MOVING HUMANITIES

''Finding meaning''

24 October 2019

Conference programme

Radboud University | GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR THE HUMANITIES

Contents

General schedule

9:30	Registration	TvA 1.0.02
10:00	**Keynote 1**	TvA 1.0.02
11:00	Coffee break	E3.14
11:30	**Parallel panel sessions**	

1. Human relations with the (super)natural   E3.14
2. Ideology and conflict   E3.15
3. Norms and practice   E3.18

13:00	Lunch	De Refter
14:00	**Parallel panel sessions**	

4. Social images   E3.14
5. Methodology: man and machine   E3.15
6. Narratives as medicine   E3.18

15:30	Coffee break	E3.14
16:00	**Keynote 2**	E2.50
17:00	Drinks	Cultuurcafé

Detailed schedule

Morning

Keynote 1, 10:00 – 11:00 / Chair: Merijn Beeksma

Prof. Dr. Leonie Cornips, "Intraspecies communication: How does the dairy cow speak?"

Coffee break

Parallel panel sessions, 11:30 – 13:00

Panel 1: Human relations with the (super)natural / Chair: Marc Colsen

11:30 Rituals, religion and reputation. Constructing meaning in early human societies
Daan Lijdsman

12:00 The Meaning of Geological *Deep Time*
Boris van Meurs

12:30 The Challenge of Finding Meaning
Nico Heidari Tari

Panel 2: Ideology and conflict / Chair: Paul Hulsenboom

11:30 The Politics of Disaster: Disaster Discourse and Consensus Ideology in the Netherlands, 1807-1890
Fons Meijer

12:00 Conflict in Present-Day Dutch Literary Fiction
Roel Smeets

Panel 3: Norms and practices / Chair: Aurelia Nana Gassa Gonga

11:30 Between sin and mitigating factor: multiple meanings of drunkenness in late medieval France
Pieter Sleutels

12:00 Use, feeling and institution: Towards a multidimensional approach of studying language norms
Marten van der Meulen

12:30 Single or double marking? The pragmatics of causal correlative constructions in Mandarin discourse
Hongling Xiao, Fang Li, Ted Sanders and Wilbert Spooren

Lunch, De Refter

Afternoon

Parallel panel sessions, 14:00 – 15:30

Panel 4: Social images / Chair: Marieke van Egeraat

14:00   The Meme-ing of Meaning
        J.A. Brown

14:30   Facebook memes and the semiotics of typography:
        The case of *lemgthbook*
        Vinicio Ntouvlis

15:00   Reflections of the Hidden Duchess and the Moon
        King: The *tabula scalata* as early modern meaning-
        machine
        Clim Wijnands

Panel 5:   Methodology; man or computer? / Chair:
Merijn Beeksma

14:00   Finding meaning in photographs. A visual turn:
        analysis and interpretation of a nineteenth-century
        soccer action photo.
        Jan Luitzen, MA, Dr. Wim Zonneveld

14:30   Making the Computer Understand Urban Legend
        Types (And Making Humans Understand the
        Computer)
        Myrthe Reuver

15:00   Do men and women use language differently? A
        scoping review of linguistic variables in face-to-face
        interactions.
        Ilona Plug

Panel 6: Narratives as medicine / Chair: Paul Hulsenboom

14:00 Shaped by Storms, Spades and Stories Memory, Landscape, and Dyke Solidarity in the Eighteenth-Century Dutch Delta
Adriaan Duiveman

14:30 "Whose openness is like a wound": The Wounded Storyteller in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992)
Carlijn Cober

15:00 Linguistic and interactional aspects that characterize consultations about medically unexplained symptoms: A systematic review
Inge Stortenbeker, Wyke Stommel, Sandra van Dulmen, Peter Lucassen, Enny Das & Tim olde Hartman

Coffee break

Keynote 2, 16:00 – 17:00

Prof. Dr. Bas Haring, "Useless Humanities" / Chair: Marc Colsen

Drinks at Cultuurcafé

Abstracts

Keynote speakers

Intraspecies communication: How does the dairy cow speak?

