

2021/22 Alumni Newsletter

Happy New Year and welcome to the 2021/22 Alumni Newsletter. I hope that this year's letter finds you all safe and well! Once again, I am your host and editor, Sam McIntosh, here to bring to you the latest from the Centre for British Studies. In this year's issue, as is tradition, I will introduce you to our new class of 2021-23 and give you a recap on the past year's happenings and goings on at the Centre and, in particular: our sad farewell to Professor Eisenberg, who retired last summer; the past year's events with a focus on the students' project, this year's literature workshop, and the Happy in Berlin Exhibition. Despite the pandemic, you will see that we were able to put on a large number of events over the last year, even if many of them had to take place online.

I'm also very pleased to be able to introduce two new faces to the MA British Studies staff and give you some information on upcoming events at the Centre. Finally, like last year, this year's Newsletter will end with an annex comprised of articles that appeared on the GBZ blog over the last year.

As always you can contact me at:
sam.mcintosh@hu-berlin.de

WELCOME TO CLASS
2021-2023!

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2021/22

This year we welcomed 33 new year students to the MA in British Studies. Compared to most years, this year's cohort is slightly less geographically diverse than normal, with a particularly high proportion of students coming to us from Turkey and Russia. However, we also have students from China, Hong Kong, Iran, Poland, Egypt and Bulgaria. As many of you will have experienced yourselves, the gender divide of students on the MA British Studies is typically very much dominated by female students. But while there is still a clear majority of female students this year, we also have a higher than normal proportion of male students. In terms of educational backgrounds, this is much more in keeping with previous years with linguistics, pedagogy, philology and cultural studies dominating. It has been great to get to know the new students in a face-to-face setting this year, and they are already making their mark as an intelligent and enthusiastic bunch.



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HELLO FROM THE EDITOR

My dear alumni. First of all, a very Happy New Year from everyone at the Centre!! I hope you all managed to have a great festive period despite the ongoing public health situation.

As is the case for most people I'm sure, it has been a mixed year at the GBZ and one that has been marked by many shifts and changes. As well as constantly adjusting our programme back and forth between online, hybrid and face-to-face teaching while trying to provide our students with a valuable life and learning experience as they complete their Masters in British Studies, we have had to say goodbye to a valuable and popular figure at the Centre, Professor Christiane Eisenberg, who retired this summer. But new challenges and change will, of course, also bring positives and as well as getting to meet a new cohort of interesting and enthusiastic first year students, we also get to welcome Christiane's replacement to the Centre, Professor Miles Taylor, who I will introduce to you properly later on in the newsletter.

So, after almost a year of exclusively online teaching during the 2020/21 academic year, we were thankfully able to return to some limited face-to-face/hybrid teaching around six months ago – albeit whilst observing hygiene rules. This increased with the start of the 2021 winter term

and it has been really great to finally interact in person with our second year students and to also meet and engage with the new cohort of students face to face. Things are not completely back to normal, of course. Even when teaching or other events can take place in person, strict hygiene regulations remain in place, which often mean that faces are hidden by masks, collaborative work is restricted, audiences at live events are limited and large classes are sometimes split up. This back and forth between online and face-to-face interaction will likely continue for some time. While the situation is undoubtedly a challenge, and at times even a strain for staff and students alike, all things considered, our students are doing fantastically well adapting to these difficult circumstances. Of course, given the small size of the Centre, we are lucky to be able to provide them with some small amount of extra support that would likely not otherwise be possible in larger university faculties. Here's hoping that the coming year will see further improvements in the situation!

HAPPY RETIREMENT CHRISTIANE EISENBERG!

This summer we had to say a sad farewell to Professor Christiane Eisenberg, who has retired after 23 years of teaching British History at the Centre. Christiane will be sorely missed, but she has assured us she won't be a stranger and will continue to pop into the Centre for joint projects, events, celebrations etc.



CENTRE LECTURES AND EVENTS 2021

- *Amongst the Nations of the World: Commemorating and Reimagining the Formation of an Irish Foreign Policy*, Dr Michael Kennedy (18 January)
- *The Future of Northern Ireland*, Professor Jon Tonge (8 February)
- Public reading by writer and novelist, Glenn Patterson, (an event held as a co-operation between GBZ, Bard College Berlin and the Literary Field Kaleidoscope) (17 May)
- *Britons in Berlin: An Exploration through the Senses*, student-led interactive project (launched with two days of online events 11-12 June)
- *Happy in Berlin? English Writers in the City, The 1920s and Beyond*, Exhibition held at three venues, part of an Oxford-Berlin project with the same title. Catalogue edited by Professor Stefano Evangelista and Professor Gesa Stedman (15 June 2021 - 30 August)
- *Highland Fling: A Scottish Reading Adventure*, Professor Claire Squires (5 July)
- *Money, Books, and the Interpretation of Wills: The Case of All Souls College v Codrington (1720)*, Professor Birke Häcker (An Oxford-Berlin Lecture) (12 July)

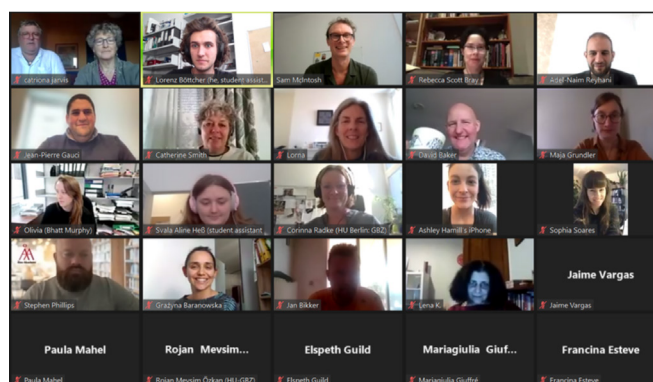


(Glenn Patterson gives a public reading)

- *Immigration Law and Policy, Border Control and Migrant Deaths Conference* hosted by Dr Sam McIntosh (30 September - 1 October)
- *The British Aristocracy and the Modern World: A one-day online colloquium* with Professor Sir David Cannadine, Professor Miles Taylor and Professor Christopher Ridgway convening (19 November)
- *Can the Anglo-Scottish Union Survive Brexit?* Professor Michael Keating (22 November)
- Public reading by writer and novelist, Okechukwu Nzelu (event part of a cooperation between the Literary Field Kaleidoscope, the GBZ and the Heinrich-Heine Universität Düsseldorf) (29 November)
- *Northern Ireland after Brexit: Between the British and the European Union*, Professor Katy Hayward (6 December)



(Student Shakespeare Workshop)



(Online Conference on Immigration Law)

Britons in Berlin: An Exploration through the Senses

BRITONS IN BERLIN STUDENT PROJECT 2021

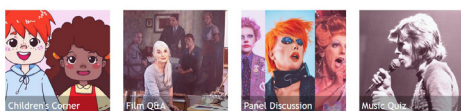
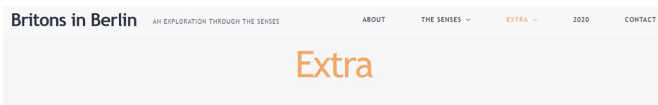
Anisia Petcu

The Student Project 2021, Britons in Berlin - An Exploration Through the Senses, by Anisia Petcu (Lecturer at the GBZ and project coordinator)

A second year into the pandemic meant that online formats were still our best bet for creating informative and engaging content while ensuring the safety of both our students and the participants. Therefore, for the second time in a row, the CPM project took the form of an interactive website, accompanied by live events and discussions.

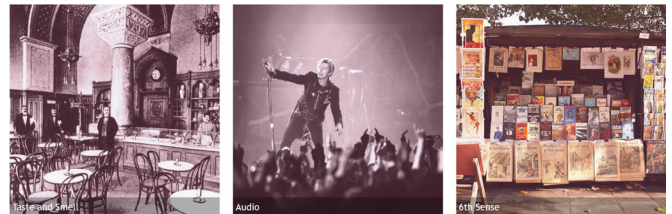


The online exhibition centres on the artistic creation of British artists who have lived or are living in Berlin. The five exhibition stations introduce the audience to British visual artists, musicians, filmmakers, cabaret performers, writers, as well as to the art they have created in response to their experience in Berlin. In addition to this, the exhibition traces how innovations in technology have contributed to the British artistic creation in Berlin throughout the decades.



