

# **Living in the End Times: Utopian and Dystopian Representations of Pandemics in Fiction, Film and Culture**

**13-15 January 2021  
A Virtual Conference Hosted by  
Cappadocia University, Turkey**

**Keynote Speakers:**

**Maggie Gee, Larissa Lai, Elizabeth Outka, Kim Stanley  
Robinson, Raffaella Baccolini, Laurence Davis, Patricia  
McManus, Tom Moylan, Darko Suvin, and Phillip E. Wegner**

**Organising Committee:**

Heather Alberro (Nottingham Trent University, UK)  
Emrah Atasoy (Cappadocia University, Turkey)  
Nora Castle (University of Warwick, UK)  
Rhiannon Firth (University of Essex, UK)  
Martin Greenwood (University of Manchester, UK)  
Robert Horsfield (Birmingham, UK)  
Burcu Kayışçı Akkoyun (Boğaziçi University, Turkey)  
Pelin Kıvrak (Harvard University, USA)  
Conrad Scott (University of Alberta, Canada)  
Bridget Vincent (University of Nottingham, UK)

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For continuing updates, visit our conference website:

<https://tinyurl.com/PandemicImaginaris>

## Conference Schedule

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Turkish Time	<b>Day 1 - January 13</b>
16:00-17:30	<b>Opening Ceremony</b> Welcoming Remarks by Cappadocia University and Conference Organizing Committee
17:30-18:00	<b>Coffee Break (30 min)</b>
18:00-19:30	<b>Keynote Address 1</b> <b>‘End Times, New Visions: The Literary Aftermath of the Influenza Pandemic’</b>  <b>Elizabeth Outka</b> <b>Chair: Sinan Akıllı</b>
19:30-20:30	<b>Meal Break (60 min) &amp; Concert (19:45-20:15)</b>  Natali Boghossian, mezzo-soprano  Hans van Beelen, piano
20:30-22:00	<b>Keynote Address 2</b>  <b>Kim Stanley Robinson</b> <b>Chair: Tom Moylan</b>



Follow us on Twitter @PImaginaries, and don't forget to use our conference hashtag #PandemicImaginaries.

You can also join the conversation on our Discord server!

<https://discord.gg/ngjz9VkfDG>



## **Opening Ceremony**

**Master of Ceremonies:** Nora Castle (University of Warwick, UK)

### **Welcoming Remarks by Cappadocia University**

- 16:00-16:20      Alev Alatlı  
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
- 16:20-16:30      Hasan Ali Karasar  
Rector
- 16:30-16:40      Serpil Oppermann  
Director of Environmental Humanities Center
- 16:40-16:45      Sinan Akıllı  
Head of English Language and Literature Department

### **Welcoming Remarks by Organizing Committee**

- 16:45-17:30      Emrah Atasoy, Cappadocia University, Turkey  
Heather Alberro, Nottingham Trent University, UK  
Nora Castle, University of Warwick, UK  
Rhiannon Firth, University of Essex, UK  
Martin Greenwood, University of Manchester, UK  
Robert Horsfield, Birmingham, UK  
Burcu Kayışcı Akkoyun, Boğaziçi University, Turkey  
Pelin Kıvrak, Harvard University, USA  
Conrad Scott, University of Alberta, Canada  
Bridget Vincent, University of Nottingham, UK

Turkish  
Time

## Day 2 - January 14

	<b><i>Dystopias: Theory &amp; Fiction</i></b>	<b><i>Post-apocalyptic Imaginings</i></b>	<b><i>Apocalyptic Fiction</i></b>	<b><i>Posthumanism I</i></b>	<b><i>Plague &amp; Pandemic Fiction I</i></b>	<b><i>Anthropocene, Capitalocene</i></b>
<b>Session 1</b> 12:00-13:20	<b>Chair: Gregory Claeys</b> ♦ Annika Gonnermann ♦ Heike Sieger ♦ Diego Carretero Román ♦ Lucia Opreanu	<b>Chair: Bryan Radley</b> ♦ Ayşe Çelikkol ♦ Mehmet Zeki Giritli ♦ Sotirios Bampatzimopoulos ♦ Hannah A. Barton	<b>Chair: Dunja M. Mohr</b> ♦ Chun-Yu Lu ♦ Frances di Lauro ♦ Cenk Tan ♦ Khawla Bendjemil	<b>Chair: Heather Alberro</b> ♦ Sezgi Öztıp Haner ♦ Seçil Erkoç ♦ Züleyha Çetiner Öktem ♦ Niğmet Çetiner	<b>Chair: Burcu Kayışcı Akkoyun</b> ♦ Andrew Milner ♦ Elzem Nazli ♦ Sümeyye Güllü Aslan ♦ Debarati Choudhury	<b>Chair: Fatma Aykanat</b> ♦ Öznur Karakaş ♦ Gregory Marks ♦ Brianna Bullen ♦ Koray Kırmızısakal
13:20-13:40	<b>Coffee Break (20 min)</b>					
	<b><i>Creating with Polluted Seas: Toxic Wellbeing, Terrible Beauty, and New Water Literacies</i></b>	<b><i>Mediations: Language &amp; Technology</i></b>	<b><i>Zombies I</i></b>	<b><i>Pandemics: Historical Perspectives</i></b>	<b><i>Daniel Defoe and Pandemic Fiction</i></b>	<b><i>Body Politics During End Times</i></b>
<b>Session 2</b> 13:40-15:00	<b>Chair: Clifton Evers</b> ♦ Clifton Evers ♦ Luz Mar González-Arias ♦ Shé Mackenzie Hawke	<b>Chair: Wladyslaw Witalisz</b> ♦ Murtaza Mohiqi ♦ Roberto Favalli ♦ Oleksandr Okhrimenko ♦ Özlem Gülen	<b>Chair: Krzysztof M. Maj</b> ♦ Krzysztof M. Maj ♦ Ildikó Limpár ♦ Seda Pekşen	<b>Chair: Thomas Kelly</b> ♦ Işıl Şahin Gülter ♦ Anamta Rizvi ♦ Mukuta Borah ♦ Pawel Kaptur	<b>Chair: Zsolt Czigányik</b> ♦ Gönül Bakay ♦ Seda Arıkan ♦ Gökben Güçlü	<b>Chair: Simon Spiegel</b> ♦ Onur Karaköse ♦ Demet Karabulut Dede ♦ Anna Campbell ♦ Freya Lowden
15:00-16:00	<b>Meal Break (60 min)</b>					

<p><b>Session 3</b> 16:00-17:20</p>	<p><b>ROUNDTABLE:</b> <i>Whither hope? Teaching utopia(nism) through the pandemic crisis</i></p> <p>◆ Siân Adiseshiah ◆ Dan Byrne-Smith ◆ Caroline Edwards ◆ Adam Stock ◆ Darren Webb</p>	<p><i>Plague and Pand. Fict. II</i></p> <p>Chair: <i>Burçin Erol</i></p> <p>◆ Kalina Maleska ◆ Zsolt Czigányik ◆ Alyaa Dawood Al-Lami ◆ Ercan Gürova</p>	<p><i>Health &amp; Viral Happenings I</i></p> <p>Chair: <i>Nurten Birlik</i></p> <p>◆ Çağdaş Ö. Duman ◆ Heather McKnight ◆ Mirna Radin-Sabadoš ◆ Başak Ergil</p>	<p><i>Margaret Atwood I</i></p> <p>Chair: <i>Jill Belli</i></p> <p>◆ Kristín María Kristinsdóttir ◆ Valentina Adami ◆ Lidia María Cuadrado Payeras ◆ Ikram Lecheheb and Soumaya Bouacida</p>	<p><i>Adaptation in End Times</i></p> <p>Chair: <i>Gülşen Sayın</i></p> <p>◆ Burcu Kayışcı Akkoyun ◆ Denise Blunn ◆ Thomas Kelly ◆ Andrea Burgos Mascarell</p>	<p><i>Apocalyptic and Post-apocalyptic Fiction</i></p> <p>Chair: <i>Özden Sözalan</i></p> <p>◆ Yıldırım Çevik ◆ Gözde Ersoy ◆ Murat Kabak ◆ William Coker</p>	<p><i>Ethics &amp; Politics</i></p> <p>Chair: <i>Anita DeMelo</i></p> <p>◆ Alice Breemen ◆ Anita DeMelo ◆ Olea Morris ◆ Katarzyna Ginszt</p>
<p>17:20-17:40</p>	<p><b>Coffee Break (20 min)</b></p>						
<p><b>Session 4</b> 17:40-19:00</p>	<p><i>Climate Change &amp; Fiction</i></p> <p>Chair: <i>Meliz Ergin</i></p> <p>◆ Claire Curtis ◆ Marek Oziewicz ◆ Trevor Jackson ◆ Sotirios Triantafyllos</p>	<p><i>The Fantastic</i></p> <p>Chair: <i>Peter Sands</i></p> <p>◆ Tim Murphy ◆ Sarah Lohmann ◆ Sara González Bernárdez</p>	<p><i>Film &amp; Media I</i></p> <p>Chair: <i>Artur Blaim</i></p> <p>◆ Steven Shaviro ◆ Annette Magid ◆ Gregory J. McClure and Lynda Haas ◆ Simon Spiegel</p>	<p><i>Margaret Atwood II</i></p> <p>Chair: <i>Thomas Horan</i></p> <p>◆ Mabiana Camargo ◆ Eduardo Marks de Marques ◆ Gillian M. E. Alban ◆ Dilara Parslow</p>	<p><i>Health &amp; Viral Happenings II</i></p> <p>Chair: <i>Özlem Öğüt Yazıcıoğlu</i></p> <p>◆ Mono Brown ◆ Patrick Mahoney ◆ Amy LeBlanc ◆ George Sieg</p>	<p><i>Gender &amp; Sexualities I</i></p> <p>Chair: <i>Işıl Baş</i></p> <p>◆ Ariel Kroon ◆ Greg Campbell ◆ Steven Holmes ◆ Muzaffer Derya Nazlıpınar Subaşı</p>	
<p>19:00-20:00</p>	<p><b>Meal Break (60 min)</b></p>						
<p>20:00-21:30</p>	<p><b>Keynote Address</b></p> <p><b>‘End Times or Living Presents? Writing in the Face of Pandemic’</b></p> <p><b>Larissa Lai &amp; Maggie Gee</b></p> <p><b>Chair: Mine Özyurt Kılıç</b></p>						

Turkish Time

**Day 3 - January 15**

	<b><i>Critical Ecologies</i></b>	<b><i>Shifting Boundaries and Borders</i></b>	<b><i>Theatre During End Times</i></b>	<b><i>Philosophy &amp; Theology</i></b>	<b><i>Posthumanism II</i></b>	<b><i>Urban Design &amp; Futures</i></b>
<b>Session 1</b> 12:00-13:20	<p><i>Chair: Hülya Yağcıoğlu</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Berrin Demir</li> <li>◆ Murathan Kaya</li> <li>◆ Kübra Baysal</li> <li>◆ Hülya Yağcıoğlu</li> </ul>	<p><i>Chair: Andrew Milner</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Giulia Champion</li> <li>◆ David Gray</li> <li>◆ Jari Käkälä</li> </ul>	<p><i>Chair: Aslı Tekinay</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Tuğba Aygan</li> <li>◆ Amjad AlShalan</li> <li>◆ Belgin Bağırlar</li> </ul>	<p><i>Chair: Heather McKnight</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ilaria Bianco</li> <li>◆ Alastair Lockhart</li> <li>◆ Hope Caitlyn Roulstone</li> </ul>	<p><i>Chair: Cenk Tan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Shraddha A. Singh</li> <li>◆ Nafisa Oliveira</li> <li>◆ Şebnem Düzgün</li> <li>◆ Angela Patricia Heredia</li> </ul>	<p><i>Chair: Tim Waterman</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Jenna Mikus, Kavita Gonsalves, &amp; Hira Sheikh</li> <li>◆ Alan Marshall</li> <li>◆ Ken Fallas</li> <li>◆ Louise Jammet</li> </ul>
13:20-13:40	<b>Coffee Break (20 min)</b>					
	<b><i>Entanglements of Contagion</i></b>	<b><i>Utopias &amp; Dystopias</i></b>	<b><i>Film &amp; Media II</i></b>	<b><i>Theory &amp; Politics</i></b>	<b><i>Horror &amp; Body Horror</i></b>	<b><i>Hope &amp; (Post)Apoc. Beginnings</i></b>
<b>Session 2</b> 13:40-15:00	<p><i>Chair: Şafak Horzum</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Zümre Gizem Yılmaz Karahan</li> <li>◆ Kerim Can Yazgünoğlu</li> <li>◆ Başak Ağin &amp; Şafak Horzum</li> </ul>	<p><i>Chair: Zeynep Atayurt Fenge</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Anindita Shome</li> <li>◆ Svjetlana Sumpor</li> <li>◆ Alexander Popov</li> </ul>	<p><i>Chair: Gillian M. E. Alban</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Jana Fedtke</li> <li>◆ Rituparna Das</li> <li>◆ Ujjwal Khobra &amp; Rashmi Gaur</li> <li>◆ Karthika V. K.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Chair: Rhiannon Firth</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Laura Denning</li> <li>◆ Martin Greenwood</li> <li>◆ Anton Nikolotov</li> </ul>	<p><i>Chair: Drew Thornton</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Drew Thornton</li> <li>◆ Srijanee Adhikari</li> <li>◆ Daniel Kong</li> <li>◆ Shadia Abdel-Rahman Téllez</li> </ul>	<p><i>Chair: Emrah Atasoy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Katrin Schmitt</li> <li>◆ Dunja M. Mohr</li> <li>◆ Mónica Martín</li> </ul>
15:00-16:00	<b>Meal Break (60 min)</b>					

	<b><i>Theorizing End Times</i></b>	<b><i>Pandemic Psychologies &amp; Subjectivities</i></b>	<b><i>Film &amp; Media III</i></b>	<b><i>Poetics of Apocalypse (Poetry, Music, and Mixed Media)</i></b>	<b><i>Gender &amp; Sexualities II</i></b>	<b><i>Film &amp; Media IV</i></b>	<b><i>Zombies II</i></b>
<b>Session 3</b> 16:00-17:20	Chair: Rita Monticelli ◆ Vera Benczik ◆ Rhiannon Firth & Erica Lagalisie ◆ Maria Anna Bertolino ◆ Manuel Santana Hernández	Chair: Bridget Vincent ◆ Elham Fatma and Rashmi Gaur ◆ Anna Bugajska ◆ Djamila Houamdi ◆ Liam Knight	Chair: Giulia Champion ◆ Stavroula Anastasia Katsorchi ◆ Eleni Tsatsaroni ◆ Débora Madrid ◆ Thais Lassali	Chair: Hande Seber ◆ Sabina Fazli ◆ Olusegun Stephen Titus ◆ Dani Shalet ◆ Julia Sattler	Chair: Elizabeth Russell ◆ Michael Pitts ◆ Álvaro Arango Vallejo ◆ Almudena Machado-Jiménez ◆ Chiara Xausa	Chair: Matt Hudson ◆ Ceren Kuşdemir Özbilek ◆ Fulya Kınca ◆ Bahar Memiş ◆ Neet Neilson	Chair: Ildikó Limpár ◆ Lars Schmeink ◆ Ewa Drab ◆ Olgahan Bakşı Yalçın
17:20-17:40	<b>Coffee Break (20 min)</b>						
	<b><i>Post-colonial Futures</i></b>	<b><i>Capitalism &amp; Biopolitics</i></b>	<b><i>Apocalypse &amp; Post-apocalypse</i></b>	<b><i>Plague &amp; Pandemic Fiction III</i></b>	<b><i>Anthropocene: In &amp; Beyond 'End Times'</i></b>	<b><i>Dystopias II</i></b>	
<b>Session 4</b> 17:40-19:00	Chair: Tim Murphy ◆ Margaret Anne Smith ◆ Anita Girvan ◆ Leah Van Dyk ◆ Allison Mackey and Özlem Ögüt Yazıcıoğlu	Chair: Nicole Pohl ◆ Ben DeVries ◆ Jason Livingston ◆ Jason Goldfarb ◆ Irena Jurković	Chair: Claire Curtis ◆ Amanda Pavani ◆ Jill Belli ◆ Wendy Roy ◆ Roberto Olavarria Choin	Chair: Conrad Scott ◆ Conrad Scott ◆ Peter Sands ◆ Emrah Atasoy & Thomas Horan ◆ Cassandra Bausman	Chair: Nora Castle ◆ Marina Pereira ◆ Tiff Graham ◆ Lydia Nixon ◆ Joey Song	Chair: Etta Madden ◆ Benjamin Burt ◆ Ata Mohamed Tabriz ◆ Jayde Martin & Benjamin Horn ◆ Tânia Cerqueira	
19:00-20:00	<b>Meal Break (60 min)</b>						
20:00-21:45	<b>Keynote Address ROUNDTABLE Raffaella Baccolini, Laurence Davis, Patricia McManus, Tom Moylan, Darko Suvin, and Phillip E. Wegner</b>						
21:45-22:15	<b>Closing Remarks by Conference Organizing Committee</b>						

# Time Zone Cheat Sheet I

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## DAY 1 – JANUARY 13

<b>Time Zone &amp; Reference Point</b>	<b>Introductory Remarks</b>	<b>Keynote 1</b>	<b>Concert</b>	<b>Keynote 2</b>
HST – Hawaii, USA	03:00	05:00	06:45	07:30
PST – California, USA	05:00	07:00	08:45	09:30
MST – Calgary, CA	06:00	08:00	09:45	10:30
CST – Oklahoma, USA	07:00	09:00	10:45	11:30
EST – New York, USA	08:00	10:00	11:45	12:30
BRT - Brazil	10:00	12:00	13:45	14:30
GMT - UK	13:00	15:00	16:45	17:30
CET – Central Europe	14:00	16:00	17:45	18:30
EET - Finland	15:00	17:00	18:45	19:30
<b>TRT - Turkey</b>	<b>16:00</b>	<b>18:00</b>	<b>19:45</b>	<b>20:30</b>
GST - UAE	17:00	19:00	20:45	21:30
AFT - Afghanistan	17:30	19:30	21:15	22:00
IST - India	18:30	20:30	22:15	23:00
ICT - Thailand	20:00	22:00	23:45	00:30 (Jan 14)
SGT - Singapore	21:00	23:00	00:45 (Jan 14)	01:30
KST – South Korea	22:00	00:00 (Jan 14)	1:45	02:30
AEST – Brisbane, Aus	23:00	01:00	2:45	03:30
AEDT – Melbourne, Aus	00:00 (Jan 14)	02:00	3:45	04:30

## Time Zone Cheat Sheet II

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### DAYS 2 & 3 – JANUARY 14 & 15

Time Zone & Reference Point	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Keynote
HST – Hawaii, USA	23:00 (Jan 13)	00:40	03:00	04:40	07:00
PST – California, USA	01:00 (Jan 14)	02:40	05:00	06:40	09:00
MST – Calgary, CA	02:00	03:40	06:00	07:40	10:00
CST – Oklahoma, USA	03:00	04:40	07:00	08:40	11:00
EST – New York, USA	04:00	05:40	08:00	09:40	12:00
BRT - Brazil	06:00	07:40	10:00	11:40	14:00
GMT - UK	09:00	10:40	13:00	14:40	17:00
CET – Central Europe	10:00	11:40	14:00	15:40	18:00
EET - Finland	11:00	12:40	15:00	16:40	19:00
<b>TRT - Turkey</b>	<b>12:00</b>	<b>13:40</b>	<b>16:00</b>	<b>17:40</b>	<b>20:00</b>
GST - UAE	13:00	14:40	17:00	18:40	21:00
AFT - Afghanistan	13:30	15:10	17:30	19:10	21:30
IST - India	14:30	16:10	18:30	20:10	22:30
ICT - Thailand	16:00	17:40	20:00	21:40	00:00
SGT - Singapore	17:00	18:40	21:00	22:40	01:00
KST – South Korea	18:00	19:40	22:00	23:40	02:00
AEST – Brisbane, Aus	19:00	20:40	23:00	00:40 (Jan 15)	03:00
AEDT – Melbourne, Aus	20:00	21:40	00:00 (Jan 15)	01:40	04:00

## Schedule Overview & Teams/Zoom Links

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*Each event link is unique. Please refer back to this page for access to each session.  
The large format events will take place on Zoom, and the panels on Teams.*

### DAY 1 - JANUARY 13, 2021

- 16:00 -17:30**      [Opening Ceremony](#)  
Zoom Meeting ID: 861 4049 2138 | Password: 633349
- 18:00-19:30**      [Keynote Address 1: Elizabeth Outka](#)  
Zoom Meeting ID: 885 8679 4904 | Password: 120669
- 19:45 – 20:15**      [Concert](#)  
Zoom Meeting ID: 829 1656 4767 | Password: 433758
- 20:30 – 22:00**      [Keynote Address 2: Kim Stanley Robinson](#)  
Zoom Meeting ID: 837 6985 3552 | Password: 142065

### DAY 2 - JANUARY 14, 2021

#### Session 1 (12:00 – 13:20) Links:

[Session 1A: Dystopias: Theory & Fiction](#)

[Session 1B: Post-Apocalyptic Imaginings](#)

[Session 1C: Apocalyptic Fiction](#)

[Session 1D: Posthumanism I](#)

[Session 1E: Plague & Pandemic Fiction I](#)

[Session 1F: Anthropocene, Capitalocene](#)

#### Session 2 (13:40-15:00) Links:

[Session 2A: Creating with Polluted Seas: Toxic Wellbeing, Terrible Beauty, and New Water Literacies](#)

[Session 2B: Mediations: Language & Technology](#)

[Session 2C: Zombies I](#)

[Session 2D: Pandemics: Historical Perspectives](#)

[Session 2E: Daniel Defoe and Pandemic Fiction](#)

[Session 2F: Body Politics During End Times](#)

**Session 3 (16:00-17:20) Links:**

[Session 3A: ROUNDTABLE: Whither hope? Teaching utopia\(nism\) through the pandemic crisis](#)

[Session 3B: Plague & Pandemic Fiction II](#)

[Session 3C: Health and Viral Happenings I](#)

[Session 3D: Margaret Atwood I](#)

[Session 3E: Adaptation to End Times](#)

[Session 3F: Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Fiction](#)

[Session 3G: Ethics & Politics](#)

**Session 4 (17:40-19:00) Links:**

[Session 4A: Climate Change & Fiction](#)

[Session 4B: The Fantastic](#)

[Session 4C: Film & Media I](#)

[Session 4D: Margaret Atwood II](#)

[Session 4E: Health & Viral Happenings II](#)

[Session 4F: Gender & Sexualities I](#)

**Keynote Address (20:00-21:30)**

[Keynote Address: Larissa Lai and Maggie Gee](#)

Zoom Meeting ID: 847 3668 5030 | Password: 495780

## **DAY 3 - JANUARY 15, 2021**

### **Session 1 (12:00 – 13:20) Links:**

[Session 1A: Critical Ecologies](#)

[Session 1B: Shifting Boundaries and Borders](#)

[Session 1C: Theatre During End Times](#)

[Session 1D: Philosophy & Theology](#)

[Session 1E: Posthumanism II](#)

[Session 1F: Urban Design & Futures](#)

### **Session 2 (13:40-15:00) Links:**

[Session 2A: Entanglements of Contagion: Narrative Agencies of Non/Human Bodies](#)

[Session 2B: Utopias & Dystopias](#)

[Session 2C: Film & Media II](#)

[Session 2D: Theory & Politics](#)

[Session 2E: Horror and Body Horror](#)

[Session 2F: Hope & \(Post\) Apocalyptic Beginnings](#)

### **Session 3 (16:00-17:20) Links:**

[Session 3A: Theorizing End Times: Cross-Disciplinary Practices](#)

[Session 3B: Pandemic Psychologies and Subjectivities](#)

[Session 3C: Film & Media III](#)

[Session 3D: Poetics of Apocalypse \(Poetry, Music and Mixed Media\)](#)

[Session 3E: Gender & Sexualities II](#)

[Session 3F: Film & Media IV](#)

[Session 3G: Zombies II](#)

**Session 4 (17:40-19:00) Links:**

[Session 4A: Post-colonial Futures](#)

[Session 4B: Capitalism and Biopolitics](#)

[Session 4C: Apocalypse and Post-apocalypse](#)

[Session 4D: Plague & Pandemic Fiction III](#)

[Session 4E: Anthropocene: In and Beyond 'End times'](#)

[Session 4F: Dystopias II](#)

**Keynote Address (20:00-21:45) & Closing Remarks (21:45-22:15)**

[Keynote Roundtable & Closing Remarks](#)

Zoom Meeting ID: 848 0720 2508 | Password: 339333

## Keynote Speaker Bios

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*Keynote Talk Speakers Listed First, Alphabetically by First Name*

*Keynote Roundtable Participants Listed Second, Alphabetically by First Name*



### **Elizabeth Outka**

Elizabeth Outka is Professor of English at the University of Richmond. Her latest book, *Viral Modernism: The Influenza Pandemic and Interwar Literature* (Columbia University Press 2020), investigates how one of the deadliest plagues in history—the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic—silently reshaped the modernist era, infusing everything from T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, to the emergence of viral zombies, to the popularity of séances. She is the recipient of

numerous awards and grants, including a Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the 2020 South Atlantic Modern Language Association Book Prize.

She has written on topics ranging from consumer culture, to postcolonial representations of trauma, to disability studies. Her first book, *Consuming Traditions: Modernity, Modernism, and the Commodified Authentic* (Oxford University Press 2009; 2012) explored the marketing of authenticity in turn-of-the-century British literature and culture. Her essays have appeared in *Modernism/modernity*, *NOVEL*, *Contemporary Literature*, *The Paris Review Daily* and many edited collections.

She teaches courses on modernism, twentieth and twenty-first century Anglophone literature, the contemporary novel, the literatures of war, environmental literature, social change and modern drama, and women in literature. She received her B.A. from Yale University and her M.A. and PhD from the University of Virginia.

### **Kim Stanley Robinson**

Kim Stanley Robinson is an American science fiction writer. He is the author of about twenty books, including the internationally bestselling Mars trilogy, and more recently *Red Moon*, *New York 2140*, *Aurora*, *Shaman*, *Green Earth*, and *2312*. He was sent to the Antarctic by the U.S. National Science Foundation’s Antarctic Artists and Writers’ Program in 1995, and returned in their Antarctic media program in 2016. In 2008 he was named a “Hero of the Environment” by *Time* magazine. He works with the Sierra Nevada Research Institute, the Clarion Writers’ Workshop, and UC San Diego’s Arthur C. Clarke Center for Human Imagination. His work has been translated into 25 languages, and won a dozen awards in five countries, including the Hugo, Nebula, Locus, and World Fantasy awards. In 2016 asteroid 72432 was named “Kimrobinson.”