Leonie Cornips, Meertens Instituut/Universiteit Maastricht

The aim of the lecture is to address the question as to why in (socio)linguistics we draw an a-priori basic distinction, claimed to be universal, between humans and other animals as language users (Pennycook 2018). I will make a plea for an *inclusive* linguistics, in which research of non-human animal languages and/or our interactions with them may become common practice. On the one hand my plea stems from my growing concern regarding the current anthropocentric era in which "human destructiveness, environmental degradation, diminishing resources and our treatment of animals" (Pennycook 2018:3) is of an unprecedented scale. Current human-animal and other animal relations have become so profoundly unequal that they call for inter- and multi-disciplinary research in which ethical and sustainability-oriented questions should and could be(come) the focus of attention (Cederholm et al. 2014:5). On the other hand my concern is with linguistics. What is the effect on linguistics of our assumption that the way we humans communicate is profoundly and significantly different from the way in which other animals communicate? This question will be addressed by results from my field work among dairy cows and farmers throughout the Netherlands. Conclusion: dairy cows do communicate like human animals.

Useless Humanities

Bas Haring, Leiden University

I am a philosopher with a Ph.D. in computer science, and professor in the Public Understanding of Science at Leiden University.

Some students call me "people's philosopher"; I must admit I like that phrase, and it describes what I am and do. In a fresh and accessible manner I try to show that science and philosophy can be understood – and done! – by almost everyone. My third book – *For a Successful Life* (2007) – questions the concept of success, and makes a plea for an unsuccessful, but happy life. It more or less hypothesizes that our strive for success is a "meme" that is able to multiply itself, in contrast to the equally valid idea to live quietly.

My current project is entitled *Why Biodiversity Loss is not a Disaster*. It's an extensive essay that exactly claims what its title suggests, and it will be accompanied with a visual, interactive summary.

Panel sessions' speakers

<u>Panel 1: Human relations with the (super)natural</u>

Rituals, religion and reputation. Constructing meaning in early human societies

Daan Lijdsman, PTR

Despite an increasingly secularised society, religion and supernatural beings are often still considered as 'giving meaning' to someone's life. Evolutionary theories describe how religion in early human societies developed in the first place. One of the steps in this process concerns the need for interacting with a moral supernatural being via ritualistic performances. The main problem regarding this step is the fact that rituals are evolutionary costly endeavours which provide no direct evolutionary advantage. So far, this problem has been tackled by acknowledging that *within* a group, egoistic individuals might have an evolutionary advantage, but that *between* groups, those that act altruisticly have the advantage. Since a ritual commonly binds people together in a single activity, it reinforces mutual trust and reciprocity and thus altruistic actions.

However, a major problem regarding this theory is that performers of rituals often seem to be evolutionary fitter than other members, contrary to what one might expect. While the *individual* cost of performing a ritual might be outweighed by the benefits gained from acting as an altruistic group, other members reap the same benefits without any additional costs, thereby decreasing the performer of ritual's relative fitness. Thus, the theory above only seems to account for rituals in which *all* members of a certain group are involved.

By treating rituals as 'credibility-enhancement displays' (CREDs), I acknowledge the individual benefits associated with performing ritual. These benefits consist of being reputed for

altruistic behaviour, ascribed to the performer of the ritual by those observing it. This subsequently makes sure that during in-group encounters, egoistic individuals do not target those with a known high reputation due to their use in between-group encounters, as well as being favoured by other altruistic individuals in in-group co-operations. Performers of rituals thereby seem to have an in-group advantage due to their explicit display of altruistic behaviour, which accounts for their evolutionary fitness.

The Meaning of Geological *Deep Time*
Boris van Meurs, PTR

Deep time refers to the geological time scale, which incorporates billions of years and is used to study the long term processes of the Earth.[1] In as far as humans are now influencing these processes, we will somehow have to reckon with these immense time scales. [2] Anthropogenic climate change, for example, will leave traces in the Earth's lithosphere that shall be observable for millions of years to come. However, as humans we usually think in terms of days, maybe years – in short, stretches of time that are dwarfed in comparison to deep time. How can deep time acquire a meaning for us?

