

# **Applied Stylistics Symposium**

Friday 16th January 2026

## **Book of Abstracts**

## **Symposium Keynote**

### **On the Haunted Afterlife of Prisons: A Critical Case Study into UK Crime-related Dark Tourism**

*Professor Christiana Gregoriou, University of Leeds*

This exploratory paper uses cross-disciplinary expertise to interrogate the discourses used in a UK decommissioned prison functioning as a dark touristic destination in 2023: Shrewsbury prison. We use collective insights from media studies, critical stylistics and criminology to ask how touristic prisons such as this construct true crime, and what place this construction has in the local/national community. In so doing, we highlight the need for spaces of this kind to make better connections between the past and the present and raise more awareness relating to matters such as prisoner mental health, re-entry and desistance, the conditions of confinement, and its impact on families. We propose that these spaces can be better utilised for public consumption and begin to generate research-informed and practical guidelines for achieving that. Given that this billion-pound dark touristic industry has intrinsic importance that stretches beyond entertainment, we seek to encourage further academic involvement in order to improve the educational content that can be embedded and integrated into public-informing tourist provisions, and thus enhance such sites' potential for visitor education and empowerment.

<https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/english/staff/57/professor-christiana-gregoriou>

## Virginia Woolf and Translational Stylistics: Deixis in Maurice Lanoire's *La promenade au phare* and Marguerite Yourcenar's *Les vagues*

Annalisa Federici, Roma Tre University

This paper examines the linguistic manifestations of point of view in original and translated texts, focusing on the first French translations of Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*, published by Maurice Lanoire as *La promenade au phare* (1929) and by Marguerite Yourcenar as *Les vagues* (1937), respectively. It aims to identify the stylistic transformations either consciously or unconsciously introduced by translators (Malmkjær 2003, 2004; Boase-Beier 2006, 2020), with attention to shifts in point of view and narrative perspective in the target texts. The analysis considers space, time, and person deixis as chief markers of point of view, particularly in relation to shifts in speech and thought presentation modes. In *La promenade au phare*, Lanoire often omits or replaces proximal, character-oriented deixis – which typically combines with past tense and third-person reference in Free Indirect Discourse – with distal forms, aligning adverbials with the narrator's perspective and avoiding the “was-now paradox” peculiar to this form (Adamson 1999: 672). Similarly, Yourcenar's *Les vagues* exhibits omissions, neutralisations (i.e. translation by a non-deictic element), and shifts in deixis that cannot be solely attributed to cross-linguistic differences. Since both translators overlook Woolf's emphasis on the here-and-now of the focalising character's consciousness, the translations reveal a general loss of deictic anchorage and, consequently, of internal focalisation.

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# **Repetition, stance and translators' decisions: a corpus-based multifactorial study of English-to-Lithuanian translation of reporting verbs in literary novels**

*Lukasz Grabowski, University of Opole and University of Vilnius*

*Anna Ruskan, University of Vilnius*

*Audrone Soliene, University of Vilnius*

Positioned in the area of corpus stylistics and translation (Mahlberg 2018; Mastropierro 2019), this corpus-based multifactorial study aims to explore how Lithuanian translators handled repeatedly used reporting verbs signalling direct speech found in English-original literary novels. More precisely, we aim to explore to what extent and why repeatedly used reporting verbs signalling direct speech were preserved (e.g. when an inter-lingual synonym was used or avoided in translation, i.e. when semantically different reporting verbs, non-reporting verb equivalents or omissions were used). Using 2 literary novels (1984 and Brave New World) extracted from InterCorp corpus (v.15) (Rosen et al. 2022), we conduct a two-stage corpus-based study focusing on, first, identification of translation patterns found in the two novels, and, second, on exploration of factors (orthographic, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic), including the potential role of stance conveyed by English-original reporting verbs and their translations, that have impacted either the preservation or avoidance of the original's repetitions. For the latter stage, we employed logistic regression modelling. Apart from descriptive findings, the results offer an attempt at explanation for the translator's choices in rendering recurring reporting verbs signalling direct speech, which perform important stylistic roles in literary texts.

