DISBELIEF

From the Renaissance to Romanticism

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## PROGRAM

**25.05.2017**

### 11:30–13:00

**REGISTRATION // Room: Lobby**  
(1st Floor Lobby, ELTE, BTK, Building R5)

### 12:30–13:00

**OPENING ADDRESS // Room 356**

### 13:00–14:30

**PLENARY**  
Péter Dávidházi // Willed Belief and the Arts of Self-Persuasion: The Classic Hungarian Shakespeare // Eötvös Loránd University // Chair: Géza Kállay // Room 356

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14:50–15:30  
Gergő Dávid // Misbelief and Marlovian Promises // Eötvös Loránd University  
Page-Jones Kimberley // Disbelief and fanciful loss in Coleridge's Notebooks // University of Western Brittany  
József Pap // A Nation Once Again? - Faith and criticism of national ideas in the Irish Romantic and Post-Romantic literature // Eötvös Loránd University

15:30–35  
**BREAK**  
**BREAK**  
**BREAK**

15:35–16:15  
Márta Hargitai // From ‘resolute’ to ‘dissolved’: Faustus’s waltz with the devil // Eötvös Loránd University  
Veronika Ruttkay // Phantom feelings and Coleridge’s Remorse (1813) // Eötvös Loránd University  
Ferenc Kovács Dávid // "The senses are the sources of all knowledge to the mind." Atheism, materialism and the sceptical tradition in the context of the birth of neuroscience in British romanticism // Independent Scholar

16:20–17:00  
BREAK  
BREAK  
BREAK

17:20–18:50  
**PLENARY**  
Tim Fulford // “The very air is a vital essence”: belief and disbelief on the Arctic ice // De Montfort University // Chair: Andrea Timár // Room 356

### 19:10–20:00

**REGISTRATION // Room: Lobby**  
(1st Floor Lobby, ELTE, BTK, Building R5)

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<td>09:00–10:30</td>
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<td>Nicholas Halmi // Disbelief in the Modern Monomyth // University of Oxford // Chair: Andrea Timár // Room 356</td>
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<td>Chair: Katalin Kállyay G. // Room 315</td>
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<td>András Bernáth // From Religious Disbelief to Literary Belief: The Shift from the Renaissance Hamlet to Its Romantic Reception // University of Szeged</td>
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<td>Stephen Bygrave // Disbelief and the aesthetic: literary, experimental and prophetic language in Joseph Priestley // University of Southampton</td>
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<td>Christie Edwina // Taken on (Dis)Trust: The Heroics of Doubt in 1650s English Prose Fiction // University of Oxford</td>
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<td>Shakespeare II. // Morality</td>
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<td>15:10–15</td>
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<td>Michael Raiger // The Poet as Maker: Moral Didacticism and Prophetic Inspiration in Sidney and Shelley's Platonic Conceptions of the Poet // Ave Maria University</td>
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<td>Brett Bourbon // Can We Speak a Poem into Existence? // University of Dallas // Chair: Géza Kállay // Room 356</td>
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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Brett Bourbon

Can We Speak a Poem into Existence?

Brett Bourbon received his B.A. from U.C. Berkeley and his Ph.D. from Harvard. He was a professor at Stanford for ten years, and is now an English professor at the University of Dallas. He is also a Visiting Associate Professor in The Program of Literary Theory at the University of Lisbon. He has received many awards, including a Fulbright to the University of Lisbon, a Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellowship, the Harvard English Scholar award, and the top teaching awards from the University of Dallas and Stanford. He is the author of Finding a Replacement for the Soul: meaning and mind in literature and philosophy (Harvard UP, 2004), as well as numerous essays on philosophy, culture, literature and art. He is also a poet, publishing most recently Color Boy against the Gods (Reunion, Fall 2015).

Péter Dávidházi

Willed Belief and the Arts of Self-Persuasion:
The Classic Hungarian Shakespeare

Péter Dávidházi DSc, MHAS, is a Research Professor in the Institute for Literary Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and Professor at Eötvös Loránd University. Author of The Romantic Cult of Shakespeare: Literary Reception in Anthropological Perspective (1998). He also published monographs and studies on the classics of Hungarian literature. Recently he edited New Publication Cultures in the Humanities: Exploring the Paradigm Shift (2014). His current research focuses on biblical allusions in Shakespeare, the prophetic tradition in Hungarian poetry, and the rhetoric of self-persuasion.

Tim Fulford

“The very air is a vital essence”:
Belief and Disbelief on the Arctic Ice

Professor Fulford’s research lies in the area of literature in the Romantic era, in the contexts of colonialism, exploration, science, landscape, the picturesque, religion. He has published many articles and books on these topics, featuring such writers as William Wordsworth, S. T. Coleridge, Robert Bloomfield, Mary Robinson, William Cowper, Jane Austen and John Clare. He is currently preparing scholarly editions of the letters of Robert Southey and of Humphry Davy. His most recent monographs are The Late Poetry of the Lake Poets (Cambridge:
Nicholas Halmi

Disbelief in the Modern Monomyth

Nicholas Halmi is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of University College, Oxford. In 2015 and 2016 he was chair of the Advisory Board of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism. His main areas of research are British and Continental literature, philosophy, and visual arts of the “long eighteenth century”. He is author of The Genealogy of the Romantic Symbol (2007) and the editor, most recently, of the Norton Critical Edition Wordsworth's Poetry and Prose (2013). At present he is writing a book on historicism and aesthetics with support from a Leverhulme Trust Major Research Fellowship for 2015-17.