In my presentation I will contextualize the origin of the concept of deep time, as well as show how its emergence to human consciousness has changed our relation to the world. I will present these reflections through an analysis of the history of the concept of deep time in three stages. These are:

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[1] Summerhayes, *Earth's Climate Evolution*.
[2] Steffen et al., "Stratigraphic and Earth System Approaches to Defining the Anthropocene."

1. The Christian notion of time in the work of James Ussher[3];
2. The dawn of geology in the works of James Hutton[4];
3. The awareness of human influence on deep time in current climate discourse.[5]

In this analysis, I will focus on the question whether deep time should lead to fatalism and pessimism, or whether it can be used as an empowering concept. In the deep future, the world that we know may have withered away, but at the mean time planet Earth will still (partly) be shaped what humans have done to it.

The Challenge of Finding Meaning
Nico Heidari Tari PTR

We are meaning-seeking creatures by nature. When something happens, good or bad, we are inclined to ask why it happened. Why are we here? What is my purpose in life? Etcetera. Even though it is in itself a beautiful tendency, and has many benefits to our species as a whole, it can sometimes also lead us astray.

Consider the phenomenon known as pareidolia. This is when an observer interprets a stimulus to exhibit patterns that are simply not there. One socially accepted way to display this erroneous form of reasoning is when we look at random cloud formations. The shapes are just random noise from the intricate physical process of water condensation. However, we insist that these random water particles represent something else, like a man holding an umbrella.

Of course, this is still quite harmless so far. But the perils exceed much further than pareidolia. The entire driving force of

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[3] Ussher, *The Annals of the World*.
[4] Hutton, *Theory of the Earth*; McPhee, *Basin and Range*.
[5] Steffen, Crutzen, and McNeill, "The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature."

conspiracy theories is this tendency of humans to find meaning in patterns when they are simply not there. A popular argument to argue in favor of 9/11 being an inside job, is that the crash of the aircrafts was not sufficiently strong to bring down such a building. Hence, there must have been explosives or something, and this leads to it being an inside job.

But what is the 'normal' way that a gargantuan explosion should take place? The conspiracy theorists are acting as if they were gods of physics, able to predict the most complex event with careful precision. But every massive explosion is quirky in its own way. If the aircrafts crashed into the buildings 1 inch to the left, perhaps some other bizarre event would have occurred. And the conspiracy theorists would have appropriated that.

These are the perils of finding meaning in the 21st century. We want the world to make sense so much, that we find ghostly patterns in random statistical noise. That is why finding meaning is a challenge. We must find the right balance. Meaning is something marvelous, it can help us get through difficult times, and can motivate us to accomplish marvelous things in the short time of a human lifespan. But our limited minds are too rhapsodic, and too zealous. Thus, we must use reason and critical analysis to contain it from time to time.

Panel 2: Ideology and conflict

The Politics of Disaster: Disaster Discourse and Consensus Ideology in the Netherlands, 1807-1890
Fons Meijer, HLCS
As scholarly knowledge has it, disasters boosted community building in the Netherlands during the nineteenth century. People helped each other in emergency situations, got to share their emotions, and provided each other with money, food, clothes or other useful resources. Cultural media of all sorts, which played

a pivotal role in regards to creating collective disaster experiences, further bolstered this tendency towards altruism and solidarity. Authors of occasional poetry, memory books and sermons produced a disaster discourse that focussed on unity: after disasters, the Dutch nation proved its worth by helping each other out and coming together as one, harmonious family unit.

Literary scholars and historians have interpreted this type of discourse predominantly as a token of strong communal bonds and supra-regional, nationwide commitment. Even though this interpretation is not untrue, it yet is only one way to look at it. In my paper I would like present a different view on this discourse by investigating the ideological implications of this consensus-oriented disaster discourse. I will argue that this type of discourse also served to perpetuate power relations, protect existing social hierarchies and depoliticise the public sphere. Through cultural media, disasters were appropriated by elites to legitimise their place in society and invite their readers into a very pacified sense of patriotism.

