Gnovis Journal

GNOVI 25 CON

MONDAY MARCH 17

GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE ON
COMMUNICATION, CULTURE & TECHNOLOGY

10:30AM-3:00PM | HFSC SOCIAL ROOM

cct TECH & SOCIETY WEEK 3.17–3.21

GRAD GOV
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT

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Gnovicon 25 Schedule

Monday, March 17, 2025
10:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Healey Family Student Center Social Room, Georgetown University

Time	Section	Panel Speakers	Moderator
10:30-11:00	**Registration and Coffee**		
11:00-11:15	**Opening Remarks**		**Anika Maney** **Prof. Michael Koliska**
11:20-12:00	**Faculty Panel: Interdisciplinary Frontiers: Technology, Communication, and Culture in a Transforming World**	**Prof. Katherine Chandler** **Prof. Jungyoon Koh** **Prof. Cal Newport** **Prof. Nicoletta Pireddu**	**Prof. Jeanine Turner**
12:00-1:00	**Lunch & Poster Presentation**		
1:00-1:45	**Gnovis Vol. 25 Paper Session 1:** **Constructing Trust and Cultural Futures: Platforms, Archives, and Digital Resistance**	**Kevin Echavarria** **Zhidong Sun** **Sophia Sinsheimer**	**Prof. Mary Madden**
1:45-2:30	**Gnovis Vol. 25 Paper Session 2:** **Geographies of Power and Cultural Transformation in Literature and Media**	**Ryan Anders Lillestrand** **Riley Tinlin** **Jisoo Choi**	**Prof. Christine So**
2:30-3:00	**Closing Remarks**		**Merielle Agorilla**

Gnovicon Faculty Panel (11:20 AM - 12:00 PM) – Interdisciplinary Frontiers: Technology, Communication, and Culture in a Transforming World

Katherine Chandler (Associate Professor, Culture and Politics) examines the intersection of technology, media and politics through a range of scales and forms. Her first monograph, *Unmanning: How Humans, Machines and Media Perform Drone Warfare*, studies unmanned aircraft from 1936 - 1992. She asks how life and death are adjudicated through conditions organized as if control were "unmanned." Professor Chandler's most recent work studies how socio-politics are entangled with everyday media and technologies, including PowerPoint, email and drone aircraft. Her work has appeared in *Social Studies of Science, Interventions, Humanity, Catalys*t, and *qui parle.*

Jungyoon Koh (Assistant Teaching Professor, Linguistics) is a discourse analyst studying the intersection of language, society, and technology. Her research broadly focuses on two contexts of interaction: social media and AI. Professor Koh's work on social media discourse has focused on narrative and identity, with a particular interest in multimodal narratives, while her work on conversational AI (e.g. Amazon Echo, Apple Siri, ChatGPT) examines how users navigate processes of meaning-making in interactions with and about technology.

Cal Newport (Professor, Computer Science)
writes about the intersections of technology, work, and the quest to find depth in an increasingly distracted world. His research focuses on distributed systems theory, particularly what can and cannot be solved in complex computational settings. More recently, he has expanded his work into digital ethics. Professor Newport has authored over 65 peer-reviewed articles and written eight books, including *Deep Work, Digital Minimalism,* and *Slow Productivity*. A contributing writer for *The New Yorker*, he also hosts the *Deep Questions* podcast.

Nicoletta Pireddu (Professor, Italian)
is a scholar of Comparative Literature, the Inaugural Director of the Georgetown Humanities Initiative, and co-editor-in-chief of *Migrating Minds: Journal of Cultural Cosmopolitanism*. Her research addresses European literary and cultural relations, national and transnational identities, interdisciplinary approaches to literature and culture, translation studies, early science-fiction, and the intersections of literature and anthropology, among many others. A recipient of multiple teaching and research awards, Professor Pireddu has published over 80 articles and several books and has held fellowships from the NEH, the Howard Foundation, and the Italian Foreign Ministry.

Moderator: Jeanine Turner (Professor and Director, Communication, Culture & Technology) explores the use of communication technologies by individuals and organizations, including instant messaging and multicommunicating, online communication as a form of social support, and the implementation of telemedicine technology. Her book, *Being Present: Commanding Attention at Work and at Home by Managing Your Social Presence*, examines social presence in a digital world and earned a Gold Medal Axiom Publishing Award. She has published over 75 articles and book chapters.