Ágnes Péter

Disbelief in Disbelief: Blake and the Moravian Brothers

Ágnes Péter is Professor Emerita of English at Eötvös Loránd University. Her research has been focused on the Romantic Age, its critical theory and European contexts, and on individual poets like Keats and Shelley. Her books include: Késhet a tavasz? Shelley poétikája (2005), a comparative assessment of Shelley and Hölderlin against the critical background of the German Frühromantik; Roppant szivárvány (1996) on the shifting concepts of nature, language and beauty in Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats; and Keats világa (2nd ed. 2010). She translated and edited the letters of Keats. Her forthcoming book is on Blake’s illustrations of the Book of Job.

Tzachi Zamir

Disbelieving God

Tzachi Zamir is a literary critic and philosopher and is an Associate Professor of English & Comparative Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His latest book is Acts: Theatre, Philosophy, and the Performing Self (2014) and his forthcoming one is Ascent: Philosophy and Paradise Lost. He is also the author of Double Vision: Moral Philosophy (2012) and Shakespearean Drama (2006) and Ethics and the Beast: A Speciesist Argument for Animal Liberation (2007). His main areas of research are: Philosophy of Literature, Philosophy Theater and Animal Ethics.
CONFERENCE PRESENTERS:

Ágnes Bató

Full of the Devil or Full of Death?

Being “too full of the Devill” (John Beale, 1667), an early criticism concerning Milton’s epic “Paradise Lost” is one of the most popular controversies surrounding the work, addressed by Neil Forsyth extensively in two volumes (1987, 2003). Yet however powerful and “undaunted” he is, he does not appear among the cosmic forces that shape Milton’s universe. Instead of being “of the devil’s party” (Blake, 1790), Milton, believed in death. In the heart of understanding the cosmology of John Milton’s epic lies the antagonism between God and death. The power of Satan is merely deceit, whereas death can “unimmortal make” the creatures. The source of both life and death is the Creator, since death is conceived in the divine mind, then it materializes in the nightmarish encounter with Satan, and is brought to the earth through the human body. The “Universe of death”, Hell is to be identified with Death, the fallen angel is merely a victim, repulsed by the unnaturalness of the place and the entity. Milton, doubtful of both scientific efforts in modelling the universe, and of Satan’s power, pictures and even darker universe. // 27/05/17 // 10:50-11:30 // Room: 315 // University of Szeged

András Bernáth

From Religious Disbelief to Literary Belief: The Shift from the Renaissance Hamlet to Its Romantic Reception

While perhaps the most complex play in Western drama, Shakespeare’s Hamlet is primarily a revenge tragedy, in which the ancient revenge theme is put into a Christian context, giving rise to a major tension. The hero, however, delays his revenge not because he is a Christian rejecting revenge. On the contrary: seeking the damnation of his enemy, Hamlet pursues total revenge, the destruction of both body and soul, which makes him uniquely cruel among Shakespeare’s tragic heroes. In the Christian context, the Ghost demanding revenge, even though it alludes to Purgatory, can come only from Hell, being a disguised demon or devil, as Hamlet himself suspects. The paper argues that as the religious significance of the play faded after the Restoration, religious disbelief gave way to literary belief, which is particularly noticeable in the Romantic reception of Hamlet. Ignoring or actually denying the religious elements of the play, the Romantic commentators view Hamlet as morally perfect hero, and the Ghost simply as his father. This, however, amounts to a very partial and problematic concept of Hamlet, grasping merely the surface of Shakespeare’s work. This is a major shift, and these problems can still be noted in the modern reception. // 26/05/17 // 10:50-11:30 // Room: 356 // University of Szeged
Bence Levente Bodó

Belief and Disbelief in the Power of Robes – The Symbolism of Clothing in Paradise Lost

Undoubtedly, Milton’s *Paradise Lost* is not about fashion or even clothing. Yet, the creation and symbolism of the first attire mankind wore within the context of the Judeo-Christian biblical narrative also falls within the scope of the epic. With how Milton embeds in a crucially moral setting the first recognition of nudity and the subsequent wearing of clothes, the poet creates a semiotic discourse. The material presence of the first garments come to signify the ontological change of the first pair, and instead of fulfilling the functional purpose that clothes are associated with, that is covering the body, they rather reveal the presence of sin and the absence of innocence. To have knowledge of good and evil, it seems, also implies the knowledge of clothes. The study maps out how the very fact of wearing clothes and the differences between the garments that weave through the epic turn into ambiguous poetic tools, where clothes either represent a barrier between interpretation and meaning or turn into material manifestations of meaning.

Zsolt Bojti

“People do not, as a rule, believe in Vampires!”: 19th Century Sexology and “The True Story of a Vampire” by Eric Stenbock

The aim of the paper is to substantiate how the figure of the vampire in “The True Story of a Vampire” by Eric Stenbock represents the unfolding conceptual muddle in 19th century sexology. From the second half of the century, a set of new terminology had been introduced regarding same-sex desires, “the new words were to be the expression… for the new theoretical insights of the respective authors” (Herzer 1985, 16): “urning” by Ulrichs, “homosexual” by Kertbeny, “the contrary sexual feeling” or “invert” by Westphal and so on. Interestingly, only in the 1890s did England join the scientific discourse on the matter while the law had been prepared to take action against same-sex desires. No wonder, then, that the English population was still shocked by the trials of Boulton and Park in the 1870s, the Cleveland Street Scandal in 1890, and the outcome of the Wilde-trials in 1895. It will be suggested the vampire in Stenbock’s short story mirrors the disbelief of the population in the existence of such affairs, and more importantly, the disbelief in the power of the scientific discourse defining same-sex desires. The paper establishes its reading of the short story on Mighall’s argument that the vampire does not represent a sexual transgressor but a “classificatory problem” in the 19th century (2003, 214).
Stephen Bygrave