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## **Destigmatising Mental Illness through Mind Style: A Cognitive Stylistic Analysis of Matthew Quick's *Silver Linings Playbook* (2008)**

*Marjorie Cheung, Hong Kong Shue Yan University*

This paper explores the value of applying cognitive stylistics to health humanities and anti-stigma work through an analysis of Matthew Quick's novel *Silver Linings Playbook* (2008), placed in specific contrast to the 2012 film adaptation. Nadel & Negra (2014) show how the film spectacularises the protagonist's distress, framing him as an exotic object of study through voyeuristic devices. This paper explores how, by contrast, the novel's sustained first-person narration, with its distinctive mind-style features, evokes different reader responses, enabling them to empathise with the protagonist's undiagnosed neurodivergent consciousness.

Mind-style features discussed in the paper include repetitive syntax, language of sensory overload, personal causal conditional reasoning, and pragmatic failure. Using a three-layer framework (interpersonal/social, intrapersonal/psychological, meta-narrative) informed by Mad Studies and neurodiversity scholarship, the analysis considers how these mind-style features (1) authenticate lived experience without medical labelling, (2) expose everyday linguistic stigma, and (3) trigger epistemic shifts for character and reader.

On a larger scale, the paper suggests that cognitive stylistic analysis can help mental health professionals and educators notice how literary language shapes perceptions of neurodivergence. By examining specific mind-style features in the novel, it offers practical examples of how narrative perspective impacts empathy and reader response.

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## ***I sing to my own don't-step-on-the-cracks-self: Recalling Mind styles in Will Self's Umbrella***

*Peter Harvey, Independent Scholar*

Herman argues that narratives inform listeners and readers not just about particular events, but also about how it feels to experience those events, suggesting narrative is 'a mode of expression tailor-made for gauging the felt quality of lived experiences' (2009 137-8). Recently, stylisticians have drawn on the notion of 'mind style' to explore how linguistic choices in prose fiction can evoke the lived experiences of people living with a range of medical conditions including, dementia (Harrison 2017, Lugea 2022) and depression (Mansworth 2022).

In this paper, I discuss the depiction of mind style in Will Self's *Umbrella*. *Umbrella* is commonly read as an example of a 'neuronovel'; a genre which portrays characters with different cognitive impairments. I explore how Self deploys techniques of literary modernism to evoke the world view of patients with *encephalitis lethargica*: a post-viral syndrome with symptoms similar to Parkinson's disease. I demonstrate how Text World Theory (Gavins 2007) provides a framework to examine the altered perceptions of space and time experienced by Self's characters. I then draw on Goodreads reviews to reveal how readers recall this aspect of Self's novel alongside more traditional plot-based narrative summaries.

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# **From Comprehension to Critique: Teaching Critical Reading Skills through Stylistic Analysis**

*Kimberley Pager-McClymont, University of Aberdeen's International Study Centre*

Critical Stylistics (CS) provides a linguistically grounded framework for analysing how texts construct meaning, stance, and ideology (Jeffries, 2010; 2015; 2022). While (pedagogical) stylistics offers tools for teaching English (Giovanelli, 2014; Ahmed et al., 2022), their use in EAP remains limited, especially for fostering international students' critical engagement with academic texts. This study investigates how integrating CS into curriculum design can support the development of critical reading skills. The research draws on both student and educator data to build a holistic understanding of teaching and learning, using a mixed approach that combines CS-focused workshops, adapted Academic Reading Circles (ARC), surveys, and staff reflections.

Findings show consistent improvement in students' ability to identify arguments, analyse language as evidence, evaluate claims, and synthesise information when reading academic papers. Akin to Pager-McClymont and Papathanasiou (2023), this study argues that because language shapes interactions and meaning-making for all participants in the classroom, embedding stylistic principles into academic reading curricula offers a systematic, transferable model for fostering criticality through language, contributing to broader discussions on critical reading in higher education, a skill required across all pathways and modules.