Gnovicon Poster Session (12:15 PM - 1:00 PM)

Man, Mind and Machine: Navigating Contemporary Tension
with Historical Perspectives

Presenter: Aminah Koshul
Georgetown University
MA in Communication, Culture and Technology

Deliberation over the invention of machines with human-competitive capabilities has been a recurrent theme throughout the history of scientific and technological development. However, a closer examination of computing's intellectual lineage reveals a different narrative - one that positions machines as tools for human augmentation rather than as autonomous replacements. This poster explores the historical perspectives of key figures in computing history, including Blaise Pascal, Ada Lovelace, Charles Peirce, Alan Turing, Vannevar Bush, and Douglas Engelbart, to demonstrate how their insights challenge contemporary anxieties about artificial intelligence.

By tracing the trajectory of thought from early mechanical computation to modern consumer technology, this poster highlights how each of these thinkers envisioned machines not as independent agents but as extensions of human capability. Lovelace's assertion that machines could manipulate symbols without originating thought, Turing's exploration of machine intelligence as a test of functional behavior rather than consciousness, and Engelbart's vision of computing as a means of augmenting problem-solving abilities all highlight the distinction between cognition and computation, emphasizing the unique qualities of human thought.

This historical grounding serves to correct common misconceptions by reframing the discussion from one of inevitable displacement to one of enhancement. As society navigates the complexities of emerging technologies, engaging with these foundational perspectives provides a necessary intellectual framework for understanding how human cognition and computational systems serve distinct and non-interchangeable roles.

Aminah Koshul is a Master's student in Communication, Culture, and Technology at Georgetown University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Her academic interests include tech policy, with a focus on privacy, antitrust and AI governance. She serves as an editorial graduate fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs and holds a B.A. in global studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Task Engagement with Different Types of Interlocutors:
AI vs. Human Interlocutors

Presenter: Hadeel Arqbi
Georgetown University
PhD in Linguistics

Language learners' engagement when performing language tasks has been shown to impact their language development positively. Task engagement in task-based language teaching (TBLT) literature has recently gained popularity among researchers, but little research exists in this area (Philp & Duchesne, 2016). Very few studies explored the task engagement effect on language learners when interacting with AI agents instead of human interlocutors (Bear et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2022).

This study investigates the multifaceted nature of task engagement among Arabic language learners in two distinct learning environments: interacting with human interlocutors and AI agents. This research addresses a gap in the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) literature concerning the impact of AI on learner engagement and extends our understanding of how Arabic learners engage in oral tasks.

Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative data from Likert-scale surveys and analysis of language performance, such as language-related episodes (LREs), with qualitative insights gathered through semi-structured interviews and stimulated recall interviews.

Descriptive analysis was used to analyze quantitative data and compare task engagement between the two learning modes. Interview thematic analysis was also used to further explore the factors influencing learner engagement. This paper reports the results of a pilot study on four participants. Preliminary results showed that participants displayed greater engagement with the human interlocutor than with the AI agent. Three participants felt emotionally disconnected from the AI agent. Nonetheless, all three participants showed varying degrees of cognitive engagement with the AI agent. Despite their emotional disconnection from the AI agent, participants interacted with it as if it were a human interlocutor.

Hadeel is a PhD student in the Applied Linguistics program at the Linguistics Department at Georgetown University. Hadeel joined the Applied Linguistics program in the Fall of 2024. She has a Master's in Second Language Acquisition from the University of Maryland College Park and another Master's in Applied Linguistics from the University of Massachusetts Boston. Hadeel is from Saudi Arabia, and She is a lecturer at King Khalid University. Her research interests are language assessment, language teaching, and technology. She is particularly interested in human-computer interaction during language learning activities. Her interest in human-computer interaction, particularly human-AI agents, stems from her passion for language learning and teaching and her dedication to finding innovative ways to help people learn more languages efficiently.

Initial Step in Globally Regulating General-purpose AI through Risk Assessment: Policy Proposal for EU

Presenter: Iverson Yue
Georgetown University
MA in Communication, Culture and Technology

Since 2022, when OpenAI launched its first chatbot ChatGPT to the global market, multiple general purpose AI Models, such as Gemini, LLaMA,DALL·E, and DeepSeek, have been developed and became publicly accessible. These general-purpose AI models, referred to as AI models trained on broad data that can be adapted to a wide range of downstream tasks and applications, if properly used, can bring considerable benefits to education, medical system, scientific research, and business efficiency. However, where there's light, there's a shadow. When exploited by malicious actors and intentions, it can also pose significant safety risks to society, including providing expertise for developing biological and chemical weapons, launching cyberattacks, producing highly persuasive disinformation, supporting fraud and deception, and guiding children toward self-harm, as well as other unexpected risks.