Disbelief and the Aesthetic: Literary, Experimental and Prophetic Language in Joseph Priestley

If unbelief is an ideology or state of mind, disbelief is more evanescent, a failure or refusal that may be corrected by subsequent knowledge. In that sense it is like the moment of the sublime – or at least it will be a moment where epistemological issues are suspended in favour of aesthetic issues. To philosophes in the Paris salons, the cleric and scientist Joseph Priestley was ‘the only person they had ever met with, of whose understanding they had any opinion, who professed to believe Christianity’. He claimed himself that ‘the only proper evidence of … God, as the author of nature, is an exhibition of something which he alone is capable of performing’. Adducing ‘evidence’ as a criterion suggests materialism and belief may not be antithetical, although they may fissure a language for the numinous in ways more typical of the propositional scepticism of literary language. This paper considers Priestley’s reading of revealed religion, the politics entailed by it and the way progress in religion and politics may carried in to the future in his late reading of biblical prophecy. // 26/05/17 // 10:50-11:30// Room: 423/A // University of Southampton

Julia S. Carlson

“To Some, this May Appear Incredible”: Blindness and the Spectacular Erosion of Disbelief

My topic is blindness and insight—not the De Manian form but the kind of insight that was produced by the haptic technologies of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Before the Enlightenment it wasn’t believed that the blind could have valid sensible knowledge of the world; the mythical figure of the blind seer led people to expect that truth could “spring from the blind man’s darkness” (as God’s gift) but not from his sensory perceptions (Weygand, THE BLIND IN FRENCH SOCIETY, 61-2). However, eighteenth-century surgical procedures, experimental methodologies, and tangible technologies (writing and calculating instruments, tactile maps, embossed print), suggested that the blind developed an extra sensitive perception of the world. “Touch, when trained, can become more delicate than sight,” wrote Diderot, whose descriptions of tactile maps also countered the argument that the blind, lacking sight, lacked the conception of space. My paper examines the erosion of this disbelief—in descriptions of the spectacular performances of the blind, pedagogical treatises, embossed books, and in “Blind Traveller” James Holman’s NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY . . . THROUGH FRANCE . . . AND GERMANY (1822), which everywhere argues that “book of nature has been largely opened to the mental view” (vii). // 27/05/17 // 10:50-11:30// Room: 423/a // University of Cincinnati, Ohio
Edwina Christie

Taken on (Dis)Trust: The Heroics of Doubt in 1650s English Prose Fiction

1650s English prose fiction celebrates disbelief: characters question the credibility of others, they demand quasi-legal proof for inset narrations and scientific evidence for seemingly magical occurrences, and it is the sceptical hero who wins the day. The greatest vice in mid-century fiction is not suspicion, but credulity – in romances such as 'The Princess Cloria' and 'Panthalia', the credulous monarch is deposed and must be educated into correct distrust of others before he can resume the throne. In this paper, I will argue that mid-century English prose fiction constructs a heroics of doubt and that this model has not merely ethical but aesthetic implications, inviting readers to turn a sceptical eye onto fiction itself. I will consider principally the Commonwealth-era romances 'The Princess Cloria' and 'Panthalia', but will conclude by drawing attention to the counter-model established in Roger Boyle's 'Parthenissa', which celebrates trust in one’s fellow man as the cornerstone of Christian faith. // 26/05/17 // 10:50-11:30 // Room: 315 // University of Oxford

Gergő Dávid

Misbelief and Marlovian Promises

In my paper I argue that Marlowe presents a sceptical worldview on religious and social conduct in his plays. However, his scepticism does not extend into the natural world. It seems that he finds assurance in the domain of planets. His (in)famous subversiveness and unorthodoxy is not present when he employs images of planetary influences and humorism. The paper is concerned with the idea of promises in terms of human interaction from various perspectives, such as religious and political points of view. Furthermore, promises are interpreted in a divine sense, as well. In my reading of Marlowe’s plays, notions of promises and scepticism are strongly intertwined, which might help us understand why Marlowe’s works are seen as the products of a harsh or even frustrated, cynical mind. // 25/05/17 // 16:20-17:00 // Room: 356 // Eötvös Loránd University

Balz Engler

Disbelief in Othello

The paper deals with different forms of disbelief in Shakespeare’s Othello, focusing on Iago and the relationship between the action and the audience. It discusses different kinds of expectations on the part of Shakespeare’s audience and the kind of conflicting reactions this must lead to. The starting point is Coleridge’s statement on the “willing suspension of disbelief”, which, belonging to a specific historical moment, creates specific problems when applied to this early modern play. // 26/05/17 // 14:30-15:10 // Room: 315 // University of Basel
Sibylle Erle

“How can I describe my Emotions at this Catastrophe...?”:
Frankenstein, Walton and the Monster

This paper revisits the question of monstrosity in Frankenstein and Mary Shelley’s representation of creation. In the 1818 edition there is almost no explanation of the animation of the patched-up body; this came later and through Shelley’s preface of 1831 and the stage adaptations. The focus is on physiognomical creation, i.e. not only on Frankenstein’s body-making but also his aesthetic response to the body: overwhelmed by what he sees, he is unable to suspend disbelief. Frankenstein is, of course, an unreliable narrator and Walton only gradually distances himself from the tale he has heard. Shelley, it has been argued, revised Adam Smith’s ideas about sympathy, suggesting that – if a person inspires terror compensatory sympathy can be achieved through narrative. Is Walton able to handle the monster because he knows it? The paper discusses the dynamic between the visual and the verbal in Frankenstein to argue that Shelley responds to Johann Caspar Lavater’s physiognomy and the publication history of Essays on Physiognomy (1789-98). If the novel was, indeed, ‘stitched’ together, where does this leave the author? The paper explores not the limits but the conditions of sympathy.

