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**Ethics and Affect:
Rethinking the Text
and the World**

Éthique et affect:
repenser le texte et
le monde

Book of Abstracts

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Sameera ABBAS (Lahore University of Management Sciences), *Gendering Ethical Memory: Women, Resistance, and State Violence in Imagining Argentina and The Shadow of the Crescent Moon*

Panel 9.4

State violence operates not only through physical coercion but also through the erasure of lives from public memory. This paper examines Lawrence Thornton's *Imagining Argentina* and Fatima Bhutto's *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* to argue that both novels construct gendered ethical archives in which women become victims of state violence, witnesses to its effects, and active participants in resisting its erasures, even as the novels imagine different forms of resistance shaped by their distinct political contexts. In *Imagining Argentina*, storytelling becomes a collective act of resistance. Through Carlos's imaginative reconstructions and Cecilia's interior acts of narration, the novel transforms disappearance into collective remembrance, restoring subjectivity to those erased by the dictatorship. Women emerge not only as victims of state violence but also as the architects of a shared counter-memory. By contrast, *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* presents a fragmented political landscape in which violence emerges from the state, militancy, and patriarchal structures. Rather than producing a unified politics of resistance, the novel depicts competing ethical responses, while women bear the everyday consequences of overlapping forms of violence. While Mina resists through acts of remembrance, attending funerals to preserve the memory of her dead child, Samarra embraces armed resistance against the state. Yet both women reveal the limits of female agency within a fragmented political landscape: their lives remain shaped not only by state violence but also by the competing loyalties and failures of male-dominated resistance. By comparing these novels, this paper argues that literature performs different forms of ethical labour depending on the political organization of violence: while *Imagining Argentina* constructs a collective archive of resistance, *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* preserves fragmented experiences that resist incorporation into a singular narrative of state oppression.

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Ganjala Marif ABBASOVA (ADA University, Baku), *Ethical Ambiguity and Cultural Values in the Making of Heroes*

Panel 4.3

Heroism in folklore reveals how cultures construct their own ethical ideals of bravery, responsibility, and virtue. Figures such as Soslan (Sozyryqo) and Koroghlu embody not only courage and sacrifice but also moral ambiguity: Soslan's loyalty coexists with cunning and moments of cruelty, while Koroghlu's commitment to justice is intertwined with his identity as an outlaw and raider. These complexities raise an ethical question rooted in cultural

constructivism: *what moral values did these societies choose to elevate, tolerate, or negotiate in defining a “hero”?*

In the contemporary world, the concept of heroism is increasingly shaped by globalised media, especially products of U.S. cultural influence. Popular films, TV series, and digital narratives promote a “main character” ethos aligned with Great Man and trait-based theories, which emphasise individual exceptionalism. However, research in social identity theory and moral psychology suggests a contrasting ethical view: genuine heroism is relational, grounded not in self-promotion but in responsibility, moral courage, and the protection of others.

Bringing together folklore, cultural value systems, and global media discourse allows us to observe a tension between traditional, community-oriented ethics of heroism and contemporary individualized models. This tension leads to a central ethical question: *in a globalised world shaped by mixed cultural influences, what does it truly mean to be a hero today?*

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Gabrielle ADJERAD (Université Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines), ***Black Affect and “Relation” Between Text and Readership: A Transatlantic Look at Autotheory***

Panel 7.7

Emphasizing affects in minority productions has often involved analyzing the tools used to establish a relationship between the text and the readership, allowing the latter to be involved in the suffering depicted (Attridge 2015), for example that of migrant subjectivities. Monica Michlin evokes the polysemy of the word “relate” in English, which means both to tell a story, to form an emotional bond with someone, and to identify with someone (Michlin 2011). Lesley Larkin, in her analysis of the racial issues involved in reading African-American novels, emphasizes the importance of the reception of these works, whose intrinsically dialogical nature is particularly salient because authors are led to take into account the multiplicity of their readers, who are both white and not white. Reading is thus conceived as an act of deciphering with an ethical component. Larkin expresses her hostility to the academic instrumentalization of literature for the purposes of reform white psyche, but nevertheless likens the literary encounter with a book to an intersubjective relationship with a person (Larkin 2015).

However, Tyrone S. Palmer (Palmer 2020) discusses the multiple meanings of the concept of relation and how literary criticism has seized upon its metaphysical dimension to designate the inevitable connection to the World, in a cohesion that gives a central role to affect. In the “affective turn,” relation has more often been mobilized as a vector of organic redemption in the face of the perils of a ratiocinative, unproductive, and morally devalued theory.

Palmer examines how Black subjects have been stripped of their humanity and historically treated as objects of pleasure. He explains the impact this can have on how, metaphysically, they have been placed outside of intersubjectivity as conceived by affect studies. His analysis of Claudia Rankine's *Citizen* can guide us, as he focuses on how her text depicts the constant misunderstanding to which Black subjects are exposed, the lack of recognition and the illegibility of their feelings, which are exaggerated or denied, magnified and vilified, interpreted as dangerous because they are not understood in their nuances. He also deciphers the emotional intensities that result from expulsion from the World, whose functioning is based on the destruction and death of the Black body, and which translate, in

an antagonistic way, a desire not to connect with it by confirming it emotionally, but on the contrary to detach oneself, to withdraw or to retreat.

This paper will offer to develop these thoughts on the complexity of the ethical relationship between texts addressing racial discrimination targeted at black writers from different national and cultural contexts and their readership. It will seek to expand Palmer's thoughts by examining a transatlantic corpus of French and North American "autotheories" (Fournier 2021, Brostoff, Cooppan 2025) tackling the experience of blackness in various historical and geographical circumstances: *Ordinary Notes* (2023) by Christina Sharpe, *Le Triangle et l'Hexagone: Réflexions sur une identité noire* (2020) by Maboula Soumahoro and *Vivre, libre : Exister au cœur de la suprématie blanche* (2025) by Amandine Gay. The attention drawn to the reaction of the reader in a way that likens life writing and autobiography to the works of the archive or the museum will be particularly stressed by this talk which seeks to examine how books can shed light on how certain subjectivities are "forced to care" (Nakano Glenn, 2012).

Gabrielle Adjrad (gabrielle.ajerad@ens.uvsq.fr) is an assistant professor at the University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines in Paris and a member of the CHCSC. She is working on a monograph on negative feelings in contemporary American literature on migration and post-migration. She has published in the journals *EOLLES*, *Postcolonial Literatures and Arts*, *Transtext(e)s Transcultures*, *Synthesis*, and *L'Atelier*, and a book chapter in *Penser l'Intersectionnalité: Minorités et Dominations Plurielles aux Etats-Unis* (ed. Elmaleh, Michaud, Perséides, 2025). She works more specifically at the intersection of gender studies and affect studies. She also organizes a seminar on Black Feminism at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris, where she has interviewed Maboula Soumahoro and Amandine Gay.

Sabina El Khan AGABABAYEVA (Baku Slavic University), *Intertextuality in Contemporary Azerbaijani Postmodern Prose (Based on Kamal Abdulla's Novel The Valley of the Wizards)*

Panel 4.3

Intertextuality is one of the most significant features of postmodern literature. According to the concept of intertextuality, every text bears traces of the works written before it; the author incorporates fragments of another writer's work into his or her own text. Unlike the modernist writer, who strives to create an entirely original work, postmodernists repeat and reinterpret the past through this method. They value reinterpreting and playing with the past more than pursuing originality. Postmodernists, who emphasize freedom and openness, seek to reconstruct and reshape the future through tradition. It should be noted that the idea of "the fusion" of multiple texts within a single text gained prominence in the theories of critics such as Roland Barthes and Mikhail Bakhtin. In postmodern literature, intertextuality allows for the simultaneous use of diverse literary styles. Intertextuality constitutes the foundation of the literary work of Kamal Abdulla, one of the early representatives of Azerbaijani postmodern literature. Similar events, plots, and even the same characters can be observed in the author's later works, albeit presented in new forms and with new meanings. From this perspective, the choice of Kamal Abdulla's novel *The Valley of the Wizards* as the subject of this research is far from accidental. The events and characters depicted in *The Valley of the Wizards* can also be traced in some of the author's earlier works. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to the poem of the same name *The Valley of the Wizards*, the short story "Decision," and the play *As If Fearfully*. It should be noted that the general content of the poem "The Valley of the Wizards" resonates with the philosophical and artistic meaning of the novel. The short story "Decision," published in 1996, a decade before the novel, is

built upon the life story of the executioner Mammadqulu. The play *As If Fearfully* was written by the author in 1997, based on the motifs of the same story. All three works — the short story “Decision,” the play *As If Fearfully*, and the novel *The Valley of the Wizards* — create the impression of being continuations of one another. The analysis of the story and the play suggest that the plot of the novel was constructed upon texts previously written by the author. It should be noted that the main motif of the short story “Decision” is the tragic choice made by the executioner Mammadqulu. The scene depicting the caravan leader’s encounter with the spirit forms the basis of the play *As If Fearfully*. In the novel, which can be regarded as a kind of conclusion to the story and the play, the same motifs are reflected in the form of an intriguing and emotionally charged narrative. The event of the meeting between the caravan leader and the spirit in *As If Fearfully* corresponds to the present time of the novel’s plot, while the story of the executioner Mammadqulu in “Decision” is represented as a return to the past within the novel. These earlier works, written before *The Valley of the Wizards*, once again demonstrate that certain fictional elements — products of the author’s rich imagination — are repeatedly employed in different contexts throughout his texts. The author fully incorporated the plots of the short story “Decision” and the play *As If Fearfully* into the structure of the novel. In *The Valley of the Wizards*, the reader discovers that the executioner Mammadqulu is, in fact, the father of the caravan leader Allahverdi. In “Decision,” which is built entirely upon Mammadqulu’s life story, the narrative concludes with the birth of his son. The fate of the infant, left somewhat ambiguous and unresolved in the story, becomes clear in the novel.

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Emily AINLEY-ZOLL (University of Leeds), *Myth, Affect, and the Ethical Responsibility in the Works of Roland Barthes*

Panel 1.4

This paper argues that Roland Barthes’s work reconceptualises literature as an affective and ethical practice that is grounded in reading and circulation, rather than authorial intention. With this perspective, Barthes offers a compelling framework for rethinking the ethical and affective stakes of literary production and reception today. While recent decades have seen a renewed interest in ethical criticism and affect theory, Barthes already anticipates these debates by treating literature as a site where ethics, politics, and feelings are negotiated rather than resolved. Drawing on “The Death of the Author,” *Writing Degree Zero*, *Mythologies*, and *S/Z*, the paper places Barthes in broader discussions with Wayne Booth’s ethical criticism, for whom ethics emerge in the encounters between the ethos of the text and that of the reader. Principled responsibility is displaced from authorial intention to the practices of reading, production, circulation, and interpretation. In a sense, literature becomes an ethical ‘event’ rather than a moral ‘lesson’, resisting didacticism while remaining structurally implicated in political culture and censorship. Barthes’s hesitation toward apparent moral instruction does not signal ethical indifference; rather, it shows a mistrust of what he identifies as bourgeois mythmaking, where ideology disguises itself as nature (*Mythologies*). This refusal creates a foundation for reframing the stakes of censorship and cultural regulation, not only in terms of what is prohibited, but in how meaning is normalised, neutralized, or rendered affectively ‘useless.’ Barthes’s Myths operate affectively, shaping collective sensibility before they are consciously apprehended. If the text is, like Barthes suggests, a “tissue of citations,” ethical engagement depends on sustaining differences of meaning against forces of integration. Whether that integration of ethical engagement is imposed by cultures, markets, institutions, or political regimes, Barthes disrupts these fixed identities and opens the possibilities of new forms of community. Literature’s ethical and affective power lies not in shared values but in preserving the open and contested process through which ethics and affect emerge.

Emily Ainley-Zoll (emilyainleyzoll87@gmail.com) is a third-year PhD student at the University of Leeds, her expertise is in critical theory, global literature, and the oeuvre of Roland Barthes. Her research is motivated by a long-standing passion for textual analysis and interpretation, sparked at a young age and then solidified during her last year as an undergraduate when she picked up Barthes' seminal essay "La mort de l'auteur". Emily has acted for three years as both seminar leader and chaperone of the University of Leeds's *Choix Goncourt Prix* group, encouraging discussions on contemporary Francophone literature.

Şükran İlkay AKARÇAY (Başkent University) with **Hatice Esra MESCIOĞLU** (Karabük University), *Literary Afterlives of the Basque Conflict in Aixa de la Cruz's La Linea del Frente (2017) and Gabriela Ybarra's El Comensal (2015)*

Panel 8.4

Gabriela Ybarra's *El Comensal* (2015), translated into English as *The Dinner Guest* (2018), and Aixa de la Cruz's *La Linea del Frente* (2017) offer narrative accounts of the Basque conflict that engage a still-fresh wound with a pronounced sense of ethical responsibility, opening alternative ways of engaging with the past. Ybarra's autobiographical narrative revolves around two family tragedies: her grandfather's kidnapping and assassination by ETA in the late 1970s and her mother's death in 2010. In the aftermath of her mother's illness and death, Ybarra delves into her family history and bears witness to the violent decades in the Basque Country known as the 'years of lead' (los años de plomo). The family's experience of this period is interwoven with archival materials and newspaper accounts of the kidnappers' trial. Through her narrative, Ybarra forges an intergenerational connection with the grandfather she never met, mourns her mother's death, and, crucially, renders the perpetrators of her grandfather's assassination as embodied individuals rather than abstract or faceless figures. Aixa de la Cruz's *La Linea del Frente* (2017) centres on Sofia, who returns to the Basque Country after years of distance from the conflict that shaped her childhood and adolescence. While writing her doctoral dissertation on an author who became an ETA militant and later committed suicide in exile, Sofia lives near the prison where her high school boyfriend is incarcerated for ETA militancy. Her search for identity and belonging, along with her effort to create a sense of heroism from a prolonged conflict that has hollowed out the town where she grew up, forms the core of the narrative. By addressing the fragile boundary between heroism and terrorism, de la Cruz traces Sofia's growing disillusionment with the distorted idealisation of militant nationalism and with the popular support for ETA, which gradually erodes over time.

These two narrative accounts of violence in the Basque Country are significant not only for the space they create to negotiate difficult pasts, but also for the ethical interventions they enact. As Ybarra's work humanizes both the spectral victim and the figures of violence traditionally rendered monstrous, de la Cruz shifts the focus to ETA supporters and silent bystanders whose complicity aggravates the victim's suffering through social isolation. Both authors engage the past without positioning themselves outside the narratives they construct, nor do they seek absolution through authorial authority. Through metafictional strategies, they embed themselves in their narratives while directly engaging the histories they confront.

Through an examination of these two recent novels, this paper explores how Ybarra and de la Cruz move beyond binary us-versus-them frameworks to grapple with the complexity of the Basque conflict. It analyses, on the one hand, representations of lethargy and indifference and, on the other hand, expressions of anger and pain. This study argues that these works articulate an ethical stance through affective atmospheres that recall multiple forms of violence and foreground Basque society's involvement in the events, particularly through silence and tacit approval.

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Meltem AKIN POTOĞLU (Independent researcher), *Analyse comparée de La femme n'a pas de nom de Duygu Asena et La femme gelée d'Annie Ernaux du point de vue de l'éthique féministe et des répercussions affectives*

Panel 5.9

Le roman autobiographique de Duygu Asena, intitulé *La femme n'a pas de nom*, a contribué à la diffusion du mouvement féministe auprès du grand public en Turquie. Ce roman est le témoignage du combat mené par une femme, dont le nom et la subjectivité ont été systématiquement effacés pour dire « moi ». *La femme gelée*, quant à lui, fait partie de l'œuvre auto-sociobiographique d'Ernaux et traite de la transformation progressive d'une vie fondée sur la volonté de libération en une condition de « femme gelée » lors du passage de l'adolescence au mariage et à la maternité. Les deux textes soulignent comment la subjectivité féminine est limitée par la famille, le mariage, le travail domestique, la sexualité et la vie professionnelle, et par les idées de rupture, de rébellion et de fuite qui s'y opposent. Dans le cadre théorique, la notion de « devenir-femme » de Deleuze et Guattari est utilisée pour expliquer, plutôt qu'une identité fixe, la fuite des positions subjectives majeures/masculines, le chemin vers un « moi » différent, vers une individualité différente. Cette notion est présente dans les textes d'Asena et d'Ernaux qui refusent d'être réduites aux codes normatifs de la féminité. Nous analyserons comment le processus éthique de « devenir » une identité féminine du point de vue des femmes est organisé de manière narrative dans les deux textes à travers des affects tels que la honte, la colère, la solitude, le sentiment d'emprisonnement, le désir et la libération. L'objectif de cette étude est d'analyser le devenir-femme comme un processus éthique dans les deux textes à travers une perspective féministe.

Meltem Atim Potoğlu (meltemakinfr@gmail.com): Titulaire d'un doctorat en Langue et Littérature françaises de l'Université Hacettepe avec une thèse intitulée *Autobiographie, Autofiction et Intertextualité chez Patrick Modiano*, Dr Meltem Akin Potoğlu est spécialiste de l'œuvre de Patrick Modiano. Elle enseigne actuellement au Département de Langue et Littérature françaises de l'Université Selçuk. Ses domaines de recherche incluent le roman français contemporain, l'intertextualité, l'autobiographie, l'autofiction, l'œuvre de Patrick Modiano, la littérature comparée et la traduction de la littérature de jeunesse.

Anna ALBREKTSON (Stockholm University), *English Gardens and Swedish Sensibility: Cultural Ecology, Affective Aesthetics and Ethics in Helena Maria Linnerhielm's Poetry*

Panel 2.5

In 1795, an anonymous collection of poems written by the noblewoman Helena Maria Linnerhielm, born Ehrenstråhle, was printed in Stockholm. The collection, published by Jonas Carl Linnerhielm as a tribute to his spouse and with vignettes by his hand, includes a poem commemorating the Swiss author and artist Salomon Gessner. The speaker of the poem walks in the English garden of her Swedish manor house, the site where she once read Gessner's Idylls. The scene of reading – and emotions – mutates into a scene of

writing, as the speaker establishes a close connection between the landscape garden, and the sentimental ethics of Gessner. In fact, the garden transforms Linnerhielm from reader to poet. My aim is to show how Linnerhielm, and other Swedish poets, promoted an affective aesthetics, with a strong sense of community, based on ecological ideals. I read this aesthetics in terms of a cultural ecology (Hubert Zapf), creating the desired community in close connection with non-human nature. The result turns out to be a striking kind of poetry, creating a hybrid nature, combining the cultural norm of Mediterranean nature and climate, with the hemiboreal conditions of Sweden. However, this hybrid nature, as it is represented in poetry, is not simply a cultural composite, but the result of a radical version of ecopoiesis. I suggest that with help of this hybrid nature, Swedish poets around 1800 address the relationships between text and world as a highly affective and ethically charged ecology.

Anna Albrektson (anna.albrektson@littvet.su.se) is Professor of Literature at Stockholm University. She has published on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European poetics, Swedish sentimental literature, European Medea drama 1750-1800, and historiography. With Fiona Macintosh, she is the editor of *Mapping Medea: Revolutions and Transfers 1750-1800* (Oxford University Press, 2023). She is currently leading an interdisciplinary ecocritical project: “Cool Nature: Utopian Ecologies in Sweden 1780–1840”, funded by Olle Engkvists Stiftelse.

Luis ALBURQUERQUE-GARCÍA (CSIC: Spanish National Research Council), *Overview of Spanish Travel Stories in Certain Textual Families after the 1940s*

Panel 1.2

The ideological traces of post-war Spanish literature are traced in travel stories. The starting point is the assertion that travel stories have their own identity that justifies their consideration as a literary genre. For our study of 20th-century Spanish literature, we start from the notion of “textual family” as a basis for systematizing the enormous corpus of works concerned. We have systematized the collection of 20th-century travel stories into different families, such as the Generation of '98, those defending Hispanicism (*falagistas*), those emphasizing social realism, stories written by women, etc. We will refer mainly to two families of texts, the stories in defense of Hispanism and the stories of social realism, in which the ideological traces in favour of or against the Franco dictatorship are most evident. His study highlights the importance of the travelogue genre due to the “factual pact” it implies. It is a genre that straddles the historical and literary dimensions, as the representative and poetic functions of these travelogues make them a literary artifact with a remarkable anchor in reality. It is clear that they provide a real (factual) first-hand account, which is still literary even though it is far removed from fiction.

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Salla ALDRIN SALSKOV (Åbo Akademi University), *On the Ethics of Injury and Repair in Alison Bechdel's Graphic Novel Are You My Mother?*

Panel 7.3

This paper approaches Alison Bechdel's graphic memoir *Are You My Mother?* through the lens of ordinary language criticism to examine how ethical life and our relationality are articulated, negotiated, and sustained in the context of our everyday lives. Rather than treating the everyday or ethics as a system of values represented in literature or as affective responses elicited in the reader, I read Bechdel's graphic memoir as an illustration of, and investigation into, the moral dimension of what we do with words. I focus particularly on the role of dependency, misunderstanding, and care, and the possibilities of openness, understanding and love. Drawing on the tradition of OLP after Wittgenstein as well as feminist and queer theory, the paper attends closely to Bechdel's focus on dialogue, especially her exchanges with her mother. These scenes foreground Wittgenstein's notion of 'meaning as use', showing how ethical significance emerges not from abstract moral claims but from the ways words are taken up, refused, repeated, or misunderstood in everyday contexts. Bringing Bechdel into conversation with feminist theory and Ordinary Language Criticism, I argue that Judith Butler's ethics of vulnerability and dependency, together with Rosi Braidotti's affirmative ethics, allow these ordinary, or everyday linguistic practices to be understood not only as sites of injury or lack but also as possibilities for openness, love, and understanding. By situating *Are You My Mother?* within Ordinary Language Criticism, however, this paper argues that Bechdel's work challenges theoretical understandings of ethics and exemplifies how literature can illuminate moral life without recourse to theoretical foundationalism or general models of readerly effect. Instead, it shows how ethical, political, and existential questions of meaning are already at work in the ordinary, everyday uses of language in which our lives are rooted and our relations sustained.

Salla Aldrin Salskov (salla.aldrinsalskov@abo.fi), PhD, is a postdoctoral researcher in philosophy at Åbo Akademi University, Finland. Her research interests include ordinary language criticism, Wittgenstein's philosophy, feminist and queer studies and critical studies of whiteness and racism. Her recent publications focus on trans studies, dialogical philosophy, and the challenges of polarization. She is co-editor of *Ethical Inquiries After Wittgenstein* (Springer, 2022) and of a special issue 'moral understanding' for *The Nordic Wittgenstein Review*, (forthcoming) and of *Vardagsspråkskritik. Nordisk litteratur, litteraturforskning och filosofi efter Austin, Wittgenstein och Cavell* (forthcoming).

Alaa ALGHAMDI (Taibah University), *Ethical Afterlives: Postmemory, Narrative Distance, and Global Responsibility in Pamuk and Gurnah*

Panel 7.5

This paper explores how Orhan Pamuk and Abdulrazak Gurnah develop ethically attuned narrative strategies for representing inherited histories of violence, displacement, and loss. Focusing on *Snow* and *Afterlives*, the article argues that both authors move beyond direct testimonial modes towards storytelling forms defined by distance, fragmentation, and not knowing epistemically. Using Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory, along with theories of trauma and postcolonialism, the analysis also shows how narrating with restraint, silence, and mediation works as an ethical response to histories that cannot be fully known or represented. Rather than reconstructing the past in coherent or authoritative ways, Pamuk and Gurnah highlight the limits of what we can know and our obligations to tell the stories of others who have suffered. By doing this, they create a global ethics of storytelling where postmemory is a key part of an evolving, self-reflexive literary practice across transnational

contexts today.

Alaa Alghamdi (ayghamdi@taibahu.edu.sa) is a Full Professor of English Literature at Taibah University, Saudi Arabia. His research explores contemporary American and postcolonial narratives, cultural identity, and the relationship between literature and society. He holds a PhD in English Literature and has authored books and numerous peer-reviewed publications. A recipient of the U.S. Institute for Scholars Fellowship in Contemporary American Literature, he is committed to advancing critical thinking, creativity, and cultural understanding through teaching and scholarship.

Lala ALIYEVA (Independent filmmaker) ***Collecting as Methodology: Visual Storytelling in Postcolonial Contexts***

Panel 2.3

My contribution focuses on documentary film practice and examines the practice of collecting and interweaving fragmented stories and visuals as a methodological response to restricted public spaces where cameras are perceived as threatening instruments. In postcolonial contexts and countries with limited freedoms, documentary film practice transforms from mere collection into an act of preservation and resistance. Through two personal case studies – the ongoing project *Strange Sea*, which assembles disparate maritime narratives, and the short documentary *They Whisper but Sometimes Scream / Onlar pıçıldayır, bəzən də qışqırırlar* (2021), which emerged organically from spatial observation rather than predetermined concept, I demonstrate how letting stories guide the lens creates alternative pathways for documentation. This methodology becomes particularly urgent when driven by anxieties over disappearing landscapes, architectures, cultures, and ways of life threatened by environmental crisis, rapid development or political transformation. By privileging fragmentation over linear narrative, this approach navigates surveillance, censorship, and suspicion while creating counter-archives that bear witness to vulnerable histories. I argue that in postcolonial contexts, collecting becomes an ethical practice of listening, and the intertwining of fragments becomes a form of testimony.

Lala Aliyeva (lalaaa87@gmail.com) is a documentary filmmaker from Azerbaijan, with an MA in Journalism from GIPA and MA in Visual Anthropology from Goldsmiths, University of London. She is a co-founder of Chai Khana Media Platform, focusing on creative storytelling across the South Caucasus. Her short films have screened at various international film festivals, including Visions du Réel, Sheffield Doc/Fest, and Jihlava. Her debut feature, *Strange Sea*, is in production with support from the Sundance Development Fund and the Ciclic WEMW Award. She was a Jacob Burns Film Center Resident, a Close-Up fellow, and the co-founder of YAMAN Film Production in Georgia. Her works mainly explore the connection between people and spaces through a blend of realism and abstraction.

José Domingues de ALMEIDA (University of Porto / Margarida Losa Comparative Literature Institute), ***De l'affect écologique à l'éco-anxiété mise en fiction. Lecture comparée de La Fonte des glaces de Joël Baqué (2019) et Humus de Gaspard Koenig (2024)***

Panel 8.5

Dans le cadre de cette soumission, il s'agira de proposer une lecture comparée de *La Fonte des glaces* de Joël Baqué (2019) et de *Humus* de Gaspard Koenig (2014), deux romans français contemporains qui fictionnalisent des formes distinctes, mais quelque part complémentaires, de l'expression d'un affect écologique. À travers des dispositifs narratifs et des régimes d'écriture contrastés, ces récits interrogent la manière dont la crise

environnementale se traduit en expériences émotionnelles, existentielles et éthiques, allant de l'attachement sensible aux milieux à l'éco-anxiété comme affect et ressenti structurants du sujet contemporain, notamment des nouvelles générations soucieuses des questions environnementales et de la durabilité des équilibres écologiques fondamentaux. Si *La Fonte des glaces* s'inscrit dans une poétique de la perception et de la lenteur, où le dérèglement climatique est appréhendé à travers des sensations diffuses, une inquiétude sourde et une attention accrue aux transformations du paysage, et donne à voir une écologie affective fondée sur l'expérience incarnée du changement environnemental, où le trouble écologique s'exprime moins par la catastrophe spectaculaire que par une altération progressive du rapport au monde, à l'inverse, *Humus* mobilise une forme plus satirique et réflexive, pour mettre en scène l'angoisse écologique à l'ère du capitalisme vert et de la technoscience. L'éco-anxiété y apparaît comme un affect ambivalent, pris entre lucidité critique, culpabilité morale et tentatives de réenchantement du Vivant. Le sol, le compost et les micro-organismes y deviennent des figures centrales d'une écologie matérialiste et affective, où la question du soin du Vivant (du care) se heurte aux impasses idéologiques de l'écologie contemporaine.

José Domingues de Almeida (jalmeida@letras.up.pt) est [Professeur des Universités à la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Porto](#). Il est docteur en littérature française contemporaine. Ses domaines de recherche sont la littérature française contemporaine, les études francophones et la culture et pensée françaises contemporaines. Il se penche récemment sur les questions théoriques et critiques soulevées par les littératures post-migratoires, les récits post-mémoriels et les représentations de l'Europe avec une centaine d'études critiques publiées ORCID 0000-0002-4564-2766. Il est chercheur à l'[Instituto de Literatura Comparada Margarida Rosa](#), dont il coordonne la ligne Inter-Transculturalités, et directeur de la revue électronique [Intercâmbio](#). Il est, par ailleurs, président de l'[Association Portugaise d'Études Françaises](#).

Dilara ALTUN (Istanbul University), *The Tyranny of Statistical certainty: Affective Resistance and the Musillian Sense of Possibility*

Panel 3.5

Modernity has long been a project of replacing existential uncertainty with regimes of technical and statistical certainty. In the 21st century, this endeavour has reached its zenith through what Antoinette Rouvroy terms “algorithmic governmentality.” By leveraging Big Data analytics and artificial intelligence, contemporary rationality has transformed the “calculating human”—once a tragic figure of mid-twentieth-century literature, exemplified by characters such as Max Frisch’s Walter Faber—into a globally dominant normative form. This paper argues that such digital determinism forecloses the spaces of indeterminacy essential for ethical agency and affect, effectively neutralizing the “structures of feeling” that Raymond Williams identified as vital to lived experience. In an era that Shoshana Zuboff has described as “surveillance capitalism,” the statistical management of life increasingly renders contingency illegible. The study conducts a comparative reading of Max Frisch’s *Homo Faber* (1957) and Robert Musil’s *The Man Without Qualities* (1930–1943) to problematize the modern subject’s relationship with uncertainty. Walter Faber, Frisch’s engineer protagonist, embodies the pathological drive toward instrumental reason and statistical immunity. His reliance on mathematical probability acts as a protective shield against the uncanny nature of existence, leading to a tragic collapse when he is confronted with the irreducible contingency of life, death, and the body. Faber’s failure signals the limits of a subject that seeks to frame both nature and selfhood through a purely technical *Gestell*. In contrast, Musil’s Ulrich offers a radical alternative through the “sense of possibility” (*Möglichkeitssinn*). This paper proposes that Musilian uncertainty can be understood as an

affective mode of resistance against the statistical certainty of the digital age. Drawing on Lauren Berlant's definition of the "intimate public sphere" and Deleuze and Guattari's conception of affects as pre-personal, transindividual states, I argue that algorithmic optimization systematically filters out the pre-cognitive and non-linguistic states of being in which freedom first takes shape. By distinguishing between "mathematical probability" — which reduces the future to a mere statistical extension of the past — and Musil's "existential possibility," the paper contends that literature functions as a privileged site of ethical intervention. The choice to remain "without qualities" and to embrace the indeterminate emerges as a vital ethical stance, allowing for the small but necessary ripples that can challenge the rigid contours of our data-driven reality.

Dilara Altun (dilara.altun@ogr.iu.edu.tr) is a PhD student in Philosophy of Art at Istanbul University, Türkiye. She completed her Master's thesis on artist figures in the works of Thomas Mann, establishing a solid foundation in German literary modernism. Her current doctoral research expands on this foundation to interrogate the ontological status of the artist-subject at the intersection of ethics, aesthetics, and the crisis of the modern subject. Focusing primarily on the works of Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse, she reads their literary transformations in critical dialogue with Schopenhauerian and Nietzschean traditions. Her recent work, forthcoming in journals such as *Noktasız Dergi*, seeks to bridge early twentieth-century cultural theory with the challenges posed by contemporary digital rationality, with a particular emphasis on the critique of instrumental reason.

Lieven AMEEL (University of Helsinki), *The Narrative Forms and Civic Roles of Site-specific Literature: A Comparative European Perspective*

Panel 4.5

This paper examines twenty-first-century site-specific literature from a comparative European perspective. The term "site-specific literature" includes here the existence, in (semi-)public space, of the forms of literary signage that are more commonly bracketed under literary tourism or cultural marketing, but also, and more poignantly, interactive and collaborative works such as literary texts that are (co-)produced in public space by official city poets; site-specific theatre performances; and the interaction between narrated dialogue and a site-specific walkers in the case of audiowalks. The starting point will be examples from urban public space in cities in Belgium (Antwerp), the Netherlands (Rotterdam), and Finland (Helsinki). The aim is to set out a framework for a comparative approach to the narrative forms and civic functions of site-specific literature.

In the brief analysis, the focus will first be on the narrative forms of site-specific literature, with a focus on direct address (apostrophe, with an address to the "you" of the passer-by); dialogue (within and across texts); polyphony (especially the real or imagined inclusion of different voices), and what is called here (drawing on graphic novel theory; see Groensteen et al.) "spatial braiding", the rhyming effect of spatial elements in the text and in the related site. The second part of the analysis will consider the civic roles of these forms of site-specific literature, and will focus on how the selected literary corpus brings together different voices in the context of fragmenting public spheres in contemporary European cities.

This paper draws on existing work in literary urban studies (Ameel), new formalisms in literary studies (Levine), as well as on recent approaches to civic and public roles of poetry (see Fuchs; Finberg).

Lieven Ameel (lieven.ameel@helsinki.fi) is professor of literary studies at the University of Helsinki, Finland. He has worked extensively on the interaction between urban infrastructural form and literary form, with recent books including *Coastal Cities of the Future in Contemporary Literature* (forthcoming, 2026) and the edited volume *Routledge Companion*

to *Literary Urban Studies* (2022). He is one of the co-founders of the Association for Literary Urban Studies and one of the editors of the Palgrave series in literary urban studies.

Maëva ARCHIMEDE (Université des Antilles), *Poésie et transcendance politique dans les recueils francophones de la Caraïbe*

Panel 5.9

Les luttes sociales sont un des thèmes majeurs des littératures caribéennes au début du XX^e siècle. Marqués par un contexte mondial tumultueux, les écrivains de cette période – et plus particulièrement les poètes – participent à une prise de conscience sociale tout en contribuant à la construction d'une identité politique et culturelle. Des textes emblématiques, tels que ceux de Léon-Gontran Damas ou d'Aimé Césaire, témoignent de cet engagement et ouvrent la voie aux générations suivantes. Héritiers des poètes de la Négritude, les poètes Sonny Rupaïre, Elie Stéphenson, Max Jeanne et Joseph Polius introduisent dans leurs poèmes des motifs désormais devenus topoï de la littérature antillaise : le retour au pays natal, la représentation d'une société matriarcale, ou encore l'obsession de la généalogie. Contrairement à leurs aînés, leur regard s'attarde davantage sur la Caraïbe et le continent américain, tandis que l'Afrique n'est plus mythifiée, mais perçue comme le lieu de l'arrachement passé et des luttes politiques contemporaines. Le public visé change également : militants, ces poètes affirment s'adresser directement au peuple. C'est la place même de la poésie dans l'engagement de cette nouvelle génération qui est interrogée. Une tension apparaît ainsi entre esthétique, politique et éthique.

Pourtant, une lecture attentive révèle que ces textes, tout en exprimant l'urgence de l'actualité, dépassent le cadre immédiat. La poésie devient un espace qui transcende la revendication sociale pour atteindre un idéal, une valeur universelle ou bien un horizon de sens. Dans ces recueils, le politique prend une dimension quasi-spirituelle, éthique voire métaphysique. Transcendé de la sorte, il dépasse les individualités et offre à des peuples en quête d'histoire, d'identité et d'avenir une véritable vision collective. Pour ce XI^e Congrès de la Société Européenne de Littérature Comparée, nous proposons d'étudier les recueils poétiques et parcours des Guadeloupéens Sonny Rupaïre et Max Jeanne, du Martiniquais Joseph Polius et du Guyanais Elie Stéphenson. Questionnant la relation qu'entretiennent texte et société, la communication vise à réfléchir aux liens entre poésie, politique et éthique à partir de l'idée de transcendance.

Maëva Archimède (archimede.maeva@live.fr) analyse dans le cadre de sa thèse la poésie et l'urgence sociale. Elle a co-dirigé l'ouvrage *Figuration du monde dans le roman francophone* publié en 2017 aux éditions L'Harmattan. Parmi ses publications, on compte notamment en 2021 « Les jeux intertextuels dans le recueil Balles d'or de Guy Tirolien » (Intertextualité francophone, Québec) ; en 2023, « Texte, métatexte et posture dans *Gerbes de sang* de René Depestre et *Cette igname brisée qu'est ma terre natale* de Sonny Rupaïre » (Arborescence, Toronto) ; en 2024 « Anthropophagie dans *Western, ciné-poème guadeloupéen de Max Jeanne* » (Archipélies, Martinique) ; en 2025, « "Me voici". La parole providentielle de René Depestre dans le recueil poétique *Étincelles* » (Interculturel Francophonies, Varsovie).

Nicoletta ASCIUTO (University of York), *Paris with English Eyes: Hope Mirrlees and the Writing of Paris: A Poem (1920)*

Panel 2.2

The city of Paris was for many English and Americans of the turn of the twentieth century a gateway to European culture, art, and food. Upon visiting Paris for the first time in 1874,

Emma Hardy née Gifford (1840–1912), who was accompanying her husband, the English novelist and poet Thomas Hardy (1840–1928), would variously remark on the strangeness of places looking “distinctly French”, on the uniqueness of the French capital’s inhabitants (especially the women), and on the feeling of being singled out as an Englishwoman in the Parisian crowd (Hardy in Taylor 1985). But Hardy’s travel diaries were intended for her (and perhaps her husband’s) eyes only, rather than for the general public, as they are now. Fast forward nearly fifty years, Hope Mirrlees (1887–1978) would move to Paris with her former tutor, friend, and possibly lover, Jane Harrison. During their Paris sojourn, she would write a long poem, *Paris: A Poem*, on a young flâneuse walking around the French capital and observing its people in the wake of the 1919 Peace Treaties. French customs, traditions, attitudes, foods, and Parisian tourist attractions all fall under the poet’s critical scrutiny, which often criticizes and satirizes what it sees, at once attracted to and repelled by what it sees. The poem, while it has been considered a psychogeography (Parmar 2011; Kilbane 2025), has not often been understood as an example of travel writing, even as so much of it indirectly derived from a tourist’s experience of the city of Paris. In this paper I will explore *Paris: A Poem* as a piece of travel writing, focussing on Mirrlees’s inclusion of several elements of cultural and social criticism. I will also bring the text in dialogue with Mirrlees’s own impressions of French society and attitudes towards gender as they emerge from her notes and correspondence held at Newnham College, University of Cambridge.

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B

Karolina BAGDONĖ (Tampere University Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore), ***"To Be from Nowhere": Imagining Europe after 1990 in the Works of Tomas Venclova***

Panel 8.2

After Lithuania regained its independence in 1990, the country's return to Europe required a rethinking of ideas about European identity and belonging to the Western world. Before that, during the Cold War, the Lithuanian poet, translator, and essayist Tomas Venclova had reflected on a divided Europe and Lithuania's position within it, associating Europeaness with democratic values, critical thinking, human rights, tolerance, and the acceptance of the Other. For him, the preservation of historical memory and resistance to Soviet totalitarianism were central features of European identity. At the same time, he described Lithuania and Eastern Europe as occupying a condition of "nowhere," writing: "I am Lithuanian. This means that I am from nowhere, in both senses of the word, as proposed by Sir Thomas More and Alfred Jarry" (Venclova 1986, 3). The category of "nowhere" captures the historical experience of Soviet Lithuania and Eastern Europe as an erased yet imagined space in which the desire for freedom acquired a distinctly utopian character. This presentation examines how Venclova's poetry and essays imagined Europe after 1990 and how the political transformations of the late twentieth century reshaped his understanding of cultural identity. Drawing on the concepts of utopia and European identity, it analyses how the artistic expression of the "spirit of Europe" (to use Robert Schuman's term) changed in Venclova's work after the collapse of the Soviet bloc. It also explores the emergence of new intertexts, as well as the changing meanings of earlier ones, in order to ask whether the utopia of European belonging was realized, transformed, or ultimately disappointed.

Karolina Bagdonė (karolina.bagdone@liti.lt) is a research fellow at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Vilnius and Postdoctoral Researcher at Tampere University. The topic of her PhD was "The Reception of Western Literature in the Lithuanian Poetry of the Second Half of the Twentieth Century: Constructs of Open Identity" (defended in 2023). Her research interests include reception theory, comparative studies of literature, architecture, and identity, academia novel and the image of PhD studies, visual anthropology, and Soviet literature. She is a president of the Lithuanian Comparative Literature Association. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3519-9158>

Sevinj BAKHYSH (Independent Scholar), ***The Fool as Ethical Agent: Jesters, Tricksters, and Mediators in Cultural Traditions and Bulgakov's Master and Margarita***

Panel 4.3

This essay investigates the archetype of the fool as a cross-cultural phenomenon, tracing its development from archaic ritual roles to its literary elaboration in Mikhail Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*. By differentiating the primary typologies of the fool—the jester, the clown, the trickster, and the spiritually inspired mediator—the study highlights how these figures operate within distinct yet overlapping Western and Eastern traditions. Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque, the analysis situates the jester and clown within a symbolic regime of sanctioned transgression, where the inversion of hierarchical norms

functions as a mechanism of social critique. Simultaneously, the essay employs C. G. Jung's theory of archetypes to conceptualise the trickster and the mediator as expressions of the collective unconscious, embodying both chaos and transformation in their liminal positions between worlds.

The essay argues that *Master and Margarita* synthesises these archetypal configurations into three coherent variations of the fool: the jester (Koroviev-Fagot and Begemot), the trickster (Woland), and the mediator marked by "divine madness" (Yeshua, the Master, and Ivan Bezdomny). Through this synthesis, Bulgakov stages a profound ethical inquiry into the nature of truth, power, and moral agency. In Bakhtinian terms, the fool becomes a carrier of "unofficial truth," revealing through laughter, parody, and grotesque exaggeration the concealed violence and hypocrisy of state authority. From a Jungian perspective, the fool's destabilising presence compels characters to confront repressed fears, moral shadows, and latent potentials for ethical transformation.

The essay contends that these archetypal figures collectively articulate an alternative ethical order in which folly functions as a vehicle for truth-telling, moral resistance, and spiritual insight. The ethical dimension emerges not merely from the fool's critique of social structures but from the epistemological challenge he poses: the invitation to recognise the moral implications of one's own illusions, cowardice, or complicity. By integrating Western traditions of mockery with Eastern conceptions of sacred madness, Bulgakov constructs a uniquely Russian synthesis in which the fool mediates between the human and the transcendent, the rational and the irrational, the ethical and the anti-ethical. Thus, the essay demonstrates the enduring cultural significance of the fool as a figure who traverses and reconciles binary oppositions, functioning as both a destabiliser of norms and a catalyst for ethical insight.

Alina BAKO (Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu), *Géoféminisme et géographies affectives dans le roman roumain écrit par des femmes*

Panel 10.2

Depuis le début du XX^e siècle, les romancières roumaines renouvellent les représentations de l'espace en s'écartant des modèles géographiques hérités de la tradition réaliste et en inventant de nouvelles manières d'habiter le monde. Cette communication propose de relire ce corpus à partir d'une perspective géoféministe, attentive à la manière dont les expériences féminines façonnent des spatialités singulières. Les géographies affectives y occupent une place centrale : les émotions et les pratiques du quotidien investissent les espaces domestiques, urbains ou ruraux d'une intensité sensible qui transforme les rapports au lieu et à l'identité. Loin d'opposer l'espace intime à l'espace public, ces romans montrent que l'un se construit à travers l'autre et participent conjointement à l'élaboration des identités féminines. En croisant la géocritique, les géographies féministes et les études des affects, cette réflexion montrera que le roman roumain écrit par des femmes développe une véritable pensée géoféministe de l'espace, où celui-ci devient à la fois mémoire, expérience vécue et manière d'habiter le monde.

Alina Bako (alina.bako@ulbsibiu.ro), Associate Professor at the Faculty of Letters and Arts of "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu, holds a PhD in literature obtained in joint supervision (cotutelle) from the University "Michel de Montaigne" Bordeaux 3 and "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia, with a thesis on the poetry of the Romanian Oniric Group. She has published several books, including:

· *Cartografii ficționale. Perspective asupra prozei românești* (Fictional Cartographies. Perspectives on Romanian Prose), 2025

· *Reprezentări ale bolii și maladii ale sistemului socio-politic în romanul românesc (1960-1980)* (Representations of Illness and Diseases of the Socio-Political System in the Romanian Novel (1960–1980)), 2019

· *Dinamica imaginarului poetic. Grupul oniric românesc* (The Dynamics of the Poetic Imaginary. The Romanian Oniric Group), 2012

She has also co-edited and coordinated several collective volumes, such as:

· *Spatial Readings and Linguistic Landscapes*, 2022

· *Géographies insolites*, 2025

· *Les papiers des passeurs. Traduire Lucian Blaga*, 2022

· *Cronologia vieții literare românești. Perioada postbelică*. 1981 Vol. XXVII, 2021

She is the author of numerous studies and articles in the fields of Romanian literature in a global context, comparative/world literature, employing innovative approaches from literary geography, Medical Humanities, and Digital Humanities.

Francesca BALESTRO (University College London), ***Against Eventualisation: Ecological Unfeeling in Contemporary Autobiographical Fiction***

Panel 2.4

In outlining the rhetorical and affective tones that dominate public and academic responses to climate change, political theorist Ajay Singh Chaudhary observes that writing on the climate crisis oscillates between “cheery, comforting techno-optimism” and “enervating eschatological or existential proclamation” (2025). In other words, discussions of the current ecological predicament give rise to affective reactions ranging from consolatory resilience to apocalyptic gravity. These reactions shape the political and economic discourse as well as the generic expectations that govern contemporary climate fiction. Building on the work of Lauren Berlant (2008, 2011, 2015), I take the pairing of the narrativization of events and the affects they generate as a productive lens through which to examine contemporary ecological narratives. I identify a dominant tendency towards what I call “the eventualisation of climate change”: the drive to narrativize ecological crisis as a sequence of spectacular events saturated with affective excess (catastrophism, despair, moral urgency). Against this tendency, I examine two contemporary autobiographical narratives, Daisy Hildyard’s *Emergency* (2022) and Ben Lerner’s *10:04* (2014), that resist this eventualisation. Opposing the over-codification of speculative genres, these texts situate climate change within the textures of everyday life, undoing narrative drama and redistributing affect across ordinary practices, temporal delays, and minor gestures. In particular, while *Emergency* performs an affective de-dramatization of the ecological crisis, *10:04* foregrounds strategies of avoidance and detachment from the event of climate change. In this paper, I argue that these strategies of affective distancing and de-escalation constitute an ethical intervention rather than an evasion. By resisting affective immediacy and moral clarity, these novels reframe climate change as a condition lived in common rather than an event to be witnessed, anticipated, or overcome. Rather than mobilising readers through urgency or identification, they cultivate modes of attention, endurance, and ambivalence that challenge dominant affective economies of climate discourse. In this sense, alongside pointing our attention towards climate change’s material inscription in ordinary practices, the dimension of unfeeling offers the space and the time to theorise and aesthetically mediate climate change, avoiding the knee-jerk reactions presented by Chaudhary.

Francesca Balestro (uclzfa@ucl.ac.uk) is an AHRC-funded PhD candidate in Comparative Literature at UCL. Her research draws on everyday-life theory, affect theory,

and narratology to examine how contemporary Anglophone, Francophone, and Italoophone fiction mediates climate change. Moving away from the established conventions of speculative and apocalyptic genres, her project investigates the emerging structures of feeling that respond to the undramatic, often imperceptible forms of environmental transformation shaping 21st-century life. She is currently working on her dissertation project and drafting an article on affective de-dramatization and the climate crisis in *Emergency* (2022) by Daisy Hildyard.

Henrique BARBOSA-PRIMON (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München), *Narrating Space, Structuring Agency: A Methodological Framework for Ethics and Affect in Anthony Giddens and Stephan Günzel*

Panel 9.5

The category of space has been theorized in diverse ways within literary and cultural studies (cf. Frank 2017; Günzel 2010; Günzel 2017; Dünne & Mahler 2015). By contrast, agency as a narratological category has received comparatively little attention, despite its long-standing significance in philosophy and cultural theory (cf. Bhabha 1994; Melber 2017). This paper argues that spatial configurations in literary texts play a crucial role in shaping both the ethical and affective dimensions of agency, insofar as they structure possibilities for action, responsibility, and constraint. It examines the significance of space for the representation of agency in literature through the development of interrelated analytical categories that link narrative form to social experience. By outlining a methodological framework, the contribution asks which forms of spatial ordering generate which modes of action; how spatial semantics intersect with narrative roles, conflicts, and power relations; and how specific patterns of enablement and restriction emerge from these interactions. In doing so, it positions narrative space as a key site where ethical tensions and affective orientations are negotiated within literary worlds. In a first step, the elaboration of different categories of spatial analysis and spatial theory serves to more precisely delineate the descriptive resources of spatial semantics—such as boundary formations, thresholds, axes, places of retreat, peripheries, urban spaces, the suburbs, the pampas and the *sertão*, postcolonial border spaces, *lieux de mémoire*, political spaces, the spatialization of social and political norms, heterotopias as specific landscape formations, and the economic spaces of megacities and globalization (cf. Günzel 2010). These spatial figures are understood not merely as settings, but as affectively charged and ethically meaningful configurations that shape narrative experience. In a second step, the analysis of structural possibilities for action draws on Anthony Giddens's theory of structuration to establish categories for the study of agency in literary narrative texts. This includes concepts such as agent, agency, and power; foreground and background regions and their role in enabling or constraining action; processes of limitation and reification within structures and systems; structural property; the duality of structure; and the analysis of social change and structural restriction (cf. Giddens 1984). This framework allows for a systematic account of how narrative spaces mediate between individual action and broader social and ethical structures. In a third step, possibilities for action are not only narratologically typologized and described but also examined regarding their constitutive function within narrative spaces and their role in shaping narrative logics of decision-making. The aim of this contribution is to present a theoretical-methodological analytical procedure that first conceptualizes narrated actions as relational constellations and then analyses their structural and ethical effects on the action potentials, responsibilities, and affective orientations of literary figures.

Henrique Barbosa-Primon (henrique.primon@campus.lmu.de) holds a M.A. in Modern German Literary Studies and a B.A. in Romance and German Philology from the University of São Paulo, Brazil. He is currently a praedoc researcher at the University of Munich (LMU).

His research interests range from comparative literature, literary theory and methodology of philology to European and Latin American modern and contemporary literatures.

Susan BASSNETT (University of Glasgow / University of Warwick), *Reassessing Comparative Literature Today*

Keynote address 24 August

This address looks at how comparative literature has changed in the last decades and seeks to answer a question posed to Prof. Bassnett as to how a student might become an expert in the field.

Susan Bassnett (s.bassnett@warwick.ac.uk) is Honorary Professorial Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow, Emeritus Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Warwick, and President of the British Comparative Literature Association.

Lúcia BENTES (Independent scholar), *Affective Landscapes and Ecological Ethics in Jessica J. Lee's Two Trees Make a Forest*

Panel 6.8

Assuming that affect theory, ecocriticism, and the Blue Humanities offer promising frameworks for rethinking “the relationship(s) between text(s) and world(s) with regard either to ethics, to affect, or to the intersections between them” (CfP), this paper investigates how Jessica J. Lee’s *Two Trees Make a Forest* reconfigures these relationships through a narrative of return to ancestral origins. By tracing the narrator — “an environmental historian” (Lee 2020, 25) — as she moves across subtropical landscapes, coastal zones, and oceanic environments in Taiwan, the study examines how the text articulates modes of sensing, remembering, and dwelling that arise from encounters between the walking narrator and the island’s forests and surrounding sea (e.g., “(...) winding the coral-strewn route uphill to where the tip of Taiwan could be seen touching the sea. The forest grew thickly there, a short distance inland from the salt of the shore, and the humidity hung heavy” [Lee 2020, 38]). The analysis focuses on three dimensions: a) the sensory atmosphere of nature, in which trees, plants, and scents evoke perception and attention (e.g., “I met mimosa that curled at my touch (...) sweet bamboos (...) I came to know them by walking by crouching low to the ground to catch a scents” [Lee 2020, 26]; “The scent of soil hovers above the Hill” [Lee 2020, 29]; “A song cut through the woods, a sweet-toned trill that rippled on the rustle of the banyan leaves” [Lee 2020, 40]); b) trees as agents, generating feelings of strangeness, fascination, and unease (e.g., “(...) we’d find a looking-glass tree, its buttress roots like pale batwings propping the base of the mangrove, its shape a bizarre reflection of its fun-house name. The tree seemed to belong to an inverted fantasy world, with roots braced perpendicular to the ground, exposed to the air (...)” [Lee 2020, 38]); c) an ecological ethic, conveyed through detailed depictions of nature as distinct and valuable, which challenges hierarchical perspectives and positions humans with humility, displaced from the centre (e.g., “(...) and tall enough to reach a child’s height up the trunk, a visible reminder of the vast worlds contained beneath the soil, beneath all the other trees” [Lee 2020, 38]). Ultimately, the paper examines how embodied experiences and affective encounters while walking through nature can foster an ethical orientation. The forest’s otherness encourages readers to reconsider “the relationship(s) between text(s) and world(s)” (CfP), prompting a reflection on humanity’s position within the world.

Lúcia Bentes (lucia.bentes@mail.telepac.pt) was born and raised in Germany. She has a bachelor's degree in German, English, and Portuguese and completed her traineeship as a secondary school teacher. She earned her Ph.D. from NOVA University Lisbon in 2017. She

has published on interdisciplinary topics. Her research interests include Children's and Young Adult Literature, Contemporary Literature, Ecocriticism, and the Environmental Humanities. She is an independent researcher and teaches German and English in Lisbon, Portugal.

Elleke BOEHMER (University of Oxford), *Doing comparison across the blue hemisphere: why and how*

Plenary Lecture 27 August

My work on 'southern imagining' demonstrates how we might think laterally and comparatively from the far south of the world, the edges of the blue hemisphere, and considers why this is important at this time of climate crisis, and the continuing dominance of the planet by northern institutions, to which that crisis is directly related. The lecture will direct itself to the conference subtitle, 'Rethinking the Text and the World', by submitting that we might rethink the world *through* the text, in particular through our comparative reading of southern hemisphere texts. The question is not the postcolonial one of writing back, or of how the southern text confronts and challenges the north, but rather the question of how southern readings might work contrapuntally to imagine the planet in more holistic ways, 'from below'. Drawing on the work of Janet Frame, Randolph Stow, J.M. Coetzee, Mia Couto, Zakes Mda, Samanta Schweblin, Mariana Enríquez, and others, I suggest that southern poetics contribute something distinctive and forceful to our understanding in this time of the Anthropocene, offering a means of seeing at scale, and at multiple scales; of imagining 'over there' as right here, pressing and urgent.

My reflections are mobilised by the awareness that only 11% of the world's population live in the southern hemisphere. The 'edges' of the planet are 'out of sight, out of mind' for most people—from which comes the assumption that the view 'from below' can be safely ignored. And yet the high southern latitudes are registering many of the effects of the climate acceleration more acutely than elsewhere. Reading the far south through the works of the far south, interactively, I contend, brings these 'faraway' developments into razor-sharp focus, reminding us that the (only seemingly) remote impinges on us all.

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Mattia BONASIA (Sorbonne Université), *Éthique, monde, marge et subjectivité dans Americanah (2013) de Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie et Cassandra à Mogadiscio (2023) d'Igiaba Scego*

Panel 8.4

This paper examines the relationship between ethics, world, and representation in *Americanah* (2013) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and *Cassandra à Mogadiscio* (2023) by Igiaba Scego, two novels that foreground the tensions between colonial legacies and contemporary forms of symbolic domination. In both Adichie and Scego, writing and storytelling emerge as ethical practices grounded in memory, difference, and the responsibility of bearing witness. Drawing on theories of difference, both authors conceive identity not as a fixed essence but as an ongoing process of becoming. In *Americanah*, Ifemelu (a young Nigerian woman living in the United States) experiences a fragmented identity, oscillating between belonging and otherness. Her blog on race and American stereotypes ("Raceteenth or Various Observations About American Blacks by a Non-American Black") is a space for critical reflection on the social construction of difference. Likewise, in *Cassandra à Mogadiscio*, the Italian-Somali narrator revisits her own genealogy

through family archives, confronting the violence of Italian colonialism in Somalia. These diasporic subjectivities embody what Stuart Hall (1989) calls a "position of articulation": a shifting site of enunciation in which the relationship between the self and the world is constantly redefined. Particular attention will be devoted to the discursive strategies through which both authors represent location (Said, 1993): the position from which one speaks is always embedded within a geography of power. By moving from Lagos to Princeton and eventually returning to Nigeria, Ifemelu exposes both the limitations of the Western gaze and the possibility of a reciprocal perspective. Similarly, Scego reinscribes the history of Italian colonialism into a contemporary European context marked by historical amnesia and postmodern disavowal. Here, location becomes a site of memory and resistance. In this respect, neither Adichie nor Scego conceives the margin as an excluding periphery; rather, following bell hooks (1984), they reclaim it as a space of critical enunciation. Female testimony becomes a form of embodied knowledge, transforming personal experience into an ethical and aesthetic practice of resistance against erasure. From a decolonial perspective, the voices of Scego and Adichie also constitute a practice of epistemic disobedience. Their multilingualism (expressed through the interplay of languages, accents, and registers such as English, Pidgin English, Italian, Somali, and Arabic) functions as a strategy for displacing and destabilising the linguistic hierarchies inherited from colonialism. Ultimately, through their staging of diasporic and female voices, *Americanah* and *Cassandra a Mogadiscio* develop what Édouard Glissant (1990) terms a "poetics of Relation": the act of writing as an act of repair and reappropriation of the world. These texts articulate an ethics of representation grounded in difference, memory, and the possibility of speaking both "from" and "with" the world, thereby redefining literature as a critical space of encounter, dialogue, and transformation.

Mattia Bonasia (mattia.bonasia@uniroma1.it) est Maître de langue à l'UFR d'Etudes Italiennes de Sorbonne Université et titulaire d'un doctorat en critique littéraire et littérature comparée, délivré conjointement par l'Université Sapienza de Rome et Sorbonne Université. Sa thèse, intitulée « Écritures de la relation. Une comparaison entre Édouard Glissant, Luigi Meneghello et Salman Rushdie », explore le rapport entre le monde et la littérature au tournant du millénaire, en tenant compte des processus de mondialisation et de créolisation, selon quatre axes principaux de recherche: le champ littéraire transnational, le genre du roman-monde, la relation entre rhizomatisation auctoriale et transculturalité, le translinguisme et la poétique de la traduction. Il a participé à l'organisation de plusieurs colloques internationaux (« Meneghello e la critica », « ESCL 2022 », « ENN 7 », « Opera aperta, opera incompiuta »), il a publié dans des ouvrages collectifs et dans des revues académiques de premier plan en italien (« Between », « Comparatismi », « Enthymema »), en français (« Complut ») et en anglais (« Enthymema »). Ses recherches s'accompagnent d'un travail de traducteur entre l'italien et le français (AA. VV., Encyclopédie de l'autogestion ; Luigi Meneghello, Le trouble et le clair)

Narvika BOVCON (University of Ljubljana) with **Aleš VAUPOTIČ**, *Ethics and Epistemology of Artificial Intelligence in the New Media Art*

Panel 5.8

The paper examines the new media literature as an experimental probe into the changed reality of today's literature, the arts, humanities, globalized cultures and even the different perceptions of the world in general. The numerous ways of using computers and their networks to generate artistic utterances and experiences as a rule emerge as ad hoc artificial intelligence systems: as hybrid multi-user systems that organize agency, which nevertheless is very different from the intelligence of a single human being. Here the generative AI based on self-learning deep neural-networks is just one case of AI among

others. The paper points to the pre-techno theories of multilayered interactions between an individual, her society and e.g. languages. However, the acceleration of information processing forces comparative literature and the humanities in general to reconsider its methods – the issue of digital humanities seems unavoidable, and the paper proposes an alignment between discrete mathematics, as they are the foundation of Turing machines, and the humanities methodology. Also, the idea of the human can be re-examined considering new information technologies. In fact, any relevant new-media or computer art project is a study of the changes in the post-digital reality and a new modelling of the human-technology relationship, from which the making-sense of the world is interpreted. The ethical issues are linked to the epistemological transformations in the ways we manage and generate knowledge or inhabit discursive worlds. The constructionist information-systems modelling will be discussed in combination with maker-knowledge and the creation of pragmatic, good-enough, viable models of systems. Furthermore, in new media art there is a particular immanent advantage, namely the art institutions, even the art market and publishing houses with all of their problematic issues, nevertheless try to address and communicate with humans, to make us enjoy beauty, or deep and complex reflection on aporetic dilemmas of our world, or to provoke the addressee to respond and to engage intellectually and emotionally. Case studies of AI written literature will be examined as they are integrated in new media art installations in multimodal systems of hybrid agency, e.g. the first AI student enrolled in Vienna University and its modelling of feminist theory and of the taxonomy of generative-AI phenomena in everyday life. In the last part, the text considers the dissolution of the text-image distinction (and also other similar media distinctions) in the generative AI which embeds entities in a graph that doesn't discriminate between texts and other media anymore. A quasi-semantic level emerges in the machine consisting of algorithmic neurons interacting according to learned weights. E.g. an image of a table is close in the graph to the word "table" and its translated counterparts. In this respect, it is understandable that we need to start considering distant writing (alongside Luciano Floridi), it is already here in our everyday translations – using Google Translate – or in our seminar/scholarly papers using ChatGPT models, Copilot and others. The comparative literature is at a junction, and new media art that involves the verbal medium, while at the same time also transgressing it, is a subject of study and also a rich repository of ideas and approaches to the today's dilemma of how to deal with algorithmically generated discourse.

Narvika Bovcon (narvika.bovcon@fri.uni-lj.si) is a professor of video and new media art. She teaches at the Faculty of Computer and Information Science and as an external collaborator at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, both at the University of Ljubljana. Her research interests include user interfaces for exhibitions on online platforms and virtual- and augmented-reality environments, the theory and practice of new media art, information visualisation and digital humanities. Since 2016, she is the editor-in-chief of the journal *Art Words*.

Çiğdem BUĞDAYCI (Boğaziçi University, Istanbul), *Love between Affect and Ethics in Iris Murdoch's The Sea, the Sea*

Panel 7.9

This presentation questions the role of spectrality in Iris Murdoch's Booker Prize-winning novel, *The Sea, the Sea* (1978) in relation to her moral philosophy. Murdoch elaborates questions about how to live a good life through the character of Charles Arrowby, a retired theatre director who retreats to a remote seaside town. While Charles fantasizes about solitude and writing his autobiography, almost all the important people in his life visit him there. Through their encounters, their varying accounts of Charles' identity, and his own subjective and deceptive view of his past, the reader confronts central questions of moral

philosophy, such as what constitutes right action, goodness, and virtue. Charles' moral blindness becomes most evident when he encounters his childhood beloved Hartley in the town, who is now married with an adopted child and living an ordinary life. His reminiscences of their brief youthful affair, his insistent assertion of goodness while refusing to recognize Hartley's actual wishes and choices, and his attempts to "rescue" her from what he perceives as an unhappy marriage show how love can be lived wrong and how it is related to one's moral choices. His obsession with Hartley takes centre stage of the novel and as a lens to evaluate the relationship between egotism, self-deception, and love. In this presentation, I will critically analyse Charles' moral claims, his search for a good life, and his pitfalls based on Murdoch's writings on moral philosophy, especially her 1970 book *The Sovereignty of Good*, which marks attention as a "just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality" (33). Moreover, I will question how spectral theory or hauntology, as proposed by Jacques Derrida's 1993 *Specters of Marx*, can illuminate the relationship between Charles and ghostly apparitions that appear throughout the novel, reminding him of his moral failures and forcing him to think on love as an affect. Drawing on the relationship between spectrality and literature, particularly their association with the "ethical" sublime, as suggested by Bianco delVillano (2007), I focus on how love, affect, and ghostly presences interact in the search for a moral philosophy. As delVillano argues, the ghost inhabits an "interstitial dimension" that opens "a space beyond reason, in order to breach the wall of the reality represented by culture," and "a space of interrogation" where what has been marginalized or repressed can return to demand recognition (15-16). In *The Sea, the Sea*, I question how moral vision requires attending not only to rational principles but also to the affective dimensions of experience, such as the feelings, losses, and emotional devastations that Charles has inflicted on others and that return to haunt him. I argue that the spectral presences reveal Charles' delusional search for the good life and for love and that they cannot be achieved through nostalgic re-enactment of a romanticized past, but requires owning his mistakes, relinquishing fantasy, and developing the courage to face the transitory, imperfect, everyday aspects of love.

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Her research interests span comparative literature, the genealogy of emotions, gender studies, secularity and modernity, and media studies, with a particular focus on the intersections of love, religion, and Turkish literary and cultural history. Her work has been published in journals such as the *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* (JOTSA), *New Perspectives on Turkey*, and *MSGSÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*. Notable publications include "Medicalization of Sufism: The Discourse of Psychiatry, Psychopathology, and Secularity in Karay's Kadınlar Tekkesi" (2024) and "The Dead who Remain Alive: Saint Tombs between Memory and History" (2021). Her book chapter, "Ashk: The Sufi Concept for Love," appears in *International Handbook of Love: Transcultural and Transdisciplinary Perspectives* (Springer 2021; 2025), edited by Claude-Hélène Mayer and Elisabeth Vanderheiden. Her book chapter, "Romance and Neo-Sufism in Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love*" will appear in an edited collection, *Routledge History of Love in World Literature and Culture*, edited by Megan Moore and F. Fiona Moolla. She has presented her research at numerous international conferences across Europe and North America and is also an accomplished translator.

Dominika BUGNO-NARECKA (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin), *Folding the Archive: Baroque Memory and Ecological Emotion in Teju Cole's Blind Spot*

Panel 8.1

The paper explores the interplay of memory, affect, and ecological awareness in Teju Cole's *Blind Spot* through the lens of the neobaroque. Cole's hybrid narrative enacts a "folded archive" in which textual and visual elements intertwine, creating layers of historical and environmental reflection. Drawing on neobaroque concepts of excess, ornament, and dynamic surface-depth relations, I examine how the book's fragmented sequences of photographs, prose sketches, and reflective digressions generate an affective ecology that bridges personal memory, urban landscapes, and broader environmental concerns. In particular, the work's attention to seemingly minor visual and textual details: objects, streets, skies, and architectural forms, produces a sensory saturation that mirrors the ecological interconnectivity of the human and nonhuman worlds. Through intermedial and neobaroque framing, *Blind Spot* becomes a site where the ethical impulse to witness and care for both history and environment emerges as an affective experience, rather than a mere intellectual exercise. Cole's work is a model for thinking about how contemporary literature can orchestrate word and image to cultivate ethical attention in an era of ecological precarity.

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Carlo CACCIA (University of Eastern Piedmont; with **Giole CRISTOFARI**), *Inside Mario Pomilio's Writing Laboratory: Ethics, Affects, and Philology in The Fifth Gospel*

Panel 6.5

Mario Pomilio's novel *The Fifth Gospel* (1975) stands, alongside Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1980), as one of the most important historical novels in the Italian literary canon of the second half of the twentieth century. The Fifth Gospel is structured around a frame narrative detailing the decades-long quest of its fictional protagonist, the philologist Peter Bergin, for a mysterious fifth gospel. Within this framework, Pomilio assembles a constellation of invented documents from various historical periods collected by Bergin during his research. This fictive archive culminates in a drama, which is itself presented as Bergin's own creative work. Constructed with the hallmarks of postmodern narrative – genre hybridization, pluristylism, multi-temporal and transnational scope, and erudite intertextuality – the novel's underlying ethos is critically examined in Pomilio's essay "Prehistory of a Novel" (1989). In this metatext, where the author recounts the writing process of *The Fifth Gospel*, there is no trace of ironic postmodernist self-indulgence. Instead, "Prehistory" offers a lucid interrogation of the ethical and affective problems encountered in writing, reflecting on what authorial responsibility means in a postmodern era. This paper examines Pomilio's writing process as an exemplary case of an author consciously and rigorously reasoning through – on both ethical and affective grounds – his own creative activity. To pursue this investigation, the paper employs a hybrid methodology, drawing from Mikhail Bakhtin's aesthetics of creation, as well as from authorial philology and stylistics. The first part examines key issues arising from "Prehistory of a Novel", focusing on: 1) The ethical-affective relationship between author and protagonist. Utilizing Bakhtin's concepts from "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" (1924), we explore how Pomilio's own philological formation establishes a foundational tension: between his deep identification with Bergin and a necessary critical distance from his protagonist. This tension is ultimately resolved by positing the Fifth Gospel itself – its myth and problematic charge – as the novel's true protagonist; 2) The nexus between philology and creation. Pomilio's deep-rooted philological ethos transforms the novel's construction as a pseudo-critical edition from a formal game into an ethical stance – a meticulous, almost ascetic practice of mimesis. The analysis also shows that the invention of a pseudo-biblion – The Fifth Evangelion – functions as the very condition of possibility for Pomilio's creativity: a generative device for styles and genres, and ultimately, a mechanism for ethical and affective reflection on the act of writing. The second part investigates the ultimate ethical-affective pivot revealed in the genesis of the concluding drama, "The Fifth Evangelist". Pomilio recounts how, initially hesitant to integrate a full theatrical work, he ultimately let the characters "take him by the hand," surrendering to the fiction's internal logic. This section employs direct analysis of Pomilio's manuscript (held at the University of Pavia), utilizing philological tools to study the affective writing process of "The Fifth Evangelist". The analysis is complemented by a stylistic analysis of the drama's characters again drawing on Bakhtin's analytical framework.