This policy brief starts with identifying these risks and then discusses the regulatory challenges of managing safety risks posed by general purpose AI, considering its unique technical mechanism, combination with physical world, and broad social contexts it may apply. Next, based on its regulatory challenges, then articulate the limitations and purpose of risk assessment at the model level in the process of managing associated risks. For policy recommendations, given the feasibility concerns, this policy brief suggests EU, rather than US, to initiate the first move to formally and legally impose risk assessment on general purpose AI model, both at the pre-deployment and post-deployment stage, by establishing a licensing regime operated by EU AI Office, and suggests US to encourage voluntary AI model risk assessment by issuing official certificate from US AI Safety Institute.

Finally, this policy brief recognizes the limitations of addressing AI safety risks—a global, cross-border challenge—by regional regulation, and expects the establishment of an international regulatory regime for AI in the future to avoid geopolitical race and tensions.

Iverson Yue is a first-year graduate student studying communication, culture, and technology at Georgetown university. His research focuses on technology policy, and Science and Technology studies. Before coming to Georgetown, he delivered multiple public speeches and actively participated in international and regional debate contests and in China addressing challenges posed by emerging technology. His is now primarily researching global AI and internet policy, but he is also exploring other kinds of technology, such as medicine technology and nuclear weapon as well as the history and philosophy of science and technology. He has written multiple policy briefs for EU, US, China addressing issues including platform's liability, free speech, disinformation, and risk assessment of AI. (Besides academia, he is also a big fan of basketball!)

SAG-AFTRA Strikes and AI: Digital Replicas and the Commodification
of Labor in Black Mirror's *Joan is Awful*

Presenter: Charlotte Addison
Colorado State University
MA in Communications Studies

In the spring through to the summer of 2023, Hollywood experienced a myriad of strikes between Hollywood actors and writers, their trade unions, SAG-AFTRA and WGA, and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, Inc., including major industry players like Disney, Netflix, NBCUniversal, and Warner Bros. At the heart of this conflict and intense negotiations is artificial intelligence. The Screen Actors Guild voiced valid concerns regarding the studios' use of artificial intelligence to create and control the digital replicas of actors and performers at will. Hollywood studios' use of AI technology without the necessary protections for human labor can make actors' contributions irrelevant and obsolete because "technology has a history of replacing human jobs." In that context, these strikes call our attention to the potential danger and disruption in the anatomy of creative work in the film and media industries.

I examine the use of AI technology by focusing primarily on specific scenes in the first episode of *Black Mirror (2023): Joan is Awful* and arguments put forth by the SAG-AFTRA. *Joan is Awful* features digital replicas of actors Annie Murphy and Salma Hayek, and through their onscreen representations, I argue that they embody the apprehensions of SAG-AFTRA. Using discourse analysis grounded in the context of media industries and engaging in textual criticism of the selected films' rhetoric, I posit that *Joan is Awful: Black Mirror* (2023) echoes SAG-AFTRA's stance on AI and digital replicas as a critique of Hollywood's capitalist-driven technological solutionism.

I contend that Hollywood's profit-centric model allows for the commodification of talent and labor exploitation from dominant powers. At the same time, the industry's positionality supports "techno-capitalism that expands its power through an array of extractive technologies", which allows studios to use AI technology to exploit their human labor.

Charlotte Addison is an incoming PhD student in Media, Arts, and Text at Virginia Commonwealth University. She is currently finishing up her Master's degree in Communications Studies at Colorado State University. She is also a Patsy Boyer Scholar and a Research Assistant at the RaGE Collective Research Hub. Her research interests focus on Film, Television and Media Studies, Science and Technology, and Digital Cultures. She takes a multidisciplinary approach in examining the relationships between media and technology from humanistic perspectives.

Cinema's Stimulation Complex: Cultural Fears of Overstimulation
from Early Film to TikTok

Presenter: Theodore Wansink
Georgetown University
MA in Communication, Culture and Technology

The rise of the vertical video feed as used in TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts has provoked cultural fears of cognitive decline, as exemplified in the popularity of the term "brain rot." A quintessential example of "brain rot" is the split-screen video, which displays two unrelated pieces of audiovisual content in the same frame. Through analyzing parallels between Subway Surfers split-screen video and the Lumière Brothers' *The Arrival of a Train* (1896), I challenge prevailing narratives about digital media's cognitive effects.