// 26/05/17 // 14:30-15:10 // Room: 423/A // Bishop Grosseteste University

Ágnes Füzessy-Bonácz

“For in him we live, and move, and have our being” – God’s Immeasurable Chaos in Paradise Lost

After the Angelic Fall, the cosmos is first assessed when Satan mentions the possibility of multiple worlds in “space” (1.650). The epic’s last commentary on cosmological matters happens when the poetic persona explains how the Sun’s course had to be altered after the Fall of Man in order to accommodate to the extremities of such a sinful state (10.687-692). The first is an opening and a nameless, creative act; the latter is an ending and divine perversion. And though the structure or Milton’s universe has been widely researched (e.g. by Gábor Ittzés in Hungary), it is not less perplexing to discern the manifold effects of such a complex environment on its inhabitants. What exactly is space in Paradise Lost, and how can it be observed? The three characters who directly comment on extraterrestrial matters – Satan, the poetic persona and Raphael – all have different responses to their respective encounters with Confusion, which seems to overshadow all other qualities of each vast landscape in the created and non-created world.

// 27/05/17 // 12:20-13:00 // Room: 315 // Eötvös Loránd University
Bálint Gárdos

Disbelief in Historical Examples: The Hampden-Milton-Cromwell Passage in Thomas Gray’s ‘Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard’

The presentation discusses the different conventions of literary didacticism that Gray’s ‘Elegy’ experiments with from almost medieval allegorical teaching, replete with capitalised moral qualities (‘Ambition’, ‘Grandeur’, etc.), through the humanist model of exemplary history (teaching through the powerful rhetorical presentation of turning points in the lives of great men) to a modern model of teaching that is not directed at action but at sympathy evoked through the understanding of socio-economic and cultural forces. The analysis focuses on the transactions between exemplary history and the ‘annals of the poor’ in the poem. // 27/05/17 // 12:20-13:00 // Room: 423/A // Eötvös Loránd University

Márta Hargitai

From ‘resolute’ to ‘dissolved’: Faustus’s waltz with the devil

From ‘resolute’ to ‘dissolved’: Faustus’s waltz with the devil In my view, Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus has a lot to offer when interpreted in the context of belief and disbelief. From the beginning, Faustus repeatedly reminds himself that he should be resolute, but at the end of the play he wishes above all to be like beasts whose souls are soon dissolved in elements—he, however, is confirmed that his soul “must live still to be plagued in hell”. This certainty of the existence of hell is the end-point, something we have not only expected but known from the beginning, when Faustus casually and mockingly called hell a fable. In the paper, various aspects of the play’s belief-disbelief spectrum (as well as that of permanence-change) will be explored focusing on Faustus’s changes of belief-states, i.e. his revisions of beliefs and disbeliefs in the hope of demonstrating that he only dismisses old beliefs so that he can find a final saving belief and he only changes to reach a final state where he will need to change no more. The paper argues that in a way he accomplishes both goals but it is not exactly the way he imagined or hoped for. // 25/05/17 // 15:35-16:15 // Room: 356 // Eötvös Loránd University

Gabriella Hartvig

“The First Will Serve the Bookseller’s Purpose”: Sterne’s Double Title Page in The Sermons of Mr. Yorick

Laurence Sterne inserted the sermon on the Abuses of Conscience in the second volume of his novel, Tristram Shandy, to advertise the publication of a collection of sermons, the first two volumes of which were to appear five months later, with a double title page, the first bearing the name of Yorick, and the second with the real name of the author on it. In the eyes of the critics, the first title page undermined the authenticity of the sermons; many found jest lurking in them, accusing their writer of merely putting on the role of a preacher. In my paper I will look at Sterne’s dual image in his own time, both as a jester and as a preacher, as it appeared in the
Lajos Horváth

Broken Images in Shakespeare’s Narrative Poems

Revising Shakespeare’s plays and his narrative poems, the role of taboo seems inevitably proper, where disbelief is the key theme in the texts. When disbelief is forced to be hidden behind broken images and muted with eloquence, the trope of catachresis can be equally captured with mixed metaphors and misuse. In Venus and Adonis, the role of speech demonstrates the genre of useless terms and the Renaissance cliché of purposeless arguments, which indicates a performative activity to procure success by narrating the subjective faith of desire. However, in Lucrece, the satiric model of the speechless performance evolves into an endless narration, which seems to be the opposed eloquence of the narrative style in Venus and Adonis. Same happens in A Lover’s Complaint, where the role of speech seems to be the one and only weapon of the traumatized sacrifice, when retelling the unavenged story of the harassed maid. All three narrative poems argue against the irreversible effect of blind love on lurking desire which rises over and over again, procreating actual disbelief in immortal nature. Nonetheless, the taboo of disbelief is acted out, when “kissing speaks, with lustful language broken”, and even with “a broken voice”, “and all for nothing”.

András Jásdi

Virtue and Disbelief in Bernard Mandeville’s The Fable of the Bees

Adorno and Horkheimer in their Dialectic of Enlightenment mention Mandeville as being in a league with Sade and Nietzsche in their work of laying bare “the utopia of every great philosophy, […] the utopia of a humanity.” A dialectic of enlightenment seems clearly to be at work at Mandeville’s The Fable of the Bees. As relentless disbelief of eternal ideas and steadfast insistence on grounding moral theory in the sensible, it is an attempt at demythologising the “Pulchrum & Honestum”, that is non-subjective, non-historical moral virtue. Yet Mandeville’s rejection of any concept metaphysical rests, in turn, on primary metaphysical distinctions such as those between ‘private’ and ‘public’ or ‘natural’ and ‘societal,’ and finds its basis in the mythical concept of “a Felicity, that would flow spontaneously from the Nature of every large Society, if none were to divert or interrupt the Stream.” My paper is sets out to examine that interplay of belief and disbelief in Mandeville’s quest for mythical-natural norms.

