

Manifest Dressing: Corporeal, Affective & National Text(ile)s

10th TransLIT International Seminar · 19/03/2025 · Sala de Juntas, Dpto. Filología Inglesa, Francesa y Alemana

10:00 Opening Remarks

- ~ *Maria del Mar González Chacón* | Vice-Dean for International Relations · Faculty of Humanities
- ~ *Alejandra Moreno Álvarez* | Head of English, French and German Philology Department
- ~ *Andrea Llano Busta & Rocio Riestra Camacho* | Organizers

10:15



Carolina Fernández Rodríguez · *University of Oviedo*

"Slap a bonnet on the cover...": The Case of Quaker Romances

This paper explores the allure of Quakerism in American Quaker romance novels, focusing on how the religion's historical and cultural traits are romanticized to enhance the appeal of its protagonists. It begins by highlighting Quakerism's involvement in humanitarian causes, such as abolitionism, and its association with moral integrity and social defiance. These values are woven into the heroines, who are often portrayed as rebellious figures challenging societal norms through their use of "plain speech." The linguistic choice evokes nostalgia for a unified, pious American past, resonating with readers seeking an idealized history. The paper further examines the symbolic significance of Quaker dress, particularly the bonnet, which serves both as a shield and a symbol of erotic femininity. The plain dress, described as modest yet erotic, plays a key role in highlighting the heroines' sensuality while preserving their role within a patriarchal framework. Besides, plain clothing, especially homespun attire, is associated with a simpler, untainted American past, enhancing the heroines' beauty while symbolizing patriotism and traditional values. The paper concludes with a comparative analysis of how Quaker and non-Quaker authors portray plain dress. Non-Quaker authors often eroticize the attire, while Quaker writers use it to explore rebellion and cultural change. Ultimately, plain dress in these novels functions as a multifaceted symbol, blending eroticism, religious identity, and national ideals.

11:00



Catherine Spooner · *Lancaster University*

(Un)dressing White: Gothic Heroines, Female Vampires and Bodies Written in Blood

The image of a woman in a white dress fleeing down dark corridors or through the grounds of a great house is a staple of Gothic fiction, originating in the Gothic novels of the 1790s by Ann Radcliffe and others, and since then, endlessly reworked in film and popular culture. This paper seeks to understand the ubiquity and significance of this image, arguing that white, rather than black, may be the quintessential Gothic colour. It extends and enriches Richard Dyer's arguments in *White* (1997) that whiteness is inevitably yet invisibly freighted with associations of gender and race. The paper 'undresses' whiteness by showing how in Gothic texts, the white dress rarely remains white. It will also consider, however, how whiteness in Gothic texts is bound up with the material conditions of 'undress' – the presumed whiteness of underwear and nightwear, and the act of their exposure. It discovers in Gothic fiction a counternarrative of material damage – marking, staining, tearing, decay – that disputes and undermines conventional associations of whiteness with purity and innocence, along with dominant ideologies of idealised femininity and racialised whiteness. Focusing particularly on images of Queen Marie Antoinette and their influence on the representation of female vampires in the nineteenth century and beyond, it argues that when marked with blood, white is rendered profoundly unstable, alternately signalling a violation of intimacy, a duplicitous display of victimhood, and an assertion of the body's materiality.

12:00



Karen Turman · *Harvard University*

Undressing Masculinity: Radical Nudity and Style as Protest in Prince's Sartorial and Corporeal Expression

In 1988 Prince chose to feature a provocative nude self-portrait by Jean-Baptiste Mondino on the cover of *Lovesexy*, challenging conventional representations of Black masculinity and subverting established visual tropes. Positioned atop a bed of oversized lilies, Prince adopts a pose that juxtaposes demure femininity with assertive self-assurance, his visage framed by carefully groomed facial hair while projecting a confident gaze. At the time, the 30-year-old pop icon had already amassed a prolific discography, with nine studio albums to his name, and was renowned for continually reinventing his image in radical and groundbreaking ways. The *Lovesexy* album cover, which contrasted sharply with contemporaneous releases such as N.W.A.'s *Straight Outta Compton*—featuring the fully clothed rap group in streetwear—invoked the objectified nude tropes of the "Odalisque" figure, drawing visual parallels with classical and modern depictions of the female nude, from Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538) to Manet's *Olympia* (1863). Furthermore, the cover's eroticized floral elements, alluding to Georgia O'Keeffe's *Light Iris* (1924), were subverted, displacing traditional interpretations of both eroticism and femininity. By presenting himself in a feminized nude posture, Prince engaged in a radical act of self-representation, challenging prevailing notions of Black male identity in the United States in the late 1980s. Since the release of his self-titled 1979 album, Prince had been persistently claiming his own corporeal agency, defying the racialized and gendered expectations of Black entertainers and rejecting colonialist tropes of Black masculinity. This paper will explore how Prince's sartorial and corporeal expressions constituted a form of Black radicalism, interrogating the sociocultural forces at play in the negotiation of meaning through states of dress and undress.

13:00 Coffee Break

13:15

Rocio Riestra Camacho & Andrea Llano Busta · *University of Oviedo*

Creative Writing Workshop · *Thread by Thread: Weaving Characters with AI*

14:00 Closing