Conflict in Present-Day Dutch Literary Fiction
Roel Smeets, HLCS

Literary studies has a long tradition of analysing texts from an ideological perspective. Inspired by feminist (Butler 1990), postcolonial (Said 1978) and Marxist (Eagleton 1976) strands of thinking, these so called critiques of literary representation have been focusing on hierarchies between genders, ethnicities, and classes in literary texts. One way in which these hierarchies can be traced is through comparatively analysing representations of characters with different demographic backgrounds. For the field of Dutch literature, a diverse range of detailed close readings have been conducted analysing the relative importance of certain represented identities as opposed to others (Pattynama 1994,

Meijer 1996a, Meijer 1996b, Pattynama 1998, Minnaard 2010, Meijer 2011).

In recent years, quantitative methods such as social network analysis have made it possible to study character representation on a larger scale (Alberich e.a. 2002, Stiller et al 2003, Elson et al 2010, Lee & Yeung 2012, Karsdorp et al 2012, Agarwal et al 2013, Jayannavar et al 2015, Karsdorp et al. 2015, Lee & Wong 2016, Van der Deijl & Smeets 2018). Insights from e.g. network theory can lead to a broader understanding of the power dynamics between characters. Important aspects of these dynamics are positive (friends) and negative (enemies) relations between characters, as bonds and conflicts in networks are indicative of hierarchical oppositions between represented identities.

In order to gain an empirically informed understanding of character hierarchies in present-day Dutch literary fiction, the present paper models conflicts for all 2137 characters in a corpus of 170 novels that were submitted to one year (2012) of the Libris Literatuurprijs, one of the most prestigious literary prizes in the Dutch language area. It draws on extensive metadata from earlier research in which gender, descent, age, education and profession of all these characters were gathered (Van der Deijl et al 2016), as well on more recent research in which relational information (family, lover, colleague, friend, enemy) between these characters was collected (Volker & Smeets 2019, Smeets et al 2019). Two models of conflict are presented, the first focusing on dyadic conflict (between two characters), the second focusing on triadic conflict (between three characters). The relevance and applicability of these models are evaluated within the broader context of the critique of literary representation.

Between sin and mitigating factor: multiple meanings of drunkenness in late medieval France
Pieter Sleutels, PTR

There are many misconceptions about alcohol use in the Middle Ages, even in scholarly research. While a cultural history of alcohol use is gradually being established, the history of drunkenness does not attract much scholarly interest. Apart from being related to the sin of gluttony, drunkenness has often been treated as a gateway drug to violence and little more. However, this straightforward characterization of drunkenness strips it of its more nuanced reality, and multiplicity of meaning.

Drunkenness was, in fact, quite a nuanced phenomenon in the Middle Ages. Besides being condemned as a sin, in canon (and later, secular) law, drunkenness was considered a mitigating factor in court because it reduced the culprit's responsibility and thus culpability. Medieval theologians and canonists were acutely aware of this strange duality and tried to justify it. These scholars attempted to determine under what conditions drunkenness was acceptable (i.e. suitable for mitigation) and when it was not (i.e. a sin and deplorable). Their writings reveal that there was no such thing as a singular drunkenness, stressing multiple meanings to drunkenness and 'being drunk'.

Next to showcasing this hitherto unexplored discourse on drunkenness, this paper proposes that this discourse was not just limited to learned men, but that ordinary laymen and -women were also aware of it, at least subconsciously. To do so, I will use a particular source type: letters of remission. Common citizens could send one of these to the king to ask a pardon for a crime they had committed. I will analyse the ways the perpetrator's – and the victim's – drunkenness is framed in several of these

letters, and how it is utilised to paint a picture of the crime that favours the issuer of the letter. In doing so, I will show that drunkenness in the Middle Ages was regarded as a complex state of being, the meaning of which depends on its context and the way it is framed.

Use, feeling and institution: Towards a multidimensional approach of studying language norms

Marten van der Meulen, CLS

Students of language norms have employed different methods, resulting in different types of results. Historical sociolinguists compare data from usage corpora - containing actual linguistic utterances - with precept corpora - containing pronouncements from normative publications. Variationists, on the other hand, favour self-reporting surveys, in which language users are interrogated about their linguistic behaviour and attitudes. From a theoretical point of view, language norms are made up of all these components: institutionalised language norms, linguistic attitudes and actual language practices. Ideally, then, all three components should be studied to establish language norms, but this does not seem to have been done. This approach could, however, deepen our understanding of language norms as well as the interplay between these "inter-related but independent components" (Spolsky 2012:5).