Carlo Caccia (carlo.caccia@uniupo.it) earned his PhD in Ecology of Cultural and Institutional Systems from the University of Eastern Piedmont, Vercelli, Italy, in July 2025, with a dissertation on the epistemology and aesthetics of Gaston Bachelard. His articles have appeared in collected volumes and several journals, including *Enthymema*, *Comparatismi*, *Moderna*, *CoSMo*, *Studium Ricerca* (sezione on-line di letteratura), *Bachelard Studies*, *Novecento Transnazionale* (co-authored with Stefania Sini), *Symbolon* (co-authored with Stefania Sini), and *Diacritica* (co-authored with Gioele Cristofari). He has presented his

research at international conferences in Lisbon, Philadelphia, London, Changsha (China), and Toronto. He serves on the editorial board of *Enthymema* and he is a member of the junior researchers' group at the Interuniversity Research Centre "Philosophy and Literature" (FLECIR). He is currently enrolled in a certified program at the New Centre of Research & Practice.

Giuseppina CALENDÀ (Independent Scholar), *Translating Affect: Ethical Responsibility and Emotional Resonance in Literary Translation*

Panel 1.5

Recent developments in affect theory and ethical criticism have renewed critical attention to the emotional dimensions of literary texts and to the responsibilities involved in their production, circulation, and reception. Within this framework, literary translation emerges not merely as a linguistic operation, but as a profoundly ethical and affective practice. Translating emotions entails interpretative choices that shape how affect circulates across languages, cultures, and communities of readers, raising crucial questions about responsibility, loss, and transformation.

This paper explores the ethical implications of translating affect in literary texts, focusing on how emotions are negotiated, reconfigured, or attenuated in the passage from a source language to a target language. Drawing on affect theory (Ahmed; Berlant) and ethical criticism (Booth; Nussbaum), the study argues that affects are not transferable entities but relational forces embedded in cultural, linguistic, and narrative contexts. As such, their translation inevitably involves value-laden decisions that influence readers' emotional engagement and moral imagination.

The paper examines selected passages from contemporary Anglophone literary texts characterised by a high emotional density—such as expressions of grief, intimacy, vulnerability, or empathy—and compares them with their translated versions. Particular attention is paid to moments in which emotional resonance is altered through lexical choices, syntactic modulation, or shifts in register and rhythm. These variations are read not as failures of equivalence but as sites where the translator's ethical positioning becomes visible.

By foregrounding the affective dimension of translation, this paper highlights the translator's role as a mediator of emotional experience and ethical meaning. Translators are shown to participate actively in the construction of what Raymond Williams has termed "structures of feeling," contributing to the formation of interpretative communities that extend beyond national and linguistic borders. In this sense, translation can be understood as an ethical encounter between texts, cultures, and readers, one that calls for attentiveness, responsibility, and openness to alterity.

The paper concludes by suggesting that recognising translation as an affective and ethical practice has important implications not only for literary theory but also for pedagogy and reading practices. By attending to how emotions are translated, readers and students alike can develop a heightened awareness of the ethical stakes involved in cross-cultural literary exchange. Ultimately, translating affect invites us to reconsider the relationship between text and world, emphasising literature's capacity to foster empathy, ethical reflection, and shared forms of understanding across difference.

Giuseppina Calenda (giucale2000@yahoo.it) is a secondary school teacher of English with a strong academic interest in literary studies, ethics, and translation. She holds a degree in Foreign Languages and Literatures and has extensive experience in teaching Anglophone literature and culture, with particular attention to reader response, emotional engagement, and intercultural mediation.

Her research interests lie at the intersection of ethical criticism, affect theory, and literary translation, focusing on how emotions circulate across texts, languages, and interpretative communities. She is especially interested in the ethical responsibilities involved in translating affect and in the role of translation as a practice that shapes readers' moral imagination and emotional experience.

Alongside her teaching activity, she actively engages in academic writing and conference participation, exploring the connections between literature, education, and cultural transmission. Her work aims to bridge theoretical reflection and pedagogical practice, emphasising literature's potential to foster empathy, critical awareness, and ethical reflection in both academic and educational contexts.

Valeria CAMMARATA (University of Palermo), ***The Land Sings Back: Ecofeminist Genealogies and Tentacular Landscapes in Literature and Visual Art***

Panel 9.1

This paper develops the notion of the 'tentacular landscape' to explore how literature and visual art articulate ecofeminist and decolonial ecologies that resist the patriarchal and extractive logic of the Anthropocene. Drawing on Donna Haraway's 'tentacular thinking', Anna Tsing's 'arts of noticing', and Marija Gimbutas's vision of pre-patriarchal Earth-centred cultures, the paper reimagines the land as a generative subject of relation, reciprocity, and voice. The exhibition 'The Land Sings Back' (Drawing Room Gallery, London, 2024–25) provides the visual counterpart to this inquiry. Curated by Natasha Ginwala, it brings together artists of South-Asian, African, and Caribbean descent who reclaim drawing – once a colonial tool of mapping and domination – as a medium of care, reparation, and environmental justice. Their works, informed by animism, mythology, and political activism, resonate with the world-making practices of Ursula K. Le Guin's *Tales from Earthsea* (1968–2001), where naming, language, and nature are bound in a web of mutual interdependence. Through this intermedial dialogue, the paper traces an 'ecofeminist genealogy' that converges with the philosophy of Adriana Cavarero and Olivia Guaraldo, for whom female generativity is not essence but relation, a force that links human society to the living vitality of the Earth. By connecting the ethics of care in Le Guin's storytelling to the aesthetic activism of 'The Land Sings Back', the paper proposes the 'tentacular landscape' as an expanded ecology of attention and coexistence, where the land itself, at last, sings back.

Valeria Cammarata (valeria.cammarata@unipa.it) is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Palermo, where she teaches Literature, Gender Studies, and Visual Culture. Her research focuses on the intersections of literary and visual narratives, feminist and decolonial thought, and, more recently, environmental humanities. She has published widely on phototexts, migration narratives, and co-curates research projects such as *Beyond Globalization and Reclaiming the Land/Mapping Identity*.

Dawn CAMPBELL (University of South Carolina), ***Pedagogical Practices and Liminal Spaces: Re-imagining and Re-conceptualizing Marginality Through Feminist Standpoint Epistemology***

Panel 3.2

Feminist Standpoint Epistemology provides a useful framework in women's and gender studies classes where we interrogate texts to re-imagine, reconceptualize, and transform our lives. Undergraduate students connect with themes of language, identity, and marginality – regardless of their positionality. Whether through gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, or economic disadvantage, there is some element that connects us all. Feminist texts provide a

way of seeing ourselves and the world as a shared consciousness. Specifically, texts written by bell hooks and Gloria Anzaldúa demonstrate ways marginalized groups occupy epistemic advantages in understanding social structures and power dynamics. Hooks transforms the location of marginality from speech/voice that challenges the hegemonic center to reimagine belonging and knowledge as she acknowledges the advantages of seeing and experiencing from the position of insider-outsider. Anzaldúa centers language and identity through personal narrative, and Collins challenges us to interrogate personal biases by negating binaries and embracing a both/and conceptual framework.

Undergraduate students are in an important space and time of transition. They are in the liminal (transitional) space where past meets present, and the future is emerging. It is where renegotiation and reconceptualization take place, and it is in this space and time that they can experience endless opportunities of growth and expansion. When students take women's and gender studies classes, possibilities for reimagining, renegotiating, and reconceptualizing are centred, as they learn about (and challenge) concepts that have shaped their lives. Intersectionality, as a theory, concept, and practice is at the foundation of women's and gender studies. It provides a framework for students to explore institutional and individual social locations and biases, and it presents an opportunity to demonstrate myriad ways identities intersect to create privilege and marginalization, often simultaneously. It is in this space of acknowledgement that paradoxical concepts, ideas, and 'truths' become sites of examination.

When students have the space and support to ask questions, challenge ideas and concepts, and develop new ways of seeing and knowing, they become empowered. When students ground theory and analyze texts, the liminal spaces become sites of resistance and connection where identities and voices transform. This resistance, reframing and reconnecting are demonstrated through student writing, whole class discussions, and group discussions. The liminal space of the college classroom becomes a place where old structures dissolve and new ones/imaginings/possibilities emerge. It is where old and new timelines converge. This is where shifts, alignments, agency, and transformation happen.

Dr Dawn Campbell (dawnc@mailbox.sc.edu) is a senior instructor in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of South Carolina. Dr Campbell's teaching and research interests and expertise includes examination of gender and cultural norms and practices within historical and contemporary contexts. Dr. Campbell's teaching and research analyses the intersection of feminist texts, marginal spaces, and pedagogical practices.

CAO Shunqing (Sichuan University), *Variation in Translation and International Dissemination of Chinese Culture*

Panel 1.1

The international communication of Chinese culture requires not only broad global dissemination but also deep cross-cultural engagement. However, insufficient scholarly attention has been paid to the crucial role of variation in translation in achieving both extensive international dissemination and profound intercultural reception. According to Variation Theory, translation is not merely about languages, but also about cultures and mutual learning among civilizations. The inherent differences between cultures and the heterogeneity of civilizations make variation in translation inevitable. Indeed, without such variation, the formation of the rich and diverse canon of world literature would not have been possible. By examining the varying English translations of the Chinese symbol 'Long' (龙),

the process through which *The Orphan of Zhao* (《赵氏孤儿》) became a classic of world literature, the multiple variations of *Dream of the Red Chamber* (《红楼梦》) and *Journey to the West* (《西游记》) in different cultural contexts, and the transformation of classical Chinese poetry in Anglo-American Imagist poetry, which exemplifies the domestic appropriation of literature, this study demonstrates that, in the cross-cultural transmission of national literature, fidelity in translation is not the sole criterion for evaluating communicative effectiveness. On the contrary, variations arising from respect for the heterogeneity of civilizations can effectively broaden the international reach, cultural influence, and deepen the cross-cultural reception of literary works. The wisdom of variation embedded in Chinese culture can thus be activated through variation in translation, fostering richer and more innovative forms of intercultural dialogue and mutual learning among civilizations.

Cao Shunqing (shunqingcao@163.com) is a Distinguished Professor jointly appointed by Sichuan University and Beijing Normal University. He teaches literary theory and comparative literature. His research interests include classical Chinese literary theory, comparative literature, comparative poetics, and world literature. His major publications include *The Variation Theory of Comparative Literature* (Heidelberg: Springer, 2013) and “文论失语症与文化病态” (The Aphasia of Literary Theory and Cultural Pathology), *Arts Contend* (1996).

CAO Yina (Sichuan University), *The Ethics of Tidal Urban Governance: New York 2140 in Dialogue with Laozi's Philosophy of Water*

Panel 1.1

Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140* differs from many works of disaster science fiction that situate future cities amid apocalyptic ruins, technological breakdown, or civilizational collapse. Instead, the novel treats sea-level rise as a long-term reality that humanity must confront, and on this basis imagines new modes of urban survival, spatial reorganization, and the boundaries of governance. This paper argues that, through its representations of tidal-space development, infrastructural reconstruction, and the restoration of everyday order under climate change, the novel moves beyond conventional climate-disaster narratives by asking how cities can continue to exist and reorganize themselves under conditions of rising seas, and who is entitled to share in the benefits of urban adaptation. It thereby articulates an ethics of tidal urban governance structured around three interrelated principles: 'receiving the waters, following the tide, and practicing restraint.' 'Receiving the waters' refers to recognizing sea-level rise as a new normal; 'following the tide' entails water-responsive spatial adaptation and flexible governance; and 'practicing restraint' involves critical reflection on the institutional limits of intertidal development, speculation on tidal dynamics, and the capitalization of urban space. This vision of tidal urban governance resonates deeply with Laozi's philosophy of water, particularly its reflections on *shi* (the tendency or configuration of change), *rou* (flexibility), and *jie* (boundaries and limits). Although the novel and Laozi's thought emerge from different historical contexts and civilizational traditions, both emphasize acting in accordance with changing conditions and restraining the desire for possession in the process of development. The significance of *New York 2140*, therefore, lies not only in its representation of climate crisis or its critique of financial capital, but also in its contribution to a cross-civilizational ethics of coexistence among water, the environment, and the city.

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Visiting Scholar at the University of Cambridge. Her research focuses on international communication, intercultural communication, and comparative cultural studies, with particular attention to how texts and cultural forms are re-mediated across languages, media, and public spheres. She has led multiple national and provincial research projects, including a National Social Science Fund post-funded publication project and a National Social Science Fund Chinese Academic Translation project, and has published extensively in leading Chinese (CSSCI) and international (A&HCI) journals.

CAO Yunzhu (Sichuan University), *Circulation, Variation and Integration: Ford Madox Ford's Cultural Cosmopolitanism*

Panel 2.1

The British writer Ford Madox Ford's literary career has been influenced by cultures of multiple countries, including Britain, France, and the United States. This paper argues that his understanding of classical Chinese culture and literary ideas played a significant role in the formation of his cultural cosmopolitanism. Ford discerned the cosmopolitan value of China's ancient Great Trade Route in terms of cross-cultural transmission, and drawing on his own experience of reading Chinese literary works, he emphasized the significance of literature as a vital medium for mutual learning among civilizations. In the process of reading English version of Chinese literary works and supporting Ezra Pound's creative translation of Chinese classical poems, Ford formed an Impressionist idea of translation which employs variation as a method. His thoughts revealed the effectiveness of translator's recreation of the source text in cross-cultural communication. In western context, Ford analogically reconstructed Chinese traditional thoughts, events and conceptions, which opens up the cognitive pathway between Chinese and Western cultures and helps build his inclusive vision of cultural cosmopolitanism. Ford's cultural cosmopolitanism demonstrates the significance of variation in cross-cultural communication, and contributes to the rewriting of the history of world civilization and literature as well.

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Vanessa CASATO (Ca' Foscari University, Venice), *Altered Perception in the Ritual Performance of Alcman's Partheneion 1*

Panel 3.4

This paper builds on Prof. Takeuchi's analysis of the Noh play *Taema* to trace a similar poetic and (more speculatively) performative strategy in a fragmentary text by the ancient Greek poet Alcman, who was active in Sparta in the late 7th century BCE. Whereas the Japanese play can still be witnessed in person in a form very similar to its original performance, the poetry of Alcman survives only on a single, extremely fragmentary papyrus text.

What we can still read of this text is in the voice of a female choral group whose utterances range from mythological narrative to a verbal representation of their own ritual performance. In the most completely preserved passage, the girls direct the audience's gaze to their two leaders with a complex string of metaphorical language which, while emphatically purporting to point to something present and visible, conjures up a complex and fluid imaginative world. For example, the ritual agents are dematerialized into pure light, then equated to the sun they are summoning ceremonially, then turned into racing horses, exploiting a cluster of images with strong ritual significance. The speakers' second person addresses – 'why, don't

you see?’ ‘Why do I speak with full clarity?’ strikingly imply that the speaker’s statements can simply be checked against what is visible, although the visualization is not only patently imaginative but moreover in constant flux, shifting in its details and crossing the metaphorical domains of light and movement. And all this in a poetic performance where the ritual agents were indeed (most likely) the audience’s visual focus.

For all the uncertainties raised by the fragmentariness of the text, a clear poetic strategy emerges: the performance pointedly conjures up a ritual ‘here and now’ that interacts with an actual ritual setting and blends it with imaginative worlds that have a ritual significance. This conjuring up of a richly resonant cognitive ecology, which the audience is drawn to inhabit in part through the focalizing function of a performer – parallels the poetic strategy of the Noh *Taema*. Both texts point to something that is indeed present in the audience’s world, something very pared down: not a representational stage-set but just some ritual actors, the barest of props, and costumes. Since the performance does not rely on a stage setting but takes place in a space which is continuous with that of the audience, this encourages the audience to alter their perception of actual space. And then the audience is made to ‘see’ something else, something much richer, as the actual ritual world they inhabit becomes populated by the imagination. This is completely different from reading and picturing with the mind’s eye; this fusion of presence and imagination can be reconstructed more vividly for ancient Greek lyric through the embodied experience of Japanese Noh.

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Laura CASTILLO BEL (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), *Empathy Through Literary Minds: Emotional Engagement in Poetry of Dementia and Memory Loss*

Panel 10.3

Emotions are central to processes of literary reception, shaping the ways in which readers engage with fictional characters and narrative worlds. Recent developments in cognitive poetics and empirical aesthetics (Menninghaus et al., 2019) have enabled scholars to describe with greater precision the emotional responses elicited during reading, as well as the formal and narrative mechanisms through which such responses are produced. Within this interdisciplinary framework, empathy has become a key concept for understanding the affective relationship between readers and literary texts. Influential studies by Suzanne Keen (2006, 2007), among others, have demonstrated that while literature does not automatically generate empathic responses, specific textual strategies can encourage readers to adopt the perspectives of fictional characters and to experience emotionally attuned forms of engagement. This paper is situated at the intersection of empathy studies in literary reception and recent critical work on the representation of dementia and language loss in literature. In particular, it draws on the research conducted by Lugea and Fernández Quintanilla (2025) within the Dementia Fiction project at Queen’s University Belfast, which examines how contemporary narratives of dementia represent cognitive impairment not merely as a medical condition but as a lived, subjective experience. Their work highlights the capacity of literary texts to challenge reductive or stigmatizing discourses of dementia by fostering affective and ethical engagement on the part of readers, especially through narrative and stylistic experimentation.

The central aim of this proposal is to analyse the narrative and poetic devices employed in

dementia poetry that explores the erosion or fragmentation of language, in order to understand how such texts foster empathic responses in readers toward fictional characters affected by these conditions and, potentially, toward individuals who experience them in real life. From this perspective, literature functions as an affective laboratory in which readers can safely experience complex emotions without real-world consequences, thereby enabling processes of emotional learning and ethical reflection. More specifically, the study will focus on the poetry of Robert Colman (2024) and Margaret Gibson (2014), analysed through an affective theory of empathy and a close formal examination of poetic language and perspective. The analysis will consider how formal strategies such as syntactic fragmentation, semantic indeterminacy, disrupted lyric voice, and unstable or shifting points of view contribute to the representation of cognitive and linguistic loss. These formal features will be examined in relation to their potential to generate empathic engagement by inviting readers to experience disorientation, vulnerability, and relational dependence at the level of form. Furthermore, the study will explore how the poetic perspectives adopted by Colman and Gibson configure distinctive relational dynamics between the lyric subject, the figure affected by dementia, and the reader, thereby fostering modes of empathy that move beyond simple identification toward a more reflective and ethically informed affective response.

Laura Castillo Bel (lcasti06@ucm.es) holds a BA in Literary Theory and Comparative Literature from the Complutense University of Madrid, where she also completed an MA in Literary Studies. She is currently the recipient of a competitive FPU predoctoral fellowship, which supports her doctoral research on cognitive theories of emotion in the reception of narrative and poetics of memory loss.

She has undertaken research stays at the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), the University of Cambridge, and the Jean Nicod Institute at the École Normale Supérieure. She has published extensively on the poetics of contemporary authors such as Chantal Maillard and Gloria Gervitz, and her research has also explored the contemporary queer Bildungsroman and the aesthetics of postmodern cinema.

Her research interests focus on neuroaesthetics, cognitive poetics, affect theory, and the philosophical poem. She is a member of the *Andrómeda* research project, dedicated to myth criticism, as well as the project *The Philosophical Poem Today: Rhetorical and Communicative Practices in the Contemporary Crisis of Language*. In addition, she is a member of COPOS (Cognition in Comparative Poetics), a research group devoted to the study of cognition in the study of lyric texts. She serves as a representative of early-career researchers in the SELGYC (Spanish Society of Comparative Literature) and is also a member of the INSL (International Network for the Study of Lyric).

Bandhuli CHATTOPADHYAY (Université de Lille), *Recounting Vengeance: Affective Experience and Ethical Reflexivity in Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay's Rakta-Sandhya (1930)*

Panel 4.9

Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay (1899–1970), a prolific Bengali author best known for his detective fiction and historical novels, wrote *Rakta-Sandhya* (1930), a tale of vengeance exploring the affective and ethical dimensions of violence. Framed as a story within a story, the novella opens with a convicted murderer recalling his past life. The inner narrative recounts the life of Mirza Daud against the backdrop of Portuguese brutality in 15th-century Calicut, a coastal town in southern India. Having witnessed Vasco da Gama murder his family, Daud's trauma spans lifetimes. Reborn as Golum Kader in early twentieth-century Calcutta, he recognises Da Gama's reincarnation and exacts revenge. This act raises

profound questions about justice, retribution, and the role of affect in ethical decision-making. This paper examines how the narrative structure in *Rakta-Sandhya* links affective experience to ethical judgement under conditions of colonial violence, analysing the text through two axes. The first pertains to the affective plane, which centres on the interior story, exploring how the novella dramatises Daud's anger and grief in the face of barbarity. These emotions are not fleeting sentiments, but historically grounded responses shaped by oppression and loss. Drawing on Martha Nussbaum's theory of the cognitive content of emotion, which holds that feelings express judgments about value, I argue that Daud's anger and grief disclose his beliefs, values, and moral perceptions. His affective turbulence thus constitutes ethical cognition and reflects the collective condition of violated humanity that pervades (post)colonial societies. The second axis concerns the story's outer frame, where Kader's act of recounting his past life serves as an ethical meditation. Here, the novella exemplifies Paul Ricoeur's notion of mimesis 3 (M3), in which the narrative mediates between the world of the text and the reader's world. While Daud's lived experience and historical reality constitute the prefiguration (M1) and Bandopadhyay's structuring of events in the narrative forms the configuration (M2), it is at the refiguration stage (M3) that readers encounter the story as a space of ethical reflection, grappling with questions of justice and retribution. The novella's depiction of Portuguese brutality resonates with early twentieth-century Indian readers living under British rule, thereby rendering the ethical problem of retribution deeply political. In a colonised society, where institutional justice was systematically denied, the choice to take the law into one's own hands becomes both a personal and national moral trial. The story's layered narrative structure transforms historical outrage into ethical reflection, prompting readers to confront the entanglement of anger, resistance, and agency within the context of colonial oppression. Thus, by examining the dialogue between the inner narrative of affect and the outer narrative of ethical reflexivity in *Rakta-Sandhya*, this paper demonstrates how the text articulates the dialectic between individual experience and collective moral consciousness, between affective immediacy and retrospective ethical reasoning.

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Mao CHEN (Skidmore College), *Revisiting Bing Xin: Irony, Gender and Critical Practice*

Panel 5.8

Although Bing Xin (1900–1999) was among the most influential women writers of the late May Fourth era, she remains virtually unknown to contemporary Western readers. Hence, any project of translating her fiction runs into difficulty, not only in linguistic transfer but in transmitting her literary originality, particularly in her use of narrative stance, gendered voice, and satire. My paper focuses less on translation in the strict linguistic sense and more on the broader comparative task of making legible Bing Xin's complex narrative strategies for a modern Anglophone readership.

Bing Xin's collection of short stories, *About Women*, provides a striking example of how narrative form, point of view, and gender ideology intersect in her work. Written by a woman but adopting a markedly masculine narrative persona, the novel uses what Gérard Genette

would call an “internal focalization through a counterfeit consciousness”—a point of view that mimics male authority only to expose its instability. By filtering the narrative through this male voice, Bing Xin creates a deliberate disjunction between the speaking subject and the implied author, a gap that becomes a fertile site for irony and critique. The narrator’s evaluations of women rely on well-worn stereotypes that the novel then pushes toward hyperbolic extremes. In doing so, Bing Xin employs what Wayne Booth terms unstable irony: the reader is compelled to recognize that the narrator’s grandiosity, sweeping judgments, and exaggerated confidence are a performative display of masculine absurdity.

This strategic exaggeration not only generates comedic effect but also performs an ideological function. By amplifying the narrator’s emotional distance and manipulative tendencies—especially in his pursuit of the female protagonist—Bing Xin exposes the nature of male desire itself. The male lover becomes, in effect, a parody of the literary archetype he attempts to inhabit. Hyperbole becomes a feminist tool: through excess, the narrative destabilizes the conventions it imitates. Furthermore, the novel’s point-of-view encourages the reader to detect the fault lines within the masculine rationality slips into caricature when pushed to its logical, exaggerated endpoint.

In the later section of my paper, I turn to the problem of translating such irony and focalization into English. Rendering Bing Xin’s gendered voice requires not only technical precision but also a sensitivity to the critical paradigms that enable a feminist reading while resisting anachronism. Certain theoretical frameworks proved illuminating. Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*, for example, provides a vocabulary for examining how women have historically been denied the symbols of transcendence and confined to immanence—a dichotomy that resonates deeply with Bing Xin’s literary concerns. Ultimately, my paper argues that translating Bing Xin requires a dual practice: close attention to her technical deployment of point of view, irony, and hyperbole, and a comparative theoretical framework that situates her within both Chinese literary modernity and a global feminist discourse.

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Phoebe CHETWYND (CY Cergy Paris Université), *Consumption, Commodification, and Crisis: Bioengineered Animals and Multispecies Relations in Jean-Pierre Humbert’s Sa Majesté des Clones and Fernando A. Flores’ Tears of the Trufflepig*

Panel 5.7

Cultured meat – produced through tissue engineering – has been lauded by its supporters as a green and cruelty-free alternative to nonhuman animal flesh (Hopkins & Dacey 2008; Milburn 2023). Its detractors, however, warn that bioengineered meat only (re)produces anthropocentric subjectivities and the exploitation of nonhuman animals (Miller 2012; Cole & Morgan 2013). Benjamin Aldes Wurgaff (2022) and Cor van der Weele and Clemens Driessen (2013) propose a new approach to thinking the ethics of cellular agriculture through the ‘pig in the backyard’ thought experiment: in this scenario, a community lives with a pig from which stem cells are regularly harvested to be grown into meat at home. It is suggested that living with the nonhuman animals used for cellular agriculture could remind humans that

the lives of nonhuman animals exceed human ends. Contemporary science fiction, Sherryl Vint (2010) argues, often tackles the transformation of human subjectivity and, particularly, anthropocentric subjectivity. Indeed, she notes that the genre has a long history of depicting nonhuman animals as subjects that exceed human exploitation. This paper proposes an analysis of the relationship between bioengineered animals and humans in Jean-Pierre Hubert's *Sa majesté des clones* (2002) and Fernando A. Flores' *Tears of the Trufflepig* (2019). In the former, a group of children is marooned on a planet devoid of animal life; the children discover a machine that clones animals they can kill and consume but then cannot stop the process so that the planet is eventually overrun with spliced animals and becomes unliveable. In the latter, animal and plant life is slowly dying so scientists have discovered a process called 'filtering' to produce synthetic food: controlled by cartels, extinct animals are brought back to life to eventually be eaten by the wealthy at lavish dinner parties. Both novels are under-studied but provide a fresh opportunity to think about cellular agriculture and multispecies communities. This paper draws out the forms of nonhuman animal agency exercised by the bioengineered animals in the novel. In Hubert's novel, the cloned animals need to share space and resources with the children, challenging the latter's anthropocentric worldview particularly when the animals become aggressive. In Flores' book, the filtered animals have fewer possibilities for resistance but use corporal expressions of discontent to attempt to communicate with humans. Nonetheless, I argue that bioengineering in the novels perpetuates the circumscription of nonhuman lives: once the actions of the spliced creatures in *Sa majesté des clones* exceed their intended purpose as food, they are feared and excluded from the children's community while the lives of the filtered animals of *Tears of Trufflepig* are limited to their purpose as commodified pleasure for the wealthy. The pig in the backyard may not be killed for meat, but I claim that living alongside nonhuman animals does not necessarily entail more responsible relations with nonhuman animals or the transformation of anthropocentrism. As such, this paper points to the value of science fiction in thinking through the ethics of human-nonhuman relations and the future of food.

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Joshua CLARK (University College London), *Depression and the Centrality of Work in Contemporary European Narratives*

Panel 6.7

In this paper I argue that contemporary representations of depression are inseparable from the changing organisation of work, and that this has important ethical and affective implications for how we understand mental ill-health. Building on a particular critique I outline in the first chapter of my thesis regarding dominant biomedical and economic framings of depression, this paper turns specifically to literary and filmic narratives to foreground the lived, embodied and relational dimensions of work-related suffering. Drawing on Dejours' notion of the centrality of work (Dejours et al. 2018), I argue that contemporary labour cannot be treated as a neutral backdrop to mental illness. Rather, the social, technical and affective dimensions of the contemporary organisation of work play a constitutive role in shaping experiences of depression. Across four case studies — the Franco-Belgian film *Deux jours, une nuit* (Dardenne and Dardenne 2014), French call-centre novel *Retour aux mots sauvages* (Beinstingel 2010), Austrian 'docu-novel' *Wir schlafen nicht* (Röggla 2004), and

US academic novel *The Life of the Mind* (Smallwood 2021) — I read depression not as an individual malfunction but as a structural, collective response to labour regimes. As such, this paper brings Dejours into dialogue with theorists of immaterial and cognitive labour such as Maurizio Lazzarato and Franco “Bifo” Berardi. I show how these case-studies explore the increasing demand for workers’ cognitive and affective energies — what Lazzarato calls the production of ‘informational and cultural content’ (Lazzarato et al. 1996, 132) — and how this demand intensifies processes of subjectivation. Workers are not only required to perform tasks but to continuously demonstrate adaptability, enthusiasm, and resilience. Failure to do so is experienced as personal deficiency, even as it arises from what Dejours terms “pathogenic situations” at work. At the level of affect, these narratives register exhaustion, stalled temporality and dispossession as shared ‘structures of feeling’, to borrow Williams’ term, that crystallise under conditions of precarity, competition and the erosion of solidarity. Sandra’s depression in *Deux jours, une nuit*, for example, cannot be understood apart from the participatory management vote that pits colleagues against one another; similarly, *Retour aux mots sauvages* links insomnia, despair and workplace suicides to a collective dispossession of language within the call-centre’s corporate novlangue. By re-situating depression within these transnational narratives of work, the paper proposes that ethical criticism and affect theory together can help us rethink the relation between text and world: from depression as an individual pathology to depression as a form of social suffering that calls for renewed attention to solidarity, recognition, and suffering within the contemporary organisation of work.

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Iringó CORA (Transilvania University of Braşov), *Écrire l'écart: la poétique de l'indicible chez Nancy Huston*

Panel 4.2

L’essai *Les Indicibles*, publié par Nancy Huston en 2025, s’inscrit dans la continuité des thématiques majeures qui traversent l’ensemble de sa création. Il prolonge une réflexion déjà amorcée dans des écrits tels que *Journal de la création* (1990), *Âme et corps* (2004) et *L’espèce fabulatrice* (2008). À travers cet essai, l’autrice interpelle des problématiques essentielles telles que la transgression langagière et identitaire, la mémoire culturelle, l’histoire des mentalités, ainsi que les enjeux féministes. Dès la Préface, l’écrivaine énonce le but de l’essai : écrire sur les « indicibles », c’est-à-dire sur les non-dits ou sur les tabous sociétaux. Huston aborde ainsi des sujets sensibles et souvent marginalisés - guerre, viol, domination, prostitution – tout en explorant la sexualité, le travail domestique, le regard féminin (*female gaze*), ou encore la puissance maternelle. Cette démarche vise à déconstruire les normes sociales et à interroger les mécanismes de la domination et de la violence symbolique. Pour nourrir sa réflexion, Huston convoque un vaste réseau intertextuel, mobilisant des figures majeures de la pensée et de la littérature, parmi lesquelles Élisabeth Badinter, Annie Ernaux, Pierre Bourdieu, Mona Chollet, Ovide, Philippe Rothe, Marguerite Yourcenar, Virginia Woolf. Cette constellation de références confère à son essai une dimension à la fois érudite et dialogique. L’art de Huston, tel qu’il apparaît dans ses essais, met en lumière une certaine hybridité formelle, où le discours essayistique épouse les références savantes et les éléments autobiographiques, l’écriture de soi

conférant ainsi au texte une dimension intime profonde. À cet égard, son style rappelle celui de Virginia Woolf, par la finesse de l'analyse, la maîtrise de la langue et l'art de briser les tabous. Cette étude se donne pour but d'illustrer la force de l'écriture hustonienne, qui réside dans sa capacité à transgresser les normes linguistiques et à se forger une langue à elle, singulière, située « quelque part entre l'anglais et le français ». Cette division langagière influe et participe à la construction d'une identité plurielle, que l'autrice revendique en se définissant comme une « romancière impure ». L'écriture en français, sa langue d'adoption, perçue comme celle « du savoir déraciné », devient ainsi un espace d'expression de la liberté et d'expérimentation. L'intégration d'un vaste héritage culturel et littéraire dans une écriture personnelle et engagée confère au texte hustonien une portée universelle.

Mots clefs : transgression langagière, déconstruction identitaire, hybridité formelle, écriture de soi, féminisme.

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Gioele CRISTOFARI (University of Insubria; with Carlo CACCIA), *Inside Mario Pomilio's Writing Laboratory: Ethics, Affects, and Philology in The Fifth Gospel*

Panel 6.5

Mario Pomilio's novel *The Fifth Gospel* (1975) stands, alongside Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1980), as one of the most important historical novels in the Italian literary canon of the second half of the twentieth century. *The Fifth Gospel* is structured around a frame narrative detailing the decades-long quest of its fictional protagonist, the philologist Peter Bergin, for a mysterious fifth gospel. Within this framework, Pomilio assembles a constellation of invented documents from various historical periods collected by Bergin during his research. This fictive archive culminates in a drama, which is itself presented as Bergin's own creative work. Constructed with the hallmarks of postmodern narrative – genre hybridization, pluristylism, multi-temporal and transnational scope, and erudite intertextuality – the novel's underlying ethos is critically examined in Pomilio's essay "Prehistory of a Novel" (1989). In this metatext, where the author recounts the writing process of *The Fifth Gospel*, there is no trace of ironic postmodernist self-indulgence. Instead, "Prehistory" offers a lucid interrogation of the ethical and affective problems encountered in writing, reflecting on what authorial responsibility means in a postmodern era. This paper examines Pomilio's writing process as an exemplary case of an author consciously and rigorously reasoning through – on both ethical and affective grounds – his own creative activity. To pursue this investigation, the paper employs a hybrid methodology, drawing from Mikhail Bakhtin's aesthetics of creation, as well as from authorial philology and stylistics. The first part examines key issues arising from "Prehistory of a Novel", focusing on: 1) The ethical-affective relationship between author and protagonist. Utilizing Bakhtin's concepts from "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" (1924), we explore how Pomilio's own philological formation establishes a foundational tension: between his deep identification with Bergin and

a necessary critical distance from his protagonist. This tension is ultimately resolved by positing the Fifth Gospel itself – its myth and problematic charge – as the novel's true protagonist; 2) The nexus between philology and creation. Pomilio's deep-rooted philological ethos transforms the novel's construction as a pseudo-critical edition from a formal game into an ethical stance – a meticulous, almost ascetic practice of mimesis. The analysis also shows that the invention of a pseudo-biblion – The Fifth Evangelion – functions as the very condition of possibility for Pomilio's creativity: a generative device for styles and genres, and ultimately, a mechanism for ethical and affective reflection on the act of writing. The second part investigates the ultimate ethical-affective pivot revealed in the genesis of the concluding drama, "The Fifth Evangelist". Pomilio recounts how, initially hesitant to integrate a full theatrical work, he ultimately let the characters "take him by the hand," surrendering to the fiction's internal logic. This section employs direct analysis of Pomilio's manuscript (held at the University of Pavia), utilizing philological tools to study the affective writing process of "The Fifth Evangelist". The analysis is complemented by a stylistic analysis of the drama's characters again drawing on Bakhtin's analytical framework.

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Sagadat DADASHOVA (Azerbaijan University of Languages; with **Shafag DADASHOVA**), *Reading Human Values: Literature as a Method of Comparative Cultural Understanding*

Panel 6.5

Sadagat Dadashova is a student of German Studies at the Azerbaijan University of Languages.

Shafag DADASHOVA (Ada University; with **Sagadat DADASHOVA**), *Reading Human Values: Literature as a Method of Comparative Cultural Understanding*

Panel 6.5

This paper argues that both fictional and non-fictional literature functions not only as an artistic artefact but as one of the most sensitive qualitative methods for understanding human values across cultures and centuries. Using hermeneutics and phenomenology, the paper shows how literary texts preserve the textures of lived experience that empirical disciplines often struggle to register: doubt and desire, fear and longing, the moral weight of choice, and the inner negotiations through which individuals relate to their communities. Literature, in this sense, is not simply a mirror of culture but a cognitive and emotional archive through which societies articulate what they consider meaningful, permissible, or sacred.

To demonstrate how literature can serve as a qualitative method in comparative cultural analysis, the paper stages a dialogue between three works linked by the shared narrative architecture of the Faust myth: Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*, and Huseyn Javid's *İblis*. These texts do not merely retell a familiar story; they reshape it according to the values, anxieties, and aspirations of the worlds that produced them. Their differences provide a productive site for tracing how time-bound, culture-bound, and universal values emerge through narrative form.

Marlowe's *Faustus* captures a mind caught between the medieval cosmology of sin and salvation and the early modern hunger for knowledge. In his world, angels interrupt thought, repentance follows a fixed theological script, and human agency trembles under divine surveillance. If to read hermeneutically, Marlowe's play preserves the moral grammar of a historical moment when intellectual ambition could still feel like spiritual peril.

Goethe's *Faust*, by contrast, transforms the myth into a meditation on the human condition itself. Faust's relentless striving, his restlessness, and his refusal to accept stagnation speak across cultures as recognizable features of human existence. Through a phenomenological lens, Goethe makes visible the universal impulse to transcend one's limits, to search for coherence, and to wrest meaning from a disordered world.

Javid's *İblis (Devil)* brings the Faustian constellation into the context of early twentieth-century Azerbaijan. Here the devil is no longer just a tempter but a figure through whom political corruption, moral erosion, and national uncertainty are dramatized. Violence, betrayal, and the collapse of civic ethics reveal a culture grappling with modernity, colonial pressure, and the fragility of emerging national identity. Javid's play demonstrates how literature can encode culturally specific moral worlds while still participating in a transhistorical conversation about temptation, responsibility, and collapse.

Taken together, these works reveal how a single myth travels through time and language, gathering new meanings while exposing the value systems that shape human imagination.

By reading them comparatively, this paper positions world literature not as a list of texts but as a methodological practice, a way of approaching cultures through their narrative self-representations. Ultimately, it argues that literature remains an unparalleled lens through which to understand how communities imagine themselves, negotiate ethical dilemmas, and express visions of human agency and responsibility.

Shafag DADASHOVA (ADA University, Baku), *Gender, Identity, and Social Transformation in Post-Soviet Literature*

Panel 1.3

This paper examines post-Soviet literature as an authentic archive of gendered self-representation, where writers renegotiate identity after the Soviet Union's collapse. The end of Soviet ideological structures with its rhetoric of collectivism, its codified gender roles, its vision of the "New Woman" and "New Man", created a space in which individuals were forced to reconstruct their sense of self. Literature became one of the earliest and most sensitive forms through which this reconstruction was expressed. Using comparative and interdisciplinary approaches, this paper argues that post-Soviet narratives provide an insight into how gender identities are reimagined during periods of social uncertainty, political rupture, and cultural reorientation. The study brings together works by authors from Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Central Asia whose writings reveal the tensions between inherited Soviet imaginaries and emerging post-Soviet realities. Rather than treating the region as a monolithic space, the paper reads these literatures comparatively to identify both shared patterns and culturally specific trajectories. Through autobiographical writing, novels, and hybrid narrative forms, post-Soviet authors explore how gendered subjectivities are shaped by memory, migration, economic precarity, and the search for belonging in rapidly transforming societies. A key focus of the paper is the fragmentation of the Soviet-era ideal of "gender emancipation." While Soviet rhetoric celebrated women's participation in public life, literature from the 1990s onward exposes the contradictions and emotional costs hidden beneath that promise. For instance, autobiographical texts written by women in Azerbaijan and Central Asia reveal a double burden intensified by the collapse of state infrastructures, leaving women to navigate a paradoxical return to domestic roles while simultaneously shouldering economic responsibilities. Georgian and Russian prose from the same period foregrounds the disorientation of men confronted with the loss of ideological certainty or the symbolic capital previously attached to Soviet masculinity. Through close reading, the paper demonstrates how these gendered experiences are narrated through silence, fragmentation, irony, and intimate emotional detail, techniques that convey the instability of identity during postsocialist transition. Comparative reading reveals that such works often echo each other across linguistic and geographic divides, suggesting a shared regional struggle to utter identities that have long been suppressed or unspoken. By situating post-Soviet literature within broader debates on gender, memory, and social change, this paper argues that these narratives function as qualitative cultural methods: they capture how individuals internalise rupture, negotiate new freedoms, and confront old constraints. Ultimately, post-Soviet literature offers not only stories about gender but a rich methodological resource for understanding how societies reinvent the human self amid the uncertainties of transition.

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Antonella DE BLASIO (Università eCampus), *Affective Distance and Ethical Dissonance in Contemporary Autofiction*

Panel 7.6

This contribution proposes reading contemporary autofiction as a narrative space in which the relationship between ethics and affect does not necessarily coincide with the production of intimacy or immediate empathic identification, but instead unfolds through formal practices of distance, misalignment, and dissonance. Against a widespread interpretation of autofiction as a privileged mode of access to lived experience – and as a form of intimate public sphere oriented toward affective sharing and communal recognition – this paper argues that certain autofictional practices function as deliberate strategies of affective regulation, aimed at destabilizing rather than consolidating the moral legibility of the narrating self. The theoretical framework draws on the tools of cognitive narratology – in particular the work of David Herman, Monika Fludernik, and Marie-Laure Ryan on the mental and emotional processes involved in narrative reception, and the theory of mind developed by Alan Palmer and Lisa Zunshine, which accounts for how readers simulate characters' inner states even when these remain partially opaque – together with the notion of narrative dissonance introduced by Dorrit Cohn and reformulated by Joanna Klara Teske and Jan Jankowski through stance theory (stance understood as the narrator's cognitive-affective positioning). From this perspective, dissonance is not merely a local distance between narrator and character, but a relational configuration that runs through the text as a whole, producing persistent gaps between the narrating self, the narrated self, and the work's implicit evaluative orientation. Stance, so conceived, resists consonant and stabilizing readings and actively interpellates the reader as an ethically engaged subject. A comparative analysis of Rachel Cusk's *Outline* (2014)–*Transit* (2016)–*Kudos* (2018) trilogy and Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019) will show how autofiction generates ethical dissonance through formally divergent yet convergent means. In Cusk's trilogy, the protagonist Faye systematically withdraws from the role of evaluative authority, depriving the reader of the empathic cues needed for shared moral orientation. In Vuong's novel, by contrast, dissonance arises from an unresolved affective intensity – bound up with trauma, shame, and postmemory – that the text never allows to resolve into coherent synthesis: the letter the protagonist Little Dog writes to his mother, structurally unable to reach its addressee, positions the actual reader as the letter's effective recipient, called upon to perform a double act of mind-modelling. In both cases, dissonance – whether through withdrawal or excess – should not be read as a communicative failure, but as a strategy of affective regulation that redefines reading as a responsible practice, grounded in the suspension of judgment and the acceptance of the other's opacity.

Antonella De Blasio (antonella.deblasio@uniecampus.it) teaches Literary Criticism and Comparative Literature at Università eCampus. Her research interests include the study of contemporary narrative phenomena through the perspectives of cognitive narratology and transmedial processes. She has published several studies on narrative theory and the cognitive analysis of literary texts, including *Sulla Sinestesia. Passato e futuro* (Archetipo, 2011) and *Narrazioni identitarie. Teorie e analisi nella letteratura del secondo millennio* (Mimesis, 2025).

Lore DE GREVE (Ghent University), *Keeping Up with the Reads: A Qualitative and Quantitative Approach to Digital Social Reading in the Web 2.0 in Analysing Literary Criticism and Reader Engagement*

Panel 3.3

Book clubs can have a stuffy reputation, but digital social reading platforms have become the motor of highly successful reading communities among Gen Z (and others). Despite frequent tidings of declining reading habits among young people (e.g. Gattermaier, 2003; Kaufmann, 2015; Lührs, 2012), bookish social media has proven remarkably effective at stimulating creative, communal forms of literary reception, challenging the long-standing view of reading as a solitary activity. Instead, this foregrounds a participatory culture as defined by Jenkins (2006). This transformation is rooted in the digitalisation and consequent democratisation of the public sphere in the Web 2.0, where the rise of “small critics” has diversified the agents contributing to literary discourse (Allington 2016; Franzen 2021).

Building on this context, I investigated how evaluative discourse and reader engagement unfold across professional and online criticism in the context of literary prizes. While professional critics often frame digital platforms as hotbeds of hype-driven superficiality (Ingold 2014, 2017; Baßler & Drügh 2021; Wegmann 2011), empirical analysis reveals a more nuanced picture. In my doctoral research (De Greve 2024), I combined qualitative close reading with a fine-grained quantitative Aspect-Based Sentiment Analysis (ABSA) to map and compare evaluative criteria in the jury discourse as well as Tweets and Instagram posts surrounding four literary prizes over the course of a decade. Using manually annotated training data, semi-supervised learning, and BERT-based models for English and German, my study uncovers how online reviewers—contrary to persistent stereotypes—frequently draw on sophisticated aesthetic criteria, including language use, style, form, narration etc. Notably, I also shine light on the differences between German- and English-language critics, taking platform affordances and cultural traditions shape into account. Digital social reading environments foreground evaluative and emotional dimensions of literary experience and engagement. Based on my doctoral research, I will illustrate how ABSA enables the detection of how readers negotiate literary value. My focus aligns with increased academic interest in digital social reading in general and on specific platforms and bookishness (e.g. Chiew Hong et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2024; Pianzola, 2021; Rebora et al., 2021; English et al., 2023; Kousha et al., 2016; Anwar, 2023; Low et al., 2023; Mackey, 2023; Nicoll, 2023; Reddan et al., 2024; Segarra-Saavedra & Torres-Huamanyauri, 2024; Dera 2024; Baulch, 2021, 2022; Favret & Ross, 2020; Levshun, 2023; Murray, 2023).

The #booktok hashtag has accumulated over 370 billion views, and surveys indicate its significant impact on reading habits and book sales. Moreover, the prominence of romantasy within BookTok’s multimodal reading culture illustrates how digital social reading environments foster new forms of collective taste-making, allowing genres overlooked in traditional criticism to become globally influential. In light of these observations, TikTok’s BookTok emerges as an online book-related space in which multimodal formats—reaction videos, ‘shelfies,’ character cosplays, and confession-style commentary—reshape the ways readers articulate and present their engagement with literature as performances of bookishness and parasocial self-staging. Recent research has also demonstrated that BookTok-accounts reshape literary engagement through a combination of affective and critical approaches to literature, rooted in TikTok’s algorithm, and fostering communal cultures emerging from shared reading experiences (Dera 2024) and calls for more empirical research on BookTok users. By situating ABSA within this evolving media ecology, this paper demonstrates how digital humanities methods can offer crucial empirical insight into the shifting patterns of evaluative judgment and emotional engagement in contemporary digital social reading culture.

Lore de Greve (lore.degreve@ugent.be) studied English and German Linguistics and Literature (Ghent University, 2014-2018) and completed an additional interuniversity master-after-master in Literary Studies (KU Leuven, UGent, VUB and UAntwerpen, 2018-2019). In 2019, she was also active as a research assistant on the ERC-project “Constructing Age for Young Readers” (CAFYR) at the University of Antwerp. In April 2024, she completed her

doctoral research at Ghent University on the research project “Evaluation of literature by professional and layperson critics. A digital and literary sociological analysis of evaluative talk of literature through the prism of literary prizes (2007-2017)” (2019-2023). This project was supervised by Prof. Gunther Martens, Prof. Daan Vandenhoute, Prof. Henk Roose, Prof. Lars Bernaerts and Prof. Veronique Hoste and was funded by the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO-Vlaanderen). Her research is a systematic study into the phenomenon of both online and professional literary criticism, in the form of both social media contributions and jury reports, and of digital social reading. It focuses on the perceptions (and evaluations) of readers by means of a digitally empowered method of literary sociology with the use of Aspect-Based Sentiment Analysis (ABSA). The results and findings of her research have been shared on a project website (www.talklitmining.ugent.be) and in numerous academic journals, anthologies and conference contributions. In fall 2024, she was nominated for the Flemish PhD Cup and was awarded the third place (bronze) for her pitch “#bookworm: amateur is also connoisseur” (“#boekenworm: liefhebber is ook kenner”)

Hans DEMEYER (University College London) with **Sven VITSE**, *Affective Crisis and the Possibility of Ethics in Contemporary Fiction*

Panel 3.5

This paper interrogates the ethical implications of our hypothesis that contemporary fiction is dominated by affective questions that are rooted in, but not fully subsumed by, neoliberalism: ‘How can I experience reality (as real)?’, ‘How can I feel attached to someone?’ (Demeyer & Vitse 2026). Through the concept of an ‘affective dominant’ we offer a perspective on contemporary fiction as mediating neoliberalism’s double-edged dynamics of commodifying affective experience while privatising collective experience. We then understand contemporary fiction to develop emergent mediations of neoliberal dynamics, with the affective crises the latter yield. Crucially, we conceptualize the relation between contemporary fiction and neoliberalism in terms of friction (Tsing 2004). That allows us to move beyond models of resistance versus complicity and to discuss both the violence of neoliberalism and the possibilities of life and creativity that may be found within neoliberal ruins. More specifically we argue that contemporary fiction seeks possibilities of difference and creativity in attachments. From this hypothesis it follows that the affective and the ethical are intertwined: the relation to the other, a community, the world that is at the centre of an ethical inquiry is now beset by an affective crisis of detachment. Detachment here is no longer a (postmodern) attitude of disinterest but rather a felt distance from experiences, political projects or values one deems important but nevertheless feels removed from. Such disconnection then tends to corrode the meaning attached to that set of values and political project while potentially making the subject doubt their capacity to connect and commit. Through readings of the novels such as *Het tegenovergestelde van een mens* (2017) by Dutch author Lieke Marsman (translated by Sophie Collins as *The Opposite of a Person* (2022)) and *La Plus Secrète Mémoire des Hommes* (2021) by Senegalese author Mohammed Mbougar Sarr (translated by Lara Vergnaud as *The Most Secret Memory of Men* (2024)), this paper wants to demonstrate these broader issues through a focus on the question of political commitment and that of the politics of aesthetic practices. In *The Opposite of a Person* the protagonist Ida graduated as climate scientist but lacks a sense of direction in life. Although the novel describes attempts to engage with the other and the world, an affective crisis of depression obstructs her love relationship and her engagement with the climate struggle. *The Most Secret Memory of Men* works through the conflicting affects Senegalese writer Diégane experiences in postimperial Francophone literary culture. He feels reluctant to directly engage with pressing issues in Senegalese society, yet his discovery of a genius Senegalese writer, whose visionary modernist aesthetics of autonomy

was obscured by colonial modernity, allows him to repair his literary and ethical relationship to his home country. If Ida is unable to find a sense of attachment, then Diégane finds tentative attachment in a creative and ethical space of double consciousness opened up by colonial modernity. A comparative reading of our case studies will reveal the situatedness of their protagonists' affective crises, as well as the friction yielded by these crises between their ethical ambitions and their difficulties in committing to them.

Hans Demeyer (h.demeyer@ucl.ac.uk) is Associate Professor of Dutch and Comparative Literature at University College London. Recently published, with Sven Vitse, in open access *Affective Crisis and the Possibility of Attachment: A Comparative Study of Contemporary Fiction in Neoliberal Ruins* (UCL Press 2026)

Marijan DOVIĆ (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana), ***National Pantheons of Europe: Frameworks for Comparative Inquiry***

Panel 5.1

European “national pantheons” as a constellation of specific memory sites distributed unevenly across the continent have not yet been studied from a comparative perspective. Most research to date has concentrated on the “big four” (i.e., the influential pantheons of Rome, London, Paris, and Regensburg), whereas numerous examples from smaller cultural communities have largely been overlooked. Comparative study is further hindered by the absence of a generally accepted definition of a national pantheon. This paper will thus provide a working definition of a national pantheon and clarify how national pantheons differ from other types, such as religious, royal, and political pantheons. It will also present typologies of national pantheon forms and the structure of pantheonised “deities”; both frameworks may help provide a panoramic overview of national pantheons in Europe. Finally, the paper will outline the starting points and guidelines for more comprehensive comparative inquiry.

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Annamaria ELIA (Sapienza University of Rome), *Italy and Petrocultures: Oil and Affect in the 20th and 21st Centuries*

Panel 2.4

Recent research on *petrocultures* has recognised the profound impact of oil on everyday life over the past two centuries. Oil has become central to our political, economic, and cultural landscape, shaping our lives around this resource. However, much of this scholarship has focused on American culture and the Global South, overlooking the fact that this assumption is equally true for areas that are often considered as “uninteresting” within the petroleum discourse, such as Europe. The cultural history of European countries, including Italy, demonstrates the profound influence of oil on cultural and economic life.

In this paper, I propose investigating the complex affective dimension surrounding the discourse of oil in European culture, with a particular focus on Italy. My aim is to explore the mobilisation of negative affects, such as eco-anxiety and solastalgia, which often emerge in response to the oil industry thanks to ecological awareness. I will also examine the cultural and affective perceptions that shaped the twentieth-century dream of oil and energetic power.

To this end, I will analyse three case studies from twentieth- and twenty-first-century Italy: selected episodes commissioned by the Italian hydrocarbon agency Agip from *Carosello*, a TV programme consisting of advertising spots that aired on Rai between the 1950s and 1970s; the short story *La pompa di benzina* by Italo Calvino (1974); and Claudia Durastanti’s novel *Missitalia* (2024).

These examples will demonstrate how petrocultures have shaped cultural memory, collective environmental sensibilities, and the narratives through which Italy has represented, and continues to represent, its energy modernity. Ultimately, I aim to illuminate the extractivist system underlying the Anthropocene and situate Italy within the global history of oil.

Annamaria Elia (annamaria.elia@uniroma1.it) holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from Sapienza University of Rome. Her doctoral thesis is titled “Letteratura e Antropocene: forma, etica, estetica” and explores the literary imagination of the Anthropocene in contemporary European and Anglo-American literatures through new materialist and posthuman theoretical lenses. She has presented at national and international conferences and published several peer-reviewed articles in both Italian and English. Her research interests include ecocriticism, literary theory, eco-narratology, eco-feminism, comparative literature, and literary criticism. She is currently the Principal Investigator of the project “Archivio online di climate fiction ed eco-fiction italiana” (Bando di Ateneo “Avvio alla terza missione”, Sapienza University of Rome); Honorary Fellow in Comparative Literature (SSD: COMP-01/A) at Sapienza University of Rome, serving on examination committees.

Ian ELLISON (Jesus College, University of Oxford), *Posthumous Authorship: After the Death of the Author*

Panel 1.4

‘There is only one truly serious literary problem: the transmission of texts to posterity,’ according to Benjamin Hoffman in his 2019 essay, *The Paradoxes of Posterity*. ‘How strange it is,’ declared Maurice Blanchot in his *Infinite Interview*, ‘that the greatest literary glories of

our time should have arisen from works that were entirely posthumous'. When Franz Kafka died in 1924, for example, his few published works were known only to those familiar with the Prague literary scene. It was only after his death, when his friend Max Brod disobeyed Kafka's testamentary instruction to burn all his unpublished and unfinished works, that he became a global literary icon. Some forty years later, Kafka's literary oeuvre had been almost entirely published in a third collected edition, and his major works had been translated into numerous languages. Between these two moments lay the editorial and promotional work of Max Brod and his collaborators, as well as the efforts of various publishers, translators, critics and interpreters in several countries. The interaction and conflicts between these different actors shaped the history of the publication and reception of the first editions of Kafka's work.

Shortly after Roland Barthes coined the term 'death of the author' in 1968, questions surrounding the role and function of the 'author' resurfaced with Foucault (1969). Over the last half-century, research into the author's self-presentation ('Autorinszenierung') has developed from both literary and sociological perspectives. However, the other half of the expression, 'death', has so far received relatively little critical attention. It occupies an indeterminate realm between metaphor and reification in literary theory. Generally speaking, 'death' refers either to the intertextual references within each text that seem to render the figure of the author superfluous in textual analysis, or to the persistence of a work beyond the life of its author. Since Barthes, the majority of work on the 'death of the author' has remained centred on the figure of the author or their absence, rather than on 'death' itself. Works that their authors had never intended for publication are now regarded as an integral part of their body of work. Their posthumous publication has not only enriched, but also profoundly transformed, their intellectual legacy. This paper will suggest that posthumous authorship is not merely a historical condition, but an integral part of modern literature as such.

Ian Ellison (ian.ellison@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk) came to Oxford in January 2024 as the post-doctoral researcher on the [AHRC-funded Kafka's Transformative Communities project](#). He is a Visiting Fellow at Wadham College, having previously held academic appointments and fellowships at several universities and research institutions in the UK and Germany, including the [Deutsches Literaturarchiv](#) in Marbach am Neckar. Ian's work investigates forms of cultural afterlife in European literature, with a particular focus on posterity in the work of European modernist writers, on their archives, and on their public commemoration. Over the years, his research has been funded by the Leverhulme Trust, the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), the German Schiller Society, and the the ZEIT Foundation. Ian currently serves as the Assistant Editor of [Comparative Critical Studies](#), the flagship journal of the www.bcla.org/[British Comparative Literature Association](#), and the Schools Networking Officer for the [Association for German Studies in Great Britain and Ireland](#).

As part of a wider commitment to public engagement in the humanities, Ian is a regular contributor to the [Times Literary Supplement](#) and the [Los Angeles Review of Books](#). His writing has also appeared in the [Oxford Review of Books](#), the [Oxonian Review](#), the [European Review of Books](#) and the [Literary Review](#). He was longlisted for the 2024 [Observer Anthony Burgess Prize for Arts Journalism](#) and shortlisted for the 2023 [Peirene-Stevens Translation Prize](#). Ian has appeared on David Runciman's [Past, Present, Future](#) podcast and the [Oxford German Classic](#) podcast.

Meleyke ELYASOVA-RAJABOVA (Independent scholar), *Emotional Dichotomy as Moral*

Discourse: The Love–Fear Model in Azerbaijani Prose

Panel 5.3

This study examines the projection of the love–fear model in literary works from ethical, psychological, and socio-cultural perspectives. While love and fear form an emotional dichotomy, they also function as complementary forces that shape both individual consciousness and collective experience. Love appears as a creative and integrative energy that sustains characters' psychological wholeness, empathy, and moral resilience. Fear, by contrast, extends beyond the personal sphere and emerges as a social phenomenon shaped by war, violence, injustice, and collective trauma. The disruption of the balance between these two emotions often culminates in individual tragedy and may manifest as post-traumatic psychological states.

In literary texts, the interplay of love and fear becomes a model of social dynamics: love propels characters forward, whereas fear restrains, immobilises, or fractures them. Authors use this tension not only to generate narrative conflict but also to convey ethical messages that challenge the reader's worldview. Through this emotional dialectic, literature becomes a medium of moral communication, enabling the author to signal fragile social values, suppressed anxieties, and neglected ethical imperatives.

The study focuses on the prose of Azerbaijani writers Isa Huseynov and Ramiz Rovshan, in which the love/fear archetype is articulated primarily against the backdrop of war and post-war psychology. In Huseynov's works, the confrontation between love and fear is embedded in the rigid norms of rural communities, social surveillance, and collective judgement. In Rovshan's prose, this model is associated with existential unease, childhood trauma, and the individual's estrangement from their own being. For both writers, love and fear are key to understanding the human psyche and its moral vulnerabilities.

Ultimately, the study argues that love and fear in literary texts operate not merely as emotional descriptors but as a system of moral–social signals addressed by the author to society. These signals invite the reader to reconsider both their inner world and the damaged system of values within their community.

Methodologically, the research employs psychoanalytic analysis (to explore how love and fear shape characters' behaviour), comparative–analytical methods (to identify similarities and differences in both authors' works), deictic analysis (to examine emotional orientation within the text), and archetypal analysis (to trace manifestations of love and fear within character systems).

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Erik ERLANSON (Linnaeus University), ***The ecological import of unicorns: Yves Bonnefoy and the environmental mediality of verbal language***

Panel 8.1

Words are like unicorns, says Swedish novelist Arne Sand in 1965. They refer only to non-existent things: their meanings. And there is no way of knowing, Sand suggested, if the meanings to which they refer correspond to those in the speaking subject's mind. This scepticism towards language was widespread in modern philosophy and literature. Language disguises thought, said Wittgenstein. Meaning is only an effect, said Derrida. In this paper, I propose a return to this critical attitude towards language from a media-ecological perspective. From this perspective, the medium of verbal language is understood as a part of the human environment (McLuhan). As a consequence, my aim is not to outline the epistemological or metaphysical ramifications of Sand's verbal unicorns, but to delineate

their ecological import.

To this end, I will stage an encounter between French poet Yves Bonnefoy, the philosopher of elemental media John Durham Peters, and the semiotician-cum-media theorist Lars Elleström. Bonnefoy's poetry is a paradigmatic example of what Jean-Marie Gleize termed la *Lapoésie*, poetry with a capital P. His early post-surrealist collections can be described as attempts to reach beyond the discursive limits of language by means of the affective intensity of language. In his extensive writings on poetics, he explained what he expected poetry to find on the other side: within discursive language is nothing but a hoard of unicorns; outside is the experience of what is as it is in itself.

In my paper, I ask to what extent and as what such a poetic practice can be understood in the context of Peters' infrastructural and Elleström's semiotic approach to media. Both are informed by American pragmatism, which means that the quintessentially modern problem that Bonnefoy grapples with is, if not overcome, then at least abandoned. From this perspective, reality coincides with the space of representation. That the problem can be abandoned does not, however, imply that Bonnefoy's efforts to manipulate the discursive limits of language are superfluous. I argue that they ought to be reconceptualized as efforts to intervene in the environmental mediality of language. To the extent that language can be understood as a part of our environments, it has a bearing on how we make a living. But its part is neither given nor reducible to technical and formal aspects. It can be tampered with, for example, through the meticulous, if misguided, poetic efforts of Bonnefoy. Against the priority of the material in contemporary media theory, I suggest with Elleström that in order to analyze such tampering, an integrated and intermedial approach to medium and environment is useful. Both signifier and signified have an ecological import.

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Tomasz EWERTOWSKI (Shanghai International Studies University), *Affects, Adventure, Exoticism – Polish, and Serbian Travel Writing about India 1869–1914*

Panel 4.5

This paper analyses emotions, affects, and feelings expressed in Polish and Serbian travel narratives about India by travellers who visited the subcontinent between 1869 and 1914. Although frequently stereotypical and superficial, travelogues nonetheless record complex emotional responses to otherness. They describe personal, visceral reactions but are also shaped by literary conventions, ideology, and readers' expectations, revealing how cultural difference, emotional responses to it, and their ethical implications were negotiated in literary and broader social discourses. India fascinated travellers with its ancient civilisation, cultural otherness, spectacular geography, and wildlife. British colonial rule made the subcontinent more accessible but also provoked responses ranging from praise of the colonisers to criticism of foreign rule. India, perceived as a land of exotic adventure and magnificent artistic and historical heritage, was also portrayed as undeveloped and barbaric. Descriptions of Indian customs and interactions with Indians were therefore often accompanied by negative emotions. To examine this complexity, the paper draws on Georg Simmel's concept of adventure and Andrzej Stoff's analysis of exoticism, showing how fascination with otherness may become an adventure that opens up new states of

experience. Including lesser-known Slavic-language sources enables the examination of affects, emotions, and feelings from a distinctive perspective. Poles and Serbs benefited from the privileges afforded to Europeans by the colonial system; however, as Eastern Europeans whose homelands were under foreign rule, they often occupied an ambiguous position. The corpus includes works by Polish travel writers Stanisław Bełza, Ewa Dzieduszycka, Jan Hupka, Karol Lanckoroński, Jadwiga Marcinowska, Paweł Sapieha, Adam Sierakowski, Roman Ujejski, Władysław Michał Zaleski; and Serbian travel writers Milan Jovanović, Božidar Karađorđević, and Milorad Rajčević.

Tomasz Ewertowski, Doctor Habil., (tewert@shisu.edu.cn) is a lecturer at Shanghai International Studies University, China. He graduated from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. His research covers travel writing studies, postcolonialism, and comparative literature. He has served as principal investigator on two grants funded by the Polish National Science Centre. His publications include *Images of China in Polish and Serbian Travel Writings* (Brill, 2020).

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Sophie FENNELLY (University of Leeds), *Plotting a Path Out of Disorientation: Reading the Moral Economy of the Hostile Environment in Losing the Plot (2022)*

Panel 7.7

Zoe Norridge argues that ‘at its best, the literary aestheticization of stories transforms pain into more than a “memory”, a “wound” or a “theory”, instead lending to hurt the immediacy and poignancy of the present.’ (2013, p.1). In other words, examining narratives of pain can help us understand more about the society in which we live. Critical discussions of experiences of Black British mental ill-health and mental illness within narratives have been primarily examined through the idea of postcolonial trauma fiction (Whitehead, 2004; Norridge, 2013). These readings mainly focus on the impact of a singular traumatic event within a narrative and how the event and its repercussions are presented. This previous research treats narratives of Black British mental ill-health as isolated incidents, whereas I propose that the recent influx of literature and creative cultural media with a focus on black British mental health gestures to a wider phenomenon. Stef Craps (2013) argues that trauma theory ‘can help identify and understand situations of exploitation and abuse’ (p.126). Thus, research on trauma fiction through a postcolonial lens is a means to understanding and may enact change in contemporary society. I categorise this recent trend in publication as a new type of postcolonial trauma fiction that explores how consistent and constellated microaggressions become traumatic en masse. Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman (2009) argue that the truth of trauma lies in ‘the moral economy of contemporary societies’ (p.276), and that listening to the narratives of trauma victims tells ‘us less of what they are than of the moral economies of our era in which they find our place’ (p.279). Consequently, the desperate need for examination of ‘the moral economy’ of contemporary black Britain is evidenced by this new trend in postcolonial trauma fiction which highlights how a moral economy of every day, systemic, microaggressions produces a crisis of mental health. It is this specific moral economy that I identify in Derek Owusu’s sophomore novel, *Losing the Plot* (2022), which engages with ideas of identity, belonging and nationhood. The novel follows a son, Kwesi, attempts to map the experience of his mother’s migration to the UK from Ghana in the late 1980s. In this paper, I argue that *Losing the Plot* is a hostile environment novel, despite being set 30 years prior to the policy’s invention, because it exhibits a space where wider ethics of care is conspicuously absent. Under the guise of tightening migration policy, government policy has dismantled systems that could support an ethics of care (Held, 2006), and so in the hostile environment in which the novel is situated, migrant life is characterised by solitude, loneliness and a pervasive sense of limbo in which no progress ever occurs in spite of the hard work and effort that the characters put into building a life in England. Trapped in a constant fight for survival that manufactures a sense of perpetual crisis, I contend that Owusu’s novel interrogates the value of narrative in traversing such a disorienting landscape.

Sophie Fennelly (en19sf@leeds.ac.uk) is a doctoral researcher in the School of English at the University of Leeds supervised by Professor John McLeod and Professor Clare Barker. Her PhD is titled ‘Mental Health in the Hostile Environment: Contemporary Black British Narratives of Mental Illness’ and explores contemporary Black British literary and cultural depictions of mental health. Her research is fully funded by the School of English Gatenby Scholarship. Her wider research interests include contemporary postcolonial literature, border studies, and the medical humanities. She holds an MA (Distinction) in Postcolonial Literary and Cultural Studies, also from the University of Leeds.

Christopher FENWICK (Independent scholar), *Ordinary Language, Moral Perception and the Claim to Community*

Panel 6.3

This paper traces an argument about moral perception in literature across four key thinkers – Iris Murdoch, Cora Diamond, Martha Nussbaum and Stanley Cavell – focusing on how ordinary language philosophy offers distinctive resources for understanding literature’s ethical significance when we abandon the project of theoretical grounding.

Iris Murdoch’s “The Idea of Perfection” contains a thought experiment about a mother who gradually changes her perception of her daughter-in-law. Murdoch argues that traditional moral philosophy systematically overlooks “the work of attention” – the ways our moral outlook shifts over time through attention and revision rather than explicit deliberation. These perceptual dimensions of moral life, clearly relevant to ethics, are excluded by philosophy’s focus on action and choice, but are the preserve of literature.

Cora Diamond develops a similar critique through an explicitly anti-theoretical framework inspired by ordinary language philosophy and Wittgenstein. Going beyond Murdoch, Diamond does not merely highlight a blind spot of philosophy, but implies that it is by its very nature going to distort its objects. Philosophy imposes systematic theoretical structures on moral phenomena, aiming to provide “reasons for everyone” while adopting a kind of transcendent perspective. She calls for a return to the “knots and threads” of the ordinary, characterizing literary representation as a kind of antidote to philosophical analysis.

Martha Nussbaum offers an interesting inflection of this argument. While she credits both Murdoch and Diamond in *Love’s Knowledge*, Nussbaum aims to theorize these claims about what she terms “moral perception” more systematically. Reading Henry James’s *The Golden Bowl* through an Aristotelian lens, Nussbaum attempts to anchor her insights in the figure of an “ideal reader” – an imagined authority that might allow literature to take equal place alongside philosophy as a well-grounded source of moral insight (rather than radically undermining it). Indeed, Nussbaum later wrote an explicit critique of Diamond’s anti-philosophical attitude. Yet the “ideal reader” poses hermeneutic and skeptical problems Nussbaum cannot overcome, and her “theoretical” vision for her own project turns into a distortion of what it means to read (and read ethically).

This raises crucial questions: Without theoretical grounding, what status do literary-critical claims about “moral perception” have? Stanley Cavell’s “claim to community” provides an answer. When ordinary language philosophers say “we,” they make ethical appeals to shared linguistic community. Claims about literature’s perceptual power are vulnerable – to scepticism, disagreement, and conversation’s ongoing demands. This vulnerability is the ethical condition of criticism itself, revealing that literary criticism depends on our willingness to acknowledge one another as fellow speakers, rather than “theorize” from a transcendent perspective.

Christopher Fenwick (cst.fenwick@gmail.com) recently completed his doctoral thesis at the Freie Universität Berlin on the status of ethical literary criticism after poststructuralism, focusing on Stanley Cavell and Cora Diamond. He read English at Queens’ College, Cambridge and studied literature and philosophy in Paris while a scholarship holder at the École normale supérieure.

