

Dead Man and the Mythic West: Anglo-Saxon Values Revised

(B. A. thesis)

This thesis juxtaposes Jarmusch's *Dead Man* with classic Western cinema by using post-colonial and New Western historical approaches. It elaborates the concept of the mythic West, which is the basis of the settler-invader ideology that justified WASP-expansionism in 19th century, and builds on the ideals of frontier and the American family. This concept is crucial for the classic Western cinema of Ford and Wayne, which is classified as the colonial Western within my framework. Since this cinema promotes the silencing of Native American voices and savage stereotypes, functioning not unlike British imperialist programs, I argue for its definition as visual imperialism. By regarding the differences in the portrayal of the mythic West, I aim to exemplify that *Dead Man* strictly uses the classic Western formula only to subvert cultural myths of white America; hence, *Dead Man* is to be regarded as a post-colonial Western that strives to dismantle visual imperialism with its own tools.

Bodies in Escape – Performative Gender versus Gender as Institution in Jackie Kay's

Trumpet and Jeffrey Eugenides' Middlesex

(M. A. thesis)

The aim of this thesis is an interdisciplinary comparison of Jackie Kay's *Trumpet* with Jeffrey Eugenides' *Middlesex*. It investigates how the transgender protagonists construct alternative masculinities and in which ways these masculinities approach and relate to hegemonic masculinity. Both novels depict the coming of age of non-masculine girls who rupture the conventional linearity of masculinity by deciding to live as men. The protagonists' strong focus on heterosexuality as a crucial part of their masculinities, however, complicates the question of subversivity. Given this context, Connell's *Masculinities*, Halberstam's *Female Masculinity*, and Judith Butler's concept of performative gender build the theoretical framework of my thesis. Hence, this thesis does not only pose the question of how the protagonists, Cal and Joss, become perceivable as men by using gender as a performative sign system; the unveiling of structures of power, or gender as a policed institution, particularly in public spaces such as the hospital and public restrooms, is equally important. Cal's Greek and Joss' African roots contribute to the complexity of the issues in question: how do ethnicity, sexuality, and gender inform and influence each other in the construction of manhood? Moreover, this thesis addresses the role of medical discourse in identity formation: whereas medical gaze enables Calliope to become Cal in *Middlesex*, Joss' masculinity is erased by the doctor's pen in *Trumpet*. In this context, this thesis also explores the binary of cultural and genetic heritages and their connection to family structures in both novels.