## Larissa Lai

Larissa Lai has written eight books. For her first novel, *When Fox Is a Thousand* (1995, 2004), she received an Astraea Foundation Emerging Writers' Award, and was shortlisted for the Books in Canada First Novel Award. *The Advocate* called it “an elegant, elliptical spiral of gradually tightening circles that collide in a fusion of magical and objective reality.” Her second novel, *Salt Fish Girl* (2002) was named an Otherwise Honor Book, and shortlisted the Sunburst Award and the City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Prize. The Georgia Straight said “Lai's creation reminds us of the importance of connecting with our past and with each other if humanity is to work together to create a future worth living in.” After these two novels, she wrote three poetry books: *Sybil Unrest* (2008, 2013, with Rita Wong); *Automaton Biographies* (2009, shortlisted for the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize); *Eggs in the Basement* (2009, shortlisted for the Nichol Chapbook Prize), and a book of literary criticism, *Slanting I, Imagining We* (2014, shortlisted for the Gabrielle Roy Prize in Literary Criticism). Her third novel, *The Tiger Flu* (2018) won a Lambda Award, was named Tiptree Honor Book, and was shortlisted for the City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Prize. Of it Autostraddle says: “Life - fierce, painful, unyielding, complicated - bursts from every page.” A fourth poetry book, *Iron Goddess of Mercy*, will be published by Arsenal Pulp Press in March 2021. Involved in cultural organizing, experimental poetry and speculative fiction communities since the late 1980s, she received the Jim Duggins Novelist's Prize in 2020. She holds a Canada Research Chair at the University of Calgary, where she directs The Insurgent Architects' House for Creative Writing.

## Maggie Gee

Dr Maggie Gee OBE has written sixteen books, including the pioneering climate-crisis fictions *Where Are the Snows* (1990), *The Ice People* (1997), *The Flood* (2004) and *The Red Children* (forthcoming 2022). Her novel *The White Family* (2002) was shortlisted for the Women's Prize and the International Impac Award. Her novel *Blood* (2019), about Britain on the verge of leaving Europe, was on the *Sunday Times*'s 'Best Literary Novels 2019' list. Hilary Mantel described *Blood* as ‘An astonishing book. Funny and fierce, written with style and dash, without fear.’ Maggie was the first woman Chair of the Royal Society of Literature, and is now a Vice-President. She has been translated into 15 languages, including Turkish. In 2012 there was an international conference about her writing at St Andrew's University. She has travelled and lectured around the world, including Istanbul, Stockholm, Beirut and Kampala. In 2018 her long short story ‘May Hobbs’, about love and protest across different classes and different families, was chosen as the subject of a pan-Russian translation competition. She is Professor of Creative Writing at Bath Spa University where she co-founded the ‘Empathy and Writing Group’. She is also a long-time activist for writers' rights and is a director of the Authors' Licensing and Copyright Society, ALCS. Professor Mine Ozyurt Kilic's study, *Maggie Gee: Writing the Condition of England Novel* (Bloomsbury), focuses especially on her social and political writing, and the collection *Maggie Gee: Critical Essays* (Gylphi) also looks at issues of belief, form and style.



## Roundtable Participants



### Darko Suvin

Darko Suvin is Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at McGill University in Montreal and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. Yugoslav by birth and education, he is a member of the Croatian Writers Society and the Croatian Writers Association. His *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (1977 in French, 1979 in English, 2016 as a Ralahine Utopian Classic) is widely regarded as the founding text of contemporary academic science fiction studies. Famously and controversially, it argued that science fiction had retrospectively englobed the older genre of utopia, transforming it into the sub-genre of social-science fiction. His other key publications include *Victorian Science Fiction in the UK* (1983), *To Brecht and Beyond* (1984), *Positions and Presuppositions in Science Fiction* (1988), *Learning from Other Worlds* (2001) and *Defined by a Hollow: Essays on Utopia, Science Fiction and Political Epistemology* (2010). He was founding editor of the journal *Science Fiction Studies* in 1980 and in 2013 was awarded the Lyman Tower Sargent Distinguished Scholar Award by the North American Society for Utopian Studies.

### Laurence Davis

Dr. Laurence Davis teaches in the Department of Government and Politics at University College Cork, where he specializes in the areas of political theory and ideologies. He has published widely on radical political thought, including utopian and anarchist studies, democratic and revolutionary theory, and the politics of art, work, ecology, love, and social change. His notable publications in the area of utopian studies include *The New Utopian Politics of Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed* (with Peter Stillman, Lexington Books, 2005) and *Anarchism and Utopianism* (with Ruth Kinna, Manchester University Press, 2014 [2009]). He is a longstanding member of the Steering Committee of the Utopian Studies Society Europe, and a series editor of the Manchester University Press Contemporary Anarchist Studies book series.





## Patricia McManus

Patricia McManus teaches cultural and literary history in the School of Humanities at the University of Brighton. She is a founding member of The Dystopia Project, a research network set up in September 2019 to explore the history of dystopian fiction in the light of what dystopia had become in the twenty-first century. The Dystopia Project is a collective scholarly endeavour designed to help widen and deepen understanding of this odd genre of fiction. All are welcome to join it. They are currently working on the three strands described below, but are open to further problematics.

- the mapping of dystopias across space to assess how global a form this is (if at all);
- historically a return to the vexed questions of the relations between utopia, anti-utopia and dystopia (including in the notion of the 'critical dystopia'), especially to get a sense of where we are now;
- and politically an exploration of what we have now, and whether a dystopian tradition which has lost utopia is of any political value at all. This last would mean doing some work on the currency of dystopian fictions within white supremacist and other 'alt-right' movements.

## Phillip E. Wegner

Phillip E. Wegner is the Marston-Milbauer Eminent Scholar and Professor of English at the University of Florida, where he has taught since 1994, and the director of the Working Group for the Study of Critical Theory. He is the author of numerous essays and five books: *Imaginary Communities: Utopia, the Nation, and the Spatial Histories of Modernity* (California, 2002); *Life Between Two Deaths: U.S. Culture, 1989-2001* (Duke, 2009); *Periodizing Jameson: Dialectics, the University, and the Desire for Narrative* (Northwestern, 2014); *Shockwaves of Possibility: Essays on Science Fiction, Globalization, and Utopia* (Peter Lang, 2014); and most recently, *Invoking Hope: Theory and Utopia in Dark Times* (Minnesota, 2020); as well as the editor of a new edition of Robert C. Elliott's *The Shape of Utopia: Studies in a Literary Genre* (Peter Lang, 2013). In 2017, he was honored with of the North American Society for Utopian Studies Lyman Tower Sargent Award for Distinguished Scholarship. Full bio and list of publications at: <https://phillipewegner.org>



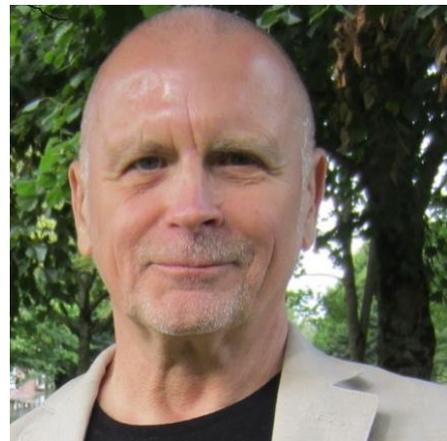


## Raffaella Baccolini

Raffaella Baccolini is Professor of British and American Literature and Gender Studies at the University of Bologna, Forlì Campus. She is the author of numerous essays on women's writing, dystopia and science fiction, trauma and memory, modernism, and Young Adult literature. She has edited several volumes, among which are *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination* (with Tom Moylan, Routledge, 2003), *Utopia, Method, Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming* (also with Tom Moylan, Peter Lang, 2007), and *Transgressive Utopianism: Essays in Honor of Lucy Sargisson* (with Lyman Tower Sargent, Peter Lang, 2021). She is the coordinator of the European projects G-BOOK and G-BOOK2 on "Gender and children's literature." She is currently working on kindness, solidarity, and feminist education as utopian, political acts.

## Tom Moylan

Tom Moylan is Glucksman Professor Emeritus in the School of English, Irish, and Communication; Adjunct Professor in the School of Architecture; Founding Director of the Ralahine Centre for Utopian Studies and the Ralahine Utopian Studies Book Series at the University of Limerick. His publications include *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination* and *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*; co-edited books (*Not Yet: Reconsidering Ernst Bloch*, with Jamie Owen Daniel; *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming* and *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*, with Raffaella Baccolini; *Exploring the Utopian Impulse*, with Michael J. Griffin); special issues of *Utopian Studies* on Ernst Bloch, Fredric Jameson, and Utopia and Music; and numerous essays on utopia, dystopia, theology, and political agency. His most recent book is *Becoming Utopian: The Culture and Politics of Radical Transformation* (Bloomsbury 2020).



## Musician Bios

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### **Natali Boghossian**

Natali Boghossian is a mezzo-soprano based in Amsterdam. Drawing from her cross-cultural as well as literary background, she researches new colours, original themes and repertoire for her concerts with special respect for contemporary works. She also attracts attention as a multi-talented singer by also playing the piano on the stage. She is now under the vocal and artistic tutelage of dramatic soprano Elena Vassilieva.

Boghossian has made her Paris debut at the International Association “Dimitri Chostakovich” with Shostakovich’s works. With her musical collaborator Hans van Beelen, she regularly gives recitals in various venues in and out of the Netherlands. She has recently received a Performing Arts Fund grant from Dutch Fonds Podiumkunsten for her trio project in January 2021.

Her current operatic repertoire includes trouser roles like *Komponist* (*Ariadne auf Naxos*/R. Strauss), *Cherubino* (*Le nozze di Figaro*/W. Mozart), *Urbain* (*Les Huguenots*/G. Meyerbeer), *Stephano* (*Romeo et Juliette*/C. Gounod) and mezzo-soprano roles like *Carmen* (*Carmen*/G. Bizet), *Nancy* (*Albert Herring*/B. Britten) and *Lola* (*Cavalleria Rusticana*/P. Mascagni).

In her repertoire she also has a variety of lieder, art and cabaret songs including those by Schumann, Brahms, Mahler, Wolf, Schoenberg, Menotti, Walton, Weill, Britten, Bernstein, Agoshian and Tchouhadjian.

### **Hans van Beelen**

Hans van Beelen studied classical piano at the conservatories of The Hague and Amsterdam, where he was taught by Marlies van Gent and Willem Brons. He graduated from the latter in 2005.

Hans is very active as an accompanist and in rehearsals for choirs and opera societies. As a pianist he won various prizes at competitions and participated in many master classes. Hans teaches piano lessons to students of various ages and with different musical style preferences.

It goes without saying that attention is paid to instrumental and musical development, but working on, for example, ensemble playing, theory and creative handling of chords is also important to Hans.



## Organising Committee

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Listed Alphabetically by First Name



### **Bridget Vincent**

Bridget Vincent is an Assistant Professor of Modern and Contemporary Poetry at the University of Nottingham. Her first book, titled *Moral Authority and Exemplarity in Seamus Heaney and Geoffrey Hill*, is forthcoming from Oxford University Press in 2021. She is currently working on two projects: one focused on literature and public apology, and one about the representation of modern ruins in contemporary fiction. In addition, a recent British Academy Rising Star project focused on attention and distraction in modern and contemporary literature.

### **Burcu Kayışcı Akkoyun**

Burcu Kayışcı Akkoyun is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Boğaziçi University, Turkey. She received her MA degree in English literature from the same department in 2007 with a thesis on the dystopian novels of Margaret Atwood and Ursula K. Le Guin. After completing the coursework for PhD there, she went to Monash University in Melbourne to continue her doctoral studies. She completed her PhD in Literary Studies at Monash University in 2015 with a dissertation on the literary representations of the end entitled “Imagining the End: Comic Perspectives and Critical Spaces.” Her fields of interest are utopian and dystopian fiction, contemporary literature, ecocriticism, identity politics, and narrative theory.



### **Conrad Scott**

Conrad Scott holds a PhD from and is an Instructor in the University of Alberta’s Department of English and Film Studies, on Treaty 6 / Métis lands. He researches contemporary sf and environmental literature, and his current project examines the interconnection between place, culture, and literature in a study of environment and dystopia in contemporary North American fiction. His reviews and essays have appeared in *Science Fiction Studies*, *Extrapolation*, *Paradoxa*, *The Goose*, *Environmental Philosophy*, *UnderCurrents*, and *Canadian Literature*. He is also the author of *Waterline Immersion* (Frontenac House 2019).

## Emrah Atasoy

Emrah Atasoy is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities at Cappadocia University, Turkey. He completed his PhD at Hacettepe University's Department of English Language and Literature in 2019 with a dissertation on twentieth-century dystopian fiction entitled "From Ignorance to Experience: Epistemology and Power in Katharine Burdekin's *Swastika Night*, Anthony Burgess's *The Wanting Seed* and P. D. James's *The Children of Men*." He spent an academic year as a visiting scholar under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor at Penn State University between 2015 and 2016. His most recent publications include the article, "Pandemics and Epidemics in Speculative Fiction" (2020), published by *Ankara University Journal of Languages and History-Geography* and the chapter "Epistemological Warfare(s) in Dystopian Narrative: Zülfü Livaneli's *Son Ada* and Anthony Burgess's *The Wanting Seed*" in *Speculations of War: Essays on Conflict in Science Fiction, Fantasy and Utopian Literature* (2021), edited by Annette M. Magid. He is a member of both Utopian Studies Society-Europe and the Society for Utopias Studies (SUS). His fields of scholarly interest include speculative fiction, dystopia, utopia, science fiction, apocalyptic fiction, Turkish utopianism, and twentieth-century literature.



## Heather Alberro

Heather Alberro recently completed her PhD at Nottingham Trent University's Department of Politics and International Relations. Her background and interests span a range of disciplines including green utopianism, critical posthuman theory, environmental ethics, and political ecology. Her publications include the 2020 article, "'Valuing Life Itself': On Radical Environmental Activists' Post-Anthropocentric Worldviews" published in the *Journal of Environmental Values*, and 'Interspecies' in the upcoming *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Anthropocene*. Heather also serves as co-convenor for the Political Studies Association's (PSA) environmental politics specialist group, and as Chair of the PSA's Early Career Network (ECN).

## Martin Greenwood

After many years of being some sort of skint musician, Martin is now a third-year PhD student in the Sociology department of University of Manchester. He's interested in utopia, social reproduction, public services and the political-pedagogical nature of routine experience.





### **Nora Castle**

Nora Castle is a PhD student in the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies at the University of Warwick, UK. Her research, funded by the Chancellor's International Scholarship, is at the intersection of environmental humanities, food studies, and science fiction studies. Her project, entitled 'Food, Foodways, and Environmental Crisis in Contemporary Speculative Fiction', focuses on the future of food in sf narratives of ecological stress. Nora has two forthcoming chapters: one in *Interdisciplinary Essays on Cannibalism: Bites Here and There* (Routledge, 2021) on Sixth Extinction cannibalism in contemporary sf, and one (with Esthie Hugo) in *Technologies of Feminist Speculative Fiction* (Palgrave, 2021) on food technology and feminism in contemporary sf from the Global South. She has previously

published in the field of East Asian Studies. Nora is co-editing a special issue of *Science Fiction Studies* on 'Food Futures' with Graeme Macdonald (March 2022) as well as a special issue of *Green Letters* on 'Animal Futurity' with Giulia Champion (Jan/Feb 2022).

### **Pelin Kivrak**

Pelin Kivrak is a literary scholar and fiction writer. She graduated in 2007 from The Koc School in Istanbul. She earned her BA in literature from Harvard University in 2011, where she focused on Literary Theory and Latin American literature. After graduating from Harvard, she joined the creative team of The Museum of Innocence in Istanbul for a year. Pelin received her MPhil and MA from Yale University's Comparative Literature Department in 2016. She earned her PhD also from Yale University in 2019 with a dissertation on representations of responsibility in contemporary literature and visual arts, and thereafter joined Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard as a postdoctoral fellow to conduct research on migration and public humanities. Her research fields include critical theory, modern intellectual history, literature(s) of migration and diaspora, cosmopolitanism, world cinema, modern and contemporary art, and contemporary Anglophone fictions. Pelin's first fiction book, *Hiçlikte İhtimal Var*, was published in November 2017 in Turkey after her manuscript received the annual Yaşar Nabi Nayır Fiction Award. Pelin has also been working as a concept developer at Los Angeles-based art collective Refik Anadol Studio, producing works at the intersection of architecture, multimedia art, and artificial intelligence. The Studio's immersive art projects have been exhibited in numerous countries, including Germany, France, US, Canada, Mexico, Turkey, Italy, China and South Korea.





### **Rhiannon Firth**

Rhiannon Firth is a political theorist and writer, a senior research fellow in sociology at the University of Essex and author of *Utopian Politics: Citizenship and Practice* (Routledge 2012). She has two forthcoming books on anarchist disaster relief social movements: *Coronavirus, Class and Mutual Aid in the UK* (with John Preston, Palgrave 2020) and *Disaster Anarchy* (Pluto, 2021). She wrote the Afterword for the new edition of M.L. Berneri's *Journey Through Utopia* (PM Press, 2019) She can be found on Twitter at @RhiFirth.

### **Rob Horsfield**

Rob is a graduate of the University of Leeds and of the University of Warwick. He holds MAs in Philosophy and Literature, and spoils his cat/nemesis, Kemo.



## Panel Abstracts

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### DAY 2

#### Session 1A: Dystopias: Theory & Fiction

**Chair:** Gregory Claeys (Royal Holloway, University of London, UK, Emeritus Prof.)

##### **Absent Rebels: Dystopia and its Modi Operandi of Critique**

Annika Gonnerman (University of Mannheim, Germany)

Critique, in the words of Tom Boland, is an integral part of what defines human beings; he writes that critique is ‘part of our cultural history, a tradition which constitutes us as thinkers’ (Spectacle 1). Dystopia partakes in this long-standing tradition since it can be classified first and foremost as a literary expression of criticism. Yet, despite this truism, no publication has yet zoomed in into the types of criticism employed by dystopian diction. Using Rahel Jaeggi’s taxonomy of criticism, ‘external criticism’, ‘internal criticism’ and ‘immanent criticism’ as explained in her *Critique of Forms of Life*, trans. 2018), I want to introduce a classification and analysis of dystopian fiction that aligns classical dystopian fiction with a focus on totalitarianism (i.e. the classics like Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1948) with ‘external criticism’, and contemporary dystopian fiction with its focus on neoliberal capitalism (like Mitchell’s *Cloud Atlas*, 2004) with ‘immanent criticism’. I will explain the modi operandi of critique, their differences, their target of criticism and thereby shed a light on why contemporary dystopias so often shun away from the ‘rebellion subplot’, i.e., why their protagonists do not rebel anymore.

##### **Aldous Huxley’s *Ape and Essence*: A Sinister Outlook with a Glimpse of Hope**

Heike Sieger (WWU Münster, Germany)

You move to an area and you multiply and multiply until every natural resource is consumed and the only way you can survive is to spread to another area. There is another organism on this planet that follows the same pattern. Do you know what it is? A virus. Human beings are a disease, a cancer of this planet. You're a plague and we are the cure.

This is what Agent Smith tells Morpheus in the 1999 movie *The Matrix*. Apart from fatal pandemics such as the Spanish Flu or the plague, which killed millions of people, the British writer Aldous Huxley had already detected the main threat to mankind decades before the Wachowsky’s postulated their thesis: mankind itself possesses the greatest potential for destruction. During his career, Huxley warned against the effects of over-population in various ways, probably most explicitly in *Brave New World Revisited* (1956), an essay collection about the nightmares of his classic future fantasy *Brave New World*, which already seemed to be within reach. In one of his lesser known novels, the negative utopia *Ape and Essence*, the writer wanted to show what happens when over-population and technological progress culminate in warfare and devastation. Huxley reveals humans’ essence, proving that mankind – in control of the atomic bomb and biological weapons – possesses the power to blow itself up. The dystopian presentation of life in post-nuclear-war Los Angeles provides an insight into the basest human essence as well as it implies the concept of a vicious circle: unless mankind will not fully eradicate itself, it will make the same, fatal mistakes over and over again. These revelations are wrapped in the extraordinary form of a fictitious film script and this talk will give an overview about Huxley’s ideas as well as his search for a cure.

## **Self-consciousness in Dystopic and Post-apocalyptic fiction: the Reader as the Narrative Centre in Postmodernist Re-examinations of the Future**

Diego Carretero Román (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain)

Dystopic and post-apocalyptic narratives have become popular culture's way of expressing its anxiety towards the future and the decay of our society. David Mitchell's novel *Cloud Atlas* installs them within the postmodernist tradition of historiographic metafiction, and uses them to re-examine past, present, and future in the light of each other. It presents them as always 'virtual', that is, mediated through language and representation. While some academics as Fredric Jameson or Jean Baudrillard have disregarded postmodernism as anaesthetic, apolitical, or ahistorical, this paper will follow Linda's Hutcheon interpretation of postmodernism, which overtly dissents at their view. Hutcheon, instead, presents postmodernism not as the decay of aesthetics, as it had been previously approached, but as an aesthetics of problematization – of the decay of totalizing discourses and master narratives. The lack of new aesthetics – apart from the imitation and parodying of previous styles and genres – was initially understood as an aesthetic impasse by the academia, but the divergent view of postmodernism led by Hutcheon has gained now recognition and popularity. Divided into six stories, *Cloud Atlas* imitates different literary genres, including dystopic and post-apocalyptic fiction in the last two stories; it installs their illusive reality only to subvert it by self-consciously presenting them as fictitious. Hence, although the novel portrays the decay of society as a fiction, it also portrays fiction, like any other discourse, as functioning within reality – a function that requires our presence and readers, for whom the question on how to avoid that catastrophic future remains open.

## **Passion and Pandemic: The Pathological Dimension of Emotions in Utopian Literature and Film**

Lucia Opreanu (Ovidius University of Constanța, Romania)

While the vast majority of fictional pandemics share the increasingly relatable premise of out-of-control viral pathogens, there is also a small but by no means negligible corpus of dystopian or (to use Atwood's more fluid term) utopian societies in which the ultimate health and safety hazard is believed to reside in the ability to harbour emotions. When the first-person narrator of Yevgeny Ivanovic Zamyatin's *We* is discovered to have somehow developed a soul, the doctor responsible for this unexpected diagnosis alludes to the dangers of an epidemic and the imminent need for affected parties to have their imagination extirpated. In Kurt Wimmer's 2002 *Equilibrium*, the ability to feel has been singled out as the underlying cause of all human tragedy and the entire population of Libria is required to ward off the dangers of hatred and rage by means of emotional suppressants. In Lauren Oliver's 2011 *Delirium* love (better known as amor deliria nervosa) has been identified as a disease and, upon reaching maturity, every citizen has to undergo surgery to escape its nefarious effects. Finally, in Drake Doremus' 2015 *Equals*, the emotionally anaesthetised population of a futuristic Earth is threatened by contamination with S.O.S. (Switched On Syndrome), prompting the government to take drastic measures while searching for a cure. This paper aims to identify both the common denominators and the unique details of these fictional scenarios, paying close attention to elements of intertextual contagion, such as the numerous echoes of Zamyatin's novel permeating contemporary narratives. It will moreover explore the real-life correspondents of the dangerous manifestations targeted and suppressed by fictional regimes, particularly the emotional manipulation so prevalent in contemporary politics and the viral online transmission of fear and hatred.

## DAY 2

### Session 1B: Post-Apocalyptic Imaginings

Chair: Bryan Radley (University of York, UK)

#### **The Dystopian Persistence of Enclosure in Jefferies's *After London***

Ayşe Çelikkol (Bilkent University, Turkey)

*After London* (1885), the British nature writer Richard Jefferies's post-apocalyptic novel, depicts a dystopian world characterized by loss, danger, and deprivation. An unknown disaster has wiped out the Victorian world, medieval-style settlements dominating its bleak aftermath. Because people must fend off innumerable adversaries such as wild animals, private enclosures become ubiquitous amidst the wilderness. Indeed, the word enclosure appears almost fifty times in this short novel. Jefferies, an astute observer of the historical transformations of the countryside in Britain, offers an imaginary world in which the enclosure remains the dominant mode of spatial organization. Historically the site of primitive accumulation in English capitalism, enclosure enjoys an eerie afterlife in this dystopia. The claustrophobic representations of enclosure inspire a longing for an unenclosed world even as they connote safety from wild animals, "Bushmen," and "gypsies" for the enclosed. The novel's opening sequence, in which nonhuman living beings—roaming animals and sprawling plants—emerge as the main actors, evokes spatial freedom. Locked in a dialectical relation, the roaming animals and the ubiquitous enclosures appear to necessitate each other. Enclosures become reminders of the presence of roaming. This paper argues that the shepherds in the novel, minor characters who enjoy the freedom of roaming like the wildlife they seek to avoid, help imagine human life beyond the logic of private enclosure. The shepherds usher in refreshing pastoral moments in this otherwise antipastoral narrative. The figure of the precarious shepherd at once betrays an existence marked by lower-class status and promises the ability to step outside the binds of that structure. Leading unenclosed lives in spaces resembling the commons, Jefferies's shepherds signal how the enclosed worlds of the pre- and post-apocalyptic England sacrifice an essential freedom.

#### **Life in Trash Cans: Remembering Beckett's Post-post Human in the Time of Pandemic**

Mehmet Zeki Giritli (Koç University, Turkey)

Since Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* (Fin de partie) was staged for the first time on 3 April 1957 at the Royal Court Theater in London, it has been analyzed in various aspects; however, has stayed in shadow of the popularity of *Waiting for Godot*. Theodor Adorno, in his 1961 essay titled "Trying to Understand Endgame" described the atmosphere of the play as "permanent catastrophe, along with a catastrophic event caused by humans themselves... dramatis personae resemble those who dream their own death". A few years before Adorno's essay was published, Barbara Deming (1958), in her review of *Endgame*, had claimed that *Endgame* seems to offer a completely different world at first glance, which might be attributed to Beckett's intellectualism; however, the play actually presents "a familiar plight- of the all- too-everyday". Now, 63 years after the first staging of the play, *Endgame* attracts the attention of the Beckett scholars working on Anthropocene and bio-politics, such as Savi (2017), Bennett (2010), Lavery (2016), and Arons to name a few. In the light of these recent arguments, this paper aims to explore Beckett's theatrical world, focusing on *Endgame* and his 35 second play *Breath*, from the perspective of the pandemic. The paper claims that Beckett's world in *Endgame* can be read as an ultimate representation of the reality we are going through in 2020 rather than an anti-realist dark world representing the existential crisis of humankind. Thus, these two plays offer us a lot about the future of the pandemic and the new human kind, which I call "post-post human". The paper aims: a) to offer a new reading of the plays referring to specific productions, and more generally of Beckett's theatre, in the light of the recent

developments b) to reflect upon the future of humanity in the post-pandemic period through Beckett's art.

### **Looking Back While Moving Forward: The Inalienable Value of the Nuclear Family in Post-apocalyptic Narratives**

Sotirios Bampatzimopoulos (Ankara University, Turkey)

One might think that the end of the world in movies, and most importantly what comes after, would be a vehicle for reimagining societies in more functional alternatives. The ultimate failure of civilization brings forth the inevitable birth of a new world. The survivors of the apocalypse are given the chance to do things better this time, to create a society that will be free from the self-destructive and all-devouring habits of the past. New structures can be made and the possibilities seem endless. Although this might be the case when it comes to imagining eco-friendly societies and inclusive egalitarian communities, it also seems that progressive thought limits and exhausts itself in political imaginations. It not only fails to question, but actually reinforces one of the pillars of western societies: the nuclear family. It is often seen in post-apocalyptic narratives (e.g. *World War Z*, *The Road*, *Cargo*, *Light of My Life*, *A Quiet Place*, *Bird Box*) that the family becomes the central focus, and the hope for a better world can only exist as long as the nuclear family survives. Therefore, the family, the way it has been structured in western societies, does not become one of the many possibilities, but instead a requirement. It is even suggested that the nuclear family, as it is known today, is the inalienable value upon which the better world should be built. The purpose of this paper is to examine the traditional ideology of commercially successful and critically acclaimed post-apocalyptic narratives, explore the reasons behind this surprising lack of imagination regarding the representation of family, and to highlight the very few cases, in which core family values are brought into question.