In this paper I test the multidimensional approach to studying language norms by examining one normative morpho-syntactic case study: the inflection of the adverb heel/hele. I combine usage data from two differing corpora, one spoken and one consisting of literature reviews, with institutionalised norms from the Normative Database of Dutch (NoDaD), and compare these to recent self-reporting data. I show that there are important discrepancies between the three types of data, which shed light

on the question of what people do versus what they think they should do. Moreover, I show that institutionalised norms are more conservative than the attitudes of language users.

Single or double marking? The pragmatics of causal correlative constructions in Mandarin discourse
Hongling Xiao, Fang Li, Ted Sanders and Wilbert Spooren, CLS
Recent corpus studies on Mandarin reason connectives and result connective (Xiao et al. accepted; submitted) find that causal constructions in Mandarin differ systematically with regard to three subjectivity-related features: the propositional attitude of the result segment, e.g. *judgment, intentional act,* or *fact*; the subject of consciousness (SoC) responsible for the causal interpretation, i.e., the *speaker*, the *character*, or *no SoC*; and the linguistic realization of the SoC, i.e. *implicit, pro-drop,* or *explicit.*

Double marking (DM) is a language-specific way of marking causal complex sentences in Mandarin discourse. To the best of our knowledge, it has received little attention in the literature. Most studies consider it as an arbitrary alternative to *single marking.* The few existing studies consider only the inter-sentential coherence in discourse: they stress the strong linking power of DM (Chu & Tao, 2008; Guo, 2013), or take the perspective of topic continuation (Xu, 2017) or topic switching and causality scope marking (Tu, 1992) regarding the semantic relationship between the correlative construction and the contexts. In this presentation we focus on the pragmatic/rhetorical effects of DM.

Taking the subjectivity perspective, we argue that different degrees of *SoC involvement* are encoded in one correlative construction compared to another. For example, by using *youyu*

P, suoyi Q, the speaker seems to attribute the result event to the cause event. Also, P seems to be objectified as an external factor leading to Q, therefore alleviating to some extent the speaker/SoC from taking full responsibility for the result event. By contrast, *yinwei P, suoyi Q* seems to imply an active involvement and alignment of the SoC with the causal reasoning. We present a qualitative analysis of some examples to substantiate our claims.

Panel 4: Social images

The Meme-ing of Meaning
J.A. Brown, CLS

Meaning is often discussed in science and philosophy, but what is it really? I will delve into this question by investigating the relationship between meaning and another popular concept, that of memes. Memes were originally described by Richard Dawkins as a metaphor for cultural transmission, but the concept has since taken on a life of its own---the notion of memes itself has become a meme, one could say. In my presentation, I will try to argue that meaning arises and spreads in the form of memes; in fact, that in order to understand meaning, we need to understand memes (and vice versa).

Oxford philosopher Mark Richard claims meanings are better thought of as species, rather than memes. I will attempt to provide a counterargument to his argument. In my view, humans (in fact, all lifeforms) have a natural, evolutionarily adaptive tendency to produce meaning, and this is what we mean when we use the word "meaning" in the existential sense, the "meaning of life". What makes humans so interesting is that we are capable of conventionalizing meanings and transmitting them throughout the generation in the form of self-reproducing symbols---i.e., memes. This requires what Dan Everett calls "dark matter of the

mind"; that is, implicit, emic cultural knowledge. Such emic knowledge is what is necessary to successfully produce meanings (and memes) and pass them on. I will illustrate this with the examples of internet memes and linguistic semantics. I hope to leave the audience with the idea that memes are the vehicle through which human culture is succesfully transmitted; therefore, that if we think of meaning (both in the existential sense and in the semiotic sense) as self-reproducing information that is transmitted from one generation to the next, then we can felicitously think of meanings as memes.