(The Project's interactive website on <https://british-berlin.com/>)

A bonus station is dedicated to what we have chosen to call The 6th Sense, and explores literary works by three contemporary British writers living in Berlin.



On the 11th of June, we inaugurated the exhibition with an online film projection and Q&A session with figurative painter and film maker Barbara Loftus. Barbara Loftus' work explores her family's history through the memories of her German mother, who was born into a Jewish family, having been the only member of the family who managed to escape Germany during National Socialism. The theme of Barbara Loftus' current work is the convergence of personal memory and major historical events.

The following day, we held a panel of British drag artists, who candidly discussed Berlin's reputation as friendly space for the LGBTQ+ community. During the discussion, they covered topics such as the meaning and significance of drag, queer spaces and queer communities in Berlin, the myth of Berlin as a particularly queer-friendly space, and the challenges of the pandemic for independent artists.

You can see all of this and more at <https://british-berlin.com/>.



(Niederkirchenerstrasse and Wilhelmstrasse, John Davies, 1984)

THE LITERATURE WORKSHOP

2021

Sonya Permiakova



This year the Literature Workshop, which is one of the regular courses taught at the Centre for British Studies, included two special guests. One of them was Marianne Graffam, an actor whose name might be familiar to many readers of this newsletter, as she has been teaching a theatre workshop at the Centre for several years now. This time, despite the pandemic, the first-semester students got the chance to experience the workshop in person, albeit whilst protected by FFP2 masks.



The students and Marianne discussed and re-interpreted some scenes from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. At the end of the workshop, when the students were asked to re-write and re-enact a scene from the play, they chose themes that hit close to home. Coming from different parts of the world, the students raised questions that were relevant to their countries and today's political climate, proving that theatre – Shakespeare included! – can and should be relevant and political.

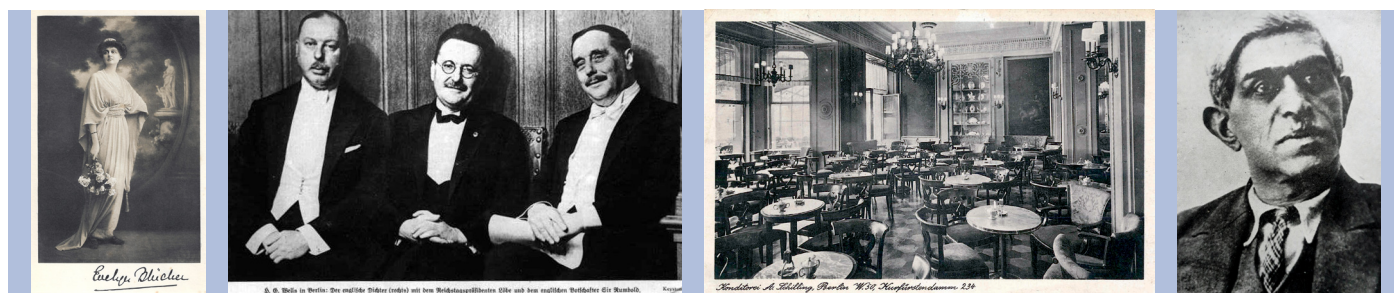
Our second guest was British writer and editor Paul Scraton, who has been living in Berlin for over

twenty years. Paul took the students on a literary walk through Berlin's city centre, which, despite the typical November weather, was an exciting investigation of the Berlin myth. Paul read from British writers whose lives have been connected with Berlin in different ways: Priya Basil, Musa Okwonga, Timothy Garton Ash, Philip Henscher and Jane Flett. Walking past the controversial Humboldt Schloss and the memorial on Wilhelmstraße commemorating the Africa Conference, the students were invited to ask why and how certain events get remembered. After the walking tour, the students and Paul came back to the Centre for British Studies, to continue with the second part of the tour, a creative writing workshop inspired by the walk.

Both Paul and Marianne's approach to texts show that the ways in which we interact with literature go far beyond the contents between the book covers – and that teaching literature should not be limited to the classroom.



- We are always very interested to hear your news. Please feel free to drop me a line at sam.mcintosh@hu-berlin.de.
- For those of you who live in Berlin, please let us know if you hear about accommodation that might be suitable for our students. They struggle every year, but as I'm sure you know, the situation continues to deteriorate.
- Similarly, please let us know of any employment opportunities that may be suitable for our graduates. Note: we will not generally advertise voluntary positions or unpaid internships and job advertisements should have some connection to British Studies.



From left: Evelyn Blücher, H.G. Wells (r) with Paul Lobe & Ambassador Rumbold, Konditorei Schilling, Biren Chattopadhyaya

Part of the long-running cooperation between the Centre for British Studies and Oxford University, „Happy in Berlin? English Writers in the City, the 1920s and Beyond“ is our largest collaborative project to date. It is led by the Centre’s fellow Professor Stefano Evangelista (Trinity College, Oxford) and the Centre’s own Professor Gesa Stedman.

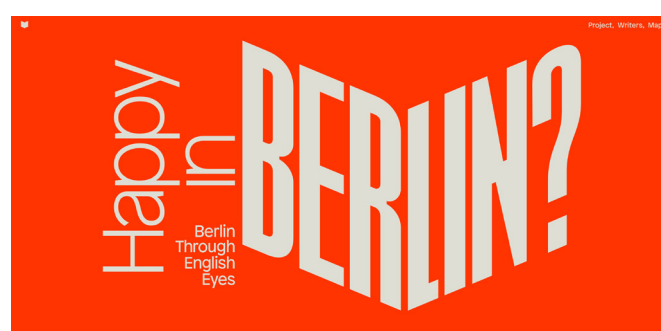
During the summer of 2021, the three-part exhibition of the same title could be visited at venues in Oxford and Berlin. Currently, a travelling exhibition is being developed, based on the part of the exhibition that was shown at Humboldt-Universität.

The project website happy-in-berlin.org documents how writers ranging from Christopher Isherwood to the less well-known Alix Strachey experienced Berlin, which places were important to them, and what they wrote about their time in Berlin.

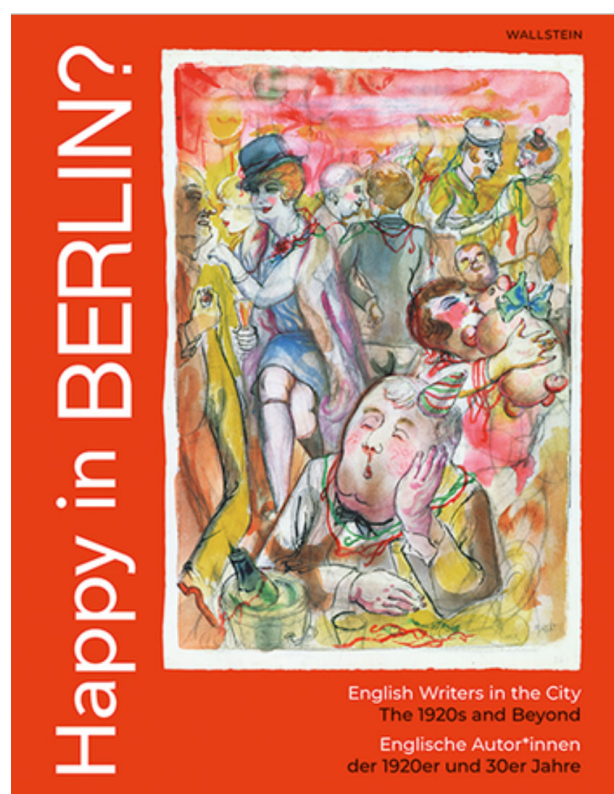
The project is also accompanied by a five-part podcast series that can be accessed here:

