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American Indian Literature: The Emerging, Established, and Iconic Voices of Generation X

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The Native American Renaissance (c. 1968-92) is an era noted for the proliferation of American Indian literary authorship. Writers such as Louise Erdrich, Hanay Geiogamah, Joy Harjo, N. Scott Momaday, and Leslie Marmon Silko transformed genres, produced masterpieces, garnered international interest, and heightened expectations. These authors, along with dozens of others, laid the groundwork for the next generation of American Indian scholars, novelists, poets, dramatists, fictionists, and filmmakers. Generation X writers (born in/since 1965) include Sherman Alexie, Mandy Smoker Broaddus, Natalie Diaz, Jennifer Foerster, Santee Frazier, Stephen Graham Jones, Beth Piatote, Cynthia Leitich Smith, David Treuer, and Daniel H. Wilson. In terms of purpose, style, and content, some have elected to write in the manner of their predecessors, whereas others have adopted a different approach. In each instance, their rationales are based on several conditions, including artistic tendencies, contemporary technologies, social and political climates, and adapting markets. This ongoing research project has produced several scholarly, teaching, and service activities.
04.02.03  Literary Archetypes: the Relationship of Gilgamesh and Enkidu

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My objective in this research is to examine the various characteristics of literary archetypes from the most ancient to more modern versions. Therefore, I will show how many modern heroes are based on antiquated archetypes which arise in the earliest of civilizations. However, my primary focus is on the tale of Gilgamesh, specifically the relationship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu. I believe that there are key differences concerning this relationship which make Gilgamesh and Enkidu unique among epic heroes. At the same time, I acknowledge that Gilgamesh is the original archetype for a hero. In order to prove my hypothesis, I will study the epic of Gilgamesh, as well as the tales of other archetypal heroes, while drawing evidence and inspiration from different sources concerned with the examination of heroes. Finally, I will show how Gilgamesh and Enkidu differ from all other archetypal heroes, and that the basis of this difference lies in the nature of their relationship.

04.02.04  Reading in Girl Scouts Affiliated Public Housing Sites

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Literacy is an important issue in most educational circles in the 21st century. With so many distractions in our society, what are ways to motivate children to pick up a book? This study examines a specific population of children—females living at Girl Scouts affiliated public housing sites—to determine if incorporating literacy materials with Girl Scout curriculum will increase motivation to read for these girls. The girls will be surveyed and the facilitators of the program will be interviewed to see if there is a change in their motivation and attitudes towards reading. The larger implications of this survey can determine if specifically targeted literacy programs will help children desire to read more as well as contribute to future research on similar topics.

04.02.05  Alexander’s Excellent Adventures: An Examination of Cultural Influence on Adaptations of “The Romance of Alexander”

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The Romance of Alexander is a collection of myths and legends surrounding the exploits of Alexander of Macedonia, which were rewritten repeatedly during the 4th through 16th centuries in many languages, including Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and a variety of European vernaculars. The Romance of Alexander changes in each cultural setting as different parts of the story are emphasized, along with the accompanying art, in a variety of ways. Due to its popularity and prevalence, the Romance of Alexander is a good touchstone to examine the differences between these cultures. This is a survey of different versions of the tale, with emphasis on three key areas of study: (1) those parts and sections from the original story which are included, (2) the editorial changes in those parts, and (3) the changes in the artwork. The survey uses an empirical-analytical methodology by gathering archival research created by highly regarded resources, including professional journals and books.
A major theme in the Harry Potter series by JK Rowling is good versus evil. The protagonist and antagonist play a major role in developing that theme. It is useful to examine why good triumphs over evil in this particular case. The objective of this research is to better understand the Hegelian Master-Slave dialectic itself and how it applies to the Harry Potter series. The thesis is two-part: 1) Applying the Hegelian dialectic to examine the relationship—and struggle for power and recognition—between the protagonist and antagonist opens a new door in understanding why the series is so compelling to many readers. 2) Considering the dialectic, it is clear that the antagonist attempts to live above the system of the dialectic which leads to his defeat. The method of this research was three-fold. 1) Study the source text of Hegel’s work, Phenomenology of the Spirit. 2) Study the source texts of the Harry Potter series and the relationship between Harry and Lord Voldemort within those seven novels. 3) Applying the major concepts of Hegel’s dialectic to the novels. The findings of this research are that the key tenets of Hegel’s Master-Slave dialectic are applicable to the series itself, in general, as well as the protagonist-antagonist relationship, in specific. The dialectic illuminates why Harry Potter was successful, through the framework of the dialectic, and why Lord Voldemort was defeated, through taking the dialectic for granted in his quest for absol.