This essay takes a transhistorical and transmedia look at reception history by comparing turn-of-the-century silent cinema to modern-day digital video First, I deconstruct what it is about split-screen videos that evokes such strong cultural anxieties, elaborating my idea of the "stimulation complex"—Western culture's paradoxical relationship with visual stimulation characterized by a simultaneous attraction to and repulsion by spectacle for its own sake. Then, I explain the origins of the stimulation complex, tracing its roots back to the fissure between cinema of attractions and narrative cinema as described by film historians Tom Gunning and Lynne Kirby. Finally, I compare early train cinema with Subway Surfers split-screen videos in terms of their formal content, as well as the cultural anxieties they provoke. I argue for an alternate reading of Subway Surfers split-screen content as a visual metaphor for twenty-first century modes of perception— not the root cause of our overstimulation, but rather, a way of coping with it. This analysis offers new frameworks for understanding recurring anxieties around visual media and the evolving relationship between spectacle and narrative in digital culture.

Teddy Wansink is an interdisciplinary scholar examining digital video through the lenses of film theory, science and technology studies, and media production. His research explores the societal impacts of video platforms like YouTube and TikTok, traces historical patterns of media evolution, and analyzes the utopian/dystopian narratives that emerge around new audiovisual technologies.

As William & Mary's 2019 McCormack-Reboussin scholar, Wansink wrote a thesis on gender representation in French New Wave cinema, earning multiple grants to complete archival research at the Cinémathèque française in Paris. Following graduation, Wansink established himself as a video producer and editor, with his video essay work generating millions of views by translating complex topics into an accessible format. He is currently pursuing an M.A. in Communication, Culture, and Technology at Georgetown University, where he bridges theoretical frameworks with practical media production.

Technology and Justice: Emerging Counter-Narratives by Ghanaian LGBT+ Citizens On Instagram

Presenter: Sheilla Addison
University of Virginia
PhD in Media Studies

In Ghana, like in most African countries, LGBT+ individuals are relegated to the background and generally live in fear of persecution. The media has played a crucial role in shaping the discourses surrounding queerness, which has led to exclusion, marginalization, and moral panic within the country. Currently, the rise and active use of social media have provided many Ghanaians a platform to engage and express harmful opinions that reflect both implicit and explicit queerphobia. Similarly, queer activists and some LGBT+ individuals have harnessed social media platforms, such as Instagram, as a powerful tool to redefine negative stereotypes, challenge the narratives surrounding marginalized LGBT+ citizens, and offer an alternative perspective on their experiences. Utilizing defensive digital alchemy as its theoretical framework, I employ Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis to examine @lgbtrightsghana's defensive digital alchemy on Instagram in the fight against the marginalization of sexual identities amid Ghana's anti-LGBT+ Bill. The findings indicate that @lgbtrightsghana's defensive digital alchemy challenges dominant narratives, redefines negative stereotypes, and presents alternative viewpoints of queer Ghanaians.

Sheilla Addison is a PhD student in Media Studies at the University of Virginia. She received her Master's in Journalism and Media Communication at Colorado State University. Her research focuses on social media, digital cultures, and emerging technologies. Sheilla is a Patsy Boyer Scholar, a TEDx Speaker and a member of the Sloane Lab at UVA.

McGlocalization: A Content Analysis on McDonald's Menus Around the World

Presenters: Merielle Agorilla, Clarisse de Jesus, Jingyao Feng, Kunjika Pathak, and Mengna Zhao
Georgetown University
MA in Communication, Culture and Technology

We constantly ask ourselves who we are. Many psychologists, such as Erik Erikson, theorized that as human beings, identity formation is a core part of our development (1994). Culturally, this search for identity can be shaped by history, traditions, and societal expectations. But what shapes culture? And what's the relationship between culture and us? French gastronome Jean Antheleme Brillat-Savarin's popular quote, "You tell me what you eat, and I will tell you who you are," demonstrates food is more than sustenance rather, it is a cultural mirror, reflecting our values, traditions, and identities within the society (1826). In a globalized world today, nowhere is this more evident than in McDonald's, a brand that has transcended borders while adapting to local tastes. From the world's famous Big Mac to localized menus such as Japan's Teriyaki Burger and India's McAloo Tikki, McDonald's menu is a fusion of global flavors shaped by its brand identity and local preferences.