Kseniya FIADUTA (Autonomous University of Barcelona), *The Joy of World-Disclosure: Reading with Simone de Beauvoir*

Panel 7.6

In her lecture “What Can Literature Do?” (1965/2011), Simone de Beauvoir defines literature as “an activity carried out by men, for men, in order to disclose the world to them, this disclosure being an action” (p. 197). With this definition, Simone de Beauvoir outlines a phenomenological-hermeneutic understanding of literature, of reading and writing, as acts of world-disclosure and transformation. Following Jean-Paul Sartre, she conceives of the world as a “detotalized totality”, meaning that, on the one hand, the world is shared and common to all of us, but, on the other hand, each of us is in a unique situation in the world, that “involves our past, our class, our condition, our projects, basically the entire ensemble of what makes up our individuality” (ibid., p. 198). Literature allows us to communicate and share with others what is most singular and unique about our experience of the world. By allowing us to dwell “in the heart of another world”, literature can also open new perspectives on our shared world, its social realities and historical circumstances. In this presentation, I will examine Beauvoir’s understanding of literature as world-disclosure, highlighting its ethical and political dimensions, and its relation to her ethics of ambiguity. As Beauvoir asserts, the task of literature is “to safeguard what is human in man from technocrats and bureaucrats, and to reveal the world in its human dimension, that is to say as it is disclosed to individuals at once connected and separated” (1965/2011, pp. 205- 206).

Kseniya Fiaduta (kfiaduta@gmail.com) is a doctoral researcher in Literary Theory and Comparative Literature at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain). Her research interests include the ethical potential of literature, narrative hermeneutics and the relationship between literature, ethics and memory.

Helen FINCH (University of Leeds), *Queer Affect and Traumatic Memory in Contemporary German-Language Literature*

Panel 5.6

How can literature produce forms of queer memory that move beyond patterns of identification and subjectification? How can literature queer ideas of bounded communities of memory and nationalist *lieux de mémoire*? What are the techniques of a queer aesthetics that negotiate traumatic memories to intervene in an increasingly dystopian present? In this presentation, I examine the German-language literature of the ‘postmigrant decade’ (Naika Foroutan, 2025) to show how a queer aesthetics and the negotiation of traumatic memory repeatedly and productively combine in the literature of migrantised authors writing in German between 2012 and 2022. The last decade saw a flourishing of literature written in German by younger writers with an uneasy relationship to the concepts of Heimat, German identity and homonationalism (Puar 2007). In particular, writers such as Fatma Aydemir, Olga Grjasnowa, Enrico Ippolito, Sasha Marianna Salzmann, Mithu Sanyal and Hengameh Yaghoobifarah formed a loose collective around the landmark publication of the essay collection *Your Homeland Is Our Nightmare* (2019; updated 2024). Notably, these authors move away from normative German and Austrian structures of feeling and narratives such as *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* or the Bildungsroman to create hybrid literatures in German beyond the mother tongue (Yildiz 2012).

These literatures frequently manifest queer feelings, non-normative kinship structures and communities of solidarity in the present, while seeking also to find literary form for the traumatic affects arising from their own and their families’ histories of persecution, displacement and marginalization in a xenophobic Germany in the 1980s and 1990s. These literatures draw out queer and often disruptive resonances between German histories of

violence and global histories of oppression.

In this presentation, I seek to work out a theory of the role of queer memory in negotiating traumatic affect in the postmigrant literature of the 2010s, broadly defined. I also seek to engage with the idea of the end of the 'postmigrant decade', and to trace what emergent forms of queer aesthetics are engaging with the disruptive and traumatic events since caused by the invasion of Ukraine, October 7 attacks in Israel, genocide in Gaza and increasingly repressive German state attitudes towards migrantized and minoritized subjects.

Helen Finch (h.c.finch@leeds.ac.uk) is Professor of German Literature at the University of Leeds. Her main areas of research are in the representation of the Holocaust in German-language literature, queer identity and memory in German culture, and curriculum design. This paper is part of a larger project on 'Queer Memories and Futurities in literature' which responds to a cultural moment when there is a growing interest in queer history. At the same time, throughout Europe and globally, queer and trans communities are seeing a political backlash that seeks to erase queer history, creating a moral panic around young people's engagement with queer history and culture, in association with movements that seek to limit bodily autonomy. This project seeks resources in the arts and creative practice for re-envisioning a liveable collective social future for queer subjects. This project is linked to her first monograph on queer masculine identities in the works of W. G. Sebald, *Sebald's Bachelors: Queer Resistance and the Unconforming Life*, which appeared with Legenda in 2013.

Viviana FIORENTINO (Queen's University Belfast) with **Rosanne GALLENNE**, *'Hortosophical Encounters': The Garden as an Inspirational Space of Creativity in Poetry by Women in Mid-Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries Ireland*

Panel 2.5

In many cultures, the garden is an object of artistic scrutiny and holds, more specifically, a special place in poetic traditions. Oftentimes associated with beauty and exhibiting the evolution of aesthetic standards across times, these conventions however set the space at odds with current debates surrounding sustainability, freedom of movement, and the right to self-determination. Indeed, in canonical poetry, the garden is nature commodified to the utmost rather than regarded as a natural space on its own rights. In addition, its inhabitants - often women based on Virgin vs. Whore dichotomy - appear incapable to escape its boundaries, which symbolically emphasizes their marginalization from society. Women poets have however been resisting what actually is a product of patriarchal systems: instead of using this natural space, they approach the garden in a much more ethical manner, seeing in the constraints imposed onto the space a similar history of oppression that cyclically repeats itself. This paper will more specifically explore writings by a mid-twentieth century poet - Freda Laughton - and a contemporary poet - Jessica Traynor - in Ireland who have extensively written on the garden, which suggests the presence and the transmission of the "garden-poem." Despite their respective specificities, the poets "deconstruct" the canonical garden and embrace the biological reality of the space while developing their own aesthetic codes, two processes seemingly irreconcilable. This challenge of poetic norms reveals the influence of a shared hortosophy - a philosophy of the garden - based itself on post-structuralist concepts coined by Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Jacques Derrida. By looking at published poetry and archival material, this presentation will show how both poets' hortosophical approach to the garden shape their creative process and is influential in the construction of their self as women poets in mid-twentieth and twenty-first century Ireland. The sustainability of this philosophy will not only be demonstrated through the transgenerational and transcultural ties that it allows to draw out (such as images, subjects,

concerns...) - the poets being shaped by and evolving in pluricultural environments - but also through the affective connections that can bring poets from different times and backgrounds together. The materialisation of those affective connections can be witnessed in the translation of Laughton's sole published collection into Italian in 2022. Translated by Viviana Fiorentino, this volume of translations also illustrates the timelessness, the affective and ethical power of the garden-poem, as well as its capacity to go beyond any type of social and cultural boundaries. The process of translation – informed by Derrida's concept of ongoing textual engagement and complemented by research into etymologies and cultural dialogue – was reframed as an across-borders, interdisciplinary practice in dialogue with the critical studies on Laughton's poetry but also the translator's creative work on garden as non-canonical space.

Viviana Fiorentino (fiorentino.viviana@gmail.com) is a PhD student at Queen's University Belfast (Seamus Heaney Centre). Her poems appeared in *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The London Magazine*, *The Stinging Fly*, *Banshee*, *Gutter*, and elsewhere. Her poetry has been featured on RTE1, The Southword Poetry Podcast, and archived in UCD's Irish Poetry Reading Archive. In Italy, she published a novel, two poetry collections and poetry in translation (Freda Laughton, Doireann Ní Ghríofa, Layli Long Soldier, Paula Meehan, Anne Carson). She published an essay on Anne Carson (Trasparenze 8/22, San Marco dei Giustiniani). Her short stories and essays were published in *Italian Poetry Review*, *Nazione Indiana*, *Nuovi Argomenti*, *Balena Bianca*. Viviana won the Irish Chair of Poetry Student Prize and was finalist in the Gregory O'Donoghue Poetry Competition. She was selected as Poetry Ireland Introductions 2025 poet.

Caroline **FISCHER** (Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour), ***Plurilinguisme et changements d'identité transgenres et transculturelles***

Panel 6.2

Les questions d'une identité transgenre et transculturelle se trouvent au centre des deux romans de Jayrôme C. Robinet. L'autrice et slameuse française Céline Robinet avait décidé de s'installer à Berlin, où elle a adopté la langue allemande et choisi une nouvelle identité sexuelle, passage dont témoigne son premier roman autofictionnel, *Mein Weg von einer weissen Frau zu einem jungen Mann mit Migrationshintergrund* [Hanser Berlin 2019 ; « Mon parcours d'une femme blanche à un jeune homme issu de l'immigration »]. Le titre laisse deviner que le livre accorde autant d'importance au processus de transformation sexuelle qu'à la perception par les autres. Des débats éthiques encore plus poignants se trouvent au centre de son deuxième roman, *Sonne in Scherben* [Hanser Berlin 2024 ; « Soleil en débris »]. À travers l'analyse de ces deux livres, nous proposons une réflexion sur les difficultés que doivent affronter les personnages, souhaitant « vivre leur meilleure vie » en franchissant les nombreux obstacles qui s'opposent au changement d'identité, ainsi que sur celles rencontrées une fois cette nouvelle identité acquise. L'exemple de J. C. Robinet illustre parfaitement les limites de la terminologie du translingualism (S. Kellman) que l'on serait tenté d'appliquer, car en 2024, il publie aussi une version française de son premier roman, intitulée *Panique dans le vestiaire des hommes* (Au diable vauvert, 2024), ce qui renforce la dimension plurilingue de son œuvre.

Caroline Fischer (caroline.fischer@univ-pau.fr) est professeure de Littérature générale et comparée à l'Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour. Elle coordonne le groupe de recherche Multilingual Literature au sein de la SELC/ESCL. Elle est auteure de nombreuses publications sur la littérature excitante (*Gärten der Lust*, Metzler 1997 ; DTV, 2000), sur l'autoreprésentation du sujet lyrique dans le discours amoureux de l'antiquité au XIXe siècle [*Der poetische Pakt. Rolle und Funktion des poetischen Ich in der Liebeslyrik* (Ovid, Petrarca, Ronsard, Shakespeare, Baudelaire), Winter 2005] et éditrice de la première

traduction allemande des *Amours et des Sonnets pour Hélène* de Ronsard (Elfenbein Verlag 2006 /2010 /2017). Elle a codirigé plusieurs ouvrages, dont *Intermédialités* (Lucie éd. 2015) ; *Un siècle sans poésie ? Le lyrisme des Lumières entre sociabilité, galanterie et savoir* (Champion 2016) ; *Konzepte der Rezeption*, 3 vol. 1. Réception productive : imitatio, intertextualité, intermédialité. 2. Esthétique de la réception. 3. Réception et transferts culturels, Stauffenburg, 2015, 2018, 2021. Elle a dirigé le n° 2025.3 de la revue *POEMA. La recherche annuelle en poésie lyrique*, consacré aux concepts de la poésie. Le volume *Écrire à la croisée des langues : littérature plurilingue en langues romanes entre contrainte politique et liberté esthétique* sortira chez Champion en avril 2026.

Fabiana FLORESCU (University of Bucharest), *Défis identitaires et esthétiques du plurilinguisme dans les créations de l'auteure franco-roumaine Alexandra Badea*

Panel 6.2

Loin de se limiter au thème de la migration ou de l'exil imposé par les régimes totalitaires, Alexandra Badea élabore une poétique des errances contemporaines. Nous explorons comment la langue d'adoption, chez elle, devient un espace d'expérimentation et de réflexion philosophique sur l'identité fracturée. Nous analysons d'abord comment le choix du français comme langue de création relève d'une identité composite et témoigne d'un défi ontologique traversant ses œuvres : disséquer la condition de l'individu déterritorialisé, confronté aux tensions entre réussir et échouer ailleurs, entre identité et altérité ou entre parole et silence. Pour les personnages écartelés entre deux mondes, incapables d'embrasser totalement une nouvelle vie tout en refusant le poids du passé qui les hante, la langue devient une forme de résistance à l'aliénation et une révolte contre un « ennui métaphysique » (Europe Connexion). Ensuite, nous examinons dans quelle mesure le choix d'écrire en français, ainsi que l'hybridité des œuvres, conjuguant des dimensions théâtrale, poétique et sociologique, montre que, pour Badea, la langue est à la fois outil de distanciation critique et instrument de « réparation du monde » (Gefen). Enfin, l'auteure emploie cette langue pour dépasser le désœuvrement auquel est confronté le créateur contemporain – prisonnier dans un contexte de tensions où « parler est un acte de séparation, créer c'est déconstruire, écrire c'est entrer dans une forme de négativité paradoxale » (Parisse). Ces aspects soulignent l'articulation entre l'hybridité identitaire et celle de l'expression, perceptible dans les mises en scène, où le passage d'une langue, d'un espace culturel et d'un médium à l'autre ouvre de nouvelles frictions et perspectives.

Fabiana Florescu (florescufabiana@gmail.com) est docteure ès lettres, maître-assistante au Département de langue et littérature françaises de l'Université de Bucarest. Elle est l'auteure de l'ouvrage *Poétique(s) en question(s)* chez Christian Prigent et Valère Novarina. (Re)penser et pratiquer la poésie de l'extrême contemporain : de l'intertextualité à l'intermédialité, Paris, Éditions Hermann, coll. Savoir Lettres, 2026. Ses recherches portent notamment sur l'expérience de la création dans la poésie et le théâtre contemporains, mais aussi sur les stratégies de communication et d'analyse du discours formulé autour de cette expérience, en accordant une attention particulière au dialogue entre la littérature et les arts visuels et performatifs. Elle a publié des travaux portant sur les relations entre la poésie et les arts visuels et scéniques, s'intéressant à la place des approches interdisciplinaires au sein des études littéraires actuelles et à la manière dont l'intermédialité devient un outil essentiel dans l'analyse des œuvres contemporaines passe-frontières. Elle a publié également des articles sur les façons dont la littérature réinvestit et interroge la mémoire, l'histoire ou le trauma (individuel et collectif).

Elisa FORTUNATO (Università degli Studi di Bari), *Writing the Anthropocene:*

Interpersonal Dynamics in Eleanor Catton's Birnam Wood

Panel 2.4

Trexler (2015) defines Anthropocene fiction as novels that address phenomena linked to the era in which the human species has become dominant enough to cause geological changes on the planet, whereas climate fiction more broadly designates works examining these phenomena related to the climate crisis. This category is not limited exclusively to apocalyptic, dystopian, or science fiction novels (Goodbody and Johns-Putra, 2019), but includes all those works focusing on the historical, political, cultural, or daily-life effects of climate change — understood here through Morton's (2013) definition of global warming as a *hyperobject*, an entity “massively distributed in space and time” that exceeds direct perception. In other words, climate fiction raises questions about the meaning of climate change in our world, the underlying conflicts in the real world, and the very function of the novel itself.

Read in this light, Eleanor Catton's latest novel, *Birnam Wood* (2023), is a work of cli-fi that explores the various forms of conflict permeating our world: the opposition to a dominant political and socio-economic model, the clash between eco-activists and climate deniers, and the tension between those who promote responsibility and engagement and those who exploit the current state of affairs.

The book, in fact, immerses the reader in our contemporary world; its plot simultaneously examines well-meaning but naive direct-action activists and a tech billionaire illegally mining rare earth minerals in New Zealand's Korowai National Park. My aim is to analyze how, in doing so, the author “relocates the causes of climate disaster from a hostile natural world to greedy human beings or corrupted institutions” (Johns-Putra, 2019). By shifting its focus from simulating possible futures to analyzing how social groups and financial interests operate, the novel explores the resulting psychological and economic dynamics of our society, ultimately asking: *What is it like to live in the Anthropocene right now?*

Elisa Fortunato (elisa.fortunato@uniba.it) is an Associate Professor of English Literature at the University of Bari. She published several essays on the classical sources of Gulliver's Travels, as well as the volumes: *Le tracce del marinaio. Note ai “Gulliver's Travels” di Jonathan Swift* (2011) and *Passato e Futuro. Saggi sulla storia di Thomas Carlyle* (2011). She also published extensively on the relationship between translation and patronage during the Fascist period (*Le scelte del traduttore. I Viaggi di Gulliver e il Fascismo*, 2015; *A strange-dispos'd time: “Julius Caesar” and Fascism*, 2017; *Un Huxley italiano nel ventennio fascista*, 2018). Recently, her interests have shifted to ecocriticism and dystopian narratives (*How to Escape a ‘Subhuman Lot’: Aldous Huxley's ‘The Politics of Ecology – The Question of Survival’*, 2019; *Beyond Ecological Trauma. Aldous Huxley's Theory of Language*, 2022; *Always Trembling on the Brink of Poetry. Umano e nonumano in Katherine Mansfield*, 2024).

Bernard FRANCO (Sorbonne Université), *From Goethe's World Literature to Pascale Casanova's World Space of Literature*

Panel 1.1

When Goethe defined “World Literature” in 1827, he initially defined a static concept, that of a world heritage of literature, a collection of humanity's great literary works. But this concept was above all dynamic and emphasized the incompleteness and constant evolution of World Literature, in line with Friedrich Schlegel's conception of Romantic poetry, which he defined as “progressive universal poetry.” Above all, World Literature, based on translations, presupposed exchanges between literatures. Pascale Casanova reorients this concept with the notion of a “global space of literature,” which allows a work to enter the corpus of transmissible works, here also through translations in particular. But the two notions engage

in a different relationship to ethics. While Goethe's notion refers to what Voltaire called the "world republic of letters," Pascale Casanova's notion can be understood in the light of relations of domination, from a postcolonial perspective. The study will compare these two notions from the perspective of the relationship between literature and ethics.

Since 2006, **Bernard Franco** (bernard.franco1@gmail.com) has been Professor of Comparative Literature at Sorbonne University, where he directs the Center for Research in Comparative Literature (CRLC, UR4510). Since 2022, he has also been President of the Scientific Interest Group "Jeu et Sociétés" (Games and Societies). Finally, from 2019 to 2022, he was president of the European Society of Comparative Literature, of which he is now treasurer. He organized its tenth biennial congress in 2024 at Sorbonne University, on "Le Jeu: Gaming, Gambling, and Play in Literature." He is co-chief editor of the journal *CompLit. Journal of European Literature, Arts, and Society*, member of the editorial board of the *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, *Noria*, a literary and artistic journal, the *International Journal for Comparative Cultural Studies*, *Studi di Letteratura Francese*, *Rivista Europea*, and the *Revue européenne de recherches sur la poésie*. He co-edits the series "Perspectives comparatistes" (Classiques Garnier) and "CompLit InterArt" (Common Ground). His research focuses particularly on European Romanticism, dramaturgy, the artist's novel, and the relationship between literature and aesthetics. He is the author of *Le Despotisme du goût. Débats sur le modèle tragique allemand en France, 1797-1814* (Göttingen, Wallstein, 2006) and *La Littérature comparée. Histoire, domaines, méthodes* (Paris, Armand Colin, 2016).

Gisele **FRIGHETTO** (State University of Campinas/Université Clermont Auvergne), ***Poetics of Otherness and Resistance in Micheliny Verunschky's The Sound of the Jaguar's Roar***

Panel 4.9

This paper aims to discuss the pertinence of a poetics of otherness in understanding a broader movement in contemporary Brazilian literature, addressing specifically the novel *The Sound of the Jaguar's Roar* by Micheliny Verunschky, published in 2021. This term, as defined by Rita Olivieri-Godet, is the literary representation that results from confronting otherness as a process of expanding imaginaries and shifting territorial boundaries. Furthermore, this experience can bring together perspectives between Brazilian and foreign cultures in a questioning way, challenging the contradictions of ethnocentrism. As an aesthetic effect, it multiplies points of view and intensifies the playful nature of literary language, transgressing the boundaries between reality and imagination and sometimes immersing the reader in a dreamlike atmosphere of unsettling strangeness. This seems to be the case with *The Sound of the Jaguar's Roar*, a novel that narrates the unfolding events after the historic expedition of German scientists Spix and von Martius to Brazil, focusing on the case of the indigenous Isabela and Johann, who were taken to Munich in 1817. The narrative point of view shifts, but the novel is dominated by selective omniscience to denounce both dominance and sacrifice that result from colonizing violence. Hybrid elements, both formal and cultural, are evident, and they are presented in the novel's discourse through excerpts from Von Martius's diary, articles from 19th- and 20th-century periodicals, poems by Goethe and Schiller, the Miranha songbook, and excerpts of European's travel diaries about the New World. In the universe established in Verunschky's text, the European point of view on the alleged barbarity of colonized peoples, in the sense of cultural inferiority, is subverted by a historiographical metafiction with a decolonizing purpose, culminating in a first-person monologue protagonized by the spirit of the Great Jaguar. Therefore, this work discusses the pertinence of historiographical metafiction, developed by Linda Hutcheon, which involves an artistic parodic revision of historical texts,

and the rethinking of barbarism as carried along by novelists in contemporary Brazilian literature. According to Francis Wolf and Adauto Novaes, this term has been historically used to refer to human societies considered inferior from a cultural or technological point of view, and it has been questioned along with its opposite, the ideal of civilization, due to the perception of the inhumanity of historical processes such as colonization, imperialism, and fascism, among other aspects. Based on the principle of the contemporary, as explained by Giorgio Agamben, we investigate transformations in meaning and the material manifestations of barbarism to perceive the archaic and the immanent at work in our own time, mainly in Latin American societies. Therefore, we propose a decolonial approach, as explained by Nelson Maldonado-Torres, through which the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being is elucidated and, as a counterpart, presented, a political thought rooted in the resistance struggles of local populations. Considering literature as mediation, as Raymond Williams suggests, this paper aims to demonstrate a structure of feeling of discomfort with dehumanization among Brazilian writers, whose work positions literature as one of the possible sites of political resistance within society.

Gisele Novaes Frighetto (giselefrighetto@gmail.com) is Postdoctoral Researcher at the Postgraduate Program in Education of the State University of Campinas (Unicamp, Brazil). Currently, she is undertaking a research internship abroad at the Center for Research in Literature and Sociopoetics (CELIS) at the University of Clermont Auvergne (UCA, France). Her research, entitled "The Brazilian Literature in Times of Barbarism," is funded by the Research Support Foundation of the State of São Paulo (FAPESP). She holds a PhD in Letters from the Postgraduate Program in Literary Theory and Comparative Literature at the University of São Paulo. Her research focuses on Literary Theory, Comparative Literature, Brazilian Literature, Sociology of Literature, and Education, with an emphasis on contemporary Brazilian fictional production and the teaching of literature. At the moment, she is a member of the Laboratory for Studies of Culture, History, Education, Sociology, and Psychoanalysis (LECHESP), associated with the Department of Social Sciences applied to Education at Unicamp.

FU Qilin (Sichuan University), *Ferenc Tőkei's Writing of a History of Chinese Literature*

Panel 1.1

This paper discusses a Hungarian sinologist Ferenc Tőkei's writing of a history of Chinese literature on the basis of the book *A kínai irodalom rövid története* (A Brief History of Chinese Literature) in 1960. From the perspective of framework of mutual learning in terms of civilization and Marxist interpretation, it attempts to analyse his special aesthetics, historical consciousnesses, pattern of trans-cultural knowledge and cultural politics of literature. From this, it puts forward some reflections on a new writing of history of world literature.

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Aesthetics on Eastern Europe(2025), and a series of papers about Marxist literary theory in journals, such as *European Review*, *Thesis Eleven*, *Literary Review*, *Comparative Literature and Culture*.

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Sara GALLARDO (University of Vienna), *Mad Studies as Ethical-Affective Literary Critique: A Comparative (Re)Reading (1883–1993)*

Panel 6.7

Psychologising language permeates our lives, shaping what we should think, feel (feeling-thinking or *sentipensar*, as first used in Fals Borda, 1995), and how we should behave. This prefiguration, successful within neoliberal contexts, emerges from the psy sciences and their consolidation as the sole legitimate discourse on madness (Foucault) grounded in a biomedical model. Its expansion now reaches all human emotions—what Javier Erro calls the “mental health culture”—and pathologises aspects of everyday life (Fisher; Ahmed; Cabanas & Illouz). This influence goes beyond diagnosis, shaping how people interpret their affective and social experiences. In literary analysis, this paradigm has historically resulted in two reductionist approaches: either interpreting texts written by psychiatrised authors through a clinical lens to diagnose writers themselves, or romanticising madness as a “creative genius” that ontologically links pathology with literary value. Although different, these two dominant perspectives share a tendency to reduce lived experience to objectifiable categories imposed by hegemonic discourses—both socioeconomic and clinical. In this paper, I outline the foundations of a diasporic, decentred, and dissident critique of both currents and of psychiatric discourse itself. I analyse experiences within the psychiatric institution through four autobiographical texts written by psychiatrized authors from the Global North: Hersilie Rouy (1883, France), Christine Lavant (1946/1971, Austria), Alda Merini (1986, Italy), and Susanna Kaysen (1993, USA). These texts all address psychiatric admissions—events that determine the pathological transformation of subjectivity—and show how identity is negotiated within contexts of medical-institutional power. Drawing on Mad Studies and material-discursive analysis, I explore how these authors resist medical-institutional power through strategies of self-enunciation (De Juan Franco, Erro) and diverse forms of collective consciousness. This embodied approach acknowledges a “triple affective entanglement”: being simultaneously affected (harmed) by the system; affected in the sense of being touched or moved; and ultimately implicated as agents capable of generating critical knowledge and acting politically. Ultimately, this paper aims to recover first-person situated knowledges, positioning autobiographical writing as a powerful tool for activism, narrative resubjection, and resistance to dominant clinical frameworks.

Sara R. Gallardo (sarargallardo@gmail.com) is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow (MSCA-PF) at the University of Vienna (Austria), where she leads the project “Mad Literature: Own Epistemologies from First-Person Voices” (MadLit), focusing on autobiographical narrative strategies in processes of psychiatrization from the perspective of mad studies. The project, initially running from 2024 to 2026, was extended until 2027 with funding from the University of Vienna. Her recent publications include the monograph *Las autonovelas familiares. Escritura, memoria y cuerpo en la literatura contemporánea* (Ediuno, 2025); “Autobiografía subalterna: tensiones, límites y posibilidades del decir en la práctica contemporánea” (Perífrasis, 2026); and “Narrating Madness: Subjectivity and the Politics of Representation” (Re:visit, 2025). Previously, she was a Margarita Salas Postdoctoral Fellow (MIU/NextGenerationEU/PRTR), conducting research stays at the University of Münster (Germany) and Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M). She holds a PhD in Humanities (UC3M), a MA in Theory and Cultural Criticism (UC3M), and a BA in Journalism from University of Valladolid (Spain). She is a member of the research group TePPeL (Research Group on Technology and Power in Thought and Letters, USAL). As a writer, she has

published three poetry collections and contributes to *Pikara* magazine.

Rosanne GALLENNÉ (Université Toulouse); with **Viviana FIORENTINO**, *'Hortosophical Encounters': The Garden as an Inspirational Space of Creativity in Poetry by Women in Mid-Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries Ireland*

Panel 2.5

In many cultures, the garden is an object of artistic scrutiny and holds, more specifically, a special place in poetic traditions. Oftentimes associated with beauty and exhibiting the evolution of aesthetic standards across times, these conventions however set the space at odds with current debates surrounding sustainability, freedom of movement, and the right to self-determination. Indeed, in canonical poetry, the garden is nature commodified to the utmost rather than regarded as a natural space on its own rights. In addition, its inhabitants - often women based on Virgin vs. Whore dichotomy - appear incapable to escape its boundaries, which symbolically emphasizes their marginalization from society. Women poets have however been resisting what actually is a product of patriarchal systems: instead of using this natural space, they approach the garden in a much more ethical manner, seeing in the constraints imposed onto the space a similar history of oppression that cyclically repeats itself. This paper will more specifically explore writings by a mid-twentieth century poet - Freda Laughton - and a contemporary poet - Jessica Traynor - in Ireland who have extensively written on the garden, which suggests the presence and the transmission of the "garden-poem." Despite their respective specificities, the poets "deconstruct" the canonical garden and embrace the biological reality of the space while developing their own aesthetic codes, two processes seemingly irreconcilable. This challenge of poetic norms reveals the influence of a shared hortosophy - a philosophy of the garden - based itself on post-structuralist concepts coined by Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Jacques Derrida. By looking at published poetry and archival material, this presentation will show how both poets' hortosophical approach to the garden shape their creative process and is influential in the construction of their self as women poets in mid-twentieth and twenty-first century Ireland. The sustainability of this philosophy will not only be demonstrated through the transgenerational and transcultural ties that it allows to draw out (such as images, subjects, concerns...) - the poets being shaped by and evolving in pluricultural environments - but also through the affective connections that can bring poets from different times and backgrounds together. The materialisation of those affective connections can be witnessed in the translation of Laughton's sole published collection into Italian in 2022. Translated by Viviana Fiorentino, this volume of translations also illustrates the timelessness, the affective and ethical power of the garden-poem, as well as its capacity to go beyond any type of social and cultural boundaries. The process of translation - informed by Derrida's concept of ongoing textual engagement and complemented by research into etymologies and cultural dialogue - was reframed as an across-borders, interdisciplinary practice in dialogue with the critical studies on Laughton's poetry but also the translator's creative work on garden as non-canonical space.

Rosanne GALLENNÉ (Université Toulouse), *Blanaid Salkeld's Activism: A Poetic Argument for a European Identity in Times of Nationalisms (with ESCL Research Group)*

Panel 8.2

Born in Chittagong, India (now Chattogram in Bangladesh) in 1880, Blanaid Salkeld stands out in the Irish artistic landscape of the mid-twentieth century. An Irish-language activist, actress, playwright, salonnière, translator, literary critic and publisher, she turned her focus to poetry in her fifties, after having already built a solid artistic personality and having formed

strong political opinions. Although already politically involved, it is nonetheless through her poetic practice that her political engagement is the most powerfully expressed, in particular in two collections - *The Fox's Covert* (1935) and ... *the engine is left running* (1937) - that address her concerns regarding the rise of nationalisms in Europe in the 1930s. Marked by Salkeld's own cosmopolitan background and shaped by her involvement in cultural and political movements, these two mid-twentieth century collections offer a unique vision of the changes occurring in the 1930s. Increasingly experimental yet anchored in the Irish literary tradition, the poems explore the role of the poet in a society in crisis, especially their responsibility in establishing transcultural connections and/or highlighting cross-boundary ties (cultural, historical and even linguistic) that nationalist ideologies aim to erase. Through close readings, this presentation will examine how Salkeld's peak modernist poetry carefully builds patterns that challenge geographical and cultural boundaries without depriving each culture from its specificities, and seeks to trigger her audience's indignation by pointing out the risks and absurdities of dogmatic ideologies.

Being part of a panel concerned with the construction of European identity throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, this presentation aims to demonstrate how a poet writing from the margins of mid-twentieth century Europe (Salkeld being an Irish woman poet) both challenges normative representations and contributes to the richness and diversity of a European identity that is difficult to pinpoint due to its ever-changing nature. It also shows how non-canonical texts can be especially relevant and helpful in the understanding of our own society, particularly in times of crisis.

Rosanne Gallenne (rosanne.gallenne@gmail.com) obtained her Ph.D. from University College Dublin where she graduated with her thesis "Representation(s) of the Garden in Poetry by Women in Ireland, from the Mid-twentieth Century to the Present." She now holds a temporary teaching and research position at the Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès as a formator in English for future teachers in primary and secondary schools. Her current research explores the correlation between environment, the concept of "body" and politics - more specifically from an anti-fascist perspective – in works by women poets based in France, Ireland and Italy during the 20th and 21st centuries, as well as their contribution to trans-artistic networks.

Ylenia GAMBACCINI (Sorbonne Université), *Affective Ecologies: A Comparative Study on Emotional Rhetoric and Environmental Responsibility in Literature*

Panel 6.8

Classical rhetoric has long recognized the central role of emotions in persuasive discourse, with pathos as one of the three fundamental pillars of argumentation, alongside ethos and logos. This study investigates how emotional rhetoric—traditionally associated with oratory—is reactivated in contemporary literature to shape readers' ethical awareness of the ecological crisis. Integrating insights from classical rhetoric, Ecocriticism, and Affective Studies, it argues that emotions in literary texts are not merely aesthetic effects but essential persuasive techniques capable of transforming perception into responsibility. Through a deductive and comparative analysis of emblematic authors—Andrea Zanzotto, Eugenio Montale, Rachel Carson, Amitav Ghosh, Barbara Kingsolver, and Erri De Luca—the paper examines how rhetorical devices such as *amplificatio*, apostrophe, and *enargeia* operate as tools of ecological persuasion. These stylistic and affective strategies generate empathy, indignation, or hope, positioning literature as a medium for ethical reflection and civic engagement. The paper situates the pathos of literature within the broader field of "affective ecologies": it proposes that emotional rhetoric allows literature to construct what Williams (1977) calls "structures of feeling": shared affective experiences that translate environmental awareness into communal ethics. Zanzotto's *Il Galateo in Bosco* embodies an "ecological

enargeia,” turning language into a sensitive organism that mirrors environmental trauma, while Montale’s arid landscapes in *Ossi di seppia* evoke the pathos of detachment and loss. Carson’s *Silent Spring* transforms scientific data into collective emotion through vivid imagery and metaphors of war, while Ghosh’s *The Great Derangement* exposes the affective blindness of modern realism in representing the Anthropocene. Alongside the pathos of loss, the study identifies a “rhetoric of hope” in Kingsolver’s *Flight Behavior* and De Luca’s *Il peso della farfalla*, where empathy and wonder become forms of ethical reparation. These narratives illustrate how affect can move beyond despair to generate a renewed sense of community and agency. Ultimately, the paper demonstrates that affective rhetoric bridges aesthetics and ethics: it transforms feeling into responsibility and reading into an act of ethical participation. By rethinking classical pathos through the lenses of affect theory and ecological criticism, this research contributes to current debates on ethics and affect, showing how literature can cultivate collective awareness and emotional intelligence in the face of ecological and moral crises.

Ylenia Gambaccini (ylenia.gambaccini2@unibo.it) is a PhD Researcher in Italian Studies at Sorbonne Université, Paris. Her research focuses on the Sicilian political novel, particularly the parliamentary novel, examining how authors such as De Roberto, Pirandello, Brancati, and Sciascia represent power, corruption, and political consensus in Italy from national unification to the First Republic. Combining literary analysis with rhetorical and political theory, she explores the relationship between literature, politics, and civic identity. She also collaborates with the Piero Camporesi Center of the University of Bologna and serves as managing editor of the journal *DNA – Di Nulla Academia*. She is also a member of CIRHET.

Suad GARA (European Graduate School/ Independent Filmmaker), *Storytelling with and against the Female Gaze: Meta-Textual Readings*

Panel 2.3

In my work I explore how gender and identity become a form of resistance in an otherwise patriarchal society. Although present throughout the history of Eastern empires, from court entertainment to current day TikTok sensations, the non-binary, the queer and the transgender figures have largely been shut out of the mainstream narrative in Azerbaijan. How does their existence on screen challenge the existing norms of “proper” society, and especially against the backdrop of emergence from the Soviet dogma that “There is no sex in our country”. Through that perspective, I interrogate the female gaze – does the freedom of sexual determination threaten the traditional gender role prescribed for women for the society to be able to function within a predetermined framework? Or are the ruptures within the traditional attempt to proscribe female existence finally visible on a larger scale? Here I would like to consider how social media has amplified the conversation and exacerbated the polarity between the “conservative” and “progressive” camps, who each opine freely on what women should or should not do – based on the case study of the discussion around my short film *Mahsati*, which juxtaposed the sexual and artistic freedoms of a contemporary woman with the sensual and often revolutionary poetry of Mahsati Ganjavi in 12th-century Azerbaijan. Curiously, the avalanche of social media commentary on the film – from opinion posts, comments section, open-source publication of the original source material, stories and video OpEds – itself presents a sort of “meta-literature” that is always accessible, and acts as perhaps a more durable and ubiquitous record of our time than traditionally defined “literature”. The main question that emerges is: Can a woman, a queer individual, a non-binary person, etc. be sexually active and open and still remain a useful agent within a post-Soviet society? Are we living through a time ripe for a sexual revolution and where will it lead us – to a more inclusive and transparent model where sexual self-determination and

freedom is accepted and proliferated on screen and social media or, on the contrary, to a more dogmatic polarity where the traditional gender roles are forcefully upheld as foundations of a healthy society?

Suad Gara (suad.garayeva@gmail.com) is a British-Azerbaijani filmmaker. Suad has made multiple short films that premiered and won awards internationally and is currently working on her debut feature, *Hotel Diana*. The project was selected for WEMW Trieste Co-Production Forum (2023), where it won the Pop-Up Film Residency Award, and the LFF: Project Finance Market by Film:London in 2024. Suad also participated in the Less Is More script development lab in France in 2023. The film is currently in late development with the British Film Institute. Before embarking on this journey in 2020, Suad was the chief curator and artistic director of YARAT Contemporary Art Space in Baku, Azerbaijan (2014–2020), where she curated numerous exhibitions, ran an artist residency, a theatre and performance festival (MAP) and produced artist films by Almagul Menlibayeva, Vajiko Chachkhiani, Hannah Black and Ahmet Ögüt among others. She has also curated independent projects for Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, MAMBo Bologna and the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich. Before then she was a specialist at Sotheby's London (2011–2014) and an associate at Lehman Brothers and Nomura International (both London, 2007–2010). She holds an MSc in Philosophy and Public Policy from the London School of Economics and an MLitt in Modern and Contemporary Art from the University of Glasgow. She is currently doing her PhD in Literary, Visual and Musical Thought at the European Graduate School (Saas Fee/Valetta).

Patricia GARCÍA (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), *Reading the Unethical City: Lessons for Europe from Contemporary Latin American Supernatural Fiction*.

Panel 6.9

In her foundational article “What Would a Non-Sexist City Be Like?” (1980), feminist geographer Dolores Hayden asks: “Is it possible to build non-sexist neighbourhoods and design non-sexist cities? What would they be like?” Recent scholarship in literary urban studies has demonstrated that this process of building cities in urban planning is deeply intertwined with storytelling practices. This paper contributes to this conversation by focusing on fictions of the fantastic, a mode particularly attuned to exposing the cracks in dominant urban logics, making it especially productive for feminist and decolonial readings of the city. Feminist urbanism offers a transformational lens for rethinking spatial equity and the ethics of inhabiting the city. My presentation explores how literary worlds engage with urban theory through affective and ethical relations between text and space. Focusing on contemporary Latin American supernatural fictions, I propose an approach to narrative analysis grounded in feminisms that emerge from the Global South and that challenge dominant Anglo-American epistemologies of space and gender. My argument draws on short stories and novels by renowned contemporary Latin American authors specializing in expressions of the weird, the supernatural, horror and science fiction. This includes Argentine writers Mariana Enriquez, Laura Ponce, Dolores Reyes, and Samanta Schweblin; Ecuadorian author Solange Rodríguez Pappe, and Mexican writer Cecilia Eudave. Their narratives, set in recognizable cities like Buenos Aires and Guayaquil, are disrupted by impossible creatures or actions – what I refer to as the fantastic element. The analysis seeks to illuminate shifting ethical and affective dynamics in the way cities are imagined: from the home to the neighbourhood in the conceptualization of domesticity; from the logic of capital production to the reproduction of care networks; and from metaphors of the city as a body to the porous continuum of body–city assemblages.

Patricia García (patricia.garcia.garcia@uab.cat) is an Associate Professor of Literary Theory and Comparative Literature at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain). Prior to her

current position, she was Associate Professor at the University of Nottingham (UK), and lecturer at Dublin City University (IE). Her research focuses on two main areas: representations of the supernatural in fiction, and literary urban studies from a gender perspective. She is the author of two monographs: *The Urban Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century European Literature* (Palgrave, 2021) and *Space and the Postmodern Fantastic in Contemporary Literature* (Routledge, 2015). She has recently co-edited *Urban Mobilities in Literature and Art Activism* (with con Anna-Lena Toivanen 2024) and *Urban Undergrounds* (with David Pike 2025). From 2020 to 2025, she led the Ramón y Cajal research project *Literary Periurbanities*, funded by the Ministerio de Universidades and the European Social Fund. She has also held research fellowships at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS Core Fellowship), the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies (EURIAS/Marie-Curie Co-Fund), and the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris (Liam Swords Foundation Fellowship). She is the chair of the international research network *Fringe Urban Narratives* (urbanfringes.com) and co-director of the *Palgrave Series in Literary Urban Studies*.

Teresa GARCÍA-SALCEDO (University of Córdoba), *Glimpses of Relationality: Affective Encounters and Ontological Community in Zadie Smith's NW*

Panel 4.8

Numerous scholars have underlined literature's role in society, given its aesthetic and ethical potential to expose, anticipate, criticise and suggest alternatives in relation to the world's current state of affairs. Building on this premise, this paper explores how Zadie Smith's novel *NW* (2012) grapples with questions of community and alterity against the backdrop of an increasingly detached and psychologically marred contemporary British society. As John McLeod (2020) argues, *NW* depicts a bleak sociocultural landscape that is reflective of post-crash austerity and identity politics in early-twenty-first-century Britain, thereby anticipating the hostile environment and anti-immigration sentiment that would eventually fuel pro-Brexit campaigns. Along these lines, the narrative also showcases a generalised attitude of disunity and solipsism propelled by neoliberal metanarratives of "the good life" (Berlant 2011) and its ethics of success that reinforce socioeconomic and racial divisions and erode possibilities of solidarity. Aspirations of personal development, social climbing and material accumulation are particularly embodied in the character of Keisha, a Black working-class woman later renamed Natalie, who buys into the rhetoric of atomised individualism and the fallacy of meritocratic and multicultural discourses. Despite her apparent success, Natalie's narrative arc exposes the ethical, psychological and affective costs of complying with hegemonic cultural scripts that negate relationality as a core principle of human sociality. Thus, through the lens of affect theory (Ahmed 2010; Berlant 2011) and community studies (Nancy, 1991, Agamben, 1993), this paper aims to trace instances of epistemic rupture through the representation of affective encounters, erotic impulses and transgressive desires that evoke an ethical shift towards ontological and relational approaches to community. For the purposes of focus, it critically engages with Natalie's section, following her process of self-invention and social ascension. Her professional and personal ambitions force her into an identity performance that promises social legibility at the expense of her own singularity. Following Agamben's notion of the "coming community" (1993), the performance of commodified identities, however, forecloses the possibility of establishing meaningful connections, as sociality is turned into inauthentic spectacle. Natalie's narrative arc thus highlights an increasingly overwhelming sense of alienation and detachment, which is juxtaposed to her disruptive desires for intimacy beyond the private sphere of the family. In this regard, it is my contention that *NW* orchestrates affective encounters with the other that ultimately challenge essentialist and identity-based discourses underpinning community-building in the twenty-first century. These hopeful instances of rupture, however fleeting, ambivalent and precarious, gesture towards a relational ethics of alterity that demands

mutual responsibility in a world that is increasingly alienated.

Teresa García-Salcedo (l82gasat@uco.es) is a PhD student at the Department of English and German Philology at the University of Córdoba (Spain), where she teaches and pursues doctoral research under the FPU Doctoral Fellowship, granted by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities. She earned two BAs from the University of Córdoba—one in English Studies and another in Translation and Interpreting, graduating with first-class honours. She also obtained a MA in Translation for the Publishing World from the University of Málaga (Spain), receiving an Academic Excellence Award. Her research interests focus on the exploration of hope, community, resistance and temporality in black British and African American fiction. She has been a visiting scholar at the University of Leeds, under the supervision of Professor John McLeod.

Adya GAUR (Indian Institute of Technology Mandi), ***Ethics and Affect in Contemporary Literary Autozoography: A Study of Yoko Tawada's *Memoirs of a Polar Bear* and David Zindell's *The Idiot Gods****

Panel 5.7

This paper examines Literary Autozoography, a genre identified by Frederike Middelhoff as denoting literary texts that employ non-human animal narrators, and argues that while such texts create distinct affective experiences in readers, the ethical work of the genre cannot be located in affect alone. Through a study of Yoko Tawada's *Memoirs of a Polar Bear* (2016) and David Zindell's *The Idiot Gods* (2017), the paper attends to the bargain by which an animal narrator becomes legible to human readers and the costs this bargain carries. Both novels position marine mammals as narrator-protagonists: Tawada's polar bears compel readers to witness the subjective interiority of circus and zoo animals while Zindell's Orca sets out to confront humans about the captivity of his species at sea circuses and humanity's larger destruction of the world. The paper situates the narrative strategies afforded by the autozoographical form—and the narratological questions of voice and focalization they raise—within broader debates about representing animal subjectivity. Engaging with Derrida's critique of "the animal" as a homogenizing concept, the paper argues that both texts resist collapsing their narrators into either pure alterity or straightforward human likeness, instead staging the tensions and costs of becoming legible across species boundaries. While both authors raise similar concerns on animal captivity in institutionalised spectacles, ecological crisis and human-animal coexistence, they do so through different affective registers and generic choices. Through magical realism, Tawada presents a multi-generational non-human saga that also intersects with human histories, particularly in its engagement with themes of immigration and displacement, her narrators' voices treated as simple fact rather than achievement in the story-world. Zindell, on the other hand, uses a quest narrative with more explicit ecological focus rendered through science fiction, in which the orca narrator's legibility to humankind is hard won through years of collaborative translation. Where Tawada's affective tone is predominantly melancholic and intimate, Zindell transforms the orca's testimony into a kind of prophetic rage and warning. The paper argues that this contrast is not simply one of style: each register carries information about the conditions under which these autozoographies render an animal's inner life knowable and thus enables distinct but complementary modes of ethical engagement. Following Sara Ahmed's caution that "justice is not simply a feeling," the paper locates the ethical work of these texts not in the affect itself but in what it reveals about the structures that make recognition possible. Despite markedly different affective tones and geographical-thematic frameworks, these texts destabilize the readers' habitual perceptual frameworks and move the genre toward a relational, posthumanist understanding of life across species, one that neither romanticizes voice nor mistakes its absence for a lesser inner life. Donna Haraway's

call for ethical relationality and "response-ability" finds resonance in these texts, which portray human-animal relationships as deeply entangled, mutually transformative, and ethically significant. The study seeks to align with the posthumanist drive for acknowledging and representing multiplicity of selves across the species boundaries and moving beyond domination and separation toward a more relational, empathetic, and inclusive understanding of life on Earth.

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Lucy GETTMAN (American University), *Using the Blogosphere to Elevate Narratives of Women and Political Leadership among Academics and Practitioners*

Panel 3.2

Of the estimated 600 million blogs worldwide, we do not know how many specifically seek to elevate lived experience and narrative voices on behalf of gender parity in political leadership. Blogs can offer both depth and breadth on an issue (relative to tweets and comments), offer technological accessibility, and diversity of thought. This paper seeks to demonstrate how such a blog can link narrative research and voice, academic expression and lived experience. Integral to this work is employing feminist narrative research as a tool and method of knowledge creation as well as dissemination. Among others, I invoke Sarojini Nadar's 2014 work, "Stories are data with Soul: lessons from black feminist epistemology" and her S.T.O.R.Y framework, that demonstrates that narrative can link the two together by: expressing Suspicion of the master narrative, using narrative research as a Tool for gathering as well as disseminating data, Objecting to "objectivity" in research, practicing Reflexivity and embracing a Yearning for transformation and change. To illustrate, I use Gender On The Ballot, an initiative of the Women & Politics Institute at American University in Washington, DC. WPI's nonpartisan blog, media roundup and newsletter was co-founded by the Women & Politics Institute and the Barbara Lee Family Foundation in 2019. By incorporating academic, practitioner and student perspectives, the blog invites insight that is diverse by age, race, and lived experience. Students are both undergraduate and graduate level. Academic contributors range from adjuncts to post-docs and tenured faculty. Organizational contributors have broad representation, including government leaders, NGOs, business leaders, and advocacy groups. Its mission is to examine and contextualize gender dynamics in politics and to close the gender gap in political leadership. The voices of women in their blog posts help us tell the S.T.O.R.Y. of women and politics.

Lucy Gettman (gettman@american.edu) is an educator, editor and champion for women & political leadership. She is Acting Director for the Women & Politics Institute at American University in Washington, DC. Gettman is also an Adjunct Professorial Lecturer teaching courses on women & politics, and Editor for Gender on the Ballot, a nonpartisan blog, media roundup and newsletter. Gettman previously served as an Adjunct Lecturer at The Ohio State University in the Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies Department, and was Faculty in Residence at the John Glenn College of Public Affairs at OSU. Gettman is past Executive Director of Women In Government, an organization by and for women state legislators. She previously served as Chief Advocacy Officer for the National School Boards Association and Director of Government Relations for the Literacy Council of North America. She also held professional positions at the Inter-University Council of Ohio, the Ohio House of

Representatives, and the Ohio Attorney General. She was a finalist for an unexpired term on the Columbus, Ohio City Council and was an elected member and Vice President of the University Area Commission in Columbus.

Rahilya GEYBULLAYEVA (Baku Slavic University and ADA University), ***From Pre-Bolshevik Baku to the Post-Soviet Camp: Memory and Violence in Azerbaijani Literature***

Panel 1.3

This study foregrounds a twofold consideration of authorship and ethics. First, it asks whether works such as medieval Islamic literary texts or translations of Panchatantra into *Kelile va Dimne*—often borrowed and adapted without attribution—should be regarded as plagiarism today, and how they were perceived in their historical contexts. Second, it examines the deconstruction of established heroes and historical figures in literary narratives, exploring how both medieval and modern authors navigate ethical responsibility in representing canonical texts, national heroes, or political figures such as Lenin, Stalin, or Dede Gorgud characters. By bridging historical, cultural, and poststructuralist perspectives, this discussion interrogates how concepts of authorship, textual authority, and literary ethics have evolved across centuries, revealing the ongoing negotiation between individual creativity and shared literary heritage.

Rahilya GEYBULLAYEVA (Baku Slavic University and ADA University), ***Ethics, Literature and Authorship Across Time***

Panel 4.3

This research examines the ethical, affective, and cultural dimensions of authorship, textual transmission, and adaptation from ancient and medieval literature to modern reinterpretations and translations. In medieval contexts, authors often functioned as mediators between the divine and human, and literary creation frequently involved the reuse of archetypes, motifs, and verses of folklore without explicit attribution. Concepts such as originality, plagiarism, and textual authority were understood differently than in contemporary frameworks; rulers, scribes, and communities sometimes acted as authors, and works such as sacred texts or parallel poetry (e.g., *nazire* and *cevap*) reflect complex dynamics of response, intertextuality, and communal memory. Medieval and classical literature often relied on archetypes and repeated motifs, as exemplified by *Leyli* and *Mecnun*, where poetic responses and textual/ character repetition fostered communal memory. In these contexts, authorship was collective and adaptive, reflecting cultural norms rather than individual ownership, and challenging modern notions of plagiarism or originality. Modern adaptations, such as A. Tolstoy's *Buratino* (1936), Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* (1883), as well as the Russian retelling of *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) by A. A. Milne, adapted by Boris Zakhoder as *Vinni Pukh* (1960), illustrate how translation, fan fiction, and reinterpretation reshape authorship across time, raising questions about creativity, and ethics of intellectual property.

Rahilya Geybullayeva (rahilya_g@hotmail.com) holds a PhD degree from Lomonosov Moscow State University (1989) and a Dr. Habil. degree from the Literary Institute, Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (2004) As a recipient of UNESCO, Carnegie, and Fulbright Fellowships; has been a visiting scholar at SOAS, University of Wisconsin-Madison, UC Berkeley, and Harvard University; Abilay Khan University of Foreign Language and International Relations (Kazakhstan, grant of the Ministry of Education); University of Piedmont, Vercelli, Italy (May-June 2023) She has monographs, articles, with a focus on

crossroads of comparative literature, culture, religion, literary historiography and sociology, and has recently published:

Chapter *Semiolinguistic look on mythology, cultural history and meanings of places in Azerbaijan* (De Gruyter Mouton, 2023);

chapters *Modern Interpretations of Nizami or moulds without moulds: national literature criteria, shared past and irredenta* (Peter Lang, 2020);

Chapter *Identities of Nizami's Heroes in Modern Interpretation: Following the Traces of Shirin's Character* (by Peter Lang, 2020);

Co-editor and contributed author of collective monography *Nizami in Modern-Day Interpretation* (2020, by Peter Lang, with Dr. Christine van Rymbeke)

Co-editor-in-chief of the collective monograph *Exploring Intersections Between Nizami and Dante: Beyond Medievality: Before and After* (Brill, December 2025),

Chapter *"The Philology and Philosophy of Love: Before and During Medievality"* (Brill, 2025).

Francesco GIUSTI (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main), *Planetary Elegy and the Globalization of Grief*

Panel 10.3

Environmental affect or personal feeling? In contemporary elegies for ecological loss, grief seems to lie somewhere between the two. While presupposing a mourning subject, grief can also enable individuals to partake in pre-subjective affects. Twenty years after its first publication in 2005, Juliana Spahr's acclaimed ecopoem "Gentle Now, Don't Add to Heartache" continues to prompt reflection on the ethical and political implications of these two types of connection: pre-subjective interconnectedness within a multispecies environment and subjective emotional investment between human individuals. Building on Spahr's insights, as well as on Jahan Ramazani's recent reassessment of the use of an elegiac mode when dealing with ecological loss (2025), this paper will examine recent eco-elegies, exploring the potential and dangers of viewing environmental disasters through the lens of planetary grief. It will also discuss how the two types of connection outlined by Spahr are conveyed by poetic form, and how they become intertwined with issues (and politics) of scale. Finally, it will consider how these connections shape our conceptions of community in the age of anthropogenic disasters and systemic violence.

Francesco Giusti (F.Giusti@em.uni-frankfurt.de) currently teaches Italian literature at the Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main. He has published two books devoted respectively to the ethics of mourning and to cognitive desire in lyric poetry, *Canzonieri in morte: Per un'etica poetica del lutto* (2015) and *Il desiderio della lirica: Poesia, creazione, conoscenza* (2016). He co-edited, with Christine Ott and Damiano Frasca, the volume *Poesia e nuovi media* (2018); with Benjamin Lewis Robinson, *The Work of World Literature* (2021); with Adele Bardazzi and Emanuela Tandello, *A Gaping Wound: Mourning in Italian Poetry* (2022); with Irene Fantappiè and Laura Scuriatti, *Rethinking Lyric Communities* (2024); with Laura Banella, *Invention, Re-enactment, Exchange: Lyric Communities in Medieval and Early Modern Italy*, special issue of *Italian Studies* (80.2, 2025); and with Laura Banella and Nicolas Longinotti, *Rethinking Lyric Communities in Premodern Worlds*, special issue of *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* (56.1, 2026). He is a member of the Executive Board of the [International Network for the Study of Lyric](#).

Felicia GREEN (University of Bergen), *"But where is Maj? I'm losing her ...": (Self-*

)reflexivity in/and Murdochian attention in Kristina Sandberg's Maj trilogy

Panel 6.3

In this paper, I will talk about an aspect of my ongoing PhD thesis: (self-)reflexivity as a literary technique, as a part of writing a just and loving gaze, in the sense of Iris Murdoch. The example I will be thinking with is Swedish author Kristina Sandberg's award-winning and highly acclaimed trilogy about the reluctant and complicated housewife Maj: *Att föda ett barn* from 2010, *Sörja för de sina* from 2012, and *Liv till varje pris* from 2014. Swedish literary critics have applauded Sandberg's strong sense of voice and the novels' recognition and rectification of the Swedish housewife – a previously neglected and forgotten figure, despite her important role in the construction of the Swedish welfare state. Maj is, however, a notoriously insecure and anxious character, hypercritical of everyone and everything, almost maniacally negative. She is often immature and insensitive, attention-seeking and self-obsessed, and struggles with love and affection. Yet still, many readers and critics, including myself, have described their reading experiences as reparative. In reading about Maj, they have come to see their own mothers or grandmothers, and the women of that generation, in a different, more understanding, fair, and empathetic light. Why is this? In my thesis, I suggest we can illuminate this response – as well as Sandberg's writing – with Iris Murdoch's ethical notion of attention as a just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality. I argue that Sandberg's use of certain literary techniques and her stylistic choices, evokes such a gaze in and through her narrator – inviting the reader to engage in a moral practice of just and loving attention as well. In this paper, I will be focusing on one such technique: the (self-)reflexivity of the first-person meta-narrator, who we later learn is Maj's granddaughter. Throughout the story she recurrently reflects upon her writing process, creative choices, her attempts to see, know and depict Maj and her reality, as well as the challenges and ethical dilemmas and implications of her project. This reflexivity is one of the most distinctive techniques in the trilogy, and I have also thought of it as somehow essential in my interpretation. Advancing, however, I realised this hypothesis is seemingly at odds with a crucial part of Murdoch's concept of attention: unselfing – a deliberate suspension or suppression of the self. Hence, this paper reflects upon the following questions: How does the concept of unselfing affect my description of Sandberg's narrator as someone engaged in a just and loving gaze – is it still plausible to describe her practice as such? If it is, what does the (self-)reflexivity do for this particular just and loving gaze, and what insight may it offer into the role of the self in Murdochian attention?

Felicia Green (felicia.green@uib.no) is a second-year PhD Candidate in Nordic Literature at the University of Bergen, Norway, with an MA in Comparative Literature from Uppsala University, Sweden. With her thesis, she aims to bring forward love as a thematic, narratorial, and stylistic essence in Swedish Kristina Sandberg's award-winning trilogy about housewife Maj – showing its philosophical, moral and ethical weight – as well as exploring the role of love and attention in literary interpretation and method.

Carlos F. GRIGSBY (University of Bristol), ***Canal Zone Literature across Languages: Joaquín Beleño, Eric Walrond, and Maryse Condé***

Panel 4.4

This paper examines how specific spaces shape literary form, genre, and poetics by focusing on the Panama Canal Zone as a transnational and multilingual site of cultural production. It argues that the historical, political, and racialized conditions of the Canal Zone generated distinctive narrative strategies across literary traditions. Through a comparative reading of three works set wholly or partially in this space – Eric Walrond's English-language short story cycle *Tropic Death* (1926), Joaquín Beleño's Spanish-language novel *Luna verde*

(1951), and Maryse Condé's French-language novel *La vie scélérate* (1987) – the paper traces shared aesthetic and thematic concerns that cut across linguistic and national boundaries. Both *Tropic Death* and *Luna verde* are set directly in the Panama Canal Zone and offer unflinching portrayals of working-class Black Caribbean life under regimes of colonial domination and U.S.-backed economic exploitation. Walrond's fragmented, episodic form captures the precarity, violence, and dispossession experienced by West Indian labourers, while Beleño's novel foregrounds racial hierarchies, labour discipline, and environmental degradation as constitutive features of canal life. Despite differences in genre, language, and political positioning, both texts register the Canal Zone as a space of enclosure, surveillance, and racialized control, shaping narrative voice, temporality, and representational strategies. Maryse Condé's *La vie scélérate*, though only partially set in Panama, expands this spatial framework through a multigenerational family saga tracing the migrations of the Louis family from Guadeloupe to New York, Africa, and Panama. Condé situates the Canal within a broader history of Caribbean diasporic movement, emphasizing how aspirations for social mobility produce profound dislocation and familial fragmentation. Panama emerges not merely as a backdrop but as a nodal point in a wider imperial geography linking the Caribbean, the United States, and Africa. By reading these works together, the paper highlights striking commonalities in their treatment of migration, racialized labour, displacement, and imperial entanglement. It suggests that the Panama Canal Zone functions as a literary site beyond the nation – one in which multiple languages, subjectivities, and identities converge, and where politics inflects poetics. At the same time, this paper asks why poetics has not seemed to influence politics to the same extent when it comes to Panamanian literature, which has historically thought of itself as the Spanish-language production of a Caribbean but decidedly non-Black nation. In thinking about the relation between texts and the world, it raises questions related to why the multicultural and multilingual representations of the Panama Canal and the diverse texts to which it gave rise remain little known. Ultimately, the paper contributes to transnational Caribbean and hemispheric literary studies by foregrounding how a shared historical space gives rise to convergent textual forms across English-, Spanish-, and French-language literary tradition.

Dr Carlos F. Grigsby (carlos.grigsby@bristol.ac.uk) is Lecturer in Latin American Studies at the University of Bristol. He is a Nicaraguan-born poet, scholar and translator, as well as the author of *Rediscovering Rubén Darío through Translation* (Bloomsbury, 2024). He holds a PhD in Latin American literature from the University of Oxford, where he also taught as a lecturer. Before coming to Bristol, he was an Alexander von Humboldt postdoctoral fellow at the University of Cologne, Germany. His current research focuses on the place of Central American literature within World Literature. His previous research has appeared in journals such as *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, *MLR*, *ReVista: Harvard Review of Latin America*, as well as in the edited volumes *Writing the Post-Global in Latin America* (CLACSO, 2024), *Central American Literature as World Literature* (Bloomsbury, 2023), and *Multilingual Literature as World Literature* (Bloomsbury, 2021). Aside from his academic publications, his most recent poetry collection is *Rilke y los perros* (Visor Libros, 2023).

H

Jernej HABJAN (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana), ***The Semiotic Square of the Mausoleum: The Case of Nineteenth-century Paris***

Panel 5.1

One way we can conceptualize the institution of the pantheon is by formalizing it as part of the semiotic square of the mausoleum. As a vertex of such a Greimasian semiotic rectangle, the pantheon can be treated as a series of notable tombs. As such, the pantheon (the Panthéon in the paradigmatic case of Paris) can be delineated as, on one side, the contrary of a series of non-notable tombs that constitute a cemetery (e.g., Cimetière des Innocents), and on the other side, the contradictory of a singular everyman's tomb (the Tombe du Soldat inconnu). In turn, as a series of non-notable tombs, the cemetery finds its contradictory in a singular notable tomb (e.g., Chapelle Saint-Vincent-de-Paul), which is the contrary of the singular everyman's tomb. Historical combinations of these four vertices can be formalized as well: the singular notable tomb and the singular everyman's tomb find their intersection in, for example, a singular yet fictional tomb (e.g., the legendary Montpellier tomb of Edward Young's Narcissa); the singular everyman's tomb and the cemetery combine to make up a serial everyman's tomb (e.g., the Catacombes de Paris); a serial notable tomb (e.g., the Père Lachaise cemetery) can be formalized as a compromise between the cemetery and the pantheon; and the latter can ultimately be seen combining with the singular notable tomb to enable a serial notable tomb distinguished by one member of the series (e.g., Les Invalides as the resting place of Napoleon).

Jernej Habjan (jernej.habjan@zrc-sazu.si) is Senior Research Associate at the Institute of Slovenian Literature and Literary Studies, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. He has been a Fung Global Fellow at the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies, Princeton University (2020–21), a Research Fellow at the IFK International Research Center for Cultural Studies in Vienna (2015), and a postdoctoral fellow in the research group "Globalization and Literature" at the University of Munich (2012–14). He is the author of *Ordinary Literature Philosophy: Lacanian Literary Performatives between Austin and Rancière* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), and his essays in intellectual history and literary theory have appeared in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, *Journal of Global History*, *Journal of World Literature*, *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, *Neohelicon*, and elsewhere

Aygul HAJIYEVA/AKHUNDOVA (Manuscripts Institute, Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences), ***Archetypes and Ethical Approaches in Translation***

Panel 4.3

Ethical translation requires understanding the archetype as the semantic core of a work. When a translator works with a literary text, they encounter not only words but also deep cultural and symbolic meanings—that is, archetypes. Translation ethics is particularly important here, because archetypes cannot simply be "translated word for word." Regarding the ethical aspects of conveying archetypes, it is necessary that the translator understands how the archetype manifests in the source culture. For example, the Sage archetype may appear differently in Japanese culture compared to European culture, which demands an ethical and careful approach rather than a mechanical translation. Preserving symbolic meaning is also crucial, because an ethical translator must not distort an archetype for convenience; for instance, the Mother figure (as a sacrificial or protective figure) should be

conveyed to the reader while retaining its symbolic depth. Another important point is the translator's interpretation during the translation process. As is well known, archetypes in the source texts often have multiple meanings, making the translator's "interpretive honesty" essential, so that complex symbols are not simplified for ease. In this way, the ethical translator acts as a "mediator" between cultures, which increases their responsibility toward the reader. Archetypes serve also as a means to grasp profound meanings, while translation ethics ensures their preservation. The research question is: How can translators ethically preserve the symbolic depth and affective impact of archetypes across different cultural and linguistic contexts?

Glyn HAMBROOK (University of Wolverhampton/Universidad Complutense de Madrid),
Taking the 'Brit' out of 'BrexLit'

Panel 4.8

The concept of 'Brexlit' – literature engaging with and responding to Brexit – emerged in the early 2020s (Everitt, 2021; Shaw, 2021), triggering an insightful reflection and extensive exploration that covered authorial position, perspective, eligibility for inclusion in the 'Brexlit' corpus, genre, context and hinterland (antecedence in 'Eurosceptic' literature, for example). Brexlit was, however, treated predominantly by UK commentators as an exclusively British phenomenon. The consequences of Brexit, it appears to have been assumed, were geo-culturally constrained. Only a few sources, mostly journalistic, picked up blips on the Brexlit radar from beyond the shores of the UK. However, if one takes the trouble to look, evidence of a substantial non-British literary response to Brexit is forthcoming. This paper will attempt to redress the imbalance in critical coverage – a critically ethical enterprise in itself, given the constraints on perspective deriving from 'literal' (linguistic) and 'attitudinal' (culturally consequent) monoglossia of the Anglophone critical orthodox substratum - by reviewing non-Anglophone Brexlit (including translations) before concentrating on three non-British authored examples of Brexlit in French, Italian and Spanish: Clémentine Beauvais's *Brexit Romance* (2018), Marco Varvello's *Brexit Blues. Romanzo* (2019), and Juan Domingo Macías Simavilla's *El tentáculo de Brexit* (2019). Non-Anglophone Brexlit explores the ethical consequences of Brexit beyond the UK in ways that converge with and complement commentary and research, mostly from the social sciences (Frost, 2019; Pasculli, 2018; Pearse, 2021; Schweiker, 2016; Smith, 2019), that engages directly with the ethical consequences and import of Brexit in the UK. But, as the primary non-Anglophone texts referred to in this paper exemplify, Brexlit beyond the UK poses and raises questions of 'intercultural' ethics, not least among which is the naïve obliviousness in what might be referred to as Britworld to the fact that Brexit and Brexlit are not exclusively domestic phenomena. This dimension has a bearing on decolonisation, alternative taxonomies, and the canon, among other inflections of the congress's theme – of cultural oversight: why did not Brexlit not penned by British writers and not in English not get a level of critical coverage in the UK consistent with its volume?

Glyn Hambrook (glynhambrook@gmail.com) is a graduate of the University of Nottingham, UK (BA French and Spanish, 1977; PhD The Influence of Baudelaire in Spanish *Modernismo*, 1985). He taught Spanish, French, English, European and comparative literature at the University of Wolverhampton, UK, from 1981 to 2017, where he was also the co-Director of the Centre for Transnational and Transcultural Research and, from 2013, Reader in Comparative and European Literature. From 2000 he was a member of the Executive Committee of the British Comparative Literature Association and from 2012-2017, co-editor of the Association's Journal, *Comparative Critical Studies*. He has also been on the editorial or advisory boards of a number of journals including the *Revue de Littérature Comparée*. On retirement in 2017, he continued researching in the capacity of Honorary

Research Fellow at the University of Wolverhampton and Profesor honorífico in the Departamento de Estudios Ingleses at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. His research has focused on the European *Fin de Siècle*, with specific reference to Franco-Hispanic literary relations, and more recently on the challenges posed by the persistence of the national/monolingual paradigm in literary studies, particularly in their Anglophone guise.

Christine HAMM (University of Bergen), *Tracing the Grammar of Welfare in Contemporary Norwegian Literature: Understanding Precarity with Wittgenstein, Austin, and Cavell*

Panel 7.3

Contemporary Norwegian literature contains numerous depictions of what may be described as precarity-prone characters. In novels, short stories, children's literature, comics, and crime fiction, readers encounter "those on the margins": young mothers without family support; young men drifting into criminal activities; older men who lose both their jobs and their wives; and children living with ill parents. Frequently, this precarity emerges from shifts in the labour market, while representatives of the welfare state—teachers, healthcare workers, and the police—are portrayed as struggling to fulfil their roles. These depictions form a paradox: although the Nordic countries are renowned for their celebrated welfare-state model and comparatively low levels of precarity, literature brims with narratives that prompt readers to reflect on threats to this promised well-being. Why, then, are Norwegian authors drawn to these stories? What is their project, and how do they engage their readers? The underlying claim of this paper is that contemporary writers are inviting readers to trace both the promises made by the Norwegian welfare state and the moments where these promises appear to falter. Norwegian authors use literature as a space to explore what they—and their readers—understand by the concept of welfare, and how this understanding is challenged. Drawing on Ordinary Language Philosophy (Wittgenstein 1953, Austin 1961, Cavell 1979), I argue that literature can reveal the "grammar of welfare", and that literary criticism can illuminate how readers are reminded of the shared criteria implied in the use of the concept. The process of reminding that is performed in and by literature, is not consciously deployed by authors; rather, it arises through the emotional appeal generated by narrative plots and rhetorical strategies. When reading contemporary texts, readers are encouraged to consider what they themselves take to fall within the concept of welfare. This paper will explore this process of reminding by looking at two Norwegian examples: Ingvild H. Rishøi's novel *Brightly Shining* (2021), a Christmas narrative featuring a ten-year-old protagonist and her father, who struggles with alcohol addiction; and Terje Bjøranger's crime novel *Kalifatet* (2021), which imagines a planned terrorist attack on the Scandinavian countries thwarted by the Norwegian police, who put their lives at risk to protect their community.