Joshua Schouten de Jel

The Eternal Death of Unbelief

In Blake’s mythopoeia, as well as his personal eschatology (referred to as the ‘Everlasting Gospel’), belief is the source of life itself; all creative acts, all visionary episodes, stem from an individual’s belief. ‘Eternal Death,’ which is the cycle of Generation (the possible State in which all human beings live on Earth), is the result of unbelief. Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, and John
Locke were, for Blake, the triumvirate of culpable votaries for the propagation of rational reductionism which had led to the reification of ‘Natural Religion’ in the form of Deism and Rational Dissent in England and, with the addition of Rousseau and Voltaire, of the apotheosis in France of the Cult of Reason and, shortly after, of Robespierre’s Cult of the Supreme Being. The French philosophes and the English empiricists were not only at fault for forming the wheels which turned the ‘dark Satanic Mills?’ (M 514 1.8) of man’s cognizance but, and what Blake considered their primary offence, of unbelief. This paper will discuss how unbelief is the main cause of division in Blake’s universe, accentuated ‘by the cruelties of Demonstration’ (M 578 29.36) of empiricists who ‘Doubt Doubt & dont believe without experiment’ (NB 609 5-9). // 26/05/17 // 15:15-15:55 // Room: 423/A // Plymouth University

Katalin Kállay G.

Disbelief against Disbelief:
the Cases of Goodwife Agnes and
Mrs. Larkin (A comparative analysis of
János Arany’s Ballad ‘Goodwife Agnes’ and
Eudora Welty's Story ‘A Curtain of Green’)

If the phrase ‘hope against hope’ means clinging to a mere possibility, that something, though very unlikely, might still happen, ‘disbelief against disbelief’ may mean clinging to a mere impossibility, that something that has happened, might still ‘unhappen’. In spite of all evidence, perhaps it can still be undone. In such a case, one might become obsessive in undoing the evidence, while this behaviour in itself might become a proof of the thing that had happened, as well as of the traumatic deformation it had caused. In my paper I wish to examine a 19th c. Hungarian poem and a 20th c. American short story. The central characters are both widows who cannot comprehend the death of their husbands, and gradually turn insane, both of them obsessively get occupied with an irrational activity (washing a clean sheet, planting new and new shrubs in a jungle-like garden), they both become not only subjects to the natural elements, but in fact, part of them, transforming into mythical figures of the landscape. Goodwife Agnes had helped her lover to kill her husband – but in the text, she is oblivious of the deed: all she knows is that she has to wash her bloodstained linen in the streamlet. Her disbelief is directed against the fact of death and murder, as well as against the fact that the sheet is spotless. Mrs. Larkin’s husband died of an accident in the garden, he became the victim of a chinaberry tree that fell on his car, in spite of his wife’s protective words:’You can’t be hurt’. Mrs. Larkin’s disbelief is directed against the powerlessness of her own most intimate protective words, as well as against the fact that her husband was killed by her garden, all she knows is that she feverishly has to plant more and more green life in the chaotic sloping plot behind her house. From the point of view of the gesture of abandoning oneself to disbelief, the difference between murder and accident seems to be irrelevant. However, the central metaphors of cleaning and planting might subtly indicate separate attitudes to disbelief in death, i.e. to the continuity of life. // 27/05/17 // 11:35-12:15 // Room: 356 // Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary
Nietzsche, in Human, All Too Human, describes philosophers as wanderers, who have a “transparent, transfigured and cheerful face between the hours of ten and twelve.” Stanley Cavell, in his essay entitled “Philosophy the Day after Tomorrow” explains this by saying that for such wanderers, there is always “another dawn risen on mid-noon.” In a passing remark, Cavell mentions that Wordsworth and Milton have already proposed dawns at noon.

In my paper, I will discuss Book Six (“Cambridge and the Alps”) of Wordsworth’s The Prelude, in which there is an actual scene where the re-experiencing of nature’s presence is described as “another morn / Risen on mid-noon,” a second dawn, a re-appreciation of the ordinary in the middle of the day – and which is an allusion to Milton’s Paradise Lost as well. Using Cavell’s essay as a mental framework, I will analyse the scenes of this book which describe wandering, getting lost, certain dislocations in time and space, the (dis)belief in the sublime experience anticipated at Simplon Pass, how these scenes get re-appreciated in light of the ordinary, the “second dawn,” and the role recollection plays in organising these experiences.

