**019LM Letteratura inglese I – AA 2022-23**

**MODULO PROF Roberta GEFTER:**

**“Writing the other’s body: concepts, tropes, representations from Shakespeare to McEwan” (I module, 30 hours).**

The module will consider a selection of literary texts from all genres - drama, poetry and the novel – which in different ways foreground the human body as a central trope and metaphor of subjectivity in its normative/heteronormative/ transformative and metamorphic power and agency. The fascination with the idea of corporeal change and transformation – metaphysical, allegorical, scientifically induced or perpetrated through acts of violence and control, is an abiding trait of the cultural imagination. From antiquity to the Renaissance, the Gothic, Romantic and Victorian literature, up to 20th century dystopic and feminist fiction, the body ties in with issues of gender, power, science and politics.
Through the critical reading of some representative texts from different literary and historical ages, the module will focus on some related aspects of corporeal subjectivity, transformation, and violation, as an inscription of a complex understanding of human identity challenged by the anxieties generated by philosophical, religious and scientific discourses, and by the traumatic legacy of history, particularly colonial history. A variety of related concepts pertaining to literary representations of the body such as the anomalous body, monstrous anatomies, the modern preoccupation with boundaries, the body in pain, the deviant, heteronormative body, the abject, corporeal boundaries will be examined in their cultural contexts from the early modern to the Gothic, from the ‘monsters of modernity’ to sensation fiction, the fin de siècle, power and the post-colonial body and, in the last part of the course, the post and transhuman imagination in fiction.

Students will take active part in the close reading of the primary sources and will have the opportunity to reconsider other literary texts they may have approached in previous courses.

Pdf versions of some primary sources and of critical reading will be made available to students on moodle. Further critical references, also to figurative arts and cinema, will be provided during the course.
**Primary sources:**
Part I:

**The body in parts:**
The W.Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Folger) (selected reading, moodle); *Titus Andronicus* (feltrinelli, a cura di A.Lombardo (selected reading, moodle).

J.Donne, “The Exstasie” (moodle). (\*optional: G. Melchiori, Introduzione a Songs and Sonnets”. In J.Donne, *Anatomia del Mondo - Duello della Morte*, A cura di G. Melchiori, Modadori (moodle)

**Othering the female body in Romantic and Victorian imagination:**
J.Keats: “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” (moodle)
J.S.Le Fanu: “Carmilla” (recommended edition: J. S. Le Fanu, In a Glass Darkly, Edited with an introduction by Robert Tracy, Oxford UP) ; project Gutemberg (moodle).

R.L.Stevenson, \*“The Body Snatcher” (moodle); \*“Olalla”, (moodle, Project Gutemberg). The texts will be discussed in class and alternatively selected by students).

W.B.Yeats, “Leda and the Swan” (moodle)

**Part II:**

**Power and the (postcolonial) body**:

J.M.Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980). Vintage.

**Posthuman bodies**:
A.Huxley, *Brave New World (1932)*. Penguin 2009/Vintage 2004.
I. McEwan, *Machines Like Me* (2019), Vintage.

Jeannette Winterson, *Frankisstein* (2019), Vintage.

**Critical Reading**:
(\*optonal) S.Arata, Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle: Identity and Empire, Cambridge UP, 1996. (selected reading, moodle).
P. Brooks. *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (1993) (selected reading Sharepoint)
R.Braidotti, Madri, Mostri, Macchine, Castelvecchi, 2021 (selected reading, Sharepoint).

F.Ciompi, «The Future of Humans

in a Post-Human World»: *Frankissstein* by Jeanette Winterson*Between* vol. 12 n.24 (2022).
D.Hilllman and U.Maude, “Introduction”, in The Cambridge Companion To The Body in Literature Edited By David Hillman and Ulrika Maude, Cambridge, CUP, 2015.(moodle)

Ferrari, R. “A Plunge into Otherness: Ethics and Literature in *Machines Like Me* by Ian McEwan”. *Between* vol. 12 n.24 (2022).
P.Fifield, “The Body, Pain and Violence”, in *The Cambridge Companion To The Body in Literature*, ed. by David Hillman and Ulrika Maude, Cambridge, CUP, 2015.
S.L.Gilman, “Representing Dead and Dying Bodies”, in *The Cambridge Companion To The Body in Literature*, ed.by David Hillman and Ulrika Maude, Cambridge, CUP, 2015.
(\*optional) K.Hurley. *The Gothic Body. Sexuality, Materialism and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle*. Cambridge UP, 1996 (selected reading, moodle).

A.Violi, *Il corpo nell’immaginario letterario*, Mimesis 2014. (selected reading, moodle)

Further critical material might be provided during the course (*Sharepoint*).