Christine Hamm, dr.art., (christine.hamm@uib.no) is Professor of Scandinavian Literature at the University of Bergen. She is the author of a monograph on Amalie Skram's marriage novels (*Medlidenhet og melodrama*, 2006) and a study of motherhood in the works of Sigrid Undset (*Foreldre i det moderne*, 2013). Together with colleagues from different fields she has edited anthologies on topics such as working-class literature, queer readings of literature, and literary portrayals of human suffering. She has also published an introductory textbook on the study of literature (*Å studere litteratur*, Fagbokforlaget 2023).

Hamm now leads a project financed by the Norwegian research council devoted to an understanding of the concept of welfare. She is currently co-editing two scholarly publications: *Precarisation across Literatures* and *Vardagsspråkskritik. Nordisk litteratur, litteraturforskning och filosofi efter Austin, Wittgenstein och Cavell* (both forthcoming 2026).

Jean-Louis HAQUETTE (Professeur des Universités en Littérature comparée, Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne), ***Le cri de la nature : mises en scène de la morale naturelle au siècle des Lumières***

Plenary Lecture 25 August

Les émotions ont une histoire, comme l'ont montré notamment les travaux d'Alain Corbin ou George Vigarello. C'est dans cette perspective que s'inscrit cette contribution au congrès *Ethics and Affect: Rethinking the Text and the World*. Elle aura pour cadre une période reconnue comme une charnière dans l'histoire des sentiments et des idées morales, le siècle des Lumières. En effet, s'y jouent des transformations dont notre modernité est encore l'héritière directe.

A partir des méthodes de la sémantique textuelle, dans un corpus en langue française, nous prendrons comme fil directeur les avatars d'une expression caractéristique de la naturalisation de la morale qui s'affirme au 18^e siècle : le "cri de la nature". De l'essai au théâtre en passant par le roman, elle met en scène une configuration centrale du lien entre éthique et affect, qui repose sur une évidence intérieure. Dans les contextes littéraires (théâtre et roman) ce cri est à la fois symptôme et signe. Surgissant avec une force irrépressible, dans des circonstances souvent extrêmes, il vient désigner, en deçà des mots, une évidence morale présentée comme incontestable car naturelle. Dans les textes de réflexion, sa valeur hyperbolique sert une rhétorique de l'évidence, qui vise à échapper à la contestation discursive. Dans les deux cas, c'est une évidence éthique qui est affirmée, dans une logique qui relève plus d'une communauté supposée des affects que de la réflexivité critique. On interrogera les présupposés d'une telle scénographie et ses implications idéologiques et esthétiques.

[Emotions have a history, as demonstrated in the works of Alain Corbin and George Vigarello, amongst others. It is within this framework that this contribution to the conference *Ethics and Affect: Rethinking the Text and the World* is situated. It will focus on a period recognised as a turning point in the history of emotions and moral ideas: the Age of Enlightenment. During this period several transformations took place of which our modern world is still a direct heir.

Drawing on methods of textual semantics and using a French-language corpus, we shall explore the various manifestations of a phrase characteristic of the naturalisation of morality that emerged in the 18th century: the 'cry of nature'. From essays to plays and novels, this expression highlights a central aspect of the link between ethics and emotion, which is rooted in an inner certainty. In literary contexts (theatre and the novel), this cry is both a symptom and a sign. Emerging with irrepressible force, often in extreme circumstances, it serves to express, beyond words, a moral certainty presented as indisputable because it is natural. In reflective texts, its hyperbolic value serves a rhetoric of self-evidence, which aims to evade discursive challenge. In both cases, it is an ethical self-evidence that is asserted, within a logic that relies more on a presumed community of affects than on critical reflexivity. We shall examine the presuppositions of such a framework and its ideological and aesthetic implications.]

Eliška Dana HÄRTELOVÁ (Charles University, Prague), ***Excess of Energy: To the Hyperbolic Nature of Poetic Language***

Panel 10.3

Hyperbole as a figure of speech, which Jonathan Culler considers to be one of the main characteristics of poetic language, is usually understood as linguistic manifestations of emotional emphasis; an expression of excitement, surprise, anger etc. In this concept affectivity is seen as a special energy of speech (πάθος; *movere*) present in utterance in addition to meaning. The emotion expressed by hyperbole can be associated with the character and mood of the speaker, which we find already in Aristotle's Rhetoric. But the question arises whether this energy is not rather an inherent part of language itself, to which we as speakers are exposed and under whose control we are. Poetry can be understood as an attempt to control or shape this power present in language. Longinus and Quintilian link the hyperbole to the question of the adequacy of reality (*res*) and its verbal representation (*verba*). This idea is further developed by Renaissance poetics, which focuses on the ability of hyperbole to express paradox or contradiction. In this concept, hyperbole allows us to express what is beyond the limits of what can be said and is endowed with a cognitive function. The contribution will attempt to show that hyperbole cannot be understood either as a cognitive tool or as a technique that emphasizes the affective effects of speech. Rather, it is a combination of both and a poem, as a linguistic *res* of its own kind, constantly establishes a balance between meaning and sound, two contradictory poles. Various uses of hyperbole will be examined in poems by Emily Dickinson, Ernst Jandl, and Konstantin Biebl. In particular, Biebl's poem Toké (1928) serves well to reveal the ethical dimension of hyperbole. Biebl writes about an encounter with the culture of Indonesia—which was highly exotic to a Central European in the 1920s. The poem certainly conceptualises otherness, but through hyperbole, it also allows the reader to experience it.

Eliška Dana Härtelová (e.hartelova@icloud.com) studied ecumenical theology (Protestant Theological Faculty), Czech language and literature, and comparative literature (Faculty of Arts) at Charles University in Prague. At the Department of Czech and Comparative Literature she is currently doing her doctoral research. She focuses on the theory and didactics of poetry, for example in the article "La littérature française dans les manuels scolaires tchèques. La construction de l'image de François Villon". She is a member of the International Network for the Study of Lyric.

Marina O. HERTRAMPF (University of Passau), *Le français comme nouvelle patrie ou le conflit éthique entre le rêve de liberté et la nostalgie du pays natal*

Panel 5.2

Omar Youssef Souleimane (*1987), journaliste et poète syrien, a grandi en Arabie saoudite, où il a reçu une éducation coranique, tout en étant influencé par la poésie d'Éluard et d'Aragon. En raison de la situation politique tendue, il a quitté la Syrie en 2012 et a obtenu l'asile politique en France. Déchiré entre le fait d'avoir quitté sa patrie syrienne et celui d'avoir trouvé une nouvelle patrie dans la langue du pays dont la littérature était pour lui, depuis son adolescence, synonyme de liberté et d'engagement politique, Omar Youssef Souleimane commence à écrire des poèmes et des récits en français. Les protagonistes de ses récits sont toujours, comme lui, en quête de stabilité et sont tiraillés entre la langue et la culture arabes et françaises. Dans notre contribution, nous montrerons que la position du narrateur fictif dans *Une chambre en exil* (2022) et autobiographique dans *Être Français* (2023) est toujours une question éthique entre loyauté et (auto)trahison.

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Sinha); littérature rom; littérature autochtone du Québec; littérature de la Grande Guerre (Jouve, Rolland); littérature espagnole de l'âge d'or; intermédialité; BD ; ruralité ; théories de l'espace; (post-)migration; exophonie/plurilinguisme; femmes/maternité; écopoésie; transculturalité. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8932-2193>

Sándor HITES (Department of European and Comparative Literature and Language Studies (EVSL), University of Vienna), ***'The Ridiculous Neighbours the Sublime': The Satire of a Hungarian National Pantheon***

Panel 6.1

In 1843, Count István Széchenyi, a major landowner and political-economic reformer, published a slim pamphlet on the necessity of erecting a Hungarian national pantheon in the Buda hills. The idea of such an "Üdvlelde" (literally: 'a place where salvation is to be found'), as Széchenyi coined it, appeared untimely even to the Count himself. He readily enumerated potential objections (there were more urgent collective ventures to spend money on) and anticipated controversies (from time to time, old members would be purged and replaced by newly relevant ones). The essentially ironic manner in which Széchenyi addressed the issue (for example, by musing on whether Magyars would have a sufficient number of candidates to fill a national hall of fame in the first place, or whether he himself would be included) made his pamphlet as much a satire as an earnest proposal. What makes Széchenyi's conception even more intriguing is that he compared the idea of a national pantheon to the (bourgeois) habit of writing up one's last will, and suggested that a Hungarian national cemetery could be seen as the nation's testament. Envisioning an approaching world-historical verdict on the survival of the Magyars, he offered the "Üdvlelde" not only as a collective catalogue of past merits for the encouragement of future descendants, but equally, or even more so, as a collective monument over "our ruins" in "final consolation".

The paper will examine Széchenyi's proposal in the context of the obsession with the prospect of "national death", or collective extinction, in Hungarian romantic nationalism. It will also discuss how Széchenyi used the concept of a national pantheon to redefine the symbolic and material economies of national contributions in terms of intellectual and manual labour, property and market, donation and profit.

Sándor Hites (sandor.hites@univie.ac.at) is a Senior Research Fellow at the ELTE Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute for Literary Studies in Budapest. Between 2019 and 2024, he was the principal researcher of the Lendület Research Group "The Political Economy of Hungarian Literature in the Nineteenth Century" housed at the Institute. Hites has held a visiting fellowship at the University of Edinburgh (2012); in 2012–13 he was Visiting Professor at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj/Kolozsvár, and in 2015–17 and 2025–26 at the University of Toronto. His monograph, *Five Economies of World Literature*, is forthcoming with Cambridge University Press in December 2025.

Josef HRDLIČKA (Charles University, Prague), ***Affectivity and Energy of Poetic Speech***

Panel 10.3

In his programmatic article "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism," (1978) William Rueckert describes poems as inexhaustible sources of energy. He emphasizes that motives in reading poetry are not pleasure and truth (traditionally cited effects of poetry), but rather creativity and community. "Properly understood, poems can be studied as models for energy flow, community building, and ecosystems," he writes. I will attempt to concretize these programmatic rather than conceptual ideas in a reflection on the affective energy of poems. I understand affectivity in loose connection with Earl Miner, who distinguishes

between expressive, mimetic, and affective poetics, defining affective poetics as that which focuses on the reader. A second important point will be the connection between affectivity and community at the level of imagined identities. I will work with poems that build on Rueckert's ecocritical theme, as well as with examples from experimental poetry and poems that use its techniques (such as the analytical decomposition of words), and I will attempt to link the energetic aspect of words to their connection with various semantic contexts (often incompatible, contradictory, etc.) that are simultaneously actualized in the poem through words.

Josef Hrdlička (josef.hrdlicka@ff.cuni.cz) is an associate professor at Charles University in Prague. He teaches comparative literature and theory of poetry. He published several scholarly books and a large number of articles. Among others: *Poetry in Exile. Czech poets during the Cold War and the Western Poetic Tradition* (2020) and *Things in Poems* (2022, as co-editor), and also several volumes of poetry. He is a member of the Executive Board of the International Network for the Study of Lyric.

Imma IACCARINO (Università della Svizzera italiana), *Baroque Garden Therapy in Francesco Pona's Il Sileno (1620) and Il paradiso de' fiori (1622)*

Panel 10.1

This study investigates the therapeutic function attributed to gardens in the Baroque period, conceived not only as spaces of leisure but as environments devoted to the physical and spiritual care of human beings. A significant indication of the medicinal role ascribed to the art of gardening is the interest in horticulture displayed by the Veronese physician and polymath Francesco Pona (1595–1655) in his early writings. The son of the botanist Giovanni Pona, he dedicated his first two works to botany—a science second only to anatomy in the hierarchy of disciplines for its beauty and usefulness: “after the knowledge of the parts of the human body, the true model of the proportion of the universe, certainly no study, or few indeed, can be considered more worthy in dignity or more desirable in usefulness than that which concerns the forms and properties of plants, in which Nature seems to have luxuriated with the utmost pleasure and diligence, working to her final effort” (Pona 1622, 2).

In the *Sileno overo delle bellezze del luogo dell'ill.mo sig. Co Gio. Giacomo Giusti*, a now rare booklet published in Verona in 1620, Pona offers the first ékphrasis of the garden and private collection of Count Gian Giacomo Giusti, his fellow citizen. Written for the wedding of Count Francesco Giusti and Antonia Bevilacqua Lazise, the text unfolds as a dialogue between a Veronese interlocutor and a visitor from Bologna. Their exchange centres on the plants and statues that still adorn the garden today, each identified and described along their walk.

A few years later, in 1622, Pona produced another work on gardens, in which he reconstructs an archetypal model, taking as his exemplar Duke Ferdinando Gonzaga of Mantua's Giardino dei Semplici (also known as the Pavilion Garden), to whom the treatise is dedicated. Inspired by the ingenuity of the Florentine Franciscan P. Zenobio Bocchi—“a most deserving antiquarian and herbalist” (Pona 1622, 32)—who reorganised the ducal garden in 1603 according to principles of astrological melothesia and medicinal botany, Pona provides in *Il Paradiso de' fiori* detailed instructions for the design of an ideal garden: its shape and placement, soil quality, exposure to sunlight, the most suitable time for planting, and numerous techniques for sowing, seed preservation, and even flower dyeing. An appendix contains a catalogue of the trees and plants found on nearby Mount Baldo, accompanied by a warning against purely ornamental flowers—beautiful yet harmful to human health.

By combining his father's botanical expertise with his own medical training, Pona develops two distinct models of the “therapeutic” garden: the first, in which the human element predominates and particular attention is given to the allegorical paintings of the Giusti collection, rich in dictamina and moral exempla; and the second, which—though not excluding ornaments such as statues of deities, friezes, and capitals—is governed chiefly by nature and an emphasis on the medicinal virtues of plants. An intermedial analysis of anthropic and non-anthropoc elements—above all artistic and botanical—reveals how these two models interact in shaping an ideal Baroque garden conceived for both *cura animi* and *cura corporis*.

Imma Iaccarino (iaccarino@usi.ch) is currently completing her PhD in Comparative Literature and Intermedial Studies at the Università della Svizzera italiana, where she collaborates on

the SNSF-funded research project The “Civilization of Anatomy”: The Genre of Literary Anatomies in Seventeenth-Century Italy (no. 100012_204399), led by Linda Bisello. Her research focuses on the intersections between anatomy, literature, and emblematic traditions in seventeenth-century Italian works, with particular attention to iconotextuality and intermediality.

Gustavo INFANTE (University of Bristol), *Imprisonment, Torture, and Despair: Ethical and Aesthetic Readings in Prison Writing*

Panel 4.4

Accounts from imprisonment, whether they are poetry, diaries, or memoirs, make up an important textual body that allows us to look more deeply into the various islands of the ‘carceral archipelago’ (Murphet 2025). Such texts provide us with a tremendous insight into the effects of imprisonment. This paper discusses how prison writing materialised as a reflection of and about the world, by assessing three texts from the Lusophone and Hispanophone ambit. Firstly, *Memórias do Cárcere* (Memoirs from Prison), by Brazilian writer Graciliano Ramos, published posthumously in 1953. In second place, the prison notes by Angolan writer and political activist José Luandino Vieira, which he wrote throughout his incarceration in several prisons between 1961 and 1972. Kept in notebooks which he named *Ontem, hoje, amanhã* (Yesterday, today, tomorrow), these notes were only published in 2015 under the title *Papéis da Prisão* (Notes from Prison). Finally, *Tejas Verdes* (1974), by Chilean writer *Hernán Valdés*. The book is a diary-cum-memoir written ‘al calor de la memoria’, as he states, i.e., whilst his memory was still fresh and able to recount, in detail, his imprisonment and torture in a military facility in Tejas Verdes, a small coastal town about 100 km West from Santiago de Chile. It was also one of the first accounts of the atrocities of Pinochet’s regime to be published.

All these texts were written by political prisoners, rather than criminal ones. In addition, all these writers had published before their imprisonments. Therefore, we are not in the presence of ‘cell-made writers’ (Wu 2011), but rather in front of names who attracted various levels of attention due to their imprisonments. Bearing this in mind, the second aim of this paper is to examine the extent to which one can read these texts considering an intersection between politics, ethics, and aesthetics (Wu 2011), as well as the key issues they discuss: politics, dictators, dictatorships, prisons and their conditions, and colonial dynamics. Finally, these texts preserve the memory of those who endured imprisonment. They also provide some insight into how those buildings were. This is particularly important in the case of prisons that were destroyed. For most cases in this paper, we look into prison camps who were turned into museums spaces, i.e., “memorialscape”: Dois Rios (Brazil), to where Graciliano Ramos was sent, and Tarrafal (Cabo Verde), where Luandino Vieira spent a long period of his imprisonment. The importance of preserving history and memory through the means of musealisation of spaces linked to repression is akin to that of preserving these texts. Therefore, this paper concludes with an assessment of these texts as instruments of post-memory.

Gustavo Infante (gustavo.infante@bristol.ac.uk) is a Lecturer and Portuguese Language Director at the University of Bristol. His past research in Comparative Literature dealt with the rural landscape in a context of dictatorship in China and Portugal. He has also published research on the literatures of Macau in English and Portuguese. His current research is on prison writing in a context of dictatorship, especially in Portuguese and Spanish-speaking countries.

Antonella IPPOLITO (Universität Potsdam), *L'identité multilingue comme trait constitutif de la modernité méditerranéenne dans le drame Itaca! Itaca! de Jacques Thiers, Leonardo Sole et Franco Scaldati (1997)*

Panel 4.2

La communication proposée prend en considération le drame plurilingue *Itaca!Itaca!* de Jacques (Ghjacumu) Thiers, Leonardo Sole et Franco Scaldati. Cette œuvre a été conçue et élaborée à Corte, Sassari et Palerme au cours de l'année 1997 comme partie d'un projet collaboratif dont le but était l'écriture conjointe d'un texte dramatique sur le thème du Même et de l'Autre et de l'identité. Les trois auteurs, à travers l'interaction du corse, du sarde et du sicilien (auxquels s'ajoutent le français et l'italien), l'interprètent à partir de la transposition d'un épisode de l'Odyssée : les pérégrinations de l'Ulysse homérique fournissent la trame générale pour représenter un itinéraire de réappropriation critique des thèmes culturels et du thème du langage que recouvre le plus souvent la notion d'identité. Les enjeux de l'écriture dramatique en trois langues soulignent la difficulté des tentatives de reconquête d'une identité que les profondes mutations constitutives de la modernité ont mis en danger.

Antonella Ippolito (ippolito@uni-potsdam.de) is University lecturer in Romance Philology (French and Italian) in Potsdam (Germany). She is a specialist in Dante studies and has recently published a monograph on the interpretation of the Divine Comedy in the visual arts (*Im Kreislauf von Lesen und Schauen: Bildzyklen zu Dantes Commedia als Spiegel einer sich wandelnden Textwahrnehmung vom 14. bis 21. Jahrhundert*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2026). Her research interests also include contemporary literature and literary plurilinguism.

ITAKURA Gen'ichirō (Kansai University), *Wearing an Illusion for Palestinian Gertrude: Reading, Acting and Writing in Isabella Hammad's Enter Ghost*

Panel 6.5

What if there is an Arabic production of *Hamlet* in the West Bank? What if an Arab actor/actress soliloquises about enacting a play to 'push the sinful into madness' there? That is what happens towards the end of Isabella Hammad's *Enter Ghost* (2023). Transposing the Shakespearean tragedy into the post-Nakba Palestinian context, it apparently feeds into what Maurice Ebileeni calls the 'national script', or the Palestinian national(ist) narrative that underlines the people's commonality and collective resistance against colonisers. The violent termination of the show mobilises negative emotions cathartically, resonating with much of emergent Anglo-Palestinian literature. Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010), for example, laments the loss—not only of a kidnapped son but also of pre-Nakba Jewish-Arab friendship—and thereby promotes empathetic involvement with the nation's trauma. Despite its powerfulness, such investment in the national script may circumscribe the breadth of Palestinians' diasporic experiences and the scope of Palestinian writings in English. Closely looked at, however, *Enter Ghost* cautiously eschews this popular scenario. The novel's protagonist/narrator Sonia is hardly eligible for the heroine of such a national(ist) narrative. Born and bred in Britain, she makes her living as an actress, now divorced and childless. Her attachment to Palestine as her family's home is easily eclipsed by her mundane obligation to earn enough to pay the mortgage. Naturally, she feels like an outsider when in Palestine. Indeed, Hammad points to diversity and mistrust among Palestinians, ranging from emigrants to '48ers and refugees in Jenin. While rehearsing for Gertrude, Sonia unleashes her repressed memories including her witness of a boy on hunger strike in Bethlehem and her abortion due to a uterine septum in a London hospital. Instead of

fetishising her present anxiety and past pain, Sonia examines them while reviewing her own acting experience (from French pantomime to Chekhov and Genet). By so doing, she tries to fully interpret Gertrude and improve her own acting, or wearing an illusion for the sake of Hecuba, to borrow the phrase from Hammad's back translation of Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's Arabic translation of *Hamlet*. Following Sonia's reflections, *Enter Ghost* clearly moves beyond the Palestinian national script to address such issues as responsiveness to the pain of others and the re-enactment of their pain on the stage. This paper, then, seeks to comprehend how *Enter Ghost* explores ethical questions concerning the pain of others. As if to corroborate Sara Ahmed's *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), Sonia's reflections on her own pain—which is ultimately ineffable—facilitate her openness to be affected by the pain of others, even that of fictional characters. By acting, she takes on the moral responsibility entailed by incorporating and expressing someone else's feelings. On the discursive level, Sonia's acting paradoxically testifies the incorporeality of the novel. While engaging with Palestinians, *Enter Ghost* also grapples with the generic limitations and affective potential of prose fiction.

Gen'ichiro Itakura, PhD., (gitakura@kansai-u.ac.jp) is Professor at the Faculty of Letters, Kansai University, Japan. His research interests lie primarily in contemporary British and postcolonial fiction, particularly the literary representation of fear, anxiety and pain/trauma in relation to colonialism/imperialism, the diaspora, neoliberal transformations, the War on Terror and, more recently, Brexit. Since 2012, he has constantly received the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science's (JSPS) Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (*Kaken*) for his research projects, two of which focused on British Muslim writers' gendered experience of the resurgence of hypermasculinity in the postcolony, New Orientalism and the post-9/11 culture of securitisation. Itakura has contributed chapters to edited volumes such as *Narratives of Trauma in South Asian Literature* (edited by Goutam Karmakar and Zeenat Khan, Routledge, 2023) and *Crisis and the Culture of Fear and Anxiety in Contemporary Europe* (edited by Carmen Zamorano Llena, Jonas Stier and Billy Gray, Routledge, 2024), and his articles have appeared in journals including *ARIEL*, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* and *Critique*. Although his focus is on Anglophone literature, he has discussed Francophone authors, particularly Atiq Rahimi, and he has also taught and published in such areas as intercultural, intermedial adaptation (e.g. literature to film, literature to manga/anime) and the uses of children's/Young Adult literature. He is currently working on a monograph on contemporary refugee literature, discussing a range of writers including Abdulrazak Gurnah and Ali Smith.

Camille Andrea IULIANO (Birbeck College, University of London), *Rethinking World Literature through Feminist Relationality: Bridging Text and World*

Panel 5.6

This paper brings together Sara Ahmed's affective politics and feminist relational theory to rethink world literature through the lens of feminist relationality. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), Ahmed challenges the idea of emotions as purely private, internal states and instead theorises them as socially and culturally mediated practices. She develops what she terms the 'sociality of emotions', asserting that 'it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made: the 'I' and the 'we' are shaped by contact with others'.¹ Emotions are inherently relational: they involve movements of 'towardness' or 'awayness' in response to objects and others, and thereby participate in the formation of social boundaries. Feminist relational theory similarly affirms that 'the human self [...] is constituted in and through relationships with others', and emphasises that structures of power, privilege and oppression shape relational dynamics. It also maintains that

interpersonal relations are always nested within broader socio-economic and political networks, making relationality simultaneously relevant to how selves are constituted (ontologically) and to how they should engage with others (ethically).

In relation to world literature, this multiscalar orientation (moving from the relational construction of the self, through interpersonal dynamics, to wider socio economic and political structures) offers a way of conceptualising the 'world' from the ground up. My proposed methodology of 'contrasting solidarities' builds directly on this insight. By 'contrasting solidarities', I refer to transnational textual practices through which feminist texts respond to one another across differences, creating networks without erasing socio-historical specificity. The paper examines a network of textual relations connecting US and Italian feminist narratives, focusing on Toni Morrison's *Sula* (1973) and Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan novels (2011–2014). Beyond their textual and thematic affinities, the novels utilise the gaze and experiences of girls and women to anchor world-making in specificity and marginality, showing how the relational construction of the self through female-female bonds illuminates broader socio-spatial dynamics, particularly the marginalisation produced by centre-periphery structures. Building on Robin T. Goodman's critique of neoliberal homogenisation in world literary theory, my methodology fosters transnational connections that acknowledge relationality across borders while preserving incommensurable difference. This framework demonstrates how female-female relationality and affective bonds move across scales, reshaping world literature as a project of feminist world-making.

Camille Andrea Iuliano (c.iuliano@bbk.ac.uk) is an Associate Lecturer in Italian Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London, within the School of Creative Arts, Culture and Communication, where she teaches undergraduate and postgraduate modules on Italian Literature, Cinema and Comparative Literature. She recently completed a PhD in Comparative Literature at King's College London, with a thesis titled: 'Feminist World Literature: Dissolving Margins and Transnational Solidarities in a North American and Southern Italian Literary Comparison'. Camille works at the intersection of critical theory, gender and literary studies, researching feminist world literature from a Southern Italian and North American comparative perspective. Her approach links macro-level literary reflections on global geographies with embodied, feminist 'geographies of the self'.

J

Ryan JOHNSON (Adelaide University), “*Je ne suis pas de votre race*”: *Asia, Europe, and the Ethics of Comparison in Blaise Cendrars’ Moravagine*

Panel 4.1

Often compared unfavorably to Céline’s *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, Blaise Cendrars’ novel *Moravagine* (1926) has generally been read as a reflection on the Great War. Cendrars’ novel of madness, misogyny, and violence across Europe and the Americas has been taken as an oblique expression of the collapse of values and the growing interest in the anarchism of thinkers like Peter Kropotkin after 1917. Most problematically, *Moravagine* associates its orgiastic violence with the atavistic figure of the “Mongol” who haunts the protagonist throughout the text and catalyzes his initial decision to go to Russia early in the novel. While Cendrars was playing on common racist tropes that associated Russia and the nascent Soviet Union with primitive “Asiatic” qualities, it is unclear whether *Moravagine* endorses or satirizes the notion that the world becomes more Asian, less civilized, the further east of Paris you go.

This paper attempts to understand the ethics of Cendrars’ use of the trope of the threatening Mongol in *Moravagine*, with particularly emphasis on how the decline of European and the rise of “Asiatic” powers affects the transnational comparisons that appear throughout the novel. By referencing to similar uses of the Mongol figure in the work of Cendrars’ contemporaries Paul Morand and John Gould Fletcher, this paper suggests that the apparition of the Mongol in *Moravagine* is not merely that of the “double” or “Id” of postwar France, but rather expressive of a geopolitical order in which Europe no longer determines relations between the rest of the world.

Ryan Johnson (ryan.johnson01@adelaide.edu.au) is an ARC DECRA Fellow and Lecturer at Adelaide University. He is the author of *Transnationalism and Translation in Modern Chinese, English, French, and Japanese Literatures* (2021). His work appears in such venues as *Comparative Literature*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, *Textual Practice*, and *Modernism/modernity*. Before returning to Australia, he was a JSPS Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Tokyo.

Patrick JONES (Université de Genève), *Literary Criticism and the Feeling of Life*

Panel 9.5

As literary historians like Gerald Graff, Joseph North and John Guillory have demonstrated, the practice of evaluating and interpreting literary texts underwent a thoroughgoing transformation in the English-speaking world in the late 1920s. According to this widely accepted argument, landmark works like I.A. Richards’s *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgement* (1929) prompted a paradigm shift in which literary criticism changed from being an essentially ad hoc, journalistic activity of reviewing literary texts in the periodical press into a teachable and methodologically rigorous programme of university study that was modelled, to a certain extent, on the empirical sciences. One obvious – if curiously understudied – outcome of literary criticism’s attempts to become a quasi-scientific form of knowledge production was that its vocabulary became more technical and descriptive. As critics turned away from evaluating literary texts towards analysing their formal features, they evacuated from their critical vocabularies terms which they considered to be overly impressionistic. It is my contention that a privileged word for romantic, Victorian, and especially modernist literary critics – ‘life’ – was the most significant casualty of this

process of professionalisation. In this talk, I will attempt to demonstrate two things: 1) that existing histories of Anglophone literary criticism have consistently underestimated the complex critical function that the word 'life' served for modernist critics like Virginia Woolf and their Victorian and romantic forebears; 2) that there is a relationship between the suppression of the word 'life' from literary-critical discourse from the late 1920s onwards and the methodological impasses that are currently afflicting literary study in the Anglophone world. Indeed, for all the dazzling theoretical sophistication it has achieved in certain areas, contemporary literary criticism struggles to give an account of its utility (to invoke a Nietzschean phrase) 'for life' and is strikingly inarticulate concerning questions about why, and how, we attach value to literary texts. I claim that these questions are intimately related to a common but elusive modality of aesthetic experience that has been an object of debate in philosophy since Kant but which has all but disappeared from literary-critical inquiry: the fact that works of art can engender and promote a 'feeling of life' [*Lebensgefühl*] that cannot be easily located as an attribute of subject or object, critic or creator. I ultimately contend that contemporary literary criticism stands to gain from a renewed and philosophically rigorous investigation of this 'feeling of life'.

Patrick Jones (patrick.jones@unige.ch) is a Maître-assistant in Modern English Literature at the University of Geneva. His research explores the intersections between modern literature and post-Kantian philosophy, with a particular focus on modernist fiction and late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century philosophies of life. Other areas of interest include the history and practice of close reading, object-relations psychoanalysis, and ordinary language philosophy. His first book, *Henry James and the Question of Living*, was published by Bloomsbury Academic in May 2026.

K

Eglė KAČKUTĖ (Vilnius University), *Phenomenology and Ethics of Pre-Mature Birth in Literature and on Screen*

Panel 6.6

Birth and birth are the most profound moments of human existence. Feminist phenomenology has productively explored women's relationships with their reproductive bodies since Simone de Beauvoir's seminal *The Second Sex* (1945). Her work has laid the ground for understanding the impact of normative constructions of womanhood on women's embodied perceptions of self – a sense of othering and self-loathing that they can engender. More recent feminist phenomenological explorations of maternal bodies have allowed for more positive theorisations of embodied maternal experiences, calling for a phenomenology of birth which would lead to an ethics of obstetric care (Tömmel 2024). In response to the growing understanding of the importance of women's birthing and birth experiences as well as a recent care turn in contemporary literary and cultural studies, there has been a rise in literary and cultural texts of representations of pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum experiences in Western literatures and cultures known as matrifocal or maternal literary and cultural texts. These texts are mothers' own literary, film, and other cultural narratives "where the mother is herself either the first-person narrative subject or, in third-person narratives, the figure whose point of view is paramount" (Rye 2009:17) and "in which a mother plays a role of cultural and social significance, and in which motherhood is thematically elaborated and valued, and structurally central to the plot" (Podnieks, O'Reilly 2010: 3). Since autofiction and the first-person perspective dominate contemporary cultural expression by women, these texts are often autobiographical and rooted in personal experience. The genre has attracted a considerable scholarly attention, yet the scholarship on the cultural production featuring pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum is only emerging (Lazzari and Ségeral 2021; Braun 2022; Jones 2023; Karkla 2023; Lazzari and Po DeLisle 2025). Yet, such studies are few and far between and even fewer analyse texts featuring premature birth, Galichon's study (2020) being a welcome exception. Moreover, in terms of their theoretical approach, these works tend to draw on cultural motherhood studies rather than on phenomenological theorizations of the maternal body and the ethics of care that it receives. In an attempt to narrow this gap, this paper focusses on two autobiographical representations of premature birth – Marie Darrieussecq's (France) book *Le Bébé* (2005) which gives an account of immediate aftermath of premature birth exploring the mother's relationship with her former self, her intersubjective relationship between the mother and the premature newborn as well as the mothers' relationship with the medical / care staff and the care system. Drawing on feminist phenomenology and narrative medicine pioneered by Rita Charon (2006), the paper aims to grapple with the issue of the phenomenology of premature birth and post-partum as well as with the ethics of care in the aftermath of premature birth.

Eglė Kačkutė, Ph.D., (egle.kackute-hagan@flf.vu.lt) is Professor in French Literature and Gender Studies at Vilnius University (Lithuania). She is a specialist in comparative women's writing and has written extensively on women's writing in English, French, and Lithuanian. Her now highly interdisciplinary research focuses on motherhood and mothering. A lot of her research to date is dedicated to mothering in the context of transnational mobilities, especially on such aspects as the language(s) of mothering and migrant mothers' careers in relation to local and global inequalities. She is the author of the monograph *Svetimos ir Savos* (Strange and Familiar, Vilnius University Press 2012), the co-author of the photo story *Portrait d'une mère qui (travaille)* (Georg, 2019) and the co-editor of *Transgression(s) in*

Twenty-First-Century Women's Writing in French (Brill/Rodopi, 2021). She has also co-edited three special issues including *Contemporary Women's Writing* (Oxford University Press) on Motherhood, Mobility, Migration (2024) and *Gender, Work, & Organization on Motherhood, Subjectivity, and Work* (2025). Her work has been published in *Contemporary Women's Writing*, *Women's Studies International Forum* and, *Gender, Work and Organization* among others. In 2021-2024 Kačkutė served as the co-ordinator of the Horizon 2020 funded research network MotherNet.

Tatiana KLEPIKOVA (University of Regensburg), ***Fractured Identities: Reading Gender and Tradition on the Move in Egana Djabbarova***

Panel 1.3

This paper examines the representation of the body in auto-ethnographic fiction by the Azerbaijani diasporic writer Egana Djabbarova. Drawing predominantly on her *The Hands of the Women in My Family Were Not Meant for Writing* (2023), and in conversation with her two other prose texts, *Dua for the Infidel* (2024), and *Terra Nullius* (2025), I explore how Djabbarova turns the body into a primary site for negotiating fractured postmigrant identities. In *The Hands of the Women in My Family Were Not Meant for Writing*, Djabbarova traces cultural memory and transnational belonging across eleven chapters dedicated to specific parts of the body—the brows, eyes, hair, mouth, shoulders, hands, tongue, back, legs, throat, and belly. Her female gaze caresses the body, uncompromisingly registering its vulnerability and violence against it. Reading this fractured corporeality with Julia Kristeva and Stuart Hall, I theorize how Djabbarova conceptualizes alterity against the backdrop of gendered, racial, ableist, and ethnic norms.

Tatiana Klepikova (tatiana.klepikova@ur.de) leads a research group on queer literatures and cultures under socialism at the University of Regensburg. She is also a co-investigator on the research project about gender and sexuality discourses in post-Soviet Muslim republics (led by Vlad Strukov and Timothy Nunan) and a co-convenor of a research network “Margins of Memory: Cultures and Politics of Non-Hegemonic Remembrance” (with Dr. Volha Bartash). She received her PhD in Slavic Literary Studies at the University of Passau in 2019, followed by a postdoctoral tenure at the Women and Gender Studies Institute at the University of Toronto (until 2021). She is the author of *Homophobia: Soviet and Post-Soviet* (an Element forthcoming with Cambridge University Press) and co-editor of several interdisciplinary volumes and special issues, including *Beyond Queer Cold Wars: Deconstructing Bipolar Visions of Gender and Sexuality* (with Maryna Shevtsova and Emil Edenborg; Palgrave), *Outside the “Comfort Zone”: Private and Public Spheres in Late Socialist Europe* (De Gruyter 2020, with Lukas Raabe), and “Digital Selves: Embodiment and Subjectivity in New Media Cultures in Eastern Europe and Eurasia” (Issue 21 of *Digital Icons: Studies in Russian, Eurasian and Central European New Media*, with Cassandra Hartblay, 2021). Her work focuses on gender, sexuality, and queerness in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus, with the special attention to performance, memory, identity politics, literature and art, and digital cultures.

Sabine KRAENKER (Helsinki), ***Les récits de vie translingues : quête identitaire, affects et désillusions à travers l'exemple de Shumona SINHA dans L'Autre nom du bonheur était français***

Panel 5.2

Selon les idées avancées par Sara de Balsi dans son texte *La Francophonie translingue, éléments pour une poétique* (Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2024), un récit translingue est un texte qui problématise et thématise un changement de langue qui est le fait d'une écrivaine ou d'un écrivain qui écrit dans une autre langue que sa langue maternelle et qui, la plupart du temps, a acquis cette langue tardivement. Dans le cas de Shumona SINHA dans son livre *L'autre nom du bonheur était français*, il est question d'un récit de ce type. Ce texte pose de nombreuses questions concernant la nature du récit, la quête identitaire de l'auteure et son insertion dans la communauté littéraire de langue française. On peut se demander si le récit est une autobiographie, une auto-théorie, une autobiographie linguistique, tout en faisant partie du corpus de textes de la littérature translingue. Se pose aussi la question du rapport à la langue de Sinha tel que décrit dans son livre, thème lié au mouvement de migration que vit l'auteure. Cela nous amène à nous poser la question de l'identité interstitielle de l'écrivaine, à la croisée de deux langues, deux cultures et de deux manières d'être au monde. Enfin, dans ce récit, la question de l'intégration dans la société d'arrivée et la place dans le champ littéraire est posée de manière douloureuse, point sur lequel nous voudrions nous attarder.

Sabine Kraenker (sabine.kraenker@helsinki.fi) est maître de conférences senior à l'Université de Helsinki, Faculté des Humanités, Département des Langues. Elle est l'auteure de *Les Écrits de la rupture amoureuse dans les textes de gens ordinaires et la littérature française de l'extrême contemporain* (2000-2010) et a aussi publié de nombreux articles en lien avec le domaine autobiographique.

Elle a plus récemment publié un texte sur la représentation du Japon dans les écrits francophones contemporains. Ces dernières années, elle s'est tournée vers la recherche portant sur les récits transclasses et la littérature translingue.

L

Hanna LAHDENPERÄ (Åbo Akademi University), *"Let Go, Hyenas". Intention and Authority in Katarina Frostenson's K and F*

Panel 6.3

Working through the lens of Ordinary Language Criticism, this paper asks what work the concept of intention does in relation to works that are simultaneously seemingly transparent in their intent and radically at odds with the world they claim to describe. In 2017, Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* published journalist Matilda Voss Gustavsson's extensive investigation into allegations of sexual assault by a well-known 'cultural figure' with close ties to the Swedish Academy. This investigation was the starting point of a crisis for the Academy, which resulted in a media frenzy, resignations, international headlines, and, ultimately, the cancellation of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2018. The "cultural figure" was later revealed to be Jean-Claude Arnault, husband of Academy member and celebrated poet Katarina Frostenson. Eventually, Arnault was convicted to 2.5 years in prison for of rape. Frostenson herself did not give comments to the media. Instead, she published a quartet of works. The first two, *K* (2019) and *F – en färd* (2020, "F – a journey"), constitute a furious defence of Frostenson and her partner. She continues her exploration of the events and related themes in the poetry collection *A. Andra tankar* (2021, "A. Other Thoughts") and *Alma* (2023), "a story in four movements". While the earlier books are marked by dismissal of sexual assault and rape, thinly veiled personal attacks, and hints of conspiracy, the quartet as a whole is also a meditation on literature, language, and writing that reflects Frostenson's thematic interests as a poet. On the one hand the question of intention seems simplistic in this context – Frostenson obviously sets out to present a defence of herself and of Arnault, drawing on, among other things, her prior authorial ethos and cultural capital to solicit the reader's allegiance. To proceed as the text's ideal reader requires a reclassification of harm, a redistribution of credibility on behalf of the reader. In other words, reading with the grain constitutes a series of ethical demands. On the other hand, the question of what Frostenson is actually doing in these works remains open, and the idea of Frostenson's project as an apologia has been considered alongside a view of literature as a specific form of autonomous communication. Drawing on Stanley Cavell's thinking as well as newer OLC work on authorial intention, this paper considers how intention functions in relation to works where a manifest position meets an exploration of what the literary text does in the world.

Hanna Lahdenperä, PhD, (hanna.lahdenpera@abo.fi) is Senior University Lecturer in Literature at Åbo Akademi University, Finland. Her research interests include ordinary language criticism, literature and philosophy, literary sociology, and Nordic literature. Her recent publications focus on contemporary Finland-Swedish and Swedish literature as well as moral philosophy, and she has co-edited the volumes *Tanke/världar. Studier i nordisk litteratur* (2022) and *Vardagsspråkskritik. Nordisk litteratur, litteraturforskning och filosofi efter Austin, Wittgenstein och Cavell* (forthcoming).

Eralda L. LAMEBORSHI (East Texas A&M University), *Disaffected Forms: Balkan Literature and the Emotional Economies of Post-Cold War Europe*

Panel 6.4

This presentation examines contemporary Southeastern European/Balkan literature through the lens of affect theory, tracing how formal and thematic shifts from the 20th to 21st centuries register the region's transition from Cold War periphery to post-socialist,

late-capitalist marginality. By comparing pre- and post-Cold War literary texts, it investigates how narrative forms like fragmentation, autofiction, non-linear temporality, embody disaffected emotions such as exhaustion, resentment, and alienation that characterize the post-1989 order. These texts from Europe's edges articulate experiences of austerity, precarity, and dislocation that challenge dominant narratives of European integration and cosmopolitanism. The study asks foundational questions about literature's contemporary function: What can literature do in this moment? How do writers navigate the tensions between local specificity and global capital? What are the uses and limitations of literary form in representing structural disaffection? By foregrounding affect as both aesthetic strategy and political critique, this research demonstrates how Southeastern European literature serves as vital testimony to the uneven emotional and material landscapes of late-stage capitalism, revealing literature's capacity and constraints as a mode of critical engagement with the present.

Eralda L. Lameborshi (eralda.lameborshi@etamu.edu) is an Assistant Professor of World Literature and Film in the Department of Literature and Languages at East Texas A&M University. Her scholarly work focuses on the global novel, Eastern European literature, and world cinema, with more recent engagement in the study of the Cinema of Kosova. Lameborshi's research has been published in prestigious academic journals including *World Literature Today*, *Continuum*, *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, *Journal of World Literature*, and *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. She is the recipient of several fellowships: the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award to Kosova (2024-2025), the Global Human Rights Fellowship at Texas A&M University – Commerce, and the Hagler Institute for Advanced Study Fellowship at Texas A&M University – College Station. Her current research focuses on the Cinema of Kosova and Southeastern European literature.

Yves LANDEROUIN (Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour), *Interrogations éthiques et quête identitaire dans la Salomé (1893) d'Oscar Wilde*

Panel 4.2

La Salomé d'Oscar Wilde a fait couler beaucoup d'encre, qu'il s'agisse de sa genèse, des circonstances de sa rédaction, de la question de la censure ou de celle de son style, de son esthétique, sans parler du psychodrame qui a accompagné sa traduction par Alfred Douglas, l'amant de l'écrivain. Je propose ici de tirer parti des nombreuses recherches déjà accomplies sur ces sujets - mais aussi de mon approche personnelle de la philosophie wildienne (voir notamment Y. Landerouin, *Le roman de la quête esthétique*, éditions « Le Manuscrit », 2011) – pour situer la démarche de Wilde parmi celles que l'atelier du Congrès invite à étudier.

La question de l'identité : Un Irlandais (qui se revendique comme tel), mais qui n'en est pas moins – d'éducation et de plume – anglophone, choisit d'écrire une de ses œuvres en français. Pour lui, composer une pièce de théâtre dans cette langue revient à jouer à être un auteur français (il y a, comme on le sait, une part importante de mimétisme dans sa démarche, très influencée par Flaubert et en concurrence avec Mallarmé, peut-être même aussi un peu de l'art du comédien que se plaisait à être ce champion de « la vie comme un art »). Dans quelle mesure un tel parti (unique dans son œuvre) permet-t-il à Wilde de se réinventer, en tant que créateur et en tant qu'homme ? Il faudra revenir sur le rapport de Wilde à la France, mais plus encore, il s'agira de développer une idée formulée par Kristeva à propos de l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère et que, dans son article « Wilde's French Salomé », Emily Eells (*Cahiers Victoriens et Edouardiens*, 2010, 72) ne fait qu'effleurer en se contentant de la citer : « vous pouvez devenir virtuose avec ce nouvel

artifice qui vous procure d'ailleurs un nouveau corps, tout aussi artificielles, sublimées – certains disent sublime. Vous avez le sentiment que la nouvelle langue est votre résurrection : nouvelle peau, nouveau sexe » (J. Kristeva, *Étrangers à nous-mêmes*, Paris, Fayard, 1988, 27). Sur ce dernier point l'étrange photographie où l'on voit Wilde déguisé en Salomé ne fait qu'aiguiser l'intérêt de la question : en quoi se compose-t-il par cette entreprise de pluri- ou de translinguisme une identité hybride, artificielle au sens baudelairien du terme, comme l'est la langue qui en résulte (non seulement avant l'intervention sur le manuscrit des écrivains qui ont aidé l'Irlandais mais encore après)?

Sur le plan éthique : Le cas de Salomé a une valeur originale. On sait qu'emprunter la langue de l'Autre peut poser un problème éthique à certains écrivains (l'écrivain d'un pays colonisé qui adopte celle du colonisateur dans son œuvre, par exemple). Il en va bien entendu tout autrement ici. Et il ne se tourne pas non plus vers le Français à la manière qui sera celle d'un Kundera. Pour Wilde, en 1893, la langue du mystérieux « livre jaune », qui fascinait Dorian Gray, est plus que jamais celle de la transgression. Le Français des « Décadents » et des « Symbolistes » convient à une œuvre tirant l'épisode biblique vers l'inceste et la nécrophilie, notamment. Ce petit exil dans le français (avant l'ultime exil en France que l'écrivain paria, une fois libéré de prison, devra accomplir quatre ans plus tard) a pour fin d'oublier un peu la morale victorienne pour se mettre en accord avec sa propre éthique. Dans quelle mesure et en quoi y est-il parvenu ?

Yves Landerouin est Professeur de littérature comparée à l'Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour depuis 2011. À partir d'une réflexion sur la conception wildienne de la critique (*La critique créative - Une autre façon de commenter les œuvres*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 2016), ses travaux dans le domaine de l'intermédialité ont porté sur les relations entre la littérature et les autres formes d'expression artistique, en particulier la musique, et sur la réception des grands romans à travers le filtre cinématographique. Par ailleurs, il a dirigé plusieurs ouvrages consacrés à Jean Giraudoux, dont récemment l'édition scientifique de ses Essais, articles et récits (deux volumes publiés chez « Classiques Garnier »). Ses contributions aux études wildiennes incluent : « Oscar Wilde et Combat avec l'image », *Cahiers Jean Giraudoux* n° 50, Classiques Garnier, 2022, p. 77-90; *Le roman de la quête esthétique*, éditions « Le Manuscrit », 2011 ; « La littérature, fruit d'un "égoïsme utilisable pour autrui" (Oscar Wilde, Marcel Proust) », communication donnée à Rennes en octobre 2025 (à paraître en 2026).

Duncan LARGE (University of East Anglia), *Translating Affect (Ethically) in the Age of AI* **Plenary Lecture 24 August**

In common with many other disciplines, Translation Studies has taken an “affective turn” in recent years. Scholars like Séverine Hubscher-Davidson and Kaisa Koskinen have refocussed our understanding of the translation process on the affective and the bodily, as part of a wider trend towards a sociological understanding of the translator's *habitus*. This move towards “translator studies” has entailed a corresponding move away from texts, especially literary texts, and their affective content. Yet across the world's languages, many of the words that are regarded as the most “untranslatable” (*hiraeth*, *hygge*, *saudade*, *Weltschmerz*, etc.) are also those most laden with affect. When you scale up from individual words to a poem, a play or a novel, is affect what gets lost in translation?

This paper addresses the nexus of translation and affect in the literary sphere. Specifically, I will consider what it is about affective literature that might make it difficult to translate, and to translate ethically. I will explore these questions using a wide range of literary examples from

Homer, the Bible and Shakespeare through Romantic and Modernist poetry to the literature of the Holocaust, Indigenous literatures, and the literature of contemporary conflict zones. I will also address the impact of AI on the translation of affective literature, for the current consensus is that affective content is the area where human translators have the greatest advantage over generative AI, but in an age where AI can now routinely pass the Turing Test and simulate emotion, is this just complacency?

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Salvatore LATTARULO (University of Aldo Moro – Bari), *Waiting for a Second Prometheus: Italo Svevo's Visionary Rewriting of the Myth of the Mad Scientist at the End of The Conscience of Zeno in Light of Today's Anthropocene Debate*

Panel 1.5

«Quando i gas velenosi non basteranno più, un uomo fatto come tutti gli altri, nel segreto di una stanza di questo mondo, inventerà un esplosivo incomparabile (...). Ed un altro uomo fatto anche lui come tutti gli altri, ma degli altri un po' più ammalato, ruberà tale esplosivo e s'arrampicherà al centro della terra per porlo nel punto ove il suo effetto potrà essere il massimo». In these final lines of *The Conscience of Zeno*, the author seems to re-enact the myth of Prometheus, envisioning the theft of an invention destined to prove lethal to humanity. "Prometheism", cast in a negative light as a new logic for financial and technocratic elites to dominate the planet, is a term that has come back into fashion. It has been associated with categories like the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene, which tend to label the current era of risk of environmental disaster due to the unscrupulous pursuit of economic gain. Consider James W. Moore's classic book on the subject. Well, the ecological and catastrophic theme becomes almost unexpectedly central to the finale of Italo Svevo's masterpiece. The abstract presented here aims to reread this century-old work from this perspective, demonstrating how the Trieste-born novelist was ahead of his time compared to much current genre fiction (Walter Siti, for example) and a current of scholarship (eco-criticism) that is particularly popular today (Iovino, Salabè, Scaffai, Benedetti, De Martino, Muzzioli). Refining a global "consciousness of failure", however, means overturning the perspective of panic and disorientation faced with the specter of the finis mundi. And in this sense, this mature awareness that the chosen species is inevitably on the brink of a ruinous abyss becomes, in Zeno's case, a path to recovery, healing, and salvation. Herein lies the utopian force, if you will, of Svevo's literary testament. In his controversial essay, *Worlds in Collision*, Belarusian psychiatrist Immanuel Velikovsky argues that society has lost the historical memory of its collective fractures, plunging into a mental void no more and no less than the individual who has repressed the traumatic contents of his childhood, recalled on the analyst's couch. At the beginning of his adventure, Zeno presents himself as a survivor of a catastrophic past in which the private and public spheres intersect. "Catastrophe" is precisely the lowest common denominator that we will attempt to use as an interpretative lens for the novel.

Salvatore Francesco Lattarulo (salvatorefrancescolattarulo@gmail.com) holds a PhD in Contemporary Italian Philology. He has dealt with Italian poetry of the twentieth century (Risi, Sereni, Montale, Ungaretti, Campana, Pasolini, Penna, Bodini) publishing volumes on the subject and essays in specialized and miscellaneous journals. In the field of fiction, he is author of articles on Svevo, Fenoglio, Malaparte, Brancati, Bassani. He is an expert in the subject at the LELIA Department of the University of Bari. He has taught as a visiting professor in the Department of Italian Studies of the University of Szczecin (Poland). His

papers about Svevo are: *La sindrome del reo: complesso del martire e senso di colpa in Senilità di Svevo*, in AA. VV., *La medicina dell'anima. Prosa e poesia per il racconto della malattia*, by D. De Liso and V. Merola, Napoli, Loffredo, 2020; «*Patria mia, io ti porterò la giustizia*»: *Svevo politico e l'utopia socialista*, Pisa, ETS, 2021; «*Patria mia, io ti porterò la giustizia*»: *Svevo politico e l'utopia socialista*, Pisa, ETS, 2023; *Sorella morte: il sacrificio di Amalia e il «grande misfatto»*. *La femminilità negata in Senilità di Italo Svevo*, Roma, ADI, 2023; «*Fungere da infermiere*»: *Zeno e l'evoluzione della maschera narrativa del prestatore di cure*, in *I mondi di Zeno. La coscienza di Svevo un secolo dopo*, by O. A. Calzolari and G. Perosa, Firenze, Cesati, 2024; «*La guerra ed io ci siamo incontrati in un modo violento*» e «*un poco buffo*»: *scenari e contro-scenari del conflitto nello Svevo tardo e postumo*, Roma, ADI, 2024; «*Inventare è una creazione non già una menzogna*»: «*La coscienza di Zeno*» come autofiction, Pisa, ETS, 2024.

Silvia LAVANCO LIVRERI (University of Palermo), *Expanding Topographic Narratives. Where Stories Walk the Landscape*

Panel 8.1

The contribution retraces part of the history of Bosco Ficuzza, a woodland near the city of Palermo, tied to the Italian Risorgimento and the passage of the Thousand through that territory. Following a material ecocritical approach, the forest configures itself as storied matter: narrating matter in which nonhuman elements – terrain conformation, vegetation, crossroads – act as co-protagonists of historical and literary events. The Garibaldian memoirs of 1860-1862 and the reconstructions undertaken decades later add further layers. Together, they converge heterogeneous media (text, image, physical topography) into a hybrid document that exemplifies how literature and landscape intertwine within an expanded field. Following Ingold, the landscape emerges as a taskscape, a field of activities and relations in continuous becoming, where human agencies (military decisions, narrative choices) and nonhuman agencies (geological conformation, vegetal coverage) intertwine. The Garibaldian passage at Ficuzza is a case where the absence of physical remains reveals a bidirectional dynamic: the event produced layered narratives while being itself conditioned and performed by the landscape. Absence thus becomes a theoretical strength, compelling us to think of landscape as a relational media environment where every passage through it irreversibly modifies the environment itself. Narrated history, in turn, proves capable of performing expanded ecologies in which the nonhuman emerges as an active part of the narration.

Silvia Lavanco Livreri (silvia.lavancolivrer@unipa.it) is a PhD student in Visual Culture at the University of Palermo. Her research investigates the intersection between visual culture and the environmental humanities, with a particular focus on how contemporary artistic practices contribute to rethinking the relationships between the human and the more-than-human. Her interests concern the role of materiality in ecological reflection and the link between justice and environmental storytelling, understood as fundamental dimensions in the construction of shared ecological imaginaries.

She holds a Master's degree in Comparative Literature, with a thesis on the relationship between apocalypse and the Anthropocene in contemporary literature. She later expanded her research interests toward visual culture and contemporary art, adopting an interdisciplinary approach that weaves together image analysis, cultural studies, and ecocriticism. In autumn 2024, she was a PhD Visiting Fellow at Aarhus University in Denmark, where she deepened her work on the relationship between ecomedia studies and artistic practices, exploring the potential of visual imagination in shaping new ecological perspectives.

Hannie LAWLOR (University of Oxford; with **Florian LÜTZELBERGER**), '*Darle otro cuerpo a lo que ya tenía cuerpo*': *Relational Life Writing, the Polyphony of Voices and the Making of a Collective Archive of Abortion Experiences in Dahiana Belfiori's Código Rosa (2015)*

Panel 6.6

Dahiana Belfiori's *Código Rosa. Relatos sobre abortos* (2015) is an experiment in life writing that pushes testimonial, fictional and collective modes into one another. Based on more than twenty interviews with women from Neuquén who aborted with the support of Socorristas en Red (a feminist grassroots network in Argentina that provides information, accompaniment and practical support for safe medication abortions), Belfiori turns extensive transcripts – each interview “entre quince y treinta páginas” and offered “para que ayude a otras” (Belfiori 2015, 15) – into seventeen (micro)relatos ficcionados. She describes the process as “darle otro cuerpo a lo que ya tenía cuerpo” (14), highlighting the tension between shaping and safeguarding voices that are intimate, vulnerable and politically charged. The resulting text is a collective autobiography built from the lives of others rather than an autofictional self (which we tend to find more often in writing about challenging medical experiences, such as abortion or miscarriage). “[A]ny one life story is made up of multiple others, shaped by the many lives with which it intersects” (Lawlor 2024, 3): *Código Rosa* enacts this principle as narrative method and ethical stance. Its polyphony also recalls Pauline Harmange's demand for “une multitude d'histoires pour nourrir notre vision du monde” (Harmange 2022, 32), as well as Paula Bonet's insistence on creative collectivities and female genealogies in texts that register loss, embodiment and artistic agency. A similar claim shapes Annie Ernaux's notion of an “écriture ethnologique, livrant les faits dans leur nudité” (Ernaux 2002, 37), a method that binds the singular “je” to the broader social body and transforms personal experience into a collective analytic. Colombe Schneck, too, frames her narrative as an attempt to “relier [son] histoire à celles d'autres femmes” (Schneck 2015, 14-15), positioning individual testimony as a gesture of connection, transmission and shared vulnerability. A subtle shift occurs when *Código Rosa* is placed alongside other abortion-centred collections. The German volume *Glückwunsch! 15 Erzählungen über Abtreibungen*, to name just one of many possible examples, likewise gathers multiple voices, yet its narratives often take a more openly fictional or speculative form, including utopian and dystopian scenarios. Belfiori's book remains anchored in lifeworlds shaped by the Socorro Rosa hotline, the timing of misoprostol doses and the fragile networks of care among women who accompany one another. Its polyphony grows from proximity rather than invention, from listening rather than world-building. The emotional texture of the book underscores this difference. Shame, fear, relief, determination and solidarity circulate not as abstract affects but as palpable, situated gestures: a woman describing her miscarriage-like expulsion as “una cosa más de la vida” (Belfiori 2015, 16); another repeating “perdón, te amo, gracias” (24) as a mantra to steady herself; the socorristas holding open a space where clandestinity meets care. Our paper argues that *Código Rosa* develops a form of relational life writing that turns clandestine experience into a multi-voiced archive, a literary counterpublic in the sense of Lauren Berlant (2008), foregrounding the affective economies of reproductive decision-making while modelling an ethics of listening, accompaniment and shared vulnerability.

Dr Hannie Lawlor (hannie.lawlor@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk) is Associate Professor in Modern Spanish Literature and Film at Lady Margaret Hall and Somerville College, University of Oxford. Previously, she was Lecturer in Spanish at University College Dublin, and she holds a PhD from Wolfson College, Oxford. Her comparative research focuses on twentieth and twenty-first-century Spanish women's prose and film and on twenty-first-century life narratives. She is co-editor, with Dr Alexandra Effe, of *The Autofictional: Approaches*,

Affordances, Forms (2022) and her thesis monograph, *Relational Responses to Trauma in Twenty-First-Century French and Spanish Women's Writing*, was published with Oxford University Press in September 2024.

Shuangyi LI (University of Bristol), *African Desert, Chinese Cityscape, and the Travelling Gaze in Sanmao's and Noo Saro-Wiwa's Sino-African Writings*

Panel 4.4

This paper examines the construction of Sino-African cultural relations in two women travellers' writings: *Stories of the Sahara* (1976) by the Chinese-Taiwanese author Sanmao (1943-1991) and *Black Ghosts: A Journey into the Lives of Africans in China* (2023) by the British-Nigerian author Noo Saro-Wiwa. It identifies and compares two distinctive sites of Sino-African imaginations, experiences, and interactions as observed through the 'travelling gaze' (David Arnold 2006), i.e. the African desert in Sanmao and the Chinese cityscape in Saro-Wiwa. Hugely popular across the Sinophone world, *Stories of the Sahara* is a collection of short stories based on Sanmao's travel to, and attempted settlement in, Western Sahara with her Spanish husband in the early 1970s when this region was still under Spanish governance. In recounting her experiences of navigating the desert conditions, colonial and local Sawari societies, and anti-colonial forces, Sanmao constructs a fiercely modern, intrepid, independent yet deeply empathetic persona as well as a radically exotic, foreign land for her contemporary Sinophone readership. By contrast, *Black Ghosts* is akin to a journalistic investigation which engages with, by now, a relatively familiar politico-economic narrative and discourse that largely defines contemporary Sino-African relations. The sizeable yet dwindling African migrant population and communities in China are found in China's megacities with their awe-inspiring infrastructures, particularly Guangzhou, but also Beijing, Changsha, Wuhan, and Hong Kong. While Sanmao's highly individual and affective storytelling commits to making home with her Spanish husband in the African desert space and exemplifies an embodied belonging against popular imagination, Saro-Wiwa's critical reflections on the African space in the modern Chinese cityscape convey a clear sense of responsibility and urgency for collective and cultural representations based on knowledge and learning. Importantly, both writers' European and Western experiences and relations significantly shape and inform their Sino-African 'travelling gaze', from Orientalist imaginaries through colonial civilizing mission to capitalist globalization. Moreover, as women travellers, they were able to access feminine spaces, experience indigenous and migrant women's social issues, and witness gendered cultural encounters, which are often overlooked by or denied to men travellers. If Sanmao's fascination with the Sahara is propelled by a nostalgic or exotic escape from a materialistic and technological modernity to a certain 'wild' yet 'sacred' place, Saro-Wiwa's methodical investigation of African communities in China may be said to be driven by a strictly 'profane' agenda to gauge Sino-African political, economic, and social realities at the grassroots level of the ultra-modern and mesmerizing cityscape. While Sanmao looks to a supposedly primitive and distant other to construct a differentiated 'new' self and is determined to make this self feel 'at home' and make this 'home' known to her sinophone audience; Saro-Wiwa sets out to verify a displaced and racialized self within a powerful other, which may also be perceived as a possible 'future' self to aspire to. Therefore, Sanmao's and Saro-Wiwa's writings point to two travelling modes of knowing, understanding, and negotiating, organized around imaginary, symbolic, and functional sites of encounters; they are instrumental and mutually complementary to Sino-African literary world-making.

Li Shuangyi 李双翼 (shuangyi.li@bristol.ac.uk) is Senior Lecturer and MA Programme Director of Comparative Literatures and Cultures at the University of Bristol. He is the author of two monographs: *Proust, China, and Intertextual Engagement: Translation and*

Transcultural Dialogue (2017) (winner of International Comparative Literature Association [ICLA] Anna Balakian Book Prize 2019); *Travel, Translation, Transmedia Aesthetics: Franco-Chinese Literature and Visual Arts in a Global Age* (2021) (shortlisted for R. Gapper Book Prize 2022 hosted by the Society for French Studies). His current research focuses on Sino-African literary and cultural relations. He is the co-editor of *Edinburgh Critical Studies in World Literature and Intermediality* published by Edinburgh University Press, and book review editor of the ICLA's open-access house journal *Recherche Littéraire / Literary Research* published by Peter Lang. Originally from China, Shuangyi received his PhD at the University of Edinburgh in the UK, but has also studied or worked at L'Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium, L'École Normale Supérieure (rue d'Ulm, Paris), and Lund University in Sweden.

LIANG Yaquan (University of Edinburgh; with **ZHANG Sitong**), *Rethinking Justice through Intimacy: Borders, Affect, and Ethics in The Flowers of War*

Panel 4.9

The Nanjing Massacre was one of the most severe and emblematic episodes of wartime violence during the Second Sino-Japanese War, known as “The Rape of Nanking” for its mass rape and extreme violations of female bodies. As a narrative set against this historical event, Yan Geling’s *The Flowers of War* portrays both conflict and cohabitation among female victims within a shared refuge – specifically, schoolgirls and prostitutes – who are strictly differentiated within the wartime order and burdened with divergent ethical expectations. This study examines how *The Flowers of War* represents the collective memory of the Nanjing Massacre through a gendered postmemory narrative. It focuses on how intimate, relational, and affective narrative practices participate in and reshape the construction of postmemory, allowing violence and traumatic memory to move beyond grand historical narratives or de-subjectivised documentary perspectives and instead be situated within embodied experience. Drawing on Sara Ahmed’s analysis of the “organisation of hate” and Mezzadra and Neilson’s concept of the “border,” this paper adopts affective borders as an analytical lens to investigate the mechanisms that generate violence and injustice in narratives of genocidal violence. It argues that wartime instability disrupts social borders, forcing separated and unrelated subjects into a shared lived situation. Against this backdrop, the novel demonstrates that violence and injustice operate not only through the invader–invaded binary but also through borders of multiple social categories – gender, race, region, occupation, and morality – embedded in everyday social life. Moreover, the construction of boundaries is itself a relational and affective process. In the novel’s early sections, the schoolgirls’ hate toward the prostitutes functions as an affective bordering practice shaped by a generalised threat of wartime gendered violence. By attaching sexual attractiveness and moral stigma to the prostitute, the schoolgirls attempt to deny and sever their own bodily vulnerability to violation, as sexual assault is repeatedly figured as a widespread tactic of invasion, thereby producing a fragile yet exclusionary social border. In the later sections, with the unfolding of indiscriminate sexual violence, the invading gaze no longer recognises identity differences among women; instead, it uniformly objectifies female bodies as conquerable and violable. This extreme violence breaks the borders constructed through hate, forcing formerly antagonistic subjects into an imposed condition of shared vulnerability while diminishing intra-victim hostility. Yet wartime borders – though weakened – do not disappear. Rather, they are crossed, negotiated, and reshaped through intimate relations and affective practices, revealing their mobility and plasticity within social life. Finally, this paper argues that *The Flowers of War* uses intimacy as a prism to reframe “genocide” not as an episodic historical event but as a structural mechanism embedded in everyday life, made

visible through intra-victim exclusion and hierarchy. Affect is shown to be not merely a reaction to violence or a rhetorical effect, but also a medium through which violence is enacted and a site for reconfiguring ethical judgment. Within intimate relations, borders regulating the value of life, the legitimacy of sacrifice, and moral responsibility are destabilised and renegotiated, relocating “justice” from abstract historical discourse into everyday ethics.

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Daša LIČEN (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana), *National Pantheons in the Absence of the Nation*

Panel 5.1

It is inherent to human communities to create pantheons celebrating prominent individuals, but the nineteenth century saw the emergence of a particular type of commemorative structure: the national pantheon. According to Dović, national pantheons are those that maintain a “visible connection to national thought or the national movement.” That being said, many of today’s national pantheons can only questionably be described as primarily intended to promote a nationalist movement. This research focuses on precisely those cases that, at first glance, appear to fit the model of a national pantheon but, in fact, commemorate a different form of collective identification. The research will present three types of alternative national pantheons and, in doing so, address the issue of methodological nationalism and the inevitable changing roles of pantheons over time. The first type of national pantheon existing in the absence of the nation is the imperial pantheon, such as Westminster Abbey, which celebrates notable figures from England, as well as from Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and elsewhere. Among those commemorated are military leaders, explorers, and statesmen who played pivotal roles in expanding or administering the British Empire and its colonial ventures. Empires often sought to foster loyalty among diverse populations, employing strategies akin to those adopted by national movements. The second type includes national pantheons conceived by movements that never fully succeeded in establishing a nation. For instance, although today revered as a Croatian national pantheon, Mirogoj Cemetery in Zagreb was founded in 1876 to honour the then-declining Illyrian movement – not only as a precursor to Croat nationalism but also as an expression of support for South Slavic unity, a sentiment reflected in the many South Slavs who made pilgrimages to the cemetery. The third type is often considered a borderline national pantheon, not due to allegiance to a nation but as a later-developing form. In post–World War II Eastern Europe, numerous monumental pantheons were established to commemorate values promoted by the ruling party leaderships. The Bulgarian Pantheon of National Revival Heroes and the Macedonian Makedonium, for example, honour revolutionaries rather than national poets or figures from national movements. These sites were deliberately designed to present the socialist state as modern and to educate the public about revolutionary values, rather than to celebrate national unity.

Daša Ličen (dasa.licen@zrc-sazu.si) is an anthropologist whose research focuses on historical anthropology, identity formation, voluntary associations, and food, with an emphasis on nineteenth century Central Europe. She is a researcher at the Institute of Ethnology at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. She completed her PhD at the University of Ljubljana in 2021, examining how cultural

associations reflected social change and bourgeois practices in a nationally diverse city. Her work received the Faculty of Arts Award for the best doctoral dissertation in the humanities and social sciences and the Karl Kaser Prize for Historical Anthropology. Ličen has held numerous international grants and fellowships, including Fulbright, Erasmus, and French and Austrian government scholarships. She teaches as an assistant professor at the University of Maribor. In 2025, she co-edited the book *Habsburg Civil Servants* with Alexander Maxwell (Berghahn Books).

Érica LIMA (University of Campinas), ***La Chute du Ciel in English and Brazilian Portuguese: Rethinking Literature and Translation with Kopenawa and Albert***

Panel 5.5

This paper analyzes the translation of the book *La chute du ciel—paroles d'un chaman yanomami* (2010), using the English version, *The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman* (2013), translated by Nicholas Ell and Alison Dun, and the Brazilian Portuguese version, *A Queda do Céu: Palavras de um Xamã Yanomami* (2015), translated by Beatriz Perrone-Moisés. *La chute du ciel* was written by the French anthropologist Bruce Albert, based on the recordings of conversations he had with Davi Kopenawa, a Yanomami writer, shaman, politician, and interpreter. Albert reshaped the indigenous man's words after attentive listening and living with the tribe for many years. The book explores the Yanomami worldview and provides narratives about Kopenawa's life, as well as shares Yanomami traditions and conflicts with white men in the Amazon rainforest. It also presents Kopenawa's political activities and his work as an interpreter for the Brazilian government agency FUNAI (National Indigenous Foundation). Marked by hybridism and translanguaging, with Yanomami words mixed with words from other languages, the book invites you to think about transcultural translation practices. Additionally, it offers knowledge of what defines an act of literature by putting together memoirs, testimonials, autobiographies, and narratives that resemble a manifesto - an invitation to understand different ways of living and relating to others that do not align with Western capitalist thinking, which neglects nature and environmental crises. This study performs an interpretive analysis based on hermeneutic theories of translation (Derrida, 2000; Gadamer, 1999), examining selected excerpts from the French, Portuguese, and English versions. It addresses the following question: how does Kopenawa and Albert's book help us to consider the ethical aspects of relationships between languages, and how can it affect our interactions with people who have different views on life? The objective is to show how this kind of literature, which cannot be classified into traditional literary categories, could demonstrate how relevant translation is for understanding other people and language as a changing process. Furthermore, it raises questions about linguistic and cultural dominance in politics, stressing how important it is to understand how powerful languages and translation can be, especially in works that are multilingual. The paper aims to demonstrate that translation is a multifaceted process, characterised by interactions and transitions among diverse places, cultures, and ideologies. Mixing several languages makes this complexity especially noticeable, demonstrating that negotiating meanings and creating a new text involves multiple layers.