### **“When Will I Be Home?”: Unearthing a Second Chance at Life in the Post-Pandemic America of Peter Heller’s *The Dog Stars***

Hannah A. Barton (University of Glasgow, UK)

This paper will examine an ecocritical reading of *The Dog Stars* by Peter Heller as it represents nature's impact on rehabilitation in a post-pandemic world. This paper will argue that Heller's novel provides a version of the American frontier narrative through Hig, the narrator of the novel, and his dog Jasper, as they take refuge in an airport hangar in the mountains of Colorado. As Hig's story of grief and remembrance of his past life unfolds through his lyrical stream of consciousness, his connection with nature is shown as a coping mechanism throughout his past and present. I claim this attachment to nature connects Hig to the “male frontier hero” that is “situated between wilderness and civilization” so he can contemplate “the space between the town and the wilds by his knowledge of both worlds”. Utilizing this, one can analyze Hig as he engages with the changes of nature and environment around him, before and after the pandemic. Since ‘end of the world’ fictions turn the present into the “determinate past of something yet to come”, it is essential for Hig to examine his past in order to carry forward into his future. As copious post-apocalyptic futures depict humankind gone or the world lay bare as an uninhabitable wasteland, *The Dog Stars* is not only about a life-affirming story about the human condition in terms of grief, hope, spiritual regeneration, and remembrance of the past in the ‘after times’ of a pandemic, but it is also about Hig's connection with nature and his journey for a second chance at life.

## DAY 2

### Session 1C: Apocalyptic Fiction

Chair: Dunja M. Mohr (University of Erfurt, Germany)

#### Masking Up: Dystopian Affects in Sinophone Cultures

Chun-Yu Lu (Independent Scholar, Taiwan)

This project examines the affective subjectivity in the narratives of dystopia in the Sinophone world. More specifically, it discusses the nuclear crisis in Taiwan, political unrests in Hong Kong, as well as pandemic in China and Chinese Malaysian writers. When depicting the dystopian end of times, masks (and gas masks) become conspicuous objects in the Sinophone films, popular culture and literature. As much of the 2020 has witnessed, masks are a contested topic that could trigger various and sometimes contradictory affects: paranoia or peace, constriction or freedom, resistance or compliance, abnormality or normalcy, stigma or pride, etc. Masks (and gas masks) then are not only objects but also aesthetic strategies and technologies to bring to surface of the thus unconscious feeling, memory, idea and ideology, and to make the invisible enemy visible. Interestingly, in many of the dystopian texts, the situations are often described as war (against government or pandemic) and the enemies are rendered invisible: nuclear leak, political oppression and virus. Masks, in these cases, also indicates agency to affect—people must mask up by the visually evident objects to fight against the existential crisis brought by the invisible (and invincible) enemies. Why does mask become a common means to resist the destruction of environment, human rights and humanity in Sinophone cultures, despite that it is usually small and cheap? How do the paradoxical affects in masks alleviate or aggravate the sense of doom in these dystopian texts? What degree of agency do the writers, artists and filmmakers have in the face of apocalypse in different Sinophone societies? Through masking up in the nightmarish dystopia, contemporary Sinophone writers, filmmakers and artists redefine the epistemological boundaries of fantasy and reality, present and future, progress and regress, as well as self and other.

#### The Sense of an Imminent and Inevitable End: Apocalyptic Thought in Times of Crisis

Frances di Lauro (University of Sydney, Australia)

Bob Dylan performed A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall at Carnegie Hall on 22 September 1962, only a few days after he wrote the song in the Gaslight Café, New York. Dylan admitted to writing the music and lyrics after the discovery by US intelligence that Soviet weapons, including ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads, were being stockpiled in Cuba. The looming threat of what became known as the "Cuban Missile Crisis" generated fear, and apprehension that the world was coming to an end. It was, for Dylan "a song of desperation" (Heylin, 1991:14). This sense of an imminent and inevitable end echoed the existence of an atomic terror in Western Europe between 1940-1945 and the fear of living in a fallen world, a world of incurable contradictions or, as coined by Jonathan Z. Smith "situational incongruity" (Smith, 1983: 90). Desperation and the sense of living in the 'last times' are characteristics of apocalyptic literature, literature that is in Freedman's view "born of crisis" (Freedman, 1969: 39) or crises that stem from other widespread threats, like devastating floods, earthquakes, cyclones and ravaging bushfires, as well as plagues and pandemics. This paper examines the restorative power of literature that emerges from crises that generate incongruity and fear of imminent catastrophe and death in the tomes of Dante Alighieri, Giovanni Boccaccio, and the lyrics of Milton, Marvel and Dylan.

## **A Philosophical Analysis of the Apocalyptic Human in John Christopher's *Empty World*** Cenk Tan (Pamukkale University, Turkey)

John Christopher's *Empty World* (1977) is one of the most remarkable examples of contemporary British apocalyptic fiction. The novel recounts the story of 15 year old Neil Miller who loses his parents in a tragic car accident and is left behind as the only survivor of his family. Trying to adapt to his new life with his grandparents, a horribly fatal disease called the Calcutta Plague hits the world, killing millions of people around the globe. Afterward, Neil departs on a quest for survival and is faced with the burden of dealing with solitude as well as the struggle for power with other survivors he meets during his quest. This paper contemplates to conduct a philosophical inquiry into the depths of human nature in John Christopher's *Empty World*. The novel depicts a realistic portrayal of humanity's basic instincts of survival as well as typical human behavior in a state of utmost crisis. Christopher's bleak narrative projects the inner depths of human nature within an apocalyptic context. Thereby, the paper aims to scrutinise specific philosophical themes which are relevant to the nature of humanity. Initially, it explores the notion of lawlessness and its consequences on individuals and the society. Additionally, it analyses the notion of evil with specific references to various influential philosophers. Finally, the study examines the perusal of power and violence from a philosophical perspective and their manifestation in the novel via the protagonist Neil. The study concludes with some resolutions concerning the nature of humanity and its foreseeable future.

## **Pandemic's Representation in Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven*** Khawla Bendjemil (University of 8 May 1945, Guelma, Algeria)

Diseases, nature and the environment are currently crucial preoccupations for literary and theoretical critics and analysts. The interest in this area is actually not recent but it has increased since the rise of the environmental issues of the twentieth century and the emergence of 'Ecocriticism' as a separate theoretical approach. Today with the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), the interest has been tripled both in number and in field. Indeed, ecocritics concern themselves with explaining the meaning of the physical environment (be it natural or human-built) for people through the analysis of literature in addition to cultural artifacts and language. Hence, given the fact that land, as part of nature for instance, does influence the psyche and the body of people, and that many other environmental elements such as climate, wilderness, technologically altered landscapes, topographies function as powerful forces that human beings have to react to and get affected by, this paper aims to trace the representation as well as the significance of such related aspects in Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* (2014). In this latter, which is set in the Great Lakes region narrating the stories of a Hollywood star, his would-be savior, and a group of nomadic actors who fight for art and humanity before and after a fictional swine flu pandemic "the Georgia Flu", has devastated the world. Thus, using ecocriticism and also Heather Houser's book of *Ecosickness in Contemporary U.S. Fiction: Environment and Affect* (2014), this paper will examine in what way(s) the characters deal with the pandemic and each other during such hazardous times. Lastly, it also investigates how Emily St. John Mandel represents the epidemic and to what end in this novel. Thus, the focal point of this presentation is to investigate the treatment of the pandemic along with its impact on the characters' lives.

## DAY 2

### Session 1D: Posthumanism I

Chair: Heather Alberro (Nottingham Trent University, UK)

#### **A New Form of Movement and Circulation as a Pathway within Posthuman Embodiment in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***

Sezgi Öztop Haner (Kütahya Dumlupınar University, Turkey)

The twenty-first century has commonly celebrated as the biotech century. This study explores how Kazuo Ishiguro's literary figuration of posthuman embodiment in *Never Let Me Go* (2005) places the body as an object of prosthetic circulation for technology and social subjectivity. In such a case, Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* employs posthuman bodies to involve in a larger intervention within the formulation of twenty-first century biopolitics. Then, *Never Let Me Go* creates a kind of prosthetic biopolitics where the metabolic control of life is regulated by constantly altering bodies from the inside out. It is unsurprising, then, throughout the novel, transition from a disciplinary to prosthetic society of mobile materiality and posthuman subjectivity apparently presents a new promise of escape. In fact, within the novel, there is nowhere particular to escape to; only the notion of continued circulation and mobility within and between bodies helps construct a sense of escape and a deferral of death drive.

#### **Trees Are No Longer Silent: Global War(n)ing in Mario Petrucci's *Bosco***

Seçil Erkoç (İnönü University, Turkey)

Foregrounding the intra-active and the responsive dynamics of the nonhuman matter, Mario Petrucci's *Bosco* (1999) shows how the more-than-human world re-acts to the egocentric impulses of the humankind through climate change and global warming. Divided into three main sections, titled "Arboretum," "The True Service," and "Woodsmoke," *Bosco* traces the catastrophic consequences of deforestation – as reflected both on humans and nonhumans. In the third section, "Woodsmoke," the damage wrought upon the more-than-human world reaches to such a huge extent that trees can no longer stay silent, and they start addressing the humankind directly in the poem "Logwood" – accusing them of their egocentric impulses that turn a blind eye to the agential dynamics of the nonhuman matter. Similarly, the poem "Dodona" depicts the last surviving oak tree which is compared to a patient struggling for his/her last breath in a life support unit. With the death of the tree, however, the humankind becomes totally vulnerable before the heating flames of the chimaera – symbolizing the global warming. In this respect, the poem "Deserted," illustrates a futuristic setting where all entities encounter the threat of mass extinction since deforestation has long turned the Earth into a barren space. Eventually, "Exodus," the last poem that closes *Bosco*, presents panoramic view of a dying planet, that is our home, as seen from space. Overall, underlining the co-constitutive entanglement of human and nonhuman agents, it is argued that *Bosco* explores the negative consequences of the humankind's anthropocentric mindset to become the ultimate controller in a posthuman space. In other words, epitomizing the nonhuman matter's agential capacity to react to the human intervention, it is attempted to show the way in which *Bosco* warns against the devastating consequences of the climate change that threaten all (non)human life forms.

#### **Resisting Sympoiesis: The Birth of the Monstrous Posthuman in Greg Bear's *Darwin's Radio***

Züleyha Çetiner Öktem (Ege University, Turkey)

In 1962 Ballard proposed that it was "inner space, not outer, that needs to be explored. The only truly alien planet is Earth," to which I would fervently add, "the only true alien (planet) is the human body." The idea of the human body as microcosmos is certainly not new; through

developments, specifically in microbiology, the perspective of the human body as microcosm shifts into a site that harbours the microbial instead. The body, sustaining the micro, inevitably sanctions scrutiny to how these organisms reshape and redefine the human that is in a constant state of flux, in what Haraway (2016) calls sympoiesis, a continuous becoming with, a making with. Greg Bear's *Darwin's Radio* (1999) is such a work that interrogates these assertions. *Darwin's Radio* is based on the premise that a dormant retrovirus in our DNA has been activated, triggering mutations to such an extent that the body is no longer considered to be human but rather diverges into a monstrous species. The crux is that this activated gene not only rewrites the human body transforming it, but also has the capability of being transmitted to other individuals infecting them. This disease affects pregnant women (the men are asymptomatic) causing the foetus to be aborted; these women then become spontaneously pregnant, eventually giving birth to babies with abnormalities. The main argument is whether this phenomenon is a disease or just the natural course of human evolution. The reverberations of this epidemic, soon to become pandemic, however, manifests in the fear of speciation. These ramifications initiated in *Darwin's Radio* are further explored in the sequel *Darwin's Children* (2003) in which Bear illustrates the difficulties in consolidating these mutated monstrous posthumans and negotiates for a remodelling of our understanding of being human, issues I propose to explore in this paper.

### **Transforming Bodies in Maggie Gee's *The Ice People* and HBO Max's *Raised by Wolves*: A Posthuman Approach**

Niğmet Çetiner (Kastamonu University, Turkey)

We are now living in an age of artificial intelligence which may appear as a great development offering a friendly helping hand dealing with everyday chores at home or functioning like human workers in the factories, saving money and time for human beings as much as possible. Nevertheless, human beings fail to recognize the "matter" value and the subsequent ethical concerns regarding the new robot "species" as part of the nonhuman world. As human beings develop the robot technology more and more, they seem to rely on human grandeur and ignore the imminent danger they have unknowingly introduced to the world along with the rise of technology. By demanding more advanced technology, they have failed to see that the artificial intelligence has continued to develop and indeed evolved into something totally more developed than it was originally intended. This puts forth the possible danger of the collapse of the family institution, the cultures, civilizations and the human world as we know it and at the same time lays the very basis of a posthuman world with humans heavily interconnected with technology and robots evolving into human-like bodies. With this in mind, Maggie Gee's *The Ice People* presents the highly developed robots, the Doves, created for the pure pleasure and benefit of human beings in a posthuman society fighting for survival in an anthropogenic world whereas the HBO Max TV series *Raised by Wolves* introduces a robot character, Mother, who is originally created as a deadly weapon, but, later, reprogrammed to be the parents of the children who are intended to be the first members of an atheist colony on the planet Kepler-22b. However, the robots both in the book and the TV series manage to evolve by themselves and adopt humane qualities which poses a great threat for the human societies. Hence, *The Ice People* and *Raised by Wolves* demonstrate the dangerous outcomes of human arrogance failing to see the intricate value of technology in the posthuman world.

## DAY 2

### Session 1E: Plague & Pandemic Fiction I

Chair: Burcu Kayışcı Akkoyun (Boğaziçi University, Turkey)

#### Utopia and Dystopia in Viral Science Fiction

Andrew Milner (Monash University, Emeritus Prof., Australia)

The paper will begin by arguing, with and against Amitav Ghosh, that science fiction has itself 'gone viral' in recent years. It will then develop a brief overview of how pandemics have been represented in the literary canon and in genre science fiction, both literary and cinematic. It will identify five main subtypes of pandemic fiction: post-apocalyptic survivalism, time travel stories, political allegories, techno thrillers and scientifically plausible science fiction. As in the genre more generally, these fictions are overwhelmingly dystopian. It will conclude with an argument to the effect that Camus's *La Peste* is, in Darko Suvin's terms, a scientifically plausible science fiction.

#### A Plague of Forgetfulness: Reading Ishiguro's *The Buried Giant* under the Light of Utopia/Dystopia Studies

Elzem Nazli (Middle East Technical University, Turkey)

Kazuo Ishiguro's most recent novel, *The Buried Giant* (2015), is so multi-layered a novel that it provides a highly fertile ground to inquire many issues ranging from marriage to aging, from essentialist nationalism to memory and trauma, from genre question to stylistic qualities, and to the blurred link between history, fiction, and fantasy. Apart from these, the novel also raises various crucial questions regarding the plague and its relation to utopia/dystopia studies. In the novel, which is set in post-Arthurian England when the Romans departed the country, a plague of mist causing forgetfulness is inflicted on people on the whole land - people hardly remember even the most recent past. The plague, like any evil, is thought to come from outside i.e., theological interpretations such as God's punishment. However, when the novel unfolds later, the plague turns out to be a fabricated one, and an enchanted dragon is the source of the mist of forgetfulness. This paper argues that in *The Buried Giant* the plague-like mist is used as a literary device functioning as an instrument to create a u(dys)topia by the authoritarian regimes. Upon the decree of the legendary King Arthur, the sorcerer Merlin casts a spell on the breath of a she-dragon, Querig, for the sake of creating a utopia where peace reigns between Britons and Saxons, for it enables people to forget the previous slaughters and hatred between them. However, the intended utopia can alternatively be seen as a dystopia not only for the Saxons but also for the Britons. Since this u(dys)topia, on the one hand, builds itself upon a slaughter of the Saxons commanded by the Briton King Arthur and refers to a despotic dominion over both people's memories, and on the other, it is ultimately ruined by both the Britons (on the individual level) and the Saxons (on the collective level) who live in the state of fragile peace, this study claims that to create a distinction between utopia and dystopia seems rather moot.

#### Tracing Renaissance Humanism in Two Plague Narratives: *Decameron* and *The Betrothed*

Sümeyye Güllü Aslan (Middle East Technical University, Turkey)

Plagues have been a subject of awe for humans for two main reasons: the taunting feeling of our powerlessness in the final analysis of life and death and the feeling of victory once we do end them, albeit generally upon high numbers of casualties. However, not only our feelings toward plagues but also the changes we experience in social, political and economic life after plagues are worthy of study. Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Alessandro Manzoni's *The Betrothed* are two examples of fiction that depict the Bubonic Plague at two different times,

during the 14th century and during the 17th century, respectively. The depiction of plagues in both works are taken from real-life experiences and documentations of the plague, making the observations semi-fictional, rather than fictional. This comparative study of two of the most catastrophic plagues in Europe as they are depicted in these works of fiction aims at analysing how people viewed and reacted to the plague to track whether anything had changed in the 300 years that passed, and if so, what had, how and why. To achieve a fair and fitting comparison, plagues of the same type and of almost the same geography were chosen. Assuming the constancy of type and geography, the analysis could be focused solely on the changes. The thesis is that Renaissance humanism must have left traces on the perception of and the reaction towards the second plague. Therefore, the works will be compared on the basis of (1) the way the plagues are generally described; i.e. the origins and progress and (2) social and economic changes during the plagues. While the full effect of Renaissance humanism on perception of plagues will not be readily available in this highly specific study, certain changes in attitude are expected to reflect the altered mind-set.

### **Chronicles of Epidemics in Bengali Literature and Movies**

Debarati Choudhury (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India)

The human tryst with epidemics is as old as the hills; writers over centuries have repeatedly explored it in prose and verse, underlining not just its terrifying power but also the resilience of the human mind in confronting it. Beyond the Euro-centric portrayal of epidemics, there have also been indigenous accounts of epidemics in India. Celebrated Hindi poet Suryakant Tripathi's memoir, *A Life Misspent*, provides a heart-rending account of the influenza epidemic that ravaged India during the early years of the 20th century: "I travelled to the riverbank in Dalmau and waited... The Ganga was swollen with dead bodies. At my in-laws' house, I learned that my wife had passed away." By and large, early epidemics in pre-Independence India have not been narrativised as filmic stories, even adequate documentations are not found. Interestingly, not many films comprehending such epidemics and pandemics are found in the Indian pantheon of films either. This paper will explore how Bengali literature, in responding to epidemics in and around the east Indian state of West Bengal, has celebrated the enduring range of human responses, the gamut of feelings that rage against the onslaught of disease and death. The same will be done with a sociological reading of fiction by the likes of Rabindranath Tagore and Sharatchandra Chattopadhyay, and movies by Satyajit Ray and others. The analysis will also aim to portray how epidemics become a breeding ground of superstition/blind faith of the local people coupled with corruption, and how fiction has brought the dichotomy between religious faith and scientific rationale to the forefront.

## DAY 2

### Session 1F: Anthropocene, Capitalocene

Chair: Fatma Aykanat (Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University, Turkey)

#### Posthuman Thought in the Era of Capitalocene

Öznur Karakaş (Independent Scholar, Turkey)

The new coronavirus pandemic, climate-change related wild fires in California, globally increasing temperatures and growing uncertainty over climate patterns have recently been on the world agenda. We have come to discuss the concept of Anthropocene in the light of similar developments. Anthropocene, described as the moment in the geo-history of Earth when human species has become a natural force capable of leading to irreversible changes in the biosphere, is generally initiated with the Industrial Revolution. In this presentation, I will dwell on the possibilities brought forward by posthumanist thought with reference to James Moore's critic of the concept of Anthropocene -and his proposal to refer to Capitalocene instead- and Rosi Braidotti's critic of humanism and anthropocentrism. The new materialist posthumanist thought is both a critic against Western metaphysics assigning an exceptional position to humans based on the modernist divisions of nature-culture, human-nature, human/non-human and a proposal to reconsider the lived content of the terms of human or humanity, averring instead that these terms are neither homogeneous nor neutral or universal and the share and value of humanity is inequality distributed among humans. In this respect, the white, male-Human, corresponding to the 'anthropos,' acts as an abstraction that excludes those who are deemed less-than human, racialized and sexualized others, and cheap labor reservoirs. Cheapening/devaluating operations among humans themselves go hand in hand with the cheapening/devaluation of the nature as the domain of non-human life. Viable solutions to today's problems -and future possibilities for an ecological co-existence- will come from post-human trajectories, rather than analyses that remain within the axis of the 'anthropos.'

#### Apocalypse Never: Walter Benjamin and the Deferral of the End

Gregory Marks (La Trobe University, Australia)

In his famous "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (1940), Walter Benjamin delineated between two forms of time: one which counted the seconds and minutes of the clock, and another which marked the revolutionary break with that endless procession of interchangeable moments. But this dual model of temporality is not the only theory of time which Benjamin penned. Over two decades prior, in the notes which would form the basis of his dissertation on German Baroque drama, Benjamin formulated another, far more fractured system of plural temporalities. Of these temporalities, the most conspicuous is that of the *Trauerspiel*—an obscure form of German drama, best translated into English as either mourning-play or funeral-pageant—which is defined not by its messianic fulfilment or its historical import but by its failure. Unlike messianic time, the time of the *Trauerspiel* is not only unfulfilled but also lacking in eschatological potency: it does not mark the end of history in redemption, but the failure of that redemption to take place. Instead, the time of the *Trauerspiel* is marked by its transience and the sinking of historical time back into the timelessness of inhuman nature. Symptomatic of our present historical juncture of late capitalism, which seems at once futureless and without end, this melancholic disposition is today visible in the discourses surrounding climate catastrophe and global warming. More troubling still, I argue that it is this mournful order of time which characterises much contemporary theorisations of the Anthropocene, which shrink from historical consciousness and envisage humanity as fossils in the making. If, as per Benjamin, this funereal vision of time is a mark of our historical failure, we are today confronted with a failure of world-historic proportions that threatens to sweep up even the most critical minds in its tide.

**“But in the end, joy cannot fend off evil. Joy can only remind you why you fight:”  
Acceptance of Futility of Hope as a Strategy of Resistance within New Weird Fiction and  
the Anthropocene**

Brianna Bullen (Deakin University, Australia)

This paper examines the re-emergence of the New Weird fiction genre as a mode for exploring the upheavals of the Anthropocene. Transfiguring the Weird genre popularised by Lovecraft, the New Weird seems to blend together the fantasy, science fiction and horror to explore ecocritical and posthuman thought. I examine how Jeff Vandermeer’s *Borne* (2017) utilizes the weird fiction format to explore the enmeshed processes of climate change and capitalism and their impact on human and nonhuman organisms and environments. I contend that the texts portray worlds in which discomfort has been normalised, and that any staged story of hope and rebellion is ultimately redundant and met with failure in human terms. It deprivileges the primacy of the human through a focus on numerous biotechnological organisms and their realities. The world of the *Borne* universe signifies itself as being concerned with the impacts of late-capitalism through its primary villain being the nameless Company, an entity destroying itself and the world further through its attempts at perpetuation through its constant production of dangerous unethical biotechnology. Its human characters are all displaced, biotechnologically constructed, or both. Ultimately, the texts express that the ‘future for humanity’ is non-existent. That is not to say all humans die out, but that they can no longer separate themselves from nature and nonhumans and claim exceptionalism, and nonhuman animals are suggested to be the new custodians of the world fundamentally altered by human exploitation. Under the forces of late-stage capitalism, all life becomes the primary fuel for capital until the human processes trying to contain it fall themselves. Who inherits the structures, and whether the memory of them should still exist, is of primary concern.

**In Search for Utopian Possibilities in Times of Crises**

Koray Kırmızısakal (Kocaeli University, Turkey)

In my presentation, I am going to dwell on the possibilities of developing ‘utopian’ narratives today, in times of the Covid-19 pandemic, ecologic disasters and systemic crises, in the midst of what has started to be called Anthropocene (Steffen et al. 2008), or better Capitalocene (Moore). Future imaginaries -that go beyond futurisms, the latter being merely accelerated versions of existing technologies- are significant in the sense that they are constitutive of what is deemed imaginable and thinkable at a given moment. They therefore constitute the very limits of collective imagination. Following Kim Stanley Robinson, I will propose that certain types of science-fiction narratives today act as “realism of our times” as opposed to the dominant capitalist realism (Fisher 2009). ‘Capitalism realism,’ a concept developed by Mark Fisher, refers to neoliberal times -without being reducible to neoliberalism itself- when it has become increasingly impossible to think about novelty, and alternatives to the actually existing capitalism. I associate the closure of the utopian moment (Jameson 2005, Traverso 2018, Fisher 2009) to capitalist realism and end of history narratives, and briefly point to the fact that today’s dominant present and future imaginaries are predominantly dystopic in character. It is indeed true that “it is easier to imagine the end of the world, rather than capitalism” (Jameson 2003). I will then search for traces of possible utopian narratives in science-fiction subgenres as solarpunk – more specifically in *Mars Trilogy* of Kim Stanley Robinson- for an alternative understanding of realism, “the realism of our times” in terms of Robinson (2018), with reference to a rather striking twist at the end of a previous version of Jameson’s aforementioned quote “... perhaps that is due to some weakness in our imaginations” (Jameson 1994).

## DAY 2

### **Session 2A: Creating with Polluted Seas: Toxic Wellbeing, Terrible Beauty, and New Water Literacies**

**Chair:** Clifton Evers (Newcastle University, UK)

*This is a set panel proposed by the participants.*

This panel examines critical issues related to place-making, blue spaces (e.g. seas, oceans), health/wellbeing, and eco-literacy, through creative industry. The three panellists employ the creative research approaches of: photo-performance, soundscapes, film, and poetics to consider how ecological sensibilities and literacies about nature-based wellbeing (human and non-human) have been and continue to be reconfigured by pollution in blue spaces. Traditional associations between the sublime, wellbeing, and an unspoilt nature have been superseded by a necessary recognition of, and adaptation by many people to thinking, feeling, and acting with the rhythms, flows, surges, and throbbing of pollution to realise nature-based wellbeing in blue spaces. Pollution is now ecological; part of the murmur of the world. It is crucial to make sense of how sensual and cognitive nature-based wellbeing and eco-literacies proceed in polluted blue spaces in light of the recognition of the persistence of pollution and adaptation to it. To persevere in adapting to catastrophic currents is no easy task and poses ongoing challenges for life on earth. The panel explores if recognition of and adaptation to pollution is interpreted as resignation or as an active working through of how to live with blue spaces that are toxic, and polluted, while aiming and hoping for wellbeing with nature's alive-ness. Ours is an argument for better appreciating how people are dancing with blue spaces on a polluted planet in ways that, as Jane Bennett muses, recognize "the complexities of ecologies" in a way that still holds the potential to provoke a "more cautious, intelligent approach to our interventions in that ecology" (2004, 349).