But how does a fast-food giant maintain these seemingly conflicted relations? This study unpacks the cultural strategies behind McDonald's global menu, revealing how food can bridge cultures while preserving the brand's uniqueness. McDonald's is well known for its glocalization strategy, and through this study, we have presented evidence of its business practices. This form of cultural hybridization leads to newer forms of cultural production and knowledge building. Our study sits at this significant intersection of cultural hybridization and knowledge production by making a quantitative contribution to understanding the levels and factors that cause localization and cultural reproduction.

Merielle Agorilla (she/her) is a graduate student at Georgetown University's flagship interdisciplinary program on Communication, Culture, and Technology. Her academic curiosity has revolved around how our relationship with technology changes us, from our individual interactions to our views on nation-building. She is also interested in culture studies, including research on cultural production, fandom, and popular culture. Her motivation for this project is her love for food and its cultural implications. Her favorite McDonald's item is a cheesy eggdesal, a Filipino breakfast item from McDonald's Philippines.

Clarisse de Jesus (she/her) is a second-year student in Georgetown University's Communication, Culture, and Technology program. Her Media & Culture Studies background has led her to pursue research that affects broader cultural trends. A storyteller at heart, Clarisse has always been fascinated by how we connect with media, history, and each other. When they're not studying, they love working on creative projects like short films, tinkering with 3D printing, or building Legos.

Jingyao Feng is a first-year CCT student at Georgetown University. She majored in Communication and minored in Philosophy and International Relations. She loves exploring the relationship between people and food, from historical, cultural, and social aspects by watching documentaries, visiting restaurants, and replicating some recipes. When she was doing her bachelor's degree in Beijing, she

always hunted for food in McDonald's just outside the school gate after morning classes. Her favourite is the hash brown and she hates the brew coffee offered in the breakfast combo.

Kunjika Pathak is a second year CCT student from India. She has a background in Literary and Cultural Studies and International Studies and at CCT her primary focus has been technology policy and strategic communication. As a lifelong food nerd, she enjoyed working on this project and statistically proving that McDonald's with non-American items is better than the 'original' (joking of course, we proved no such thing). In her free time, she likes long walks, trying out new recipes and making crafts with her friends.

Mengna (Mona) Zhao is a second-year CCT student from China. Having moved to Japan in early childhood and later pursued undergraduate studies in the U.S., her multicultural background naturally sparked her curiosity about cultural studies and adaptability. She majored in Media and Culture Studies with minors in Sociology, Film Studies, Gender Studies, and Asian Studies, exploring the intersections of these disciplines. During her time in CCT, she seeks to understand how technology is changing the way people communicate and interact, ultimately transforming our culture.

Gnovis Vol. 25 Paper Session 1 (1:00 PM - 1:45 PM) – Constructing Trust and Cultural Futures: Platforms, Archives, and Digital Resistance

Moderator
Professor Mary Madden ([bio](#))
Communication, Culture and Technology
Georgetown University

Dreaming of Electric Taro: Contextualizing the Tuvalu First Digital Nation Archive Among Contemporary Digital Cultural Heritage Projects
1:00 PM - 1:10 PM

Presenter: Kevin Echavarria
New York University
MA in Media, Culture, and Communication

At COP28, the 2023 United Nations Conference of Parties on Climate Change, Minister Simon Kofe of Tuvalu delivered a progress report on his country's "First Digital Nation" project, a worst-case scenario effort to transition the entirety of Tuvaluan statehood into the digital realm in response to rising sea levels which threaten the country's physical existence. Among the updates was the announcement of the creation of a digital archive of Tuvalu's tangible and intangible cultural heritage, which will be developed in partnership with the German Archaelogical Institute (DAI). While not the first such project, this one carries added significance given the existential destruction facing Tuvalu, its people, and its culture. This paper questions the implications of datafying cultural heritage. It posits the Tuvaluan First Digital Nation Archive as a site in which colonial power dynamics are introduced through this data project, grounding it in larger Science and Technology Studies discussions of infopolitics and data science. It uses two similar projects—the DAI's Syrian Heritage Archive Project and the European Union's Europeana—to understand how digital cultural archives can serve as dialectical sites in which colonial and Indigenous ontologies may come into tension. Finally, it considers how this digital cultural archive project can contribute to a larger interrogation of the racial capitalism of climate crisisIt concludes with a brief discussion of its implications for larger discussions of climate justice one in which Indigenous imaginaries are finding new ways to engage with environmental destruction, in this case taking on practices of data colonialism.