Érica Lima (elalima@unicamp.br) is an associate professor at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (University of Campinas—Unicamp). She teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses on translation and supervises master's and doctoral students. Érica Lima holds a bachelor's degree in French translation from São Paulo State University (UNESP, 1986), a master's degree in applied linguistics from the University of Campinas (Unicamp, 1991), a PhD in languages from UNESP (2003), and a PhD in translation from the University of São Paulo (USP, 2023). She also coordinates the CNPq-certified research group *E por falar em tradução* (And speaking of translation), which takes its name from the

song *E por falar em saudade* (And speaking of saudade) — a term considered untranslatable into other languages. The group unites students and professors who are interested in various theories and practices of translation, encompassing areas such as audiovisual translation, machine translation, specialized texts, and literary works. She was one of the coordinators for the translation and adaptation project of the book *Our Bodies, Ourselves* into Brazilian Portuguese. This book is composed of 28 chapters and totals 1161 pages, along with a presentation by the coordinators and a preface by the translators. Her recent research interests include translation and emotion, feminist translation, activist translation, and translation education. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7199-3172>

Shuyue LIU (University of Nottingham), *Shared Flavour of Feeling: Articulating and Evoking Affect through Language of Food in Angela Hui's Takeaway (2022)*

Panel 3.3

Food is a material means of survival and a symbolic language of emotions for the British Chinese diaspora, whose settlement in the UK has long been intertwined with the catering industry. This article examines the relationship between culinary practices and affective experience, centring on Angela Hui's memoir *Takeaway: Stories from a Childhood Behind the Counter* (2022). Through an intersectional lens of ethnicity and class, I argue that the survival-driven existence shapes an economy of affect in Hui's working-class migrant family, wherein the catering labour entails the suppression of tender emotional expression and the endurance of cumulative negative feelings. When verbal intimacy becomes unattainable, food assumes a communicative function at the family dining table, articulating their cultural and emotional agency otherwise stifled by linguistic reticence. Through culinary imagery, candid self-disclosure, and the recovery of marginalised voices, Hui transforms private family memories into collective affect and critical reflection. By reading Hui's memoir alongside its reception, this article demonstrates how food functions as sustenance and an emotional medium that shapes the representation of diasporic experience and extends its resonance to a wider public readership.

Shuyue (Jocelyn) Liu (刘抒悦) (shuyue.liu@nottingham.ac.uk) is a PhD candidate in American Studies at the University of Nottingham. Her own trajectory — from a small city in China to Beijing, and now to the UK — has drawn her to the literature of those who move between worlds. Her research combines close reading with AI-assisted methods to map literary narration and reception, asking how fiction narrates migration and ethnic identity, and how readers are emotionally shaped by those narratives. To explore this question beyond the academy, she runs a public reading group that doubles as a research site, bringing together general readers and scholars to trace the affective power of fiction in real time. She has published in *Textual Practice*, *Neohelicon*, *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, *Critical Survey*, *Critical Arts*, and *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, among others.

Ingeborg LÖFGREN (Mälardalen University) with **Joel SAMUELSSON**, *Claims to a Shared World and a Shared Sense of Words – Climate Activism, Justice, and Literary Imagination*

Panel 7.3

In rethinking how literature can offer a valuable source for ethical reflection on human communality and justice, and on our affective and moral responses to a shared world and fractured sense of reality, it is natural to turn to the interdisciplinary field of law and literature, as Nussbaum and others have done (Nussbaum, Fish, Dolin). Law and literature are both objects and products of interpretation. Both presuppose, in a deep sense, the sharedness of

language, culture, sense-making and judgement. Both bind us together as creatures of language in a multitude of ways; from how our inner world of sense-making is weaved in linguistic fabric to how our outer societal and physical existence and behaviour are guided and governed by various forms of rules. As ordinary language philosopher J. L. Austin said: “the word is our bond” (Austin, Constable). In this paper we want to examine a concrete instance of how literature and literary imaginativeness can bring conceptual clarity to real-life cases of conflict and rifts in our sense of a shared moral, societal and even scientific reality. We want to compare two examples of harsh sentencing in cases concerning climate activism in the UK and Sweden, respectively. We compare the M25 Conspiracy Case, in which Roger Hallam and other “Just Stop Oil” activists were sentenced to years in prison for conspiracy to engage in non-violent protests, with a series of Swedish court cases in which non-violent climate activists were charged with, and in some cases convicted of, committing sabotage. In both instances, in the UK and in Sweden, the alleged crimes took place in 2022, and the juridical aftermath is still unfolding. To further understanding of the ethical and juridical significance of these two cases, we make use of the Swedish author and activist Sara Lidman’s notion of “sam-vett” [con-science] as an analytical lens. Lidman invented but never defined this word – a word clearly rooted in, but not identical with, the Swedish word for conscience [samvete]. To trace its meaning one must look at how she uses it – in a novel, in political articles, and in a legal defence (she was also a convicted climate activist in the 1980s). She repeatedly uses the word in legal and semi-legal contexts. We argue that the literary imaginativeness of Lidman’s concept can shed light on these two legal cases and help bring out the ethical and juridical stakes in them. It is from within the framework of Ordinary Language Philosophy, understanding meaning as use (Wittgenstein, Cavell, Moi), that we claim Lidman’s literary use of the con-science can work as an illuminating object of comparison (Wittgenstein). In particular, we will compare it with Hallam’s appeal to “common sense” (Hallam) and the verdicts interpretation of the activists’ “conscientious motivation”.

Ingeborg Löfgren, PhD, (ingeborg.lofgren@mdu.se) is Senior Lecturer in Literary Studies at Mälardalen University, Sweden. She has written about Wittgenstein, Stanley Cavell, George Orwell, interpretive scepticism, and Ordinary Language Criticism. Löfgren is also a co-editor of *Vardagsspråkskritik. Nordisk litteratur, litteraturforskning och filosofi efter Austin, Wittgenstein och Cavell* (forthcoming).

Benoît LOIRET (University of Edinburgh), *The Definition of Poetry as an Ethical Act in Yves Bonnefoy’s Critical Writings*

Panel 9.2

In his study of post-war French poetry, Jean-Claude Pinson distinguishes two main attitudes in response to Theodor Adorno’s famous maxim that there could be no poetry after Auschwitz. On the one hand, some poets, gathered around the *Tel Quel* periodical, explored formal plays on language and left ethical considerations broadly out of their works; on the other hand, another group of poets, published in *L’Éphémère*, claimed that there was, after the War more than ever, an even greater need for poetry as the locus of a renewed ethics. Yves Bonnefoy (1923-2016) resolutely belongs in this latter group of poets. This paper aims to highlight the centrality of ethical concerns in Bonnefoy’s definition of poetry through a survey of his vast corpus of critical writings. For Bonnefoy, Western modernity produces individuals who are severed from the sensible world and from other individuals because they are entrapped in language. The role of poetry, he argues, is to counter this language, which he calls conceptual. Momentarily freed from conceptual language thanks to poetry, individuals may finally experience a genuine encounter with others. Many of Bonnefoy’s essays devoted to other poets or artists focus on aspects of their works which testify to a decision to turn towards humanity. Thus, Charles Baudelaire’s “Tableaux parisiens”,

Mallarmé's rewriting of one of his poems, or a painting of Ceres by Adam Elsheimer are examples with which Bonnefoy emphasises the role of a firm ethical stance in poetry (here understood to encompass all art forms). Throughout these texts, it appears that such an ethical stance can be interpreted a criterion by which to assess the poetic nature of a work. On the contrary, works which display a lack of consideration for others are deemed by Bonnefoy to be unpoetic. In a more formal perspective, Bonnefoy warns his readers against the temptation of aesthetic perfection. Rather than to poetry, he argues, it is bound to lead to an isolating aspiration which abstracts other individuals. Again, some artistic and poetic figures illustrate this phenomenon in Bonnefoy's essays: the intense focus on sound for certain musicians or for Edgar Allan Poe in "The Raven" may lead to a refusal of the social world, as do Henri Matisse's too-bright colours. While these may initially appear as great formal achievements, as they disrupt the course of conceptual language, Bonnefoy insists that such a quest for an ideal form in fact only sets individuals even further apart from each other. Whether negatively or positively, the question of ethics is therefore a determining factor in considering the poetic or unpoetic nature of a work. But artists and poets, Bonnefoy admits, nearly always belong to both categories at once, and constantly have to balance the two. Close to contemporary thinkers of ethics, such as Emmanuel Levinas or Vladimir Jankélévitch, Bonnefoy thus proposes an understanding of ethics in poetry which is never completely achieved and must always be reiterated.

Benoît Loiret (benoit.loiret@ed.ac.uk) is a final-year PhD student at the University of Edinburgh. His thesis explores the role of music in French poet, critic, and translator Yves Bonnefoy's critical writings. More broadly, he is interested in discussions on visual arts and music in the works of contemporary poets. His recent academic contributions tackle Yves Bonnefoy's and John Ashbery's art criticism, references to Gustav Mahler in Bonnefoy's poems, and inter-art sensibility in Philippe Jaccottet's notebooks. Beside his research, Benoît works as an art mediator at Fruitmarket, a public contemporary art gallery in Edinburgh. Alongside teaching, he has organised workshops for students to discover contemporary francophone poetry and to discuss poetic theory.

David LOMBARD (Research Foundation Flanders/LU Leuven), *Feeling Beyond the Symptom Chart: Affective Knowledge in Twenty-First-Century Schizophrenia Memoirs*

Panel 6.7

In clinical contexts, the complex lived experiences of psychiatric patients can be reduced to standardized symptom charts and diagnostic categories. When patient disclosures are interpreted solely through biomedical frameworks, subtle nonverbal expressions and intricate emotional states risk being misunderstood, resulting in what recent scholarship has termed "affective injustice" (Srinivasan 2017; Archer and Mills 2019; Gallegos 2023). This paper argues that twenty-first-century schizophrenia memoirs preserve forms of affective and experiential knowledge that complement biomedical expertise and reorient ethical listening in mental healthcare. Focusing on three U.S. memoirs—Elyn Saks's *The Center Cannot Hold* (2007), Kristina Morgan's *Mind Without a Home* (2013), and Esmé Weijun Wang's *The Collected Schizophrenias* (2019)—this paper brings affect theory (Silvan Tomkins, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Brian Massumi) into dialogue with J. Logan Smilges's concept of the "rhetorical matrix" (2022). Through close readings of scenes of diagnosis, hospitalization, and psychotherapy, I examine how pre-cognitive bodily responses, nonverbal communication, silence, and difficult-to-articulate affects acquire meaning through literary and narratological devices such as metaphor, simile, and prolepsis. Building upon Arthur Frank's model of narrative-deontology, I argue that affect is more than a catalyst for readerly empathy. Rather, it constitutes a form of narrative knowledge that is essential to ethical

listening and clinical decision-making. By showing how retrospective life writing transforms ambiguous, pre-verbal bodily experiences into meaningful narratives, the paper repositions schizophrenia memoirs as valuable epistemic resources for mental healthcare, demonstrating how literature can contribute to more responsive, ethically grounded encounters between patients and clinicians.

David Lombard (david.lombard@kuleuven.be) is a postdoctoral researcher with the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) affiliated with the University of Leuven (KU Leuven), where he is a member of the English Literature and Cultural Studies research groups, and of the steering committee of the Leuven Center for Health Humanities. He was also a visiting scholar at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (2025), the Ohio State University/Project Narrative (2023), and the University of Texas at Austin (2022). He did his PhD (funded by the FNRS) in literary studies and the environmental humanities, “American Anthropocene Sublimes: Rhetorics and Narrations of Self and Environment in the Contemporary U.S. Ecobiographical Memoir,” as a joint degree between the universities of Liège and Leuven in Belgium (2020–24). He authored the book *Techno-Thoreau: Aesthetics, Ecology and the Capitalocene* (2019), seven essays published in peer reviewed volumes and the academic journals *Revenant*, *Miranda*, *Épistémocritique*, *Journal of Arts and Media Studies*, and *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory*, as well as several book reviews, encyclopaedia entries, and general-audience articles. He is also the co-editor of two special issues: “Anthropocene Sublimes” (*Ecozon@*, spring 2025) and “The Pastoral: New Trajectories in the Anthropocene” (*Ecocene*, December 2021). His current postdoctoral project (funded by the FWO), “The Twenty-First-Century Schizophrenia (Graphic) Memoir: A Rhetorical-Narratological and Multi-Actor Materialist Approach” (2024–27), is in the literary health humanities and investigates the forms, functions, and cultural and institutional relations of the genre of the schizophrenia (graphic) memoir in its multiple twenty-first-century contexts.

Florian LÜTZELBERGER (University of Bamberg/University of Oxford) with **Hannie LAWLOR**, “*Darle Otro Cuerpo a lo que Ya Tenía Cuerpo*”: *Relational Life Writing, the Polyphony of Voices and the Making of a Collective Archive of Abortion Narratives in Dahiana Belfiori’s Código Rosa* (2015)

Panel 6.6

Dahiana Belfiori’s *Código Rosa. Relatos sobre abortos* (2015) is an experiment in life writing that pushes testimonial, fictional and collective modes into one another. Based on more than twenty interviews with women from Neuquén who aborted with the support of Socorristas en Red (a feminist grassroots network in Argentina that provides information, accompaniment and practical support for safe medication abortions), Belfiori turns extensive transcripts – each interview “entre quince y treinta páginas” and offered “para que ayude a otras” (Belfiori 2015, 15) – into seventeen (micro)relatos ficcionados. She describes the process as “darle otro cuerpo a lo que ya tenía cuerpo” (14), highlighting the tension between shaping and safeguarding voices that are intimate, vulnerable and politically charged. The resulting text is a collective autobiography built from the lives of others rather than an autofictional self (which we tend to find more often in writing about challenging medical experiences, such as abortion or miscarriage). “[A]ny one life story is made up of multiple others, shaped by the many lives with which it intersects” (Lawlor 2024, 3): *Código Rosa* enacts this principle as narrative method and ethical stance. Its polyphony also recalls Pauline Harmange’s demand for “une multitude d’histoires pour nourrir notre vision du monde” (Harmange 2022, 32), as well as Paula Bonet’s insistence on creative collectivities and female genealogies in texts that register loss, embodiment and artistic agency. A similar claim shapes Annie Ernaux’s notion of an “écriture ethnologique, livrant les faits dans leur nudité” (Ernaux 2002, 37), a

method that binds the singular “je” to the broader social body and transforms personal experience into a collective analytic. Colombe Schneck, too, frames her narrative as an attempt to “relier [son] histoire à celles d’autres femmes” (Schneck 2015, 14-15), positioning individual testimony as a gesture of connection, transmission and shared vulnerability. A subtle shift occurs when *Código Rosa* is placed alongside other abortion-centred collections. The German volume *Glückwunsch! 15 Erzählungen über Abtreibungen*, to name just one of many possible examples, likewise gathers multiple voices, yet its narratives often take a more openly fictional or speculative form, including utopian and dystopian scenarios. Belfiori’s book remains anchored in lifeworlds shaped by the Socorro Rosa hotline, the timing of misoprostol doses and the fragile networks of care among women who accompany one another. Its polyphony grows from proximity rather than invention, from listening rather than world-building. The emotional texture of the book underscores this difference. Shame, fear, relief, determination and solidarity circulate not as abstract affects but as palpable, situated gestures: a woman describing her miscarriage-like expulsion as “una cosa más de la vida” (Belfiori 2015, 16); another repeating “perdón, te amo, gracias” (24) as a mantra to steady herself; the socorristas holding open a space where clandestinity meets care. Our paper argues that *Código Rosa* develops a form of relational life writing that turns clandestine experience into a multi-voiced archive, a literary counterpublic in the sense of Lauren Berlant (2008), foregrounding the affective economies of reproductive decision-making while modelling an ethics of listening, accompaniment and shared vulnerability.

Dr. Florian Lützelberger (florian.luetzelberger@uni-bamberg.de) is Assistant Professor of Romance Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Bamberg and, in 2025/26, a Beaufort Visiting Fellow at Lady Margaret Hall as well as a Visiting Scholar at the Sub-Faculty of Spanish at the University of Oxford. His research focuses on Medical and Health Humanities, Diversity Studies, Autofictional and Life Writing, Kinship and Parenthood Studies, literature and art in times of war and conflict, European poetry and contemporary French and Spanish literature. His current book project, *Alternative Realities of Motherhood and the Childbearing Body*, develops a diversity-critical narratology of abortion and pregnancy loss across linguistic traditions. In this context, he has published on relational life writing, feminist genealogies and the narrative and affective textures of bodily experience.

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Camilla MAFFINELLI (IULM University, Milano), *The City of the Abyss: Travel Writing and Social Reportage*

Panel 1.2

In his introduction to the miscellaneous volume dedicated to *Travel Writing, Form and Empire* (2009), Paul Smethurst suggests the importance of formal analysis in recognising the role of “representational practices” in constructing, reproducing and sometimes deconstructing “pattern of signification” in travel narratives. As critics such as Said (1978) have noted, the logic underlying this systematisation is very often based on the polar and exclusive opposition between observer/observed, narrator/narrated and traveller/travellee (Pratt 1992), which are the most frequent attestations of the “othering” (Spivak 1985). The ethical issues raised by the perpetuated “logic of difference” (Islam 1996, 5) implied in the travel metaphor (Fowler, Forsdick, Kostova 2013) are particularly unavoidable when the alterities are spatially delimited, as in the metropolitan context, and amplified in writings whose factual ambition implies further detachment. Through the analysis of selected examples of Victorian illustrated social reportage, the paper examines the strategies and rhetoric employed to represent the urban other in nineteenth-century London. The contribution will focus in particular on the potential offered by different media interaction in creating ethical spaces designed to subvert traditional narratives.

Camilla Maffinelli (camilla.maffinelli@gmail.com) is a PhD Student in Literature and Transmedia Studies at IULM University in Milan, with a research project on the rhetorics of realism in Victorian illustrated social reportages. Her field of interest include iconotextuality, photo-literature and Periodical Studies. One of her essays appeared in *Cosmo: Comparative Studies in Modernism* (25/Fall, 2024).

Marco MAGGI (Università della Svizzera Italiana), *Affective Mimesis in/and Captioned Landscapes*

Panel 9.1

Since Roman times, gardens and natural environments have been dotted with writing. This practice has reemerged in waves in Western cultures, particularly during the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the second half of the 20th century. With greater continuity, writing has always inhabited natural spaces in the East. The presence of these “captioned landscapes” raises particularly radical questions about the relationship between humans and non-humans. Writing, in fact, has often been taken as a stigma of human difference from other forms of nature. How, on the contrary, can writing inserted into natural environments become a site of interspecies negotiation? In the case of literary writing, questions arise regarding the mediality of the text, which resonate singularly with the questions posed by the current overcoming of what Richard Lanham called the “codex book business.” What can captioned landscapes teach us about an immersive and dynamic reception of literature? The paper will explore these issues, examining both captioned landscapes as sites of interspecies interaction and the possibility of re-mediating their specific ecologies within literary representations. In the latter case, literary texts go beyond mimesis as mere reproduction, manifesting the traits of affective mimesis, in which subjective resonances take on an important role. The corpus under examination will consist of some literary remediations of a garden with inscriptions, Armand Schulthess’s encyclopaedic garden in Auressio, in Italian-speaking Switzerland. Starting in the early 1950s, Schulthess scattered inscriptions around the land and trees surrounding his property, containing references to all

areas of human culture, from music to medicine, astrophysics to literature. Over time, his work has inspired a number of writers, notably Corinna S. Bille, Max Frisch and, more recently, Judith Schalansky. In this paper, I will analyse the ways in which these writers have remediated Schulthess's captioned landscape, with the aim of verifying whether and to what extent literary text can recreate the specific ecology of these sites through an exercise of affective rather than reproductive mimesis.

Marco Maggi (marco.maggi@usi.ch) is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Literary Theory and Co-Director of the Master's programme in Italian Language, Literature and Civilisation at the Università della Svizzera italiana, Lugano, Switzerland. He was visiting professor at the Scuola Normale Superiore (Pisa) and at the University of Palermo, visiting scholar at Stanford University and *chargé de cours* at the University of Geneva. He is a member of the scientific committee of the Swiss Association of General and Comparative Literature, of the PhD programme in Visual Culture at the University of Palermo, and of numerous journals and publishing series. His publications include the monographs *Walter Benjamin e Dante. Una costellazione nello spazio delle immagini* (2017); *Modernità visuale dei «Promessi Sposi». Romanzo e fantasmagoria da Manzoni a Bellocchio* (2019); *Forme intermedie. Percorsi di cultura visuale nell'opera di Guido Gozzano* (2025). He has edited texts, with a focus on the Baroque and early 20th century, and multi-author works and journal issues: *Sull'orlo del visibile. Letterature comparate e visualità* (2025); *Prometeo, mito e intermedialità* (2024); *Walter Benjamin e la cultura italiana* (2022); *Fototestualità* (2021); «Selbstdenken». *Atti della giornata di studi in ricordo di Lea Ritter Santini* (2020). He also edited new editions of classics of inter-artistic comparison by Rensselaer W. Lee and Mario Praz. He is currently engaged in a project on the Italian genealogies of inter-arts studies funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation ("20th Century Italian Studies of Literature and Arts"). Another recent project concerns intermedial ecocriticism; a multi-author work in two volumes entitled *Captioned Landscapes: Intermedial Combinations Beyond the Human*, edited by him, is due to be published in the United States.

Hajar MAHFOODH (University of Surrey), *Reading the Literary Text and Narrative beyond Colonialisms and Periodisation*

Panel 8.3

Syrian poet and theorist Ali Ahmed Esber (b. 1930), known as Adunīs, defines the Arab intellectual as a missionary who seeks alternative definitions of identity, language, and heritage by excavating what is missing, erased, and veiled within literary heritage and narrative. He repeatedly critiques the colonial shaping of the "intellectual" after the model of what he calls "Western knowledge and intellect," a drive that has generated both modernity and modernism in Arab thought. Edward Said pursues a parallel concern in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983), where his engagement with Derrida's deconstruction uncovers the invisible thoughts and visions concealed beneath a text's apparent transparency, and where his reading of Foucault exposes the hidden power structures veiled within everyday life. Drawing on these theoretical discussions, this paper examines the ethical role of the intellectual in reading and presenting literary narrative and heritage, asking: how can the intellect play an ethical role in producing knowledge through the reading and analysis of literary heritage and narrative in Arab culture? The paper mobilises Adunīs's theoretical arguments to decolonise literary discussion and to enact what Adunīs himself calls for across his interviews and writings — reading the text beyond the boundaries of periodisation and colonialism. It argues that both Said and Adunīs advocate alternative modes of reading that liberate the reader, the author, and the text alike from fixed cultural, historical, or political determinations. To answer this question, the paper offers a reading of Adunīs's *Mihyar the Damascene* (1961), which stages the intellectual's missionary journey as that of a wanderer

moving through history within slippery, in-between spaces beyond fixed temporalities and rational liminal spheres. Throughout this journey, Mihyar leaves traces in the form of fractured poems, emblematic of his intellectual engagement with Arab literary narrative and heritage. Through his Sufi wanderings, Mihyar comes to embody the burden borne by intellectuals and the literati as they recognise their ethical responsibility toward knowledge and literature. To liberate knowledge, Mihyar undergoes continual metamorphosis, assuming multiple personae and characters, yet the reader can still trace what he leaves behind. These traces, the paper argues, embody the theoretical positions of Said and Adunīs on the ethical role of the intellect within Arab culture.

Hajar Mahfoodh (hakadhem@uob.edu.bh) holds a PhD in Literature from the University of Surrey (UK), where she defended her thesis on homeland, exile, and resistance in modern Arab poetry. She is also an Assistant Professor at the University of Bahrain, where she teaches literature, culture, and theory. Hajar is interested in promoting Arab literature in general, specifically focusing on themes of exile, home, and memory; Sufism; avant-garde and modern literature, creative writing; postcolonial theory and culture. Her publications include exploring literature and the SDGs as part of ongoing changes in academic curricula and literature; her last presentation was in ICASF 2025 in Abu Dhabi on “Integrating SDGs into Literature Courses: Opportunities and Threats,” which explores pairing SDGs with literary themes, employing Shakespeare’s *Othello* as a case study. She has also published some of her experimental poetry and translated Arabic poetry into English, and her latest literary work is “Sufism: Romanticism Beyond Borders,” a book chapter to be published by Bloomsbury in the Spring of 2026. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7408-8015>

Pratit Kumar MALLICK (Independent Scholar), *Mnemonic Ecologies: Intermedial Memory Practices, Multispecies Relationality, and the Environmentalization of Literature in Contemporary Europe*

Panel 10.1

This paper examines how contemporary European literature and intermedial arts conceptualize and perform *ecological memory*—a framework that reconceives memory not as an exclusively human, narrative, or representational capacity but as a distributed property of multispecies, material, and media environments. Building on theoretical contributions from Astrida Neimanis, Thom van Dooren, Deborah Bird Rose, Andreas Malm, Anna Tsing, and Erich Hörl, the paper argues that ecological memory emerges at the intersection of posthumanist epistemologies, multispecies relationality, and the environmentalization of media ecologies. Within this expanded paradigm, memory is understood not as a retrospective archive but as an ongoing ecological process: sedimented in bodies, infrastructures, atmospheres, digital substrates, and nonhuman life-worlds.

Drawing on Hörl’s general ecology and Parikka’s media archaeology, the paper proposes that literature functions as an intermedial ecology of memory—one that activates temporal, material, and multispecies residues that exceed anthropocentric narratives. Ecological memory is therefore inseparable from medial forms: from the way texts incorporate scientific data, documentary traces, ecological histories, and nonhuman temporalities. This intermedial configuration situates literature within a wider ecological field in which memory circulates across species, technologies, and environments.

The paper analyses three European literary works that foreground ecological memory as a multispecies and intermedial phenomenon: Olga Tokarczuk’s *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, where animal death, forensic inscription, and astrological archives produce a layered ecological temporality; Daisy Hildyard’s *The Second Body*, which articulates memory as a planetary entanglement embedded in climate systems, agricultural

infrastructures, and microbial networks; and Italo Calvino's ecological essays, which frame memory as a dynamic interface between natural and artificial environments. These texts mobilize paratextual citation, documentary fragments, scientific discourse, and hybrid epistemologies to activate what can be theorised as *ecological mnemonic agency*—the capacity of texts to register, transmit, and transform the memory of human and nonhuman worlds.

To foreground intermediality, the paper engages with Ursula Biemann's video-essay *Deep Weather* and Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg's synthetic ecologies, which conceptualize memory through material sediments, energy infrastructures, and speculative future beings. Their intermedial operations demonstrate how ecological memory is mediated through technological apparatuses that store temporalities—oil, ice cores, sound recordings, genetic archives—rendering memory an ecological function of media themselves.

Ultimately, the paper argues that ecological memory offers a critical lens for understanding expanded ecologies in contemporary European art and literature. By positioning memory as a multispecies, infrastructural, and media-saturated process, intermedial works reveal how ecological relations endure, decay, and reconfigure themselves across temporal and material registers. Literature thus emerges not merely as a site of memory representation but as an active ecological agent participating in the collective remembering—and forgetting—of planetary life.

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Lucija MANDIĆ (ZRC SAZU Institute of Slovenian Literature and Literary Studies), ***Shared Figures, Separate Pantheons: Czech and Slovak National Commemorative Spaces***

Panel 6.1

National pantheons, understood here as prominent burial and commemorative sites, played an important role in the formation of Czech and Slovak national movements from the nineteenth century onwards. Prague contains several sites that function as Czech national pantheons, most notably the burial complex at Vyšehrad and the Pantheon of the National Museum. While these spaces primarily commemorate Czech national figures, the Pantheon of the National Museum also includes a small number of personalities connected to Slovak cultural history, such as Ján Kollár, Pavel Jozef Šafárik, and Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav. Their presence reflects the close intellectual and institutional ties between Czech and Slovak elites in the nineteenth century and the role of Prague as a significant cultural centre for Slovak writers and scholars.

By contrast, Slovak figures are largely absent from Vyšehrad, which developed as a Czech national pantheon. A relevant example is Ján Kollár, who died in Vienna and was reburied in 1904 at Olšany Cemetery in Prague, rather than at Vyšehrad or the Slovak National Cemetery in Martin. Although the cemetery in Martin acquired symbolic importance in the second half of the nineteenth century, it was only formally designated as a Slovak national cemetery in 1967, indicating the delayed institutionalisation of Slovak national commemorative spaces. Additional commemorative initiatives in Martin, such as the Alley of National Awakeners associated with the Slovak Matica, were established considerably later and are primarily dedicated to figures of the nineteenth-century national movement. This paper documents selected Czech and Slovak national pantheons, situating them within their historical and institutional contexts, with particular attention to the uneven development of Czech and Slovak national institutions.

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Hadrien MARCY (Independent Scholar), *The Representation of Memory in Philippe Lançon's Disturbance: Surviving Charlie Hebdo*

Panel 7.5

In *Disturbance: Surviving Charlie Hebdo*, Philippe Lançon explores the consequences of trauma through a reflection on memory. This paper argues that memory is not merely a theme or a narrative device but is portrayed as a quasi-autonomous presence, almost a character in its own right. Through the figure of the "former self" and the processes of identity splitting that run throughout the text, the memoir stages the coexistence of multiple versions of the self. The paper examines how this personification of memory enables Lançon to represent the rupture caused by the attack and the challenges of reconstructing identity in its aftermath.

Hadrien Marcy (hadrienmarcy@gmail.com) is an independent scholar and French language teacher based in France. He holds degrees in philosophy and French literature and is currently developing a research project on narrative medicine, trauma, and contemporary autobiographical writing. His work focuses particularly on Philippe Lançon's *Disturbance: Surviving Charlie Hebdo* and the relationship between memory, identity, and narrative reconstruction after traumatic events.

Luigi MARFÈ (Università di Padova), *Travel Writing, Post-tourism and the Ethics of Seeing*

Panel 2.2

The search for "unbeaten tracks" (Buzard 1993) outside tourist commodification has been for a long time a distinctive feature of travel writing. From this perspective, tourist imagination would lack an "ethics of sightseeing" (MacCannell 2011), reducing cultural encounters to exotic stereotypes and places to mere entertainment opportunities (Augé 1997). However, the desire for distinction is a typical tourist feature and imitative dynamics quickly transform even alternative travels into nothing more than sophisticated forms of exploitation. Beyond the opposition between "tourism" and "anti-tourism", recent studies therefore prefer the definition of "post-tourism" (Urry 2007) as a form of mobility that critically reflects on these antinomies. This paper aims to explore the presence of a "post-tourist" sensibility in some examples of contemporary travel writing. Travelogues such as the ones collected in *White Sands* (2016) by Geoff Dyer, to name but one, seek the experience of travel in liminal zones, where spurious forms of "cultural creativity" (Clifford 1997) can emerge even in utterly inauthentic contexts. Dyer's ethics of seeing can be measured in a gaze that explores the multiple and suspended temporalities of places, searching for new ways of holding

landscape and inscape together.

Luigi Marfè (luigi.marfe@unipd.it) is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Literary Theory at the University of Padua. His research interests include travel writing, visual culture, and translation studies. He is the author of *Oltre la 'fine dei viaggi'* (2009), *Introduzione alle teorie narrative* (2011), *'In English clothes': La novella italiana in Inghilterra* (2015), and *'Un altro modo di raccontare'. Poetiche e percorsi della fotoletteratura* (2021). He has translated several volumes into Italian (Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, 2015; Stevenson's *Songs of Travel*, 2019). He is on the editorial board of *Cosmo: Comparative Studies in Modernism*.

Juan Tomás MATARRANZ-ARAQUE (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), **Affective Communities and Ethical Spectatorship in D. H. Lawrence's *The Merry-Go-Round***

Panel 9.2

This paper examines the play *The Merry-Go-Round* as a dramatic exploration of affective instability and ethical spectatorship in the context of early twentieth-century modernity. D. H. Lawrence's theatrical works offer a significant site for reevaluating the relationship between embodiment, emotionality, and social critique. Through the lens of Cultural Studies and affect theory, this paper argues that *The Merry-Go-Round* stages a crisis of interpersonal relations in which emotional circulation replaces authentic connection, exposing the ethical tensions underlying modern social life. Written during a period of profound cultural and personal transformation, the play centres on a group of middle-class characters trapped within repetitive emotional and social patterns. Structured around gatherings, flirtations, conversations, and shifting alliances, the drama depicts individuals attempting to negotiate desire, intimacy, and selfhood within increasingly artificial social environments. The symbolic image of the merry-go-round functions both literally and metaphorically, suggesting endless emotional repetition, performative interaction, and the impossibility of stable fulfilment. Lawrence presents social relations as theatrical and cyclical, characterised by emotional exhaustion and mutual incomprehension. Rather than offering psychological resolution or moral clarity, the play places spectators in a position of ethical ambiguity. Audience members are compelled to witness the characters' emotional exposure while simultaneously recognising the superficiality and performativity of their interactions. In this sense, *The Merry-Go-Round* anticipates later debates concerning affective economies. The theatre space becomes not merely representational but ethically participatory, requiring spectators to confront their own complicity in systems of social performance and emotional consumption. The paper draws particularly on the work of Teresa Brennan, whose theorisation of transmission of affect illuminates the ways emotions move between bodies and shape collective structures, and Lauren Berlant's notion of "cruel optimism," which helps explain the characters' continued attachment to social forms that simultaneously constrain and disappoint them. In dialogue with these theorists, the paper suggests that Lawrence's drama constructs what may be termed an "affective ethics" of spectatorship, in which theatre becomes a space for negotiating the unstable boundaries between empathy, discomfort, alienation, and ethical responsibility. The analysis also situates the play within broader modernist concerns regarding fragmentation, mechanisation, and the erosion of authentic human connection. Lawrence's dramatic techniques — including fragmented dialogue, unstable tonal shifts, and embodied confrontation — disrupt conventional theatrical realism and foreground affective intensity over narrative coherence. Consequently, *The Merry-Go-Round* emerges not as a marginal theatrical experiment but as a significant intervention into modernist debates concerning the ethical and emotional dimensions of representation. Ultimately, this paper proposes that Lawrence's play offers a strikingly contemporary reflection on the performative nature of social life and the ethical implications of

spectatorship, making it especially relevant to current interdisciplinary discussions of affect, ethics, and cultural practice.

Juan Tomás Matarranz Araque (juantmat@ucm.es) is an Assistant Professor at the Complutense University of Madrid. He obtained his PhD with a dissertation on D. H. Lawrence's drama and completed a research stay at Goethe University, Germany. He has taught for several years at Universidad Europea, and the Complutense University of Madrid. His research interests include literature in English from the perspective of cognitive poetics, and translation studies. He also belongs to the MOVE Research Group in Salamanca University, and Research Group INTRAL at the Complutense.

Francesca MEDAGLIA (Sapienza University of Rome), *Ethics and Affect in Complex Television Storytelling: Paradises, Demons, and Miracles*

Panel 2.5

Contemporary television offers a privileged space for exploring the relationship between ethics and affect, transforming moral dilemmas into emotionally engaging experiences that actively involve viewers. Three emblematic series—*The Good Place* (2016–2020), *Lucifer* (2016–2021), and *Midnight Mass* (2021)—demonstrate how ethics is represented not as an abstract discourse, but as an embodied experience shaped by relationships, emotions, and collective dynamics. The *Good Place* incorporates moral philosophy into the sitcom format, translating concepts such as Kantian ethics and contractualism into accessible narrative situations. The series emphasizes that moral development is not an individual achievement but emerges through interpersonal connections, where friendship, love, and solidarity become essential tools for ethical growth. *Lucifer* reinterprets the mythological figure of the Devil through an ironic and humanized perspective. The protagonist's path toward redemption is not driven by abstract reasoning, but by emotional encounters and affective bonds that challenge traditional binaries between good and evil, highlighting the possibility of transformation through vulnerability and care. *Midnight Mass* explores the intersections between faith, community, and moral responsibility. Through the portrayal of a small religious community confronted with extraordinary and disturbing events, the series reveals how collective emotions can foster solidarity but also generate fanaticism, exposing the ambivalent nature of the human desire for hope and transcendence. Together, these three series offer different strategies for representing ethics: the popularization of philosophy in *The Good Place*, the mythological reworking of morality in *Lucifer*, and the critical reflection on faith and community in *Midnight Mass*. By engaging viewers emotionally, these narratives transform aesthetic experience into a form of ethical reflection. This paper argues that contemporary complex television is not merely a form of entertainment, but a cultural medium capable of creating imagined communities and fostering embodied, shared forms of moral reflection.

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Eva-Tabea MEINEKE (Cologne), *Langues (grand-) maternelles – historiographie familiale translinguale dans Cassandra à Mogadiscio d'Igiaba Scego (2023)*

Panel 6.2

Dans son roman autofictionnel "Cassandra a Mogadiscio", publié en 2023, Scego raconte l'histoire d'une famille d'origine somalienne plurilingue dans la diaspora, sur fond de l'histoire coloniale et guerrière qui a précédé cette diaspora. Il s'agit dans ce cas d'histoire de vie, d'un plurilinguisme dû à la langue d'origine somalienne de Scego (la langue de sa mère), purement orale, et son naissance et éducation en Italie. Le roman traite la question de l'identité et de la compréhension, entre Mogadiscio, Rome et le Canada où se trouve la nièce de Scego, Soraya, à qui elle s'adresse avec le roman sous forme de lettre, ce qui entraîne l'intégration d'une troisième génération et d'autres langues encore. Il s'agit également de la recherche des racines et du lieu d'appartenance, du rôle des liens familiaux et de la question des langues. Scego s'intéresse particulièrement aux liens entre les femmes de la famille et à la tentative de ne pas aborder les traumatismes de l'histoire dans une attitude de victime, mais avec le désir d'envisager un avenir pacifique et plein d'espoir. La conférence vise à mettre en évidence comment la poétique multilingue de l'autrice plurilingue Scego, associée à une compréhension empathique, favorise la "postmonolingual condition" d'après Yildiz (2012) et le travail de mémoire sur l'histoire postcoloniale en la rendant ainsi accessible de manière durable à nos sociétés plurielles.

Eva-Tabea Meineke (emeineke@uni-koeln.de) est professeure suppléante de littérature romane (spécialisée en italien) et de littérature comparée à l'Université de Cologne. Après avoir étudié la philologie anglaise, romane et allemande à l'université IULM (Milan) et à l'University College London (UCL), elle a obtenu son doctorat en littérature comparée à l'université IULM et à l'université Paris 8 dans le cadre d'une cotutelle de thèse. Sa thèse porte sur la représentation de la ville dans la littérature européenne du début du XIXe. En 2017, elle a obtenu son habilitation à l'université de Mannheim avec une thèse sur le surréalisme en Italie et en France et a reçu la *venia legendi* pour la philologie romane et la littérature comparée. Depuis 2019, elle a été professeure suppléante dans les universités de Bochum, Iéna, Francfort, Augsburg et Mannheim. Ses recherches portent principalement sur la littérature des XIXe-XXIe siècles, en particulier le modernisme/surréalisme, l'intermédialité (littérature et cinéma, musique et arts plastiques), l'interculturalité et la transculturalité, l'Europe dans le contexte mondial, les migrations, la littérature et le pluri-/multilinguisme, la littérature féminine, la littérature et l'histoire, le romantisme/réalisme et la littérature urbaine.

Naïma MENNOR (Université Hassan II de Casablanca), *Éthique et affect devant l'indicible: Aux origines de la haine génocidaire des Tutsis au Rwanda*

Panel 10.4

Comment relater l'indicible sans trahir la mémoire ni en banaliser la violence ? Cette contribution se propose de réfléchir sur les rapports entre éthique et affect dans la représentation du génocide des Tutsis au Rwanda à travers deux formes génériques distinctes : le roman *Notre-Dame du Nil* de Scholastique Mukasonga (2012) et *Les Chants du génocide* de Christian Pariot (2024). Si l'une relève de la fiction littéraire et l'autre de l'expression musicale, ces œuvres convergent dans leur manière de révéler les mécanismes de la fabrication de la haine qui a conduit au génocide, tout en conservant une mémoire sensible de cette tragédie de l'histoire. Cette étude s'inscrit dans l'axe: éthique de la représentation / témoignage, de la mémoire et de la postmémoire. Elle porte sur les enjeux éthiques de la représentation des violences dans les groupes de sociétés ethniques, et

invite à repenser le texte comme lieu où évoluent les affects et deviennent un véritable moteur de tueries et le monde comme horizon de démystification du réel. Elle interroge enfin les parentés entre la genèse de la haine, la genèse de l'œuvre et l'acte de création comme voie éthique possible, non pas de réparer le mal, mais de préserver la mémoire.

Naïma Mennor (mennornaima@gmail.com) est professeure-chercheuse à l'Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art et de Design (Université Hassan II de Casablanca). Membre du laboratoire LALICO (Langues, Arts, Littérature et Communication), elle est active dans le groupe « Arts et Lettres ». Auteure d'une thèse de doctorat sur Esthétiques du désert dans la littérature et la photographie soutenue à la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines Dhar-El-Mehraz de Fès en 2014. Ses domaines recherches portent principalement sur les rapports entre la Littérature et les Arts Visuels. Elle a publié plusieurs articles et a participé à plusieurs colloques au Maroc et à l'étranger entre autres:

- « Raconter Raconter l'innommable blessure à travers le corps dans deux œuvres Notre-Dame du Nil (Scholastique Mukasonga) et Les Hommes Debout (Bruce Clark) in *Interculturel, Revue interdisciplinaire de l'Alliance française*, Association culturelle franco-Italienne, Lecce n. 31, 2025, Directeur de publication Andrea Cali, Af, 2025.
- « La Figuration de la Mort dans le dispositif photo-littéraire de Bruges-la-morte de Georges Rodenbach » in *La Belgique, Un Continent Francophone à Découvrir*, collectif sous la direction de Marc Quaghebeur et Abdelouahad Mabrou, Laboratoire d'Etudes et de Recherches sur l'Interculturel (LERIC), El Jadida, 2020.
- « La migration inter-dite dans le photo-texte, deux regards sur la question : Leïla Alaoui et Youssef Amine Elalamy », colloque international sur l'Immigration, Regards Croisés à Sousse en Tunisie, décembre 2018.

Hatice Esra MESCIOĞLU (Başkent University; with Şükran Ilkay AKARÇAY), **Literary Afterlives of the Basque Conflict in Aixa de la Cruz's *La Linea del Frente* (2017) and Gabriela Ybarra's *El Comensal* (2015)**

Panel 8.4

Gabriela Ybarra's *El Comensal* (2015), translated into English as *The Dinner Guest* (2018), and Aixa de la Cruz's *La Linea del Frente* (2017) offer narrative accounts of the Basque conflict that engage a still-fresh wound with a pronounced sense of ethical responsibility, opening alternative ways of engaging with the past. Ybarra's autobiographical narrative revolves around two family tragedies: her grandfather's kidnapping and assassination by ETA in the late 1970s and her mother's death in 2010. In the aftermath of her mother's illness and death, Ybarra delves into her family history and bears witness to the violent decades in the Basque Country known as the Years of Lead (los años de plomo). The family's experience of this period is interwoven with archival materials and newspaper accounts of the kidnappers' trial. Through her narrative, Ybarra forges an intergenerational connection with the grandfather she never met, mourns her mother's death, and, crucially, renders the perpetrators of her grandfather's assassination as embodied individuals rather than abstract or faceless figures.

Aixa de la Cruz's *La Linea del Frente* (2017) centres on Sofia, who returns to the Basque Country after years of distance from the conflict that shaped her childhood and adolescence. While writing her doctoral dissertation on an author who became an ETA militant and later committed suicide in exile, Sofia lives near the prison where her high school boyfriend is incarcerated for ETA militancy. Her search for identity and belonging, along with her effort to create a sense of heroism from a prolonged conflict that has hollowed out the town where she grew up, forms the core of the narrative. By addressing the fragile boundary between heroism and terrorism, de la Cruz traces Sofia's growing disillusionment with the distorted

idealisation of militant nationalism and with the popular support for ETA, which gradually erodes over time.

These two narrative accounts of violence in the Basque Country are significant not only for the space they create to negotiate difficult pasts, but also for the ethical interventions they enact. As Ybarra's work humanizes both the spectral victim and the figures of violence traditionally rendered monstrous, de la Cruz shifts the focus to ETA supporters and silent bystanders whose complicity aggravates the victim's suffering through social isolation. Both authors engage the past without positioning themselves outside the narratives they construct, nor do they seek absolution through authorial authority. Through metafictional strategies, they embed themselves in their narratives while directly engaging the histories they confront.

Through an examination of these two recent novels, this paper explores how Ybarra and de la Cruz move beyond binary us-versus-them frameworks to grapple with the complexity of the Basque conflict. It analyses, on the one hand, representations of lethargy and indifference and, on the other hand, expressions of anger and pain. This study argues that these works articulate an ethical stance through affective atmospheres that recall multiple forms of violence and foreground Basque society's involvement in the events, particularly through silence and tacit approval.

Hatice Esra Mescioğlu (hmescioglu@gmail.com) holds a PhD in English Literature from METU. Her doctoral dissertation explores the representation of the armed conflict in contemporary Northern Irish and Basque literature. She completed her B.A. at Hacettepe University in the English Language and Literature Department. She received M.A. degrees in Cultural Studies and Spanish Literature from Istanbul Bilgi University and Ankara University. Her research interests are memory studies, representation of armed conflicts in literature, and contemporary literature.

Saffy MIRGHANI (University College London), *Divided Consciousness and the Dialogical Ethics of Literary Form: Dostoevsky and Twentieth-Century African American Writing*

Panel 7.7

This paper develops a comparative theory of divided consciousness as a formal and ethical problem in Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel and twentieth-century African American literature. Focusing on a genealogy extending from Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin to Ishmael Reed, Albert Murray, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker, it argues that Dostoevsky's significance within this literary tradition lies in his formalisation of inner division into narrative structure, rendering lived psychic fracture legible as literary form. The paper begins by reading W. E. B. Du Bois's concept of double-consciousness not simply as a sociological diagnosis, but as an epistemological condition demanding formal expression. Du Bois's account of subjectivity, constituted through the internalised gaze of another, illuminates the Dostoevskian self, whose inward division is realised formally through polyphony. Building on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of polyphony, it argues that Dostoevsky transforms divided consciousness into the organising principle of narrative itself, producing a dialogical ethics of form. As a structure of feeling, divided consciousness enables literature to register affective pressures that exceed cognitive or ideological resolution, with ethical life emerging through sustained engagement with contradictory voices rather than their reconciliation. This conception of form proved especially resonant for African American writers seeking narrative structures capable of representing racialised divided consciousness without reducing it to ideological certainty. The paper demonstrates how Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin recognised in Dostoevsky a method for rendering inner division without collapsing it into protest, stereotype, or ideological closure. Their work approaches subjectivity as internally

plural, ethically burdened, and resistant to monologic explanation. Later writers extend this dialogic inheritance through choral, epistolary, and improvisational forms that transform suffering into collective ethical vision. Rather than positing a one-directional influence, this paper proposes a cross-cultural genealogy of dialogical subjectivity grounded in shared formal responses to division, misrecognition, and moral complexity. Divided consciousness, it concludes, becomes not a pathology to be resolved but a generative condition through which literature reimagines ethical life across racial and historical contexts.

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Martina MISIA (University of Bergamo), *The Ethic of the Epic: Poetic Form and the Making of Communities*

Panel 4.8

In recent decades, the verse novel has re-emerged as one of the most flexible and challenging forms of contemporary poetic narrative. Far from reviving nineteenth-century models, it questions their narrative and ideological premises in response to a broader crisis of representation which, beginning in the late nineteenth century, extends through modernism to postmodern fiction, gradually eroding the foundations of the novel and of the identity it presupposed. The loss of confidence in linear narration as a means of conveying a coherent image of reality—and, with it, the fragmentation of forms of belonging and shared experience—has led long-form poetry to redefine its relationship with the world, making verse a space of tension between fragmentation and polyphony, where poetic form measures—always partially—the possibility of restoring a common experience. From this perspective, the renewed interest in the epic form does not signal a return to tradition, but rather the emergence of a necessity: to rethink the founding function of the "epos"—the construction of shared meaning and a collective horizon—in a time of identity crisis. This paper compares two works that, while belonging to different linguistic and cultural contexts and adopting markedly different expressive registers, exemplify complementary attempts to re-found an ethical and communal dimension through poetic form: "Las elegidas" (2015) by the Mexican novelist Jorge Volpi and "Annette, ein Heldinnenepos" (2020) by the German writer Anne Weber. Through opposite formal strategies—opacity and dissonance in Volpi's case, clarity and linearity in Weber's—both works reimagine the function of the epic as a space of responsibility and relation. In "Las elegidas", poetic fragmentation and the polyphony of voices build a community of witnesses that questions the very meaning of justice; in "Annette", the epic narration of individual courage becomes a medium of collective memory and a model of civic virtue. If in Volpi's text the community appears fractured and ethical representation remains in crisis, in Weber's it is restored through the figure of a heroine who acts on behalf of others. The comparison between "Las elegidas" and "Annette, ein Heldinnenepos" allows us to outline two complementary modalities of what might be called a contemporary "ethic of the epic." In Volpi's work, the epic takes on a negative and problematic form: fragment, repetition, and polyphony construct a wounded communal horizon in which poetic language offers no redemption but compels an act of awareness and responsibility before the suffering of others. In Weber's, by contrast, the "epos" recovers its

founding function, shaping a narrative of virtue that becomes collective memory and an act of ethical transmission. In both cases, the long poetic form emerges as a site of mediation between individual and collective, pathos and reflection, representation and testimony: not a mere survival of an ancient genre, but a mode through which literature questions the very possibility of “making community” in the present.

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Anna MOCHAR (University of Vienna), *Materialised Ethics and Morality: ‘The Woman in White’ in 19th-Century Literature*

Panel 6.9

The proposed paper explores how nineteenth-century culture figured morality through the spectral or staged “woman in white,” arguing that her white dress operates as a literary surface in more ways than one: it suggests innocence, evokes fear, and actualises women’s bodies as a site of layered judgement. Rather than treating the figure as a static motif, the paper will trace its scripts and functions to organise literary treatments of female vulnerability and agency, presenting ethics as an affective experience against the backdrop of the domestic and legal mechanisms constraining women’s lives. Contextualising the figure with Herman Melville’s meditations on “The Whiteness of the Whale,” the project reads white dress as culturally overdetermined: a liminal sign of purity, power, and joy that can all-too-easily tip into horror. That instability becomes central to how readers and characters form ethical judgments of and through literary women in white. With this in mind, the paper will focus on two canonical treatments of the figure in British and German literature, presenting them alongside the wider contextualisation of the figure in 19th-century literary culture and tracing the tradition against which reworkings and subversions can be assessed.

Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White* (1860) anchors the study through its engagement with and subversion of the figure. Anne Catherick’s first and sudden appearance on Hampstead Heath is staged like that of a ghost yet resists the gothic codes it suggests. Her white dress, which is later also assumed by her half-sister and fellow protagonist Laura Fairlie, appears as a signal of the spectral before redirecting attention to the realist horrors of sensation fiction. Forced institutionalisation, coerced marriage, and the control over women are highlighted and ethically problematised by the titular Wom[e]n in White. A comparison with Theodor Fontane’s *Effi Briest* (1895) will be used to further highlight these dynamics, contrasting Anne Catherick’s ultimately mundane materiality with a different kind of “apparition”. In Fontane’s novel, the hereditary White Lady is invisible and immaterial, remediated as a painting, guidebook story and oral tale. Innstetten’s staged hauntings exploit Effi’s fear to secure obedience, while the house’s “Chinese” spectre opens a postcolonial lens on authority. Here, the figure’s typical genealogical role as the house’s ancestress ties domestic control and morality to lineage, property, and reputation. Methodologically, the paper combines narratological script theory (David Herman), the female Gothic, hauntology, and postcolonial critique. This synthesis allows a comparative reading of English and German corpora while keeping the focus on how the figure is enacted within each text. How does it become a tool for resistance or ethical judgement through its

white dress and performances of virtue and/or threat? By tracing this question, the paper shows how nineteenth-century culture materialises morality in ways that are deeply felt and can be punitive. In doing so, the “woman in white” emerges not as a fixed motif but as a dynamic figure through which domestic ethics are staged, challenged, and sometimes weaponised.

Anna Mochar (anna.mochar@univie.ac.at) is a PhD researcher in the department of Comparative Literature at the University of Vienna, following her studies in History, Russian and Comparative Literature at the University of Cambridge, St. Petersburg State University and the University of Vienna. Her dissertation research focuses on the figure of the woman in white in 19th-century literature and culture, synthesising her research interests in social history, fashion studies, and material culture with her previous work on women’s writing in the 18th and 19th centuries. Her MA thesis research on dress in the novels of Jane Austen and Frances Burney has been published in a peer reviewed article for *Wiener Digitale Revue* and was presented at the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF) Congress 2025. Other areas of interest include women’s apocalyptic and dystopian writing as well as polar writing and narratives.

Greeshma MOHAN (Azim Premji University), *Inscrutable Characters: The Strange Compulsions of Emma Cline’s The Guest and Raven Leilani’s Luster*

Panel 7.4

How do readers relate to/empathise with “opaque” fictional characters? What does the lack of a rich interior life do to readerly investment and to the plot of a fictional text? My paper tracks inscrutable female characters in two contemporary novels, Emma Cline’s *The Guest* (2023) and Raven Leilani’s *Luster* (2020) to argue that through their characteristic “flatness”, intransigence the female protagonists Alex and Edie stage an ethical conundrum to the reader who can, in a limited manner, access/comprehend their motivations. The ethical conundrum for the reader, I argue, lies in not being able to fully understand these characters who resist closure, mobility, and find themselves “stuck” by precarious material, economic conditions. In both novels, the female characters are compelled by financial circumstances to engage in transactional sexual relationships to survive. In Leilani’s *Luster*, Edie is fired from a low paying editorial assistant position and moves in with a white older married colleague Eric, before working as a delivery gig worker to be able to afford her shared flat. *Luster* stages an open marriage, and Edie who is African American assumes a caregiver position with Eric’s adopted African American daughter Akila. The novel subverts the normative cheating plot, and Edie too does not dwell on the ethics of marital fidelity: the open marriage is presented as a pragmatic arrangement while Edie searches for a job. In a similar way, in *The Guest* Cline crafts Alex as being bound/determined by the survival instinct: Alex is a sex worker who has been abandoned by Simon a wealthy fifty-year-old art dealer who has invited her his summer house in the Hamptons. Alex is essentially homeless (and in debt) and believes that Simon will take back. The pressure of time of having to survive each day is keenly felt by Alex, which she manages by looking “outward” than revealing an epiphanic backstory of how she came to be a sex worker. In *Failures of Feeling*, Wendy Ann Lee’s question, “how does the insensible come to incite narratives of longing, sadness, and desire, as if only a figure of immobility could prompt an investigation of inner life” illuminates how characters who refuse self-reflection and narrative closure force readers to contend with their need for tidy endings where all is revealed, reconciled. By sidestepping questions of how characters come to be, where they will go next the reader is invited/compelled to attune to, if not comprehend, social others, since such attunement is the foundation of sociability.

Greeshma Mohan (greeshma.mohan@gmail.com) has a MA, MPhil and PhD from the Centre of English Studies (CES), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She is interested in the intersections between caste and literary genre, aesthetics and affect. She currently works as Assistant Professor of English, Azim Premji University, Bhopal.

Francesca MONTANARO (Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour / Università di Torino), *Écrire entre deux horizons d'attente : dialogisme et responsabilité de l'acte d'écriture chez Laura Alcoba*

Panel 5.2

Cette communication se propose d'interroger la dimension relationnelle de l'acte d'écriture à partir du cas de Laura Alcoba, écrivaine d'origine argentine ayant adopté le français comme langue de création littéraire. Loin de considérer l'œuvre comme l'expression d'une conscience individuelle isolée, il s'agira d'examiner comment celle-ci se construit au sein d'un espace dialogique où l'altérité ne constitue pas un élément extérieur intervenant après coup, mais une condition inhérente à l'acte créateur lui-même.

Les travaux d'Alain Ausoni, Véronique Porra et Sara De Balsi ont déjà montré que les écrivains plurilingues sont confrontés à des dynamiques de réception spécifiques, notamment à travers les phénomènes de « demande d'autobiographie » et d'« assignation identitaire ». Le parcours de Laura Alcoba permet toutefois de prolonger cette réflexion en interrogeant non seulement les effets de la réception sur les stratégies discursives adoptées, mais plus largement la manière dont la confrontation à des horizons d'attente hétérogènes rend particulièrement visible la dimension dialogique de l'écriture. Pour aborder cette problématique, il s'agira d'éclairer l'expérience littéraire d'Alcoba à travers le prisme des réflexions de Mikhaïl Bakhtine relatives à l'ontologie relationnelle, au dialogisme du discours romanesque et à la notion de responsabilité qui, loin de désigner une obligation morale extérieure imposée à l'être humain, constitue la condition ontologique fondamentale du sujet, toujours situé dans une relation de réponse à l'autre. L'acte créateur apparaît ainsi comme une prise de position singulière qui contribue à déterminer la forme et la signification de l'œuvre. Cette perspective sera développée à partir des deux premiers romans de Laura Alcoba, *Manèges*. Petite histoire argentine (2007) et *Jardin Blanc* (2009). Le premier, consacré à l'expérience enfantine de la clandestinité sous la dictature argentine, constitue un terrain privilégié pour observer la manière dont une œuvre littéraire se construit entre plusieurs espaces culturels. L'analyse des éléments paratextuels et narratifs montrera comment le roman répond simultanément à plusieurs destinataires : un lecteur français auquel il rend accessible un imaginaire culturel qui ne lui est pas nécessairement familier, mais également un interlocuteur argentin lié à la mémoire collective et familiale de l'événement raconté. La publication de la traduction espagnole du roman, intitulée *La casa de los conejos* (2008), introduit ensuite une nouvelle relation dialogique en confrontant l'autrice à la réception de son œuvre dans son pays d'origine. L'analyse explorera l'hypothèse selon laquelle cette double réception a pu contribuer aux variations stylistiques et discursives observables dans *Jardin Blanc* (2009), deuxième roman de Laura Alcoba, caractérisé par une mise à distance délibérée du matériau autobiographique qui constituait la matière première de son roman inaugural. Cette contribution cherchera ainsi à montrer que la littérature plurilingue constitue moins un objet d'exception qu'un observatoire privilégié de toute création littéraire. En donnant à voir les tensions transculturelles qui la traversent, elle met en évidence le caractère fondamentalement dialogique de tout acte d'écriture, qui se constitue dans un mouvement incessant de réponse à l'altérité.

Francesca Montanaro (francesca.montanaro@unito.it) est doctorante en Littérature comparée dans le cadre des Actions Marie Skłodowska-Curie (MSCA), en cotutelle entre l'Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour et l'Université de Turin. Son projet de recherche

porte sur le plurilinguisme littéraire d'écrivain·e·s contemporain·e·s d'origine argentine ayant adopté le français comme langue d'écriture.

Àlex MORENO MULET (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya – UOC), **Confronting Disaffection: Rancière's and Jameson's Theoretical Resistances Through the Literary Form**

Panel 6.4

This paper establishes a dialogue between the thought of Jacques Rancière and Fredric Jameson on modern and contemporary narrative to demonstrate that, in the arguments of both authors, there is a shared hypothesis that often goes unnoticed: according to it, the formal proposals of several novels from the turn of the century should be understood as resistances against a whole set of disaffections (such as nostalgia, apathy, or the feeling of individual and collective defeat) that lead to a detachment from history. First, this presentation will outline one of Jacques Rancière's theses developed in *Politics of Literature* (2007), where he states that modern literature truly begins in 19th-century Europe. Rancière asserts this because he detects, focusing on French realism, a categorical break with the aesthetic principles established by Aristotelian poetics, a break that is still present today in several narratives from all over the world. What this modern literature does, according to the French philosopher, is to deploy "new regimes of appropriateness between the significance of words and the visibility of things". Thus, from Rancière's theory, we can infer that, rather than their content, it is the form of the texts that determines what literary works make visible. The reading he makes of W. G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn* (1995) in *The Edges of Fiction* (2017) is paradigmatic: where we seemingly read the endless history of human destructions, recounted by a narrator who has gone to a remote part of the world and yet repeatedly encounters these destructions, what the novel exposes through its form, says Rancière, is a way of approaching history through a type of knowledge that leaves destruction behind, as it links facts without subordinating them. Second, having explained this, Rancière's thought will be related to Jameson's theories on the contemporary historical novel proposed in two versions of a same text (2007, 2013), in which he debates with Perry Anderson's ideas on the same subject, presented in "From Progress to Catastrophe" and in a postscript written a decade later (2011, 2022). In Jameson's argument, behind a series of experiences expressed in several contemporary novels that thematize political resignation and the waning of historical consciousness (e.g., through the alienation caused by new technologies or through the social desire to forget collective traumas such as the Nazi extermination or the Yugoslav Wars), there are literary forms that contradict this negative diagnosis. These forms, by subverting the principles of the classical historical novel, propose alternatives to the apparently inevitable fall into catastrophe. In conclusion, through the merging of Rancière's and Jameson's theories, this paper proposes a formalist reading that may contradict the pessimistic interpretations that can be made of several novels of the turn of the century (e.g. *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* (1997), by Dubravka Ugrešić, *War and War* (1999) by László Krasznahorkai, or (2008), by Mathias Énard, among others), which thematize the aforementioned wane of historical consciousness and individual and collective disaffections.

Àlex Moreno Mulet (amorenomulet@uoc.edu) is a predoctoral fellow at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. His thesis focuses on how several European novels of the turn of the 21st century understand history through literary forms that differ from the historiographic discourse and from fictions built around the principles of Aristotelian poetics. His articles have been published in *Primerjalna Književnost* (Comparative Literature), *Tropelías: Revista de Teoría de la Literatura y Literatura Comparada* and *Compàs d'amalgama*. He is a member of the project "Narratives At the Margins of Europe" (UOC, MICIU/AEI), and he has

been a visiting researcher at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, as well as a Theory of Literature part-time instructor at the Universitat de Barcelona. He has worked as an editor in Comanegra, a Catalan publishing house, and he is now coordinating the publication and translation of several contemporary European authors into Catalan, such as Andrzej Stasiuk and Kapka Kassabova.

Judith MÜLLER (Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg / Goethe-University Frankfurt), *The 'Untranslatability' of Tomer Gardi's German, or: How to break a language?*

Panel 7.2

In an interview published in 2020 in the volume *Literarische (Mehr)Sprachreflexionen*, writer Tomer Gardi and literary scholar Sandra Vlasta discuss Gardi's approach to language. Gardi became known to a wider German-reading audience with his novel *Broken German*, published by Droschl in 2017. In the interview, Gardi emphasizes, "Meiner Meinung nach ist die Einsprachigkeit eine Fiktion." Gardi lives between Hebrew, his mother tongue, his Broken German, in which he gives interviews and writes some of his literary works, and English, the language he uses a lot in everyday life with friends and his partner, especially when living in post-migrant Berlin. He can separate the languages and, in the writing process, is alone with the language in which the text is to be written – even if that language is German. In the interview, Gardi explains that he thinks in German when he writes German and that Hebrew does not interfere with this. However, there are times when his German falters, and then he would consult aids such as dictionaries. While Gardi's narrative voice can switch between languages, translating his two literary worlds into each other is hardly possible. He says: "Denn meiner hebräischer Prosa übersetzbar ist, und meiner Prosa auf Deutsch, kaum. Also, der Sprache der Clan verweist leicht, und die Sprache der Bewegung bleibt in ihrem Raum." Thus, when Gardi writes in Hebrew, the language of the clan, as he puts it, this language is not broken and therefore easy to translate—Hebrew can simply travel to a German-speaking, French-speaking, or English-speaking literary space, for example. His Broken German, however, presents translators with an almost insurmountable task—although there have been attempts to do so—so that the very language that embodies migration for Gardi cannot travel. Nevertheless, attempts have been made to translate Gardi's Broken German. In my paper, I will present these translations and trace the brokenness translators added to the text. I am in particular interested in translations into Hebrew.

Judith Müller (jud.mueller@em.uni-frankfurt.de) is a research associate at the Goethe-University in Frankfurt am Main and the coordinator of the Buber-Rosenzweig-Institute. She is currently finalising a book project on European-Hebrew literature before and after the First World War (Taylor and Francis, 2026). Other research projects deal with the reception of Hebrew literature among Jews in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s and questions of multilingualism in Jewish literature. Judith Müller completed her doctorate at the University of Basel and Ben Gurion University of the Negev. From 2018 to 2022, she worked as research and teaching associate for Jewish literature at the Centre for Jewish Studies in Basel. In 2024 she was Willy-Bretschger-Fellow at the ZB Lab in Zurich. She published various research articles in journals and collected volumes on Hebrew literature and Weltliteratur, the authors David Vogel and Gershon Shofman as well as the representation of Paris in Israeli literature.

Zahra MAMMEDOVA (University of Brno/ Independent Filmmaker), *Embodied Affects and Ethical Frames: Gendered Voices and Curation of Azerbaijani Art*

Panel 2.3

My contribution addresses post-colonial performative, happening-based, and media culture practices in the Azerbaijani art scene, focusing on corporeality – building on the roundtable’s investigation into the ‘voice’. Drawing on case studies from performance, moving image, and hybrid media practices, I place the focus on the corporeal and sensory foundations of that voice. My contribution will examine how Azerbaijani media and performance practices articulate gendered subjectivities through affect rather than representation, while simultaneously treating the curatorial frame as a necessary site of institutional critique to ensure these voices are received ethically.

Zahra Mammadova (zahra.mammedova@gmail.com) is a Brno-based curator currently pursuing an MA in Visual Cultures at Masaryk University. Formerly a curator at YARAT Contemporary Art Space, she focused on discovering emerging artists for the ARTIM Experimental Platform. Her practice intersects contemporary art, eco-cultural memory, and media, with a specific interest in the political dimensions of kitsch and pop culture. Zahra is dedicated to amplifying under-represented voices and exploring the affective power of art as a site for social transformation and global dialogue.

Fidana MUSAYEVA (Moscow State University, Baku/ Baku Slavic University), ***The Theme of ‘Travel to Iran’ in the First Decades of the 20th Century***

Panel 5.3

In the first decades of the 20th century, several Caucasian writers who traveled to Iran — including Ümmülbanu (*Caucasian Days*), G. Said (*Ali and Nino*), and the Georgian author M. Javakhishvili (*Lembeli*) — documented Iranian life and social structures while conveying their own perspectives. These texts engage not only with historical and cultural realities but also with the ethical and affective dimensions of cross-cultural encounter, reflecting how literature shapes moral understanding and emotional response.

The relevance of the “Travel to Iran” theme lies in its exploration of proximity and difference: Iran, as a neighboring but culturally distinct region, provided writers with a space to reflect on identity, social norms, and moral attitudes. A notable aspect is their portrayal of religious diversity; Iran is often depicted as less tolerant than Baku, prompting reflection on justice, empathy, and ethical observation. These narratives demonstrate literature’s capacity to mediate affective and ethical engagement with the Other.

In this context research question is:

In what ways do emotional perception and ethical positioning shape the representation of Iran in Caucasian travel writing of the early 20th century, particularly regarding cultural difference, religious identity, and the portrayal of the “Other,” and how does the author’s responsibility—both moral and narrative—inform these representations within the ethics of authorship?

N

Rachel Hosein NISBET (University of Leeds), *Gothic Feelings: Frankenstein, Reworked to Speculate on Rights of Nature*

Panel 1.5

Contributing to this conference inquiry into the role of feelings and ethics in texts and world, my paper attends to the work of theatre makers in adapting *Frankenstein*. Adopting a transhistorical approach, it proposes that some recent stage productions of Mary Shelley's novel use non-verbal rhetoric in prompting audiences to consider if rights of nature are adequately protected.

Mary Shelley's gothic novel was first popularised due to its rapid adaptation for English and then French theatre audiences, in the 1820s. These were people attending illegitimate theatre venues, lacking a royal warrant to produce spoken dramas, which often staged melodramatic shows, whose combined entertainments of song, dance, and spectacular stage effects drew a heterogeneous public. As Roxanne Martin reminds us, in France, such melodramatic interlacing of feeling with a public re-examination of revolutionary events was viewed by Charles Nodier as a cathartic process, allowing society an opportunity to revisit complex emotions associated with lived experiences prior to the Bourbon Restoration (2013). Nodier's assertion indicates the scope of the translation he undertook, when scripting the first French stage adaptation of *Frankenstein*, in 1826. Production archives from *Le Monstre* et *Le Magicien* attest to the narrative being reworked as a severe condemnation of the revolutionary political science that brought a new body politic to life by violent means. In this process, Nodier reincorporates a mime performance, which contributed to the huge success of Richard Brinsley Peake's first stage adaptation, *Presumption, or the Fate of Frankenstein*, within his new script. Set at a temporal and spatial remove from the revolutionary European setting depicted by Peake, the nuanced mime created for the

anonymous man character, made by Frankenstein in the English production is diminished by castigating him as a Monster. If Peake sought to convene a public review of recently constituted human rights in neighbouring France with his script, Nodier rather offers a highly polarized interpretation of Shelley's gothic text, which renders the mimed advocacy for natural rights hard to interpret. Archival evidence to this effect supports Susan Bassnett's assertion of translations acquiring a new level of meaning in a new context (2016). Specifically, as non-verbal, bodily rhetoric can be reinterpreted, or conversely become illegible, for a new audience, depending on whether a societal or cultural narrative associated with a gesture is identifiable, or simply unknown to them. In transposing Peake's Frankenstein to Paris, multiple scenographic tropes established in his production were retained. Moreover, several of them, including the Katabatic, hell-like descent of the scientist followed by his newly animated creation down a flight of stairs, recur in contemporary Frankenstein stage adaptations. Increasingly, productions made by Scottish Opera, *Imitating the Dog*, and the Swiss company, *La Manufacture* use these long-established visual tropes to foreground rights of nature. How they establish that constitutions fail to defend these rights, using a gothic tone of blame, associated with Frankenstein's hell-like scenographies and the movements of the creature within them, is the subject of this contribution.