Facebook memes and the semiotics of typography: The case of *lemgthbook*

Vinicio Ntouvlis, CLS

Since January 2017, an ever-growing agglomeration of Facebook groups has spawned (362 groups to date) whose defining characteristic was that all of their content was somehow thematically related to the concept of length. These groups, collectively titled *lemgthbook*, enforce a puzzling meaning-making practice: the usage of the letter <n> is banned from their content and <n> is systematically replaced by <m>. This study adopts an ethnographic approach in order to provide a preliminary account for this practice through a qualitative analysis of *lemgthbook*-style user-generated content. The study's main goal is to investigate possible theoretical implications for the semiotics of typography within the framework of social semiotics. The content posted in *lemgthbook* groups, treated here as internet memes, is found to innovatively exploit the modal affordances of typography as a mode by creating meaningful typographic contrasts not on the level of typeface but through the substitution of alphabetic characters. This is found to be a result of the limitations imposed by the semiotic technology of

Facebook, which does not readily allow for the inclusion of different-font text. It is also found that this peculiar semiotic practice has begun spreading outside *lemgthbook*. The findings further our understanding of the mode of typography expanding on its original conception by Van Leeuwen (2006). This is mainly achieved by considering the crucial role of social media technology in semiosis as recently brought to light by Poulsen & Kvåle (2018), whereby the availability (or lack thereof) of options for meaning-making on a social medium (e.g., can users produce text in different fonts?) results in different meaning-making patterns. Based on this semiotic analysis, the study also explores the humourous function of *lemgthbook* content. The discussion proposes a view of such content as a case of shitposting, a type of abstruse humour that proliferates on the internet.

Reflections of the Hidden Duchess and the Moon King. *The tabula scalata as early modern meaning-machine*
Clim Wijnands, HLCS
Cardinal Ciocchi del Monte (c. 1532-1577), the late pope's lover, owned a painting that changed as he moved, transforming the image of a waxing moon into the King of France. This *tabula scalata,* or 'ladder painting', consisted of triangular slats painted on two sides and attached to a panel, creating a 'double image'. A mirror was placed at straight angles of the upper frame, allowing the beholder to see both painted sides at the same time – but only when standing in the right position.

Devices like this one are exemplary of the sixteenth-century tendency to engage paintings kinetically and physically. Within the elite culture of the Italian *palazzo*, these interactions took on a distinctively social and intellectual character. This contribution

analyses how these scarcely studied devices relied on the beholder's active participation to convey intertwined layers of artistic, scientific, political, and poetic meaning(s). To do so, it discusses two compelling case studies.

The first is Del Monte's lost painting, created in French royal court circles around 1550 and subsequently making its way to Rome as a diplomatic gift. The device combined a portrait of Henry II of France, a moon symbol, and a puzzle-ridden poem to convey interrelated political and poetic meanings.

The second painting is Ludovico Buti's *Portrait of Charles III of Lorraine and Christina de' Medici.* It was commissioned by the Medici family in Florence, and originally hung in a room filled with maps and geographical devices, embedding the work in a scientific discourse, while also referring to dynastic ideology.

As shall be seen, both devices were designed to evoke wonder, straddling the vague boundaries between painting, scientific instrument, poem, and toy to stimulate the beholders' senses and involve them in an interactive game of meaning-making.

Panel 5: Methodology: man and machine

Finding meaning in photographs. A visual turn: analysis and interpretation of a nineteenth-century soccer action photo
Jan Luitzen, Wim Zonneveld, HLCS

Visual Turn
Sport history is adapting its long tradition of empirical research rooted in written sources to a methodological process known as "the Visual Turn." Contributions to sport journals and books have traditionally been based on written sources since these were (often implicitly) thought to have had the most to offer. However,

visual images such as sports photography are very well suited to helping recall and clarify sports history.

This paper is a contribution to cultural history through sport history. It uses visual research of a period in Dutch sport history that has barely been examined, i.e., the late nineteenth century. We argue that the analysis of football (i.e soccer) photos can contribute greatly to the understanding and explanation of the social and cultural context in which football is practiced and photographed, in this case through the emerging sports photography in the late nineteenth century.

