that is supposed to transcend culture, perception, and bias – to persuade the reader to return to the origins of claims to know something, the origins of trust in science's truth-claims. The force of this trust resides not only in the solidity of science, it also resides in Atwood's literary fame.

[Biography]

Myles Chilton is professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, Nihon University. He is the author of *English Studies Beyond the 'Center': Teaching Literature and the Future of Global English* (2016), and articles in such journals as *Comparative Critical Studies* and *The Journal of Narrative Theory*. He is also co-editor and co-author of *Asian English: Histories, Texts, Institutions* (2021); and co-author of *The Future of English in Asia: Perspectives on Language and Literature* (2015), *Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative* (2014), *Deterritorializing Practices in Literary Studies* (2014), and *World Literature and the Politics of the Minority* (2013). He has a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

Neil Addison

(Japan Women's University, Japan)



[Abstract]

The Complex Science of Tennyson and Wilde: Poetic Evolution in the Nineteenth-Century

The Victorian poetic response to Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) was significant but also complex, poems by figures such as Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Oscar Wilde broadly reacting to changing evolutionary thought. Robert Chambers' *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844) was a significant text that introduced pre-Darwinian evolutionary ideas to Victorian public awareness. This drew upon the notion proposed by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, who argued in *Philosophie Zoologique* (1809) that organisms changed to adapt to their environment, and that those changes were then passed on to offspring. Tennyson in *In Memoriam A.H.H.* (1850), was cautiously receptive of *Vestiges*, expressing sentiments that echoed a Lamarckian notion of the great chain of being. Darwin's theory of natural selection provoked a more pessimistic series of poetic responses. Ideas discussed in Robert Browning's 'Caliban upon Setebos' (1864) and Herman Melville's *Clarel* (1876), for example, can be directly traced to Darwin's influence. Tennyson's reading of Darwin, moreover, is evidenced by the later published sections of the *Idylls of the King*, such as 'The Coming of Arthur', and 'The Holy Grail' (1869), which display a darker world view. Subverting this poetic trend, Oscar Wilde creatively adapted Lamarckian as well as Darwinian concepts into his work. Wilde's 'Panthea' from *Poems* (1881), for example, appears influenced by the 1870s resurgence in neo-Lamarckian evolutionary ideas. In this discussion I will consider how the work of Tennyson and Wilde reflects the overlapping and competing nature of nineteenth-century evolutionary ideas.

[Biography]

Neil Addison (PhD, University of Birmingham, U.K), is Professor of British Literature at Japan Women's University. Having grown up in Thomas Hardy's Dorset, U.K., he is now vocationally based in Tokyo. His research focuses on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century novels and poetry. He is currently serving as a Commission on Science and Literature (CoSciLit) Regional Representative for Asia. In March 2024 he co-convened The Inaugural CoSciLit in Asia Conference in Tokyo. He has published articles in English for periodicals including *The Thomas Hardy Journal* and *The Journal of Literary Semantics* and in Japanese for *Mitta Bungaku* (a long-established literature journal founded in Tokyo in 1910). His monograph *Thomas Hardy, Optimist* will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2025.

Sumin Kim

(Seoul National University, Korea)



[Abstract]

The Political Impact of Jules Verne's Science Fiction in Early Twentieth-Century Korea

From the second half of the nineteenth century, Jules Verne's novels became known in East Asia through Chinese, Japanese, and Korean translations. The first Korean translations of Verne's works are known to be of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas*, which was translated by Park Yong-hee and published in a magazine called *Taeguk-hakbo* from 1907 to 1908, and *The Begum's Fortune* which was translated by Lee Hae-jo in 1908. With the advent of the Japanese colonization of Korea, the Korean translators intentionally chose to translate these texts and accentuate the anti-colonial sentiments embedded in them. However, further research is required to understand how the specific scientific details in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas* and *The Begum's Fortune* contribute towards furthering Park's and Lee's anti-colonial agendas. Ultimately, this paper seeks to examine how the Korean translations can enrich our understanding of how Verne intertwines science and politics in his works.

[Biography]

Su Min Kim is a scholar of nineteenth-century British literature. Her research focuses on the intersections of literary and mathematical history in nineteenth-century Europe. She is currently researching how science fiction writers like Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, Kurd Lasswitz, and Olaf Stapledon adapted mathematical concepts and structures in their works to undermine the military and nationalist foundations of colonial expansion and to model new infrastructures of global cooperation and unity. Su Min is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the College of Liberal Studies at Seoul National University. She advises students in their choice of major and their design of student-designed majors and coordinates an international student exchange program between Seoul National University, Peking University, Rikkyo University, and the National University of Singapore.

Scott Jordan

(Illinois State University, U.S.A.)



[Abstract]

“We’re being invaded!”

Science Fiction, Wild Systems Theory, and Culturally Sacred Boundaries

From Arthur C. Clark’s *Overlords* (*Childhoods End*), to Octavia Butler’s *Immortals* (*Wild Seed*), to James S. A. Corey’s *Protomolecule* (*The Expanse*), to Cixin Liu’s *Trisolarans* (*The Three Body Problem*), many science fiction authors have utilized invasion themes to examine the boundaries individual humans and their associated cultures find most sacred. Ranging in scale from the sub-atomic, to the molecular, the bodily, the psychological, the social, the cultural, and the cosmic, all of these multi-scale boundaries are essential to being. This presentation will utilize Wild Systems Theory (Jordan, 2013, 2017, 2022—accessible via google) to reveal what these levels of border maintenance have in common, as well as why they serve as such robust vehicles for examining individual and cultural notions of the sacred.

[Biography]

Dr. J. Scott Jordan is a cognitive scientist who studies the neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy of cooperative behavior. He is perhaps best known my work on [Wild Systems Theory](#), a 21-century, transdisciplinary framework that integrates the sciences, humanities, the arts, lived-life, and pop-culture by focusing on what they have in common; specifically, the never-ending struggle for meaningful coherence. With over 120 publications, Jordan has published dozens of papers that examine this struggle. Examples include, *Exploring the hidden kingdoms of assumption: Interview with Christopher Priest on Black Panther, culture, and the art of changing minds* (Black Panther Psychology), and [The welcoming Spiderverse: Finding your 'self' in a web of others](#) (Pop Mythology). He has given invited talks in many different countries about the reality of meaning and humanity's relationship to the world. He has also been invited to speak at multiple conferences regarding the relationship between science and spirituality. He published a peer-reviewed, scientific song about the 'self' ([It's hard work being No One](#)), (song), which received a positive review in [Discover Magazine](#). He is the originator and director of [ReggieCon](#), a virtual comic-con panel series that celebrates diversity and heritage months during the academic year. He produces the [Dark Loops Productions](#) channel on YouTube, where he hosts discussions of lived-life, science, art, the humanities, and all things pop-culture. Finally, he loves to cosplay, and is extremely proud of his international comic-book collection.