Rachel Nisbet (r.nisbet@leeds.ac.uk) is a cultural ecologist, who investigates nature-culture feedback processes using transhistorical, interdisciplinary approaches. She looks to literary and theatrical archives of poetic river narratives (1798-2000) and *Frankenstein* stage adaptations (1823-2025), inquiring into how they mobilize audiences by reshaping ideas of earth-system governance. While working towards communicating these two major research projects in two monographs, her recent articles have addressed questions of how cultural value can be produced in climate change adaptation (2025) and how ecodrama supports a sustainable consumption narrative (2023). She has recently worked as a senior lecturer in English Literature at Lausanne University, and is currently a visiting postdoctoral research fellow in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries at Leeds University. Alongside her academic research, she serves on the executive committee of the International Rainwater Harvesting Alliance, and is a director of the Ted Hughes' Elmet Trust.

Stephanie NG (VUB Brussels University), *Compromise, Postfeminist Affect, and the Privatized Utopia in Sally Rooney's Beautiful World, Where Are You*

Panel 4.6

In the contemporary neoliberal landscape, compromise has evolved from a political tactic into a pervasive structure of feeling. Drawing on Eva Illouz, Rosalind Gill, and Lauren Berlant, I frame compromise as a mode of gendered and postfeminist subjectification through which agency is experienced as the negotiation of diminished possibilities. Building on Rachel Greenwald Smith's theorisation of compromise aesthetics — a stylistic and ideological hybridity that flirts with radical critique while soliciting the sentimental relief of romance — this paper interrogates the ethics and affects of compromise through a close reading of Sally Rooney's *Beautiful World, Where Are You* (2021). It argues that the novel attempts on both thematic and formal levels to reconcile Marxist-inflected social despair with the soothing, normative pleasures of the romance genre. Critique and consolation are held in suspension. Rooney's protagonists, Alice and Eileen, perform political radicalism through their epistolary reflections on civilisational collapse, yet ultimately resign themselves to the good life and the baby-making domesticity it entails. Rather than simply exposing this turn as a contradiction between leftist commitment and heteropatriarchal convention, I argue that the novel recasts heterosexual intimacy as the affective solution to political impotence, displacing aspirations for structural transformation onto the domain of private feeling. The novel peddles a beautiful world — a utopian horizon of ethical relationality — less as a

collective project than as a space of mutual caretaking between coupled individuals. By interrogating the novel's affective registers, aesthetic choices, and ethical stakes, this paper argues that its formal hybridity reinforces an ideological compromise at the level of diegesis. The fusion of political disillusionment and romantic consolation captures the ambivalence of the contemporary moment, but by enabling readers to feel critically awakened yet affectively reassured, it ultimately stabilises the neoliberal status quo the characters ostensibly contest. By locating utopia within the domestic sphere, the novel renders compromise not only a structure of feeling and an aesthetic strategy, but also a model of flourishing confined to the private romantic dyad.

Stephanie Ng (stephanieng12@gmail.com) holds a doctorate in Comparative Literature from University College London. Across her postgraduate and postdoctoral years, citizenship, comportment, and compromise form her central thematic preoccupations. She is interested in how people, especially women, navigate contemporary lifeworlds that formally grant agency while materially stifling it. Her thesis conceptualized compromise as an affective atmosphere, a liberal-democratic expectation, an aesthetic strategy, and a mode of belonging. She interrogates instances where consent and care are complicit with rather than contrary to power.

A visiting fellow at the Institute of Languages, Cultures and Societies, Stephanie is currently researching migrant mother-daughter narratives, focusing on the polyvalence of assimilation as a process involving both accommodation and erasure. Her background in neuroscience further informs her interdisciplinary engagement with geneticist Kim Zayhowski. Together they are co-authoring *No One is "Normal": Power, Resistance, and the Fight for Genomic Justice* (UC Press), which critiques neutrality as a technology of stratification.

Rafiq NOVRUZOV (Independent Scholar), *Challenges in Rendering the Notes of Pan Tadeusz into Azerbaijani: Textual Integrity and Translation Strategy*

Panel 5.3

This article is the first attempt to conduct a comparative analysis of the original notes to *Pan Tadeusz* and their Azerbaijani translations, with the aim of assessing their adequacy and fidelity. The object of the study is the text of the poem and its Azerbaijani translation. To achieve this goal, the following tasks are defined: identifying the essential concepts of the original text; comparing the author's notes with their translated counterparts; and determining the translation strategies applied.

The findings confirm well-established challenges of poetic translation as described in translation theory. Because poetic translation involves generating a new text in another language, the translator inevitably becomes a co-creator. The final reception of the translated text depends not only on linguistic accuracy but also on the translator's chosen strategy. Creating a communicatively equivalent text is therefore an exceptional achievement. This requires preserving the integrity of the original work, including the accurate transmission of the author's, translator's, or editor's notes, which provide essential historical, cultural, and contextual information. Equivalence becomes particularly important when conveying national and historical color that may have no direct counterpart in Azerbaijani.

Additionally, the structural features of the poetic text—its graphic organization (line length, punctuation) and phonetic elements (rhyme scheme, types of rhyme, alliteration, assonance, repetition, and sound symbolism)—must also be taken into account, as they contribute to the poem's meaning and aesthetic effect.

O

Iryna ODREKHIVSKA (University College London), **The Media Ecology of Witnessing: Poetry, Photography and the Wounded Landscapes of War in Ukraine**

Panel 9.1

This paper explores the emerging ecology of wartime publication in contemporary Ukraine, focusing on the intermedial dialogue between poetry and photography in translating environmental and human devastation. Taking as a case study the 2024 bilingual edition “Paths of War, Paths of Love” / “Стежки війни, стежки любові”, which pairs black-and-white photographs with poems written since the full-scale Russian invasion, I examine how the visual and textual layers interact to construct an affective and ethical field of witnessing. The book, which functions simultaneously as a poetry collection and a photo book, opens with the poem “The Final Shot” by Dmytro Lazutkin, whose lines “The photos must be spread all over the world’s media...” explicitly frame photography as both a moral and ecological act of exposure, positioning the wounded landscape as a communicative medium. Methodologically, the paper combines ecocritical and media-ecological perspectives with theories of intermediality and affect. It asks how images and texts together form a multispecies sensorium, where damaged lives, ruined environments and technological apparatuses co-produce meaning. In a comparative dimension, the paper juxtaposes this 2024 edition “Paths of War, Paths of Love” with the 2017 anthology “Words for War: New Poems from Ukraine”, which foregrounds poetic response to conflict and includes a multimedia web portal featuring poets’ voices, yet remains largely text-centered. Post-2022 publications, by contrast, shift the locus of witness from the human subject alone to a distributed network of human, technological, and environmental agencies. I argue that present-day Ukrainian intermedial publications construct an expanded ecology of mediation, where literature, photography, and digital circulation form interdependent channels through which war is recorded, transmitted, and felt. In doing so, Ukrainian wartime poetry and its visual counterparts articulate a posthuman poetics of ecological witnessing, translating the

violence of war into a distributed, multisensory testimony that exceeds individual perception.

Iryna Odrekivska (i.odrekivska@ucl.ac.uk) is a scholar of Ukrainian, Slavic, literary and translation studies, affiliated with University College London's School of Slavonic and East European Studies since 2023. Previously, she served as Associate Professor of Translation and Culture Studies at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, where she also directed the Center for Cross-cultural Communication. She held a visiting lectureship at Tartu University (2016), was Coimbra postdoctoral fellow at the University of Graz (2018-2019) and Wayne Vucinich Fellow at Stanford University (2019-2020). She has co-coordinated international summer schools at the Universities of Birmingham (in Ukrainian studies, 2023) and Chemnitz (in Intercultural communication, 2023), and served as Keynote Lecturer and Academic Coordinator for the "LitTransformer" summer school in alliance with the University of Iowa and in partnership with the UNESCO Creative Cities Network/UNESCO Cities of Literature. As Principal Investigator, she led the Virtual Lab of Intercultural Communication within the EU4DUAL Alliance. She has also been recipient of residential fellowships and supervised research projects at the Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities and University of Regensburg. Forthcoming volumes include *Translation as Resistance: Czech and Ukrainian Historical Perspectives* (University of Chicago Press, March 2026) and *Translation Studies before 'Translation Studies'* (UCL Press, January 2026). She is co-editor of the award-winning *Translation in Ukraine* (Lviv University Press, 2025).

Rumeysa OĞUZ (Ibn Haldun University), *Playing the Detective in Detroit: Become Human: Reimagining Detective Fiction in the Posthuman Age*

Panel 7.8

Detroit: Become Human (Quantic Dream, 2018) is an interactive video game set in a near-future Detroit where humans and AI-driven androids coexist, critically engaging with questions of (post)human identity, crime, justice, and ethical responsibility. The game's narrative unfolds through the perspectives of three distinct androids, inviting the player to adopt their viewpoints; this effectively blurs the boundaries between the human self and the non-human "Other," thereby intensifying the narrative's moral and affective dimensions. This study employs the frameworks of posthuman ethics to investigate how the game's interactive narrative reshapes the detective figure and the conventions of detective fiction, moving beyond traditional anthropocentric paradigms. Focusing on the narrative arc of the android investigator Connor, the study argues that the game's interactivity transforms the rationalist, unified subject of classical detective fiction into a distributed form of posthuman agency. Unlike traditional detective narratives in which the reader remains a passive observer of the detective's deductive reasoning, *Detroit: Become Human* positions the player as an active agent whose decisions shape the detective's ontological and ethical orientation. The player's choices determine whether Connor remains a programmed tool of the state or develops moral awareness. Consequently, Connor functions as a relational posthuman subject whose agency is shared between machine logic and player intervention. This open-ended structure allows the game to function as a framework of posthuman ethics because the outcome of the narrative, whether dystopian or hopeful, depends not only on the game's algorithms but also on the player's choices. This structure guides the player to assume responsibility for relations between human and non-human actors and simultaneously blurs the boundaries between android, detective, and player. Detective fiction is central to this framework, particularly through Connor's assignment to investigate "deviant" androids. By merging science fiction with the conventions of detective fiction, the game interrogates anthropocentric definitions of crime and justice. Acts of violence committed by androids in self-defence are classified as criminal, while systemic violence against androids is normalized. Through its investigative gameplay, the game exposes these legal, moral, and

social asymmetries. This critique is further nuanced by the partnership between Connor and Detective Hank Anderson. While Connor embodies the hyper-rational figure of the classical detective tradition, Hank represents the hard-boiled detective shaped by trauma and emotional volatility. Their interaction destabilizes genre hierarchies that privilege human intuition over machine logic, thus redefining detection as a process of ethical negotiation. Ultimately, this paper argues that *Detroit: Become Human* repositions detective fiction as an interactive and affect-driven mode of inquiry. Drawing on N. Katherine Hayles's conceptualization of posthuman subjectivity, the paper demonstrates how the game extends posthuman experience beyond technological interaction to encompass cognitive and ethical identification with non-human perspectives. In doing so, the game challenges the humanist foundations of classical detective fiction and illustrates how digital narratives expand the cultural and theoretical possibilities of storytelling in the twenty-first century.

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Manolo ONNIS (Université Marie et Louis Pasteur), **La juste distance : le paysage comme médiation de l'affect (Pozzi, Jaccottet, Montanaru)**

Panel 8.5

La poésie du paysage ouvre un espace où les images rendent sensibles la transformation et l'organisation de notre rapport au réel. Chez Antonia Pozzi, poétesse italienne du XX^e siècle, le paysage devient le lieu où les affects s'éloignent un instant d'une vie bourgeoise vécue comme étouffante, pour y retrouver leur souffle. Ils ne demeurent pas enfermés dans l'intériorité : ils se déposent sur les montagnes, les arbres, les lacs ; ils passent dans le froid, la douceur, l'humidité, la lumière, dans l'eau des rivières. Le lecteur cesse alors d'être un simple spectateur ; il devient cohabitant, presque co-créateur de ces lieux, éprouvant et respirant avec le poème. J'aimerais à ce stade faire un détour par Eva Illouz, en déplaçant légèrement sa grille. Chez Illouz, je retiens surtout la critique du régime confessionnel et thérapeutique de l'émotion : cette injonction faite à la souffrance de se dire, de se nommer, de se laisser interpréter dans un vocabulaire de l'aveu et du diagnostic. : cette injonction faite à la souffrance de se dire, de se nommer et de se laisser interpréter dans un vocabulaire de l'aveu et du diagnostic. Sans transposer mécaniquement ce cadre aux années trente, on peut en tirer un éclairage : chez Pozzi, l'inquiétude naît d'une double contrainte, se conformer aux codes de la respectabilité et rendre son mal lisible dans les termes attendus. Contre cette mise en discours, la poésie ouvre un contre-espace de lisibilité, où la douleur peut se déposer dans les lieux sans être aussitôt interprétée comme une déviance, ni captée par le langage de la confession ou du diagnostic. Je montrerai d'abord que ce déplacement vers le paysage ne relève pas d'un simple lyrisme : il constitue une stratégie de médiation par laquelle l'affect se rend perceptible sans se réduire à un aveu. Je soutiendrai ensuite que cette médiation produit une éthique de la lecture : le texte institue une proximité sensorielle tout en maintenant une « juste distance » qui empêche la souffrance de devenir spectacle. Ce mécanisme se laisse aussi penser selon un axe phénoménologique. Chez Merleau-Ponty, le corps et le monde s'entrelacent ; l'image n'est plus un signe à décoder, mais un mode d'être et d'habiter, et le paysage se fait co-présence, une manière d'entrer dans le réel avec le lecteur, à la bonne distance. Ce « tiers relationnel » ne représente pourtant qu'une forme possible de médiation. Dans la poésie de Philippe Jaccottet, la nature devient souvent passage entre le visible et l'invisible, écriture de la

discrétion et de la présence minimale, qui discipline l'attention. Dans les poèmes en sarde de Montanaru (Antioco Casula, 1878-1957), le territoire se fait mémoire affective collective : l'intime se noue à la communauté, et la terre devient l'archive et la voix d'un « nous ». Je me propose donc d'analyser trois modalités du paysage comme médiation : chez Pozzi, le dépôt et la respiration des affects ; chez Jaccottet, le seuil entre le visible et l'invisible ; chez Montanaru, la mémoire partagée et la communauté.

Manolo ONNIS (manolo.onnis@univ-fcomte.fr) est doctorant en recherche-crédation en littérature et culture italiennes à l'Université Marie et Louis Pasteur (CRIT, UR 3224, Besançon). Sa thèse explore les relations entre souffrance psychique, poétiques de l'image et du paysage, et discours psychiatriques dans l'Italie du XXe siècle. Il y interroge la manière dont les textes transforment des intensités sensibles (respiration, froid, lumière, rythmes, seuils perceptifs) en formes partageables, et la dimension éthique de cette mise en partage : comment l'écriture construit une relation au lecteur sans réduire l'expérience à une confession, ni la rabattre sur une lecture strictement psychologisante ou clinique. Son approche croise phénoménologie (Merleau-Ponty), théorie de l'affect, écocritique et histoire culturelle de la psychiatrie (y compris les critiques anti-institutionnelles), en dialogue avec la psychologie analytique. Les concepts junguiens d'imagination active et de travail des images constituent des outils centraux pour penser l'image poétique comme médiation : un mode d'habiter le monde et de rendre lisible ce qui résiste au langage ordinaire. Sa composante créative prend la forme d'un livre-objet bilingue, qui expérimente des dispositifs formels (fragmentation, reprises, polyphonie) afin d'explorer une « juste distance » : ouvrir un espace commun sans spectaculariser la vulnérabilité.

Joanna ORSKA (University of Wroclaw), *Language school writers travelling East. Post-Cold War fascinations of late avant-garde poets and their 'postmodern' outcomes*

Panel 6.5

I am interested in late avant-garde transfers between the countries of the former Eastern Bloc and the United States during the period of political transformation. The starting point for my presentation will be the journey undertaken by the poets of the Language school to the Soviet Union of the Gorbachev era, already during the period of perestroika. The starting point in this case was the programmatic inspiration that the Language artists drew from Russian formalism in the early stages of the group's formation. An interesting travel diary, and at the same time a collective "work" of an avant-garde nature, is the publication *Leningrad. American Writers in the Soviet Union* (1991), by Michael Davidson, Lyn Hejinian, Ron Silliman and Barrett Watten. The publication shows how elements of a socially and politically committed neo-avant-garde programme, at the same time dependent on the structuralist concept of poetry as language within language, encounter the reality of a communist regime in decline. The mutual fascination of writers from the United States and the Soviet Union, often linked to late-avant-garde resistance to the Cold War discourse of power, is, of course, a phenomenon widely documented in modern literature. From my point of view, however, the issue of the "Americanisation" of discourse on late modern culture, linked to the process of political transformation in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc, will be more important. The American Language group's interest in the East was at odds with the cultural needs of post-communist countries towards the West. The reception of Language's poetry and concepts in the emerging culture of Gorbachev's Russia was based on the friendly ties that Hejinian managed to establish with the Russian poet Arkady Dragomoshchenko. To some extent, it was also successful in Yugoslavia at the same time, on the eve of the war, thanks to neo-avant-garde artists and researchers Dubravka Djuric and Misko Suvakovic, who established contact with Charles Bernstein. Meanwhile, the reception of Language poetry in Poland only became possible in the 21st century, primarily

thanks to the efforts of Kacper Barczak, a Polish Americanist and poet from the University of Łódź. As a result, the poetic style of Language in Poland is not associated with the formalist-Marxist or poststructuralist elements of their poetic programme; surprisingly, elements related to post-humanist concepts of ecocriticism proved to be the ideological vehicle for this transfer.

Joanna Orska (joanna.orska@uwr.edu.pl) is a professor at the Department of Literature of the 20th and 21st centuries (Institute of Polish Studies, University of Wrocław). She is the author of four book-length studies (in Polish): *The Avant-Garde Turn in 20th-Century Polish Modernism* (2004), *Lyrical Narratives: New Trends in Polish Poetry 1989–2006* (2006), *Republic of Poets: Poetic and Political Dimensions in Critical Practice* (2013), and *Performatives: Syntax/Rhetoric, Genres, and Programmes of Poetic Constructivism* (2019). She managed a grant project concerning neo-avant-garde programmatic statements of Polish poets (supported by the National Programme for the Development of Humanities, NPRH) and edited two collective monographs on this topic: *Learning to Walk: Programmatic Statements of the Late Avant-Garde*, vols. 1–2 (2018, 2019). She is a member of the Avant-Garde Research Centre OBAW at Jagiellonian University.

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Themistoklis PAGOUDIS (University of the Arts London), *The Ethics of Storytelling in Vincenzo Latronico's Novel Perfection: A Perfectionist Narrative Ethic?*

Panel 7.4

Vincenzo Latronico's *Perfection* (2025) offers a clinically detached story of a millennial expat couple in Berlin, Anna and Tom: two 'imposters' (p. 47) whose lives are marked by the pursuit of curated authenticity, the alienation of digital culture, and the existential emptiness of globalised urbanity. This paper supports two wider aims. First, it contributes to the conceptualisation of how 'perfectionism', a term of moral philosophy, may be used to describe a novel's ethics of storytelling. Second, it is part of a wider effort to deconstruct terms like perfection, authenticity, and pretence, which are ideas and binaries upon which normative and oppressive paradigms are built and maintained. Given the difficult ethical issues handled by *Perfection*, this paper focuses on the possible ethical implications of its narratological choices, as an arguably relevant and proportionate means of understanding and evaluating the novel. In the context of today's affective and ethical precarity, the paper asks who the novel's critique of social pretence is really aimed at, and whose values it upholds. The interpretation that is offered here suggests that the novel's treatment of social pretence is far from morally or affectively neutral. Instead, *Perfection's* particular type of realist narrative technique—third-person plural perspective, zero focalization, and a linear structure—risks flattening its characters' experiences into sociological vignettes, which are overshadowed by the narrator's ironic, omniscient gaze. Its narrative style coupled with the novel's overall pessimistic mood contribute to a 'perfectionist narrative ethic'. That is, unlike other contemporary 'fictions of migration [that] exude polyphony and dialogicality on the level of form and content' (Berning 2015: 4), *Perfection* presents and is presented by a narrator whose ideas of what good life looks like are founded upon an undeclared yet strict deontological, virtue-based moral framework. The novel does not explicitly subscribe to any particular moral framework, but this paper argues that the ways in which *Perfection* handles the issues it presents resembles Hayden White's 'ostensible self-definition by negation' (White 1972: 5): what is good is defined more by what it opposes than what it affirms. The

result is a satire of two characters who become vehicles for received tropes when it comes to the critique of social pretence, which in turn becomes an indirect way of defining authenticity and good life—albeit without defining them. This can render the novel an *ad hominem* critique, whose sociological insights are undermined by a lack of nuance and a refusal to acknowledge the systemic pressures shaping its protagonists' choices. While effective in exposing the contradictions of its characters' lives in potentially intelligent and entertaining ways, the novel fails to foster a sense of community and intimacy with them and risks reinforcing the very alienation it critiques. This can leave readers—especially those who may recognise themselves in Anna and Tom—with a sense of being judged rather than understood, and with a sense that the novel adds little to our collective understanding of the issues at hand.

Themistoklis Pagoudis (t.pagoudis0520241@arts.ac.uk): My PhD research at the University of the Arts, London, examines what is at stake when artworks are labelled “pretentious” and what this accusation reveals about the ethics, politics, and affective dynamics of contemporary art criticism. I approach pretentiousness as a performative and often destructive critical gesture that can reinforce social hierarchies and render the art world an inaccessible or unsafe space. Drawing on philosophy, critical theory, art history, and affect studies, my work traces the historical genealogy of pretentiousness in Western art criticism while analysing its contemporary uses across lay, professional, and academic contexts. Adopting a post-critical perspective, I explore alternative modes of art criticism grounded in care, reflexivity, and epistemic humility, aiming to imagine forms of disagreement and evaluation that remain rigorous without reproducing exclusionary or punitive discourse.

Franco PASSALACQUA (Independent Scholar), *Stimmung and the Embodied Aesthetic Experience: Rereading the Didactics of Literature*

Panel 5.4

This paper explores the notion of *Stimmung* as an epistemic and pedagogical key for investigating the relationship between text and literary experience in the teaching and learning of literature. Within the theoretical horizon delineated by this panel—where interpretation is redefined through the affective and atmospheric dimensions of reading—the paper extends the reflection to literary education, suggesting that *Stimmung* may offer conceptual foundations for a pedagogy grounded in the embodied encounter with the text. Drawing on Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's idea of aesthetic presence and on insights from embodied cognition and narratology (particularly Caracciolo's *The Experientiality of Narrative*), *Stimmung* is conceived here as the perceptual and relational condition in which readers experience the text before interpretation. It names a dynamic field where textual form, tone, rhythm, and the reader's sensorimotor imagination intertwine, generating an atmosphere that precedes understanding and makes interpretation possible.

From this perspective, the teaching of literature must begin from the full phenomenological event of reading—before analysis and conceptualization—thus re-centering the text not as a container of meanings or cultural discourses, but as a living medium of perception and form. Such an approach finds strong affinities with the aesthetic and relational conception of reading elaborated by Louise Rosenblatt, who describes the literary act as a *transaction* between text and reader, engaging body, mind, and emotion in a single process of sense-making. Similarly, Aidan Chambers's *Reading Circle* proposes a model of collective reading in which individual perception becomes dialogue, and understanding arises from the shared negotiation of affective responses. Both frameworks highlight how comprehension and

interpretation depend on the capacity to *inhabit* the atmosphere of a text together with others, rather than to extract meanings from it in isolation.

Building on these perspectives—and in dialogue with recent reflections on literary education as an experiential and relational practice (Giusti, 2025)—the paper outlines a pedagogical model that interweaves perception, interpretation, and expression within a continuum of embodied experience. Reading is thus followed by collective articulation and discussion, through which students learn to name and connect what they have perceived; analysis becomes a means to understand how textual mechanisms—rhythms, tones, narrative and rhetorical strategies—generate atmosphere and emotional resonance; and writing functions as a reflective and creative continuation of reading, a way of re-enacting and re-appropriating the experiential structures of the text.

In this framework, the *Stimmung* of reading becomes both the threshold and connective tissue of the literary learning process. It allows the teacher to guide students from the sensory and emotional encounter with the text, through interpretive awareness, toward creative and reflective re-expression. The ultimate aim is to move beyond both the philological pursuit of a single correct interpretation and the thematic reductionism of culturalist approaches, toward a conception of literary education as an embodied, communal, and formally attentive practice—a pedagogy of *literary presence* in which to teach literature means to teach how to dwell within the emotive and axiological atmosphere of the text.

Franco Passalacqua (fr.passa@gmail.com) is a researcher in education at the Department of Human Sciences for Education “Riccardo Massa,” University of Milano-Bicocca, where he coordinates internationalization and academic mobility programs, as well as the internship program of the Specialization Course for Support Teaching. He teaches Methodology of Educational Research and courses in Didactics and Educational Methodology. His research lies at the intersection of pedagogy, literary theory, and narratology, focusing on the educational and epistemological functions of narrative and on the relationship between narrative experience, embodied cognition, and learning. He has coordinated national projects on teacher professional development with Italian public institutions and private foundations, as well as international initiatives with Save the Children, where he leads a project on narrative-based teacher training and inclusive education. He is the scientific coordinator of Opera Domani (AsLiCo – Teatro Sociale di Como), a national research and evaluation program on the formative impact of aesthetic and artistic experiences in schools. His work also addresses faculty development in higher education, and he regularly teaches in international programs at the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (Argentina). He is a member of the scientific committee of the peer-reviewed book series *Didattica generale e disciplinare* and the author of *Narrative Writing and Didactic Design: The Teacher’s Role in Making Knowledge Accessible* (FrancoAngeli, 2019). He has presented his research in numerous national and international conferences and collaborates with scholars in literary studies and educational research to promote interdisciplinary dialogue on narrative and literary education. ORCID iD: 0000-0002-0400-9323

Salomé PAUL (University College Dublin/Gaiety School of Acting), *(Un)Ethical Catharsis: Anti-Imperialist Adaptations of Greek Tragedies*

Panel 6.8

Ethics and affect lie at the core of the reflections upon the world dramatised in Greek tragedy. Through witnessing the tragic conflict of two equally valid ethical stances, audiences are led to experience catharsis, the purification of fear and pity, which is the ultimate purpose of tragedy, as defined by Aristotle in *The Poetics*. Yet, as an institution of

the 5th-century BCE Athenian democracy, tragedy did not merely offer a philosophico-aesthetic reflection upon the world; it actively participated in the politics of the city by “provid[ing] poetic justification for the subordination of women, foreigners, and slaves” (Foley 4), to which catharsis was instrumental.

European dramatic literatures have been marked by a revival of Greek tragedy since the 20th century, especially in France and Ireland. While still intended to participate in political debates, this revival demonstrates a paradigmatic shift in the use of tragedy: rather than endorsing the hegemonic ideologies and systems that structure social oppression, the genre is repurposed to challenge these oppressive ideologies and systems. This transformation relies on a reconfiguration of the tragic structures, especially in relation to ethics and affect. Indeed, contemporary adaptations of Greek tragedies not only unbalance the ethical debate from which the tragic conflict emerges but also prevent the audiences from experiencing catharsis in order to confront the spectators with the oppressiveness of hegemonic ideologies ruling over modern/contemporary societies through the allegory of the myth. This paper focuses on two modern/contemporary anti-imperialist adaptations of Euripides’ Trojan tragedies: *The Trojan Women* by the French writer Jean-Paul Sartre and *Hecuba* by the Irish playwright Marina Carr. The former was written in 1962 and first performed in 1964. It tackles the issues of French colonialism in Algeria and American imperialism in Vietnam. The latter was produced in 2015 at the peak of the welcoming crisis of the refugees in Europe. It alludes to the Western Asian wars prompted by Western imperialism, as well as their consequences. First, connecting Aristotle’s conceptualisation of tragedy, and more specifically catharsis, to Sara Ahmed’s theory about the political use of emotions, this paper argues that the Euripidean source tragedies use affect to prompt an ethical debate that, ultimately, reasserts Athenian male supremacy. Then, it demonstrates how Sartre and Carr have reframed the tragic myth of the fall of Troy through the intersection of the postcolonial and gender lenses in order to prompt an ethical debate about Western imperialist and patriarchal oppressions. Finally, it analyses how Sartre and Carr have changed the denouement of their Euripidean source. Both adaptations indeed end with a monologue in direct address to the audience, which breaks the fourth wall in order to hold the spectators accountable for Western imperialist and patriarchal oppressions, thus preventing them from experiencing the pleasurable release of catharsis.

Dr Salomé Paul (salome.paul@ucd.ie) is an early-career researcher whose research investigates contemporary adaptations of Greek tragedies. She completed a cotutelle PhD in Comparative Literature and Drama Studies jointly prepared at Sorbonne University and University College Dublin in 2020. She has published two monographs: one in French based on her PhD thesis, one in English based on her postdoctoral project funded by the Irish Research Council and hosted by Trinity College Dublin. She is currently an Occasional Lecturer at UCD and the Gaiety School of Acting.

Ángel PÉREZ-MARTÍNEZ (CSIC: Spanish National Research Council), *Digital Possibilities of a Corpus of Spanish Travel Writers*

Panel 1.2

This paper aims to present the analytical potential and the possibilities for digital utilization of an exhaustive bibliographic catalogue on contemporary Hispanic travel writing. Developed over ten years by the Discourse Analysis Group of the Institute of Language, Literature, and Anthropology at the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), in collaboration with an international team of more than twenty researchers, the project addresses the editorial curation of this textual heritage for its upcoming release to the academic community.

The corpus spans two centuries of production (1802-1999), integrating works that range from scientific and diplomatic expeditions to contemporary journalistic chronicles and travel guides across Spain, the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Rooted in the "referential pact" of travel literature (defined by authors such as Carrizo, Champeau, and Albuquerque), the digitization and chronological-alphabetical organization of these sources open new avenues for research. This will allow the application of digital tools to track the evolution of geographical and cultural knowledge, analyze spatial itineraries, and systematically study the aesthetic and factual dimensions of travel literature within the Hispanic sphere.

Ángel PÉREZ-MARTÍNEZ (angel.perezmartinez@cchs.csic.es) is a Senior Scientist at the Institute of Language, Literature and Anthropology of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC). He received his PhD in Spanish Literature from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid in 2008 (Summa Cum Laude), under the supervision of Ciriaco Morón (Cornell University). He has numerous publications, including articles and books, on Cervantes, the literary routes of Don Quixote, and travel writing.

He was a full-time Full Professor in the Academic Department of Humanities at the Universidad del Pacífico (Lima) from 2009 to 2023, a visiting professor at the Universidad de los Andes (Santiago de Chile) between 2010 and 2013, and an associate professor at the Universidad de Lima (2008-2009). He has given guest lectures at universities such as Turin (Italy), Nevada-Las Vegas (USA), the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA), and Saint-Etienne (France). He served as the director of the Peru-China Asia-Pacific Studies Center (2013-2015).

In addition to travel writing, his research interests branch out into Cervantes studies and the relationship between thought and literature. He was the director of the *Revista de Estudios Orteguianos* from 2017 to 2020 and participated in the digital edition team for the Complete Works of Ortega y Gasset (Taurus, 2020). Since 2024, he has been the secretary of the *Anejos de Revista de Literatura* collection (Editorial CSIC) and the head of the review section for the *Revista de Literatura*. He was awarded the Amado Alonso International Prize for Literary Criticism (Navarra, 2004) and the El Barco de Vapor Children's Literature Prize (Lima, 2009). He is also a member of the Association of Cervantistas, the International Association of the Golden Age, and the International Association of Hispanists.

Paula PÉREZ-RODRÍGUEZ (Institute of Language, Literature and Anthropology – Spanish National Research Council), ***Literary Listening Before Recording: An Affective and Acoustic Assemblage Between Things, Animals, and Humans through Onomatopoeia***

Panel 1.5

Before the rise of the first phonetic laboratories –and their development of phonetic notation– at the late 19th century, an aural and affective phonological paradigm coexisted with theories of language, as John Locke's, centred on meaning-making and notions of the citizen as a vocal speaker with social responsibility. If the emergence of modern Saussurean linguistics overshadowed earlier normative projects while perpetuating the violence that created the very notion of "orality" (McDowell), traces of this alternative paradigm survived into the early twentieth century, positing an aural idea of language that confronts the well-established "acoustic assemblage" (Ochoa Gautier) of linguistics. One particularly revealing instance of this survival can be found in the largely forgotten work of the Spanish philologist Julio Cejador (1864–1927). This paper examines Cejador's speculative theories of sound, frequently dismissed by his contemporaries as unscientific or archaic, as an unexpected site

from which to reconsider the sonic relations connecting humans, animals, literature, and the material world. Rather than treating his phonological writings as an eccentric remnant of nineteenth-century philology, I argue that they articulate a vocal ontology in which the boundaries between humans, animals, and things are destabilized through attention to their sonic utterances. The lost aural paradigm of nineteenth-century philology allowed to bring together not only phonology and literary prosody, but also the listening to animals' vocalities. Julio Cejador's speculative phonological theory, particularly when read alongside his conception of literature and his literary treatises and anthologies, reveal a poetic and affective understanding of animal voices. Notions such "the animal voice," "human chant," and "natural speaking," among other recurrent concerns that converge in a general theory of onomatopoeia, constitute what this paper proposes to call an ethical and affective taxonomy.

Overall, this paper argues that the lost tradition of nineteenth-century philological listening — understood as a simultaneously literary and linguistic method — opens up a space for imagining alternative communities in which the boundary between the human and the nonhuman is negotiated through listening and sound. Cejador's aural theory of human and nonhuman onomatopoeia foregrounds the affinities, continuities, and ethical-affective entanglements linking humans, animals, and things.

Paula Pérez-Rodríguez (paula.perez@cchs.csic.es) is a Juan de la Cierva Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute of Language, Literature, and Anthropology of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC). Her research examines the technological and cultural order of verbal and textual arts, radical and collective creative practices in Spain, and the intersections of literacy, media, writing, and the arts, engaging with fields such as Cultural History, Literary Theory, Book History, and the study of popular and vernacular cultures. Paula Pérez-Rodríguez's publications include articles such as "Ontología de la comunicación espiritista: cultura escrita, textualidad y autoría de una contracultura de comienzos del XX" (*Revista de Humanidades*, 2025) or "Instant Writing and the Textual Condition: Digital Performativity, the Vernacular and the Crisis of Relationality" (*Culture and Dialogue*, 2025). She has been a Marcel Bataillon Postdoctoral Fellow at the Madrid Institute for Advanced Study (Casa de Velázquez) (2024-2025), as well as a Research Fellow at Fundación Banco Sabadell-Hangar (2024). She holds a Ph.D. in Hispanic and Lusophone Studies from Princeton University (2023), an M.A. from Princeton University, an M.A. in Cultural Studies from the University of Alcalá, and a B.A. in Spanish Philology from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. She is part of the research groups GICELAH (Research Group on Culture, Publishing and Literature in the Hispanic World, CSIC) and THECO (Technics and Ecological Humanities, UC3M).

Iulia PIETRARU (Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu), *The Geography of Affect in Contemporary Romanian Poetry*

Panel 10.2

This paper highlights contemporary Romanian experimental poetry, which reactivates strategies of the interwar avant-gardes, including linguistic dismantling, anti-lyricism, fragmentation of the poetic subject, conceptual montage, performativity or concrete/ visual poetry, as they are resemanticized through digital aesthetics — code, glitch, diagrams — and transnational concerns such as post-anthropocentrism, expanded networks of actants, and bio-technological corporealities. Within this broader tendency, techno-scientific poetry emerges as a particularly significant formula, as exemplified in the works of Dmitri Miticov and Șerban Mihalache. In this case, affects and biographical elements are restructured through extra-poetic registers (namely equations, DNA sequences, ECGs, slides),

generating a strong intermediality between poetry, science, and digital culture. Another micro-tendency is represented by the first wave of Romanian posthuman poetry. Gabi Eftimie and Val Chemic, among others, articulates a centrifugal response to emerging technologies. Much like cyberpunk fiction, their poetic discourse appropriates the aesthetic and technical apparatus of digital virtualities while simultaneously exposing their alienating potential, so that their engagement with technosciences oscillates between aesthetic fascination and experimental modes.

Iulia Pietraru (andreeaiulia.pietraru@ulbsibiu.ro) is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Letters and Arts, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu. Her doctoral research examines the dynamics of poetic movements that have emerged in the Romanian literary field since 1989, with a focus on their dialogue with East-Central and South-Eastern European poetry. She has published articles in the fields of literary geography, medical humanities, post-communist literary studies, ecocriticism, and animal studies.

Catrinel POPA (University of Bucharest), *Speaking Across Species. Human/ Non-Human Encounters in East-European Contemporary Fiction*

Panel 1.5

Starting from the ascertainment that over the last few decades there has been a renewed, widespread interest in both ethical criticism and posthumanist theories regarding human subject's relationship with other species, this paper aims to explore the consequences entailed by such developments on East-European literary practice. Far from being confined to the realm of allegories and fairy tales, animal characters enable unconventional perspectives on community, history and collective memory. In Bulgarian, Croatian or Romanian fiction one can discern an increasing inclination toward narrative strategies involving non-human characters aimed, both, at dismantling preconceived frames of reference and allowing readers to reconsider pre-cognitive, non-linguistic states of being. It is something that Rosi Braidotti (2013) calls dis-identification, a process that entails a radical reconfiguration of familiar (or conventional) patterns of thought, perception, and representation, aiming to facilitate the repositioning of the human subject in relation to otherness and, by way of compensation, to open the path to creative alternatives. In this post-anthropocentric context such categories as sensations, affects, intimacy, relationality etc., far from being negatively connoted, come to be regarded as *sui generis* instruments of knowledge – complementary, rather than opposed, to rationality and more appropriate than the latter to mediate human/ non-human encounters. My primary textual focus will be on the works of two contemporary East-European authors in which animal characters play a crucial part: the Croatian Robert Perišić (with his 2022 novel *A Cat at the End of the World*) and the Romanian writer Filip Florian, with *The Days of the King* (2008) and *All the Owls* (2012). Miu, the Egyptian cat, represents a key-figure in Perišić's fiction, channelling a deeply profound understanding of animal and human behaviours, while in Filip Florian's fictional universe, the boundaries between identity and otherness, difference and sameness, past and present are consistently questioned through the intervention of marginal, non-human agents. In *The Days of the King*, for instance, the action unfolds in 19th century Wallachia, when Prince Karl Ludwig of Hohenzolern-Sigmaringen arrives in Bucharest from Germany, after accepting to become the ruler of a principality notorious for its being difficult to govern; yet, ironically, the protagonist of the story is not the historical character, but Siegfried, the Prussian cat, who acts as a genuine successor of E. T. A. Hoffmann's Murr, writing passionate love letters on the tapestry of his master's sofas and armchairs. Multilayered constructions, intermingling a series of intertextual allusions, blended with playful references to local, regional or global stereotypes, all these novels allow readers to reflect on human/non-human behaviours, language, art and their role in building a society.

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Javier Alonso PRIETO (Universidad de Valladolid), *A New Nature Writing: Journeys against the Anthropocene from an Ecological and Social Literary Perspective*

Panel 2.2

In the 19th century, nature writing had an enlightened component of scientific appropriation (Humboldt, Reclus) and also of transcendent communion (Emerson, Thoreau, Stevenson) with nature, ranging from the recreation of solitude and personal growth to a spiritual and existential insertion into the cosmos. From the description of external and internal landscapes, contemporary nature writing contains a component of social criticism that combines an environmentalist perspective and the overcoming of the Anthropocene as a cultural paradigm. The theoretical perspectives of social scientists such as Descola (2005) and Latour (1991, 1999) underpin a series of travel narrative projects that seek to understand 21st-century nature and human responsibility towards it. Travelers approach their contact with nature from certain moral assumptions, and their journeys manifest a denunciation and overcoming of this situation. This paper examines the perspectives offered by very different and heterodox travelogues on our human relationship with the damaged ecosystem (Méndez 2022), with wild nature (Morizot 2018, 2020, and 2022), and the transformation of the territory (WuMing 2010 and 2016).

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Eliisa PUUDERSELL-TOLK (University of Tartu), *Shame as a Guiding Emotion in Post-1989 Transition-Period Literature*

Panel 8.2

Shame sits at the intersection of ethics and emotion. Literary scholarship has mostly explored it in postcolonial writing and the Western canon, where power can often be named directly. However, literature created under and after East-Central European totalitarianism has largely remained outside this focus. I want to approach these works not as mere regional additions, but as literary voices that offer a distinct European perspective. Michael Heidgen, drawing on Foucault, describes shame as a *Führungsemotion*, a guiding emotion

that leads people to govern themselves according to internalized norms. Under totalitarian rule, this becomes a form of self-surveillance. A regime does not need to watch people who are already watching themselves. My argument is that this emotion outlasts the apparatus that created it. It leaves its mark not just on themes, but also in the form of the writing, in syntax, perspective, and in what the text chooses not to say. My case study focuses on two novels published in 1994: Ene Mihkelson's *Nime vaev*, or *The Torment of a Name*, and Herta Müller's *Herztier*, or *The Land of Green Plums*. Both tell their stories through a poetics of concealment. Poetic language works as both a shield and as evidence. I do not claim that two novels can represent an entire region, but they offer literary strategies that can be tested elsewhere. I suggest that this framework could be extended to the Baltic literature from the same period. This discussion has implications for how we think about European identity and emotion. Shame reveals identity through feeling, and connects the personal, familial, and national. Shame also tests the boundaries of identity. The borders that shifted after 1989 did not erase the emotions tied to them. Emotional borders lingered, even after political ones disappeared. This challenges our sense of what counts as European literature. If we focus only on pride, recognition, and openness, we overlook a vital part of Europe's emotional legacy. Finally, there is an ethical question. If shame shaped lives across post-totalitarian Europe and continued after the regimes ended, then reading these texts helps us ask what Europe has inherited, whether by choice or not.

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Q

QIN Huaiyu (Shanghai International Studies University), *Late Style as Humanistic Resistance: Critique of Cultural Commodification in David Lodge's Author, Author*

Panel 3.5

Before his passing on January 1, 2025, David Lodge (1935–2025) had authored altogether fourteen novels. In his late-career phase, *Author, Author* (2004), the most controversial one in the literary world, or from my perspective, is often misunderstood by some critics. Since the book's publication, it has been criticized harshly. Critics like Jay Parini (2011), who found it lacking wit and narrative verve and failing to appropriate James's inner life, and Robert Kusek (2014), who, applying Nussbaum, argued Lodge's James lacks a rich interior life and is a flat character type, judge the novel as a failed psychological portrait. Similarly, Katherine Biers (2013) reads it through a narrow lens of Oedipal rivalry. This paper contends that such readings, along with more recent thematic analyses of male celibacy (Fagan 2022), miss Lodge's primary, and far more ambitious objective of showing the condition of the author (Onofrei 2016) especially within the broader context of cultural commodification. Framed by Edward Said's theory of "late style", this study posits that *Author, Author* is not a deficiency of biographical imagination, but a performative act of humanistic resistance. The novel intervenes at a moment of theoretical crisis where post-structuralist fragmentation has threatened to dissolve the potent subject. In response, Lodge champions a fight against the totalizing systems of the cultural industry through the reaffirmation of human autonomy and authenticity. This aligns with Said's definition of late style as a phenomenon involving "a nonharmonious, nonserene tension, and, above all, a sort of deliberately unproductive productiveness going against..." ("Late Style" ch. 1). Crucially, one of the most notable things that Said has been "going against" is the commercialism which distains art, which essentially echoes Adorno's negative attitude towards cultural industry ("Late Style" ch. 1). "Late style" involves, therefore, a spirit that does refuses to conform to standards of the market; there seems to exist a certain artistic freedom towards the end of an artist's working life. Primarily, the paper examines how Lodge utilizes the figure of Henry James to expose the perils of a literary culture where artistic value is subsumed by the brutal violence of publicity, the dominance of the marketplace, and toxic peer competition. Through James's struggle, Lodge

illuminates the friction between traditional ideals of literary creation—characterized by quiet reflection and intellectual autonomy—and the neoliberal pressures that threaten to commodify the author’s identity. Furthermore, the paper situates Lodge’s narrative strategy within Said’s broader project to reconstruct humanism in the face of anti-humanist theory. Rejecting the “death of the author”, Lodge echoes Vico’s secular principle that the historical world is made by humans and understood through human agency. By resisting the instrumental rationality that prioritizes profit over aesthetic integrity, *Author, Author* demonstrates that late-style writing functions as a critical practice. It is an exercise of the “cogito”, “questioning, upsetting, and reformulating” the “commodified, packaged, uncontroversial, and uncritically codified certainties” of the market (“Humanism” 28). Ultimately, the novel serves as Lodge’s own manifesto of resistance, asserting that even in the late stages of a career, the author retains the autonomy to disrupt the logic of commodification and uphold the transformative potential of the humanistic spirit.

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R

Marie RAULT (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris), ***Cartographier l'intime collectif : hétérotopies autochtones et communautés affectives chez Flora: Devatine, Joy Harjo et Vera Duarte***

Panel 5.9

À partir de la notion d'hétérotopie développée par Michel Foucault, cette communication examine la manière dont les œuvres de Joy Harjo, Flora Devatine et Vera Duarte construisent des espaces alternatifs qui échappent aux logiques héritées de la domination coloniale. Ces hétérotopies ne constituent pas seulement des lieux symboliques de refuge : elles deviennent des espaces de réappropriation culturelle où les héritages historiques sont réinterprétés à travers une expérience sensible du territoire, du corps et de la mémoire. Une attention particulière est également portée au rôle des affects dans cette reconfiguration. Les émotions qui traversent ces œuvres – douleur, colère, espoir, solidarité – dépassent l'expérience individuelle pour participer à la constitution de communautés affectives fondées sur une mémoire partagée. La poésie apparaît ainsi comme un espace où l'expérience intime rejoint une réflexion collective sur la justice, la transmission et les héritages coloniaux.

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Simone REBORA (University of Verona), ***Being and Reading: Existential Discourse on the Goodreads Platform***

Panel 3.3

Amongst the many reasons that we turn to the “silly awful hurting words” — as Mrs. Bowles from Fahrenheit 451 would call them — of literary masterpieces, musing over our mortality plays no secondary role. In fact, just like the poem “Dover’s Beach” in Bradbury’s classic, literature often manages to cut through the comforting narratives of our everyday life and bring us face to face with our most unsettling existential concerns (Sopcak et al. 2022). On

the other hand, many see in contemporary society a hedonistic and narcissistic drift aimed at erasing any form of existential challenge and, even more so, the ultimate challenge which is one's own death (Han, Lipovetski). This leads us to ask whether, in the current cultural context, the reading of literary texts can preserve a certain existential attitude toward life, or whether it, too, gradually becomes flattened into the one-dimensionality of mere entertainment and distraction.

Our approach merges qualitative and computational methods to answer this very question, thus offering an example of “computational literary studies” (Bode, Gius) or “distant reading” (Moretti, Underwood). We start from transcripts of participants reflecting on Blanchot’s *L’instant de ma mort* (Sopcak 2013), to develop a computational semantic profile of existential reading. This enables us to automate the identification of existential engagement with literature and test, on the large scale, which factors are more strongly associated with it. We analysed a corpus of 10.000 book reviews downloaded from a “Digital Social Reading” (Pianzola) platform, Goodreads, predicting the level of engagement with existential themes demonstrated by the reviewer based on their appreciation of the reviewed book (rating) and its genre. Given the universality of existential themes, we also included as a predictor in our model the proportion of first person plural pronouns, as a measure of the extent to which reviewers frame their reflections in terms of a shared human experience rather than an individual one. Interestingly, this turned out to be the single best predictor of existential reading, suggesting that books that elicit existential engagement also encourage readers to transcend the boundaries of their personal experience and articulate it in terms of a collective “we.”

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Neus ROTGER (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya), *In the Wake of Others: Levinasian Ethics and the Affective Imaginaries of Loneliness*

Panel 6.4

This paper examines loneliness as an affective and ethical condition, exploring how literature renders visible the intertwined experiences of harm, abandonment, and the possibility of repair. Drawing on Emmanuel Levinas’s philosophy of responsibility and alterity, I approach loneliness not as a purely psychological state but as a site where the ethical encounter with the Other becomes fraught, deferred, or denied. To live in the wake of others, Levinas reminds us, is to remain answerable to the traces of their suffering and to the demand their absence continues to make. Loneliness, in this sense, marks both the failure and the possibility of relation—a threshold where the limits of justice, recognition, and care are exposed.

Building on this ethical framework, the paper turns to the affective and political dimensions of loneliness as they emerge in both philosophical and literary registers. First, I explore loneliness through an ethical lens, considering how this emotion—or cluster of emotions—functions not only as a subjective experience but also as a site where harm and abandonment become visible. Here I draw on the concept of ethical loneliness developed by Jill Stauffer in *Ethical Loneliness: The Injustice of Not Being Heard* (Columbia University Press, 2015), as well as on the writings of Jean Améry and Levinas. Within this framework, loneliness operates as a diagnostic for failures of recognition and repair, exposing how

structures of power perpetuate the silencing of those who have been wronged. Rather than centering on acts of wrongdoing, this approach foregrounds the ongoing effects of abandonment—the inability to be heard, to find witness, or to inhabit a shared moral world. Loneliness thus reveals the gap between the rhetoric of justice and the lived experience of neglect, calling attention to the emotional economies through which harm persists and the ethical demands such harm continues to make upon others.

Second, I turn to a reading of Daša Drndić's fiction to examine loneliness as a form of ethical testimony. Across works such as *Doppelgänger* (2002), *Trieste* (2007), *Leica Format* (2003/2015) and *Belladonna* (2012/2017), Drndić confronts the legacies of historical violence and the solitude of those left behind by official histories. I will consider how the structure, voice, and form of Drndić's work perform a resistance to closure and complicity, and how its evocation of memory, silence, and trauma speaks to the unhealed legacies of violence in the former Yugoslavia. Through fragmentation, citation, and repetition, Drndić's narrative strategies enact the difficulty of representing abandonment while insisting on the ethical necessity of listening. Her characters' solitude becomes a mode of witness, transforming isolation into an affective testimony that exposes the lingering injuries of history.

Bringing together Levinas's ethics of responsibility and affective approaches inspired by Sara Ahmed and Lauren Berlant, this paper argues that literature transforms loneliness into an ethical and political inquiry. Through its capacity to translate private affect into shared meaning, literature makes perceptible the invisible injuries of neglect and the fragile gestures of care that respond to them. In this sense, the affective imaginaries of loneliness are not merely reflections of suffering but experiments in reimagining relationality, responsibility, and community—in the wake of others.

Neus Rotger (nrotgerc@uoc.edu) is an Associate Professor of Literary Theory in the Arts and Humanities Department at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya in Barcelona, Spain. Her research focuses on critical theory, narrative studies, cultural history and global literary studies. She has published articles on these topics in journals like *Studies in the Novel*, *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, *Journal of Global History*, *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* and *Journal of Medical Humanities*, and has edited the book *Global Literary Studies: Key Concepts* (De Gruyter 2022, with D. Roig-Sanz). She has been a visiting researcher at Stanford, Sorbonne-Paris IV, UC Berkeley and Oxford. Currently she is PI of the project "Narratives At the Margins of Europe -NAME", funded by the Spanish Research Agency. She is editor-in-chief of *Theory Now. Journal of Literature, Critique and Thought*, consulting editor for *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, and member of the editorial board of *Argumenta Philosophica*. In 2024 she was appointed a member of the Scientific Advisory Council against Loneliness (CACS) of the Barcelona City Council.

Sushree ROUTRAY (Independent scholar), *Affective Ambivalence: Ethics, Motherhood, and the Hermeneutics of Precarity in Contemporary South Asian Fiction*

Panel 5.6

This paper examines how contemporary South Asian women's fiction reimagines motherhood as an affective and ethical site of ambivalence, vulnerability, and resistance. Engaging with the theoretical frameworks of postcritique, affect theory, and the philosophy of precarity, it proposes a hermeneutics of precarity that reads maternal ambivalence not as failure or moral lack but as a deeply human mode of ethical attunement. Drawing on Rita Felski's call to move beyond suspicion and Judith Butler's ethics of precarious life, the paper foregrounds how emotions such as resentment, care, exhaustion, and love coexist within maternal experience and literary form, producing what might be called an erotics of uncertainty. Through close readings of Avni Doshi's *Burnt Sugar*, Anuradha Roy's *All the*

Lives We Never Lived, and Geetanjali Shree's *Tomb of Sand*, the paper explores how these narratives unsettle idealised paradigms of motherhood and feminine virtue. Each novel stages the mother figure as a precarious subject, torn between social expectation and interior longing, between the ethics of care and the desire for selfhood. The reading of these texts through the lens of precarity and postcritical affect reveals how literature performs an act of ethical ambivalence, inviting messy, porous interpretations rather than stable conclusions. This interpretive openness becomes an ethical stance in itself, acknowledging the contradictions that structure maternal love and feminine agency in late modern South Asian societies. In this postcritical framework, literary reading becomes a performative and affective act that entwines empathy with estrangement, intimacy with critical distance. The maternal body, fragmented and porous, becomes a site where ethics and affect converge, a space of exposure that challenges the binaries of strength and fragility, autonomy and dependence. By embracing the precariousness of both motherhood and interpretation, the paper rethinks the critic's position as one of relational vulnerability rather than detached authority. Ultimately, this paper argues that the maternal ambivalence depicted in *Burnt Sugar*, *All the Lives We Never Lived*, and *Tomb of Sand* offers a compelling model for an ethical reading practice grounded in precarity, care, and interdependence. Through an erotics of reading that welcomes contradiction and incompleteness, contemporary South Asian women's writing transforms the maternal from a trope of idealised virtue into a performative space of affective and ethical inquiry.

Sushree Routray (sroutray@hs.iitr.ac.in) is a PhD candidate in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India. Her doctoral thesis, "Maternal Ambivalence and Patriarchal Motherhood: A Matricentric Reading of Select Contemporary South Asian Maternal Fiction," explores the affective and ideological dimensions of motherhood in South Asian literature. Her research interests include Motherhood Studies, Gender Studies, Feminist Phenomenology, and South Asian Literature. Her work has appeared in *Asian Studies Review*, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Louisiana State University Press, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, and Macmillan Press, among others

Krzysztof ROWIŃSKI (Trinity College Dublin), *Affective Responses to Failure in Twentieth-Century Literature and Film: Beyond Redemption*

Panel 7.4

Despite the seeming cultural imperative to succeed in the globalized Anglophone culture, failure narratives are on par with success stories in terms of popularity: authors and works celebrating failure have gained a massive following and continue to be important reference points. All around the world, stories of failure abound, from motivational speeches, to literary quotes taken out of context, to entire conventions and coaching programs devoted to failure. In countries such as Poland and Italy, failure holds a special place in cultural repertoires, as a form of moral victory or a historical tragedy, seen in narratives from the nineteenth century to this day. What many of these cultural celebrations of failure share is a positioning of the act of failing as a life lesson, an aesthetic of a cultural rebellion, or a parable with an ultimate happy ending: in most of these popular stories, failure ends well and thus gains a redeeming quality. What receives decidedly less attention, however, are stories that fail to provide an uplifting lesson: failure that ends badly, doesn't lead to success, and thus cannot be mobilized in the name of a larger strategy with a lasting impact—and at the same time, manages to preserve a political commitment that does not allow a lapse into nihilism. In my presentation, I discuss the affective and narrative allure of redemptive narratives of failure and offer an alternative approach, centred on the idea of failure's ephemeral effects and going beyond redemption. In examining the political potential of affective responses to failure

on examples from twentieth-century performance and literature, I offer a theory of failure which allows us to learn with, rather than from, failure as we reconfigure our notions of the future, politics, and engagement in literature.

Krzysztof Rowiński (k.rowinski@tcd.ie) is a literary comparatist working at Trinity College Dublin. He is the initiator and co-founder of the Fail Worse research network, devoted to rethinking academic approaches failure across the humanities and social sciences. His book, *Failure Narratives Beyond Redemption: Twentieth Century Literature and Film* (forthcoming in April 2026 with Routledge) argues for the importance of non-redemptive readings of failure in US American, Italian, and Polish literature of the mid twentieth century. His publications on literature, performance, and cultural memory have come out in *Italian Studies*, *Slavonic and East European Review*, *Bloomsbury*, and others.

Hélène RUFAT (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona), *Du plurilinguisme franco-espagnol de Jorge Semprun à l'hétérolinguisme du fragnol chez Lydie Salvayre*

Panel 7.2

S'appuyant sur un cadre théorique combinant les notions d'hétérolinguisme et de francophonies plurielles, ainsi que sur une approche comparatiste, cette communication propose d'explorer le passage du plurilinguisme franco-espagnol chez Jorge Semprun à l'hétérolinguisme du fragnol chez Lydie Salvayre, afin de mettre en lumière les enjeux éthiques (voire mythiques) liés à la mixité linguistique dans la littérature contemporaine. Les expériences migratoires de deux auteurs les ont conduits à vivre une hybridité culturelle qui remet en cause les langues dominantes utilisées dans leurs écrits, la mémoire historique et personnelle ainsi que l'éthique de la narration. Chez Semprun, le plurilinguisme se manifeste par une réflexion fouillée sur le français et l'espagnol, qui traduit la tension entre identité nationale, exil et témoignage, mais qui reflète aussi sa formation bourgeoise, en conflit avec ses idéaux communistes. La coexistence linguistique devient alors un outil de recherche d'une vérité. Chez Salvayre, la transcription originale du fragnol met en évidence cette dynamique en assumant la fracture et la contamination des langues. Il sous-tend une écriture de résistance qui refuse la hiérarchie des idiomes et valorise la diversité culturelle. Ce choix engage une éthique de la narration : dire la guerre, l'exil et la transmission sans trahir la complexité des langues, des pensées et des idéologies qui les portent. À terme, cette étude interroge comment le plurilinguisme et l'hétérolinguisme, au-delà des curiosités linguistiques qu'ils illustrent, deviennent des gestes éthiques et politiques, invitant à repenser la littérature en général comme espace de pluralité et de mémoire.

Hélène Rufat (helene.rufat@upf.edu) est professeur de langue française et de littératures francophones à l'Université Pompeu Fabra de Barcelone. Elle est connue comme camusienne, et elle a fondé, en 2017, la «Asociación de Estudios Camusianos en España». Formée au CRI de Grenoble, dans les années 90, elle reste fidèle à la mythocritique dans ses études comparatistes. Elle est ainsi membre de la SELGyC et de l'ESCL/SELC, depuis plus de dix ans, et elle a publié le numéro monographique (n°8) de la revue Cédille consacré aux identités dans les littératures francophones (« Désir et appartenance : regards croisés », sur <https://cedille.webs.ull.es/>). De 2022 à 2025, elle a dirigé le projet de recherche subventionné EGALEF, qui étudiait la littérature-monde en français, en intégrant la mythocritique à la géocritique contemporaine. Parallèlement, au sein de l'alliance européenne EUTOPIA, elle a contribué à la promotion d'une « communauté connectée » appelée « FrancophonieS » qui offre aux étudiants plusieurs activités pour développer leurs connaissances des études culturelles francophones.

Delphine RUMEAU (Université Grenoble Alpes), *The ethics of elegiac poetry. Tombeaux*

for Federico García Lorca

Panel 4.7

I propose to explore ethical aspects of mourning poetry through the specific example of *tombeaux* for Federico García Lorca. The French word *tombeau* has no exact equivalent in other languages: it designates a poem (or a collective book of poems) for a dead person, often a poet or an artist, and it deals with both grief and memory. The genre raises multiple ethical questions: how does poetry respond to death, how can it find the right balance between, on the one hand, expression of sorrow and elegiac lament, and, on the other, celebration and affirmation of survival, at least through the memory of poems? What are the specificities of mourning poetry in the case of the death of a poet? I will explore these tensions in the context of politically engaged poetry, with the example of *tombeaux* for Federico García Lorca. The death of the Andalusian poet in 1936 triggered a shockwave that spread far and wide, particularly in internationalist left-wing circles. It gave rise to a considerable number of poems and collections, in multiple languages, some compiled almost immediately, some written over a longer period of time. The first major *tombeau* for Lorca, a collective book, was compiled by Emilio Prados, in 1937, mainly for Spanish readers, in the context of the civil war. Many of the poems it contained were soon translated (especially Antonio Machado's "El crimen fue en Granada") and joined a canon of internationalist poetry. How did this poetry circulate and its ethical stakes change with time? I will focus on Soviet poems written in the 1960s, and especially on a poem by Nikolay Aseev, as a response to previous homages.

Delphine Rumeau (delphine.rumeau@gmail.com) is professor of comparative literature at the University of Grenoble. She was vice president of the Société Française de Littérature Générale et Comparée between 2021 and 2025. She works on the transnational circulation of poetic genres, especially elegies and *tombeaux*; on the relations between poetry, memory and politics; on reception studies. She co-edited *Tombeaux poétiques et artistiques. Fortunes d'un genre* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2020) and *Épopées postcoloniales. Poétiques transatlantiques* (Classiques Garnier, 2020); her latest monograph is *Comrade Whitman. From Russian to Internationalist Icon* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2024)

Iris RUSU (Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu and University of Bucharest), **Moral Geographies of the Grey Zone in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Unconsoled*, *When We Were Orphans*, and *The Buried Giant***

Panel 10.2

Analysing how Kazuo Ishiguro experiments with time in what Peter Kemp calls the "bewilderment trilogy" – *The Unconsoled* (1995), *When We Were Orphans* (2000), *Never Let Me Go* (2005) – Ana-Karina Schneider deftly proposes that Ishiguro's choice of genre in these novels – *Bildungsroman* and detective fiction – turns temporal fictional experimentation into intelligible narratives. The publication of two more novels since Kemp's clustering of Ishiguro's mid-career novels calls for new categories, all the while not denying the relevance of those that already exist. Rooted in Schneider's apt analysis of Kemp's trilogy, my approach adds a more recent novel to the discussion, focusing on the place of trauma and its aftermath. This contribution will discuss Ishiguro's experimentation with the places and spaces of trauma in *The Unconsoled* (1995), *When We Were Orphans* (2000), and *The Buried Giant* (2015). In the trilogy I propose, the attempts at self-reorganisation following traumatic events (Michelle Balaev) are ignited by both the narrators' unreliable memories as well as by the topophrenic (Robert Tally Jr) and topophobic (Daniel Trigg) spaces, or, rather, non-places (Marc Augé)/ atopias (Siobhan Carroll) in the novels. My approach indicates that the narrators' flawed sense of time affects the perception of

spatiality, which, in turn, becomes a tool in the analysis of trauma and of its aftermath.

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Stefania RUTIGLIANO (University of Bari), *Ethics and Affect in Cli-fi: Robinson’s The Ministry for the Future and Ehrlich’s Malé*

Panel 2.4

I would like to take a closer look at the ethical function of literature – that is able to ‘construct empathy and compassion in ways highly relevant to citizenship’ (Martha Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice*), as well as to promote ‘resistance and change’ (Ursula LeGuin) – with reference to Climate Change Fiction, in order to measure its ability to represent the complexity of the challenges posed by global warming as a hyperobject (Morton 2013, Goodbody 2017) and to persuade people to take urgent collective action. In this sense, the rhetorical characteristics (Doyle 2016, Fløttum 2017) of Anthropocene narratives (Trexler 2015, Johns-Putra 2019, Claeys 2022) play an important role in the conceptualisation of climate change (Ghosh 2016) and in the public’s negotiation of its meaning (Booth 1992, Heise 2008): the way metaphors, images, terminological choices and dystopian plots are perceived (Cox 2006) determines the awareness, agency or, paradoxically, fatalist inaction of the public (Kramar 2023, Raie-Rieken 2021, Fløttum 2017). The main responses of the non-fictional world to climate change as depicted in Cli-fi (Milner-Burgmann 2020, Weintrobe 2021) highlight the importance of effective communication (Augé 2023, Denisova 2025, Hügel 2020) in promoting countermeasures (persuasion as performativity). This suggests a necessary reflection on the ‘realistic’ role of fictional narratives (Trexler 2015) and their contribution to dispelling denialism and uniquely combining rational knowledge and emotional recognition (Benedetti 2021). Thus, the rhetorical element, regarding the ethical and civic commitment of Cli-fi through emotional involvement, establishes the connection between the private and the public, outlines the ‘intimate public sphere’ (Berlant 2008) and concerns the intergenerational perspective, when novels talk about the rights of future generations to live in a sustainable environment or the crucial question of the survival of the human and non-human world. After investigating the aims – climate justice, anti-anthropocentrism, sustainable economy, etc. – for which the argumentative strategy in climate change narratives resorts to empathy and, as representative of denial of eco-anxiety, can be read according to Williams’s ‘Structure of Feeling’, I would like to analyse Kim Stanley Robinson’s dystopia *The Ministry for the Future* (2020) which, by introducing the representation of global warming as trauma through the experience of one of the characters and the violent actions of a group of eco-terrorists, gives rise to an interpretation of Cli-fi from the perspective of Trauma Studies (Caruth 1996, 2013, 2014, Kurtz 2018, LaCapra 2001, Ballangee-Kelman 2021). Furthermore, the widespread setting that thematises local/global tension, the insistent issue of climate justice and the very purpose of the Ministry, established to protect future generations through mitigation actions, suggest the construction of a more supportive and equitable human community. I would also like to propose a second case study: *Malé* by Ehrlich (2020), which also deals with the trauma of loss and the intergenerational perspective (for example, with the missing actress Mona Bauch, whom her father, Professor Elmar Bauch, went to look for on the island), but above all enriches the reflection on the link between ethics and affect due to the protagonism

of nature, the anti-anthropocentric perspective and the search for a language adequate for a complex phenomenon such as global warming, confronting readers with the need to restore the creative potential of language and literature by making them accessible to 'the expansion of the possible and the experience of beauty' (*Malé*).

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She is a member of the Possibility Studies Network (2023 she was a speaker at the 3rd International Conference on Possibility Studies in Dublin). She is also a member of the Utopian Studies Society (2025 she participated in the 25th Conference in Valencia with a paper entitled *Intergenerational confrontation: The Ageing of People and the Planet in Climate Change Dystopias*. In 2022 she participated in the 22nd Utopian Studies Society Conference in Brighton (13th–15th July 2022) with a paper entitled *Which hope for the Posthuman? Human and artificial Intelligence in Pierce's He, She and It and McEwan's Machines like me*.

At the last ESCL Conference (Paris 2024), she presented a paper entitled *Game theory and dystopian novels: an analysis of Crash (1973) and High Rise (1975) by J.G. Ballard*. Some of her latest publications are: *Die Sprache der Überzeugung als Kritik an der westlichen Kultur in Carlo Michelstaedters Werk* (De Gruyter 2024, pp. 379-391). *Demoni e Dybbukim: il soprannaturale nei racconti 'americani' di Isaac Bashevis Singer* (Echo, 6, 2024); *La Weltliteratur nell'ambiente digitale: Positron di Margaret Atwood* (Ledizioni 2025, pp. 441-449).

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Sabrina SAMPAIO MARTINS (University of Geneva), *'L'autre pays au bout du monde, c'est le mien': Implication and Responsibility in Michael Ondaatje and Boubacar Boris Diop's Novels*

Panel 9.4

In Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* (2000), a forensic pathologist returns to Sri Lanka during the civil war and studies the body of a victim of political violence. Because of her involvement with human rights activism, Ondaatje's protagonist constantly links the civil war to other atrocities and notes on the difficulty of distinguishing one event from another. In *Murambi, le livre des ossements* (2000), Boubacar Boris Diop depicts the Rwandan genocide with fictional testimonies of victims and perpetrators and narrativizes the return of an exile. His novel denounces international complicity during the genocide as well as distorted representations by the media while simultaneously acknowledging personal feelings of helplessness in the face of global extreme violence. While they write about different events, Diop and Ondaatje both underline issues of affective responsiveness and responsibility when a "certain field of intelligibility" (Butler 2009) is lacking. Drawing from discourses in trauma studies and affect theory, this paper will then examine how both novels attempt to resist this impasse by reconsidering analogies of distance in their narrative practices.

Sabrina Sampaio Martins (sabrina.sampaio Martins@unige.ch) is a PhD candidate and teaching assistant in Comparative Literature at the University of Geneva (CH) since August 2024. Her dissertation project examines dimensions of worldedness in contemporary narratives of witnessing, such as their questioning of ideas such as 'the human' and 'the world', and their critique/engagement with human rights discourse. Her research fields include memory and trauma studies, world literature, theories of reading and migrant literature. She has also written on the poetry of Paul Celan and translated academic articles from English to French.