#### **Toxic 'Wellbeing' and Polluted Leisure in a Blue Space Wasteland**

Clifton Evers (Newcastle University, UK)

There is a surfing spot called 'wastelands' (Northumberland, UK). I frequent this post-industrial place often to slide along oil-slicked waves. The beach is situated next to a coal power plant, now converting to biomass extracted from international clear-cut coastal forests. The power station emits a variety of pollutants into the atmosphere, including nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, particulate matter, and heavy metals. The beach also has a long history of being a colliery waste site. Sand has stabilised around anthropogenic residue. Old mining pipes, cables, and machinery protrude from the sea and sand. Chemicals and iron ore leak from the abandoned mines into a stream at the southern end of the beach, colouring the water orange. The sedimentary layers of the cliffs that envelop the beach are anthropogenic, all the way down. In this talk I present a sensory ethnography (Pink, 2015) involving the churning of a photographic essay, film, and soundscape that not only helps us interpret but immerse us in a community of surfers dedicated to undertaking their 'polluted leisure' at this site, the only ones who do so (Evers, 2019). Through an analysis of blue space salutogenesis (Foley et al., 2019) in this disregarded place of economic and ecological extraction I argue that our polluted leisure reveals an emerging paradoxical and ironic nature-based 'toxic salutogenesis' that is not only being actively pursued but even celebrated in this 'shadow place' (Plumwood, 2007).

#### **The New Sublime: The Terrible Beauty of the Anthropogenic Beach**

Luz Mar González-Arias (University of Oviedo, Spain)

On the cliffs of Cabo Negro, on the beautiful and temperamental coast of Asturias (Northern Spain), there remains the structure of an old cableway that linked the coastline with the Spanish

National Steel Company (then called ENSIDESA), based in the city of Avilés, a few kilometres away. Between 1962 and 1972, approximately, thousands of tons of slag and residues from the steel factory were dumped directly into the sea, with the resulting environmental impact on the area. If observed from above, the coastline around Cabo Negro is extraordinarily beautiful. If looked at closely, however, one becomes aware of the different layers of organic and inorganic materials, all blended to form a genuine anthropogenic space. The aim of this paper is to use Cabo Negro as a case study of similar land- and seascapes on the Atlantic coastlines in considering the possibilities for art and literature to become active agents in the construction of meaning for such blue spaces. Using as an example the series of photographs and photo-performance I curated in August 2020 entitled *Cabo Negro* (by photographer Venancio Mayo and choreographer Laura Cueto), we will assess the extent to which artistic interventions complement scientific approaches to the phenomena of the Anthropocene (Davis and Turpin 2015) and challenge the cultural assumptions that associate blue spaces with ideals of healthy life-style, the purity of nature and the conceptualisation of the sea as an instrument for our enjoyment and emotional comfort, using gender as a cross-category element in our analysis (Löw 2006). The series *Cabo Negro* will be presented in photographs and soundscapes as work-in-progress, part of a larger exploration of the area using historical records and the testimonies of men working for ENSIDESA in the 1960s and 70s.

### **End on Sea**

Shé Mackenzie Hawke (Mediterranean Institute for Environmental Studies, Slovenia)

My body is tied to weather patterns ... feels like home (Evers, 2010: 47-49)

Water—oceans, rivers, the moist air we breathe and exchange every 3 seconds, water—that omniscient all-knowing narrator that ‘directs our passage through the world’ (Jean Luc Nancy, 2011: 83) reels us in through inter-species and elemental entanglements and dialogue. Yet we remain barely environmentally literate. An end on sea is the very place the manifest destiny of the human species could find itself. But are we ready for such a metamorphosis, to return to the nursery from which we were spawned? Can we breathe ... with more-than-human beings and elements as we all face the profuse challenge of restoring and reconstructing the planet from its toxic Anthropocentricism? Climate science has produced volumes of data on sea level rise and temperature increases, yet little adaptation research has appeared for human navigation of this scenario. Could it be, as Braun and Cavagnaro (1971: 24), once suggested, that nature may deem man an experiment, as yet un-proved? As the planet skids to an abrupt halt through Covid-19 and other disasters, this paper challenges the currency of the Anthropocene meta narrative of harm to humans. Instead it offers a multi focal ecocentric positioning of climate change specifically in relation to our future assemblages with other species, and elemental life, particularly water. Living on, in and from seas and rivers—at times polluted and developed beyond sensible measure—appears as a future, dystopian or otherwise. Will humanity bury its head in the collective sands of denial or shift with tides and weather patterns and re-make home differently and harmoniously with other species? The narrative poem ©‘End on Sea’ is interspersed in this paper with critical theory, as a bi-lexical attempt at ‘eco-fluency’ and ‘water literacy’ (Hawke, 2014) to imagine and understand futures beckoning from both the horizon and the near-ness of the shore.

## DAY 2

### Session 2B: Mediations: Language & Technology

Chair: Wladyslaw Witalisz (Jagiellonian University, Poland)

#### **Artificial Intelligence for Justice during a Pandemic: The COVID-19 Example**

Murtaza Mohiqi (Gharjistan University, Afghanistan)

Artificial intelligence is associated with various aspects of our lives. These sophisticated machines have been increasingly used in different manufacturing industries and services sectors for decades. Artificial intelligence is currently a center of attention of legal professionals. An abundance of startup companies explores the application of AI techniques in the domain of law, and there is even talk of artificially intelligent legal assistants disrupting the legal market space. An artificial intelligence (AI) driven judicial system would make sure that nothing stalls during the pandemic. As one of the measures to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, courts in major parts of the world are delaying trials and temporarily closing doors. While the move is reasonable in the face of the pandemic, the process could leave some cases in limbo for weeks, if not months. In addition to these measures, new AI-based systems may prove helpful during these times and should, where available, be used to secure access to justice. Questions addressed included the following: How can AI & Law research contribute to improving legal work in, for example, courts, law firms, public administration, police practice and businesses? How should AI & Law research change in light of the recent research breakthroughs and technological developments? For example, how can traditional research on legal knowledge bases, legal reasoning and legal argument be combined with data science, machine learning and natural language processing? We aim to review the role of AI as a decisive technology to the changing attitude towards technology in the legal domain, and the increased need for norms embedded in technology (big data analysis for crime fighting and counterterrorism).

#### **Technoscientific Utopia: Problematizing the End of Time**

Roberto Favalli (University of Padua, Italy)

Referring to the last few decades, several authors have spoken of “end of utopias” and “crisis of utopia”. This paper aims to problematize these concepts starting from the acknowledgement of the centrality of scientific pervasiveness and technological innovation in contemporary society, with an eye to the consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Through the concept of “technoscientific utopia” it is possible to trace the features of a European utopian discourse, that is likely to share a tight, longstanding relationship with the technoscientific level. In the first place, through a historical-diachronic analysis of literary utopias it is possible to highlight this continuity. Secondly, through a qualitative analysis of the languages and rhetoric adopted in the field of science fiction, future studies and within the arena of the public communication of science (PCOS), it is shown that in our contemporaneity there is still a utopian discourse and that it is mainly of a technoscientific utopian discourse. Furthermore, the question of the “crisis of the future” is not only a sociological problem, but also a social and political one. With respect to this crisis, the technoscientific system is among the actors competing for a possible social delegation on the “direction to take”. With respect to the Covid-19 pandemic, quoting a headline in *The Guardian*, “we need to reinvent ourselves”; and it is precisely science and technology that could play a key role in this general rethinking.

## **Hope for a Better Future in the Late Medieval Prayers**

Oleksandr Okhrimenko (Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine)

During the late Middle Ages (the second half of the 12th century – the 15th century), due to several famines, epidemics (e.g., Black Death), frequent major and minor violent conflicts (such as the Hundred Years' War), economic crises and new economic outcomes, then the feeling of fear, uncertainty about the future, the desire for something else than the Domesday, increased. This provoked the emergence of many new prayers and translations into vernacular languages, in which we may discover the requests for a better future expressed in these texts. The strong emotion of fear (especially fear of uncertainty of the future) which naturally emerges during the difficult situation as wars or epidemy provokes the development of mentality and changes of key values. During the last pandemic of COVID-2019, we see the growing role of art and technologies during spring 2020. It is comparable to the situation during the late Middle Ages – the huge development of Renaissance art and cutting-edge technologies (such as printing press) for the period. Even earlier in the 21st century, with the coming of New Millennium, several economic crises, the threat of terrorism, the growth of aggressive expression of racism the West rapidly grown the 'culture of fear.' For the paper, I use several French-language prayers from the 14-century Books of Hours and indicate the requests from the Higher Powers to reconstruct the imagination of a better world in the views of the late medieval Europeans.

## **Neologism and Pandemics in Literary Translation: “The Masque of the Red Death,” “King Pest” and “The Sphinx” by Edgar Allan Poe**

Özlem Gülen (Haliç University, İstanbul)

Each historical event, from wars and migrations to catastrophes and pandemics, leaves traces behind in several areas, one of which is literature. Being a foremost witness of the history, literature reflects the social realities, transformations, sorrows and all other experiences that people have been through. Along with every striking incident taking place at a certain time, literature not only acquires new topics to handle, but also gain new words and sayings. Moreover, all these new terms and contexts are transferred to other countries, cultures and languages by favor of translation. Within this scope, writers emerge as one of the most important representatives of their time, while translators become their voice in other languages, playing a key role in nurturing new concepts within translated literature. As a well-known writer, Edgar Allan Poe serves as one of the most convenient examples in this respect. With his powerful writing that combines all deep-seated emotions and impressive depictions, he concerned himself with the pandemics of his time and the translations of his works has brought a breath of fresh air for neologism in the literary worlds of several countries. In this regard, this study aims to analyze “The Masque of the Red Death”, “King Pest” and “The Sphinx” by Edgar Allan Poe and their Turkish translations from the point of their focus on pandemics and neologism in different socio-linguistic contexts.

## DAY 2

### Session 2C: Zombies I

**Chair:** Krzysztof M. Maj (AGH University of Science and Technology, Kraków, Poland)

#### **They Are Billions and That's Our Fault: On the Biopolitics of Contagion in Dystopian World**

Krzysztof M. Maj (AGH University of Science and Technology, Kraków, Poland)

The presentation will deliver a biopolitics-focused analysis of the steampunk apocalypse in the storyworld of *They Are Billions*—2017 survival real-time strategy/tower defense video game from Numantian Games. Having taken up a world-centered approach to the gameplay, instead of analysing its governing mechanics and procedures, I will aim at addressing the means a dystopian narrative may utilise to show how an apocalyptic pandemic can be used (bio)politically for both disciplining and punishing terrified citizens. Contrary to many zombie and postapocalyptic fictions, *They Are Billions* offers a critical insight into political machinations behind the fall of a fictional country similar to the United States of America—now transformed (much like in *Kabaneri of the Iron Fortress* anime) into a fragile network of fortresses containing the spread of the zombie infection within the so-called Doom Villages. Simultaneously, real-time strategy genre offers a chance of utopian redemption, as the player progresses towards not only revealing the political origins of the zombie pathogen, but also rebuilding the U.S. under a watchful eye of the self-proclaimed Emperor—whose intentions, as for now, has not been put to doubts. I shall closely inspect all these narrative deceptions while pondering on the boundaries between utopian and dystopian order in the end of times, as well as addressing a controversial issue of giving an evident preference for totalitarian means of control over less efficient, but utopian ones—and not only in *They Are Billions*, but in many other titles in the genre as well (such as 11bit studios' *Frostpunk*).

#### **The Evolving Zombie as the Embodiment of Hope in Daryl Gregory's *Raising Stony Mayhall***

Ildikó Limpár (Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary)

Daryl Gregory's *Raising Stony Mayhall* (2011) is set in a near-apocalyptic world, brought about by a zombie tsunami that was successfully stopped. However, the world is still threatened by the existence of hiding/hidden zombies, who could start an apocalypse any time if they launched an organized attack on humanity, spreading the zombie disease by biting people. This context constructs the zombie as the embodiment of infection and otherness, but what makes Gregory's approach outstanding is his construction of his protagonist as an evolving zombie. Stony Mayhall is born as a zombie but is capable of growth, which symbolizes hope in a pandemic for the disprivileged and for society at large. As his body gradually decomposes, Stony realizes that his body is a way to reconnect with the world; disintegration, therefore, becomes an opportunity to extend existence instead of succumbing to the inevitable end. As a Messiah character, Stony proves to be able to save humanity from a final zombie apocalypse by sacrificing his own body and undead "life," thereby rewriting Christian mythology for a post-apocalyptic society. Stony's experience asks us to reconsider not only our concept of deviance/otherness but also our relationship with our environment, without the power of which humanity could not have been saved in the novel. My reading will explore some of the religious and ecocritically relevant aspects of the novel and their inevitable interconnection that manifests in the zombie body signifying hope.

## **Humour as Medicine: Terry Pratchett's *Reaper Man* as a Subversion of Zombie Narratives**

Seda Pekşen (Ankara University, Turkey)

Terry Pratchett's *Reaper Man*, one of the forty-one books in his *Discworld* Series that portrays Death as a major character, is a humorous subversion of zombie narratives in which what spreads as a sort of virus is the life force, thereby preventing the dead from actually leaving the world. As the life force keeps on building up inside a construction that looks very much like a shopping mall served with life carried by live shopping trolleys and snow globes, the undead begin to rise against vitalism asking for their right to a fresh start. Using such a setting, Pratchett presents the reader with Death's perspective on life and a zombie's perspective on death, thereby offering the reader a quite different vantage point to see the world. The novel, published in 1991, thus highlights various subjects that the 21st Century reader struggling through a pandemic could relate to: human beings' constant neglect of the present moment, the destructive impact of consumerism, and the consequent imbalances in society and in individuals' lives. As humorous as it is, the novel is a satire on people's relentless endeavours to build, to buy, and to consume not only material things but their lives as well. Metaphors and abstractions turning into corporeal realities as part of the subversion serve to show the reader the redundancy of their own perceived reality by making them see it from the other way around. The focus of this presentation will be the humorous style through which Pratchett shakes the reader out of obliviousness to these matters of the human condition, while also providing a healing effect during this time of depression and anxiety.

## DAY 2

### Session 2D: Pandemics: Historical Perspectives

Chair: Thomas Kelly (King's College London, UK)

#### **Multicultural Traffic in the Mediterranean: Plague Epidemics and Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern Period**

Işıl Şahin Gültür (Fırat University, Turkey)

In the history of plague epidemics, many outbreaks spread throughout all the inhabited parts of the world. It has been observed that the number of places in Europe and the Mediterranean, infected by plague epidemics, began to increase from the mid-fifteenth until the end of the sixteenth century following the rapid expansion of the Ottoman Empire. In other words, the intercultural exchanges and socio-economic relations with Christian Europe and the Muslim world in the Mediterranean led to the rapid spread of the plagues in the early modern period. In this regard, this study investigates the attitudes toward the plague epidemics in special reference to the European travellers' accounts of the Ottoman lands and Ottoman historical records and indicates that there appears a division on the religious difference between Christian Europe and the Islamic world. Thus, this study aims to reveal that the European travellers' accounts argue that Christian attitude toward the plague was an active combat with the disease, while the Muslim response was passive and fatalistic during this period. As will be analysed through sixteenth-century Ottoman historians' accounts and the treaties, this study highlights that those works include legal knowledge, medical recipes, and precautions to be taken against the plague in contrast to the European accounts, which developed as a common discourse in the western travel writing of the Ottoman Empire.

#### **Plague, Death, the Ottoman Empire: Epidemic in Elif Shafak's *The Architect Apprentice*** Anamta Rizvi (University-Jamia Millia Islamia, India)

Since the devastating Black Death pandemic in 1347, the Ottoman Empire was bedeviled by plagues for centuries to come, causing a heightened increase in the mortality rates. In sixteenth century, plague in the Ottoman Empire disseminated on an unprecedented level, especially during the last decades. Nukhet Varlik in "Plague epidemics in the post- Black Death Mediterranean and the Ottoman Empire" observes, "It is possible to document the presence of plague in at least one location of the Ottoman Empire for each year between 1570 and 1600. This sustained eruption peaked in 1578, 1586, 1587, and between 1597 and 1599, but continued well after 1600" (Varlik 9). The surge in plague deaths engendered a sense of urgency within the Ottoman administration for immediate implementation of regulations and strategic measures. As medical science in the sixteenth century was still in its age of infancy, public health measures were seemingly the most daunting task for the Ottoman Empire. A dearth in the medical knowledge coupled with lack of awareness, and beliefs in superstitions worsened the situation of plague during that period. Historians divide the plague of the sixteenth century into three phases: 1453-1517 (first phase), 1517-1570 (second phase), 1570-1600 (third phase). As commercial networks of the Ottoman Empire expanded with European countries, the plague in the first phase is discerned as being exported from the port cities of Europe. In the first phase, the plague did not disseminate towards the inward regions of the Ottoman Empire. However, in the coming years as mobility and transportability advanced, the range of the plague escalated rapidly in the second phase. The third phase is considered to be the most monstrous of all. Varlik writes, "It was in this phase that Istanbul fully emerged as the intersection between these multiple channels of communication, facilitating and perhaps even accelerating the exchange of infection among the remotest corners of a centralized colossal empire" (Varlik n.p.). A study of the plague unfolds myriad aspects of health, sanitation, medical thought, self-isolation stratagem, etc. undertaken by the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century. While keeping Elif

Shafak's *The Architect's Apprentice* (2013) in the backdrop, this paper shall address the issue of plague and the havoc that it wreaked in the sixteenth century Ottoman Empire. Set in the sixteenth century, Shafak's novel resurfaces several issues of the Ottoman Empire, and plague serves as a crucial standpoint in the novel as many major characters succumb to this harrowing disease. While dealing with the discourse of the plague, the paper shall look into what measures the Ottoman Empire undertook to combat the plague, how public health policies shaped the future state, how awareness campaigns were promoted, and what measures were adopted by the general public to control the further spread of the disease. The question that stands imperative is whether the catastrophic plague, which killed million during the sixteenth century, was taken on a war footing by the Ottoman Empire. It shall also comment upon how social and administrative responses, along with the medicinal theoretical practices used for their rationalization, paved way for more fervent governing policies in order to shape a modern state.

### **“Kala Azar”: The Representation of Black Fever in Assamese Literature**

Mukuta Borah (Sharda University, India)

The world is desperate to return to being ‘Normal’ again. The ‘positive cases’ of Corona Virus pandemic has claimed more than half a million lives. During every Pandemic in history, we saw a phase where the reality is so grim - we count the number of dead bodies, socio-economic falls, depression and hopelessness about work and lives. The literature that grows out of all these mental, emotional, physical losses can be included in the genre of ‘pandemic’ literature. History explores the ancestries of Pandemic literature some 200 years or so, both Indian and foreign writers site references of epidemics and Pandemic in their works. In India references of epidemics and pandemic can be found in works of Rabindranath Tagore, Premchand, Suryakant Tripathi Nirala, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Rajinder Singh Bedi and many others. The paper intends to showcase the impact of diseases by offering a glimpse into the lives of common people – the emotional, social, cultural impacts on their lives – through an analysis of the representations of Pandemic in Dhrubajyoti Bora's novel *Azaar* and Arupa Patangia Kalita's short story “Uttaradhikar.” Written originally in Assamese, these texts have attempted fictional documentation of the impact of kala-azar (black fever), the epidemic that raged the northeast region of India in the 19th century, on Assamese social and domestic spheres. This paper would attempt to explore the ways the texts have located the dreaded disease and the impact it had on the socio-cultural flow of nineteenth century Assamese society.

### **‘I have never lived so merrily as I have done this plague time’: Food and Drink as Forms of Escapism during the Great Plague of London in Samuel Pepys's *Diary***

Pawel Kaptur (Jan Kochanowski University, Poland)

*The Diary* of Samuel Pepys offers not only a first-hand account on the political and social life in the 17th century England, but also an insight into the culinary habits of the diarist and his contemporaries. The presentation attempts to scrutinize Pepys's outlook on life focusing on eating and drinking as main sources of his “joys of existence” and an idea which helps to overcome the hardships of life. That concept is best visible during the Great Plague of London which decimated the population of the city in 1665 and 1666 and which Pepys himself survived. Reading his *Diary*, it seems that not only did he try to live according to his regularly scheduled working hours, but also managed to maintain good spirits and an exceptional level of merriness. Pepys chose to accept the deadly menace raging around London and learn to live alongside with it. He developed a strategy of conjuring the reality and escaping from its dangers by surrounding himself with life pleasures. One of the major sources of those pleasures is apparently eating and drinking in a company of friends, which the diarist treats as a form of escapism purposefully exploited to obliterate and postpone the inevitable end of life.

## DAY 2

### Session 2E: Daniel Defoe and Pandemic Fiction

Chair: Zsolt Czigányik (ELTE University, Hungary)

#### Defoe's *A Journal the Plague Year*: Fact or Fiction?

Gönül Bakay (Bahçeşehir University, Turkey)

A Dreadful plague in London was  
In the year sixty – five.  
Which swept an Hundred Thousand souls  
Away: yet I live.

Written in 1722, Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* reflects the famous writer's thoughts and first-hand experiences regarding a devastating pandemic. It is quite doubtful that Defoe could really have his own authentic views about the first plague of 1665 since he was only five at the time. Yet it is more probable that he had personal experiences to relate in the case of the second plague. Although nearly 300 years have passed since the second plague that Defoe wrote about, many of the issues raised by the writer in his *Journal* are still very relevant today. For instance, during the plague, Defoe was deeply worried about the sufficiency of prevention methods employed in England. He was also horrified by the increasing number of deaths and infections. Moreover, he was constantly wondering whether a vaccine could be found to halt the spread of the disease. He particularly stressed the point that people should find methods to protect themselves and also closely observe others so that they wouldn't spread the disease. Defoe was profoundly interested in the plague as far back as 1709, when he published articles in various periodicals about the threat of the plague. After the quarantine act of 1721, he published "Due Preparations for the Plague". As Wayne Wild remarks: "Defoe was acutely sensitive to changes in medical theory and rhetoric over the intervening fifty years" between the great plague of 1665 and 1720. Defoe created a character called HF who is present at the sights to bear witness to what is going on – very much like Joseph Conrad's Marlowe. HF survives the plague and lives long enough to relate his observations afterwards. According Benjamin Moore, HF is more than an observer, he is "rather a compiler of and commentator on plague discourses, and in his capacity holds a dominant perspective on the information constituting the narrative." One could argue that Defoe's primary aim in writing this journal is to make England a stronger country vis-a-vis both internal and external threats. Defoe's account bears considerable interest as well as urgency at a time when the whole world is in the throes of another deadly pandemic - COVID- 19 - which continues to devastate populations on a planet-wide scale and which seems to threaten socio-economic structures in our globalised world. Drawing on the theories of Stephen Greenblatt, this paper offers a new historicist reading of *A Journal of the Plague Year* by examining how this literary work offers us important insights into the cultural history of the era in which it was produced.

#### A Virtuous Pandemic? (Im)Moral Responses to Black Death in Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*

Seda Arıkan (Fırat University, Turkey)

Throughout the history, humanity has suffered many pandemics to which people have responded in various ways, struggled to cope with, and ultimately survived them. As the history has made humanity witness, there is not a single one pandemic until now which humanity has not come through. However, to survive a pandemic requires multiple capabilities, not only physical, social, and financial, but most importantly a moral capability. In this sense, the narratives of pandemic are stimulating to discern how moral and immoral attitudes are adopted while going through hard times. In the light of it, Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*

published in 1722 sheds light on the Great Plague of London in 1665 by using a rationalist point of view which makes the novel being included in a realist historical narrative. However, Defoe's documentation of the 1665 plague is also a narrative of morality that depicts and gives insight into how people behave in the times of a pandemic and respond them morally or immorally. Considering Defoe's range of people—the wealthiest people running away from the city at once, the governors who quarantine houses leaving people to death, the ignorant infectious people spreading the plague, the fraud ecclesiastics, physicians, and magicians who exploit people, or the ones who prefer to survive by taking care of each other – *A Journal* signs how the people who are suffering and the others who take advantage of their suffering give moral or immoral responses to a fatal pandemic. To provide an insight into the current (im)moral responses to today's Covid-19 pandemic, this study is an effort to make the place of morality visible through the narrative of Defoe which could be accepted as a call from over the centuries.

### **Reading Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* as an Adaptation of the "Great" Plague of 1665**

Gökben Güçlü (Istanbul Atlas University, Turkey)

Although human history has witnessed a wide variety of fatal diseases, humanity has always been weak and unprepared in the face of pandemics. Once more, as humankind has been struggling in the sometimes-life-threatening atmosphere caused by Covid-19, it is perfectly natural to seek solace in literary narratives. Written four centuries ago, Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) still stands not only as a vivid portrayal of the "Great" Plague of 1665, but also as an important text that reflects how fear and anxiety can become more prevalent than the pandemic itself. Triggered by the Marseilles plague of 1720, Defoe's attempt to go back in time was an indication that even in the absence of plague, it was still present in his mind as a source of unease. Incorporating this feeling in narrative form, he creates an imaginary reality where a narrator, H.F. wanders around the infected streets of London. Benefitting from the works of physicians (Nathaniel Hodge & Richard Mead), anecdotes of his uncle, Henry Foe, and the weekly Bills of Mortality, Defoe (re-) interpreted and (re-) created (Hutcheon 2006) the plague which took place fifty-seven years before. Through H.F., he also repaints the picture of death and nightmare caused by the pandemic. This paper aims to read Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* from the perspective of Linda Hutcheon's approach to adaptation. As a product of personal interest and anxiety, Defoe's historical account of a natural disaster involves interpreting the "Great" Plague of 1665 and creating an entirely new docufiction, which is defined as "appropriation/salvaging" by Linda Hutcheon. Thus, the story of the plague evolves through Defoe's idiosyncratic adaptation and resonates through the final sentences: "A dreadful Plague in London was, / In the Year Sixty Five, / Which swept an Hundred Thousand Souls / Away; yet I alive!"

## DAY 2

### Session 2F: Body Politics During End Times

Chair: Simon Spiegel (University of Zurich, Switzerland)

#### **Making Sense of Post-Pandemic Body: Howard Phillips Lovecraft's "Herbert West – Reanimator"**

Onur Karaköse (Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University)

Howard Phillips Lovecraft's "Herbert West- Reanimator" (1922) is reflective of the corporeal fragmentation of the modern subject stemming not only from the horror of the Great War of 1914-1918 but also of the 1918 Spanish Flu which represented the invisible enemy and uncanny threat lurking in the air, infiltrating the bodies and leaving more than fifty million dead in the world. Lovecraft's portrayal of a mad doctor who serves both in the frontline of the war and the fight against the 1918 flu pandemic only to obtain body parts to perform an accurate reanimation is embedded in his xenophobic and often racist evaluation of the post-pandemic body. The Frankensteinian push for crossing the boundaries of the forbidden knowledge of reanimation, the uncanny encounter with the horrific Real in Lacanian terms, culminates towards a dichotomy in Lovecraft's story: even though the unholy creation of the "African monster" from the body parts of a black boxer, juxtaposed against the blonde and blue-eyed scientist Herbert West, is deemed as the abject, the black body also serves as an object of envy. This paper will explore the tie between Herbert West's ubiquitous obsession with patching-up of the already fragmented post-pandemic body imagery in the culmination of the zombie figure and the repressed yearning in the modernist era for the material return of bodies that were lost to the two catastrophic incidents. Looking at how the image of the healthcare martyr is overshadowed by Lovecraft who instead transforms it to a flesh-eating monster, this paper will read the Lovecraftian treatment of the post-pandemic body through the Kristevan notion of the abject, which helps identify the cultural fear of the outsider infiltrating and invading the bodies in post-pandemic United States towards the mid-20th century.