In addition to textual analysis we examined a football action photo taken between 1895 and 1897 on the football field of the all-boys boarding school Noorthey, where football was introduced in late 1877 – along with the cultural Anglomania of the day – following the English style, regulations, and terminology.

The Noorthey photo is one of the earliest proofs that between 1890 and 1897 photography in the Netherlands had been technologically developed to the point that an object such as a football ball, moving unpredictably, could be recorded as hanging in midair.

Outdoor football was encouraged by the management of Noorthey as an alternative to classes taught inside because its competitive and feisty nature not only helped shape the students physically and mentally, but it also stimulated camaraderie and more serene studying at night. The pictures show the competitiveness among students, but more so among the English instructors, who oversaw the students while playing side-by-side with them. By participating passionately, (new) teachers could gain popularity off the field and be accepted more quickly by (a large number of) the students.

<u>Methodology</u>

Our search for pictures of football-in-action was "manual labor": available paper material and online resources were searched "intuitively" but with a sound basis. We used over 1.5 million digitally available newspapers, books, and periodicals that can be found through <u>www.delpher.nl</u>, and the digital library of Jan Luitzen, which includes 15,000+ sport reference books and sport magazines.

For the analysis and interpretation of this soccer action photo we followed three steps: Identifying people, objects and events; Establishing and checking their usual meaning (with the aid of other sources); Explaining the cultural context.

Making the Computer Understand Urban Legend Types (And Making Humans Understand the Computer)

Myrthe Reuver, CLS

Urban Legends are the original and offline "viral" stories: stories that widely and spontaneously spread from person to person. These legends have a weak factual basis, and topics concern specific anxieties about modern life, such as "*Stranger Danger*" (Fine 1985).

The Meertens Institute possesses an extensive collection of urban legends in Dutch culture, in the Volksverhalenbank database. This database uses the brunvand-type index as metadata for the urban legends (Brunvand, 2002), in order to categorize the individual story versions into types. For instance, "BRUN 03000" is "The Babysitter and the Man Upstairs" (Brunvand, 2002, Nguyen et. al. 2013). One story type can have many different story versions, with for instance characters of different genders, or slightly different endings.

This paper will showcase a machine learning model created to predict the *type* of urban legend story from an input text, but also (crucially) an interface to help the people working with the model actually understand what it is doing.

The trained classification model (a hierarchical support vector machine, trained on 1055 legends with a random 20% development set) predicts BRUN-type numbers of new, out-of-database urban legends. The model makes its decision for "urban legend type" simply on word counts and word frequencies, but has a surprising high accuracy for such a simple metric: some stories ("Poodle in the Microwave") were very well recognized (in-class F1 = .86), while other stories were not well-recognized at all. This is due to the heterogeneity of some story types, where setting or characters changes a lot in different versions. Another factor that confuses the model is noise in the text data, in the form of genre features. Thus the model has strengths and weaknesses in identifying urban legend types.

One of the results of the research project is a demo: an interactive visualization of how the model works, with a way for employees of the Meertens Institute to correct the model when it is wrong. The aim is to make human and computational model find meaning (in this case, urban legend type) together.

Do men and women use language differently? A scoping review of linguistic variables in face-to-face interactions.
I. Plug, W.J.P. Stommel, P.L.B.J. Lucassen, T.C. olde Hartman, S. van Dulmen, E. Das, CLS
The relationship between sex/gender and language use has been of researchers' interest for decades. Some previous studies have reported empirical evidence for what it means to 'talk like a (wo)man', whereas other studies have found more similarities

than differences between men and women in how they use language. Because it has almost been 20 years since the last comprehensive review about male and female language use was published, the current state of empirical findings on whether men and women use different linguistic and interactional variables is indistinct. The aim of our scoping review is to provide an overview of findings on a broad range of linguistic and interactional variables that were empirically examined in relationship with sex/gender in the last two decades. Fifteen empirical studies investigating men's and women's language use in spoken face-to-face interactions were reviewed. In total, more than thirty linguistic and interactional variables were identified, which were classified into six different linguistic categories. The review's findings provide little evidence for consistent differences between women and men in the use of linguistic variables, although it can be tentatively suggested that women are more engaged in supportive turn-taking than men. Furthermore, the findings show an important role of context, in which interactional setting, specific conversational goals, and roles associated with gender, status and experience, seem to relate to the language use of women and men. Besides providing insight in the current state of empirical findings on men's and women's language use, the overview of linguistic variables and their operationalized definitions presented in our review can be used as observational tool in future research for studying men's and women's language use in dyadic and triadic interactions in various meaningful contexts, for instance in physician-patient interactions.