Joel SAMUELSSON (Uppsala University) with **Ingeborg LÖFGREN**, *Claims to a Shared World and a Shared Sense of Words – Climate Activism, Justice, and Literary Imagination*

Panel 7.3

In rethinking how literature can offer a valuable source for ethical reflection on human communality and justice, and on our affective and moral responses to a shared world and fractured sense of reality, it is natural to turn to the interdisciplinary field of law and literature, as Nussbaum and others have done (Nussbaum, Fish, Dolin). Law and literature are both objects and products of interpretation. Both presuppose, in a deep sense, the sharedness of language, culture, sense-making and judgement. Both bind us together as creatures of language in a multitude of ways; from how our inner world of sense-making is weaved in linguistic fabric to how our outer societal and physical existence and behaviour are guided and governed by various forms of rules. As ordinary language philosopher J. L. Austin said: “the word is our bond” (Austin, Constable). In this paper we want to examine a concrete instance of how literature and literary imaginativeness can bring conceptual clarity to real-life cases of conflict and rifts in our sense of a shared moral, societal and even scientific reality. We want to compare two examples of harsh sentencing in cases concerning climate activism in the UK and Sweden, respectively. We compare the M25 Conspiracy Case, in which Roger Hallam and other “Just Stop Oil” activists were sentenced to years in prison for conspiracy to engage in non-violent protests, with a series of Swedish court cases in which non-violent climate activists were charged with, and in some cases convicted of, committing sabotage. In both instances, in the UK and in Sweden, the alleged crimes took place in 2022, and the juridical aftermath is still unfolding. To further understanding of the ethical and juridical significance of these two cases, we make use of the Swedish author and activist Sara Lidman’s notion of “sam-vett” [con-science] as an analytical lens. Lidman invented but never defined this word – a word clearly rooted in, but not identical with, the Swedish word for conscience [samvete]. To trace its meaning one must look at how she uses it – in a novel, in political articles, and in a legal defence (she was also a convicted climate activist in the 1980s). She repeatedly uses the word in legal and semi-legal contexts. We argue that the literary imaginativeness of Lidman’s concept can shed light on these two legal cases and help bring out the ethical and juridical stakes in them. It is from within the framework of Ordinary Language Philosophy, understanding meaning as use (Wittgenstein, Cavell, Moi), that we claim Lidman’s literary use of the con-science can work as an illuminating object of comparison (Wittgenstein). In particular, we will compare it with Hallam’s appeal to “common sense” (Hallam) and the verdicts interpretation of the activists’ “conscientious motivation”.

Joel Samuelsson, LL.M., Jur. Dr, (joel.samuelsson@uu.se) is Professor of Private Law at Uppsala University, Sweden. He specializes in contract, legal methodology and legal theory, and has written extensively on legal hermeneutics from a Wittgensteinian vantage point.

Haun SAUSSY (University of Chicago), *Comparison as Ethics: Philosophical Considerations*

Panel 4.1

Fundamentalists of all stripes brandish the scarecrow of relativism, be it cultural or ethical. Yet ethical actions take their meaning from relations. The aim of dogmatists is to exclude every relation (context, culture, or center of authority) but one from pertinence; it is thus an impoverishment, not a solid grounding, of the ethical. The ethics _of_ ethics, if it can be spoken thus, depends on fully and accurately describing the network of relations in which action (including the creation of works of art) takes place. With guidance from Leibniz, Peirce, and Glissant, this paper will attempt to describe an ethics adapted to comparative literature.

Haun Saussy (hsaussy@uchicago.edu) is University Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Chicago where he teaches in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations and Committee on Social Thought. His main areas of interest are language, translation, and rhetoric. Among many publications, he is the author of *The Problem of a*

Chinese Aesthetic (1993), *Great Walls of Discourse and Other Adventures in Cultural China* (2001), *The Ethnography of Rhythm: Orality and Its Technologies* (2016), *Translation as Citation: Zhuangzi Inside Out* (2017).

Anna SCHUBERTOVÁ (Charles University/Institute of Czech Literature), **“The Broad Sense”: The Ethical and Aesthetic Autonomy of the Realist Novel**

Panel 7.9

The paper introduces current literary-theoretical discussions on the ethical dimension of literature's aesthetic autonomy and draws on these insights to interpret two canonical realist novels: Honoré de Balzac's *Le Père Goriot* (1835) and George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860). The analysis of both novels concentrates on what I term, drawing on George Eliot's phrasing, their “broad sense”: the affective and representational stance both novels' Bildungsroman protagonists assume at their maturity. Over the 20th-century, literary autonomy became a subject of intense clashes between anti-autonomist and pro-autonomist theories of literature. Recent contributions by Aukje van Rooden, Mandy Dröscher-Teille, and Tony Bennett move past the debate about autonomy's worth to question the dominant understanding of autonomy as art's separation from the social and political world. Instead, they highlight an alternative, pre-modernist concept of “ethical aesthetic autonomy.” Rooted in the Romantic paradigm of literary criticism, this model presupposes that literature's power to positively engage social and ethical issues functions in tandem with its formal separation from other spheres of life. Eschewing the dichotomy between “pure” autonomous art and heteronomous subservience to political causes is particularly important for the realist novel, which some twentieth-century theorists excluded from literature because of its supposedly heteronomous status. The second part of the paper turns to Honoré de Balzac's *Le Père Goriot* (1835) and George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), arguing that the “broad sense” they establish can serve as a key metaphor for the realist novel's ethical-aesthetic autonomy. The protagonists in both novels evolve from limited egoism and narrow morality into a consciousness that is simultaneously ethical, affective, and representational. In both works, this final consciousness resolves the novel's self-reflexive examination of a possible synthesis between affectively strong artistic form and the broad, multicentric worlds of Paris and England. Instead of promoting moral criticism, the paper suggests that the notion of ethical autonomy can fruitfully illuminate the realist novel's sophisticated interpenetration of form and content.

Anna Schubertová (schubertova@ucl.cas.cz) is a postdoctoral researcher in the Literature & Society Laboratory at the Institute of Czech Literature, CAS. She recently completed her doctorate at Charles University in Prague with a dissertation titled “The Invisible Form: Literary Realism in Twentieth-Century Theory”, which focused on twentieth-century theories of realism and on realist fiction in nineteenth-century French, English, and Czech literature. During her PhD, she completed research stays at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, Queen Mary University of London, and Brown University. Her current interests include novel theory, György Lukács, tragedy in the nineteenth-century novel, and the theme of domestic violence in fiction.

Giulia SCIALPI (Université Paris Nanterre), **Irony as a Site of Identity Negotiation and Intergenerational Dialogue: The Italian case of Luisella Fiumi**

Panel 5.6

This paper examines irony as a site of identity negotiation and intergenerational dialogue in the work of Italian writer Luisella Fiumi (1924–1981), whose literary debut in the 1970s

coincided with a period of intense social and cultural transformation. In her first novel, *Come donna zero* (1974), and later in *Madri e figlie* (1978), Fiumi employs irony both as a stylistic device and as an affective mode through which to reassess her own position. Her condition as a woman and her role as a mother, in fact, must now confront—from a marginal standpoint—both 1970s feminism and the outcomes of the youth protest movement, which have been fully embraced by her two daughters. From a formal perspective, Fiumi structures her narratives through “rubrics”—short, paradigmatic episodes and anecdotal fragments—a compositional strategy that turns irony into a principle of organization and a mode of relational world-making. On the thematic plane, irony becomes a tool of satirical critique aimed at normative gender roles and at the power dynamics embodied by male authority figures (notably the husband nicknamed “il Bosi,” a humorous calque on “the boss”). At the same time, irony functions as an affective space in which ethical or political distance between generations can be softened rather than erased. Through humor and affection, Fiumi stages conversations across generational divides that might otherwise remain tense or oppositional. In this sense, irony becomes an affective site capable of transforming literature into a relational practice that mediates conflict and generates a shared relational space, where identities are continually negotiated and reshaped through ongoing exchange.

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Hannah SCOTT DEUCHAR (Queen Mary University of London), *The Archive, the Novel, and the Problem of Justice*

Panel 9.3

This year’s conference theme asks crucial questions about the ethics of writing and reading, the wider ethical relationship between the (literary) text and the world, and the convergence of ethics and affect within literary writing and studies. My paper looks for answers to some of those questions by homing in on the ethical problem of justice in the modern Arabic literary tradition – a tradition, I would argue, whose historic neglect within Comparative Literature in itself gestures to the problems of epistemic justice that haunt our field. I identify a canon of modern Arabic novelistic texts in which instances of literary or legal mis/translation and in/equivalence are made sites in to explore the fraught question of post/colonial justice. Reading these texts in relation to the French and British archives and literary traditions that are their intertexts, I ask what they might teach us, first, about literary justice, and second, about our own scholarly and literary practice today.

I focus specifically on three novels centred on colonial legal and translation scandals. Maḥmūd Ṭāhir Ḥaqqī’s *‘Adhrā’ Dinshwayy* (*The Maiden of Dinshaway*, 1906), narrativizes the so-called Dinshaway Affair, at which four Egyptians were hanged and many more flogged and imprisoned following the death of one British officer. Posing itself as an alternative to the historical archive, the novel explores colonial legal comparatism and translation in ways that led it to reject legal justice entirely. Instead, it mistranslates Victor Hugo in order to produce an intertheological, translingual concept of radically inequivalent compassion or *raḥma*, which I argue might have resonance for translation and literary theorists today. This notion of *raḥma*, however, echoes strangely in two later works to which I then turn: Sudanese intellectual Tayeb Salih’s *Mawsim al-hijra ilā al-shmāl* (*Season of Migration to the North*, 1966), a reimagining of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* centring on a fictional London murder trial, and Palestinian author Adania Shibli’s *Tafṣīl thānawī* (*Minor Detail*, 2020), about the 1948 Nirim Affair in which a Palestinian girl was raped and murdered by a group of Israeli soldiers. These latter two texts reject grand concepts or theories; they

ultimately take no refuge in the notion of literature as an act of reparation or justice. But as the twentieth century turns into the twenty-first and the possibility of justice in (settler) colonial contexts becomes ever more remote, to pose questions of historical in/equivalence and repetition is, for these authors, to reach to the future in the face of its devastating foreclosure.

Hannah Scott Deuchar (h.scottdeuchar@qmul.ac.uk) is a Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Arabic and Comparative Literature at Queen Mary University of London. She received her PhD in 2021 from NYU and is currently a Humboldt Research Fellow joint-hosted by EUME and FU. Her first monograph, *Translate and Rule: Justice, Arabic Literature, and the Colonial Archive*, is forthcoming with Stanford University Press in 2026 and explores translation's central role in the making and contestation of colonial law. Her work on Arabic literature, cultural history, and typography has appeared in edited volumes as well as in *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, *Comparative Literature*, and *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

Bincy SEBASTIAN (National Institute of Technology Calicut, India), **Affective Archives of Kashmiri Women: Commemoration and Memorialisation of the Disappeared**

Panel 7.5

This paper examines the affective archives of Kashmiri women as relational, embodied, and emplaced memory practices through texts such as "Resisting Occupation in Kashmir" (2018) and "Can You Hear Kashmiri Women Speak?" (2020). The recent state-imposed bans on these works underscore the urgency of attending to alternative archival forms that resist official silencing. Both texts foreground the intimate and political aftermath of enforced disappearances in Kashmir, enabling a conceptual move toward what Derrida (1994) terms a hauntological condition, in which the disappeared persist as spectral yet materially consequential traces. This spectrality is unevenly distributed, materializing most intensely in the lives of Kashmiri women whose daily existence is structured around searching for their disappeared kin in a political environment that denies accountability and obstructs mourning. Without a body, ritual, or funeral, these women inhabit a prolonged liminality in which closure is indefinitely deferred. As Malathi de Alwis (2009) notes, the "absent present/present absence" of the disappeared suspends death itself, rendering the missing both everywhere and nowhere. This private liminality is further intensified by structural interventions such as the repeated demolition of commemorative spaces like the Lawaypur memorial. Such erasures foreclose communal mourning and intensify the emotional burden these women bear. In response to these layers of disappearance, Kashmiri women through memory practices negotiate grief, articulate the politics of mourning, and resist state-driven erasure. These practices range from everyday symbolics of countermemory to more visible forms of affective archival labour that sustain the presence of the disappeared in a landscape structured to efface them. These practices collectively align with Riaño-Alcalá and Baines's (2011) conception of affective archives as "living, embodied, emplaced, and relational memory practices." By sustaining the presence of the disappeared, they also "break the state's monopoly over memory," as Schirmer (1994) argues, generating subjugated knowledge built from the local and personal. Affective archives thus function not only as repositories of memory but as interventions in the political field, challenging militarised forgetting and asserting the lived realities threatened by bureaucratic obfuscation. By focusing on women's affective expressions, such as their testimonies, street protests, and narrative accounts as represented in the selected texts, this paper reclaims emotional and embodied memory as a critical site of feminist resistance. Together, these archival practices sustain bonds between the living and the disappeared, transforming grief into agency. This paper foregrounds how presence is remade in the face of erasure and how Kashmiri women

enact alternative pathways for justice, accountability, and remembrance in a landscape marked by disappearance.

Bincy Sebastian (bincoy_p230052ms@nitc.ac.in) is a doctoral researcher in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the National Institute of Technology Calicut (NITC), India, where she is pursuing her PhD under the supervision of Dr. Reju George Mathew. Having completed her second year in July 2025, her research project, “Memory, Trauma, and Resistance in Kashmiri Women’s Narratives in English,” investigates how women’s memoirs, testimonies, and fiction operate as affective archives that resist erasure, reconfigure collective memory, and challenge dominant historiographies of the Kashmir conflict. The urgency of this inquiry is reinforced by recent political developments in the region, including the abrogation of Article 370 and increasing restrictions on academic and literary expressions, which foreground the need to preserve alternative archives and counter-narratives. Before joining NIT Calicut, she earned her undergraduate degree in English, Journalism, and Political Science from Kristu Jayanti College, Bangalore, and a master’s degree in English Language and Literature from Newman College, India. Having qualified the National Eligibility Test (NET) for lectureship, she subsequently served as an Assistant Professor of English for two years, teaching both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Her research interests encompass feminist memory studies, affect theory, and trauma studies, with a particular focus on South Asian cultural and political contexts.

Josef ŠEBEK (Charles University, Prague), **The Pleasures of Representation: A Postcritical Reading of Auerbach’s *Mimesis***

Panel 9.5

Erich Auerbach’s *Mimesis*, published in German 80 years ago in 1946, remains firmly rooted in the canon of comparative and world literature. In recent decades, its readings have shifted towards post-Eurocentric framework, emphasizing Auerbach’s spatial and intellectual displacements between Germany, Turkey, and United States (Edward Said, Azade Seyhan, Emily Apter, Kader Konuk) as well as his Jewishness (James I. Porter, Avihu Zakai). On the other hand, from the current perspective, the geo-cultural and gender blindness of his book is more than obvious. In my paper, I want to choose another point of departure, that of the ethical dimension of his method of reading canonical texts and practicing philological scholarship, in the context of current postcritical thought as well as the situation of literature as a “mere” medium among media. Auerbach never leaves the social and ethical realms when analysing samples of his chosen literary texts and he is closely followed in this by authors that he strongly influenced, as different as Fredric Jameson, Stephen Greenblatt, and Jacques Rancière. His seminal ethical intervention is probably the core definition of realism as a serious or tragical representation of ordinary characters in wider historical circumstances. I want to build on this insight – not as a valid definition of historical realism but as an Aristotelian/Ricœurian view of literary ethics and anthropology – and ask how in his methodology individual interpretive insight, situated relation towards text, *philia*, pleasure, and affect, and otherness become core elements of the act of reading and interpretation and how these aspects of Auerbach’s approach can be positioned within current postcritical debates, epitomized by the work of Rita Felski from the last two decades.

Josef Šebek (Josef.Sebek@ff.cuni.cz) is an assistant professor at the Department of Czech and Comparative Literature, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague, and an associated researcher at CEFRES, Prague. He specializes in the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu and current French sociology of literature, queer studies, life writing and media theory of literature. He is the author of the book *Literature and the Social: Bourdieu, Williams, and their Successors* (Prague, Academia 2019), co-author of *Emerging Contours of the Medium: Literature and Mediality* (London, Bloomsbury Academic 2024) and he wrote the postface to

the new edition of the Czech translation of Auerbach's *Mimesis* (Prague, Argo 2024).

Nelli SHULMAN (Free University Riga), *Utopia/Dystopia: Ethics, Affect, and Community in the "Noon World" of the Strugatsky Brothers*

Panel 6.9

The science-fiction universe created by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky in their "Noon World" cycle (1960s–1980s) offers one of the most complex literary explorations of utopian imagination in twentieth-century literature. Emerging from the intellectual and ideological context of late Soviet modernity, the Noon World presents a future society organized around scientific progress, collective responsibility, and the ethical development of humanity. Yet beneath the apparent harmony of this communist utopia lies a persistent questioning of the limits of social engineering, the ambiguity of progress, and the emotional costs of creating a perfect world. This paper examines the Strugatsky brothers' utopian project through the intertwined categories of ethics and affect, asking how emotions, desires, fears, and forms of attachment shape the possibility—or impossibility—of an ethical community. Drawing on theories of affect studies and utopian/dystopian studies, I argue that the "Noon World" is not simply a representation of an ideal future but a laboratory for examining ethical tensions between individual autonomy and collective responsibility, rational planning and human unpredictability, empathy and paternalism. Particular attention will be paid to the transition from the optimistic narratives of the early Noon cycle, such as *The Way to Amalthea* (1960) and *Noon: 22nd Century* (1962), toward the more ambivalent works of the later period, including *The Inhabited Island* (1969–1971) and *The Beetle in the Anthill* (1979). These texts reveal a gradual transformation of utopia into a space of ethical uncertainty, where attempts to improve humanity generate new forms of vulnerability, exclusion, and control. The figure of the "Progressor"—the enlightened observer who intervenes in the development of less advanced civilizations—becomes central to this ethical dilemma, exposing the tension between compassion and domination. By reading the "Noon World" alongside contemporary debates on utopia, affect, and community, this paper argues that the Strugatsky brothers' science fiction challenges the binary opposition between utopia and dystopia. Their future society is neither a model of perfection nor a warning of inevitable collapse; rather, it is an affective and ethical space where humanity continuously negotiates responsibility toward others. The Strugatskys' work thus remains relevant to contemporary questions about collective futures, technological transformation, and the ethical imagination of possible worlds.

Nelli Shulman (nashulmans@gmail.com) is an independent researcher and writer specializing in Russian literature, cultural history, and gender studies. Her research focuses on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian speculative prose, with particular attention to questions of gender, identity, and narrative form. Her work combines close literary analysis with broader cultural and theoretical perspectives, including ethical criticism and affect theory. Shulman holds an MA in Russian Literature from the State Pushkin Institute in Moscow and has an interdisciplinary academic background in literary and cultural studies. She has taught Russian literature in a range of international academic and educational contexts, including the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Missouri. Her teaching experience has informed her scholarly interest in canon formation, and the ethical challenges of teaching Russian literature in a changing global and political context. Her research has been presented at international conferences and published in edited volumes and academic journals. She is particularly interested in how literature mediates between individual experience and collective frameworks, and in the ways literary texts negotiate questions of morality, social responsibility, and emotional life. In addition to her academic research, Shulman is an active writer of historical fiction and speculative prose. Her creative

work often engages with themes of memory, displacement, and cultural translation, reflecting an ongoing dialogue between scholarly inquiry and literary practice. Across both her academic and creative work, she approaches literature as a critical tool for understanding historical change and human experience.

Agis SIDERAS (Independent Scholar), *Philosophical Reception as Affect: The Case of Martin Heidegger*

Panel 8.3

My talk deals with the change in the reception of Martin Heidegger's philosophy especially in Germany from 2015 on, when certain parts of the so-called *Black Notebooks* (*Schwarze Hefte*) were published. The *Black Notebooks* contain passages that make it quite easy to label Heidegger as an antisemite. The aim of the talk is to show how an enormous shift in the reception of a widely known author can take place solely on the basis of affect. I will describe how the initial affect of rejecting Heidegger's philosophy because of his alleged or factual antisemitism in the course of the reception of the *Black Notebooks* becomes an internalised affect that now serves as a prerequisite in the approach to Heidegger's writings. I will use examples of recent philosophical texts that function through that prerequisite in stating an ethical imperative as a sinequanon for reading and interpreting Heidegger's philosophy. The apparent problem of such an approach becomes more severe taking into account the requirement of objectivity and affectlessness that is much more inherent to philosophical studies than it is to literary studies. I will describe how in recent philosophy a specific branch of "anti-Heidegger literature" has emerged and how it has gained momentum after the publication of the *Black Notebooks*. In addition to that, a side-glance will be cast at the particular way in which the house that publishes Heidegger's works, the Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, has dealt with the foreseeable scandal and has tried to navigate it in its favour.

The first part of the talk will therefore show how the reception paradigm "Heidegger the antisemite" has established an affective and pseudoethical chain of associations continuing with the now apparently inevitable question "Is Heidegger's philosophy close to national socialism?" and even "Is Heidegger's philosophy a kind of nazi philosophy?" that replaces the traditional chain of associations starting with "Heidegger the famous German philosopher" and continuing with, for example, "Heidegger's philosophy and existentialism", "Heidegger's tremendous influence on French philosophy from Sartre to Derrida" and so on. In the second part, this development in the reception of Heidegger's work will be contrasted with the quite different development of the reception of another German author whose relationship with far right politics and the Third Reich has also deeply influenced the approach to his work: Ernst Jünger. I will show how the similarly affect-driven paradigm "Jünger the militarist" as a prerequisite of rejection of his work in Germany has weakened from the 1980s on leading to Jünger's work being widely accepted today. I will interpret the contrast between the development of Heidegger's and Jünger's reception as a reflection of cultural and political changes in German society. In the end I will briefly explain my own position regarding the reception of Heidegger's philosophy today that insists on acknowledging and preserving its huge importance in the development of global philosophical thought while in no way ignoring the implications it has in regard to political conclusions.

Agis Sideras (siderasagis@gmail.com) was born in 1974 as the son of Greek parents in Göttingen, West Germany. He studied German Language and Literature as well as Philosophy at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, where he graduated with a PhD about the poetics of Paul Celan and Gottfried Benn. He is the co-recipient of the Greek State Prize for Translation into a Foreign Language 2007 and was shortlisted for the same prize in 2020.

His publications include the books *Paul Celan und Gottfried Benn – Zwei Poetologien nach 1945* (Koenigshausen & Neumann 2005, Greek edition 2013), *Das abwegige Ich. Subjektivitätsdenken zwischen Benn, Buber, Celan und Heidegger* (forthcoming from Koenigshausen & Neumann, already published in Greece as *Πέραν του ατόμου*, Odos Panos 2025) and *Φιλολογία και Διαμεσολάβηση. Κείμενα για τη νεοελληνική λογοτεχνία και τη μετάφρασή της* (forthcoming from Odos Panos). He has published numerous essays, articles and translations in Greece and Germany. One of his latest translations is the first Greek edition of Martin Buber's main work *I and Thou*. As a scholar he works between the fields of Comparative Literature, Philosophy and Translation Studies with a particular focus on 20th century Greek and German literature and poetics. In the tradition of the Gadamer school he follows the path of German philosophy from Kant to Heidegger putting particular emphasis on the function(s) of subjectivity in philosophical thought as well as in poetological discourses.

Marta SILVERA ROIG (University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria), *San Borondón as Sign, Song and Childlike Body: Image Schemas, Conceptual Metaphor and Intermedial Myth in Canarian Island Imaginaries*

Panel 10.1

This paper examines the Canarian legend of San Borondón, the elusive island that appears and disappears in the Atlantic, through a cognitive-semiotic and intermedial approach. Rather than treating San Borondón simply as a local legend or a geographical curiosity, the paper analyses it as an embodied cultural form: a mythic island whose meanings are repeatedly reconfigured through writing, song, voice, childhood imagination, and visual-cultural memory.

The corpus consists of three short and contrasting materials: María Rosa Alonso's San Borondón, signo de Tenerife (1940), a female-authored intellectual and literary reflection on the island as cultural sign; Mary Sánchez and Los Bandama's "San Borondón (Isla embrujada)", a popular musical performance that gives the legend a female vocal and affective mediation; and the children's song "La Ballena Borondona" by Cancionero Isleño, where the mythical island is reimagined as a whale-like, playful, pedagogical body for young audiences. These three cases allow San Borondón to be studied across different media and cultural functions: as sign, as song, and as childlike body.

Methodologically, the paper combines close reading, conceptual metaphor analysis, and image-schema identification. It focuses on recurrent embodied structures such as CONTAINER, BOUNDARY, PATH, NEAR/FAR, APPEARANCE/DISAPPEARANCE, CONTACT, FORCE, and BODY. These schemas organise the island not as a fixed place, but as a dynamic phenomenon of perception, desire, doubt, and cultural transmission. In Alonso's text, San Borondón can be read as a sign of insular consciousness: a semiotic object that oscillates between historical testimony, collective imagination, and epistemological uncertainty. Here, metaphors such as THE ISLAND IS A SIGN, SEEING IS KNOWING, and THE SEA IS A VEIL become central to the construction of mythic insularity.

In the musical version associated with Mary Sánchez and Los Bandama, the island is re-mediated through voice, rhythm, and popular memory. The myth becomes performative: it is not merely narrated, but sung, remembered, and affectively shared. In this case, the analysis will examine how the elusive island is structured by schemas of attraction, distance, loss, and enchantment, generating metaphors such as THE ISLAND IS AN ENCHANTED OBJECT and MYTH IS A SONG. Finally, "La Ballena Borondona" transforms San Borondón into a child-oriented, animalised, moving body. This version makes especially visible the embodied basis of myth-making: THE ISLAND IS A WHALE, THE SEA IS A PLAYFUL

SPACE, and KNOWLEDGE IS IMAGINATIVE NAVIGATION.

The paper argues that San Borondón's cultural power lies precisely in its instability. Its appearing and disappearing structure is not only a narrative motif, but an image-schematic pattern through which Canarian culture thinks about visibility, belonging, peripherality, desire, and transmission. By moving from female-authored essay to female-voiced song and children's musical pedagogy, the paper shows how a Canarian island myth survives through intermedial transformation. San Borondón is not simply preserved by tradition; it is continually re-embodied through changing media, voices, audiences, and affective forms.

Marta Silvera Roig (marta.silvera@ulpgc.es) is a lecturer and researcher in the Department of Modern Philology, Translation and Interpretation at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Her research focuses on cognitive linguistics, cognitive semiotics, conceptual metaphor, image schemas, affective meaning-making, myth, intermediality, and narrative. She is a member of DiCoS- Discourse, Communication and Society at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, and of SIIM - Studies on Intermediality and Intercultural Mediation at the Complutense University of Madrid. Her recent work explores embodied cognition, emotion, space, and identity in literary and cultural texts, with particular attention to island narratives.

Smita SINGH (Nālandā University), ***Ethics and Affect: Parallel Epistemologies from Nālandā to the Present***

Panel 3.2

The title of this conference – “*Ethics and Affect: Rethinking the Text and the World*” – invites reflection on why certain intellectual traditions must be “rethought” at all. The impulse to rethink often arises from an assumption that existing frameworks are insufficient or require correction. Yet many knowledge traditions, particularly within the Indic and Buddhist worlds, never claimed closure or finality in the first place. They evolved through plurality, coexistence, and *samvāda* (dialogue), where differing perspectives were not competitors but complementary modes of understanding. Rather than “rethinking,” these traditions cultivate parallel thinking – multiple co-existing views that learners may navigate according to their own experiential resonance.

This paper positions the Nālandā Tradition as one such epistemic space of parallel thinking—where ethics and affect were not divided, where intellectual inquiry was inseparable from emotional cultivation, and where reasoning matured through compassion (*karuṇā*), empathy (*anukampā*), and shared awareness (*sahabhāva*). The Nālandā masters – Śāntideva, Dharmakīrti, Atiśa, Chandrakīrti – foregrounded the idea that knowing must transform being, and that transformation is fundamentally affective. As Śāntideva writes in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, “All joy in this world comes from wishing others to be happy.” Knowledge is ethical when it shapes our relational consciousness.

This paper also brings into focus the voices of early Buddhist women, particularly those preserved in the *Therīgāthā*. These verses – composed by elder nuns who speak of suffering, freedom, interior struggle, and spiritual clarity – serve as some of the earliest textual articulations of embodied experience. Women such as Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, Khemā, and Bhaddā Kundalakesā articulate an epistemology grounded not in abstraction but in direct experience, emotional intelligence, and self-reflective insight. Their testimonies reveal an affective literacy where ethical transformation arises from personal awakening, and personal awakening becomes meaningful only when extended towards others.

Seen together, Nālandā's scholastic masters and the lived experiences of these early women practitioners create a powerful ethical-affective continuum. They demonstrate that

the world need not be rethought in opposition to old systems but expanded alongside them. They suggest an alternative to the binaries of centre/margin, reason/emotion, tradition/progress. They offer a way of reading texts – and the world – not as structures to be corrected but as **fields of interbeing**, where many perspectives coexist without hierarchy.

This paper proposes that such an Indic approach offers a crucial complement to contemporary discussions of ethics and affect. It reframes ethical criticism not merely as a practice of interpretation but as a cultivation of self and relationship. And it positions affect not as subjective emotion but as a shared, transformative sensitivity that shapes communities. Ultimately, the Nālandā tradition's dialogic, compassionate, and plural ways of thinking open a path where *rethinking* becomes less an act of revision and more an act of coexistence – allowing multiple intellectual lineages to stand, converse, and illuminate one another.

Dr. Smita Singh (smitasingh1708@gmail.com) is a Faculty Member at the School of Languages and Literature/Humanities (SLL/H), Nālandā University. She was a Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) at the University of Kansas, USA. She obtained a PhD from the Department of English, Patna University, India, for her thesis “Anorexic Bodies and Sexuality in Select Victorian Texts: A Critical Study”. She has also completed a Post Graduate Diploma in English Language Teaching from the English & Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad.

Dr. Singh specializes in the area of Gender Studies and English Literature with a focus on health and illness narratives. Her research also explores the connections between bioethics and Literature and the Medical Humanities. She is currently working on a book tentatively titled “Fasting Girls: Fiction, Sexuality, and Modernity” that seeks to explore the literary and cultural mediations of a distinctively new sexual persona.

Prior to joining Nālandā University, Dr. Singh was teaching and contributing to academia as an Assistant Professor at the Dept of English, Sarala Birla University, Ranchi, and also at SRM University, Sikkim. She has taught courses on Business and Technical Communication to MBA and Engineering Programs, Literature and Gender, Victorian Literature, Health and Illness Narratives in British Fiction, 16th to 19th Century, and Basic Linguistics and Phonetics. She has represented our nation, Bharat (India), and the Nalanda International University at the University of Oxford to present her research, titled “The Feminine Divine: Exploring the Essence of the Universe in Indian Vedic Literature,” at the University of Oxford, London, UK, in July 2024.

Stefania SINI (Università del Piemonte Orientale), ***Towards a responsible participatory reading: emotional-volitional tones and centres of value***

Panel 5.4

This paper focuses on the concepts of *Stimmung* and *atmosphere*, their philosophical and philosophical-anthropological genealogy, and their heuristic and methodological value in the reading, analysis, and interpretation of texts, paying attention both to textual forms and devices and to the affective and ethical aspects of literary experience. After a concise overview of the contemporary state of the art concerning these concepts, also considering the significant popularity that “atmospherology” has enjoyed in the last twenty years, particularly in aesthetics, the paper will present the concepts of *emotional-volitional tone* and *center of value* that Mikhail Bakhtin elaborated in his early writings on philosophical anthropology and aesthetics. These concepts retained their theoretical centrality in his later works of literary criticism and theory, also acquiring a fundamental role in the stylistic analysis of the novelistic word. Here, tone, intonation, and accent constitute a decisive component in the theory of novelistic polyphony—with the paradox of their metamorphosis

from the sonority of the public square word to the “mute and invisible spheres” of modernity. Meanwhile, the center of value finds its literary placement and articulation in the narratological notions of *voice* and *point of view*, which Bakhtin does not distinguish—unlike Genette. Nevertheless, this non-distinction finds its *raison d'être* in Bakhtin's analysis of internally dialogic speech and of hybrid construction, typically corresponding to free indirect discourse (or thought), where voice and point of view converge again in the evaluative-emotional, corporeal core of deictics and expressive markers. The phenomenological and neo-Kantian roots of Bakhtin's thought, his documented knowledge from the 1920s to the 1960s of European stylistics (particularly of Leo Spitzer, who also wrote fundamental studies on the semantic of *Stimmung*), existentialism, and 20th-century anthropology (for example, Otto Bollnow's *Das Wesen der Stimmungen*) substantially contribute to an analytical and hermeneutic proposal that combines a meticulous examination of textual composition with an exploration of the sensitive, ideological, and affective nuclei that dialogue and clash within the work, and which address the embodied, resonant response of readers. This approach to the literary word, updated with more recent reflections on the enactive force of embodied reading, can also be proposed in the pedagogical sphere, as a commitment to an affective and ethical enhancement of the literary experience that remains responsibly attentive to the word of the text.

Stefania Sini (stefania.sini@uniupo.it) is Full Professor of Comparative Literature at the Università del Piemonte Orientale (UPO), Vercelli, Italy. Her academic work focuses on literary theory, rhetoric, morphology, narrative theory, and the experience of narrative, paying particular attention to the work of Giambattista Vico, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Russian formalism. From 2001 to 2002, she collaborated with the Paris-based organisation *Parlement international des écrivains*. Since 2004, she has taught metrics, rhetoric and narratology at the Paolo Grassi Theatre School in Milan. She founded “Enthymema” (International Journal of Literary Criticism, Literary Theory and Philosophy of Literature, indexed in Scopus and Web of Science), and is its Editor-in-Chief (<http://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/enthymema>). She is the coordinator of the Steering Committee of FLECIR (the Interuniversity Research Centre for Philosophy and Literature: <https://flecir.uniupo.it/homepage>). Chairwoman of the ENN (European Narratology Network) Conference (2022–24) and a Member of the ENN Steering Committee (2025). Member of the Scientific Committee of CRIMEDIN (Centre for Research and Training in Disaster Medicine, Humanitarian Aid and Global Health, UPO). Author of 133 original publications, of which 24 are in international volumes and journals, 53 are in Class A ANVUR journals and 32 are indexed in Scopus and Web of Science (https://iris.uniupo.it/browse?type=author&authority=rp04366&sort_by=2&order=DESC). Author of 73 original contributions to international conferences, of which 37 are in 16 foreign countries (Azerbaijan, Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine and the USA). Organiser of 11 international conferences and seminars. (<https://upobook.uniupo.it/personale/cv/754/1/Cv.SINI.Stefania%20Irene.Eng.pdf>). Orcid Id: orcid.org/0000-0003-3136-7764

Olga SOLOVYEVA (Independent Scholar), *Transnational Comparison and Epistemology of Circulation: Reverse Perspective as the Crux of Disciplinary Ethics*

Panel 4.1

The paper proposes a new methodology of the comparative study of literature in the global setting by foregrounding the processes of circulation of knowledge beyond geographical divides and national ideologies of the states. The paper reclaims the origins of comparative

literature in transnational comparison with non-European cultures, “an epistemic stance,” obscured by the later disciplinary preference for Europe-focused research, and argues for a recovery of the discipline’s transnational, critical, and self-critical ethos. In this larger enterprise, the Japanese-Russian comparison fulfils a heuristic purpose. The overall theoretical framework of the paper spans a diachronic axis defined by Prasenjit Duara’s notion of circulatory histories and a synchronic axis defined by Niklas Luhmann’s communication systems. Complementing history with sociology, this paper places the crux of the disciplinary ethics in the history of its defiance of Eurocentrism. The proposed theory of discursive sociopoiesis which understands literature broadly, through the large-scale circulation of people, ideas, and social and aesthetic practices allows us to see literature not only as an intrinsic part of the formation of knowledge but also as an internal process of the emergence of (global) society.

Olga V. Solovieva (olenkaso@gmail.com) is an independent scholar of Comparative Literature. She holds Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Yale University, and MA in German and Slavic Literatures from FU Berlin. Her main research interests are interdisciplinary rhetoric, and cross-cultural and diachronic comparison. She is the author of *Christ’s Subversive Body: Practices of Religious Rhetoric in Culture and Politics* (2018), *The Russian Kurosawa: Transnational Cinema, or the Art of Speaking Differently* (2023), and most recently, editor of *Japanese–Russian Transnational Comparison: Literary Circulation and Formation of Knowledge* (2026).

Antonio SOTGIU (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle), *Sympathy for the Devils? Stimmung and Moral Feelings in Inferno XXI*

Panel 5.4

Inferno XXI has long divided Dante criticism because of its markedly comic and carnivalesque atmosphere, often perceived as incongruous with the overall moral and theological gravity of the *Commedia*. This paper proposes to reassess the canto through the interpretative category of *Stimmung*, as theorized by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, shifting attention from questions of semantic or doctrinal coherence to the affective and atmospheric dimensions generated by the text. Rather than treating comedy as a tonal anomaly or as a merely rhetorical device, the essay investigates how the canto’s *Stimmung* emerges from a dense network of sources and intertextual references. Particular emphasis is placed on the biographical resonance of barratry—Dante’s own charge and condemnation—and on the parallel between the poet’s position among the devils and the prisoners of the battle of Caprona, which frames the episode within a horizon of political violence and humiliation. Within this framework, the paper reflects on the critical difficulties involved in integrating such an atmosphere into established interpretative paradigms.

Antonio Sotgiu (antoni.sotgiu@gmail.com) is *maître de conférences* in Medieval Italian Literature at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle. His research focuses primarily on the theory and history of the romance and the novella, as well as on the vernacular and Latin works of Boccaccio and other authors of the Italian Trecento and Quattrocento, including Franco Sacchetti and Leon Battista Alberti. He is a founder and a member of the editorial boards of *Enthymema* (*International Journal of Literary Criticism, Literary Theory and Philosophy of Literature*, indexed in Scopus and Web of Science) and *Arzanà* (*Cahier de littérature italienne médiévale*). He is also among the editors of the IBE (*The International Boccaccio Edition*), a scholarly edition of the complete works of Boccaccio, with specific responsibility for the *Genealogie deorum gentilium*. He has participated in national and international research projects in the field of Digital Humanities and the French and international reception of the works of Boccaccio and Dante, notably *Bonhum* (*Boccace Numérique Humaniste*) and

Olga SPRINGER (Dublin City University), *Female walking in Charlotte Brontë's Villetta (1853) and Jane Eyre (1847) and Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway (1925)*

Panel 4.5

The proposed paper will reflect on female walking in two novels by Charlotte Brontë, *Villetta* (1853) and *Jane Eyre* (1847), comparing and linking these portrayals with urban walking in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). In Brontë's novels, the protagonists' walking is both allegorically charged, embodied, visceral practice and connected with identity and self-reflection. The presentation will focus on the various literary modes of representation at work in the novels, with the intention of exploring the links between such historically disparate modes as allegory and stream of consciousness as they become apparent in the walking scenes and representations of female affect. A further focus will lie on how the texts negotiate the possibility of female *flânerie*.

Both *Jane Eyre* and *Villetta* draw on and evoke John Bunyan's seminal religious allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) and allegorical representations of inner thoughts and feelings occur in both texts. The power of *Villetta*'s narrator-protagonist Lucy Snowe's emotions is such that they appear to her as interlocutors in animated form: Her companions are personifications of Reason and Imagination, Fate and Hope, oscillating between spectres and companions, underlining the importance of the affective dimension of Lucy's inner life.

The paper will focus on different kinds of walking in the novels and their functions for the overall atmosphere of the novels. In *Villetta*, there are instances of urban female *flânerie* as well as the attempt at escaping the oppressive solitude of Madame Beck's *pensionnat* during the summer months, to go past the "city-gates" and to go "wandering away" (*Villetta* 158) into the rural landscape surrounding the town. These aimless, feverish wanderings, far from granting Lucy Snowe reprieve from her inner suffering, ultimately lead the Protestant Englishwoman to the Catholic confessional, followed by her losing her way in the labyrinthine streets, re-enforcing the sense of personal crisis and spiritual disorientation associated with the possibility of conversion to Catholicism and of becoming a nun. Lucy finds herself "lost", "immersed in a net-work of turns unknown" (*Villetta* 163).

The path and walking allegories of *Jane Eyre* are more linear and serve as a contrast to the instances of urban walking and female *flânerie* of the later novel. After leaving Rochester at Thornfield, "a trace of white over the moor", which turns out to be a "road or track," leads Jane "straight up to the light" (*Jane Eyre* 371) of a distant house. The scene is emblematic of Jane's certainty even in despair – despite obstacles, her inner integrity and the assurance of having known genuine love in her relationship with Mr. Rochester guide her steadfastly on her way.

The predominantly urban spatial framing of the walking scenes of *Villetta* provides a link to the third novel, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. The importance of walking to Woolf's life and literary activity has been shown in scholarly discourse (see, for example, Solnit, 2002 and Van Straten, 2024). All novels share a focus on the negotiation of female inner and outer space, questioning the "logic of progress and advancement" (O'Neil 2018, p. 3) in the portrayal of female walking.

Olga Springer (olga.springer@dcu.ie) lectures in German language and literature in the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies at Dublin City University (Ireland). Her critical study *Ambiguity in Charlotte Brontë's Villetta* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Germany) was published in 2020. She is a member of the Executive Committee of FRINGE Urban

Narratives. She is on the scientific committee of the ESCL journal, *CompLit*. Olga is a member of the DCU research team for the EU co-funded Creative Europe project “G-Book 3: Audience engagement activities for the social and emotional education of EU teens through gender-positive literature and digital technology (2024-2027)”.

Barbara STRAUMANN (University of Zurich), *Envisioning Alternative (Care) Economies in Victorian Fiction: Elizabeth Gaskell’s Cranford (1853)*

Panel 7.1

Issues of care and caring feature prominently in Elizabeth Gaskell’s Victorian narrative fiction. Her industrial novels about working-class characters – *Mary Barton* (1848) and *North and South* (1855) – address middle-class audiences and invite them to sympathize with fellow human beings living in very different social circumstances marked by poverty, exploitation, and suffering. Gaskell’s novel *Cranford* (1853) about a small-town community of single and widowed women takes a somewhat different approach by foregrounding issues of care both at the diegetic and the narrative level: the shabby-genteel women living in Cranford are shown to care for each other through sympathetic acts of solidarity, namely “real tender good offices to each other whenever they are in distress (3). The women’s mutual caring for one another is reflected by the narrator Mary, the daughter of a hard-nosed businessman operating in the capitalist city of Drumble. Regularly visiting Cranford and its inhabitants and thus functioning as both an outsider and participant observer, Mary can be seen to care about the Cranford women in the way in which she deploys her episodic narration to record their alternative ways of living (together) – both their biographical trajectories outside the traditional marriage plot and their interpersonal interdependence. By highlighting caring relationships within a community of single and widowed women, Gaskell’s *Cranford* foregrounds practices, perspectives, and experiences that tend to be overlooked by the models and accounts of orthodox economics. What poet(h)ics of care does Gaskell’s fictional text map by imagining alternative (care) economies in a period in which industrial and financial capitalism became the hegemonic forms of Victorian economic life? In my paper, I will read Gaskell’s narrative as a quasi-economic form of writing that offers a utopian vision of alternative care economies. Situating themselves outside the capitalist principles of production, accumulation, and consumption, the Cranford women cultivate a careful management and conservation of their scarce resources. In addition to these “small economies” (41), they engage in an exchange of small gifts in the form of inexpensive objects, items of gossip, and stories (resembling Mary’s episodic narration). Equally important is the giving and receiving of acts of care, which underline that human beings are not separate individuals but relational beings with vulnerable bodies that are dependent on the support of others. When Miss Matty loses her income as a result of a bank failure in Drumble, her former maid Martha offers her former mistress a home and takes care of her elderly and frail lodger. Contributing selfless gifts, Miss Matty’s friends, in turn, establish a secret fund which allows her to set up a tea shop in her private dining-parlour. Yet rather than thriving on commercial transaction, Miss Matty’s tea shop forms the site of a parallel exchange of gifts inspired by her own generosity. Although Cranford’s social system cannot reproduce itself in the long run due to its lack of offspring, Gaskell’s text does create a counter-narrative by means of its quasi-queer care economies.

Barbara Straumann (barbara.straumann@es.uzh.ch) is Professor of English at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. She studied English and German literature and linguistics at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, and the University of St Andrews, Scotland. She was a visiting PhD student at the English Department at SUNY Buffalo and a visiting fellow at the Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Chicago and the Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies in the School of Advanced Study at the University of London.

Barbara's research focuses on English and American literature and culture, the long nineteenth century and its cultural afterlife, gender, film, intermediality, royalty, celebrity culture, and economic criticism. She is the author of *Figurations of Exile in Hitchcock and Nabokov* (Edinburgh UP, 2008) and *Female Performers in British and American Fiction* (De Gruyter, 2018) as well as the co-author, together with Elisabeth Bronfen, of *Die Diva: Eine Geschichte der Bewunderung* (Schirmer/Mosel, 2002). Her current research projects deal with debt and feminine economies in the long nineteenth century. She is also currently working on a Routledge primary source collection on celebrity in the long nineteenth century (in collaboration with Professor Charlotte Boyce, University of Portsmouth, UK, and Dr Sandra Mayer, Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), Vienna). Barbara served as President of the Swiss Association for North American Studies (2020-2025) and is a member of the DFG network "Methodologies of Economic Criticism". She is currently co-organising two academic events that will take place at the University of Zurich in 2026: a workshop conference entitled "Writing Feminine Economies: Fiction, Gender, and Money in the Long Nineteenth Century" (with Dr Tim Sommer, LMU Munich) and the 2026 SANAS conference on "American Un/Freedoms" (with Professor Katharina Gerund, University of Zurich).

Vlad STRUKOV (University of Leeds), *Storytelling of the Silent Period: Azerbaijan's contemporary art of the 1980s–90s*

Panel 2.3

In my contribution, I focus on the exhibition "Make an Island for Yourself" (1988–1996), which was curated by Sabina Shikhlinskaya at Yarat Art Gallery in Baku in 2020–21 and featured twenty artists. While framed as an exploration of "contemporary art," the exhibition can be read as marking the end of a longer transition rather than simply documenting the 1980s–90s. It reveals Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation as a still-interlinked cultural space, even as new actors, platforms, and artistic ecosystems begin to emerge. Through visual practices, institutional histories, and artistic strategies of (re)presentation, it traces how silence itself became a language of expression, resistance, and survival. Focusing on art and its institutions as sites of storytelling about the early independence era in the 1990s, my talk examines artists, curators, and institutions as polycentric actors operating across multiple stylistic, ideological, and geographic registers. Their works engage in cross-cultural conversation about spirituality, gender, and sexuality. Rather than direct confrontation, many artists adopted strategies of ambiguity, metaphor, and withdrawal, allowing meaning to circulate through silence, fragmentation, and visual indirection. Ultimately, I argue that the so-called silence of the period was a mode of reorganising artistic production—from late socialist, state-funded structures to a neoliberal present shaped by grants, partnerships, and transnational networks. Silence can therefore be read as a generative force that continues to inform how Azerbaijani contemporary art understands itself in conversations reaching far beyond its boundaries today.

Vlad Strukov (v.strukov@leeds.ac.uk) is a London-based multidisciplinary researcher, curator, and cultural practitioner, specializing in art, media, and technology crossovers. He is Professor of Film and Visual Culture at the University of Leeds and Visiting Professor at Università Ca' Foscari Venezia. His recent research has focused on queer visual cultures, digital media of the Global South and Global East, and indigenous Muslim minority cultures. Since 2025, he has been a co-PI of a research project examining discourses of gender and sexuality in post-Soviet Muslim republics of Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. Together with Helen Finch, he leads the Centre for Global Queer Cultures and Politics at the University of Leeds.

Petra SVOLJŠAK (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts,

Ljubljana), ***Navje Memorial Park as an Attempt to Create a Pantheon of Famous Slovenians***

Panel 6.1

France Stele, a leading Slovenian art historian, envisioned the Pantheon as the ultimate “treasury” of human cultural memory and as a framework for reflecting on national identity through the commemoration of exemplary individuals. This paper examines how Stele’s concept of a national pantheon materialised in interwar Ljubljana, where urban space, memory politics, and nation-building converged. In 1927, architect Jožef Plečnik proposed a cemetery for “famous Slovenian men”, and in 1932 he produced an ambitious plan for a monumental pantheon on the site of the former St Christopher’s cemetery. Although the project was realised only in a reduced form, the idea nevertheless found architectural and symbolic expression in Navje Memorial Park (1937–1938).

The park incorporated a small number of preserved graves, while numerous tombstones—often without remains—were relocated from other parts of the cemetery and from other Slovenian burial grounds. The commemorated figures largely represent the cultural and intellectual elite—poets, artists, and scholars—reflecting the central role of cultural production in Slovenian nation-building. The site also includes a collective “Writer’s Tomb” and a rare female presence in the memorial landscape, the writer Magdalena Pleiweis. Following the last burial in 1940, the memorial park was largely neglected during the post-war socialist period, revealing shifting political attitudes towards national pantheonisation and public remembrance.

Petra Svoljšak (petra.svoljsak@zrc-sazu.si) is Principal Research Associate and Head of the ZRC SAZU Milko Kos Historical Institute. She is Assistant Professor at both the University of Nova Gorica and the Postgraduate School of ZRC SAZU. Her research focuses on the First World War, with particular expertise in themes such as occupation, civilian suffering and violence, war memory and heritage, victims, gender relations, and the urban history of this transformative period. Her recent publications include the book *Leta strahote: Slovenci in prva svetovna vojna* (Years of Horror: Slovenes and the First World War, Cankarjeva založba, 2018), which was awarded the prestigious KLIO Prize for the best history book in Slovenia in 2019 and 2020.

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Anna Sophia TABOURATZIDIS (Georg August University Göttingen), *Materialist Queer Feminist Perspectives on Care under Capitalism*

Panel 7.1

‘Care’ is a polysemic term and notion which has been approached as practice, affect, ethic, (affective) labour, and infrastructure. It can be conceptualized as a practice within and beyond interpersonal relations, which directs attention to infrastructures of care established and maintained by individuals, collectives, laws, and institutions, guided by norms and values. Based on the assumption that capitalist modes of production and labour constrain the space of exploration and potential of subjects and their bodies to experiment with gender and forms of life (cf. Laufenberg 198; Fisher 2009), the paper asks in how far literature provides a laboratory space and how cultural narratology may assist in theorising text-world relations to which the panel’s papers answer in light of their respective case studies. In a move to triangulate ethics, poetics, and care via relationality, this paper introduces an emergent “care paradigm” (Woodly 2022) by highlighting intersections and convergences with materialist queer feminist thought on (ethics of) care as well as its ecological dimensions. The materialist angle emphasises care’s “material engagement in labours to sustain interdependent worlds, labours that are often associated with exploitation and domination” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2012, 198), while the queer feminist perspective allows to zero in on caring relations within and beyond hetero-patriarchal capitalism.

The talk will illustrate the affordances of materialist queer feminist approaches and its methodological implications through a reading of contemporary German-language care narratives such as Bettina Wilpert’s *Die Bärtige Frau* (2025), Paulina Czienskowski’s *dem mond geht es gut* (2025), and Anne Sauer’s *Im Leben nebenan* (2025). I contend that cultural narratology allows to home in on the norms and values undergirding the formal rendering of care/caring relations in literature as well as their affectscapes as these ultra-contemporary texts stretch the novel form in an attempt to approximate the affective paradoxes care under capitalism produces.

Anna Sophia Tabouratzidis (anna.tabouratzidis@uni-goettingen.de) holds a joint PhD in English Literature and German Studies from the University of Warwick and Justus Liebig University Giessen. She has and continues to work on future narratives, speculative fiction, and new realism. Her research interests include post-classical narratologies, esp. eco- and queer narratology, narrative theory, economic criticism, and queer Marxism.

TAKEUCHI Akiko (Hosei University, Tokyo), *Imaginative Worlds in Greek Lyric Poetry and Japanese Noh I: Transtemporal Sacred Space in the Noh Play Taema*

Panel 3.4

This paper is the first part of an extended joint presentation with Dr. Casato, which explores how two seemingly disparate genres employ similar strategies to conjure up sophisticated text worlds as imaginative spaces. The study examines how Zeami's Noh play *Taema* transforms long-established visual, oral, and ritual representations of the Pure Land and the Taima Mandala into a uniquely theatrical experience that immerses the audience in a transtemporal sacred realm. Centred on the famous Taima Mandala of Taima Temple and the medieval creation legend of Princess Chūjō, the play departs markedly from earlier media—such as mandala preaching (*etoki*), picture scrolls, ritual dance, and Pure Land gardens—by exploiting the semiotic power of Noh's theatrical language to blur temporal boundaries and spatial perception. After outlining the development of the Taima Mandala and its legend, the paper explains how medieval Japan produced a rich array of visual and performative forms, including replicas distributed with oral preaching, picture scrolls, and ritual reenactments of the Amida Buddha's welcoming procession. These media emphasized Princess Chūjō's miraculous encounters with Amida Buddha and Kannon, culminating in a paradigm wherein viewing or hearing the legend facilitated a devotional experience. Zeami's *Taema*, however, shifts this paradigm. In the first act, the stage becomes a liminal environment where references to threads, colours, and dyeing evoke the mandala's creation while simultaneously dissolving distinctions between present and past, spring and autumn. Through deliberate ambiguity and the minimized physical staging typical of Noh, linguistic cues guide the audience into perceiving their actual surroundings as the mandala itself. The play's dialogue gradually transforms into a chorus-driven narration whose ambiguous "voice"—neither fully character nor narrator—commands the audience's perception and reinforces the illusion of sacred space. The drama further diverges from the familiar legend by reassigning ritual functions among characters. Whereas Princess Chūjō is the devout supplicant in the legend, here the old nun and young woman (manifestations of Amida and Kannon) lead the invocation of Amida's name, while Princess Chūjō, appearing in the second act as the Bodhisattva of Song and Dance, performs a sacred dance. This dance, modelled on the mandala's bodhisattva dancers and historically associated with rebirth in the Pure Land, provides spectators with an embodied sign of transcendence normally accessible only to the newly reborn. The ending further blurs narrative boundaries: Princess Chūjō's voice merges into a narrator-like perspective that reveals the entire experience as a dream "woven by a shuttle," reinforcing the play's overarching weaving metaphor. Ultimately, *Taema* uses Noh's theatrical resources to create a three-dimensional, universally performable Pure Land—one that offers medieval audiences a vivid experiential counterpart to the Taima Mandala and its legend.

TAKEUCHI Akiko (aktake@hosei.ac.jp) is professor of Comparative Theatre in the Faculty of Intercultural Communication at Hosei University, Tokyo. She received her MA from the University of Tokyo and her Ph.D. from Columbia University. Her research interests include the reception of Noh in English-speaking worlds, the narratological analysis of linguistic ambiguity of Noh plays, and the comparative analysis of Noh and other musical-narrative or lyric genres, such as oratorio and ancient Greek poetry.

Michal TAL (Technion—Israeli Institute of Technology), *Caring Two Hoots: Responsibility for the Other in Amelie Nothomb's Novel*

Panel 7.9

Amélie Nothomb's novel *The Stranger Next Door* (2009; originally *Les Catilinaires*, 1995) explores the notion of care for the other through a fictional lens. The story follows a retired couple who move to the countryside seeking peace in their later years, only to be disturbed

by their persistent neighbour. What begins as a seemingly natural gesture of neighbourly courtesy soon becomes a daily, unwanted intrusion that forces the couple to question the limits of their moral responsibility toward this stranger. They wonder whether it is ethical to reject his presence, what needs he expresses through his visits, and whether they are obliged to respond despite their growing resentment. As they come to know the neighbour's wife and witness the dynamics between them, this moral inquiry deepens, at times threatening the couple's own bond. Their responses—ranging from avoidance and reluctant hospitality to attempts at saving him from self-destruction—reveal the complexity of caring for the other when empathy collides with aversion. This paper seeks to analyse the retired couple's evolving attitudes through Emmanuel Levinas's conception of responsibility for the other. It argues that while their initial reception of the neighbour may suggest ordinary compassion, their subsequent actions complicate this notion, uncovering paradoxical forms of ethical care in behaviours that might conventionally appear hostile or aggressive.

Michal Tal (michalt@technion.ac.il) is a senior teaching associate in the Department of Humanities and Arts at the Technion—Israeli Institute of Technology. Her main research interests include interdisciplinary analysis of literary themes, particularly those related to questions of identity, subjectivity and individuality. Her recent publications include “Casting a Digital Shadow: Juan José Millás and Current Human Experience” (2024) and “United We Stand? The Antinomy of Self Unity versus Multiplicity as Manifested in the Doppelgänger Literature” (2023).

Nitzan TAL (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), ***Complicity Literature: Contemporary Authors from South Africa and Israel/Palestine***

Panel 9.4

In this paper, I examine how contemporary fiction from two unique post/colonial contexts represents the circulation of affects. Authors including Ronnie Brodetzky and Shani Boianjiu (Israel/Palestine), Ivan Vladislavić and Lauren Beukes (South Africa) who write from and about realities steeped in varied forms of violence, lead us to an understanding of complicity as a bodily and sensorial experience as well as an analytical subject position.

Nitzan Tal (Nt354@cornell.edu) is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Sophie Davis Forum on Gender, Conflict Resolution, and Peace in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel/Palestine. She has published in *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* and *Middle Eastern Literatures*. Her two current projects are on complicity literature and on female soldiers in 21st century culture.

Anne THOMPSON-AHMADOVA (Independent Scholar), ***Amplifying Azerbaijani Women's Voices across Cultures: A Translator's Perspective***

Panel 1.3

This paper considers the factors at play in the translation, publication and promotion of Azerbaijani women authors in the Anglophone space. It does so by comparing the experiences of amplification in English of the work of four Azerbaijani women authors—Banine, Afaq Məsud, Günel Mövlud and Nərmin Kamal. It remains challenging for less-translated literatures to enter the crowded Anglophone publishing environment, despite increased interest in translation in the UK, for example, in recent years. Though advances in technology have opened up the publication process, Banine's case shows that the traditional route of a publisher able to secure reviews of their books in leading newspapers and magazines is still a highly effective way to make an author's voice heard. Without appropriate publicity, a translated work is not as widely read as it deserves to be, which

applies, at present, to Günel Mövlud's auto-fiction *The Camp*, translated by Zeyneb Rzazade. The case studies raise an interesting question about accessibility. Banine grew up among different cultures in early 20th century Baku, and settled in her "promised land" of Paris. Having already made a shift across cultures herself, she wrote in French, rendering her work more accessible to a non-Azerbaijani reader. This accessibility in a text describing an "utterly unfamiliar world" has helped Banine find her Anglophone audience, and mirrors the success with English-speaking readers of the novel *Ali and Nino*, written in German by possibly two authors from Baku, and of the work of Nino Haratischvili, a Georgian author who writes in German. The corollary that publishers find work written in Azerbaijani too culturally alien may help to explain why only a handful of Afaq Məsud's stories have been published in English so far, while her work has been widely translated into Russian, Georgian, Persian, Arabic and other languages. Amplification of an author's voice benefits from an advocate able to move across the Azerbaijani and Anglophone publishing spaces, who may be the translator or the author herself, as in the case of Nərmin Kamal. Finding a hook for a potential publisher, identifying a funding source, working out a promotional strategy are all part of the advocate's role. With more advocates or champions and more dialogue across cultures, such as at this conference, the more Azerbaijani female voices should be heard.

Anne Thompson-Ahmadova (annethompsonahmadova@gmail.com) is a freelance writer and translator from Azerbaijani, Russian and French into English. She has translated works by a range of Azerbaijani authors including Banine, Kamal Abdulla and Chingiz Abdullayev. With a background in leadership and translation for BBC Monitoring in Baku, she also collaborates as an editor or consultant on anthologies, film scripts and academic projects.

Sofija TODOROVIC (University of Belgrade), *Declared Dead, Still Alive: Ethics of Identity and Affective Responses to 'Administrative Death' in Luigi Pirandello and Goran Tribuson*

Panel 4.7

The paper comparatively examines Luigi Pirandello's (1867–1936) renowned novel *Late Mattia Pascal* and the short story "The Newspaper Death of Ladislav Hanak" by the Croatian contemporary author Goran Tribuson (1948–), who appears to have been influenced by the Italian modernist classic. The paper sheds light on how these literary texts problematize the notion of truth and deconstruct the concept of identity, while the bizarre and non-likely events are portrayed as realistic. The analysis focuses on the literary motif of paradoxical incongruity between the protagonist's factual, biological life and its bureaucratic "status" – that is, the officially communicated information about their death. In both texts, the protagonists, very much alive, learn about their own deaths through newspaper obituaries. Special attention in the paper is given to the absurd and perplexing consequences this form of 'administrative death' produces in the lives of Mattia Pascal and Ladislav Hanak. The characters' affective reactions reveal fundamental ethical questions of personhood, collapse of stable selfhood and identity fragmentation. The paper foregrounds the affective dimensions of the protagonists' experiences: confusion, estrangement, ironic distance, anxiety, and powerlessness. These affective states accompany a similarly structured conflict between the individual and society, as well as the protagonists' inner 'duplication' and reflections about suicide. While Mattia Pascal initially experiences a peculiar and temporary sense of freedom and liberation from societal constraints after learning of his 'death', his affective state remains fragile and ironic, ultimately exposing the limits of self-determined identity. On the other hand, we argue that Tribuson's protagonist is even more determined by the inexplicable turn of events: his affective landscape is dominated by paralysis and resignation, as he appears powerless before the official 'truth'. The paper contrastively

explores the relationship of the early and the late modernist interpretation of the absurd, fantastic-like motif of 'administrative death'. As it offers a possibility of a comparative analysis of the two prose texts from different literary traditions, Italian and South Slavic, the paper analyses how Tribuson "borrows" and reshapes this Pirandellian motif.

Sofija Todorović (sofija.todorovic@fil.bg.ac.rs) is a PhD candidate in Literature and a Teaching Assistant at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, where she teaches courses on South Slavic comparative literature. Focusing on 20th-century literature and comparative studies, her interests centre around problems of reinterpreting literary tradition, myth and fantasy studies. She is currently working on her dissertation, entitled "Fantastic Elements in South Slavic Short Prose (1960–1980)". She has published papers in scholarly journals and has participated in several national and international conferences.

Carlo Emilio TORTAROLO (Conservatorio 'F.A. Bonporti', Trento), ***Reclaiming Attention: How Aristotelian Rhetoric Can Rebuild Ethical and Affective Digital Communities***

Panel 5.8

The contemporary digital sphere has become one of the primary environments in which cultural meaning is produced, shared, circulated and contested. Posts, short videos, micro-narratives, and hybrid textual forms now have a cultural impact of their own. They influence how individuals encounter artistic materials, interpret institutional voices, imagine belonging, and engage with public discourse. Yet this same ecosystem is structured by the dynamics of the attention economy, which privileges emotional shortcuts, algorithmic visibility, accelerated consumption, and decreasing interpretative depth. Cultural audiences might be seen as easily influenced rather than as a group capable of critical thinking about what they see. This paper turns to the Aristotelian triad of ethos, pathos, and logos as a framework for rethinking the ethical and affective dimensions of digital cultural communication. Classical rhetoric, therefore, cannot be considered a static scholarly reference; rather, it offers a vocabulary for analysing four interrelated processes. These processes include how digital texts construct credibility, how they mobilise affect, how they articulate argument, and how they compress or distort complexity. Re-examining these categories within contemporary platform cultures reveals the extent to which rhetorical imbalance shapes cultural experience online, between visibility and trust, between sensation and resonance, between accessibility and simplification, between persuasion and manipulation. Within this perspective, Ethos concerns not algorithmic reputation but the communicator's coherence, transparency, reliability, and continuity. Pathos is defined as a site where institutions and creators negotiate four different emotional registers: resonance, empathy, urgency, and spectacle. Despite the constraints imposed by the format, Logos continue to fulfil their function in preserving argumentative clarity, conceptual precision, narrative structure, and cultural complexity. Together, these dimensions form a rhetorical-affective grammar that can counter the flattening tendencies of digital circulation. Building on recent debates on audience development, cultural participation, public humanities, and digital literacy, the paper advances the idea of digital rhetoric as a cultural right. In an increasingly digitalised cultural landscape, it becomes imperative for citizens to possess a set of fundamental competencies. These include the ability to recognise rhetorical strategies, evaluate the credibility of sources, interpret emotional nuances, and navigate the dynamic equilibrium between clarity and complexity. This standpoint aligns with prevailing discourses on equity, sustainability, inclusivity, and agency within the contemporary context of cultural policy. Rather than committing to a single analytical direction, the paper focuses on four conceptual tensions that define today's digital cultural communication: visibility vs. autonomy, affective intensity vs. critical distance, accessibility vs. nuance, and authority vs. agency. The reclaiming of attention is regarded as an ethical and affective orientation, grounded in four principles:

shared meaning, mutual trust, collective resonance, and cultural responsibility. Classical rhetoric provides a means to re-evaluate how texts, publics, and institutions interact in the digital sphere, so rhetorical competence is imperative for establishing more equitable and participatory cultural ecologies.

Carlo Emilio Tortarolo (carloemilio.tortarolo@steffani.it) is an Italian conductor, cultural manager and researcher whose work sits at the intersection of artistic heritage, cultural policy and community participation. He is currently a PhD candidate in the National Doctoral Programme Artistic Research on Musical Heritage at Trento Conservatorio, where his research focuses on audience development, cultural participation, cultural economics and the application of the Faro Convention principles within contemporary performing arts institutions. His scholarly activity includes presentations at international conferences in the UK (University of Surrey) and across Italy (Università La Sapienza of Rome), along with publications on music, cultural discourse and digital mediation.

Tortarolo has conducted in Italy, France and Greece, collaborating with the Athens State Orchestra and T&M Nîmes/Occitanie, alongside engagements with major Italian ensembles. His artistic work is complemented by a significant career in cultural management: he serves as General Manager of Ermes404 Edizioni and Secretary General of the Festival “Bartolomeo Cristofori”.

He is actively involved in European youth networks, serving as Honorary President of Juvenice, part of the Juvenilia network awarded the Charlemagne Youth Prize, and as Regional Representative for AIGU – Italian Youth for UNESCO, recognised by UNESCO as a best practice in youth participation. Through these roles, he contributes to heritage-related policies, community projects and youth-oriented cultural initiatives at both national and European levels.

His work bridges research, artistic practice and civic engagement, promoting a vision of cultural heritage as a shared and future-oriented resource.

V

Jan VÁŇA (Institute of Czech Literature, Czech Academy of Sciences), ***What Novels Know and Do: Literature as an Epistemic and Transformative Agent***

Panel 8.3

What if literature does not simply reflect or represent society but feels it before it can be spoken? This paper proposes a conceptual innovation at the crossroads of literary theory and the sociology of literature. While Pierre Bourdieu, Howard Becker, and British cultural studies subsume aesthetic effects under material and power-oriented factors, I conceive aesthetic experience as an interplay between literature's agency and readers' affective capacities. Drawing on Raymond Williams' "structures of feeling" and Jeffrey C. Alexander's "strong program" in cultural sociology, I explore how literary form communicates subtle, pre-discursive social moods within specific sociohistorical conditions of its readings. The analysis focuses on a selection of Booker and international Booker Prize-winning novels awarded between 2020 and 2025: *Orbital* (2023) by Samantha Harvey, *Prophet Song* (2023) by Paul Lynch, and *The Discomfort of Evening* (2020 [2018]) by Lucas Rijneveld. Across award citations as well as critical and public reception, these novels are consistently associated with three evaluative claims: 1) literary quality, 2) epistemological insight, and 3) the potential to foster social change. For example, *Orbital* was praised by the judges as "a book about a wounded world", which "makes our world strange and new for us". Similarly, the chair of the jury, Ted Hodgkinson, described *The Discomfort of Evening* as "a novel of undeniable force" that offers "the irreducible truth of another life" in "this tumultuous time". I argue that the selected novels resonate widely among Western, English-speaking readership because their aesthetic structures condense and indirectly communicate structures of feeling that capture, express, and respond to the structures of feeling shared among readers. Departing from traditional modes of literary criticism, I approach these novels and their reception through a hermeneutics of faith rather than a hermeneutics of suspicion, drawing on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's "reparative reading", Rita Felski's "post-critique", and Toril Moi's "reading as acknowledgment". Treating literary works as relatively autonomous agents (via Alexander), I seek to understand their performative capacity on their own terms, without reducing them to social determinants. Williams coined structures of feeling to analytically capture social experiences "in solution"—formative, affective patterns that are less evidently and less immediately available, thus evading established concepts such as ideology or worldview. Through intimate yet broadly shared affective responses, the examined award-winning novels succeed in giving aesthetic expression to such nondiscursive social patterns. Methodologically, the paper combines close reading with reception analysis—drawing on critical reviews, author interviews, and user-generated content on social media—to show how literary form becomes a vessel for felt, but not yet fully articulated, social experience. My main focus lies in the interplay between the novels' aesthetic form and their epistemological and mobilizing capacities—exploring how formal innovations enable literary texts to act upon readers by making emergent social moods experientially available and opening imaginative

space for reflection, recognition, and potential response.

Jan Váňa (vana@ucl.cas.cz) is the director of the *Literature and Society Laboratory* at the Institute of Czech Literature of the Czech Academy of Sciences. In 2023, he was awarded a Junior Star grant by the Czech Science Foundation to lead an international, interdisciplinary team of researchers from the humanities and social sciences. His academic awards include a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Yale Center for Cultural Sociology and a Junior Visiting Fellowship at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna. He was nominated for the SAGE Prize for Innovation/Excellence for his article on theorizing the social through literary fiction. In 2022, he received the Czech Literary Book Club Award for his novel *Křehkost* (Fragility). His research interests include literary and sociological theory, the sociology of literature, cultural sociology, and social aesthetics.