Kevin Echavarria is a second-year MA student in the Media, Culture, and Communication department at New York University. His work is concerned with the intersection of corporate mass media and Indigenous, grassroots and decolonial movements for environmental justice.

Constructing Trust in the Digital Age: How Social Media Use Influences Trust in Social Media Information
1:10 PM - 1:20 PM

Presenter: Zhidong Sun
Georgetown University
MA in Communication, Culture and Technology

With the rapid development of digital media technologies, social media has become the primary platform for information acquisition, communication, and interpersonal connection, attracting a large number of users. However, due to the anonymity, immediacy, and viral communication of social media, massive amounts of information coexist with misinformation and disinformation, creating significant negative impacts on public life and society. The trust crisis in social media has consequently emerged as a growing concern. This project, based on a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults (N = 12,147) conducted by the Pew Research Center, conducts a secondary analysis of the data, focusing on the relationship between social media use and trust in social media information, with the aim of exploring potential solutions to mitigate the trust crisis.

Zhidong Sun is pursuing a Master's in Communication, Culture, and Technology at Georgetown University. His research focuses on social media studies and digital communication.

**No Longer An Archive of Our Own: Platform Capitalism and the End of
Gift Culture in Mediated Fandom**
1:20 PM - 1:30 PM

Presenter: Sophia Sinsheimer
New York University
MA in Media, Culture, and Communication

In this paper, I explore An Archive of Our Own (AO3), the world's largest fanfiction platform, as a noncommercial online platform struggling to resist the gentrification of the internet. In a cultural landscape dominated by imperatives to monetize fannish behaviors and fanworks, AO3 struggles to maintain its self-described status as a "noncommercial" platform and to keep promises it made to its users to protect the creative authorship and cultural production of fans. Through an analysis of the founding history of AO3 and the public response to recent trends in the world of online fanfiction culture, I tease out key tensions between AO3 and its core user base. Ultimately, I argue that while AO3's governing organization, the Organization for Transformative Works (OTW) understands AO3's value to be in its advocacy for the legitimacy of fannish cultural production, AO3's users are far more concerned with the platform's promises of community stewardship and advocacy on behalf of marginalized people. This disconnect illustrates AO3's separation from its founding principles in current attempts to align itself with hegemonic cultural excellence and "legitimacy," which is necessarily commercial. As fannish gift economies are increasingly subsumed by commercialized platform affordances and industry trends, fanworks become commodities, fans become consumers, and fandoms no longer run on logics of social exchange but increasingly absorb and replicate the logics of the platforms that support them.

Sophia Sinsheimer is pursuing her MA in Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University. Her research focuses on interactive digital technologies and cultural production.

Joint Q&A Session
1:30 - 1:45 PM

Gnovis Vol. 25 Paper Session 2 (1:45 PM - 2:30 PM) – Geographies of Power and Cultural Transformation in Literature and Media

Moderator
Professor Christine So ([bio](bio))
Department of English
Georgetown University

Remapping Settler-Colonial Cartographies in Adania Shibli's *Minor Detail*
1:45 PM - 1:55 PM

Presenter: Ryan Anders Lillestrand
Georgetown University
MA in English

In Adania Shibli's novel, *Minor Detail*, the unnamed protagonist navigates a landscape of Palestinian erasure as she searches for answers to the twenty-five-year-old murder of a Bedouin woman by Israeli soldiers. Among her few resources are a series of three maps: one "produced by centers for research and political studies" shows the walls and checkpoints that divide the West Bank and Gaza, another shows "Palestine as it was until the year 1948," and a final map "produced by the Israeli ministry of tourism" shows regional streets and neighborhoods (Shibli, 2020, p. 70). By foregrounding maps, Shibli demonstrates their rootedness in colonial projects—shaping a settler-colonial vision of mobility, ownership, and time. *Minor Detail*, however, invites us to consider other ways of geographic knowing. Shibli utilizes these contradicting depictions of space to both underscore how maps (and the concept of 'mappability') are wielded to justify and sustain settler-colonialism, as well as how maps might be subverted in ways that expose the systems that undergird occupation. Drawing upon the work of Edward Said, Julie Peteet, Judith Butler, and other scholars at the intersection of literature and critical geography, this paper explores how maps can be crafted to define landscapes within the context of settler colonialism. By navigating and witnessing these spaces, the protagonist exposes how occupation cartographically functions. As *Minor Detail* explores, subverting the colonial map means remapping the ways in which occupation not only attempts to eliminate Palestinian presence but also conceals the most violent forms of itself.