<https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/happy-in-berlin-podcast-series-trailer>

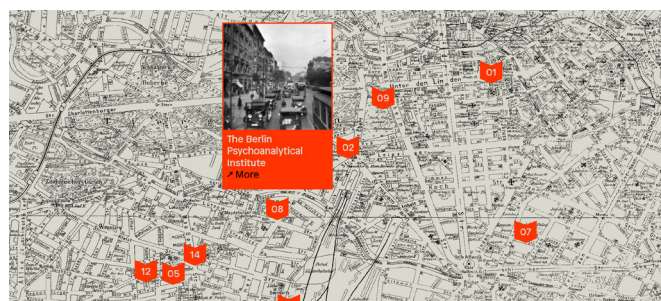
The exhibition catalogue can be found here: <https://www.wallstein-verlag.de/9783835339873-happy-in-berlin.html>



„Berlin through English Eyes“ charts how English-speaking writers encountered the city of Berlin and how they wrote about it in their published and private works. The website is aimed at researchers, students, and readers of English literature, as well as at Berlin’s residents and visitors who want to know more about the city’s cosmopolitan heritage. The site maps the interaction between literature and urban space, reconstructing a network of places, authors, and texts. A map of 1931 Berlin shows places that had a special significance for English-speaking writers. These range from private homes to cultural institutions, cafés, hotels, cinemas, and cabarets. Concise essays on individual writers provide information on their connections to the city and to other writers. All content was written by academic specialists.



Exhibition Catalogue



Screenshot of the interactive map

NEW FACES ON THE MA BRITISH STUDIES



Professor Miles Taylor

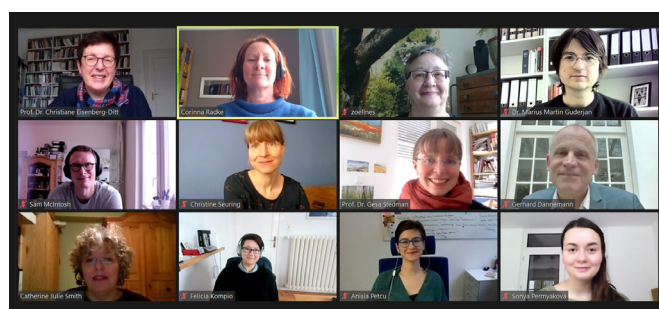
Miles Taylor joined the Centre in 2021 as Professor of British History and Society. He was previously Professor of Modern History at the University of York in the UK, and between 2008 and 2014 Director of the Institute of Historical Research in London. He studied at Queen Mary College University of London, Harvard University (where he was a Kennedy Scholar) and the University of Cambridge where he was awarded his PhD in 1989. He has taught at Cambridge, King's College London, and Southampton (where he was Professor of Modern British History, 2001-4). Professor Taylor is a 19th century specialist with a particular interest in Britain and its empire. His recent books include *Empress: Queen Victoria and India* (Yale 2018) and (as co-editor) *The Utopian Universities: A Global History of the New Campuses of the 1960s* (Bloomsbury, 2020). He is currently completing a book on parliamentary representation in the UK since the 18th century and a funded project on salt, protest and public health in India <https://www.saltindia-history.com/>. He co-convenes a research seminar on the History of Universities (<https://www.hist-geog-uni.net/history-of-universities-seminar/>) and is General Editor of the *New Cambridge History of Britain* to be published in five volumes by Cambridge University Press. He serves on the Research Advisory Board of the National Portrait Gallery, London, and on the Advisory Board of the *Journal of British Studies*. Professor Taylor is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society.

Chiara Harrison Lambe

Chiara completed her MA in British Studies at the Centre in 2020 and returned as a Guest Lecturer in literature and academic writing in 2021. In 2022, she will coordinate the 2021-23 MBS students in their 'Cultural Project Management' course, which will culminate with a student-led exhibition at the Centre in July 2022.



Her MA thesis analysed the work and career of Irish artist Stella Steyn (1907-1987), an early illustrator of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and the only artist from Ireland known to have studied at the German Bauhaus. Chiara's research interests include understudied women artists and blind spots in the art historical canon, twentieth-century visual culture in Ireland, and the impact of the Grand Tour on eighteenth-century material culture.



Staff Photo Corona Style

From top left: Christiane Eisenberg (retired), Corinna Radke, Sylvena Zöllner, Marius Guderjan
From middle left: Sam McIntosh, Christine Seuring, Gesa Stedman, Gerhard Dannemann
From bottom left: Catherine Smith, Felicia Kompio, Anisia Petcu, Sonya Permiakova

LECTURES AND EVENTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO 2022

- What Future for Wales in a Fractured Union, Panel Discussion with Professors Richard Wyn Jones, Jo Hunt and Dan Wincott (27 January 2022)
- Oxford/Berlin Lecture 2022, *title tbc*, Professor *Santanu Das*, All Souls College Oxford (25 April)
- Farewell lecture from Professor Christiane Eisenberg, *title tbc* (2 May 2022)
- KEYNOTE LECTURE 2021/22 - The Drawbacks of Political Stability: The British Case, Professor Linda Colley (9 May 2022)
- Literary Field Lecture, *title tbc*, Professor Birgit Neumann (16 May 2022)
- Inaugural Lecture of Professor Miles Taylor, *title tbc* (13 June 2022)
- 2022 Launch of Student Project: Britons in Berlin (2 July 2022)
- Performance Lecture on European and British Folklore, Matthew Cowan (11 July 2022)

THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER SUPPLEMENT GBZ BLOG ARTICLES BY STAFF AND GUESTS 2021

In the following pages, you will find some stories, descriptions, experiences and much more, written by staff for the GBZ blog over the past year

- *Literary Studies, Cultural Studies, and the Call for a „Eudaimonic Turn“*, Prof. Dr. Jürgen Schlaeger - page 9
- *Brexit and the Provisions for Settling Disputes*, Prof. Dr. Gerhard Dannemann - page 10
- *Pocock Reads Tolkien*, Prof. Dr. Patricia Springborg - page 11
- *Fighting an Epidemic with Moral Superiority?*, Felicia Kompio - page 12
- *The Dire Mood in the UK's Multilevel Politics*, Dr. Marius Guderjan - page 13
- *Anglophone Women of the Bauhaus: A Study of Stella Steyn*, Chiara Harrison Lambe - page 15
- *UK Literature Festivals - Tents, Books and Heated Debate*, Judith Robinson page 17
- *A Conference on Immigration Law and Policy, Border Control and Migrant Deaths*, Dr. Sam McIntosh - page 17
- *Affective Polarisation in the UK, First Authors' Workshop*, Prof. Dr. Gesa Stedman - page 19

Literary Studies, Cultural Studies, and the Call for a „Eudaimonic Turn“

20 January, Jürgen Schlaeger

Do we need a 'eudaimonic turn' in literary studies, i.e., a new approach, that makes 'well-being' the preferred target for literary analyses? A collection of essays published in 2013 recommended such a turn and bolstered this new approach with 'arguments from 'positive psychology' as a new guideline for literary studies. (The Eudaimonic Turn: Wellbeing in Literary Studies'. (James O. Pawelski, D.J. Moores (eds.), Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2013). Only a year ago it was at the centre of a conference that discussed the time-honoured question of what constitutes the 'Value of Literature' of in cultures past and present.

That no less than a 'turn' is needed because the available paradigms of literary interpretation are one-sided, blinkered, exhausted, and, therefore, in urgent need of rebooting, is a tall order, indeed. Looking, however, at the broad spectrum of the now widely practiced, mostly agenda-driven approaches in literary and cultural studies, a 'turn' towards well-being seems to signal not so much a radical change in direction as a supplementary option for approaches to literary works, that have given priority to human well-being in all its shades and variations for quite some time now. And to the extent that the proposed turn chimes in with these trends it also inherits and has to shoulder the problems they have created.