#### **Plague and Biopolitics in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man***

Demet Karabulut Dede (University of Exeter, UK)

Set in a futuristic Britain between 2070 and 2100, Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826) details the story of Lionel Verney who is the sole survivor of the global Plague. Through personal experiences of Verney, the novel traces several political moments such as the dissolution of the British monarchy, the rise of a republic, the suspension of the republic during the Plague, and the creation of various survivalist collectives. This annihilation caused by the Plague enacts the new process of the biopoliticization which transforms the human mind as well and shrinks the individual's thoughts just to "well-being" of their physical body, leaving them only as "bare life." Reading the novel as a critical understanding of the function of the individual for the state, this paper, first, reveals the growing mechanisms of biopolitics which find vent through the Plague and are expressed through the narrative of Lionel Verney composed in absolute solitude. Second, it suggests that the Plague reorganises the individual's position in relation to modernity and the state. In this part, the paper refers to Giorgio Agamben's theory of biopolitics and specifically to the concept of "bare life". Experiencing the recent Covid-19 pandemic ourselves, a novel interpretation of the book will be achieved in this way.

#### **Ectogenesis as a Biopolitical Tool in 21st Century Literature**

Anna Campbell (University of St Andrews, UK)

This paper seeks to analyse how contemporary authors envision ectogenesis functions as a biopolitical tool in late capitalist dystopian fiction through the examination of three texts: *The*

*Growing Season* by Helen Sedgwick (2017), *Baby X* by Rebecca Ann Smith (2016), and *The Birth of Love* by Joanna Kavenna (2010). In examining the history of ectogenesis in literature, there are distinct changes in how it is treated with regards to class politics throughout time. In the early twentieth century, ectogenesis was perceived as a means to control population, a tool of the eugenics movement and, by a small number of progressive thinkers, a path to sexual freedom. Authors that invoked the idea of ectogenesis in this period, such as Aldous Huxley, J.B.S Haldane and Charlotte Haldane viewed it as an authoritarian instrument for improving society through the eradication of poverty and crime under the mistaken belief that these traits were genetic and could be eliminated if the control afforded by ectogenesis was available. By contrast the late twentieth century was concerned with the personal freedoms afforded by ectogenesis, as seen in the literature by Marge Piercy, Shulamith Firestone and Robin Cook. In the twenty-first century, attitudes towards how ectogenesis might function in imaginary worlds has changed yet again. While developments in assisted reproductive technologies have been crucial to the emancipation of middle-class white women from being confined entirely within the domestic sphere, this has not been the case for people of other oppressed categories in terms of reproductive freedom. As such, the most recent contemporary literature concerned with ectogenesis is less hopeful than its predecessors in the power of the technology to produce radical positive change. Using three contemporary texts, I will explore the impact of late capitalism on imaginings of futuristic reproductive technologies.

### **Infectious Rebellion in Dystopian Pandemics: Bina Shah's *Before She Sleeps***

Freya Lowden (University of York, UK)

Bina Shah's 2018 novel *Before She Sleeps* depicts an apocalyptic and oppressive society, elucidating persistent patriarchal inequalities in Muslim South Asia. Within Shah's Green City, intimacy is commodified, allowing women some means of revolt in a world in which women are reduced to their fertility. Building on a tradition of feminist dystopias centring on female subordination, Shah reveals Pakistani concerns over a politically and economically dystopian future. In her novel, a dystopian society emerges as a consequence of incurable illness, both in terms of an overly medicalised society and in terms of destructive and limiting societal structures. In this dystopian environment, an uncontrollable virus outbreak has resulted in a disproportionate ratio of men to women. Bina Shah explores the horrifying aftermath of pandemics, identifying opportunities for emancipation for citizens living under discriminatory political policies. In the novel, these policies render women passive as it is essential that birth rates increase for the population to survive. Human reproduction is a focal point of the novel, as the depicted society fights to recover from a cervical cancer outbreak which has killed many women. In the aftermath of this outbreak, women have become indoctrinated machines, taking on multiple husbands to bolster the Green City's human capital. As the COVID-19 pandemic causes economic and human devastation across the globe, its repercussions, aside from fatalities, are clear. Entrenched in complexities surrounding employment, political liability and healthcare systems, the pandemic has challenged society to respond adequately and ethically. Bina Shah's novel conveys the spaces for rebellion, transformative action and liberation identifiable in the aftermath of infection outbreaks.

**DAY 2**  
**Session 3A: ROUNDTABLE**  
**Whither hope? Teaching utopia(nism) through the pandemic crisis**

Siân Adiseshiah (Loughborough University, UK)

Dan Byrne-Smith (Chelsea College of Arts, University of the Arts London, UK)

Caroline Edwards (Birkbeck, University of London, UK)

Adam Stock (York St John University, UK)

Darren Webb (The University of Sheffield, UK)

As teachers in Higher Education our pedagogy is informed by radical traditions and critical approaches to academia. The literature which inspires our work foregrounds the necessity of transformative hope to education, the importance of co-creating knowledge with students that draws on their lived experiences of present social conditions, and even – to quote bell hooks’ *Teaching to Transgress* – that the seminar room is “a place where paradise can be created.”

During the present crisis, our teaching has been stretched to the limit and much of our working lives as educators has been motivated by a need simply to survive to teach another day. We have grappled with new modes of teaching online. We struggled with technical problems and the reproduction of many social inequalities in new forms (for example, via access to high-speed broadband on sufficiently powerful computers). Many of us have also had to teach in-person, navigating public transport and campuses management assure us are “COVID secure” even as outbreaks of the virus cluster around universities. We remember research as an activity from the “before times” and creating space for theorising our present pedagogy seems faintly laughable.

In keeping with the spirit of the present moment, this roundtable proposes to open up a discussion of present teaching and pedagogy in, through and of utopian/dystopian literature. Each of the panellists will offer a five-minute intervention aimed to start a wider conversation. Is critical pedagogy possible when learning takes place via Microsoft Teams? What potential does the Zoom classroom hold? What has the frightening experience of forced on campus teaching to “socially distanced” students revealed about the contemporary university that we didn’t already know before? Most importantly, what potential (if any) have we found for utopian and dystopian cultural imaginaries as a way to help students think critically about the present moment? We aim to create a session focused on common experiences of teaching and learning during the pandemic, and to consider what approaches might help us through the coming spring semester.

## DAY 2

### Session 3B: Plague & Pandemic Fiction II

Chair: Burçin Erol (Hacettepe University, Turkey)

#### **Future Vision and Present Reality of Pandemics in Rabies and Quarantine Stories**

Kalina Maleska (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, North Macedonia)

The paper explores the dystopian representations of a pandemic of rabies in the novel *Besnilo* (in English: *Rabies*) by the Serbian author and political activist Borislav Pekić, and the present representation of COVID-19 in the story collection *Карантински приказни (Quarantine Stories)* by various Macedonian authors, which also includes certain dystopian elements. *Rabies* (1983) represents a near-future vision of an outbreak of a very dangerous and virulent form of rabies that begins at the London Heathrow Airport. Set during the Cold War, the novel, although it involves horror and thriller elements, actually explores political tensions and how they affect the transformation of the visions of the future. *Quarantine Stories* (2020), on the other hand, is composed of stories written during the spring of 2020, inspired or influenced by COVID-19 and the measures undertaken to put it under control. Some of them are explicitly dystopian and present visions of the end of humanity, while most focus on the isolation and loneliness of the protagonists during the periods of curfew, and occasionally include post-apocalyptic settings. How and why are the representations of these pandemics so different in the two books in numerous aspects (focus, perspective, response to crisis)? This is one of the questions I examine in the paper. I suggest that despite the surface differences between the representation of an imaginary pandemic in the future and the representation of a real pandemic in the present, both books similarly oscillate between hope for and skepticism of the possibilities of constructing a post-pandemic world based on greater care and solidarity.

#### **Pandemic as the Tragic Mockery of Progress in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man***

Zsolt Czigányik (ELTE University, Hungary)

Mary Shelley wrote her apocalyptic *The Last Man* in 1826. Its plot takes place in the end of the fictive 21st century where England has become a republic, but social and technological progress are annulled by a global epidemic of plague that wipes out humanity. The book culminates in a tragic pilgrimage of an ever decreasing number of the remaining members of mankind through a devastated Europe. The presentation will highlight some features of the fictive pandemic that can be seen in parallel with the one we are all experiencing. Attention will be paid to the fact that in both cases the pandemic begins in Asia, in fact, in Shelley's novel it stems from Turkey. The ambivalent depiction of technological and social progress is also a significant element of the book, as any form of progress proves to be futile with the plague sweeping across the world and destroying all human life. Distress and perseverance both prove to be equally pointless, yet examples of human greatness, altruism and hope despite the hopelessness are depicted as positive examples. The book may be interpreted as an ironical reflection on Percy Shelley's conviction expressed in *Julian and Maddalo*: "it is our will / That thus enchains us to permitted ill." In Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* human will cannot resist the blind powers of nature, suffering and destruction are inevitable, yet there are significant differences between the attitudes of humans toward mankind's demise.

#### **Representation of Social Trauma and Collective Memory in Arab Fiction and Film: *Ebola 76* and *Le Sixième Jour***

Alyaa Dawood Al-Lami (Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University, Turkey)

The relationship between literary works and the pandemics emerge from the fact that literature is an expression of collective memory, trauma and hope. An example of such interaction is that

of “pandemic literature,” which provides the readers with the representations of outbreaks of many pandemics over the ages. The present paper examines two examples of the fictional representations of pandemics in the Arab world, a world stricken many times by epidemics throughout their history and is therefore left with a collective and cultural memory characterized by literature of epidemics and pandemics. The main corpus of this research is composed of two novels: *Ebola 76*, a novel by the Sudanese Emir Taj Al-Sir published in 2012 and *Le Sixième Jour* written and published in French by André Chedid, an Egyptian author in 1960. *Ebola 76* is the first novel in the Arab world to depict the Ebola virus and is a dystopian representation of the epidemic as well as a prediction of the second wave of the virus which in took place in real life in 2014. The dystopian narration reveals a traumatic social and collective memory laden with societal misery in all its forms, abject poverty, social fragility, superstitious ignorance about the science of medicine, the loss of values and decadence, and the commercial greed in the period of crisis. The novel *Le Sixième Jour*, originally written in French, was translated into English in 1962 entitled *The Sixth Day*. Its film adaptation by Arab director Youssef Chahine was released in 1986. Chedid’s depiction and representation of the Arab world and its resistance in the face of the cholera epidemic as they are empowered with love and compassion lead to a poetic-realistic narration of this collective traumatic memory. Given the depiction of love as a phenomenon that transcends everything and the tragic ending of the novel, the utopian and dystopian are intermingled throughout the text. These two examples of Arab fiction reveal how social trauma and collective memory caused by pandemics and epidemics inspired the making of pandemic literature in the Arab world. The Arab voice both in terms of the content of poverty and other culture specific elements as well as in terms of literary style consisting poetic, ironical and metaphorical language, characterize the literary aspects of these novels.

### **The Human Struggle against Diseases in Literature: Perceptions and Attitudes**

Ercan Gürova (Ankara University, Turkey)

Epidemics have been a part of world literature whether in the form of a plague or an outbreak with catastrophic consequences at personal and socio-economic levels. Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, Defoe’s *The Journal of the Plague Year* are considered some of the pioneer works which deal with epidemics. In the 19th and 20th century, widespread diseases continued to garner the attention of the authors and readers as serious illnesses ravaged human populations across the globe. This paper will investigate various human reactions in the face of death and widespread illnesses in Mary Shelley’s *The Last Man* (1826), Jack London’s *The Scarlet Plague* (1912), and Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar’s *Hakka Sığındık* (1919). As Susan Sontag studies the impact of the epidemics or serious diseases on human mind in her book titled *Illness as Metaphor* (1978), she puts forward the idea that most people are inclined to form punitive or sentimental fantasies in relation to being afflicted with a disease. Rather than investigating the physical effects of the illnesses, Sontag prefers to look into the meanings of these diseases as metaphors. The aim of this paper will be to explore the metaphoric meanings and receptions of widespread diseases and death in three different literary texts from world literature written in the 19th and 20th century. While in *The Last Man*, which deals with the demolition of the human species at the end of the twenty-first century, the plague is seen as a mysterious force of nature, in *The Scarlet Plague*, which is set in 2073, the reaction of two different generations to the uncontrollable epidemic and counter evolutionary behaviours are illustrated. When it comes to *Hakka Sığındık* by Gürpınar, which was inspired by the 1918 Spanish Influenza, people from different layers of society ranging from general public to the elites perceive the disease diversely and form an unusual bond with the epidemic.

## DAY 2

### Session 3C: Health and Viral Happenings I

Chair: Nurten Birlik (Middle East Technical University, Turkey)

#### American HIV/AIDS Theatre, Spatio-Temporalities and Utopia

Çağdaş Ö. Duman (Boğaziçi University, Turkey)

This paper examines American HIV/AIDS theatre by prioritizing the concepts of time, space, and utopia. Drawing mainly from queer approaches to time, space and utopia, it specifically focuses on Paula Vogel's *The Baltimore Waltz* (1990), Cheryl L. West's *Before It Hits Home* (1990), and Harry Kondoleon's *Zero Positive* (1989). Also catalyzed by Erving Goffman's influential study on "Stigma," and introducing the "spatio-temporal stigma," with which I refer to the systematic prolongation of normative spatio-temporalities in the control of non-normative people and the spatio-temporal others, this study shows how this normative duress exacerbates the extant stigma on queer and black PLHIV (People Living with HIV/AIDS). This paper also resolutely concentrates on the utopian possibilities of theatrical interventions. That is, these playwrights' theatrical interventions free queer and minoritarian PLHIV from their spatio-temporal duress. In their unique dramatic ways, they criticize and problematize the medical control and decadent reality of the family and home. Spatio-temporal stigmas, I would argue, are irreducibly predominant in all three plays. However, these stigmas are redressed by way of Vogel, West, and Kondoleon's theatrical insurgencies, strategies with which they resist majoritarian oppressions and dominant ideologies by perpetually queering them. They provide a liberating alternative spatio-temporality, and thus, heralding a resistant transformation. For Jose Esteban Muñoz, as he suggests in *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, utopian theatre repudiates the prison-like "here and now," and gestures towards "then and there" instead (Muñoz, 2009, p. 1). Utopia for Muñoz is "a horizon of possibility," it is "a temporal disorganization, as a moment when the here and the now is transcended by a then and a there" (Muñoz, 2009, p. 97). In that sense, Vogel, West, and Kondoleon, are all harbingers of a "hope for our collective future," a future without spatio-temporal stigmas by way of theatre (Dolan, 2005, p. 4).

#### Unpacking *ReGenesis* from a Pandemic Perspective: Horizons of Transnational Cooperation and Human Connection

Heather McKnight (University of Sussex, UK)

"We cannot stress enough the importance of thoroughly washing your hands" - Public Health Official, S1: E2 (2004)

"Let's hold all public remarks until we have determined the potential economic damage to the industry" - Congressperson Representative, S1: E5 (2004)

*ReGenesis* (2004 – 2008) is a Canadian TV sci-fi show focusing on the containment of viruses by a fictional organisation NorBAC (North American Biotechnology Advisory Commission). From its introductory sequence, it resonates with the anxiety of the pandemic; a man travels to work on the underground, coughs, touches rails, buys a newspaper; the show premises itself on the communicability and danger of viruses.

The NorBAC lab is jointly funded by Canada, the United States, and Mexico, investigating problems from viruses to bioterrorism, diseases to the environmental crisis. While influenced by the SARs outbreak 2002-2003, the show is thematically prescient; themes of life under constant threat, public panic, containment, contagion, human error, and international conflict and collaboration. *ReGenesis* explores scientific developments as both a blessing and a curse;

human vulnerability is as much to do with the virus, as it is making mistakes, through naivety or being motivated by hatred or finances. *ReGenesis* tackles issues of the climate crisis, AIDS epidemic, exploitative pharmaceutical companies, the impact of poverty and war on public health; centring ethics in the drama. The utopian vision for this show includes cross-border working and information sharing. It reflects the real-life ambitions of the show's scientific consultant, who is at present working towards an open-source scientific horizon. Speaking about the pandemic this year Aled Edwards stated: "Scientists, particularly at universities, do not know any national borders." Hope plays a vital role in the programme. Through resolving the manifest problems of viruses characters in *ReGenesis* also overcome their prejudices and trials; we can read in these reflections that humanity has much to learn about being human through how we react and how we care in a crisis.

### ***Variola Vera* - The Time for the "Better Future" to be Cancelled**

Mirna Radin-Sabadoš (University of Novi Sad, Serbia)

In March 1972 there was an outbreak of smallpox in Yugoslavia, the last one on the European soil before WHO declared the disease eradicated in 1979. Although the outbreak was eventually well contained through mass vaccination, restrictions on the information flow and somewhat sluggish response by the officials wrapped the whole event in a shroud of secrecy and mystery. When in 1982, the director Goran Marković made the film *Variola Vera*, it was announced as a horror thriller about the epidemic. However, telling its own story ten years after the event, the film shifted the focus onto the many possible (albeit some of them entirely fictional) layers of social reaction to epidemic, both collective and individual, challenging many of the ideologically fixed presuppositions about the validity of social hierarchies and the system of values of the actual decade in which the film was made. Although its story is based on the testimonials of the witnesses and survivors, the aim of the film was not to achieve documentarist accuracy, but rather to treat the epidemic as a critical event which symbolically announced the end of an era. As the director confirmed in an interview in 2012, "it was a political film foreshadowing the cataclysm that followed and the epidemic was a warning to which nobody paid attention". In a skillful development of the conflict between characters in a confinement of a quarantined hospital behind the boarded up windows, the film constructs a social miniature closing with an uneasy ending, typical of the horror genre, masterfully challenging the sense of relief by warning us that the "better future" is irrevocably cancelled.

### **Literary Translation and Multilingualism in the Making of Global Health Policies and their Pedagogical Applications: Depiction of an Inclusive Utopia in *My Hero is You***

Başak Ergil (İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University, Turkey)

The role of translation in the making, maintenance or deconstruction of global, local, institutional policies has long been discussed in the realm of Translation Studies, as well as in many interdisciplinary researches. However, the importance of translation and multilingualism in the making and acceptance of global health policies has been utterly underresearched. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about many unprecedented practices of both translation and interpreting, paving the way for scholars to focus on new and unanticipated areas of research. One of them is that of the role of literary translation and multilingualism in the making and circulation of global health policies. Unlike the previous researches that highlighted the importance of interpreting during conflicts, disasters, crises and emergencies, new research elaborating on the role of translation has now become crucial. The present paper aims at arguing that literary translation and multilingualism can be effective tools of employing and spreading global health policies and that they can be effectively used for pedagogical purposes. The case study is based on an open-access digital publication *My Hero is You*, a children's story book translated into 120 languages including minoritized ones and published online by

World Health Organization. This case study aims at revealing how crisis translation may be handled by means of literary translation and multilingualism and how it may be used for pedagogical purposes as a means of global healthcare administration in order to govern the representation of a global health crisis (Covid-19 pandemic in this very case) and its parallel reception by children around the globe. The inclusiveness of *My Hero is You* is analyzed through three aspects: (i) the inclusive theme and content through the (re-)narration and depiction of the pandemic Anthropocene, (ii) multilingualism as inclusion, (iii) humanitarian translation of global health utopia as inclusion. In terms of translation theory, on the other hand, the paper aims at both adding the notion of “translation during pandemics” -as an alternative to “interpreting during pandemics”- to the scope of “crisis translation” and calling for the recognition of “literary translation and multilingualism” within the domain of “crisis translation”, which may bring up unprecedented research questions both within the discipline of translation studies and beyond.

## DAY 2

### Session 3D: Margaret Atwood I

Chair: Jill Belli (New York City College of Technology, CUNY, USA)

#### **Viruses Respect No Boundaries: Viral Imagery in *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood** Kristín María Kristinsdóttir (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain)

In this presentation I will discuss the imagery of the virus in *Oryx and Crake* (2003) by Margaret Atwood in relation to Susan Sontag's theory on illness as a metaphor. In *Illness as Metaphor* (1978) Susan Sontag traces the development of illness related metaphors. According to Sontag, one of the most influential and persistent metaphors in medicine is the military metaphor, where the body is seen as a fortress that constantly needs to be protected from an enemy. The usage of language of warfare only grew once the existence of bacteria and viruses was discovered. The enemy was no longer the disease itself but the minuscule viruses and bacteria that were invisible to the naked eye but could be seen under an electron microscope. The invisible nature of this new enemy encouraged usage of inventive language to describe the characteristics of the infectious agents. In the future-world of *Oryx and Crake* viruses are the biggest threat to the capitalistic science-compounds that the protagonist grows up in. Viruses are said to come from outside the compounds but as the story progresses the protagonist learns that most of the viruses are actually produced inside the compounds and distributed to the masses in order to create demand for the bio-engineered products the compounds produce. I argue that a virus created in a laboratory is not a product of nature and thus can't be dismissed as 'the Other' because it's the offspring of scientific hegemony. Even though these man-made viruses are created to infect other communities they often mutate and become a threat to the community that created them, highlighting the fact that an infectious disease doesn't respect borders, nationality or political affiliations.

#### **Ecology, Myth and Pandemics in Contemporary Canadian Women's Fiction**

Valentina Adami (University of Verona, Italy)

The theme of pandemics seems to be strikingly prevalent in contemporary Canadian women's fiction. Authors such as Margaret Atwood, Larissa Lai and Emily St. John Mandel have anticipated many aspects of the current Covid-19 pandemic. All these writers set their cautionary tales in eerie apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic worlds, interweaving themes such as climate change, trauma, and women's rights within a mythological framework to speculate on the effects of social, economic and ecological collapse. In Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy (2003-2013), a mad scientist releases a virus that wipes out most of humanity in the attempt to repopulate the Earth with more environmental-friendly post-human beings; Larissa Lai deals with pandemics both in *Salt Fish Girl* (2002), where a mysterious dreaming disease "makes the past leak into the present," condemning the victims to continuously re-experience the most horrible traumatic events of human history, and in *The Tiger Flu* (2018), where a deadly flu is brought to Grist Village, a commune of female clones, by a woman from Saltwater City/Vancouver; finally, *Station Eleven* (2014) by Emily St. John Mandel describes the outbreak of a swine flu pandemic (named the "Georgia flu") in what will then get to be known as Year Zero, and shows us its consequences twenty years later, in a narrative full of flashbacks, flashforwards and intertextual references. Focusing on these novels' common concern with pandemics and other related issues such as ecology, myth and trauma, this paper aims to explore how the intertwining of such issues may provide new insights into the past, present and future of humanity.

## **Eco-Resilience and Pandemics and in Contemporary Canadian Apocalyptic Fiction: *The Tiger Flu* and the *MaddAddam* Trilogy as a Case Study**

Lidia María Cuadrado Payeras (University of Salamanca, Spain)

This paper examines the pandemic fictions of Larissa Lai (*The Tiger Flu*, 2018) and Margaret Atwood (The *MaddAddam* trilogy; 2003, 2009, 2013) from the lens of ecocritical and resilience/vulnerability studies to assess some ways in which literature of pandemics has reimagined the apocalypse as a moment of revelation and renewal, as in the case of the paradigmatic Biblical Apocalypse, but more so than for humankind for another type of posthuman agent—the ecological one. In Lai and Atwood’s fictions, man-made pathogens bring forth some sort of “eco-resilience” that stands out as a counter to the environmental destruction that follows a neoliberal capitalist organization and exploitation of resources, and which comes at the expense of human populations. Drawing on Braidotti and Bignall’s notion of “posthuman ecologies” (2019) as well as on a New Materialist understanding of matter and the environment (Alaimo, 2010; Bennett, 2010; Iovino and Oppermann, eds., 2014; among others), this contribution considers the ways in which pandemics in contemporary dystopian literature explore the fragile balance of vulnerability and resilience (Braidotti, 2013) in which the ecological medium stands, and analyses how this relationship mirrors that existing between the natural medium itself and its human inhabitants. It argues that the “apocalypse by pandemic” constitutes a trope which in contemporary Canadian fictions serves to make explicit the environment’s agency and subject-position, reframing the Gaia hypothesis in order to locate ecological resilience not in the compensatory humanist (Braidotti, 2013) belief in a passive Earth allowed to return to homeostasis by inaction, but in the willful act of revising and actualizing human ways of relating with the Earth to fight for ecological equilibrium in an age of affective disengagement and technocratic governance.

### **The Dystopian Representation of Pandemic in Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake***

Ikram Lecheheb (University of Jordan, Jordan) & Soumaya Bouacida (University of Skikda, Algeria)

The study aims to capture how Margaret Atwood, the visionary author, represents the human condition, in a time of worldwide pandemic, in her dystopian novel *Oryx and Crake* (2003). It also aims to show how corporate greed, the power of scientific excess, and the bad human nature lead not only to an environmental destruction but also to the humanity’s elimination. By highlighting Atwood’s protagonist’s condition, the study accentuates whether the author sketches a brave new world which may survive the pandemic or depicts a world where the humanity goes to its downfall. The study specifically focuses on the aspects of the human estrangement, dehumanization of individuals, chaos and decadence, and the fear of the annihilating forces of technology to trace Atwood’s literary dystopian depiction of the pandemic. By referring to the alien setting, the abyssal visions, the various metaphors, and the narrative discourse, the study additionally sheds light on how Atwood conveys the effects of the pandemic on the world in general and on the human existence in particular. By scrutinizing Atwood’s depiction of the pandemic in her novel, the study essentially deals with Atwood’s reactions to her own capitalist society and its own vices.

## DAY 2

### Session 3E: Adaptation to End Times

Chair: Gülşen Sayın (Doğuş University, Turkey)

#### **Adapting (to) the Plague: Palimpsestic Representations of the Pandemic**

Burcu Kayışcı Akkoyun (Boğaziçi University, Turkey)

Plagues infecting physical bodies throughout history have simultaneously haunted textual bodies starting from classical and biblical narratives. While causing the death of millions worldwide, bacterial and viral outbreaks have inevitably shaped human imagination and artistic expression. In this paper, I will examine the plague as represented in Daniel Defoe's fictional eyewitness account *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) and Mark Ravenhill's libretto of his musical play *Ten Plagues* (2011). Defoe juxtaposes poignant fictional stories about the victims and survivors with the statistical data referenced, and in some parts evaluated, by his narrator to retrospectively portray the Great Plague of London that devastated the city in 1665. *Ten Plagues* is an adaptation of *A Journal*, and Ravenhill states that he has also been inspired by Samuel Pepys's, Virginia Woolf's and Susan Sontag's writings on the ubiquity and impact of plagues and illnesses. Considering the etymology of the word "contagion," a combination of Latin con- (together with) and tangere (to touch), I argue that it is possible to approach the idea of contagion, if not the plague, not only as subject matter but also as a method or medium in these two works. Drawing upon Linda Hutcheon's formulation of adaptation as a palimpsest that both reiterates and variates the source texts, I will explore the narrative layers in which *A Journal* and *Ten Plagues* touch each other and together represent human resilience as well as human fragility and precarity under psychological and socioeconomic challenges. In the aesthetic space they (co)create, Defoe and Ravenhill attempt to demonstrate the power of art forms in responding to solitude and solidarity in difficult times, and invite their audience to think seriously about infected pasts and futures.