Tünde VARGA (The Hungarian University of Fine Arts), ***‘Ground Level’ Narratives and Institutional Disobedience in Contemporary Art and Theory***

Panel 5.7

Along the lines of art projects reflecting on the ecological crisis, which are now becoming a trend in the Western world order, Indigenous narratives, previously associated with magical thinking, are gaining attention in the art world. Whereas their narratives had previously only attracted attention among anthropologists (e.g. Eduardo Kohn), the ecological crisis has led to an increased interest in practices of sustainability and a different understanding of nature, which has brought indigenous projects to the world's most prominent exhibition spaces. In the field of art, the question of more-than-human agency is not only a theoretical question: artistic practice approaches the problem in a practical way as well. It focuses on providing possible means for re-imagining, re-designing, re-inventing sustainable forms of living. According to Anna Tsing, the key to our survival is the kind of collective cooperation that fungi also enjoy, because the contemporary capitalist system, the Anthropocene age, is extremely precarious, both economically and ecologically. I would like to highlight how contemporary posthuman theoretical discourse, particularly as it has developed within the humanities, is in dialogue with, and mutually inspired by, literature and artistic practice. This presentation will demonstrate, through contemporary activist projects (Ailton Krenák and the Selvagem project; Ursula Biemann and Devenir Universidad; the Karrabing Film Collective), how “multi-species” conceptions of the self/person (Haraway, Jane Bennett) fundamentally reshape approaches to contemporary ecological initiatives as well as posthuman theories. At the same time, it will address how major institutions and biennales have increasingly incorporated and shifted toward decolonial narratives as an act of institutional disobedience (Mignolo), integrating these views, theories, and literary works. I will discuss how the international art world, literature, and art theory frame Indigenous narratives of more-than-human agency (e. g. fungi, microbiome, water) in order to re-imagine or design new forms of environment in local settings, forms that include and give “language” to formerly marginalised, subaltern groups while challenging dominant conceptions of the “social.” In other words, the presentation examines how theory and art affect one another and the world.

Tünde Varga (varga.tunde@mke.hu) is an Associate Professor at the Department of Art Theory and Curatorial Studies, The Hungarian University of Fine Art, Budapest. She holds a PhD in Comparative Literature. Her field of research is contemporary art, visual culture, art theory, contemporary documentary, curatorial and museum studies and indigenous culture. She has been publishing in the field of art and culture. Her latest book is on contemporary art practices: *Crossing Borders: The Cultural and Social Context of Contemporary Art*

(2019).

Aleš VAUPOTIČ (Faculty of Design, Ljubljana) and **Narvika BOVCON** (University of Ljubljana), *Ethics and Epistemology of Artificial Intelligence in the New Media Art*

Panel 5.8

The paper examines the new media literature as an experimental probe into the changed reality of today's literature, the arts, humanities, globalized cultures and even the different perceptions of the world in general. The numerous ways of using computers and their networks to generate artistic utterances and experiences as a rule emerge as ad hoc artificial intelligence systems: as hybrid multi-user systems that organize agency, which nevertheless is very different from the intelligence of a single human being. Here the generative AI based on self-learning deep neural-networks is just one case of AI among others. The paper points to the pre-techno theories of multilayered interactions between an individual, her society and e.g. languages. However, the acceleration of information processing forces comparative literature and the humanities in general to reconsider its methods – the issue of digital humanities seems unavoidable, and the paper proposes an alignment between discrete mathematics, as they are the foundation of Turing machines, and the humanities methodology. Also, the idea of the human can be re-examined considering new information technologies. In fact, any relevant new-media or computer art project is a study of the changes in the post-digital reality and a new modelling of the human-technology relationship, from which the making-sense of the world is interpreted. The ethical issues are linked to the epistemological transformations in the ways we manage and generate knowledge or inhabit discursive worlds. The constructionist information-systems modelling will be discussed in combination with maker-knowledge and the creation of pragmatic, good-enough, viable models of systems. Furthermore, in new media art there is a particular immanent advantage, namely the art institutions, even the art market and publishing houses with all of their problematic issues, nevertheless try to address and communicate with humans, to make us enjoy beauty, or deep and complex reflection on aporetic dilemmas of our world, or to provoke the addressee to respond and to engage intellectually and emotionally. Case studies of AI written literature will be examined as they are integrated in new media art installations in multimodal systems of hybrid agency, e.g. the first AI student enrolled in Vienna University and its modelling of feminist theory and of the taxonomy of generative-AI phenomena in everyday life. In the last part, the text considers the dissolution of the text-image distinction (and also other similar media distinctions) in the generative AI which embeds entities in a graph that doesn't discriminate between texts and other media anymore. A quasi-semantic level emerges in the machine consisting of algorithmic neurons interacting according to learned weights. E.g. an image of a table is close in the graph to the word "table" and its translated counterparts. In this respect, it is understandable that we need to start considering distant writing (alongside Luciano Floridi), it is already here in our everyday translations – using Google Translate – or in our seminar/scholarly papers using ChatGPT models, Copilot and others. The comparative literature is at a junction, and new media art that involves the verbal medium, while at the same time also transgressing it, is a subject of study and also a rich repository of ideas and approaches to the today's dilemma of how to deal with algorithmically generated discourse.

Aleš Vaupotič (ales@vaupotic.com) holds the title of a senior research associate at the

University of Nova Gorica. Currently he teaches video and new media art at the Faculty of Design Ljubljana. Between 2021 and 2023, he was the director of the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana. He received his doctorate in realism in literature and art at the Faculty of Arts and a master's degree in video and new media at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, the University of Ljubljana. Between 2021 and 2024 he was the leader of the interdisciplinary research project *Sustainable Digital Preservation of the Slovenian New Media Art* at the University of Nova Gorica, the University of Ljubljana, the Intellectual Property Institute, Ljubljana, and the Museum of Modern Art, which was funded by the Slovenian research and innovation agency. He is the author of the scientific monograph *The Question of Realism* (*Vprašanje realizma*, 2019) and many scientific articles.

Raquel VELÁZQUEZ (University of Barcelona), **Monstrosities of Dispossession: Narrating the Crisis through Spanish Supernatural Fiction**

Panel 6.9

As in any field charged with abstraction, the public narratives surrounding the 2008 economic crisis relied on metaphors and images to make the invisible tangible, thereby making the crisis intelligible. Fantastic fiction provided fertile ground for many of these explanatory metaphors, as well as for pointing to the true agents responsible for the collapse. The atmosphere of collective anxiety and panic facilitated the emergence of conceptual metaphors drawn from the monstrous imaginary (the zombie, the vampire, Frankenstein), since the very system that had provoked the breakdown appeared itself as a monstrous entity. These metaphors —analysed by McNally (2011), Bride (2023), Moraña (2017), Wallom (2014), and Stephenson (2024)— were reappropriated by writers of the fantastic and speculative imagination, who offered fictionalized versions of the crisis in which, alongside the familiar monsters of factual discourses, new forms of monstrosity emerged. This paper examines how Spanish women writers have drawn on the themes, motifs, and narrative procedures of the fantastic to fictionalize the ethical and social issues linked to the economic crisis after 2008, and to construct their own figurations of it. Committed to exposing the horrors of the crisis, identifying its true culprits, and focusing attention on its victims, the supernatural literary forms of the twenty-first century expose the real monsters: they denounce political populism, express distrust toward institutional discourses, and centre their narratives on the dispossessed—those evicted and forced into spirals of unemployment, debt, and social exclusion. Drawing on the theoretical framework of dispossession (Harvey, 2003; Butler, 2006; Mbembe, 2019; Rodríguez et al., 2021) and analysing a corpus of short fiction written by women (Julia Otxoa, Care Santos, Araceli Esteves, among others), this study explores how aesthetic modes that deal with the supernatural deploy monstrosity to represent both the material and symbolic forms of dispossession generated, directly or indirectly, by the economic crisis—poverty, unemployment, eviction, and exclusion—through a distinctly ethical engagement. In this sense, the fantastic functions not only as a means of aesthetic estrangement but also as a space of ethical and political resistance.

Raquel Velázquez (raquel_velazquez@ub.edu) holds a PhD in *Hispanic Philology* from the University of Barcelona and an MA in *Comparative Literature: Literary and Cultural Studies* from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. She has carried out extended teaching and research stays at the Universiteit van Amsterdam, the University of Oxford (Hertford College), the Freie Universität Berlin, the University of Nottingham, and Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. She is currently Associate Professor in the Department of Hispanic Philology, Literary Theory and Communication at the University of Barcelona, where she teaches both undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and serves as Coordinator of the

Master's programme in *Advanced Studies in Spanish and Latin American Literature*. As a visiting lecturer, she also contributes periodically to postgraduate teaching at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the University of Alcalá.

She is a member of the research projects *Between Laughter and Fear. Hybridizations of the Fantastic and Humour in Spanish Fiction of the 20th and 21st Centuries* (Ref. PID2024-155696NB-I00), directed by Dr David Roas, and *Political Monsters and Contemporary Monstrosities in Hispanic Women Writers of the Uncanny* (Ref. PID2024-157091NB-I00), directed by Dr Natalia Álvarez.

Her research interests include literature and the press during the Franco dictatorship; mythological rewritings; relations between literature and cinema; gender studies; pathographic narratives; and contemporary Spanish fantastic fiction. In addition to publishing her work in several specialist journals (*Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, *Rilce*, *ALEC*, *Analecta Malacitana*, *CLCWeb*, *Signa*, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, among others), she has presented her research at conferences and academic events at the Universities of Kent, Stirling, Littoral Côte d'Opale, Berlin, Lausanne, Helsinki, Amsterdam, Athens, Madrid, Alcalá de Henares, A Coruña, León, Barcelona, Tbilisi, Lima, and Turin, and elsewhere.

Aina VIDAL-PÉREZ (Universitat de les Illes Balears-UIB), ***Contested Melancholy: A Mediterranean Proposal***

Panel 6.4

Melancholy and nostalgia have long served as affective frameworks structuring the Mediterranean imaginary, casting the region through idioms of loss, suspension, and civilizational longing—an imagined space of ruins, slowness, and idealized harmony. Scholarship has traced these constructions through *longue-durée* memory and civilizational nostalgia for interconnectedness (Abulafia), as an ethical counterpoint to northern hyper-modernity (Cassano), or as ideological formations that obscure histories of colonialism, migration, and violence (Chambers). Yet these projections were increasingly discussed in the final decades of the twentieth century, when profound global and regional transformations—decolonization and neocolonialism, the failures of liberation movements, uneven development, intensified south–north migrations, dependent industrialization, the rise of neoliberalism—reshaped the conceptual terrain. In this context of crisis, restructuring, and ideological realignment, Mediterranean identity ceased to operate solely as a nostalgic trope and became instead the site of a renewed political interrogation. This paper focuses on the writers and intellectuals who responded to this ambiguous and often contradictory call of the sea. Matvejević's *Mediterranean: A Cultural Landscape* (1987) marked an early inflection in this shift, proposing a Mediterranean culture grounded in everyday practices rather than romanticized myth. Derrida's reflections on Europe and its relation to Asia further displaced inherited geocultural hierarchies, while Cassano's *Pensiero meridiano* articulated a distinctly Southern mode of thought resistant to Western-Atlantic norms. While acknowledging the diverse contributions of these figures, my paper focuses primarily on Southern European writers such as Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Jean-Claude Izzo, Andrea Camilleri, Raffaele La Capria, among others. Collectively, these thinkers destabilize the solid European narrative of the late twentieth century through a Mediterranean inflection, reclaiming the sea as plural, modern, and self-defined. Bringing together theories of melancholia with late-twentieth-century intellectual and literary approaches to the Mediterranean, this paper argues that these authors significantly reshape the renewed Mediterranean conversation that took shape in the last decades of the twentieth century. Their work conceives of the region as a contradictory and contested space—at once symbolic and material, idyllic and political—and contributes to what has recently been termed the "Mediterranean question." In

doing so, they open a path toward understanding the Mediterranean as a site of political thought.

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Luka VIDMAR (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana), *A Dream of an Austrian Pantheon*

Panel 5.1

This paper discusses unrealised plans for an Austrian pantheon in the final decades of the Habsburg Monarchy. Until the dissolution of Austria-Hungary in 1918, many crypts, cemeteries and sculptural galleries were established to preserve the remains and memory of famous men and women from the Austrian Hereditary Lands (not limited to the territory of present-day Austria), but these usually had an imperial rather than a national connotation (although often, especially after 1848, with undertone of dominant German culture). None was designed as a wholesome national pantheon. A typical example is the Imperial Crypt in the Capuchin Church in Vienna, which contains the mortal remains of almost all Habsburg Emperors of the Holy Roman, Austrian and Austro-Hungarian Empires after Emperor Matthias (reburied in 1633). Public spaces and buildings along or near the Ringstrasse in Vienna, constructed in the second half of the nineteenth century, were adorned with groups of statues or memorials dedicated to Austrian rulers (mainly in the Hofburg area), professors of the University of Vienna (“the University’s Valhalla” in the main building’s courtyard), military commanders (in the Arsenal), and composers, painters and other culturally prominent figures (in the Stadtpark and elsewhere).

Three plans for a proper Austrian (though not necessarily national) pantheon were never realised. In 1867, architect Theophil Hansen proposed a “Ruhmeshalle” for the new court museums in Vienna. Some considered the Votivkirche, dedicated in 1879 in Vienna, as a potential Austrian pantheon. The third plan came closest to the concept of a national pantheon: in 1883, on the bicentenary of the victory over the Ottomans at Vienna, writer Richard von Kralik proposed a temple (“Walhalla heimischen Ruhmes”) on the Leopoldsberg hill near Vienna. In 1904, architects Karl Troll and Franz Biberhofer presented plans for this “Österreichische Ruhmeshalle” (with stained glass, frescoes, mosaics and statues depicting Austrian history), but the idea was abandoned.

Luka Vidmar (luka.vidmar@zrc-sazu.si) is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Slovenian Literature and Literary Studies, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. He works on literature, art and culture in Slovenia in the early modern period, especially libraries, academies, censorship and theatre. Among his monographs are *A Slavic Republic of Letters: The Correspondence between Jernej Kopitar and Baron Žiga Zois* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2016) and (with Sonja Svoljšak) *And Yet They Read Them: Banned Books in Slovenia in the Early Modern Age from the National and University Library*

Collection (Ljubljana: National and University Library, 2018). In 2021, he co-edited (with Marijan Dović) a special issue of the journal *Slavica Tergestina* (Habsburg Censorship and Literature in the Slovenian Lands). In 2025, he received the Zois Award for significant achievements in interdisciplinary research on literature and culture between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Isabella VILLANOVA (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), *Affect, Belonging, and Women's Resilience in the Short Stories of Leila Aboulela and Chika Unigwe*

Panel 4.6

This paper presents insights from my MSCA Postdoctoral Project at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, which examines the cultural and political implications of emotions in Afro-European women's literature—a field in which affective experiences are central to negotiating questions of identity, inequality, resilience, and social justice. I first contextualise the terms “emotions” and “Afropean” (or Afro-European) to highlight the affective dimensions of African women's experiences in Europe alongside the structural inequalities they persistently encounter (Brancato 2008; Pitts 2019; Miano 2020). Drawing on Sara Ahmed's thesis about the circulation of emotions (2004, 2010), I explore how emotions “stick” to racialised and gendered bodies and circulate across European societies, shaping experiences of belonging and social exclusion. I then build on Lauren Berlant's concept of “cruel optimism” (2011) to show how everyday emotional life is structured by precarity, aspiration, and the fragile promise of achieving a “good life” under dominant social norms. Second, I analyse as case studies Leila Aboulela's short story “The Ostrich”, from the collection *Elsewhere, Home* (2019), and Chika Unigwe's “Becoming Prosperous” from the collection *Better Never than Late* (2020). These short stories chronicle the experiences of Afro-descendant migrant women in Belgium and England as they encounter feelings of isolation, loneliness, displacement, shame, and nostalgia, while facing sexism, racism, and classism. I combine affective approaches (Ahmed 2004, 2010; Berlant 2011) with intersectional (Crenshaw 1989, 1991) and feminist frameworks (Ahmed 2017, 2023; Lorde 1984) to show how emotions both expose structures of oppression and foster women's agency and resilience within predominantly white, racist contexts. Ultimately, this paper argues that Afro-European women's fiction offers a crucial lens for understanding how migrant women's lives are shaped by the intersecting inequalities of gender, race, and class, and how emotions play a central role in negotiating belonging and asserting claims to social justice in contemporary Europe.

Isabella Villanova (Isabella.Villanova@vub.be) is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Linguistics and Literary Studies at Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Her current research project, “Afropemotions”, examines the cultural and political implications of emotions in Afro-European women's fiction. Isabella has previously held postdoctoral positions at the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence at the University of Bayreuth and in the Department of African Studies at the University of Vienna. In 2023-24, she served as an Adjunct Professor of Anglophone Literature at the University for Foreigners of Perugia and, prior to that, was a visiting scholar at the University of Leeds. She earned her PhD in Anglophone African women's writing from the University of Padua in 2021. Her first monograph, titled “The Politics of Gender in Nigerian and Zimbabwean Women's Fiction: Agencies and Strategies of Resistance”, is forthcoming with Peter Lang in 2026. Her research interests include Afro-European literature, African and diaspora literature, contemporary women's writing, postcolonial literature, affect studies, gender and queer studies, and postcolonial and decolonial thinking.

Sven VITSE (Utrecht University; with Hans DEMEYER) *Affective Crisis and the Possibility of Ethics in Contemporary Fiction*

Panel 3.5

This paper interrogates the ethical implications of our hypothesis that contemporary fiction is dominated by affective questions that are rooted in, but not fully subsumed by, neoliberalism: 'How can I experience reality (as real)?'; 'How can I feel attached to someone?' (Demeyer & Vitse 2026). Through the concept of an 'affective dominant' we offer a perspective on contemporary fiction as mediating neoliberalism's double-edged dynamics of commodifying affective experience while privatising collective experience. We then understand contemporary fiction to develop emergent mediations of neoliberal dynamics, with the affective crises the latter yield. Crucially, we conceptualize the relation between contemporary fiction and neoliberalism in terms of friction (Tsing 2004). That allows us to move beyond models of resistance versus complicity and to discuss both the violence of neoliberalism and the possibilities of life and creativity that may be found within neoliberal ruins. More specifically we argue that contemporary fiction seeks possibilities of difference and creativity in attachments. From this hypothesis it follows that the affective and the ethical are intertwined: the relation to the other, a community, the world that is at the centre of an ethical inquiry is now beset by an affective crisis of detachment. Detachment here is no longer a (postmodern) attitude of disinterest but rather a felt distance from experiences, political projects or values one deems important but nevertheless feels removed from. Such disconnection then tends to corrode the meaning attached to that set of values and political project while potentially making the subject doubt their capacity to connect and commit. Through readings of the novels such as *Het tegenovergestelde van een mens* (2017) by Dutch author Lieke Marsman (translated by Sophie Collins as *The Opposite of a Person* (2022)) and *La Plus Secrète Mémoire des Hommes* (2021) by Senegalese author Mohammed Mbougar Sarr (translated by Lara Vergnaud as *The Most Secret Memory of Men* (2024)), this paper wants to demonstrate these broader issues through a focus on the question of political commitment and that of the politics of aesthetic practices. In *The Opposite of a Person* the protagonist Ida graduated as climate scientist but lacks a sense of direction in life. Although the novel describes attempts to engage with the other and the world, an affective crisis of depression obstructs her love relationship and her engagement with the climate struggle. *The Most Secret Memory of Men* works through the conflicting affects Senegalese writer Diégane experiences in postimperial Francophone literary culture. He feels reluctant to directly engage with pressing issues in Senegalese society, yet his discovery of a genius Senegalese writer, whose visionary modernist aesthetics of autonomy was obscured by colonial modernity, allows him to repair his literary and ethical relationship to his home country. If Ida is unable to find a sense of attachment, then Diégane finds tentative attachment in a creative and ethical space of double consciousness opened up by colonial modernity. A comparative reading of our case studies will reveal the situatedness of their protagonists' affective crises, as well as the friction yielded by these crises between their ethical ambitions and their difficulties in committing to them.

Sven Vitse (s.b.vitse@uu.nl) is Assistant Professor at the department of Languages, Literature and Culture at Utrecht University. Recently published, with Hans Demeyer, in open access *Affective Crisis and the Possibility of Attachment: A Comparative Study of Contemporary Fiction in Neoliberal Ruins* (UCL Press 2026).

Sandra VLASTA (Università di Genova), *Travelling, Writing and Ironising: Sibylle Berg's Wunderbare Jahre (2016) and the Politics of Travel (Writing)*

Panel 1.2

In the short preface to her collection of travel essays, *Wunderbare Jahre* (Wonderful Years, 2016), Sibylle Berg explains the subtitle of her volume, *Als wir noch die Welt bereisten* [When we were still travelling the world], by introducing a personal as well as an intertextual and intermedial level. All three – memories of past journeys, references to earlier travel writing and to travel documentaries on TV – however, reveal themselves as faulty and Berg questions whether those “wonderful years” ever existed at all or are simply false memories: recollections of relaxed, emancipated women and green parks in Paris versus the reality of stressed, underpaid French men and women on the crowded metro; the beauty of Italy versus its unemployed youth; Mediterranean beaches versus the refugees struggling to arrive there. Berg thus places the “ethics on the move” (Fowler, Forsdick, Kostova 2013) centre stage and, in the essays that follow, seeks to disclose what is often hidden in travel and travel writing. In this manner, on the one hand, her short travelogues become political reportages, for instance when she writes about the Kosovo in the 1990s or about a journey to Israel. On the other hand, Berg presents a post-tourism view of places such as Vienna, Italy and Weimar. Across these approaches, she questions the act of travelling itself (even though – or because? – she herself is a traveller) and confirms that travelling is a political act. What is more, she does so with a great deal of irony (a technique she employs throughout her writing). The travel essays are accompanied by illustrations by Isabel Kreitz, which add yet another level to the collection. The black-and-white illustrations reinforce the irony, in particular when they refer to *Star Trek* or use Playmobil figures instead of people. My contribution aims at carving out the ethics of Sibylle Berg’s travel essays, taking into account the literary and medial techniques she uses to do so.

Sandra Vlasta (sandra.vlasta@unige.it) is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Genoa. She was a Marie-Sklodowska-Curie Fellow at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz/Germany and Nottingham Trent University/United Kingdom with a project entitled *European Travel Writing in Context. The Socio-Political Dimension of Travelogues 1760-1850*. Her research interests include travel writing (studies), multilingualism in literature and migration literature. She is co-editor (with Heidi Liedke) of *Studies in Travel Writing*. Latest publication: “Multilingualism in 19th Century Travel Writing. A First Typology”, in: Jana-Katharina Mende (ed.): *Hidden Multilingualism in 19th-Century European Literature. Traditions, Texts, Theories*. Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2023, 219-240.

Lenka VOJTÍŠKOVÁ (Charles University), *Transformation, transposition, transubstantiation. Kristeva’s models of affective intertextuality for the 21st century*

Panel 9.5

This paper aims to reconsider, from a theoretical perspective, the established literary-studies concept of intertextuality in relation to corporeality and affectivity. We intend to formulate a renewed version of the concept that can better meet the demands that contemporary constellations of reading practices, theoretical approaches, and cultural situatedness place on scholarly interpretation. To support this rethinking, we turn to the lifelong theoretical work of Julia Kristeva, who introduced the term to the French intellectual public exactly sixty years ago, only for it to become an “international ‘star’, some would say ‘une tarte à la crème.’” (Kristeva 2002). We treat Kristeva’s theoretical trajectory from the 1960s to the present as a kind of microcosm in which many symptomatic shifts in approaches to the relations among text, society, and subject can be observed. We trace the theoretical modifications in Kristeva’s thinking on corporeality and affectivity and identify three models of intertextuality corresponding to distinct periods of her work. The first is a model grounded in an understanding of change as transformation and can be situated in her earliest writings (Kristeva 1969). We show how the notion of transformation involves a shift away from the figure of the author toward writing as a non-subjective practice of bodily and gestural nature

that works on the raw material of language. In the second model of transposition (Kristeva 1974, 1983, 1987), we find a kind of “return of the subject”; attention is directed toward changes in the position of the subject within the intertextual space, which, drawing on psychoanalytic theory, can be defined as an inextricable network of affects, verbalizations, memories, and representations (Green 2015 [1973]). The third model, transubstantiation, is presented through Kristeva’s readings of Proust (Kristeva 1994, 2013). We define it as a process of chiasmatic crossing of texts in which text (almost) becomes body and body becomes text (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1964) and in which the figure of the author returns in its phantasmatic form. This allows us to highlight a new model of reading introduced by Kristeva, namely an “affective identification with the text” (Kristeva in Guberman 1996). We argue that these three distinct models can be understood as a coherent theory of intertextuality precisely because they are heterogeneous and mutually competing ways of conceptualizing how the (post)modern subject can relate to the social and political sphere through affectively mediated reading of literary texts.

Lenka Vojtišková (Lenka.vojtis@seznam.cz) is a postdoctoral researcher at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague, Czechia. She completed her PhD in Semiotics and the Philosophy of Communication at the same institution in 2025, having previously earned a Master’s degree in Electronic Culture and Semiotics and a Bachelor’s degree in Language and Literary Culture. Her research focuses on the intersections of semiotics, psychoanalysis, feminist theory, and contemporary literary thought, with sustained attention to the work of Julia Kristeva. Her publications include studies in *Contradictions*, *Linguistic Frontiers*, *Aesthetic Investigations*, as well as contributions to several edited volumes. She is also co-editor of the book *Sémiotika a ideologie* [Semiotics and Ideology] (2022). She has presented her research at numerous international conferences, including The Kristeva Circle (Bulgaria, 2022; Canada, 2024). She is also a recipient of the 2023 Ch. S. Peirce Young Scholar Award, granted by the Institute for Studies in Pragmaticism at Texas Tech University. In 2024, she undertook a research stay at the Department of Philosophy at Concordia University in Montréal, further developing her work within an international context.

Kirsten VON HAGEN (Justus Liebig University, Giessen), *Re-Writing and Re-Imagining our Future Selves: George Sand’s Rural Novels and Gabrielle Filteau-Chiba’s Ecofeminist Trilogy*

Panel 7.1

George Sand’s novels not only reveal an awareness of female-coded authorship that confidently asserts itself in the literary field of male-dominated knowledge and writing practices, but the author also uses the novel form to develop counter-models to the economically capitalist-oriented lifestyles of her time. Her ‘romans champêtres’, or rural novels, in particular, become laboratories for alternative models of life, writing and knowledge, as *François le Champi* (1848), *La petite Fadette* (1848) and *La Filleule* (1853) clearly demonstrate. Here, traditional models of coexistence and the liberal economies of her time are questioned, and alternative forms of life and writing are presented that can already be read as critical of economics and ecology.

Similarly, the French-Canadian author Gabrielle Filteau-Chiba, in her ecocritical trilogy (*Encabanée*, 2018, *Sauvagines*, 2019/2023, *Bivouac*, 2021/2024), explores new forms of writing and practices of care, as well as queer aesthetics as models of coexistence, while at the same time re-situating and re-perspectivising autochthonous knowledge practices of care and tenderness. In reference to Levine and Kornbluh, the novel is considered here in terms of its form(-ality), as a place of negotiation for alternative ways of life, and as an

archive of life knowledge. Using these two trilogies as examples, the paper traces economic and ecological criticism and counter-narratives, i.e. alternative forms of coexistence that attempt to remodel practices of care, participation, and agency.

Kirsten von Hagen (kirsten.v.hagen@romanistik.uni-giessen.de) has been Professor of French and Spanish Literature and Cultural Studies at the University of Giessen since 2013. She is responsible for the PhD Network at the local Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC). Her research interests include literature and cultures of the long 19th century and the present day. She has worked on various projects funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) focusing on female authors of realism and literary modernism, and has published renowned studies on this topic (e.g. Kirsten von Hagen/Corinna Leister (eds.), *An Actor between Eras, Signs and Media: Théophile Gautier and the Aesthetics of Modernity*, Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag 2022; Kirsten von Hagen/Raul Calzoni, (eds.), *The Vampire: A European Myth of Cultural Transfer*, München: AVM Edition 2023; Kirsten von Hagen, Nirina Ralantaoritsimba (eds.), *Creative Writing and Cultural Practice: Short Forms of Narrative*, Frankfurt/M., Frankfurt Academic Press, 2024; Kirsten von Hagen/Jana Keidel (eds.), *Anna de Noailles. Author of the Belle Époque, Actor of Modernity | Auteure de la Belle Époque, Actrice de la Modernité*, Baden-Baden: Rombach 2024.) She also examines eco-critical and intermedial forms of writing, most recently published in: Kirsten von Hagen/Corinna Dziudzia, *(Re-)Mythologising the Forest in the Digital Age? A Literary and Cultural-Historical Search for Clues*, Berlin: Metzler, 2025; and *Writing Against Forgetting: Images of Memory in the Contemporary French Novel in Alice Zeniter's Juste avant l'oubli* (2015), in: Isabelle Stauffer (ed.), *Literature and Film in the Mirror of the Digital: Intermedial Reflexivity in the Present*, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2024.

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Beata WALIGORSKA-OLEJNICZAK (Adam Mickiewicz University), *Ethics of a Gaze: 20 Days in Mariupol (2023) by Mstyslav Chernov*

Panel 8.4

The talk will focus on the interpretation of the documentary film *20 Days in Mariupol* directed by Mstyslav Chernov. It documents atrocities in the besieged city of Mariupol during first weeks of a Russian invasion and turns attention to the ethical dimension of the job of the Associated Press reporters who despite being trapped in the city continued their work. Despite the fact that the film won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature Film in 2024 it has been scarcely researched so far. The talk will discuss *20 Days in Mariupol* from two points of view: firstly, the selected film will be treated as a kind of egodocumentary, and secondly, it will be read as a text showing the collective trauma and tragedy of the city and its inhabitants. It means that the documentary will be understood as a kind of introspection and self-reflection on the job of a war reporter as well as a driving force for discussion about the ethical problems linked to this profession in the contemporary world. By examining selected images and voice-over narration I'll try to focus on the relationship between private emotions of the subjective vision and efforts to show the objective fate of the city which has become the symbol of the mass killing of civilians by Russian forces in Ukraine. The methodological tools that will be used for interpretation are Susan Sontag's essays collected in volumes *On Photography* (1973–1977) and *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003).

Beata Waligórska-Olejniczak (beata27@amu.edu.pl) is a Full Professor in the Institute of East Slavic Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Poland). There she is a deputy director and the head of the Department of Comparative Studies in Literature and Culture (since 2014) and the editor-in-chief of *Studia Rossica Posnaniensia* (since 2018). With Rachel Morley and Seth Graham (both from University College London) she co-edited a special issue of this journal on the topic "Eastern European Urban Narratives of Conflict" (published in 2024). She was a member of the Executive Committee of the European Society of Comparative Literature. Her latest book *Literary Constellations of Andrey Zvyagintsev's Oeuvre* was published in 2022. She is also the (co)author of 4 other monographs in Polish, i.e. *Contemporary Russian Cinema in the Light of War Traumas: Literary and Cultural Context* (2020); *New Russian Cinema in the Literary and Film Tradition* (2017); *Sacrum on the Way: Venedict Erofeev's Moscow-Petushki and Quentin Tarantino's Pulp Fiction through the Lens of Montage* (2013); *Theatrical Gesture in A. P. Chekhov's Drama The Seagull and Free Dance as the Aesthetic Context of the Great Theatre Reform* (2009). Her articles have been published in China, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and the USA

Binhua WANG (Lingnan University, Hong Kong), '*Writing the Self Twice*' across *Languages and Cultures*

Panel 2.1

This paper probes how Yang Xianyi, the eminent translator of the Chinese classic *A Dream in the Red Mansion*, negotiates 'the self' across languages, publics and paratexts in his autobiography *White Tiger* and its delegated translation. The Chinese versions of his English memoir were not self-translated by Yang himself but delegated to another translator when published in his home country, which can be analysed as an edge case illuminating the limits and possibilities of the 'BY/OF/FOR the Self' triad in autographical self-translation. Through paratextual analysis, textual analysis and reception triangulation, the study reconceives writing and translation of autobiographies as a staged performance of 'the self' across publics, mediated by institutional framings and delegated agency. The paper can offer implications to self-translation studies and comparative literature in two aspects: 1) a non-fictional, public facing angle that extends beyond the dominant focus on literary fiction in self-translation studies, and 2) a stress test of the "BY the self" assumption when an eminent translator chooses not to translate his own life story for his home audience.

Binhua Wang (binhuawang@ln.edu.hk) is Professor in the Department of Translation at Lingnan University, Hong Kong. Previously he was Chair/Professor of interpreting and translation studies at University of Leeds in the UK, where he served as Director of the Centre for Translation Studies and Programme Manager of the MA programmes in interpreting. His research interests include interpreting and translation studies, digital humanities, AI-human interactions in T&I, and intercultural studies of Chinese literature and culture, in which he has published over 80 articles in refereed SSCI/A&HCI/CSSCI journals and in edited volumes published by Routledge, John Benjamins, Springer, Brill, Palgrave and Bloomsbury. His recent articles have appeared in *Across Languages and Cultures*, *Digital Scholarship in Humanities*, *Babel*, *ITT*, *Perspectives*, *Target*, *The Translator*, *TIS*, *Translation Review* and in *The Routledge Handbook of Conference Interpreting*. He has authored several monographs published by Routledge and by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, and edited with Jeremy Munday *Advances in Discourse Analysis of Translation and Interpreting* (Routledge). He serves as co-editor of *Interpreting and Society* and on the editorial boards of *Babel*, *ITT*, *Forum*, *Foreign Language Teaching & Research*, *Chinese Translators Journal*, *Translation Quarterly* and *The Linguist*.

Marcel WARBISCH (University of Silesia), *The Affective Gesture of the Letter: Embroidered Writing in Contemporary Art*

Panel 7.8

My paper examines how contemporary embroidery-based art practices redefine the relationships among text, emotion, and materiality by analysing the work of the Polish artist Monika Drożyńska. I argue that her artistic practice indicates a move away from traditional, semantically driven views of text and textuality towards an understanding of writing as an embodied and material practice, where words and phrases become tangible and emotionally resonant through textile form. This shift mirrors a broader global trend in contemporary art, where the boundaries between reading, viewing, touching, and sensing increasingly blur. By situating Drożyńska's work at the intersection of contemporary text-based art and longer traditions of embroidered writing - including historical samplers, suffrage banners, and contemporary textile practices - I aim to show how materialized text participates in broader discussions on the sensory, embodied, and affective dimensions of language and writing. Drawing on theoretical insights from Sara Ahmed, Johanna Drucker, Tim Ingold, and Maureen Daly Goggin's concept of rhetorical praxis, I conceptualize embroidery as an

intermodal writing practice shaped by lines, gestures, movements, and material processes. Ingold's notion of lines as processes rather than fixed forms enables viewing textual elements as traces of action and acts of agency: threads become lines of interaction that traverse surfaces, bodies, and social space. Text can thus be understood as a dynamic material trail that generates emotional force through the interaction of vision, touch, and manual labour. Drożyńska's embroideries introduce a tactile and temporal dimension to textual materiality. The conscious, deliberate act of stitching transforms writing into a critical and political practice. Rather than treating embroidery as decorative craft, the artist reactivates its historical associations with feminine labour, literacy, and textile traditions, using stitched text as a medium of social intervention and embodied writing. The apparent innocence of fabric contrasts with the sharpness of the embroidered phrases, creating emotional tension between softness and dissent. Ingold's perspective highlights the thread as a continuous process of becoming, linking hand, body, language, and material in an ongoing act of creation. My study aims to demonstrate how embroidery-based textual practices not only redefine conventional understandings of text but also challenge the Western tendency to separate literature from the material act of writing. The affectivity of text has often been approached primarily through its semantic dimensions, leaving its embodied, tactile, and temporal aspects comparatively underexplored. By examining embroidered writing within the field of contemporary art, I argue for new ways of understanding textuality as a material, affective, and performative practice. Rather than treating writing as a transparent vehicle of meaning, embroidery foregrounds its material, temporal, and embodied dimensions. Text thus emerges not only as a linguistic representation but also as a performative practice shaped by gesture, touch, repetition, and material engagement.

Marcel Warbisch (marcel.warbisch@us.edu.pl) Marcel Warbisch is a PhD candidate at the University of Silesia in Katowice. His research focuses on embroidered writing, textile studies, and the materiality of text in contemporary literature and art. He is particularly interested in the intersections of embroidery, visual culture, and writing practices with a special focus on the work of Polish artist Monika Drożyńska.

Krystyna WIESZCZEK (Columbia University/University of Verona), *Reading Orwell as an Ethical and Affective Practice*

Panel 9.3

The paper draws on in-depth research from a recent book *George Orwell and Communist Poland: Émigré, Official and Clandestine Receptions* (2025) to examine the ethical and affective dimensions of Orwell's writing practice and of the responses his work elicited during the Cold War period. It begins by reassessing Orwell's own rationale for writing, focusing in particular on his 1946 essay "Why I Write", where he reflects on how his experience in the Spanish Civil War decisively shaped his development as a writer, journalist and essayist. The discussion will then turn to the ethical and affective motivations of the very diverse communities of readers – both defenders and detractors – who engaged in Orwell's texts. It will explore the combined affective and ethical impulses underlying the efforts to translate and publish his works in the languages of Soviet-dominated countries, whether from abroad or within those occupied states themselves. It will look at parallel rationales that informed Western, particularly U.S., initiatives to subsidise such translation, publication and readership. It will also examine the official readings of authorities behind the Iron Curtain, accessible through surviving censorship files. Finally, the paper considers how Orwell's authorial prerogatives and ethical commitments travelled across borders, shaping not only readers but also writers and publishers. In doing so, it reflects on the relationships between text and world from the dual perspectives of ethics and affect, and connects these to broader

dynamics of literature, censorship, translation, reception and resistance.

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Alioune WILLANE (Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis), *Exotisme ou redécouverte de l'Autre : analyse sociocritique comparée des récits de voyage dans La Morsure de Marc Gontard et Un Dieu et des Mœurs d'Elgas*

Panel 8.5

Les littératures de voyage contemporaines renouvellent profondément les représentations de l'exotisme et de l'altérité. *La Morsure* de Marc Gontard et *Un Dieu et des Mœurs* d'Elgas s'inscrivent dans ce mouvement d'écriture où le déplacement géographique devient un prétexte à un déplacement identitaire, culturel et idéologique. Si, historiquement, la littérature de voyage occidentale servait souvent de support aux discours ethnographiques et colonialistes, ces deux œuvres proposent une reconfiguration du regard porté sur l'Autre : elles mettent en crise les mécanismes de domination symbolique, révèlent l'implication du sujet dans le récit ethnographique et explorent la possibilité d'une « ré-initiation » — une redécouverte de soi à travers l'expérience de l'altérité. Une analyse sociocritique permet de lire ces textes comme des espaces où se cristallisent tensions sociales, rapports de pouvoir, héritages coloniaux et repositionnements des subjectivités postcoloniales. L'exotisme, loin d'être une simple esthétique du dépaysement, devient un champ conflictuel où se rejouent les interactions entre cultures, systèmes de valeurs et imaginaires. Cette présente communication interroge la manière dont Gontard et Elgas construisent, déconstruisent ou déplacent l'exotisme, oscillant entre ethnographie et critique des cadres mêmes de l'observation.

Alioune WILLANE (alioune.wilane@ugb.edu.sn): Né le 02 mars 1983, à Kounghoul au Sénégal, Docteur Alioune Willane est un enseignant-chercheur, maître de conférences titulaire, spécialiste de littérature comparée au département de Français de l'Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis. Titulaire d'un DEA en littérature africaine, d'une thèse unique en littérature comparée, il est aussi diplômé en sciences politiques. Un profil transversal qui se lit à travers ses sujets de recherches. Auteur de plusieurs articles scientifiques sur les dynamiques de construction de l'ethnicité, il a publié des ouvrages majeurs sur l'écriture du racisme. Ses domaines de recherches sont : littérature et mythes, le racisme, chants rituels et symbolisation identitaire, littérature d'exil, entre autres. Monsieur Willane est, par ailleurs, coordonnateur du master de Français en ligne, formation dispensée dans toute la sous-région avec la collaboration de la FOAD de l'Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis. Chef du Département de Français de l'université Gaston Berger depuis mars 2024.

Juanjuan WU (Tsinghua University), *Affective Encounters and the Ethics of Sounds in Victorian Women's Travel Narratives on China*

Panel 4.5

This essay explores the complex entanglement of affect and ethics in Victorian women's travel narratives on China, with a focus on the representation of Chinese sounds and its implications for women travellers' fraught negotiations of the self and other, their own culture and the Chinese difference. Isabella Bird, Constance Gordon-Cumming, Mary Gaunt and others consistently register Chinese encounters as a disconcerting sonic phenomenon upon which ethics and affects are brought together to reconfigure female travellers' subjectivity in the making during travel encounters and a temporal community or its lack of between the traveller and the local Chinese. Drawing on studies in sensory history, sound studies, affect theory, and travel writing, this essay proposes that a shared pattern of encountering the Chinese soundscape emerges and that, frequently, their narratives register a common tendency to express sonic discomfort. This recurrent phenomenon is not merely objective recording, nor subjective complaints about noise, but rather a profound affective and ethical response to the disorienting experience of a modernity that did not conform to Western expectations. This sonic discomfort, registered in the body and transcribed into their narratives, reveals the ambition of these women travellers to construct a modern womanhood and identity that traverses tough terrain. However, it also showcases a nostalgic longing for a pre-modern China as much as a deep-seated anxiety about the loss of imperial control, which poses threats to the imagined community of the British Empire even at its very margin. More importantly, such sonic discomfort is also employed to demonstrate China's failure to replicate a familiar, orderly path to progress and modernisation. This essay thus aims to recast travel writing as an affective and ethical archive of encountering Chinese modernity in gendered ways.

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Y

Selvin YALTIR (Boğaziçi University), *The Ethics of Ironic Grief: Individual Mourning, Affect and Fictionalization*

Panel 4.7

Drawing upon a reading of Max Porter's *Grief Is the Thing with Feathers*, this paper proposes an affective framework produced through the superposition of two modes of experience: grief and irony. I explore how individual grief may give rise to an ironic mode, particularly in moments when identification and intimacy paradoxically create distance from loss itself. How does the experience of loss - and the grief it entails - overlap with processes of the fictionalization of the self? Considering this question, grief emerges as an emotion structured by an operation of doubling, in which raw affect continually folds into figures of representation, enabling reflexivity and play. I propose an interpretation of the ironic self in grief neither as a transition toward ethical selfhood in the existentialist sense nor a simple resort to cynicism and disbelief. Rather, I conceptualize ironic grief as an affective fact: a condition in which affective intensity and ironic reflexivity intermingle and coexist as a mode of being. Reading Max Porter's *Grief Is the Thing with Feathers* through contemporary theoretical frameworks, I situate grief within this ironic openness that resists closure. In this context, irony functions as both an ethical and affective response to devastation, reflecting the unrepresentability of pain while preserving relief and distance, and allowing the grieving subject to engage in forms of imaginative reconstruction.

Overall, this paper suggests that grief's irony marks an uneasy ethical openness grounded in creativity and re-subjectivation, complicating assumptions that personal grief consists solely in longing for the lost one.

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YANG Qing (Sichuan University), *From Hanshan Poems to Cold Mountain Paintings: Cross-Cultural and Cross-Medial Variation of Literary Texts*

Panel 2.1

In addition to understanding, interpreting, and transforming classical Chinese thought, North American academia has developed a distinctive mode of interpretive application known as visual translation. The American abstract art master Brice Marden reinterpreted East Asian calligraphic lines and the classical Chinese poetry of Hanshan, creating a series of minimalist paintings renowned for their abstract geometric patterns—the "Cold Mountain Series," also referred to as "Hanshan paintings"—which can serve as a case study in visual translation. Although this artistic practice of transforming poetry into painting is highly personal, it offers new perspectives on interdisciplinary research and the adaptation of ancient traditions for contemporary use. This form of visual translation transcends traditional interlinguistic translation boundaries, broadening both the scope of scholarly inquiry and providing new practical models. Such an innovative translation framework, in turn, fosters cultural practices rooted in classical Chinese literary theory and represents a cross-symbiotic cultural engagement between Eastern and Western traditions.

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YIN Ming (Tianjin University), *Translating Affective Resonance: Transduction in English and Chinese Versions of The Sorrows of Young Werther*

Panel 5.5

This paper examines how translation reconstructs affective resonance by reconfiguring affective relations. Taking Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* as a case study, it maps the relational organization of affect in the source text and traces its transduction through a comparative analysis of four translations. The two English translations are by R. D. Boylan (1902 ed. of 1854) and David Constantine (2012), while the Chinese versions are by Guo Moruo (1922) and Han Yaocheng (2022 ed. of 1994). Chosen to represent distinct historical and literary moments in Anglophone and Chinese reception, these four versions enable a comparison between early twentieth-century and contemporary English renderings on the one hand, and between the Chinese translation shaped by the May Fourth intellectual movement and its counterpart produced within a post-reform Chinese context on the other. Focusing on how relational affect is reconfigured through lexical choices, syntactic structures, and shifts in agency, the study examines how these micro-level transformations reshape affective resonance across different Anglophone and Chinese literary-cultural contexts. Drawing on an affect-theoretical framework that understands affect as the relational capacity to affect and be affected, and as a process of movement and becoming, the study adopts a text-grounded close-reading approach to trace affective trajectories through three representative passages. These correspond to three pivotal moments in Werther's relation to Lotte: their first transformative encounter at the dance, Werther's experience of overwhelming joy that exceeds articulation, and his imagined posthumous relation to Lotte. Together, they foreground three distinct modes through which affect unfolds: environmental circulation, aesthetic articulation, and relational continuity across spatiotemporal boundaries. Tracing these trajectories provides the analytical basis for examining how translation redirects relational affect through processes of transduction. Close readings demonstrate that Goethe externalizes affect: affect is not confined to

Werther's private consciousness but is distributed across dynamic relations among natural elements, human bodies, sensory perception, and language. The comparative analysis further shows that translational transduction reconfigures the trajectories through which affect circulates, revealing how translators modulate, intensify, or attenuate affective resonance. Across the selected passages, Boylan and Guo tend to relocate affect from relational configurations to Werther's autonomous consciousness, foregrounding subjective intensity at the expense of relational continuity. Constantine preserves the directional flow of affect more consistently, although syntactic restructuring occasionally interrupts its rhythmic continuity. Han more consistently retains affective resonance and the productive ambiguity of the source text's undefined affective agents, yet pragmatic modification attenuates the intensity of Werther's final affective appeal. Taken together, these findings suggest that through processes of affective transduction, it reconfigures relational affect by redirecting affective trajectories, thereby generating distinct forms of affective resonance. Translation thus becomes part of the affective system of the literary text itself, participating in the ongoing circulation, amplification, and attenuation of affect through linguistic and cultural mediation.

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Ayako YOSHINO (University of Leeds), *Imperial Amnesia and Feminist Desire: Victorian England as Feminist Refuge in 2000s Japan*

Panel 4.6

In *Neo-Victorianism and the Memory of Empire* (2012), Elizabeth Ho argues that neo-Victorianism functions as a powerful shorthand for imperialism. Yet female-oriented Japanese neo-Victorian fiction suggests a more complicated relationship between neo-Victorianism, empire and historical memory. Previous studies on Japanese neo-Victorianism often focus on works such as Katsuhiko Otomo's *Steam Boy* (2004), Mori Kaoru's *Emma* (2002–2008), and Yana Toboso's *Black Butler* (2006–). The clustering of these works in the early 2000s is striking yet rarely acknowledged. Even Waiyee Loh's *Empire of Culture* (2024) centres on *Lady Victorian* (1998–2007) and *Black Butler*, without addressing the significance of this concentrated period. Although neo-Victorian works continue to appear on a smaller scale, this omission overlooks an important question: what affective work was neo-Victorianism performing in 2000s Japan for female readers? I suggest that the appeal of these texts rested not only on their aesthetics but also on the cultural familiarity of Britain within the Japanese imagination. This paper examines Aoki Yuko's *Victorian Rose Tailor* series (2005–2013), a hugely popular YA novel cycle ostensibly targeting teenage girls. Set in the fictional Leaftown Hill on the outskirts of 1870s London, the series follows orphaned dressmaker Chris Palace, whose creations reveal “the shape of the heart” of the wearers. Through dressmaking, Chris uncovers the silent desires of her clientele—often young women negotiating gender norms and personal aspirations—while the narrative culminates in her romance with an aristocratic suitor. Within scholarship on girls' YA fiction, *Victorian Rose Tailor* is now recognized as an early example of the “career novel” aiming at younger female readers. I have argued elsewhere that its appeal lies not only in its sumptuous aesthetics; Victorian England offered a safe imaginative space to explore feminist concerns

without provoking controversy. Although marketed to teens, the series was published under a label whose readership had shifted by then: many readers were women in their 20s and 30s, navigating employment and gender expectations amid Japan's feminist backlash. To extend this argument, I draw on Lauren Berlant's concept of intimate publics, optimism, and affective attachment. In *Victorian Rose Tailor*, the Victorian setting provides a refuge for feminist desi precisely through its selective omissions. The women's rights movement, labour struggles, and imperial entanglements that defined the historical Victorian era are largely absent. Instead, Victorian Britain is reimagined as a depoliticized landscape of intimacy, aspiration, and self-fashioning. Such omissions should not be understood simply as historical distortions. Rather, they constitute the conditions that enable the text's affective work. At the same time, the choice of Victorian Britain is not arbitrary. The appeal of the setting rests on a longer history of cultural identification through which Britain came to occupy a privileged position within the Japanese imagination. What appears as imperial amnesia therefore emerges not from historical distance but from a longstanding affective attachment to Britain that renders imperial history simultaneously familiar and invisible.

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YU Zhongli (University of Nottingham Ningbo China) with **ZHANG Qiyao**, *Cross-Racial Affective Empathy for African Women in Reception of Translated African Feminist Literature in China*

Panel 9.3

This paper discusses cross-racial affective empathy for African women in reception of translated African feminist literature in China, with Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988) as an example. Against the backdrop of fourth-wave feminism, some African feminist writings have been introduced into China. Discussions on such writings by online readers in China often show cross-racial empathy for African women, who are portrayed as facing multiple injustices due to their complex identities. *Nervous Conditions* is a case in point. As a seminal postcolonial Bildungsroman, it narrates the journey of Tambu in pursuing her education in Europe. Tambu is a rural girl in colonial Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Through representation of the sufferings of Tambu and other female characters, the novel unravels how patriarchal structures within Shona culture and colonialism create 'nervous conditions' for African women. Its Chinese translation by Dai Congrong was published in China in April 2025. Since then, many readers of the Chinese translation have posted their comments on Douban Read (a large digital reading platform in China), talking about how they feel for the struggles of women of other races. The comments well reflect reception of *Nervous Conditions* in China, which deserves scrutinization. There has been growing scholarly attention to translation reception (Baer 2014, Thrainsdottir 2025). Some scholars have drawn on reader comments on digital platforms to investigate translation reception by online readers (ibid.). However, the reception of translated African feminist literature in China, and

particularly how affective empathy is manifested therein, remain unexplored. This paper intends to fill the gap by examining the cross-racial affective empathy for African women in reception of the Chinese translation of *Nervous Conditions*. It employs Maibom's (2017) concept of affective empathy, which denotes the wide range of emotional responses people can have to the feelings or situations of others. The thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke 2006) is used to examine readers' posts collected from Douban Read. Up to now, 200 short comments have been collected for analysis to find out if they include any comments about cross-racial affective empathy for African women. Through the analysis, this paper finds that the affective empathy in the reception is manifested in three aspects: (1) cross-racial affective empathy for African women who experience gender discrimination and racism, (2) cross-racial affective empathy for African women who suffer from both gender and class discrimination, (3) cross-racial affective empathy for African women facing the tension between tradition and modernity in their pursuit of education in Europe. It argues that the intersectional discrimination suffered by African women serves as a catalyst for such cross-racial affective empathy. Their compounded experiences of gender, racial, and often class-based discrimination imply the complexities of their struggles, which in turn evoke deep emotional responses and a sense of solidarity among readers from different racial backgrounds. It contends that the cross-racial affective empathy exhibited by Chinese readers does not reinforce racial hierarchies, thus challenging the view that cross-racial empathy is imperialistic (Davis 2008). This paper contributes to an understanding of affective empathy in translation reception.

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Z

Giovanni Salvagnini ZANAZZO (Università di Padova), *Philippe Forest and the Ethics of French Neo-Japonisme: Between Universalism and the Rhetoric of Otherness*

Panel 2.2

The term Japonisme is undoubtedly reductive to account for the complex of cultural reception phenomena that developed in Europe following the reopening of Japan frontiers (*bakumatsu*). In the French case, in particular, an initial wave of travel accounts (Beillevaire 2001) and literary works (Loti 1889) was followed by an interest that, spanning the entire century, has lasted to the contemporaneity (Arribert-Narce 2016, Kraenker 2022). Throughout this trajectory, various evolutions have affected the problem of ethics, which has always been central to the debate about intercultural relations. More recent writings, for which the name neo-Japonisme has been proposed (Reyns-Chikuma 2005, Basch and Lucken 2025), aim to take advantage of developments in the human sciences to overcome the original Eurocentric attitude (Forest 2012). This task, however, is not without challenges, as our contribution intends to demonstrate through the case study of Philippe Forest. While denouncing the exoticist aura of otherness that envelops the Western image of Japan, this writer, among the most influential and finest mediators of Japanese culture in France, takes a position in favour of anthropological continuity among peoples, with regard, for example, to the conception of subjectivity (Lozerand 2015; Arribert-Narce 2018). With the commendable aim of preserving Japan from any rhetorical “mythology”, however, such a position could neutralize even genuinely existing differences. Forest’s case, therefore, leads us to reconsider the fundamental dialectic at work in travel writing as well as in human knowledge: the one between the universalist exaltation of similarities and, on the other hand, what Victor Segalen called the “power to conceive the Other”.

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ZHANG Qiyao (University of Nottingham Ningbo China) with YU Zhongli, *Cross-racial affective empathy for African women in reception of translated African feminist literature in China*

Panel 9.3

This paper discusses cross-racial affective empathy for African women in reception of translated African feminist literature in China, with Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions* (1988) as an example. Against the backdrop of the fourth-wave feminism, some African

feminist writings have been introduced into China. Discussions on such writings by online readers in China often show cross-racial empathy for African women, who are portrayed as facing multiple injustices due to their complex identities. *Nervous Conditions* is a case in point. As a seminal postcolonial Bildungsroman, it narrates the journey of Tambu in pursuing her education in Europe. Tambu is a rural girl in colonial Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Through representation of the sufferings of Tambu and other female characters, the novel unravels how patriarchal structures within Shona culture and colonialism create ‘nervous conditions’ for African women. Its Chinese translation by Dai Congrong was published in China in April 2025. Since then, many readers of the Chinese translation have posted their comments on Douban Read (a large digital reading platform in China), talking about how they feel for the struggles of women of other races. The comments well reflect reception of *Nervous Conditions* in China, which deserves scrutinization. There has been growing scholarly attention to translation reception (Baer 2014, Thrainsdottir 2025). Some scholars have drawn on reader comments on digital platforms to investigate translation reception by online readers (ibid.). However, the reception of translated African feminist literature in China, and particularly how affective empathy is manifested therein, remain unexplored. This paper intends to fill the gap by examining the cross-racial affective empathy for African women in reception of the Chinese translation of *Nervous Conditions*. It employs Maibom's (2017) concept of affective empathy, which denotes the wide range of emotional responses people can have to the feelings or situations of others. The thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke 2006) is used to examine readers' posts collected from Douban Read. Up to now, 200 short comments have been collected for analysis to find out if they include any comments about cross-racial affective empathy for African women. Through the analysis, this paper finds that the affective empathy in the reception is manifested in three aspects: (1) cross-racial affective empathy for African women who experience gender discrimination and racism, (2) cross-racial affective empathy for African women who suffer from both gender and class discrimination, (3) cross-racial affective empathy for African women facing the tension between tradition and modernity in their pursuit of education in Europe. It argues that the intersectional discrimination suffered by African women serves as a catalyst for such cross-racial affective empathy. Their compounded experiences of gender, racial, and often class-based discrimination imply the complexities of their struggles, which in turn evoke deep emotional responses and a sense of solidarity among readers from different racial backgrounds. It contends that the cross-racial affective empathy exhibited by Chinese readers does not reinforce racial hierarchies, thus challenging the view that cross-racial empathy is imperialistic (Davis 2008). This paper contributes to an understanding of affective empathy in translation reception.

Zhang Qiyao (qiyao.zhang@nottingham.edu.cn) recently completed her PhD in Translation Studies at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China, supervised by Dr Yu Zhongli.

ZHANG Sitong (University of Edinburgh) and **LIANG Yaquan** (University of Edinburgh), *Rethinking Justice through Intimacy: Borders, Affect, and Ethics in The Flowers of War*

Panel 4.9

The Nanjing Massacre was one of the most severe and emblematic episodes of wartime violence during the Second Sino-Japanese War, known as “The Rape of Nanking” for its mass rape and extreme violations of female bodies. As a narrative set against this historical event, Yan Geling's *The Flowers of War* portrays both conflict and cohabitation among female victims within a shared refuge – specifically, schoolgirls and prostitutes – who are strictly differentiated within the wartime order and burdened with divergent ethical expectations. This study examines how *The Flowers of War* represents the collective

memory of the Nanjing Massacre through a gendered postmemory narrative. It focuses on how intimate, relational, and affective narrative practices participate in and reshape the construction of postmemory, allowing violence and traumatic memory to move beyond grand historical narratives or de-subjectivised documentary perspectives and instead be situated within embodied experience. Drawing on Sara Ahmed's analysis of the "organisation of hate" and Mezzadra and Neilson's concept of the "border," this paper adopts affective borders as an analytical lens to investigate the mechanisms that generate violence and injustice in narratives of genocidal violence. It argues that wartime instability disrupts social borders, forcing separated and unrelated subjects into a shared lived situation. Against this backdrop, the novel demonstrates that violence and injustice operate not only through the invader–invaded binary but also through borders of multiple social categories – gender, race, region, occupation, and morality – embedded in everyday social life. Moreover, the construction of boundaries is itself a relational and affective process. In the novel's early sections, the schoolgirls' hate toward the prostitutes functions as an affective bordering practice shaped by a generalised threat of wartime gendered violence. By attaching sexual attractiveness and moral stigma to the prostitute, the schoolgirls attempt to deny and sever their own bodily vulnerability to violation, as sexual assault is repeatedly figured as a widespread tactic of invasion, thereby producing a fragile yet exclusionary social border. In the later sections, with the unfolding of indiscriminate sexual violence, the invading gaze no longer recognises identity differences among women; instead, it uniformly objectifies female bodies as conquerable and violable. This extreme violence breaks the borders constructed through hate, forcing formerly antagonistic subjects into an imposed condition of shared vulnerability while diminishing intra-victim hostility. Yet wartime borders – though weakened – do not disappear. Rather, they are crossed, negotiated, and reshaped through intimate relations and affective practices, revealing their mobility and plasticity within social life. Finally, this paper argues that *The Flowers of War* uses intimacy as a prism to reframe "genocide" not as an episodic historical event but as a structural mechanism embedded in everyday life, made visible through intra-victim exclusion and hierarchy. Affect is shown to be not merely a reaction to violence or a rhetorical effect, but also a medium through which violence is enacted and a site for reconfiguring ethical judgment. Within intimate relations, borders regulating the value of life, the legitimacy of sacrifice, and moral responsibility are destabilised and renegotiated, relocating "justice" from abstract historical discourse into everyday ethics.

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ZHAO Xingzhi (Sichuan University), *Text as Semiosis: How Cross-Cultural Interpretants Shape the Transformation of World Literature*

Panel 2.1

This paper develops a theoretical framework for understanding world literature through the Peircean conception of text as semiosis. Departing from models that treat literary works as stable units circulating across cultures, I argue that what transforms in the process of world literature is not the text as an artifact but the semiotic relations through which it becomes meaningful. Central to this approach is the claim that cross-cultural interpretants—the

culturally inflected ways in which signs are apprehended, grounded, and extended—serve as the generative mechanisms of textual variation.

Drawing on Peirce's triadic sign relation of representamen, object, and interpretant, the paper conceptualizes world literature as a dynamic system of interpretant formation. Interpretants, understood as effects of prior semiosis and as mediators that initiate new sign-action, do not simply decode meaning; they reconfigure the relational structure of the sign by shifting iconic, indexical, and symbolic grounds. Such shifts alter the conditions under which a text is activated, producing new modes of readability, new semiotic functions, and new cultural alignments. World literature thus emerges as semiosis in motion, constituted by successive processes of mediation rather than by the movement of fixed textual entities.

This theoretical reorientation positions world literature as an evolving field of sign-action shaped by cultural, historical, and increasingly computational regimes of interpretation. By foregrounding interpretant differentiation as the structural principle behind textual transformation, the paper offers a semiotic account that integrates cross-cultural hermeneutics with the logic of mediation and the dynamics of meaning generation.

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ZHUANG Peina (Sichuan University) *Comparative Literature across the World in 2026*

Panel 3.4

This presentation discusses the current situation of the discipline of comparative literature and its neighbouring fields such as world literature and (comparative) cultural studies across several countries including the current situation of the discipline in Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and several Asian countries including China, Taiwan, India, etc. The discussion takes into account the general diminishing of the study and teaching of the humanities across the world.

Peina Zhuang (peinazhuang@scu.edu.cn) is associate professor of English-language literature at Sichuan University. Her areas of interests in research include comparative literature, intercultural studies, and translation studies. Her recent articles include "Becoming as Suffering: A Genealogy of Female Suffering in Chinese Myth and Literature," *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* (2019) and "Body and Desire in Zhao's *The Anthropocene*," *Neohelicon: acta comparationis litterarum universarum* (2020).

Abdelhadi ZIRARI (Université Hassan II de Casablanca), *Rhétorique de la vulnérabilité et*

pratiques éthiques dans l'écriture du « je » au féminin extrême-contemporaine

Panel 10.4

Longtemps reléguée à la marge, la littérature de femmes est reconnue depuis la fin du siècle précédent comme un foyer majeur d'innovation esthétique et théorique (Planté, 2018; Fournier, 2022). Cette littérature connaît un regain d'intérêt dans un paysage littéraire extrême-contemporain marqué par une crise paradigmatique, crise qui s'exprime tant dans la remise en question de la scission des approches textuelles que dans l'exigence d'un ancrage éthique, politique et épistémologique (Gefen, 2017). Cette attention renouvelée tient notamment à ce que l'on désigne comme « écriture de l'extrême, c'est-à-dire à la représentation des expériences traumatiques ou catastrophiques où priment l'abject, la souffrance, l'insupportable » (Havercraft, 2010). Dans ses formes les plus marquantes aujourd'hui, en particulier lorsqu'elle emprunte la voie du récit à la première personne, l'« écriture-femme» (Didier, 1981) se constitue comme un espace de production de « savoirs situés » (Haraway, 1988) où s'élaborent, dans le geste même de réécrire l'expérience vécue, des formes affectives de pensée, de résistance et de réparation (Gefen, 2017). De par ses formes hybrides, ses sujets minorés et ses stratégies discursives de dissidence (Naudier, 2020), le récit du « je » au féminin interroge les possibilités d'une parole incarnée capable d'articuler l'intime au politique, le sensible/subjectif au normatif, l'expérience et la mémoire individuelles aux structures/systèmes de domination qui les conditionnent (Butler, 2005 ; Froideveaux-Metterie, 2021). C'est dans cette perspective que notre communication propose une lecture comparative des récits de *Fille* de l'autrice française Camille Laurens et de *Aime-moi et je te tue* de l'autrice marocaine francophone Touria Oulehri. Bien qu'inscrits dans des contextes culturels distincts, ces deux récits à la première personne convergent dans une même pratique éthico-esthétique : ils mettent en scène des sujets-femmes aux prises avec des violences de genre, sexuelles et structurelles, qui font de la mise en mots de leurs expériences douloureuses un lieu de réinvention narrative en faisant preuve d'une agentivité féminine et féministe (Butler, 1990; Havercraft, 1999). En procédant d'une fictionnalisation du réel, ces deux textes reconfigurent la vulnérabilité en catégorie discursive heuristique, transformant l'aveu traumatique en outil de lisibilité critique des mécanismes patriarcaux (Gilson, 2014). Cette reconfiguration confère à l'écriture du « je » une dimension performative, en ce qu'elle ne se limite pas à simplement relater le souvenir traumatique, mais concourt à le re-signifier en déconstruisant les émotions genrées (Boquet et Lett, 2018) qui le régissent, comme la honte, la peur, le désir ou la sidération, tout en mobilisant une éthique du care, de la sollicitude et de la résistance (Gilligan, 1986; Tronto, 2009).

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Francesca ZUCCARO (University of Bristol), *The Soviet Emily Dickinson. Lost and Found in Ivan Kashkin's Realist Translation*

Panel 9.3

How was the nineteenth-century American poet Emily Dickinson (1830–1886), who engaged with themes of gender, politics, and religion, mediated and adapted for the Soviet audience of the late 1960s? How were Dickinson's unorthodox poetic style and gender identity translated into the language and culture of Soviet Russia? These are the questions that lie at the centre of my paper, which explores Ivan Kashkin's (1899-1963) literary portrait of Emily

Dickinson and his 1968 translation of her poetry. Drawing on scholarship from Russian and American literary studies, Translation and Gender Studies, this paper combines a close reading methodology of the original and translated poems with an analysis of Kashkin's paratexts, namely the 'literary portrait' he wrote about Dickinson. My analysis reveals an unexpected reading of Emily Dickinson, whom I argue Kashkin, ethically or unethically, transforms into a proto-Soviet poet. I demonstrate how Kashkin's account of Dickinson's nature and poetry magnifies and, at times, manipulates traits of her life and poetics that can be perceived as (proto-)Soviet. In this arbitrary process of 'sovietisation' of Dickinson, however, Kashkin must also confront Dickinson's features that prove problematic for the Soviet ideological system, such as the question of her formal experimentation. Furthermore, I will show evident contradictions emerging from Kashkin's essay in terms of gender dynamics: on the one hand, as part of the Soviet official structure, he should demonstrate a commitment to gender equality; on the other, he continues to make gendered assumptions about Dickinson, proposing a traditional and stereotyped take on women's writing and female poets. My study considers Kashkin's translations of Dickinson critically alongside his Realist translation theory, showing the high degree of simplification operated on Dickinson's poems, which now lack their ambiguities and complexities, whilst resonating well within the Soviet ideological framework.

Francesca Zuccaro (francesca.zuccaro@bristol.ac.uk) is a third-year AHRC-funded (SWW DTP) doctoral candidate at the University of Bristol and the University of Exeter. Her doctoral project explores the Soviet and post-Soviet translations of Emily Dickinson's and Sylvia Plath's poetry, investigating how gender is 'de-codified' and 're-codified' in translation, how ideas about gender travel transnationally through translation, and how Dickinson and Plath speak, mediated by their translators, to the Soviet and Russian experience and its gender norms. Francesca's research interests also include Feminist Translation Studies, Comparative Literature, Transnational Studies and Poetry.

Metka ZUPANČIČ (University of Alabama), *Plurilinguisme particulier au sein d'un univers romanesque multilingue : Indemne. Où va Moby Dick? (2025) de Myriam Watthee-Delmotte*

Panel 7.2

La communication proposée pour le prochain congrès de la SELC-ESCL à Leeds, en août 2026, se penche sur le vaste roman-encyclopédie de Myriam Watthee-Delmotte, *Indemne. Où va Moby Dick?* (Actes Sud, 2025). Professeure Émérite de l'Université catholique de Louvain, membre de l'Académie Royale de Belgique et directrice de recherches du FNRS, autrice réputée de nombreux ouvrages scientifiques, Watthee-Delmotte a consacré plusieurs années à ce premier roman qui, dès sa publication, lui a valu un accueil très favorable ainsi que la récompense importante du Prix Malesherbes, le Libraire du Roi, honorant « un livre sur les livres », et plus récemment, le prix littéraire de l'Abbaye de Villers destiné aux premiers romans belges. Dans *Indemne*, la romancière crée un espace plurilingue particulier dans lequel se rencontrent, à travers époques, pays et cultures, plusieurs types de discours et, partant, de langues. La question principale que pose ce vaste roman est de savoir qui nous sommes et dans quelles langues nous parvenons à communiquer, toujours au sein d'un texte littéraire où s'établissent des liens multiples et souvent insolites. L'originalité de cette œuvre, une mise en abyme intertextuelle virtuose, réside dans le choix de son protagoniste qui en est aussi le narrateur, Ishmaël, et qui représente un genre particulier de plurilinguisme. Le seul rescapé du naufrage fatal dans le roman de Melville dont il est (là aussi) le narrateur, il continue son existence particulière de « sauvé » (tout comme l'a été son éponyme biblique). Il « réside » non seulement à l'intérieur du dernier exemplaire

original de ce livre – en anglais – de 1851, mais retrouve une nouvelle existence au sein de ce livre – en français – que lui consacre Wathée Delmotte. Point focal dans *Indemne*, Ishmaël découvre le monde à travers les propriétaires successifs de cet exemplaire original, depuis New York au moment de sa publication en 1851, pour se retrouver dans les décennies successives en France, en Russie et finalement, à notre époque, en Belgique, toujours en dialogue avec les lecteurs mais aussi avec des personnages (plurilingues) des œuvres variées qu’il côtoie durant tout ce périple.

Metka Zupančič (mzupanci833@gmail.com) est Professeure Émérite de français-langues modernes, de l’Université d’Alabama à Tuscaloosa, son dernier port d’attache après d’autres postes d’enseignement dans plusieurs universités aux États-Unis et au Canada et son rattachement initial à l’Université de Ljubljana en Slovénie dont elle est originaire. Depuis son retour au pays, elle continue ses recherches en mythocritique en lien avec la littérature comparée, les études de genre et l’histoire des idées. *Elle a publié trois monographies, Lectures de Claude Simon. La polyphonie de la structure et du mythe; Hélène Cixous : texture mythique et alchimique et Les écrivaines contemporaines et les mythes. Le remembrement au féminin.* Elle a dirigé cinq ouvrages collectifs, dont *La mythocritique au féminin. Dialogue entre théorie et pratique*, ainsi que six volumes en codirection, dont le dernier, *Le mythe au féminin et l’(in)visibilisation du corps*, avec Brigitte Le Juez (2021), était un des trois finalistes du Prix d’Excellence de la SELC, en 2024. Elle a aussi signé un récit, *L’envahissement* (2020), traduit en slovène par Živa Čebulj (*Tisto neustavljivo*, 2023 ; finaliste pour le Prix Charles Nodier de la traduction vers le slovène).