One of the most damaging problems of such tendencies towards feel-good research questions and interpretations is that students no longer think that they are obliged to familiarize themselves with texts or aspects of texts, movements and contexts that do not promise to produce a high yield for their chosen preference of angle. In fact, such an attitude towards the duties of academic perspicuity and solidity often produces now B.A.s and M.A.s in English, American or Anglophone literatures whose knowledge of the respective literary traditions and the cultures they are embedded in is, to put it mildly, often very patchy. In the process, they tend to ignore the very specific 'voice' of texts past and present, since they deem it no longer important to concentrate on and analyse something that, so far, no other text or person has been able to put so convincingly into words. Instead, more often than not, it is chosen for the productivity of the yield it promises for the loaded and often narrow questions asked. Even more damaging is, however, that such attitudes towards the business of criticism surreptitiously or openly tend to reverse the still valid sequence of analysis and judgment so central to the standing of the field in the academic world. Finding what one wants to see and then presenting one's findings with a "Lo and behold, there it is!", is not what characterises viable scholarship.

My claim here is not that literary scholarship has to find legitimacy in hard work with hard earned results, all sweat and struggle, but that 'understanding', 'knowledge', validity and evidence in the academic world are not immediate pleasure or satisfaction guaranteeing exercises, but they are intellectual pleasures that come only when one is prepared to invest all one's talents, time and energy into what one is doing – it is long distance training with, yes, the aches and frustrations it entails, but in the end it pays. Put in simple terms: many of the popular interpretative practices and research agendas regrettably feed and encourage intellectual attitudes that mistake their own moral, ethical or political convictions for academically certified achievements with pleasure guaranteed.

Just to give you an example for the problematic consequences of such agenda-driven approaches:

Of course, I can subject a text like Robinson Crusoe to an analysis that promises to trace evidence of colonialism, racism and even anti-feminism. And there are, no doubt, such traces to be found: Robinson is shipwrecked on an uninhabited island and 'colonises it' to survive. He rescues a 'native' from another island who had been taken by an enemy tribe and brought to Robinson's island to be killed and eaten. Robinson willingly takes upon him 'the white man's burden', i.e., the moral obligation to 'civilize' him by teaching him to make himself useful, to speak English and to become a Christian. All of that is not really a good example for the actual devastations of slavery and colonialism so widespread at the beginning of the 18th century. In addition, Robinson has, before he is shipwrecked, gone through a number of sea-faring adventures, among which is an episode in which he is captured by Arab pirates and sold into slavery. So, as to slavery, Defoe's main character is both victim and perpetrator. Women play no part in the core portion of the novel. Only later, after the hero's return to England, he marries, fathers three children, buries his wife, farms out his offspring and is off, back to his little kingdom on the island - all of that on a meagre three pages out of a total of more than

600, a fact which could easily be constructed as evidence for a culpable negligence on the part of the author. Altogether, for a demonstration of racism, colonialism, or anti-feminism so prevalent during Defoe's lifetime, his novel is not a particularly productive field of investigation. Most important of all, a student still determined to go for the above-mentioned questions would completely miss the unique role this novel has played in the development of world literature. Except, perhaps, for the Bible no other text has instigated, inspired and shaped so many translations, imitations and adaptations throughout the centuries in nearly all cultures of the world.

It is, therefore, high time that we count our losses, take to heart what Rita Felski has recommended so convincingly in her book *The Limits of Critique*, and concentrate on what literary texts are actually doing and telling us rather than subjecting texts to exercises in affirmation of one's own preferences.

Jürgen Schlaeger, abstract of a contribution to a volume on 'The Value of Literature' edited by Ansgar and Vera Nünning, published soon.

Brexit and the Provisions for Settling Disputes

28 January, Gerhard Dannemann

One of the most contentious issues during the negotiation of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) was the enforcement of its provisions and the settlement of disputes. The UK was wary of any remaining influence of the EU legislator and the Court of Justice of the European Union on the UK. The EU did not want to depend on the goodwill of the UK, and became deeply suspicious once the UK government announced legislative plans which would have enabled it to violate the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement.

Eventually, the EU and the UK found a compromise. A Partnership Council (PC) is set up to monitor compliance and to develop the rules of the TCA. This Partnership Council is co-chaired by an EU Commissioner and a UK Minister, and has sixteen specialized committees, plus four working groups, to deal with all issues which will arise under the TCA.

Any arising disputes which cannot be solved by the PC or otherwise in agreement between the EU and the UK Government are to be brought before an ad-hoc arbitration tribunal. Within 180 days from the entry into force of the TCA, the PC will establish three lists of arbitrators. List 1 is proposed by the EU, List 2 by the UK Government. List 3, to be drawn up by the PC, contains the names of potential chairpersons of arbitration tribunals, who must not be nationals of the UK or of an EU Member State. For each specific dispute, an arbitration panel is drawn up with one member from each list. Detailed regulations aim to ensure that no party can delay the appointment of the tribunal, which must publish an interim report within 100 days and a binding ruling within 130 days.

There are also detailed rules on how the EU and the UK must comply with rulings by the arbitration tribunal. Failure to comply with a ruling will allow the aggrieved party to suspend its obligations under the TCA. This means that the EU could eventually impose tariffs on certain goods if the UK refuses to comply e.g. with "level playing field" provisions on environmental standards, or the UK could refuse to grant EU fishers access to UK waters if the EU adopts unauthorized restrictions for the import of UK fish.

While the mere presence of binding arbitration arrangements and the availability of sanctions can provide a strong incentive for compliance with the TCA, three factors in particular make future arbitration and even sanctions likely. First, numerous issues have not found a permanent regulation in the TCA. For example, while the UK has promised not to fall behind existing EU standards notably in the areas of employee and consumer rights, and environmental protection, distortions in competition which might arise through further legal development can cause much conflict and may eventually lead to an end of tariff free trade. The same applies to deviating standards in state aid. Similarly, the TCA covers fishing rights for EU boats in UK waters and vice versa for a limited period of 5 ½ years, after which annual renegotiations have to take place. Second, even where TCA provisions are permanent, conflicts are likely to arise due to the sheer complexity of both international trade and the TCA provisions. Third, political and economic incentives may tempt either party to the agreement not to follow the TCA in both letter and spirit.

Pocock Reads Tolkien

4 February, Patricia Springborg

Prof. Springborg's reply to Patrick Bahners' article in the FAZ, Wednesday, 6 January 2021. Bahners reads Pocock's interpretation of Tom Bombadil's role in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* as a figure representing England's constitutional incapacity to integrate and, more specifically, as emblematic of Brexit. For Patricia Springborg this is only "half right":

Pocock Reads Tolkien

Patrick Bahners should know that historians among us were simply amazed by the ingenuity of his article in the FAZ Feuilleton, January 6, 2021: "Er bleibt außen vor, Pocock liest Tolkien". And in particular for the implicit Brexit allegory. As a student of Pocock's when he was still in New Zealand, I have always known that Pocock's mission was to establish a form of British Studies designed to counterbalance the hegemony of England, by giving due regard to the kingdoms of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and also the British Commonwealth to which he belonged. Pocock charted the beginnings of English hegemony, represented today by the power of the City of London and its elites, the Parliament at Westminster, and the commanding heights of Oxford and Cambridge.

As early as Pocock's doctoral thesis, published as *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law*, as Bahners reminds us, this was one of his major themes, for which Tom Bombadil was emblematic. However, I believe we must take with a huge grain of salt Pocock's portrayal of the insularity of seventeenth century common lawyers, whom he claims only discovered feudalism in the seventeenth century. England had belonged to the Holy Roman Empire for almost 1000 years, long enough to know what feudalism was, feudal tenure, the imperial fisc and serfdom. The "insularity" of the Common Lawyers, I would argue, was a deliberately crafted Englishness designed to claim post-Reformation national sovereignty. And indeed in the Civil War, the common lawyers and parliamentarians prevailed.