Ryan Anders Lillestrand is a graduate student in Georgetown University's English department. His research and writing center around 19th and 20th-century American literature, infrastructure studies, and ecocriticism.

Mockingjays, Martyrs, and Metamorphosis: An Analysis of Myth
in *The Hunger Games*
1:55 PM - 2:05 PM

Presenter: Riley Tinlin
Georgetown University
MA in Communication, Culture and Technology

This paper explores the role of myth in Suzanne Collin's *The Hunger Games* trilogy through the lens of critical theorists Roland Barthes and Frederic Jameson, using frameworks of commodification, reification, and of myth as a communicative tool for naturalizing social constructs. Using these frameworks, the analysis examines how the Mockingjay symbol and Katniss Everdeen's transformation embody mythological constructs that serve varying ideological functions. I will argue this transformation takes place within three stages: 1) Cinna's Mockingjay: Katniss as the Girl on Fire, 2) The Revolution's Mockingjay: Katniss as Myth, and 3) Coin's Mockingjay: The Mockingjay as a Martyr. The study identifies three key iterations of Katniss as the Mockingjay: Cinna's vision of Katniss as a symbol of defiance, the rebellion's use of her as a unifying mythic figure, and President Coin's reimagining of her as a martyr. Each transformation diminishes Katniss' autonomy, demonstrating how dominant powers manipulate myth to further their agendas. Additionally, the paper contextualizes Panem's socio-political landscape, drawing parallels between the Capitol's mythologized narratives and real-world cultural critiques of late-stage capitalism. By interrogating how Katniss is alienated from her personhood and reified as a commodity, this paper underscores the dual function of myth as both a tool of oppression and a catalyst for revolution. Ultimately, it illustrates how Collins' trilogy provides a critical framework for examining the commodification of human life and identity, emphasizing the pervasive role of myth in shaping collective consciousness under systems of power.

Riley Tinlin is a second-year students in the Communication, Culture, and Technology Master's Program at the Georgetown University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Her research focuses on the intersection between theoretical frameworks and cultural communication, both through fiction representations and online discources.

Scaling the Periphery: Han Kang's Nobel Prize and the Politics of Literary Recognition
2:05 PM - 2:15 PM

Presenter: Jisoo Choi
Georgetown University
MA in Communication, Culture and Technology

The 2024 Nobel Prize in Literature, awarded to Han Kang—the first Asian woman and the fifth Asian writer in the prize's 123-year history—was celebrated as a milestone in the pursuit of greater inclusivity in global literary recognition. This paper examines how Han's Nobel win was framed in media coverage across South Korea, the United States, and the United Kingdom, focusing on how cultural "peripheries" and "centers" interpret and negotiate the symbolic capital of literary prizes. Drawing on Casanova's (2004) center-periphery model, this study highlights how Han's recognition—and the divergent media narratives surrounding it—reflect the persistent core-periphery divide within the global literary field, where cultural capital is unevenly distributed and continuously contested. Through thematic analysis, the paper demonstrates that South Korean media primarily focus on how Han's success was achieved, portraying her Nobel win as a national triumph made possible through the coordinated efforts of cultural intermediaries, translation infrastructure, and institutional support that collectively enabled her to "scale up" in the global literary field. In contrast, US and UK media focus on why Han Kang's work was deemed worthy of the Nobel, framing her as an "outsider" whose "strange" and "experimental" writing justified her entry into the global literary canon. I argue that these contrasting narratives highlight both the dominant positioning maintained by cultural centers and the "scale-shifting" strategies (Sievers & Levitt, 2020) employed by cultural peripheries to reposition themselves within the global literary field, where literary value is continuously claimed, contested, and negotiated.

Jisoo Choi is pursuing a Master's in Communication, Culture, and Technology at Georgetown University. Her research traces the shifting flows of media and culture, focusing on how they shape, contest, and reproduce power and social narratives.

Joint Q&A Session
2:15 PM - 2:30 PM