#### **Living through "interesting times": What Can We Learn from Two Millennia of Advice for Surviving and Thriving?**

Denise Blunn (CAPA Global Education, London Center, UK)

Early in 2020, many looked to history for insight and guidance on riding out the coronavirus pandemic: from the Black Death to the influenza episodes of the twentieth century. Then as now, during times of significant and adversity, people have looked to the greatest minds of their age for advice on preparing for what comes after 'the end' and to envisage what it might look like. In the contemporary world of work, Harvard Business School has led the way with influential thinking on preparedness and its mantra of "protect and pivot" for organizations and their leaders. Upon analysis, these appear to have marked similarities to the advice given by Lucius Seneca to his pupils over two thousand years ago, roughly précised and paraphrased as: expect little, prepare for the worst, and when it all goes horribly wrong, 'chill'. Prompted by this comparison, the paper takes a cultural journey through the two millennia in between, examining what we can learn from the important players in representations of both real and imagined worlds in times of great suffering, injustice and change. This journey will explore such worlds as Seneca's *Rome under Nero*, Christine de Pizan's *City of the Ladies*, Cao Xueqin's mansion in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, Bertolt Brecht's Thirty Years' War in *Mother Courage*, Ernest Shackleton's Antartica in *South*, A. A. Milne's *Thousand Acre Wood*, Jorge Amado's Salvador in *Captain of the Sands*, to Iain M. Bank's *Culture* civilization, and N. K. Jemisin's city of *Shadow*. The paper will explore themes and propose a 'family tree' of genres for "interesting times". This pragmatic framework will support greater understanding of the wider context of living in volatile and uncertain times, aiding the conceptualization of a healthier, more ethical and sustainable world.

## **Building to Survive the End Times: What Can We Learn from the Anti-Pandemic Architecture in Post-Apocalyptic Science Fiction**

Thomas Kelly (King's College London, UK)

Since the beginning of 2020, the spread of Covid-19 has had an unprecedented effect on the way we navigate, inhabit, and experience urban environments. This has raised a number of questions amongst architectural designers and engineers on the role buildings can play in addressing the human experience of pandemic infections. Taking an alternative approach to the current influx of quantitative social-scientific and urban planning studies on this issue, my paper aims to show how post-apocalyptic and post-disaster science fiction narratives can inform pandemic resilience strategies in contemporary architectural design and regional planning. From the luxury high rise apartment complex Fiddler's *Green in Land of the Dead* (2005), to the subterranean bunker of *12 Monkeys* (1995), and infrastructure transportation in *Train to Busan* (2016), I will contemplate how SF film acts as a conceptual space to understand the environmental, social, and behavioural effects of pandemic and quarantine geographies. One common scenario, comparable to our real-world situation, is the formation of hermetically sealed and socially stratified territories. Anti-pandemic environments are linked with the defense and preservation of the socioeconomic privileges of the global capitalist status-quo. These elite gated communities e.g. skyscrapers, bunkers, or sometimes entire cities, rely on the maintenance of a physical boundary between the inside/outside world to ensure the continued health and affluence of its inhabitants against the contagion event. Literary critics Doherty and Giodano argue pandemic SF acts as a 'thinking machine' that deliberately juxtaposes the 'factual and fictitious' to open up 'the possibility to internalize applicable moral lessons.' Building on their argument on the critical potential of post-apocalyptic SF, I will examine how the imaginary landscape and communities surviving in pandemic-proof settlements can offer not just adaptive building solutions, but as removed perspectives into inequalities and segregated modes of living released by new pandemic realities.

## **Feminine Societies in Dystopian Fiction: Empathy and Care in Post-Anthropocalypse**

Andrea Burgos Mascarell (University of Valencia, Spain)

Late 20th and 21st century dystopias with an ecological component have taught us the importance of the culture of care. The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light a clear deficiency in the care system, whereby families that relied on help of grandparents had no-one to take care of their children after schools closed, or the elderly needed support from NGOs to do the shopping because their relatives had no time to do so themselves. How is the care cultural system depicted in dystopian fiction? This presentation explores the empathy and care values described in two contemporary dystopian novels with a young protagonist where anthropocalypse (i.e., manmade apocalypse) has taken place or is imminent. The analysed novels are Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (2009) and Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993). The analysis is based on the concept of cultural "femininity versus masculinity" defined by Hofstede and the implications that these characteristics may have for the citizens with regards to their relationship patterns and behaviour. This discussion highlights the importance of cooperation in a world socially devastated by war and nuclear weapons, in the case of *The Hunger Games*, and an environmentally destroyed and inhospitable region where fires, draught and extreme poverty ensue, in the case of *The Parable of the Sower*. Both protagonists establish small reliable groups and protect people who may be perceived as weak in a savage world. Furthermore, both need to show physical or psychological traits traditionally associated with the masculine in order to ensure their group's survival.

## DAY 2

### Session 3F: Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Fiction

Chair: Özden Sözalán (İstanbul Bilgi University, Turkey)

#### “Survival is Insufficient”: Post-Apocalyptic Vision in Mandel's Pandemic Novel *Station Eleven*

Yıldray Çevik (Istanbul Arel University, Turkey)

Scholars agree that apocalypse has represented times of radical change to social and political systems as older orders are replaced by a realignment of respective norms. This paradigm is predicated upon an understanding of apocalypse that emphasizes the rebuilding of communities after catastrophe has occurred. Some literatures incorporate the “utopian messaging” deciphered within the failed promises of civilizations’ advancement and defy the conventions of dystopian fiction. As such, the pandemic novel, *Station Eleven* (2014), by Emily St. John Mandel, is a post-apocalyptic vision of the future with a peculiar “twist”. It is a narrative written from the multiple perspectives of characters who exist before and after a virulent new strain of flu ends modern civilization. Mandel does not care about the pandemic’s aftermath associated with chaos, pillaging and collapse; she displays how society might have remade itself 20 years later. The novel implies that a major collapse might cripple the world, but would not ruin it, nor the people who survive, and shows what happens to the survivors after an apocalypse, what survival means, and what such type of destruction does to humanity. Thus, this study intends to display how *Station Eleven* handles the sway from the post- apocalyptic theory as the basis, and how the novel oscillates between descriptions of the flu as it unravels when the world needs reshaping. The paper also tries to prove how post-apocalyptic theory is revisited in that Mandel, despite collapse, explores utopia and hope in times of crisis in a pandemic novel that indoctrinates the notion our world would change in the face of destruction.

#### Living in the End-Times and Terry Nation’s *Survivors*

Gözde Ersoy (Mugla Sitki Kocman University, Turkey)

Terry Nation was a Welsh novelist and screenwriter. His first novel *Survivors* (1976), post-apocalyptic back then, narrates what the world is going through right now. An influenza, originated in China, occurs and during its peak time, the majority of the world population dies. However, the novel projects to readers debris of a civilization; state of emergency declared, limited survivors, looting, armed gangs, and moreover people stripped off the function of industrial process and technology. The protagonist Abby’s husband dies during the pandemic and she recovers from the contagious disease at the beginning of the story. She dreams of an ethical world whereby people can keep living in a communal style through farming lands, therefore she realizes that people need to relearn some of the basic survival skills in the countryside. This idea is inflicted on her through Mr. Emerson, whom she met at her son’s school dormitory. Instead of shattering herself with the weight of the past, she clings on to the idea of finding her son. What comes after, following a non-familiar disaster with its various challenges, goes in the direction of the past because the random chaos the new situation creates requires everything to be reorganized. Creating a new liveable world is not easy with power relations surrounding the familiar human soul. As it is in John Wyndham’s *The Day of the Triffids*, for survivors of the flu epidemic, establishing the idea of self-reliance becomes more difficult than it sounds. Through Nation’s broad-visioned novel, this paper aims to explore the construction of living in the end-times through bearing in mind the sociological boundaries of self and other.

## **The Aesthetics of Apocalypse in Emily St. John Mandel’s *Station Eleven* and Saleema Nawaz’s *Songs for the End of the World***

Murat Kabak (Istanbul Kültür University, Turkey)

The last two centuries of the philosophy of art has been dominated by the notion of the autonomy of the work of art, or what the critic M. H. Abrams calls “art-as-such.” Written by two Canadian authors, two contemporary post-apocalyptic novels, *Station Eleven* (2014) by Emily St. John Mandel and *Songs for the End of the World* (2020) by Saleema Nawaz reject the entire modern aesthetic project that originated in the nineteenth century. Both novels revolve around a fictional pandemic affecting the world. The main aim of this paper is to analyze how the understanding and the reception of the five major arts – systematized by Hegel in *Lectures on Aesthetics*, architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry- is transformed by the pandemic in both novels. While architecture, sculpture, and painting vanish; music, and poetry from Shakespeare’s plays in *Station Eleven* to the fictional album in *Songs for the End of the World*, assume a new role in the post-apocalyptic/post-pandemic world of both novels. Mandel and Nawaz’s novels reject the understanding of individual work of art as a self-sufficient entity to be contemplated for its own sake and revert to the conception of work of art in the context of its relations to author/creator and its audience. In this paper, I argue that such an anti-aesthetic reversal serves as an intellectual and political justification for arts in general and ascribes a social function to utopian fiction in the backdrop of our current political and cultural crises.

## **Romantic Apocalypse between Hope and Humor**

William Coker (Bilkent University, Turkey)

Coming of age just after the French Revolution, many Romantic writers wrote as if they were living in the end times. In William Wordsworth’s 1805 *Prelude*, the narrator recounts a “friend’s” dream featuring a stranger who is both Don Quixote and the fictional Arab writer from whose work Cervantes pretends to have derived his novel. This stranger offers the dreamer a shell and a stone, claiming that both are “books.” Holding the shell to his ear, the narrator’s friend hears its wind-like voice foretell “Destruction to the children of the earth / By deluge now at hand.” This scene, in which everyone and everything has a double, allegorizes the power of poetic metaphor to liken unlike things, culminating in the vision of a flood that drowns all differences. The passage also evokes the prospect of universal levelling that inspired both joy and terror in Wordsworth and others as they witnessed the French Revolution. Wordsworth’s sublime vision has a humorous counterpart in August Klingemann’s satire, *Nachtwachen (Night Vigils)* (1804). One night, the narrator, a failed poet turned night-watchman, “calls out eternity instead of time,” faking the apocalypse in hopes of inspiring social upheaval. In response, the state reduces the watchman’s duty to filing cards stamped by a mechanical clock. Failing at revolution, he lives on after the apocalypse as (to use Karl Marx’s phrase) “an appendage to the machine.” Meant to unleash an emancipatory social leveling, his poetic act ushers in the standardization of labor under capitalism. Wordsworth’s and Klingemann’s apocalypses present alternative perspectives on revolution reflecting divergent genres: the verse epic of individual consciousness and the satirical novel. Each hints in its own way at the otherness of the self, which underlies both millennial hope and capitalist alienation.

## DAY 2

### Session 3G: Ethics & Politics

Chair: Anita DeMelo (University of Cape Town, South Africa)

#### **Pandemic Dramaturgy: Speculating on a Post-Pandemic Future in the Performance *DYING TOGETHER / FUTURES***

Alice Breemen (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands)

The performance series *DYING TOGETHER* by Dutch theatre collective Building Conversation researches events in which people, things, ideas and futures suddenly die at the same moment. In the last part titled *DYING TOGETHER / FUTURES*, the COVID-19 pandemic is the central theme. The performance confronts the participants with constellations of actors that are all related in a future scenario for life after the pandemic. Which future scenarios become reality, and which do we have to say goodbye to? In this paper, I investigate how the lens of theatricality can create an understanding of the pandemic dramaturgy of the Dutch performance *DYING TOGETHER / FUTURES*, and argue that this performance confronts us with a scenario for living after the COVID-19 pandemic. Two aspects of the concept of theatricality, which has a long history (Davis & Postlewait 2003), are particularly crucial in the analysis of a pandemic dramaturgy. These are theatricality as an epistemological tool (Röttger 2012, 43) and the ontology of theatricality as medium (Lavery 2020, Weber 2004). Their combination positions theatricality as both a shift in perspective that can extend to possible future scenarios and at the same time as the medium of the here-and-now, connecting live bodies with materials in theatrical space of the absolute present. As such, the dramaturgy is the embodiment of what Braidotti writes: “[i]t is important to acknowledge both the proximity and the distance that separate us, and to study attentively the materially embedded differences in location that contribute to that separation” (Braidotti 2020, 30). Analyzing how the dramaturgy of *DYING TOGETHER* does both presents an example of a future scenario that confronts participants with their own position in a constellation of human and non-human actors. As such, the paper shows that the dramaturgy assesses underlying problems and (in)equalities that were already present in the Anthropocene and have become visible more strongly in the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **The Ethical Literary Text in Times of COVID-19**

Anita DeMelo (University of Cape Town, South Africa)

Published in 2017 in Argentina, *Tender is the Flesh* is a dystopic novel set in a time where a deadly virus, transmitted to humans through animals, now threatens human life on the planet. Coincidentally, this timely fictional work was translated to English and published in the beginning of 2020, precisely at the beginning of the COVID-19 initial spreading. This coincidence between fiction and reality is not unexpected; a pandemic had been anticipated in several occasions since the beginning of the 21st century. In *Tender is the Flesh*, for humanity to survive and eliminate the new virus, it was decided that all animals must be killed. When this was accomplished society faced a quandary, which was to find a way to survive without animals, most importantly without eating meat, and without experimenting on animals. Since the dawn of COVID-19 transmissions outside Wuhan, a similar frame of reference is now circulating amongst society; therefore, many debates, some leading to impasses, have been risen questioning humanity lifestyle. In this paper, I offer a reading of *Tender is the Flesh* utilizing Martha Nussbaum’s ideas on literary imagination and the theories of literary ethicists Dorothy Hale and James Phelan for whom literary novels are worthy of ethical investigation. I argue that *Tender is the Flesh* is a socially engaged fiction that invokes the necessity for justice for nonhuman animals by directing the reader to evaluate our treatment and use of other species. By applying the effects of role reversal, this literary text becomes pivotal in raising

fundamental ethical questions, which is suitable for our current sanitary crisis, due to covid-19, and goes along with current debates.

### **Ecotopia Abroad: Apocalypse Anxieties and Sustainable Imaginaries of “Lifestyle Migrants” in Mexico**

Olea Morris (Central European University, Austria)

Mexico plays a recurring role in the US-American post-apocalyptic imaginary, featured as a safe haven or potential refuge in films and series such as “The Day After Tomorrow” or “Fear the Walking Dead.” Such narrative devices are effective within the post-apocalyptic genre because they appear to invert familiar patterns of migration and geopolitical relatedness (that is to say, Mexico is framed as a place to “escape to”, rather than “escape from”). However, such a scenario is far from science fiction, as migrants from Global North countries (“lifestyle migrants”) have increasingly sought to remake livelihoods abroad. These shifting transnational patterns have underscored deep inequalities particularly with regard to income and mobility; what is more, migrants often leverage this inequality in these world-making projects, taking advantage of lower costs of land, labor, and living compared to their home countries. This paper explores the role of socioeconomic inequality in the creation of utopian imaginaries, in particular by focusing on the emergence of “ecovillage” or sustainable intentional communities in Mexico. Drawing on existing literature on lifestyle migration and alternative community movements, I highlight the ways in which such migrants negotiate the material and social realities that make the creation of such “sustainable” communities possible. Engaging with these stories reflect the ways that such escape narratives can obscure latent sociocultural, economic, and geopolitical interconnectivities, and how these understandings are implicated in the construction of “ecotopias”.

### **Why does society mutate along with the development of epidemic? An analysis of changes in social relations, hierarchy and power in Jack London’s *The Scarlet Plague***

Katarzyna Ginszt (University of Maria Curie-Skłodowska, Poland)

The spread of the uncontrollable epidemic influences almost every aspect of human life, including the sphere of social relations. Facing death, caused by a previously unknown disease, inevitably impacts the organization of society. This issue is explicitly addressed in Jack London’s *The Scarlet Plague* whose fictional representation of the epidemic can be compared to the current Covid-19 world crisis. The analysis depicts how social relations, hierarchy and power change over three periods of the plague as represented in the dystopian novel in question. In the pre-epidemic phase, the social hierarchy provides relatively stable living conditions. The second phase, which encompasses the rapid development and spread of the disease through human-to-human transition, leads to a state of chaos and confusion within society where civilized mechanisms of social order no longer operate. The disorganization eventually causes a humanity crisis. In the post-pandemic period, power relations are redefined. The revolution in society is achieved by reversal of social dependencies and the rejection of civilization. Raising the subject of the plague, the novel exposes flaws in social organization. The epidemic outbreak highlights weak points in the structure of society which constitute one of the main causes of a civilization and humanitarian catastrophe in the subsequent phases of the plague. Therefore, the analysis identifies what mechanisms contributed to the collapse of civilized values as well as why seemingly stable society failed to endure the crisis unchanged. As Jack London’s vision from 1912 to some extent reflects the present coronavirus situation, I will juxtapose the results of the study with the challenges that contemporary society faces due to the global pandemic.

## DAY 2

### Session 4A: Climate Change & Fiction

Chair: Meliz Ergin (Koç University, Turkey)

#### **Justice in James Bradley's *Clade***

Claire Curtis (College of Charleston, USA)

Recent pandemic post-apocalyptic imaginings move quickly from the fact of pandemic disease to life after that end. In both Atwood's *MaddAddam* series and Emily St John Mandel's *Station Eleven* the pandemic itself is both highly deadly and contagious, and perhaps not really the point. Each of these novels goes back and forth between pre-pandemic and post-pandemic while not pausing in the pandemic present. Unlike pandemic focused novels, climate fiction, especially recent climate fiction, is set in that long present. This presentation focuses on James Bradley's *Clade* (2017) set in what one might call the apocalyptic pause – the long moment of realization that the conditions of living on this planet are changing and the questions of justice, of how we live amongst one another might be changing as well. *Clade* follows multiple generations of one family from the past, through the present and into a future of worsening crises. With this focus on one family, the novel focuses the eye of the reader on how we should live in a changing world. Bradley noted in an interview that he thinks climate fiction can give readers “tools with which to think about the problem” (<https://dragonfly.eco/interview-james-bradley-clade-silent-invasion/>). This presentation argues that one of those tools is a thinking of justice, specifically justice as understood as encompassing what one “can do and be” (Martha Nussbaum). The capabilities approach to justice is revealed in analysis of the characters in *Clade* as they respond to crisis. The capabilities approach, particularly its focus on the capabilities of “living with and toward one another” (affiliation) and recognizing the dignity not simply of human lives, but non-human lives as well, provides a framework for thinking about the tools for both thinking about the problem of future living and perhaps potential solutions.

#### **Fantasy for the Anthropocene: On the Ecocidal Unconscious, Planetarianism, and Imagination of Biocentric Futures**

Marek Oziewicz (University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, USA)

This presentation argues that the realities of a climate change world present a challenge to fantasy literature to rediscover its hope-oriented potential and apply anticipatory imagination to visions of sustainable futures. The opening premise is that Western fantasy conventions have been shaped by ecocidal literary epistemologies: epistemologies that overlook structural foundations of the ongoing ecocide and project solutions that are thinly disguised variations of the deeper structural model of human conflict with nature. This ecocidal unconscious of fantasy is examined through a reading of Marvel Comics series *Captain Planet and the Planeteers* (1991-92) and China Miéville's cli-fi *Un Lun Dun* (2007). The argument then shifts to consider how fantasy can help us imagine a way forward, past the ecocidal unconscious and toward a sustainable future. The concept of planetarianism is introduced as, at once, a biocentric philosophical commitment to stand up for the planet and applied hope articulated through stories. The remaining part of the presentation develops a proposal about how fantasy for the Anthropocene can disrupt the fantasy of the Anthropocene: a mistaken belief that we are masters of the planet. Jon Scieszka's *AstroNuts* (2019), Oliver Jeffers' *The Fate of Fausto* (2019), and Barbara Henderson's *Wilderness Wars* (2018) are examined as examples of planetarianist moves gaining traction in recent fantasy. The suggestion is that the search for hope-oriented narratives is well under way, even as we remain uncertain about the meaning of hope as a concept relevant to facing the urgencies of anthropogenic climate change.

## **From Non-Fiction to Fiction: The Global Apocalypse of the Present**

Trevor Jackson (Modesto Junior College, USA)

This paper considers how bodies beset by catastrophe and forced into migration are represented in three generically different texts set in three different zones of time-space: the fictional future post-apocalypse; based-on a true story adolescent fiction from the “third-world;” and direct non-fiction anthropology along the US-Mexico border. I will discuss representations of the body in migration in three examples: in Jason De León’s *The Land of Open Graves* along the U.S.-Mexico border, Linda Sue Park’s *A Long Walk to Water in Southern Sudan*, and Cormac McCarthy’s postapocalyptic novel *The Road*. I am interested in considering the representations of bodies in both fiction and non-fiction works. I juxtapose the representations and reception of human homelessness and migration and consider the extent to which these different zones of reading—fiction and non-fiction—work in synergetic fashion to illustrate the suffering and urgency in which so many human beings find themselves today. I consider these texts to concentrate on we might term “fallout spaces,” or “permission spaces,” “spaces of exception” in “states of exception”—spaces in which there have emerged authority gaps in what we publicly understand to be reigning ethical forms of social conduct. For instance: American slavery and the concentration camps, but also spaces in powerful institutions (Catholic church, military, corporation), places such as migrant detention centers or anywhere children are left alone, places females are smuggled or extorted and molested: all of these zones ripe for horror when authority gaps are found. These are within our very local, social reality.

## **From Biodystopia to Cli-fi: World Reduction and the Fetishization of Catastrophe**

Sotirios Triantafyllos (Independent Scholar, Greece)

Traditionally one of the basic expectations of dystopia is to be a jeremiad, namely to act as a warning against what its creator perceives as an approaching disaster. Based on dystopia’s association with this call to change ways in order to avert a catastrophe scholars of utopianism have underlined dystopia’s tendency to enclose in its narrative the conditions that could lead to the abolition of its nightmarish world and the creation of a better one coining the term critical dystopia to emphasize this hidden utopian hope inside it (Lyman Tower Sargent, 1994 and Tom Moylan, 2000). However, dystopia also expresses our collective social and political fears and its latest incarnations whether in the form of biodystopias, concerned with the outcome of the unethical uses of bio-engineering or of cli-fi, occupied with the description of climate disasters, seem to have abandoned its critical character. Instead, 21st-century dystopia seems occupied with the narration and the imagery of the coming apocalypse. Reflecting on works that combine both biodystopian and cli-fi’s themes like Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and Omar El Akkad’s *American War* (2017) this paper explores how 21st-century dystopia came to express not just the anxiety of an approaching climate crisis but a rejection of the very basic function of critical dystopia as a warning. How these narratives adopted the imagery and the language of a unique mix of popular science and pop culture disaster representations exemplified by works such as James Hansen’s *Storms of my Grandchildren* (2009) and films like Roland Emmerich’s *The Day after Tomorrow* (2004). And how by rejecting a catastrophe’s potential to create the conditions for a post-disaster utopia, the recent dystopian fiction came both to embody a narrowing of humanity’s horizon and to fetishize the very idea of world’s end.

## DAY 2

### Session 4B: The Fantastic

Chair: Peter Sands (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA)

#### **A Scourge Even Worse Than Disease: Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend* as Pandemic Political Allegory**

Tim Murphy (Oklahoma State University, USA)

Matheson's novel, which focuses on the lone human survivor of a plague that transforms both living and dead people into vampires, has remained continuously in print since 1954 and has inspired three film adaptations. Even so, readers today, constrained by the COVID-19 pandemic, may be better able to empathize with protagonist Robert Neville's physical, affective, and social isolation inside his fortified Southern California home than any previous audience. Matheson describes Neville's psychological condition in intensely claustrophobic, paranoid terms that resonate not only with the contemporary experience of self-quarantine, but also with the crude polarization of global political discourse that reached its apogee with the election of Donald Trump to the US Presidency. The novel's final scene (which no film version has staged), in which the dying Neville abruptly realizes that he is not true humankind's last martyr, but instead the first monster that will haunt the new, permanently infected posthuman species as it (re)builds civilization, allegorizes the conflict now being fought (as it has been fought at irregular intervals for centuries) over the cornerstone of representative democracy: the right of a minority to become a majority, and the struggle of the former majority to retain power as it descends into minority status. Neville's inability—or refusal—to distinguish between infected living persons and undead revenants blinds him to the emergence of the former's new social order, and his indiscriminate destruction of both types, in an increasingly vain hope of restoring the pre-pandemic order, transforms him from the valiant inspiration to scores of later cinematic zombie hunters into something more like a serial killer – an atavistic personification of barbarism in its most irrational form. Acts he presumes to be ethically good are worse than the plague's evils for the posthumans; he is not merely an obstacle to their rebuilding efforts but a merciless counterforce. The final unfolding of the plague forces Neville to recognize that he is no longer part of a majority, but rather a minority of one, and like other minorities, he clings to his inevitably waning power more furiously, violently, and blindly as it slips away.

#### **“A scene like this, whereon to close the drama”: Extinction and the Meaning of Life in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man***

Sarah Lohmann (Durham University, UK)

In Mary Shelley's post-apocalyptic pandemic novel *The Last Man*, the plague that ultimately leads to the loss of life of Earth is hard to categorise: Robert Lance Snyder suggests that there is 'no logically adequate ways of construing' it, as it is neither a naturalistic calamity as mere fictional device', nor a 'framework for melodrama with religious overtones', nor symbolic of 'barbarity, fraud, despotism, and reactionary politics'. Instead, Snyder suggests, the plague must stand as a 'grotesque enigma mocking all assumptions of order, meaning, purpose, or causality' – an 'irreducible phenomenon' at odds with rational understanding. I propose, however, that *The Last Man* should not consequently be seen to advocate a nihilistic understanding of human life and its fragile structures, as Snyder believes; instead, I will analyse it as a thoughtful investigation of how we seek meaning in tension with hegemonic ideals of the self, especially in interaction with others. In particular, I will contrast the novel's portrayals of Raymond and Perdita, pursuing flights of Romantic self-destruction, with that of Adrian, whose diametrically opposed self-image and relation to others leads his storyline in unexpected directions. Engaging also with writings by Rebecca Solnit and Darko Suvin on the current

pandemic, I will suggest that this early disaster narrative therefore presents a symbolic struggle, in the face of calamity, between self-centred, rigidly linear conceptions of human nature and more adaptive, collectively constructed values – a tension likewise evident in the self-organisation attempts of the last remaining communities described. As such, I propose that *The Last Man* can be seen as a visionary, even quasi-utopian meditation on the nature of humanity in both senses, paradoxically exploring in its elegy for humankind the clarity and forced re-invention we are currently observing in our own crisis, and thereby asking what it truly means to be human.