“The willing suspension of disbelief” was the hallmark of Coleridge’s poetic faith; as long as reason remained “at the rudder”, the mind could accept as real the “shadows of imagination” of the poetic text. Yet my interest lies in what Coleridge’s Notebooks tell us about another aspect of imagination that could distort and fantasize an event against the will of the subject: “Strange Self – power of the imagination (…) to represent the events & circumstances even to the Anguish or the triumph of the quasi-credent Soul, while the necessary conditions, the only possible causes of such contingencies are known to be impossible or hopeless” (NB 3547). Coleridge is here referring, in quite a cryptic way, to a traumatic vision glimpsed at in December 1806 at Coleorton. This vision resurfaced years later in his notebooks. What is remarkable is not the vision in itself, William Wordsworth and Sara Hutchinson sharing the same bed, but the representation of the process of “fanciful loss” (G. Agamben, Stanze, 1998) in his notebooks whereby the subject transforms through the writing process the lived experience into a simulacrum, a fanciful double, distorting the object and effacing the meaning. What I would like to emphasize in this paper, drawing on various notebook entries and extracts of poems, is the
Hume’s skeptical thought has been shown to have shaped various facets of 18th century literature. The “conversational ideal” in the literature of the second half of the century has itself been seen to have kinship with Hume’s response to his own skeptical conclusions. The same may be said about various stylistic features, among them the technique of digression that is a hallmark of Sterne’s writing, but that was also employed (probably on Sterne’s inspiration) in the satirical poetry of Charles Churchill. Churchill’s poetry has often been seen as marking the decline of moral authority grounding the satirical poetry of the earlier part of the century. David Fairer, however, has argued that Churchill's satirical writing commands an authority of its own kind that may be grasped through the moral implications of Humean skepticism. Taking Fairer’s suggestion as my point of departure, I first discuss Churchill’s digressive technique, and then turn to William Cowper’s moral satire entitled “Conversation.” I suggest that the poem reflects on Cowper’s early relation to Churchill that Cowper after his conversion is often thought (in my view unjustifiably) to have left behind as a form of disbelief. I argue that Cowper’s poetic reflections on Churchill’s attitude, as well as the poem’s treatment of the conversational ideal and the digressive technique, are meaningful instances for assessing the influence of Humean skepticism on later eighteenth century satirical poetry.

Between 1780 and 1830 there were significant debates about atheism, and the existence of god. The most significant critic of deism amongst romantic literary figures were Percy Shelley, but the traces of the notion can be seen in the works of almost every writer of the movement. The skeptical tradition (as D. T. Reiman showed in his monograph) had many links with the new psychology of the era. One of the main influence were Hume’s new, groundbreaking notions about the science of the mind, contemporarily considered an early predecessor of twentieth century cognitive sciences. The emergence of the ideas of biological medicine and mechanistic worldview also strengthened the notions of materialism (of course not in the twentieth century sense). From the 1790s to around 1830 is a crucial period in the history of neuroscience, biological psychology, and neurology. In the Romantic era was the brain definitely established as the organ of thought, and there were “significant developments included the rise of comparative neuroanathomy and functional analyses of specific features of the mind and brain.” (Alan Richardson) The history of neuroscience has rediscovered the Romantic era as a predecessor of the recent “cognitive revolution”. The aim of my paper is to trace the correspondences between the skeptical tradition and the forms of religious disbelief and the
There is general scholarly consent about the significance of the Civil War to the English utopian literary tradition. Recently, Chloë Houston claimed that this is the time when utopias of a more serious and practical nature emerge, suppressing the previously dominant satiric tone. In my paper I study two utopias (Henry Neville's The Isle of Pines and Margaret Cavendish's The Blazing World) published after the Restoration. My investigation seeks to answer the question whether there really is such a drastic change during and after the Civil War, and focuses particularly on how the texts negotiate their own fictional nature. The answer will be facilitated with a look at the texts' broader context, in Neville’s case, the coffee-house culture described by Kate Loveman, and the narrative uncertainty explored by John Scheckter, while in Cavendish's case, the context of what Emma E. L. Rees calls a "triple exile", together with its generic implications. Because of certain connections, the Royal Society is another important context to be studied. The comparison will hopefully shed light on the changing perceptions of fictitiousness around the time of the Restoration, but it will also emphasise that the precise nature of this change is quite challenging to grasp.
God’s unalterable decree. Though if one becomes convinced that he is saved, he may fall into self-righteousness, which a sense produces false conclusions about salvation. Melancholy at that time was a natural and understandable reaction to the theological recognition of the reality, that a man is a sinful creature in a disordered world, alienated from what he once was - God’s perfect creation in an ordered universe. Francis Quarles (1592 – 1644) was an English poet most famous for his emblem book entitled "Emblems", which was originally published in 1635. In his emblem book he created series of images reminding the reader to his mortality stressing out the concept of godly punishment, and eventual eternal life of the soul. By confronting the reader simultaneously with the limits of mortality and the risk of salvation, Quares projects a way for the reader to recognize the vanity of human life, symbolized by the passing and renewal of the seasons. His book became extremely popular at the 17th century, and it may has some connection with the overall logic of the period, when large numbers of Protestants were certainly haunted by the fear that they might be irrecoverably damned, and many were probably convinced that they actually were. My paper aims to investigate the concept of Protestant salvation with the analysis of Quarles' emblems, highlighting some of the iconographical marks of the connection between melancholy and Protestant concept of redemption. // 25/05/17 //

József Pap

A Nation Once Again?
- Faith and Criticism of National Ideas in the Irish Romantic and Post-Romantic Literature

This paper is going to focus on the foundation culture of modern Irish nationalism in the wake of the Irish Romantic and post-Romantic period. With the aid of representative literal works an illustration is to be provided through which the complex system of belief and disbelief in an independent Ireland is going to be shown. Several generations of Irish writers shared their opinion with the public on the subject of modern national ideas from its beginnings in the late 1830s when the Young Ireland Movement started to grow in influence and inspired following generations of Irish nationalists. Some of the junior members of the movement went on to found other associations, but the radical changes of borders waited until the 20th Century. The faith and disbelief in a culturally and politically independent Ireland was not only a topic of discourse for the intellectual prior to 1922 (when it has been finally achieved), but it is still an ongoing debate among the contemporary academic and literature circles. By examining the problems, forces and counterforces of this discussion we may have a more detailed view on the Romantic and post-Romantic Irish literature. // 25/05/17 // 14:50-15:30// Room: 315 // Eötvös Loránd University

Dariusz Pniewski

About how the Figure of Jesus was Spoilt:
Romantic Models and Post-secular Thought