The English Reformation was, I would argue, the first model for Brexit, marking its divorce from the Holy Roman Empire and, just as importantly, from the papal monarchy. Previous to the sixteenth century Britain (and I say Britain deliberately, because its cultural centres tended to be in the north and west, accessible by sea), was very well integrated into Europe. For instance, the Twelfth Century Renaissance, marked by a huge furore at the University of Paris, prompted by the reception of the ancient Greek authors, translated first into Arabic and from Arabic into Latin, and then the Arabic commentaries, featured medieval British scholars like Michael Scot and Adelard of Bath prominently. The translation movements had benefited greatly from the constant interchange of personnel between the Norman Kingdom of England and the Norman Kingdom of Sicily, the two most powerful kingdoms in Europe at the time. Sicily was Arabic speaking and promised access to the Arabic scientific MSS necessary to advance public administration and economic development. Indeed, it was in this period that the Royal Exchequer was founded, inspired by the introduction of Arabic arithmetic and the ability to calculate taxes, which Roman numerals did not permit.

Bahners, himself an Oxford graduate, is very sympathetic to the portrayal of Tom Bombadil, by both Tolkien and Pocock. That Tom Bombadil stands for England's constitutional incapacity to integrate, however, is in my view a step too far. For, during the long Middle Ages, Britain was as well integrated into the Holy Roman Empire as offshore islands could be. But when it decided to pursue an empire of its own, England simply swallowed up the border regions it failed to integrate, and still does. But what imperial powers have ever been known to meaningfully integrate? When the American colonies initially struggled for "no taxation without representation", the representation they sought was that guaranteed by Magna Carta: seats in the Parliament at Westminster, which proved simply impracticable given that the Atlantic Ocean lay between them. (Although not inconceivable for Ireland, which quickly jumped on the bandwagon). And there simply was no ancient model for the independence of colonies. As Ronald Syme, Regius Professor of Roman Studies at Oxford and, like Pocock, a New Zealander, argued in his little book, *Colonial Elites: Rome, Spain and the Americas* (1958), had the British Empire integrated its colonial elites in the way that Rome did, it might have lasted longer. But long succession of empires on the Eurasian land mass that centred around what the Arabs call the Mediterranean Lake, offered possibilities of integration that trans-Atlantic empire did not. And the tyranny of distance forbade the integration of colonial elites in any meaningful sense.

Syme is paradigmatic for the British Empire in a way that is also relevant for Brexit, although rarely discussed, and that is as a representative of the colonial diaspora. There was a time when both professors of Roman Studies at Oxford and Harvard were New Zealanders. The professor of Roman Studies at Harvard, Ernst Badian, an Austrian-Jewish refugee, was the student of JGA Pocock's father, LG Pocock, and Ernst Badian's great book, *Foreign Clientelae* (1958) is rumoured to be inspired by the Cicero graffiti on LG Pocock's walls at the University of Canterbury. Canterbury had another illustrious alumnus, and that was Ernst Rutherford, Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry in 1908, known as the father of nuclear physics, and considered by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* to be the greatest experimental physicist since Michael Faraday (1791–1867). I grew up in the village where Ernst Rutherford was born and grew up, less than a kilometre from his family home, 13 miles from the city of Nelson, first created a city by Queen Victoria in 1841, but still numbering not more than 55,000 souls. From the Brightwater village primary school of less than 100 pupils in my time, 6 graduated PhDs in Physics from Cambridge. This was a case of modelling - if he can do it, we can do it - and typical of the colonial diaspora.

Those who say that Brexit represents nostalgia for British empire, are only half right. The Empire died with WWII, but the British Commonwealth that survived, a voluntary association of 53 nations, some big, some small, sharing common law, and a common culture, 16 of whom have the Queen as the Head of the Commonwealth, as Head of State, is not inconsequential. The Commonwealth, along with the US, a former colony with a common law regime, has always been over-represented in the commanding heights of the English economy. Although I have always been a bitter opponent of Brexit, I do admit that when Boris Johnson claims that he got the deal he wanted, he probably means, he managed to re-establish the system pre-accession to the European Community, when the UK could fill many jobs with Commonwealth people, on a points system that allowed it to accept only the immigrants it wants, and not all comers. The Commonwealth, which suffered in terms of influence and markets at the point of British accession in the 1970s, may be heaving a sigh of relief at a post-Brexit and post-pandemic reopening to Britain. And it can offer large cohorts of people to compensate for the regrettable loss of Europeans.

Fighting an Epidemic with Moral Superiority?

4 March, Felicia Kompio

In November 1831, during the cholera epidemic, The Bristol Board of Health admonished the public with the following announcement:

„To temperance and personal cleanliness (at all times so conducive to health) the Board most earnestly enjoin, as precautionary measures of the greatest moment, the strictest attention to ventilation and cleanliness in the houses of the poor, the doors and windows to be frequently left open to allow fresh air to pass through the rooms.“

Currently the Covid-19 pandemic exerts mounting pressure on the very fabric of our societies, exacerbating already existing inequalities. Looking at historic epidemics, this does not come as a surprise, nor does the observation that popular narratives closely link behavioural patterns framed as “lifestyle choices” to the contraction of disease. Currently it is drinking in the pub that's to be policed instead of coming together for work. 200 years ago, it was ‘temperance and cleanliness’ that were seen as central to disease prevention.

When the cholera reached England in the early 1830s, the hastily convened Bristol Board of Health was mainly concerned with the sanitariously atrocious conditions the poorer inhabitants of the city had to live in. What was previously only regarded as a sign of moral shortcomings of the poor, like filthy clothing or body odour, now seemed to indicate an irresponsible neglect of the virtues that could help prevent a dreadful disease from taking hold; and cholera was dreadful indeed. Although not the deadliest of infectious diseases, the rapid deterioration of its victims and the degrading state to which they were reduced made it particularly traumatising for a society that prided itself on the achievements of modernity, including cleanliness and order. How a person was supposed to maintain personal hygiene when having to sleep with three or four others in one bed with several beds in one room, however, is a question neither the board of health nor the

purveyors of “British civilization” were prepared to consider.

Cholera first broke out in India in 1817 and spread across central Asia and Russia into Europe, following busy trading routes from the subcontinent controlled by the British East India Company to growing European consumer markets and factories. Most states responded by employing measures that had been developed to combat the Black Death in previous centuries. Authorities focused on closing borders to prevent the disease from entering the country and tens of thousands of soldiers patrolled the eastern borders of Prussia and Austria – however, they did not manage to curb the spread of the disease. Measures like these rested on the assumption that cholera was transmitted from one person to another via droplet infection, just like previous plagues.

European authorities ignored reports in the late 1820s from Russia and India detailing that rather than infect people who came in close contact with a victim, the disease spread along water supply lines, like rivers and reservoirs. In France, the public was told that the state had taken all necessary precautions and superior civilisation would provide the best safeguard against the „Asiatic disease“. In Bristol, meanwhile, the Board of Health, comprised of medical professionals as well as other members of the higher strata of society, called for temperance and cleanliness. As the poor were at a higher risk of falling ill, it did not seem unreasonable to assume that the rich were saved by the virtues they were assumed to cultivate. Health Board Members and other administrators overlooked that those who employed domestic servants were not exposed to the infection to the same extent because they did not prepare their own food or handle water directly from contaminated sources.

The highest infection rate in Bristol in 1832 was found in the cramped conditions of St. Peter’s Hospital, the local workhouse. The Guardians of the Poor, responsible for poor relieve in Bristol, had brought public attention to the problems before but ratepayers were reluctant to pay for improvements. The impression among the poorer inhabitants of the city was one of being ignored by the authorities and, worse, being left to die once falling destitute and turning to the workhouse for survival. This impression was exacerbated by recent scandals in other British cities, involving medical professionals buying stolen bodies for dissection and anatomical studies. To some Bristolians, doctors and local authorities were simply showing absolute disregard for the lives of the poor.

Everything came to a head when, in the summer of 1832, 105 people died from cholera in one month, 71 of them workhouse inmates. A rumour spread that authorities had people buried alive, which led to riotous crowds breaking into a burial grounds, digging up corpses. Later, the dead were removed by boat to a burial site further upstream, preventing the public from taking notice.