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## **“Juliet’s dress was made out of clouds”: Metaphor as an Applied Stylistic Lens for Exploring Children’s Shakespeare-inspired Writing**

*Lynsey McCulloch, Royal Shakespeare Company*

*Matthew Collins, Royal Shakespeare Company*

This paper reports on work being undertaken for a forthcoming CUP publication about children’s Shakespeare-inspired writing. The research draws on a corpus of children’s writing curated through the Royal Shakespeare Company’s *Time to Act* project, comprised of eye-witness accounts, stories, diary entries, and letters.

By addressing the debate around how metaphor is defined, we describe the methodological challenges of identifying and tagging metaphorical language. We outline how this debate informs our analytical procedure, which classifies metaphors according to source and target domains to identify recurring patterns and thematic commonalities.

We discuss our findings in terms of source-target mapping and draw on Cognitive Metaphor Theory to consider to what extent children’s linguistic choices are a result of embodied drama practices at the heart of *Time to Act*. Considering the dataset in terms of ‘originality’ versus ‘conventionality’, we then extend this discussion to consider where these metaphorical mappings are attested in Shakespeare’s own use of figurative language.

We conclude our paper with a methodological reflection on how successful this method is for exploring figurative language when applied to young people’s writing, as well as considering broader questions about what this research contributes to debates about how we measure and foster creativity.



## **Possible Worlds and Sacred Stories: How Evangelical Christians Apply Biblical Texts to Contemporary Moral Life**

*Stephen Pihlaja, Aston University*

*Megan Mansworth, Aston University*

This presentation focuses on how Possible Worlds Theory can be used to understand how evangelical Christian sermons about the biblical story of Ruth connect the lives and experiences of characters in the story with the lives and experiences of Christians living in the contemporary world. Utilising of a corpus of 161 sermons collected from an online repository, the presentation aims to show 1) how the sermons use textual elements to inform speculation about the characters' internal thoughts and emotional lives and 2) how the construction of characters' internal lives is then used to inform teachings about moral behaviour. The analysis shows that speculation about the internal lives of characters in the stories is pervasive, with the sermons regularly commenting on characters' thoughts and motivations with varying levels of basis in the source text. The sermons also make connections across different bible stories, showing how a unified view of the bible has implications for how the thoughts and actions of characters are understood. The presentation argues that through connecting the textual actual world with the actual world contemporary world of Christian congregation, pastors, and believers use sacred stories to make moral judgments about right behaviour and thought.

## **‘(to camera)’: Breaking the Fourth Wall in Contemporary Fictionalised Film**

Naomi Adam University of Nottingham

Paula Ghintuială, Aston University

In this telecinematic stylistic study, we investigate the phenomenon of *breaking the fourth wall* in four contemporary, fictionalised American films: *Goodfellas* (Scorsese, 1990), *The Wolf of Wall Street* (Scorsese, 2013), *The Big Short* (McKay, 2015), and *Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood* (Tarantino, 2019). Drawing on and developing Adam and Ghintuială’s (2024) ontological model, we take a jointly linguistic visual analytical approach to these case studies, proposing an integrative framework that maps verbal address, voiceover, gaze, and metacinematic cues onto layers of narrative ontology. While several previous studies (e.g., Brown, 2013; Cavaletti 2018) have explored fourth wall breaking self-reflexivity from a single disciplinary standpoint, this study uniquely combines semiotic, narratological, and stylistic analysis to examine how language and image combine to implicate the viewing audience. Our preliminary findings indicate that fourth wall breaks function differently across genres, being variously didactic (in *The Big Short*), confrontational (in *The Wolf of Wall Street*), confessional (in *Goodfellas*), and revisionist (in *Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood*), producing a range of audience reactions. Ultimately, in our paper we present a novel interdisciplinary model for analysing cinematic fourth wall breaking as both an ontological and rhetorical act.

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