

Seminar presentation sheet

Academic year	2016/17
Seminar n°	2
Seminar title	LABORATORIES OF IDENTITY : EARLY MODERN AND POSTMODERN DRAMAS AND THEATRICALITY AS EXPERIMENTS IN AN AGE OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL CRISIS
Teacher(s) (Name, SURNAME)	Attila KISS
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Teacher(s)' presentation	Attila Kiss (dr. habil.) is Head of the English Department and Associate Professor of English. His fields of specialization include the comparative semiotic analysis of early modern and postmodern culture, English Renaissance drama and theatricality, and the poststructuralist theories of subjectivity. He has published extensively in the fields of postsemiotics, his most recent volume is <i>Contrasting the Early Modern and the Postmodern Semiotics of Telling Stories: Why We Perform Shakespeare's Plays Differently Today</i> (2011).
Seminar presentation	<p>Thematizing the analogies and affinities between the epistemological uncertainties in early modern and postmodern culture, recent critical literature contends that the emergent concept of subjectivity in the late Renaissance is associated with the idea of individual interiority. The fantasies of corporeality have in their social background an early modern obsession with the depth beneath the surface of things. The practice of dissection connects the early modern anatomy theatre and the emblematic public theatre as the two institutionalized social practices where the anatomy of corporeality and the anatomy of the mind both have ritualized and highly orchestrated dramaturgies. We can observe the same dissective investigation of corporeality and identity in postmodern drama, where the crisis of modernity is represented through fragmented and desubstantiated characters.</p> <p>This seminar will rely on readings in the postsemiotics of the subject to trace the signs of the epistemological crisis in the representational techniques of selected early modern and postmodern plays.</p> <p>Key-words: body, anatomy, representation, interiority, epistemological</p>

	crisis, early modern and postmodern, world models, semiotic typology of cultures, subject, subjectivity, abjection, catharsis, emblematic theatre, tragedy of consciousness, essentialism, historicism, new historicism, cultural materialism, heterogeneity, self-fashioning, unconscious.
Prerequisites to follow the seminar	Preparatory readings; solid knowledge of the plays to be discussed and the fundamental theoretical literature to be used in the seminar.
Seminar objectives /skills to be developed by the students	At the end of the seminar, the students will be able to critically reflect on the idea of human subjectivity as a composite construct that is dependent on social and psychosomatic constraints; on the analogies between the early modern and postmodern epistemological crisis; on the similarities between the nascent Renaissance concepts of the subject and the postmodern crisis of the project of modernity and its Cartesian ego.
Session 1 – Presentation / plan	<p>1.1 “First take my tounge, and afterwards my heart.” The spectacle of death and mutilation in Thomas Kyd’s <i>The Spanish Tragedy</i></p> <p>1.2 “Ay me, this object kills me.” Flesh meets flesh in Shakespeare’s <i>Titus Andronicus</i></p> <p>1.3 “I have that within which passes show.” <i>Hamlet</i> and the prototype of the hollow subject of modernity</p>
Session 2 – Presentation / plan	<p>2.1 “Who is it that can tell me who I am?” <i>King Lear</i> and the metaphysics of the name</p> <p>2.2 “The very ragged bone has been sufficiently revenged.” The production of corpses in Middleton’s <i>The Revenger’s Tragedy</i></p> <p>2.3 “Draw thy own skin off with them!” Changeability and persistence in Middleton & Rowley’s <i>The Changeling</i></p>
Session 3 – Presentation / plan	<p>3.1 “You must know how it is to be filled with yearning.” Pluralization and desubstantiation in Adrienne Kennedy’s <i>The Owl Answers</i> and <i>Funnyhouse of a Negro</i></p> <p>3.2 “Let me sit on his lungs.” The logic of violence and fear in Edward Bond’s <i>Lear</i></p>

Bibliography:

(Where page numbers are not given, relevant parts of the volumes will be indicated later.)

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