Although the cholera has largely vanished from the western world, still today an individual’s socio-economic status is closely linked to the risk of contracting a disease, like Covid-19, and dying from it. Epidemics are historic events because they cause extraordinary suffering but also highlight society’s fault lines.

The Dire Mood in the UK’s Multilevel Politics

18 March, Marius Guderjan

Since I started working at the GBZ in summer 2014, shortly before the Scottish independence referendum on 18 September 2014, the relations between the UK Government and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales have continuously worsened. On 4 March 2021, the First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford, said before the Welsh Affairs Committee of the House of Commons that “the Union as it is, is over” and “we have to create a new union.”

The EU referendum in 2016 was a bigger blow to multilevel politics across the UK. The irony is well-known: Scottish voters were told that only as part of the UK could they stay within the European Union. Although 62% in Scotland (and 55.8% in Northern Ireland) voted to remain in the EU, they were ‘dragged out’ of it against their will.

The Scottish and Welsh Governments were strongly opposed to the UK Government’s Brexit agenda, which caused a severe lack of trust between the administrations. Part of their problem had to do with the fact that

the UK Government had surprisingly lost its parliamentary majority in the 2017 General Election and was deeply divided over the country's future relationship with the EU. While the Northern Ireland Executive was suspended during most of this time, Scottish and Welsh ministers were not shy in expressing their frustration over the lack of engagement in the Joint Ministerial Committee (European Negotiations).

In July 2018, the Withdrawal Bill was introduced to convert EU law into UK law. According to the original Section 11 of the bill, the UK Government intended to 'freeze' devolved powers for retained EU law to ensure that the UK would not breach its international obligations during the transition period and beyond. The devolved administrations could not modify retained EU law unless the UK Government enabled them to do so. This was perceived as a serious 'power grab' by Westminster. The Scottish and Welsh Governments worked very closely together and set up a concerted campaign to exert pressure onto the UK Government, and successfully lobbied members of the Houses of Commons and Lords from various parties to amend the bill. The initial attempt to centralise the retained powers was softened after intense intergovernmental bargaining and they now returned to the devolved administration by default. Nevertheless, the Scottish Parliament did not give its consent to the bill and instead introduced its own Continuity Bill which was subsequently suspended by the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the UK Government changed its approach slightly and tried to accommodate some demands from the devolved administrations, mainly in relation to domestic issues. The governments worked remarkably well together on the Common Framework Programme to "enable the functioning of the UK internal market, while acknowledging policy divergence; ensure compliance with international obligations; ensure the UK can negotiate, enter into and implement new trade agreements and international treaties; enable the management of common resources; administer and provide access to justice in cases with a cross-border element; and safeguard the security of the UK."

This period of fairly amicable collaboration, however, ended with Boris Johnson's arrival at No 10 Downing Street in July 2019. During a Zoom meeting with Conservative MPs in November 2020, Johnson called devolution "a disaster north of the border" and "Tony Blair's biggest mistake". Though he later said that he was referring to the SNP, Johnson's comments were shocking to all devolved administrations.

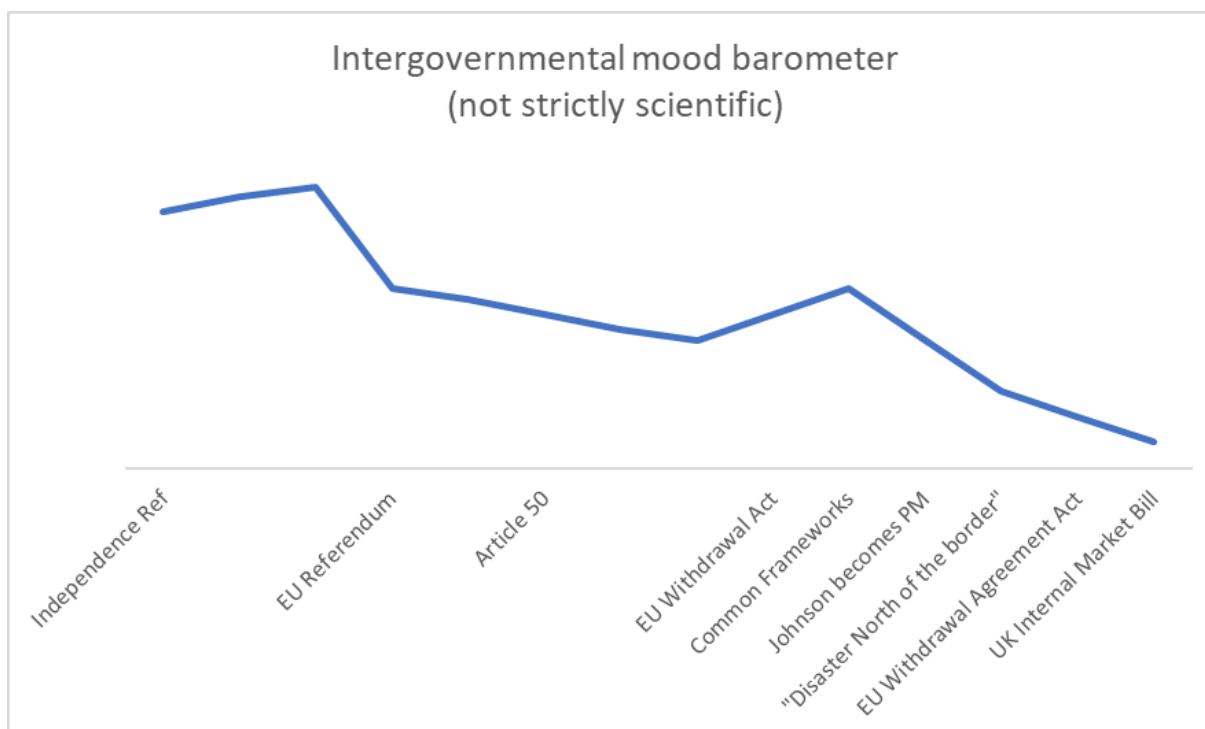
The attitude of his Government to devolution has undermined a lot of the progress made on the Common Frameworks. Neither the Withdrawal Agreement nor the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the UK and the EU (including the immigration regime and the opt-out of Erasmus+) reflect the preferences of the Scottish and Welsh Governments. When the Withdrawal Agreement Act was passed in January 2020, for the first time, all devolved legislators withheld their consent to a Westminster bill.

Since then, the democratic institutions in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have faced an even bigger threat to their powers from the UK Internal Market Act, which received Royal Assent in December 2020. The act aims to replace the European Single Market with a UK model to manage policy divergence across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Outside of the UK, commentators were mostly concerned that the original bill would have allowed the UK to breach the Northern Ireland Protocol of the Withdrawal Agreement. The domestic controversy around the act is less well-known, yet of fundamental relevance to the devolved administrations. The UK Internal Market Act provides that any goods and services that can be sold in one part of the UK must also be allowed for sale in the rest of the UK. In practice, this undermines the capacities of Holyrood and the Senedd to make their own policies and laws work. If Scotland and Wales want to increase environmental or health standards for products, it will not be effective if English products with lower standards can enter their markets. Innovative policies introduced in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, which increase production costs, would then disadvantage local producers.

Where does this leave us? The risk of Scottish independence is as serious as ever and it remains to be seen whether Johnson can keep refusing the Scots a second referendum after the regional elections in May this year. Meanwhile, public support for Welsh independence is growing, particularly among young people. An independent Wales seems like an unlikely (or even unfeasible) scenario but there is a growing sentiment in Wales that the Union is no longer working in its current form.

After Covid-19 has dominated British politics for the last year (another unfortunate tale for multilevel politics), stopping the breakup of the Union is slowly becoming a top priority of the UK Government again. In February it announced it was setting up a new union strategy Cabinet Committee. This does not mean that

the UK Government will suddenly befriend the devolved administrations. Rather, it will seek to address the people directly and use its financial powers (given by the Internal Market Bill) to put its mark on communi-



ties across the UK.