Shaped by Storms, Spades and Stories, Memory, Landscape, and Dyke Solidarity in the Eighteenth-Century Dutch Delta

Adriaan Duiveman, HLCS

Dyke solidarity could not be taken for granted in the early modern Dutch Delta. The shared responsibility for the maintenance of hydrological systems required labour from the local farmers and, when water management professionalised, substantial financial contributions from landowners. Historian Arne Kaijser asked how it was possible that premodern inhabitants of the Low Countries were able to set up large-scale hydrological projects without a strong, central state. He finds his answer in institutions: shared rules that cover the distribution of work, procedures for inspections and sanctions for misconduct. By the means of these institutions, the premodern inhabitants of the Low Countries could solve the free-rider problem. Everyone had to contribute to the building and maintenance of dykes and sluices. However, these institutions could not have been built on rules only. To be legitimate, I argue, there had to be a convincing narrative.

This paper takes it bearing from recent developments in the study of (institutions for) collective action. While the historiography of Dutch water management has mapped the judicial, administrative and technological aspects of early modern water boards in great detail, it has overlooked their 'cultural resources'. By analysing a wide range of sources – ranging from dyke laws and technological treatises to visual and material culture – I open up the wider cultural context that legitimised eighteenth-century water boards.

"Whose openness is like a wound": The Wounded Storyteller in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992)

Carlijn Cober, HLCS

This paper will investigate the close connection between both trauma and romance in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992) from the point of view of narrative medicine. Not only is trauma the underlying theme of the novel, it moreover encompasses narrative 'deep structures' that are related to the experience of trauma, such as repetition, fragmentation and 'openness'. Through a close reading of the literal wounds that are described in the novel, this paper examines how textual structures are utilized to establish the 'openness' of the text as part of a narrative strategy to convey trauma and the text as a 'wounded body'.

Linguistic and interactional aspects that characterize consultations about medically unexplained symptoms: A systematic review

Inge Stortenbeker, Wyke Stommel, Sandra van Dulmen, Peter Lucassen, Enny Das & Tim olde Hartman, CLS

Objective: The absence of a specific underlying disease challenges patient-provider communication about medically unexplained symptoms (MUS). Previous research focused on general communication patterns in these interactions; an overview of more detailed interactional and linguistic aspects of such consultations has remained lacking. This review aims gain a detailed understanding of communicative challenges in MUS consultations by synthesizing evidence from conversation and discourse analytic research.

Methods: A systematic review of publications using eight databases (PubMed, Embase, CINAHL, PsychINFO, Web of Science, MLA International Bibliography, LLBA, and

Communication Abstracts). Search terms included MUS, linguistics, and communication. Additional studies were identified by contacting experts and searching bibliographies. We included conversation or discourse analytic research based on video- or audio recordings of natural patient-provider interactions about MUS. Two authors independently extracted the data, and quality appraisal was based on internal and external validity.

Results: We identified 18 publications that met the inclusion criteria. We could distinguish three dimensions that characterize medical interactions about MUS: 1) recognition for symptom experiences is pivotal for patients with MUS, 2) MUS consultations have a double trouble potential, and 3) by absence of an organic cause, acceptable explanations are negotiated during the medical interaction with persuasive strategies. We describe recurrent linguistic and interactional features of these interactions, such as the use of extreme case formulations ("terrible"), restricted question-answer sequences, or framing ("chemical reactions" vs. "psychological processes").

Conclusions: Despite the trouble potential that surrounds MUS consultations, persuasive conduct serves to avoid friction and enhance agreement which could, eventually, lead to (psychological) treatment. Subtle negotiation and persuasion are key for successful communication in MUS consultations.

Taking notes

Taking notes

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