Figure of Jesus was the most widely-represented character in non-religious art from the late 18th to the 20th century. It was due to the fact that he became a metaphor of new philosophies of faith and spirituality, as well as social and political ideas. Highly inspirational were those approaches to Jesus that were openly against the Christian dogma and only loosely related to Biblical events, thus shedding light on the prevalent non-religious ideas: philosophical, social,
political and cultural. Around the mid-19th century, deepened and original thought was gradually superseded by formulaic clichés, and artists depended on a limited number of conventionalized types of representations. Nonetheless, as these types were strictly related to current issues and ideologies, they gave way to a multitude of examples. The character of Jesus became a fundamental element in European art. In the proposed paper I shall address two major tendencies in representations of Jesus; tendencies that can still be observed in 21st-century art despite the fact that they originated in European Romanticism. The first one can be defined as the repetitiveness of simplified models and is widely present in popular culture. The second one—dependent on post-modern concepts derived from Kantian thought—is characterized by metaphor, hyperbole and reduction to signs.

Spartaco Pupo

The Great Disbeliever. Political Implications of Disbelief in David Hume

My paper is dedicated to one of the best known “disbelievers” in modern history and culture, David Hume, whose disbelief is shown ad the foundation of his political doctrine, which until today has remained little investigated and slightly known than his moral thinking. The political implications of disbelief, in the thought of Hume, give rise to a form of skepticism strongly based on the “common sense” and empirical and realistic observation of the things. It is an unorthodox skepticism, unruly towards the intellectual and political fashions of the eighteenth century, characterized by theoretical contractualism. Hume’s disbelief in social and political sphere is a strong reaction to those literatures and currents of thought which, from Hobbes onward, dominate a large part of European culture and pretend to elevate the reason to supreme arbiter in human affairs. Hume’s skepticism is a response to what he calls “false philosophy”, that assumes considerable importance in political terms: it does not need to use the Holy Scriptures as a sort of manual of the statesman, but proceeds on the basis of a secular analysis of the experience and a contempt of that “a priori” so dear to the rationalist culture.

Michael Raiger

The Poet as Maker: Moral Didacticism and Prophetic Inspiration in Sidney and Shelley’s Platonic Conceptions of the Poet

The clear influence of Sir Philip Sidney’s Defence of Poesy upon Shelley’s Defense of Poetry is indisputable. Sidney and Shelley characterize the poet in remarkably similar ways. These characteristics all find their source in the conception of the poet as maker; a definition grounded in the structures of the essays, as Shelley follows Sidney’s defense of the poet, grounded on the strategy, typical of Renaissance modes of persuasive argument, of the division of the subject into parts. For Sidney the poet makes images that lead to the imitation of ideal forms of virtue, in contrast to the “vates,” or prophetic poet, who, inspired by the Holy Spirit, has authority to represent the divine. Sidney here establishes the distinction between religious and didactic poetry, the latter of which is made the norm for English poets. Shelley departs from this, in distinguishing poeien, which makes images that synthesize “nature in existence itself,” from logizien, which analyzes according to the relations of parts. Sidney and Shelley accept similar
epistemic limitations, but Sidney’s Christian Protestantism, and Shelley’s Enlightenment principles, lead to radically different Platonic defenses of the poet. I will argue that this results in a paradox: for Shelley, the Romantic poet is informed by a greater religious sensibility than Sidney’s Renaissance poet. // 26/05/17 // 15:15-15:55 // Room: 315 // Ave Maria University

Rayna Rosenova

Sensibility, Melancholia, and Selfhood in Mary Robinson’s Sappho and Phaon

Mary Robinson’s (1796) is a key text in the so-called sonnet revival, which took place towards the end of the 18th century. As its preface has it, is Robinson’s daring endeavour to compose the legitimate, Petrarchan, sonnet in a language deemed unfit for the form’s metrical scheme, and also to write a full-fledged sonnet sequence that narrates a story. The sonnet sequence works on a number of levels, opening itself to various readings. Apart from the main theme of unrequited, self-destructive love, the sonnets foreground a meta-fictional dimension dealing with writing and fame. They also touch upon the nature of reason and passion as well as the external world and the poet’s relation to it. The paper will explore in the context of the existential and artistic crisis suffered by Robinson’s construct of the poet in the person of Sappho. It will draw upon Julia Kristeva’s theory of melancholy, thus seeking to show how Robinson deployed the melancholy strain, which was trending during the period, in order to communicate the interrelated themes of personal crisis and artistic impasse as the result of excessive sensibility. // 26/05/17 // 16:00-16:40 // Room: 423/A // Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski

Veronika Ruttkay

Phantom Feelings and Coleridge’s Remorse (1813)

This paper looks behind the ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ in order to show that in Coleridge’s thought the in-between realm of the aesthetic is populated by a range of shadowy beings with various degrees of ‘realness’ to them, from rhetorical figures embodying passions to characters embodied on stage. From here, the paper moves on to consider phantom-like feelings and characters in Coleridge’s own play Remorse (a re-writing of the earlier Osorio), which was produced at Drury Lane simultaneously with his most successful series of Shakespearean lectures. Reading Remorse side by side with some of the lectures’ key critical insights about drama, the paper is an attempt to come to terms with the curious half-embodied nature of Coleridge’s play. // 27/05/17 // 15:20-16:00 // Room: 356 // Eötvös Loránd University

Dániel Takács

From Character to Nature: Pope’s “Ruling Passion” and Hume’s “Predominant Inclination”