It would be wiser for the UK Government to start listening to the Welsh Government, which is not tired of proposing long-needed legislative, executive, judicial, financial and constitutional reforms to bring the UK into the 21st century (see e.g. *Reforming Our Union*). The Union can only be preserved by a solid intergovernmental architecture that provides the devolved administrations with effective consultation rights and prevents them from being overruled by Westminster. Unfortunately, I do not believe that Westminster is willing to accept curtailing its own powers, especially not under the current leadership. Therefore, management of the intergovernmental mood will continue to depend on statecraft under a constitutional framework that was barely functional when assisted by the EU regularity regime.

Anglophone Women of the Bauhaus: A Study of Stella Steyn

31 March, Chiara Harrison Lambe, MA British Studies Alumna

April 2019 marked 100 years since the founding of the Bauhaus. Art institutions around the world commemorated the school's centenary with events and exhibitions celebrating the varied achievements of its staff and alumni. In Berlin, the Bauhaus' third and final home, I was entering the stage of the British Studies MA—the thesis. I was searching for a topic that resonated both personally for me and with the cultural moment. Then Dr. Gisela Holfter, director of the Centre for Irish-German Studies at the University of Limerick, alerted me to an understudied Bauhaus alumna, Irish-Jewish painter Stella Steyn (1907–1987), the only artist from Ireland known to have attended the Bauhaus in its 14-year history.

Although her name rarely appears in accounts of significant Irish artists of the last century, Steyn was a chameleonic talent and an important member of a generation of Irish women artists who ventured to Paris in the 1920s to further their study of art. There, at the age of 21, Steyn was personally commissioned to illustrate James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*.

I divided Steyn's work into three phases, the Parisian/Joycean phase (1926–31); the Bauhaus phase (1931); and her Post-war/Nude phase (1951–61), which each correspond to three factors that I suggest affected the trajectory of Steyn's career. These factors are male patronage, male genius, and the gendering of artistic

genres to favour male artists. These points are raised in the foundational feminist texts 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' (1971) by Linda Nochlin and *Old Mistresses: Women, Art, and Ideology* (1981) by Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock as critical factors for and against the success of women artists throughout history.

Male patrons were instrumental to Steyn's early success. Her father, William Steyn, paid for her to attend art schools in Ireland, France, and Germany; her tutor, Patrick Tuohy, instilled in Steyn a lifelong interest in French art and recommended that she study in Paris; and James Joyce, along with other prominent members of the Parisian immigrant avant-garde such as Samuel Beckett and Jules Pascin, opened doors for the young artist that might have otherwise remained closed. In 1929, Steyn became one of the first artists to illustrate Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, then being published in instalments in the literary journal *transition*.

By 1930, Steyn was an established figure in Parisian artistic society. The Bauhaus, then the centre of the European cultural avant-garde, was the logical next step in Steyn's multidisciplinary and multicultural art education. Little is confirmed about Steyn's year at the Bauhaus but, in later life, she described her time there as 'a false move'. The cult of male genius is given as a potential explanation for Steyn's repudiation of the school. Today, the Bauhaus is widely viewed as a citadel of progressive ideals during a generally repressive historical moment. For its female students, however, the experience was far from revolutionary. Facing many of the same prejudices within the Bauhaus as without, women struggled to find their place in a gendered workshop system that barred them from joining disciplines other than weaving, bookbinding, and pottery.

Steyn was accepted to the Bauhaus Dessau on the personal recommendation of deputy director and abstract art pioneer Wassily Kandinsky, whose art practice was built on traditional gender roles and divisions. Once there, she found herself 'out of sympathy' with his methods. She worked independently for the remainder of her time at the school, producing work that departs significantly from her Parisian output in both style and tone. Perhaps because of her clash with Kandinsky, Steyn left the Bauhaus having been turned, in her own words, 'permanently to the painting which had its roots in tradition'.

Steyn left the Bauhaus in 1932 following increasing Nazi activity in Dessau. She married, settled in England, and did not publicly resurface until 1951. For the following decade, Steyn exhibited figural and flower paintings at such celebrated London galleries as the Leicester and the Tate, as well as contributing for eight consecutive years to the Royal Academy's summer exhibition. During this period, Steyn painted numerous nude self-portraits and female nudes in a variety of styles, many of which were never exhibited. In these subversive paintings, Steyn rejects the conventional language of the male-dominated genre of the female nude, transforming the women in her paintings from passive objects into active subjects. Steyn challenged expectations of a woman artist by refusing to be limited to certain subjects, such as highly feminised flower painting. She chose instead to also paint female nudes and religious and literary compositions in the style of traditional history painting, two genres associated with men artists. Posthumous reviews by male writers largely fail to acknowledge Steyn's subversive genre choices, instead focussing on her technical skills and private life. Yet her female nudes can be understood as the culmination of a lifetime of asserting herself not only as a woman but a woman artist, and perhaps as a response to the giants of twentieth-century Modernism, Joyce and Kandinsky.

In art history, notable women artists, either those who achieved renown during their lifetime or are rediscovered long after their death, are often taken to be the exceptions that prove the rule that artistic genius is a male trait. Steyn seems to fit into neither camp: she was a moderate success during her lifetime, making significant headway as a young woman and then exhibiting in prestigious group shows in middle age, followed by a modest rediscovery after her death. The factors that must align for women artists to break through—male support, formidable talent, and a considerable amount of luck—only reinforce the notion that it is only men who deserve to be remembered for their art. However, this limited view denies Steyn, a vigorously progressive artist with a wide breadth of knowledge that enabled her to disrupt established artistic traditions, her rightful place in the Irish art tradition. This thesis is the first step towards mainstream acknowledgement of Steyn's striking and diverse art practice.

UK Literature Festivals - Tents, Books and Heated Debate

20 April, Judith Robinson, Bath Spa University, MA British Studies Alumna

Recently, I attended a virtual conference, hosted by the British Arts Festival Association (BAFA). I listened to festival organisers, including those responsible for some of the many British literature festivals, as they shared their experiences of managing the “pivot” to virtual content and debated the challenges of keeping their festivals afloat in these unprecedented times. A representative of the Wimbledon BookFest discussed how she ran a socially distanced literature festival on the beautiful Wimbledon Common. Lots of challenges had to be considered, from how authors might sign books (in advance) and whether to provide audiences with refreshments (a firm no!).

But the most interesting conversations took place when participants stopped looking backwards and, instead, pondered the future. The global pandemic and the enforced break from the continuous and often frantic efforts of producing annual festivals created a space where organisers were able to consider wide-ranging and complex issues, including accessibility, diversity, inclusion, community and much more.

It seems timely that I am about to begin my PhD research journey now, at such a pivotal time in the literature festival world. My personal involvement with the world of British literature festivals began during my time as a student at the GBZ. I was lucky enough to secure an internship with the Cheltenham Literature Festival and was offered a full-time position with the festival after graduation. This formed the beginning of a 10-year career in literature festival and event programming and production. In 2018, I took up a position as lecturer at Bath Spa University where I now teach undergraduate and postgraduate students the intricacies of festival, event, and arts management. Simultaneously, I have maintained my foothold in the literature festival world by becoming a festival speaker, occasionally co-hosting events on literature in translation with publisher and writer Scott Pack. My career change has offered me a new perspective on the UK literature festival world, and has led me to think more deeply on the purpose and value of these events.

The UK literature festival tradition started with my previous employer, the Cheltenham Literature Festival, in 1949, featuring a modest nine events. This had increased to 440 events during its 60th anniversary edition in 2009. In 1973, the inaugural Ilkley Literature Festival, modelled on Cheltenham, featured no other than W.H. Auden. The Edinburgh International Book Festival followed in 1981 and the Hay Festival of Literature & Arts in 1988. Pre-pandemic, it had been estimated that there were around 350 literature festivals in the UK, ranging from the world-renowned Hay Festival to small-scale and volunteer-led festivals. As Alex Clark declared in the Guardian a few years ago, “you’ll find a festival anywhere from Crickhowell to Wigtown to Balham to Vanessa Bell’s farmhouse at Charleston”. These festivals feature writers, journalists, celebrities in a range of events - talks, interviews, debates, workshops. They are platforms for the celebration of the written and spoken word, but also commercial vehicles which are deeply intertwined with the publishing industry. Book sales are a key component of the literature festival infrastructure and financial model. This begs the question as to how artistic aspirations and commercial objectives interconnect? In my research, I hope to uncover more about what value UK publishers and festival organisers assign literature festivals, and how their perception might influence the future of these events.