### **Corruption and Cleansing: Nature and Disease in Naomi Novik's *Uprooted* (2015)**

Sara González Bernárdez (University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain)

Naomi Novik's standalone novel, *Uprooted* (2015) – inspired by Slavic folklore and written in fairy-tale fashion – considers what happens in a world where nature is the root of disease. The novel's major antagonist is, in fact, a great forest known as the Wood, which is corrupted at its core. The Wood spreads its sickness through every medium available to it, so that even simple closeness becomes dangerous; the disease itself afflicts the psyche, turning its victims into mindless beings whose identity is erased – making them violent and even monstrous. Therefore, the infected become humanoids, fully other to those who remain healthy. The human response to this disease-ridden otherness is characterised by immediate, practically merciless violence: victims of the Wood are killed as soon as possible, and everything else burned to eliminate the corruption. The Wood itself is also often burned at its edges, in futile attempts to stop its advance; yet only the most powerful magic seems to be able to somewhat control its spread, as the Wood appears to take root even in earth that had been barren. This relentless corruption is the major driving force of this paper, which aims to examine how the inexorable spread of the Wood's disease, as well as the attitudes and measures taken against it, are depicted in Novik's novel; this examination is carried out in order to consider the possibilities of these depictions as social commentary on the responses produced by disease outbreaks, particularly those that cannot be fully understood or reliably controlled. Furthermore, the paper delves on the healing process which the protagonist of the novel brings about by restoring and purifying the Wood, as this development leads to a sort of eco-utopia where humans establish a symbiotic relationship with the forest, which becomes a healing force instead of a corrupting one.

## DAY 2

### Session 4C: Film & Media I

Chair: Artur Blaim (University of Gdańsk, Poland)

**Slapstick is the New Realism: Charlie Jane Anders' *Rock Manning Goes for Broke***  
Steven Shaviro (Wayne State University, USA)

The question of how to live on, after the end of the world, is also the question of how to imagine such an ending. Charlie Jane Anders' science fiction novella, *Rock Manning Goes for Broke*, extrapolates a near-future vision of America as a failed civilization. In presenting this vision, however, Anders moves from the sublime of dystopian disaster porn to the ridiculous utopia of comedic chaos, as in silent film, or the film and TV series *Jackass*. The novella, like the characters within it, deploys slapstick against social dysfunction and horror. The book's wager is that embracing disaster with mimetic overidentification may well be the best way, if not to avert catastrophe, then at least to survive by salvaging something from it.

#### Apocalyptic Messages

Annette Magid (SUNY Erie Community College, USA)

There are two perceptions of apocalypse. One is shown as cataclysm and the other as revelation:

The combination of violent hatred for the world as it is and violent desire for the world as it should be has characterized apocalyptic representations and apocalyptic social movements since their first recorded instances, the Biblical and apocryphal apocalypses. (Berger 1999: 34)

Both share a common path toward the primality and immediacy related to the unitary unmodified event and the absolute resolution. The focus for most apocalyptic writers and filmmakers seems to be an urge to reveal the ultimate apocalyptic event that will inspire the ultimate ethical and moral change needed for Mankind to move in a direction away from the abyss of total annihilation. Apocalyptic representations in film and literature seem to impose a threat of obliteration on the future of humanity as we know it; one of the common themes of post-apocalyptic fiction frequently suggests that human genius will enable Man to start anew following what seems to be a devastation of total destruction. The purpose of my paper is to examine the overt and, at times, hidden messages of impending hope in apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic film and literature. A clear example of this spark of hope is reflected in the trilogy, *The Hunger Games*, which has been made into a movie series. Collins and some science fiction writers of apocalyptic themes allude to a kind of justice and the right to free, truthful expression of thought in a functional, vital society. This pursuit of justice offers an element of hope to those who are seeking to emerge from an oppressive society.

#### The Apocalypse Mirror: The Pandemic of Matheson's *I Am Legend* as Transformative Rationality

Gregory J. McClure & Lynda Haas (University of California, Irvine, USA)

Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend* introduced art-horror vampires who exist not as dwellers of supernatural darkness, but due to the unintentional fallout of a global pandemic. Francis Lawrence's 2007 film adaptation makes the pandemic even more central to the story, making protagonist Robert Neville a virologist working on a cure. Both novel and film adaptation have been critiqued from the standpoints of biocultural analysis (Clasen), queer ethics (Khader), race (Hansen), and even Christian soteriological concerns (Ng). Quickly acknowledged by

most is the straightforward conception that Robert Neville is a kind of Grendel, though Neville's acknowledgement of his not-so-secret identity as antagonist turns up along with a metaphorically bitter and mercifully practical suicide pill that Neville swallows in order to avoid the violent wrath of his brutal captors. It's an intentionally cautionary conclusion. But the story offers us more than a sentimental warning about self-revelation. In both novel and film, Neville represents a redemptive potency in the face of insurmountable odds, and an iron-jawed—if desperate—testament to the usual class of human resilience that science fiction has become fond of celebrating. While Lawrence's Neville offers direct hope, the character Matheson renders is driven by rage, motivated by loss and a continual quest for understanding. Lawrence's Neville is endearing, even uplifting in his motivation to find a cure, while Matheson's is methodical, violent, and, at the novel's halfway mark, nearly inhuman. Where hope exists in both narratives, it lives always as a manifestation of rationality. It is to this rationality that the novel's strongest positive character—Ruth, an evolved vampire—ultimately successfully appeals. Matheson's conclusion, necessarily dark, retains a ray of possibility and a strong hope for the future; Lawrence's conclusion casts Neville as a modern-day savior. Both versions are instructive for pondering our current reaction to global pandemics and diseases, literal or figurative.

### **“... and Beyond the Infinite.”: The Eternal Trip of ANIARA**

Simon Spiegel (University of Zurich, Switzerland)

The 2018 film ANIARA (Pella Kagerman and Hugo Lilja, SE/DK 2018), an adaptation of the eponymous science fiction poem by Swedish Nobel laureate Harry Martinson, tells the story of the odyssey of spaceship Aniara. Originally set for a three-week journey from Earth, which for reasons never really explained has become uninhabitable, to Mars, a technical glitch forces the spaceship on a new course into the depths of space. What has started as a comfortable trip comparable to a luxurious modern-day ship cruise turns into an existential experience with passengers and crew slowly degenerating. The main character is a young woman responsible for running Mima, a machine which can evoke the beauty of Earth as it once was in the viewers's mind. Once the passengers of Aniara realize that their trip is not going to end soon, Mima becomes extremely popular. *Aniara* can be read as both a reminder that Earth is the only place where human beings can really live and that space is ultimately hostile to our species, as well as a study on the effects of isolation and desperation on a small population. In my paper I will focus on how the film takes up the established sf trope of the generation starship – from Robert A. Heinlein's *Universe* to Kim Stanley Robinson's *Aurora* – and how it deals with different levels of reality and simulation.

## DAY 2

### Session 4D: Margaret Atwood II

**Chair:** Thomas Horan (The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, USA)

#### **Re-evaluating Women's Bodies through the Literary Representation of a Pandemic: Sexuality and Gender in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy**

Mabiana Camargo (University of Saskatchewan, Canada)

Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy presents a feminist perspective on pandemics by exposing how issues of gender and sexuality surround and define women's bodies while criticizing capitalism as responsible for the decay of life in the planet. In the *MaddAddam* trilogy, formed by the novels *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013), the pandemic, a deadly disease spread through a sex pill, is related to scientific and technological ideals that consider the body the main 'object' to be improved and re-created—that is, oppressed. Further, Atwood's feminist pandemic literature questions the meanings of culture/bodies by presenting a stigmatised sexuality that is an effect of the binarism of sex/gender in the human body. The representation of women's bodies in Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy shows how women's oppression is related first and foremost to gender difference, which is evident in the pre-pandemic world and continues post-pandemic. The *MaddAddam* trilogy depicts Oryx in the pre-pandemic world as a woman whose life is compromised by gender and social inequality, leading her to become a vector of the pandemic. Ren and Toby also suffer gender oppression in the dystopian world of the trilogy and ironically, they survive the pandemic because of their vulnerable state before it happened, as a result of that oppression. However, they are not completely safe during the pandemic and afterwards; they still have their bodies commodified and sexualized by the male gaze and have their safety compromised by male actions even if society has collapsed. In the post-pandemic world, gender issues do not cease to exist and are evident also in the bioengineered Crakers, who recreate elements of human patriarchal structures in their social world.

#### **Trump's Gilead: Domestic and Foreign Policy in Margaret Atwood's *The Testaments***

Eduardo Marks de Marques (Federal University of Pelotas, Brazil)

Critics have agreed to locate the initial publication of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) as a response to the rise of neopentecostal televangelism and ultraconservative neoliberal politics during the Reagan era (1981-1989). The election of Donald Trump for president in 2016 has given the novel a new life – from reissues to multiple adaptations in different media such as graphic novel and TV series and the announcement, in late 2018, of the publication of a new novel set in Gilead, can be seen as another response to the rise of a new populist far-right government in the United States. This paper aims at focusing on what readers of *The Testaments* (2019) learn of the Republic of Gilead tracing parallels with U.S. domestic and foreign policy under Trump in order to see how dystopian both nations can be.

#### **Humanity Doomed to Death and Destruction by Riches in our Post-modern World**

Gillian M. E. Alban (Istanbul Kultur University, Turkey)

Margaret Atwood as literary spokesperson and activist for the plight of our doomed planet has narrated the danger of both human self-destruction and irreparable planetary destruction in her writings, from her early ecological *Surfacing* (1972), to her shattering trilogy, *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAdam* (2013), demonstrating how we are approaching apocalypse through ecological devastation, fueled by endless greed, alongside dubious advances in medical sciences, as power is narrowly focused in limited hands, enabled by extreme hubris and greed for power. In *The Heart Goes Last* (2015) she takes a fresh

perspective on humans herded into extreme choices through loss of employment and homes, enforcing enslaved lifestyles. Atwood outlines our perilous descent into self-destruction in “Time capsule found on the dead planet” (2009), starting with the creation of gods, followed by the creation of money, as money is subsequently elevated to the status of god, which leads to the creation of deserts. This brief message is left addressing whatever life form might possibly remain to read it after we have succeeded in destroying both ourselves and our planetary environment, through our own insatiable greed. This paper will trace her warnings through these accounts of the misapplication of intelligence through greed and power, illustrating her status as a significant contemporary seer, indicating that if we continue to refuse to take action, we are condemned to death through our super but limited intelligence and constructive skills, with our dubious ability to eradicate disease, in a world where mother nature is gradually overwhelmed with concrete, steel and glass constructions, leaving no place left to touch the earth or sustain any meaningful existence, as the force of Gaia is overwhelmed by human blindness and greed, ultimately rushing to the fate of our leaving this beautiful planet spinning empty in arid, barren space.

**“God created Adam and said have dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth”: The Role of Religion as a Lyotardian Grand Narrative in Margaret Atwood’s *The Year of the Flood***

Dilara Parslow (Cappadocia University, Turkey)

The outcomes of World War II, and capitalistic ideologies alienated ourselves from nature and emphasized the differences between culture/nature, human/non-human, dichotomies. As the emphasis continues to be made on the hierarchy among them, we as human beings are bound to experience much more pandemic cases, diseases, and disasters. In order to disrupt the hegemony, it is vital to challenge the validity of universal truths or in other words the validity of grand narratives. Many thinkers such as Michel Foucault, and Jean François Lyotard, claim that the grand narratives such as Science, Humanism, and Religion are ideological instruments that work as power mechanisms. When considered from an ecological side, the grand narrative of Religion can be claimed to be the catalyzer of hierarchical relationship between culture/nature and human/non-human beings. As it is clear in the King James Bible, religious narratives give authority to anthropocentric thinking by justifying the hegemonic stance of human beings among the other living things. Therefore, to balance the hierarchical relationship, contemporary writers take the religious narratives as a focal point. Margaret Atwood’s *The Year of the Flood* disturbs the idea of religion as a grand narrative through rewriting the Biblical story of Genesis. However, Atwood turns the anthropocentric and patriarchal hegemony of Christianity upside down by reflecting an environmentally religious world. Through environmental hymns given in the novel, Atwood portrays how religion can have a positive impact on ecology. As a result, the destruction of the grand narrative of religion through rewriting the Biblical story of Creation depicts that it is not religion or religious faith but the anthropocentric view that highlights the hegemonic dualisms. With the collapse of the grand narrative of Religion, Atwood celebrates the differences among race and sex and supports multiplicities without creating any boundaries.

## DAY 2

### Session 4E: Health & Viral Happenings II

Chair: Özlem Öğüt Yazıcıoğlu (Boğaziçi University, Turkey)

#### **The Rhetorical Work of Handwashing Campaigns in COVID-19**

Mono Brown (Langara College, Canada)

In 2019, I published an essay exploring the promotion of hand hygiene mainly in North American workplaces. The campaigns I examined, which proliferated in the decade ensuing the outbreak of the novel Influenza A virus, H1N1, sought to equip audiences in their respective public health jurisdictions to cope with and limit the spread of illness in public. To enforce compliance with the dictate to practice hand hygiene and other kinds of illness etiquette (for example, coughing into one's elbow in public or staying home from work or school when sick), many campaigns resorted to stigma or blame. A campaign first developed by the Florida Department of Health that went on to become the basis for several spin-off campaigns, for example, employed a fictional character, the "Fifth Guy," to bring to life the finding from an American Society for Microbiology study that four out of five people do wash their hands after using a public restroom. To encourage individuals and namely workers to practice hand hygiene specifically and illness etiquette more generally—and by extension to maintain labour productivity during influenza season—numerous campaigns portrayed non-compliance as a dangerous personal and even moral failing. Such campaigns, I argued, even when they succeeded at improving compliance with public health measures, potentially interfere with the need for coordination amid outbreak because they foster a culture of suspicion. Further, by emphasizing the value of personal responsibility via the practice of illness etiquette, many handwashing campaigns downplay the need for a context supportive of personal responsibility to ensure safety in times of crisis. My presentation uses examples drawn from COVID-19 to extend my analysis of the rhetorical work of handwashing campaigns to the current context. It also considers the centrality of stigma and blame to the "new cultural wars" surrounding public mask etiquette.

#### **The Sociological Present and Future Imaginaries: Creating a Conversation**

Patrick Mahoney (Colorado State University, USA)

This paper argues that the speculative creativity found in contemporary utopian and dystopian fiction, can best be informed by drawing from the environmental and health sub-fields in the discipline of sociology. Critical to the work of environmental sociology is documenting human-induced impacts on the environment. Whether the capitalocene and its treadmill of production, or the militarized logic of States and the treadmill of destruction, environmental sociology posits that a radical human-nature separation has left the latter prostrate to the edicts of humankind. Similarly, the sociology of health reminds us that just below the body's fleshy integument lies the social world. How we experience health and access medical technologies are socially determined. From pandemics to genetic engineering the effects of health in society are not neutral. The necro-politics of the COVID-19 have deepened pre-existing race, class, and gender inequalities, by disproportionately distributing death across marginalized communities in the Global South and North. This age-old form of exclusion, exclusion as State mandated death, synthesizes Foucault's ideas of biopower and biopolitics. Health disciplines the body and systems of oppression discipline health. While grounded in the present, both sub-fields offer a portal into the future. Fictional accounts of tomorrow are filtered through the social world of today. Dystopic representations are etched upon today's social systems of inequality, while utopic fiction offers the corruption of the present as a contrasting foil for a better tomorrow. Establishing a sociological foundation for environmentally informed speculative fiction makes the seemingly improbable appear ever more probable. In an age

where reality feels like science fiction, the combination of speculative fiction's future-oriented forewarnings and health and environmental sociology's history of the present, offers a powerful critique that urges us to action by finding new ways of living.

### **Disability in the Dystopia: Autoimmunity, Horror, and Canadian Pandemic Fiction**

Amy LeBlanc (University of Calgary, Canada)

In March 2020, I was about to begin research for my Master's thesis, a work of fiction detailing a pandemic in Canada, when COVID-19 first prompted lockdowns, mass panic, and a heightened sense of collective anxiety. As I researched and began writing in isolation throughout the summer, I discovered that disability in dystopian fiction, more specifically, pandemic fiction or 'pandemic fantasy', is either non-existent, stereotypical, uninformed, or misrepresentative and therefore, inaccurate. As an example, Emily St. John Mandel's novel *Station Eleven*, features a character who uses a wheelchair and dies by suicide to avoid burdening others with his mobility needs. More often than not, the message in pandemic fiction, whether explicit or implicit, is that there is no room for disability in the dystopia. I have a personal investment in representing disability in pandemic fiction: I have an autoimmune disease and have been prescribed anti-inflammatory medications, corticosteroids, monthly infusions of a biologic medication, and now biologics administered through self-injections. The biologics help short circuit my overactive immune system but leave me immunocompromised. My body's autoimmune response is akin to the cytokine storm that can occur with COVID-19 infection. Because of shelter-in-place regulations and isolation protocols during COVID-19, able-bodied individuals experienced something akin to the isolation that people with disabilities live with every day. This means that those with chronic illnesses and chronic conditions are better prepared in many ways to deal with the consequences of a global catastrophe like a pandemic. To this end, my paper will include an analysis of disability, or the lack thereof, in pandemic novels using my own lived experience, creative writing from my thesis, and criticism from Anne Elizabeth Moore's *Body Horror*, Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor*, and David T. Mitchell's *The Biopolitics of Disability* to show that disability is not only inevitable in the dystopia, it's necessary for survival.

### **Shadows of the Black Death: Apocalyptic Plague as Retro-theological Exegesis and Post-Apocalyptic Trope-Maker**

George Sieg (Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, USA)

While historical and literary accounts of devastating plagues appear transhistorically across cultures, the construction of the "apocalyptic pandemic" appears to originate in the West. Apocalyptic eschatology seems to ultimately result in the projection of every disaster-category into prophetic and fictional narratives, but apocalyptic plague and pandemic motifs are largely absent in non-Western apocalyptic traditions, particularly the Islamic, despite its origination in the same post-Judaean milieu as Western monotheism. Orthodox Christian apocalypticism similarly displays less emphasis on plague. This discrepancy invites further analysis. I examine selected Western texts that elaborate religious and secular trends toward crystallizing "apocalyptic pandemic" as a motif and trope independent of strictly religious or secular contexts; this development is itself a precondition for the Western formation of the novel category of post-apocalyptic pandemic. I will also address the ways in which plagues and pandemics vary from what is otherwise the standard model of disaster euphoria according to Fritz and Solnit, contrasting these realities with features of the trope that are consistent in Western fiction but not necessarily in historical accounts. I conclude by supporting the conjecture that unlike most other cases of the cultural creation of distinct literary tropes, the features and significance of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic pandemic narratives in the West are consequences not only of the interaction and transmission of motifs and ideas within the

shifting boundaries of a developing worldview, but also the consequences of cultural interpretations, receptions, and reinterpretations of a dramatically salient civilizational trauma : the Black Death. Significant exemplary sources range from *The Decameron* through *The Seventh Seal*, *The Matrix*, *Twelve Monkeys*, and *Utopia* (2020). I will also address and account for a possible counterexample to my observations: the post-Columbian pandemic/s that contributed to the downfall of the Aztec Empire. I end with reflections on the subgenre of zombie (post)-apocalyptic pandemics.

## DAY 2

### Session 4F: Gender & Sexualities I

Chair: Işıl Baş (Istanbul Kültür University, Turkey)

#### **Living Beyond the End Times: An Argument for Queer Utopianism**

Ariel Kroon (University of Alberta, Canada)

In response to the extraordinary crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, reigning Canadian Liberal party has vowed to “build back better”, a promise matched by official opposition the Canadian Conservative Party to “build back stronger”. The similarity of these two promises is striking: both future-oriented yet deeply invested in an iteration of the future as built on the past as signified by “back”. Canadians have only to parse the valences of what constitutes “better” and “stronger”, yet these pledges are fundamentally the same in resting on an affective promise that is cruelly optimistic. Lauren Berlant succinctly defines the desire for the “good life” despite the fact that the world as we know it is actively falling apart as cruel optimism: “the condition of maintaining an attachment to a significantly problematic object” (24). In promising a return to “normal”, politicians tacitly endorse a status quo that is colonialist, white supremacist, structurally racist, misogynist, heteronormative, and not at all bothered about the climate crisis. Utopia is often figured as a vision of the future based in ideals of the conservative past: a prescriptive, unchanging society that benefits those in power. The Utopian state is not actually future-oriented but instead looks backwards in time and, I argue, any politics seeking to move towards utopia are likely to be actively regressive in realizing utopic desire. In this short paper, I will argue that José Esteban Muñoz’s theorization of queer utopia, an open-ended and never-finished process of becoming, is a crucial intervention necessary to challenge fascist, past-glorifying political formations that seek a static status quo. Instead, a queer utopia is a much more useful critical tool to use in order to meaningfully create a future beyond the impasse of the climate and COVID-19 crises.

#### **Knowledge and Experience in the Dystopian Film *The Book of Eli***

Greg Campbell (University of Waterloo, Canada)

In terms of impact upon hope and dystopian imaginaries, an onto-epistemology lens illuminates *The Book of Eli* as a film situating heteronormative learning, knowledge, and communication as the ideal. Directed by Albert Hughes and Allen Hughes, it is a post-apocalyptic representation of living a few decades after a nuclear bomb hits the United States. The dystopian visuals of this movie tell a story of living in the end times through the experience of a lone man travelling Westward to deliver a King James version of the Bible. Explicitly visualizing the deterioration of the social and physical environments of the United States, the film projects a nightmarish future. At a denotative level, *The Book of Eli* responds to the question of “what comes after?” signaling the importance and power in public communication and how language mediates one’s experience within dystopian socioeconomical and socioecological environments. On a connotative level, the film represents a dialectical signification of the inseparability between ontology, epistemology, and how we learn. Except for the motif of survival, each interaction that the main character has with others signify a lack of shared beliefs and values among the characters; ultimately signifying a reorganization of social norms and how knowledge is accumulated through experience. Much of the behavioural differences and disagreements inform the ubiquity of binaries like good/bad, male/female, and heaven/hell while the main characters of the film illuminates tensions communicated by current ethico-onto-epistemologies. This paper presentation explores the film’s signifiers of heteronormative learning, knowledge, and communication through ethico-onto-epistemologies. The paper will also explore the heteronormative hope that exists through the film’s monotheistic tropes in the context of dystopian imaginaries. Using rhetorical, semiotic,

and design theories, to reveal the ubiquitous heteronormative signifiers in the film, this paper will unpack and queer those heteronormative signifiers using positivist, post-structuralist, and new materialist ontologies.

### **The Big Queer Apocalypse in Animation**

Steven Holmes (University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, USA)

Katie Hogan argues that deep diving into the interconnections between various systems of oppression reveals that the ways in which contradictory ideas about “women, people of color, nature, and LGBTs as ‘against nature’... and the earth as worthless” (235) encourages ecocritics from all disciplines to revisit ecofeminist and eco-queer insights. Meanwhile, Natalie Kouri-Towe observed in 2013 that “mainstream depictions of postapocalyptic survival largely centre on the archetypal figure of the male saviour or hero, and advance a familiar patriarchal instrumentalization of women’s bodies as vessels for the survival of the human species” (“Queer Apocalypse”). While that was still largely true in 2013, although there had been some strides made in the preceding decades, there has been an explosion of queer representation in certain media forms and genres. In particular, Western young adult and adult animation has seen a dramatic rise in both the frequency of queer relationships as well as noticeable qualitative changes in the style of queer relationships. Noticeably, many of these changes coincide with an increased frequency on apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic representations. This paper asks: why has the explosion in queer representation in young adult animation coincided with post-apocalyptic narrative frameworks? In answering this question, this paper will touch on animated series from the 2010s and 2020 including: *Adventure Time* (2010-2018), *RWBY* (2013-), *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power* (2018-2020), *Kipo and the Age of Wonderbeasts* (2020), with particular emphasis being paid to the adult animation program *Harley Quinn* (2019-). In discussing these shows and their themes, this paper argues that the prevalence of queer representation in apocalyptic animation coincides with emphasis on rejecting commonplace assumptions about human nature, re-evaluating the relationship of humankind to natural environments, as well as the changing relationship of audiences to the media they consume.

### **The Alarming Parallels Between Women of Gilead and Women of Post-Pandemic World**

Muzaffer Derya Nazlıpınar Subaşı (Kütahya Dumlupınar University, Turkey)

Dystopian fiction portraying societies in catastrophic fall with characters trying to cope with the bad consequences of environmental degradation, machine domination and government oppression has increased its popularity during the coronavirus pandemic. Like the dystopian characters, people all around the world are stuck in a situation beyond their control and they have started to question whether they live in a dystopia now. For Margaret Atwood, one of the prominent figures of dystopian fiction, dystopian worlds present a real-world correlate and warn people about the perils dormant in the present. Thus, the readers of dystopian fiction are challenged to think differently about the current socio-cultural and political issues, and in some cases, they are encouraged to mobilize against possible dystopian futures. Based on those facts, this study scrutinizes on *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985), Atwood’s best-known and compelling work, and aims to prove that nothing included in the novel is far-fetched for women of post-pandemic world. Through ‘Handmaid Offred’, who is enslaved to breed children for upper-classes in Gilead, a patriarchal regime applying the totalitarian theocracy to oppress women, today’s women readers of the novel are forewarned about the risks of losing all the achievements gained by feminism, because with COVID-19, women are once again imprisoned into ‘no-choice choice’ situations. They are forced to experience a life of passivity and submissiveness due to the patriarchal norms and gender roles that stigmatize women as family-caregivers. Like women of Gilead, women of post-pandemic world are under the risk

of being subjected to violence, exploitation and abuse. In other words, the independence of women having been gained through a lot of suffering may fall victim to the pandemic. Thus, considering the sufferings of women in *The Handmaid's Tale* and basing its argument on feminist literary theories, this study presents the adverse influences of COVID-19 on women of post-pandemic world.

## DAY 3

### Session 1A: Critical Ecologies

Chair: Hülya Yağcıoğlu (Zayed University, United Arab Emirates)

#### **Venice as a Matrix of Transition: Daphne du Maurier's *Don't Look Now* from a Cultural Ecological Approach**

Berrin Demir (Kütahya Dumlupınar University, Turkey)

Dichotomy between nature and culture has appeared from the very first periods of cultural history. Literature as Cultural Ecology is a theory based on that dichotomy, aiming to reveal the defects of the dominant forces in society, to enable the marginal ones via language and to provide the integration of those opposite sides. It shows how cultural creativity sustained in literature is transformed by the reader into the reconstructive experience with the interdisciplinary perspective. The aim of this study is to analyse Venice as a transition matrix in Daphne du Maurier's *Don't Look Now* from a cultural ecological approach via Hubert Zapf's Triadic Function Model. Venice, which will be handled as the imaginative counter-discourse, has such a topography structured by tides and plagues where rationalist individuals and official discourses are dissolved thanks to its liminal and catastrophic powers. Both the theory and model will be supported by the subtexts named *The Birth of Tragedy* by Nietzsche, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* by Adorno and Horkheimer and *Rabelais and His World* by Bakhtin.