It is well known that in some works of the British satirical literature of the 17-18th century, the authors jibbed and ridiculed not only the flesh and bone, historical figures of the day, but they made a target of their satires the whole religious, metaphysical and natural constitution of
mankind. In my presentation I would like to investigate Alexander Pope’s phrase, the “ruling passion” in his satirical poem Epistle to Lord Cobham. For Pope, “ruling passion” was a term to signify a person’s true nature, or, true self identity, which could reveal itself in the light of the artist’s negative, sceptical attitude toward inconsistencies of human actions and manners. I would like to show, that we can draw an analogy between this term, and Hume’s “predominant inclination” from his essay The Skeptic. These terms are not only about the passions of self-preservation and of reproduction (Hobbes, Mandeville) but about the very passion, inclination that can define a single person as a character. That is, in the case of these two idioms, the tradition of “character-sketches” (from Theophrastus to Samuel Butler) mingle with the new discoveries of human nature — that amalgam one can find later in some form at Burke and Kant too. // 26/05/17 // 15:15-15:55// Room: 356 // Eötvös Loránd University

Andrea Tímár

Rhetorics of Temporality: Knight, Keats, and the Elgin Marbles

In March 1817, while Bristol printers were busy putting together the two volumes of Biographia Literaria, containing Coleridge’s famous definition of poetic faith, thousands of Londoners visited the fragments of the Greek Parthenon displayed for the first time in the British Museum. Most experts and artists praised the marbles -- shipped from Greece to England by Lord Elgin 10 ears previously -- for their capacity to revolutionise British art, but the antiquarian Richard Payne Knight did not believe in either their unsurpassable value, or unprecedented antiquity. Unwilling to suspend his disbelief, he attributed greater worth to the polished surfaces of the Apollo of Belvedere, which had been displayed in the Paris Louvre. John Keats, on the other hand, was amazed by the marbles. In the sonnet “On Seeing the Elgin Marbles”, he evoked the “dizzy pain”, a mixed feeling of vertigo and wonder he experienced at the sight of the Parthenon fragments. But the sonnet also exhibits the failure or refusal of verbal representation, and draws attention to the temporality of any signification through an allegorical chain of intertextual references. In my paper, I shall examine Keats’s sonnet, and look into the ways in which its allegorical reflectivity displays a disbelief in the possibility of the symbol (i.e. the unity of representation and idea), and, while emphatically testifying to the crisis of history characteristic of the aftermath of the French Revolution, points towards a radical politics uncontainable by its concrete historical context. // 26/05/17 // 11:35-12:15// Room: 423/A // Eötvös Loránd University

Eszter Törék

Dis/belief: Personas of the Muse in the Fair Youth Sonnets of Shakespeare

When reading the sonnets of Shakespeare one might feel like that there is a certain inconsistency in the way the figure of the Muse is presented in these poems. The Muse denotes different people or concepts in different pieces. Sometimes it appears to be feminine while at other times it is unequivocally masculine. At certain points it is depicted as the epitome of the Muse, an endless source of inspiration, while later is it silent and insufficient. The hierarchical relationship of the Poet and the Muse alters as well throughout the sequence. The one thing which all of the various alter egos have in common, is that they are all a desacralized version of the mythical or archetypal figure of the Muse. However, it seems that there are a few possible governing principles present.
The aim of this paper is to shed some light on these organizing forces, to show what circumstances shape the figure of the Muse, and to identify the various personas as well as what they stand for. In doing so we might reach a deeper understanding of the intricacies and the nature of poetic creation itself. // 26/05/17 // 12:20-13:00 // Room: 356 // Eötvös Loránd University

Péter Závada

Rewriting Shakespeare

One can only rewrite (not translate) Shakespeare if they manage to overcome the paralysing admiration towards the metaphysical concept of an autonomous and omnipotent author fitting to be set to a pedestal, and are willing to consider the disbelief expressed by Wittgenstein: "to be deeply suspicious of most of Shakespeare’s admirers.” A writer is only capable of such iconoclasm, if he or she is able to set aside the so-called “false praise” and mere “gratitude for the existence of the Shakespearean corpus”, and is ready to engage in acquiring its techniques while also rethinking the possibilities of the Shakespearean text as a metamodern phenomenon.

As a student of ELTE’s Esthetics PhD Programme in this presentation I would like to reflect on my personal experiences concerning the creation of two recent Shakespeare-paraphrases I made for Katona József Színház and Vígszínház, namely As you like it (2016), and A Midsummer Night’s Dream (2017) also touching on the aesthetic principals that were taken into consideration by the writer, the dramaturg and the director while working on the stage productions. // 26/05/17 // 11:35-12:15 // Room: 356 // Eötvös Loránd University
THE VENUE:

Disbelief 2017 takes place in Building R5, which is the Rákóczi Street building of ELTE, the address is Ráckózi út 5. You will immediately find the registration desk in the lobby if you enter the building from inside the campus. The campus has two main entrances from Múzeum boulevard 4 (Múzeum körút 4). There is an additional “hidden” entrance from Puskin street (Puskin utca). Once inside building R5 above the lobby, three rooms on the 3rd and 4th floor will serve as lecture halls and seminar rooms for the plenaries (Room 356) and the various panels (Rooms 315 and 423A). Feel free to take the elevator or enjoy the health benefits of stair climbing.
OUR SPONSORS:

The international conference has been sponsored by the host university, Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Budapest and by the Ministry of Human Capabilities in Hungary through its program in honor of the 500 years anniversary of the Reformation. A special mention should be made, honoring the contributions of the Department of English Studies at ELTE University. The organizers are thankful for all the support that the conference has received.

The conference is jointly organized by members of the faculty at the Department of English Studies at ELTE, Géza Kállay is the renaissance project leader, while Andrea Timár is the romanticism project leader, PhD students are also part of the team, Orsolya Komáromi and Kristóf Kiss alongside members of the department’s Early Modern English Research Group (EMERG): Bence Levente Bodó, Zsolt Bojti, Gergő Dávid, and Ágnes Füzessy-Bonácz.