As the UK slowly emerges from the 3rd lockdown, literature festivals across the UK are tentatively making plans for a live comeback. My research will accompany festivals and publishers as they adapt to a post-pandemic world and I am excited to share this journey with them.

Conference on Immigration Law and Policy, Border Control and Migrant Deaths

25 October, Sam McIntosh

On 30 September – 1 October 2021, I hosted a Conference at the GBZ on Immigration Law and Policy, Border Control and Migrant Deaths. It was funded by the Volkswagen Stiftung as part of my research project ‘Refugee Lives Matter: Protecting the human rights of migrants and refugees through international and regional obligations to investigate deaths.’

Planning and Covid

The conference had been quite a long time in the planning. It was expected to take place in 2020 but had to be cancelled because of the pandemic. Then we delayed again, hoping that the growing success of the vaccine roll-out would mean it would be possible to hold it as an in-person event this summer. Unfortunately, in the end, with continuing uncertainty over the summer regarding the course of the pandemic and travel restrictions, I took the difficult decision to move the entire event online. Nevertheless, it turned out that doing the conference online had certain advantages, not least because it meant that over 160 people from all over the world were able to register and participate.

I was also incredibly lucky with the response to my call for papers and was able to put together a fantastic programme of panels and speakers with expertise in migration, refugee law and policy, as well as contentious death investigation. In addition to academics well-established in their respective fields, I was particularly pleased to welcome a good number of Early Career Researchers who are also involved in some exciting and important research projects on these topics. Finally, I felt it was also vital for the conference to hear from legal practitioners and NGO workers who have been doing incredibly important work in these areas in difficult and often harrowing circumstances.

The Refugee Lives Matter Project

The conference was effectively the last component of my research project which has been looking at regional and international human rights obligations on states to investigate certain types of death, and their potential scope when it comes to fatal scenarios involving unsettled migrants and refugees in and around Europe. The research output is a book on the topic, which will be published by the Boltzmann Institute for Fundamental and Human Rights in partnership with the Manz Verlag in early 2022. The hope is that the book will be published open access so that, with the backing of the Boltzmann Institute, it will reach as wide an audience as possible which includes not just academics but also practitioners, campaigners and activists. It currently has the working title of 'Protecting Life by Investigating Death: International and Regional Obligations on European States to Investigate the Deaths of Unsettled Migrants and Refugees'.

The Conference

As for the issues discussed at the conference, most people are familiar with the appalling number of deaths that have been occurring in the Mediterranean for decades, reaching a peak in 2016 when the International Organisation for Migration's Missing Migrants Project records that 5,143 migrants died attempting to cross the Mediterranean into Europe in just one year. The organisation UNITED Against Refugee Deaths has been attempting to track border deaths in and around Europe since 1992 and has recorded over 44,000 fatalities. In addition to the near weekly tragedies occurring in the Mediterranean, there have been thousands of cases of migrants dying in refugee camps, immigration detention centres, or while crossing land borders into or between European states.

The vast majority of these deaths are ultimately the consequence of man-made physical manifestations of that most reified of concepts, 'the border'. The physical and institutional manifestations of Europe's borders are not just found along those imaginary lines that divide one state from another. They extend outwards, far into Europe's neighbouring states (and indeed further still), and inwards deep within the bureaucracies of European states and institutions, as well as physically in the immigration detention centres and refugee camps that exist within Europe's fortified walls. When we examine the deaths of unsettled migrants and refugees within European states, we are likely to find the border lurking somewhere within, in what Moreno-Lax has described as the embodied border paradigm.

While on the one hand, the connections between immigration law and policy and migrant deaths are very clear – if it wasn't for carrier sanctions and the weaponisation of the landscape and seascape as means of border control, deaths in the Mediterranean would be a fraction of what they are today – there are difficult questions that need to be asked on a number of related issues. These are the questions that occupied the conference panels and speakers: What exactly is the nature of border violence? How are the methods, tactics and technologies behind border violence changing and evolving, and what should the response be? Who is involved in border violence, be it directly or indirectly? What factors contribute to refugee and migrant vulnerability? What processes and procedures should be triggered when deaths occur? How can

those responsible for deaths be held accountable? How can those policies, laws and practices that contribute to deaths be challenged most effectively? How can we ensure that survivors and the relatives of the deceased are given a voice and treated with respect and humanity? How can we ensure that they are given avenues to justice and legal accountability? What practical steps can we take as lawyers, academics, educators, campaigners and human beings to tackle some of these issues?

Amongst the topics the conference panels focussed on were: The regional implementation of international law and policy and its relationship to migrant and refugee vulnerability; The rise of immigration detention as a border control tactic in Europe; The 'rightslessness' of refugees in Libya; The securitisation and externalisation of European and US border control; The impact that dangerous journeys can have on migrants' increased future vulnerability; Current issues in contentious death research; The role of private vessels in rescuing migrants at sea; and the role of families and survivors in investigations into deaths, including powerful contributions from a practicing lawyer describing her experiences trying to ensure proper inquests into the deaths of refugees in the UK, and the founders of the 'Last Rights Project' who are fighting for a new framework of respect for the rights of missing & dead refugees, migrants and bereaved family members.

„Affective Polarisation in the UK’: First Authors’ Workshop

10 November, Gesa Stedman

Covid-19 kills, there is no doubt about it. But it does not kill randomly, as has become very obvious in the UK throughout the past one and a half years. People living in deprived areas, in crowded accommodation, with only limited access to healthy food, fresh air, and forced to work on the frontline often have underlying health conditions and are exposed more to the virus than people living in more affluent areas who are able to live a healthy life, and can work from home. Evidently the pandemic has not worked as the great leveler it was purported to be. On the contrary, it has exacerbated the existing social inequality in the UK even further. This inequality is unevenly distributed in terms of geography, age, ethnicity, and gender. All this has been documented and researched in great detail. What, however, requires further investigations, is the question of how Britain got to where it is now, how that compares with its crises-management in the past, and in which ways the superimposition of ten years of austerity, Brexit, and the pandemic have increased the affective polarisation that have arisen from these factors.

The editors and authors of a book entitled *Affective Polarisation – Social, Economic and Cultural Divisions in the UK After Brexit and Covid-19* (Bristol University Press) met virtually for the first time on 29 November 2021 to discuss key terms and exchange views on draft chapters. Ranging across disciplines from ethnography, cultural studies, the social sciences and history to economics, contributors presented their arguments and responded to one another's suggestions. It quickly became clear that all contributors share an interest in aiming for a deeper understanding of such seemingly simple terms as "affect", "polarisation", "the Left-Behind", "Scotland" or "populism". As academics, we are obliged to delve deeper into what appears all too often too straightforward in media representations and the news. A more nuanced and often contradictory image of the present emerges, which requires more than just one disciplinary perspective to unravel the different strands that make up our troubled contemporary times. The book is intended to explain what is happening, but also to place these events in a historical perspective and therefore show how decisions in the past are having an impact now.

The different disciplines guaranteed a wide array of methods, both quantitative and qualitative. This methodological variety, the interdisciplinary approach, and the fact that the chapter authors are affiliated to different research cultures both in the UK and in Europe, will ensure a broad-ranging account of these difficult topics. The next authors' meeting will take place in spring 2022, and the book will be published in the summer of 2023. Hopefully, by that time, the pandemic will lie in the past already. Social inequality will not have been overcome by then, nor will affective polarisation, but the editors Gesa Stedman and Jana Gohrisch hope that, together with their co-authors, some light will have been shed on the reasons for finding oneself in such dire circumstances, and possibly also, showing up some promising ways out.