#### **The Critique of Anthropocentrism in Jeff Vandermeer's *Annihilation***

Murathan Kaya (Istanbul Kültür University, Turkey)

Literary works, ever since humans started writing them, have been anthropocentric. Artistic representations of the nonhuman have not helped in this regard, since they only provoked further ire towards beings that the eighteenth-century understanding of humanism taught to consider as less-than. This paper aims to point out how Jeff Vandermeer's most popular novel *Annihilation* (2014) strives towards giving a fittingly nonhuman voice to its alien, while carefully avoiding an anthropomorphic make up, which causes many other alien narratives to fall flat – since they only manage to replace familiar human narratives with alien subjects. Vandermeer's novel hopes to establish an empathetic response towards the horrific alien while blending in its ecocritical judgements with a post-anthropocentric philosophy. The novel argues that the alien is frightening only as long as it harms humans and only up until humanity comes to terms with its metamorphosis with it – who aspires to synthesize the seemingly polarized aspects of our world, human society and nature. Part of the narrative relies on the readers' expectation that a global event such as the discovery of alien life would inevitably result in its ultimate exploitation. However, the text depicts the governmental response to the alien's existence as a charade to mask the most essential societal problem, environmental disaster. In this paper, I argue that the massive hysteria following the recent global pandemic, mirroring Vandermeer's novel, only served to mask humanity's primary concern: climate change. There is no debating that the virus is a threat to human life, however the escalated hostility towards a singular virus that threatens human life – and more importantly the modern way of life, puts into perspective our still unchanged anthropocentrism while the entire planet is threatened by human negligence.

#### **SARS CoV11 and Other Calamities in Adam Nevill's *Lost Girl***

Kübra Baysal (Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Turkey)

Speculating about the future based on the present, climate change fiction (cli-fi) seems to have proved its unique potential to predict the environmental and social repercussions of the forced anthropogenic transformation(s) on Earth. As a cli-fi and horror novel, it is hardly a

coincidence that the British author, Adam Nevill's *Lost Girl* (2015) predicts no less with its haunting atmosphere. Envisioning a total collapse of the world through grim depictions of the nonhuman environment and restless societies, it recounts the dangerous quest of a father to find his lost daughter amidst (un)natural disasters, pandemics and chaos. In the oddly realistic world of *Lost Girl*, originating from extreme weather conditions and the loss of natural balance, new strains of deadly viruses take hold of the world. Predicting the coronavirus pandemic and other calamities that actually came out to be true five years later, in 2020; such as the destructive wildfires in Australia or the heatwaves in Europe among others, *Lost Girl* is a noteworthy cli-fi novel with its realistic touch leaving a permanent wake-up call effect on the reader to change their anthropocentric way of living through an environmentally-conscious posthuman perspective.

### **Vitality of Non-Human Entities: Plagues and Pandemics as Hyperobjects (from Defoe to Camus)**

Hülya Yağcıoğlu (Zayed University, United Arab Emirates)

The recent coronavirus outbreak has urged us to question the boundaries between the human and non-human worlds as well as the limits of human knowledge. A so-called inert substance as a “virus” has made us reconsider how we understand the entities and environments around us and to become more attuned to the vitality of the non-human world including animals, plants, microorganisms and even artefacts. In order to contextualize the recent pandemic, the paper will examine two of the most popular representations of the plague in fiction: Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) and Albert Camus's *The Plague* (1947). Plagues are caused by a form of bacteria, living single-celled organisms, as opposed to Covid-19's coronavirus, normally an inert substance that comes to life on a living host. What viruses and bacteria have in common, though, is a sort of “vital force” inherent in them: they are “actants” with some efficacy to make a difference and change the course of events. The theoretical background of the paper involves object-oriented ontology, Bruno Latour's ANT (Actor-network theory), Jane Bennett's theory of “vital materiality” and Timothy Morton's theorization of “hyperobjects”, vital non-human entities that defy representation which ultimately necessitate human beings changing the way they relate to non-human forms. All these theorists attempt to challenge our anthropocentric worldview which has regarded matter and nature as inanimate in their exploration of non-human agents as social entities with an agency of their own, which actively participate in and shape social events. As well as massive suffering they engendered, plagues in history have also given a chance to break free of the dystopic past and imagine a new order. My ultimate aim is to read pandemics or plagues in a way to demonstrate how they challenge the ontological privileging of the human to finally assert an interconnectedness and interdependence between human and non-human forms.

## DAY 3

### Session 1B: Shifting Boundaries and Borders

Chair: Andrew Milner (Monash University, Australia)

#### **Imperialism is a Plague too: Transatlantic Connections in Pandemic Representation in César Mba Abogo's "El Sueño de Dayo" (2007) and Junot Díaz's "Monstruo" (2012)**

Giulia Champion (University of Warwick, UK)

As the world is in the midst of a global health pandemic, focus on other crises that have plagued our world is both minimised and increased. The focus is minimised because COVID-19 seems to have taken centre stage in most news outlets and in much academic research and it continues to impact everyone's daily life. However, it has also increased the focus on structural and systemic inequalities, which are pandemics of sorts as well, because the very marginalised communities that are more vulnerable to COVID-19 have also continually suffered from these inequalities in the past. Our current health crisis is entangled with all these other ones, including our climate emergency, our racism pandemic and many others. This paper will engage with pre- COVID-19 pandemic imaginary in two short stories. One from Equatoguinean author César Mba Abogo entitled "El Sueño de Dayo" ("Dayo's Dream") (2007) and US-Dominican author Junot Díaz's "Monstro", published in *The New Yorker* in 2012. The transatlantic connections between these two works inscribe pandemic imaginary into the history of the Atlantic trade and colonialism, the diseases developed then, and into contemporary histories of mobility and migration, put into a halt in times of lockdown. This comparative investigation of literary works proposes to identify a continuity in different uneven developments that provided a fertile terrain to the development and the spread of (a) pandemic(s) such as the one(s) in which we are currently living.

#### **Globalgia and the loss of planetary home in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and John Lanchester's *The Wall***

David Gray (Dalarna University, Sweden)

In 2005 philosopher Glenn Albrecht coined the term "solastalgia" as a psychological response to negative and often radical environmental changes in one's home. For Albrecht, the increasing threat from "human-induced change such as war, terrorism, land clearing, climate change, mining, rapid institutional change" to our "solace" in a home milieu is an increasing cause for a sense of loss "nostalgia", which causes "anguish or pain (algia)". This presentation takes its bearings from Albrecht's concept and the transnational turn in literary studies, and thus provides a literary-critical reading of two contemporary dystopian novels, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006) and John Lanchester's *The Wall* (2019). These novels are examples of speculative fiction, in that they provide fictional, future scenarios or 'future histories', to borrow Brian Stableford's term, which include a high degree of "rational plausibility" within these "fictional constructs". Consequently, this presentation extends the psychological-ecological, and contemporary, notion of solastalgia into the dystopian genre in general and future depictions in *The Road* and *The Wall* specifically. Ultimately, through literary analysis this paper illustrates a move beyond solastalgia, where the physic territory of the home has shifted onto a global scale, as a response to massive ecological devastation and desolation that I will call 'globalgia'. In other words, the term is an attempt to theorise and categorise psychological-affective responses to fictional scenarios where the entire planetary system is recognised in the pain causing loss-of-home. I will argue that this notion informs aspects of characterisation and plot in the novels and that it can in turn offer the reader an understanding of solastalgia that is more in line with the level of 'hyperobject' proposed by Timothy Morton.

## **Mundane Pandemic and a Way Out of the Virtual Interaction Dystopia in Sarah Pinsker's *A Song For A New Day* (2019)**

Jari Käkälä (University of Helsinki, Finland)

This presentation examines the intertwined themes of mundane dystopia and hopeful grassroots activism after a pandemic in Sarah Pinsker's novel *A Song for a New Day* (2019). Published the same year that gives the name to our current real-world pandemic, Pinsker's debut novel has turned out to be unnervingly prescient. It imagines a society where social distancing has become the norm, and both work and recreational life have moved online via commercial applications. At the same time, Pinsker's novel hits closer to home than most dystopian representations as its ultimately mundane world avoids the standard Orwellian gloom. I argue that, while *A Song for a New Day* implies many societal developments and inequalities heightened by a pandemic-ridden world, it sounds a much more hopeful note. The novel becomes Pinsker's ode to local underground DIY art and music communities, and their capacity to mobilise for meaningful action. As the story focuses on the live music scene that is completely shut down by a pandemic, it also provides a way to imagine what comes afterwards. By doing so, the novel charts a way out of the logic of Spotify, Amazon and social media which turns everyone and everything into a product to be exploited by the platform economy. As I argue, while there are similarities to recent works by authors such as Kim Stanley Robinson, who imagine large scale societal change through high-level political action, Pinsker is more focused on imagining grassroots incremental change towards the better by resisting the commodification of all aspects of our lives. Examining Pinsker's work via the current trend of dystopian fiction, this presentation will study how *A Song for a New Day* imagines the beginnings of a way out of the market ideological lockdown that has existed long before the pandemic.

## DAY 3

### Session 1C: Theatre During End Times

Chair: Aslı Tekinay (Boğaziçi University, Turkey)

#### Envisioning Theatre in the Pandemic and Post-pandemic Eras

Tuğba Aygan (Ataturk University, Turkey)

The novel coronavirus COVID-19, after its emergence in China in December 2019, has turned into a global pandemic within a short period of time, infecting 25.1 million people and claiming more than 847 thousand lives across the globe until today (1 September 2020). Since the highly contagious virus spreads primarily through respiratory droplets, governments mandated lockdowns to restrict human mobility, hence, to avoid further spread. Whilst ensuing closures of public places have exacerbated downturns in social and economic life, due to gathering people together in close proximity, theatre halls have been one of those that were closed first and hit hardest by the pandemic. Under the circumstances, whereas theatre has faced an existential crisis, this six-month closure time has also witnessed new explorations and interventions by theatre-makers who struggle to ensure theatre's survival. This paper offers an overview of the course of the pandemic era for the theatre industry, as well as theatre makers' various responses to the compelling hurdles created by the virus. Reflecting on the current state, it also questions the (im)possibility of post-pandemic theatre in the near future.

#### Samuel Beckett and the Visual Expression of Pain

Amjad AlShalan (King Saud University, Saudi Arabia)

Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953) and *Endgame* (1957) are two of the most famous works by the Irish author, which seem to be echoing the agony of many individuals during this particular year that experiences a pandemic and political unrest. The pain inflicted on Beckett's characters are both ideological and physical with the presence of limping, blindness, the authority that never fulfils the promise, and the dreadful isolation caused by an apocalyptic like condition. This paper explores the imageries presented in these two works as a prediction of our present time with focus on isolation and oppression through pain. The analysis is inspired by the framework adopted by Eugenie Brinkema, in *The Forms of the Affect* (2014), who based her analysis on Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), by focusing on the vital role of imagination in creating a situation that makes it possible to endure 'torments' collectively. Such a framework is important in understanding pain as a form of disability that can be categorised as a social imposed condition. The dual nature of Beckett's characters presents a rare opportunity to study the literary imagery of pain mentally and physically simultaneously but in two different settings that match today's protests on the streets and self-quarantine at home: Clov and Hamm being isolated inside a sheltered space along with Estragon and Vladimir who chose to camp by a road in the hope of creating a change for their constant condition. Even though the journey of these characters to reach certainty poses a question on the type of experience Beckett himself experienced being part of the French Resistance during World War II and his tour in Germany during Nazi control (1936-7), the analysis aims to study the presence of pain as a modern cry that seems to never end.

#### The Politics of Climate Change in Theatre: *The Contingency Plan*, by Steve Waters

Belgin Bağlılar (Aydın Adnan Menderes University, Turkey)

All over the world, it is an indisputable fact that we feel the effects of climate change more seriously every passing year. From the twenty-first century, there has been an increase in the proliferation of contemporary plays dealing with ecological concerns in the British theatre. Many a contemporary playwright, such as Churchill, Moira Buffini, and Mike Barlett have

brought these concerns onto the stage. One prime example of this is Steve Waters's breathtaking joint production, *The Contingency Plan*, staged in Bush Theater in 2009. The play includes two interdependent plays, *On the Beach* and *Resilience*. Waters reveals many different perspectives on climate change threats. The audience is exposed to scientific results throughout the play. Waters displays the impact of climate change on social and political sphere and how it is perceived by politicians, scientists, and environmental activists. In *On the Beach* part he brings the dystopic world of scientists, who argue that it is impossible to prevent climate change, together with his audience. In his second play, *Resilience*, not only does Waters criticize how politicians use environmental concerns for their own benefit, but he also uncovers the profitless sacrifices of environmental activists. In both plays, the audience encounters both anthropocentric and dystopic worlds. On the contrary, Waters leaves the interpretation to his audience to raise their awareness. The aim of this research is to find out how Waters deals with issues related to climate change in *The Contingency Plan*. This work also highlights how Waters follows a path in raising audience awareness in the light of Timothy Morton's ecocritical theories.

## DAY 3

### Session 1D: Philosophy & Theology

Chair: Heather McKnight (University of Sussex, UK)

#### **Finding Spiritual Utopia in Dystopian Time: The End of Anthropocene and Secularism in Philosophical Posthumanism and Contemporary Fiction**

Ilaria Bianco (Independent Scholar, Italy)

The multiple crisis that Covid-19 outbreak has made evident lie at the very heart of anthropocene and have been addressed in the past decade by different kinds of critical approaches both philosophical and artistic. The aim of this paper is to highlight some aspects of these approaches with specific reference to, on the one hand, philosophical posthumanism and, on the other, the work of author Brit Marling and her frequent collaborators Zal Batmanglij and Mike Cahill. Philosophical and critical posthumanism is defined by authors such as Neil Badmington, Rosi Braidotti, Francesca Ferrando as a way of overcoming humanism, anthropocentrism, human exceptionalism and essentialism, specism and any kind of rigid dualism and questioning “what it means to be human and what the re-imagined end(s) of the human might be”. Posthumanism thus offer an understanding of the human subject as “an immanent, embodied and embedded relational entity” in constant connection with others, both human and nonhuman, organic and inorganic (Braidotti). A crucial aspect is a conception of spirituality “as the core meaning of the posthuman post-dualistic perspective” based on a «relocation of transcendence not as negation but confirmation of, beyond, and within the immanent (Ferrando; Graham). As for Marling, the show *The OA* is probably her manifesto. Aired for two seasons between 2016 and 2019 on Netflix, the series is a sci-fi exploration of near-death experiences, human connection and faith explored with scientific, philosophical, and religious tools. Brit Marling, along with Cahill and Batmanglij, has returned many times all over her career on some recurring themes such as mysticism, end of times, intersubjectivity. Movies such as *Sound of my voice* (a sort of first draft of *The OA*), *Another earth*, *I origins*, *The east* all explore the role of the human being in a changing world and the importance of relationality, building a coherent look on possible futures for humanity. The paper will propose a cross-reading of both philosophical posthumanism and Marling’s work as similar ways in different contexts of looking for a way to fight inequalities, injustice and violence in all its manifestations (physical, linguistic, symbolic, interspecies, against the earth) building new forms of intersubjectivities and connection at different levels (material, psychic, spiritual) and ultimately a new era in human and earth evolution.

#### **The Co-Creation of a Utopic Garden in Interwar England**

Alastair Lockhart (University of Cambridge, UK)

Following the end of the First World War, a small religious group was formed in Bedford in England, following the teachings of the late-18th/early-19th century prophet Joanna Southcott and a line of successor prophets. While they experienced divine messages communicated directly through their own members, they identified closely with the Church of England, which they regarded as the authentic church of Christ, but they believed the church had disguised the true message of the Second Coming to obscure the role of women in religion and the final act of a divine feminine in salvation. The group came to be known as the Panacea Society, reflecting a system of divine healing which they believed expelled disease from the body in preparation for its continued existence in the millennium following the return of divine rule to the earth. The group gradually came to own a number of houses in Bedford and, by knocking down the walls between their gardens, they created a shared open space which was used for summer parties. Over time, the group’s idea of their garden took on a special meaning; it moved from being seen as an agreeable shared social space, to a foretaste of the utopian future

expected after the return of Christ, and finally being seen as a recapitulation of the biblical Eden. This paper examines the trajectory of the formation of a theology of the garden within the Panacea Society. It examines the registers of analogy and literalism in the group's communal experience of the garden and the garden's emergence as a co-created centre-point of a disease-free millennial utopia following the completion of history.

### **An Analysis on Stephen King's *The Stand* in the Era of Covid-19**

Hope Caitlyn Roulstone (The University of Dundee, UK)

“The old woman seemed to stand for some sort of elemental force, just as the dark man did” – Stephen King, *The Stand*

After a virus known as the Superflu, or Captain Trips, wipes out two thirds of the world's population, the forces of good and evil wage war against each other across the United States in Stephen King's epic tome *The Stand*. While many of King's characters have deeply religious symbolism (particularly Mother Abigail and the dark man, Randall Flagg), there are also several characters who linger between good and evil, unable to be firmly categorised into either camp. Within this paper, I not only explore the theological implications within the novel but take a wider look at the more complex characters. With a view to better understanding the decisions that place us on the side of good or evil, I will shine a spotlight on the complexity of the human psyche in the face of disaster, and discuss what reflection this casts upon King's characters and the United States of America.

## DAY 3

### Session 1E: Posthumanism II

Chair: Cenk Tan (Pamukkale University, Turkey)

#### **Locating Posthuman Articulation in the Chthulucene of Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam Trilogy**

Shraddha A. Singh (University of Delhi, India)

Theoretical premises like post-structuralism and postmodernism dislodge the human from a position of privilege and bring to the fore the “tentacular others” of Donna Haraway, as the inhuman, the nonhuman and the posthuman. Thus, thinking about Posthumanism through Haraway requires dwelling on subjectivity and the nature of embodiment of the subject. While the Anthropocene is largely defined as the age in which human activity impacted the climate and the environment, Jason W. Moore's formulation ‘Capitalocene’ particularly focusses on aspects related to profit-driven capitalist endeavours which have inflicted ecological degradation. Although Haraway has used the terms Anthropocene and Capitalocene as references, she is critical of their application because there is a disproportionate distribution of wealth, environmental impact and depletion of resources across the globe. For her to overcome the nature/ culture binary, is to then reconstitute a new form of kinship based on cohabitation in a multispecies environment, which she calls the Chthulucene. Michel Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, drew attention towards the body in terms of how it is understood and regimented in a social system, more so in terms of mechanisms of control and surveillance. Thus, to contemplate on Margaret Atwood's post-apocalyptic world of hybrid survivors requires an examination of the reconstituted social order in which new kinds of bodies are shown to exhibit unique ways of articulation, as material conditions of living are different from the kind of world Foucault examines. In order to accomplish this, the paper proposes to focus on examining Margaret Atwood's speculative *MaddAddam* Trilogy using Haraway's formulation which may be extended towards rethinking about ways of articulation of posthuman conditions in the post-pandemic world.

#### **Speculating Brave New Worlds: A Posthumanist Critique of the Utopias and Dystopias in *Electric Dreams* vis-à-vis *Black Mirror***

Nafisa Oliveira (Goa University, India)

The resurgence of speculative fiction has led to the popularity of web series such as *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Leila*, (both adaptations), or even the more recent remake, *Utopia* – ergo the canon of utopian and dystopian fiction – have left their mark. Prominent among these series are *Black Mirror* and *Electric Dreams*. Both are anthologies which grapple with the possibilities of a future filled with scientific and technological advancements. A concept that looms over these two, as among other contemporary speculative fiction, is that of posthumanism. This term continues to trigger debate where the question of its definition is concerned. Is it present in or peripheral to the human? Is it critical or compassionate towards the transhuman? These questions pervade the episodes in both series which present alternative perceptions and positions from which to destabilize, deconstruct, and decenter the human. Here, the real, the unreal, and the ideal amalgamate into surreal futuristic environments. Posthumanism also often tends to blur the line between the binaries of natural-artificial, man-machine, and life-death. If one considers the current scenario of the pandemic it appears that the line separating the standard from the strange has been obscured. The purpose of this paper is to explore the various modes in which posthumanism in its myriad avatars interrogates, mystifies, subverts and unhinges humanism. In addition, it seeks to display how posthumanism at times challenges the very ethos of humanity and seeks to redefine it. Simultaneously, the paper will also consider how the two series differ in their respective approach to creating

parallel or speculative worlds by addressing if they are more utopian or dystopian, whether they envision an end or a new beginning.

### **The End of Homo Sapiens?: Infertility Pandemic in P. D. James's *The Children of Men***

Şebnem Düzgün (Ankara Science University, Turkey)

Humanism and anthropocentrism basically advocate the ultimate superiority of man and human reason. Post-human feminism, on the other hand, deconstructs humanist anthropocentric ideas by questioning man's sense of superiority and his boundless belief in reason, science and technology to secure the progress of human civilization. The implications of post-human feminism about the failure of humanist and anthropocentric views are discussed in P. D. James's *The Children of Men* (1992), a dystopian novel illustrating a post-apocalyptic society where the notion of humanism and the infallibility of human power are questioned after the world is struck by a pandemic that makes human sperm impotent. The assumed superiority of humankind is challenged by the fact that it is only male animals that possess the ability to generate progenies in the post-pandemic environment. The novel also shows how the presumptuous confidence in human reason is relinquished when Western science and technology fail to find a solution for depopulation. Furthermore, it demonstrates the futility of humanist struggles to create human babies having desirable mental and physical traits through selective breeding, a process of selecting healthy and robust parents without imperfections to procreate. Ironically, regenerative power is restored by two people who are neglected and marginalized by 'rational,' 'humanist' men due to their 'imperfect' bodies. The novel ends with the miraculous birth of a male baby, which proclaims the beginning of a new cycle of life. Still, the novel avoids closure by hinting that the baby, being male, might lack fertility, like other male humans, or he might just be a means to start another patriarchal, anthropocentric regime. The purpose of this study is to explain how humanist anthropocentrism that idealizes man's reason and body is decentered in P. D. James's *The Children of Men* through studying the novel from a post-human feminist perspective.

### **Fearing Nonlife: The Anthropocene, being-towards-annihilation and the Coloniality of the (Post)human**

Angela Patricia Heredia (Central European University, Austria)

The concept of the Anthropocene has constituted a powerful historical, political and experiential shift in the articulation of temporality and historicity through the collapse of the timescale of the "human" and the timescale of "nature" (Chakrabarty 2009). With the expectation of a catastrophe to come caused by humanity's agency, the Anthropocene seems to paradoxically move "us" towards a needed de-centering of the "human" by exalting the impact and responsibility of "our" destructive power (Colebrook 2017). Building from Yusoff (2018) and Povinelli (2016) take on the coloniality of the discourses of the Anthropocene, as well as black feminisms' reflections on the coloniality of the notion of the human (Spillers 1987; Wynter 2003; Jackson 2020; Lethabo King 2019), in this paper I address the way in which the idea of the Anthropocene, as a shift in the perception of historicity for certain "human" subjects, increases the perception of catastrophes to come and raises anxieties in relation to finitude, annihilation, a return to lifelessness, and the end of the "overrepresentation of Man as if it were the human" (Wynter 2003, 267). I argue that such anxieties and the experience of temporality/historicity that they evoke, rather than decenter the "human" through the emergence of a posthuman subjectivity attuned to the dangers of the harm done to the nonhuman world (Latour 2017; Chakrabarty 2009; Braidotti 2012; 2017; Bennett 2010), constitute a way of iterating, reproducing and sustaining the coloniality of the (post)human. As a way to cope with the fragility of the human subject's boundaries, the grammars of the flesh

(Spillers 1987) that shape the sovereign human subject within coloniality require an experience of historicity and temporality that deflect annihilation and extinction (nonlife) as a horizon of intelligibility and a condition of possibility. Put differently, as the Anthropocene abstractly confronts the human subject with nonlife, it awakens new responses and mechanisms that aim to reinstate its wholeness. Through this reflection, I aim to develop a de-colonial intervention on posthumanist discourses that relate the Anthropocene with an experience after or before the end of times (Latour 2017).

## DAY 3

### Session 1F: Urban Design & Futures

Chair: Tim Waterman (University College London, UK)

#### **Pandemic, Floods, & Bushfires: A Cli-Fi Trilogy Across the Utopia-Dystopia Continuum**

Jenna Mikus, Kavita Gonsalves, Hira Sheikh (Queensland University of Technology, Australia)

2020 has been a year of humanitarian and environmental crises, ranging from the global COVID-19 pandemic to the deadly Asian floods and Australian bushfires. To address these planetary challenges, we need to reconsider the current human-centred perspective that work in favour of positivism, capitalism, and colonialism to establish hierarchical inequalities between human and non-human beings (Escobar, 2017). Under the rubric of speculative design fiction (Dunne & Raby, 2013; Oziewicz, 2017), this paper argues for a paradigm shift from human-centred to multispecies thinking through decolonial and feminist climate fiction (cli-fi) narratives across the utopia-dystopia continuum. • *Pandemics in North America: Futopia* tells the tale of a North American elder who has survived the Pandemic of 2020, WWIII of 2030, and ClimAgeddon 2040. By reflecting on the elder's lived experience, *Futopia* offers morals on connection to land and the multispecies construct. • *Floods in Asia: Floating Terrestrial(s)* is a story about three animals—wild (dog), domesticated (cat), and livestock (goat)—washed away by a flood in Gilgit-Baltistan in 2080. *Floating Terrestrial(s)* explores more-than-human histories of Shamanist traditions to illustrate a multispecies dystopia amidst the melting Himalayan glaciers. • *Bushfires in Oceania: 2100AD* marks 50 years since the earth was ravaged and the Transfiguration took place—a super-evolutionary event where the Adivasis began to rule in cahoots with the non-human species. Set in the romance genre, *2100AD* is a speculation that provides commentary on colonialism, racial capitalism, and planetary crisis. The proposed trilogy balances Roger Glass' cli-fi themes ranging from warning to discovery (Glass, 2013) to examine fear-inciting dystopian scenarios (Fry, 2012) highlighting the vulnerability of all life and habitats (Zacks, 2020) and relatable utopian “adjustment narratives” (Hofstetter, 2019) encouraging multispecies-driven philosophy. Employing speculative fiction storytelling across the utopia-dystopia continuum presents a compelling means to ignite imaginations towards ecosystems-focused policy and design decision-making.

#### **A Method by Which to Predict and Design Future Urban Environments Based Upon Utopian and Dystopian Literature**

Alan Marshall (Mahidol University, Thailand)

There is an array of previsioning tools at the disposal of those needing to, or fascinated with, the idea of predicting the physical and social characteristics of future cities (including after some crisis event like a natural disaster, plague, political revolution, war, or economic catastrophe). Some of them are scientific. Others are mathematical. Still more come from many other disciplines, from economics to innovation studies. This method I intend to outline here comes from the spirit and knowledges of environmental studies and the humanities -- in that it intends to foreground the wisdom of canonical historical utopian / dystopian literary texts and the ideas of modern environmentalism as they might be used to analyze the potential development of our urban futures. This is done to show scientists, students and scholars the valuable insights that a humanities approach may have in predicting real world futures. Due to time restrictions, a small set of a few literary texts and a small set of a few real-world cities will be chosen to explain how the method might work. In this presentation, the utopian visions of Thomas More's *Utopia* and of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* will be used to identify

the environmental futures of London (England) and Singapore (Singapore), respectively. Also, the dystopian visions of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and of Ray Bradbury's *The Fog Horn* will be used to identify the environmental futures of Ingolstadt (Germany) and Tokyo (Japan), respectively. To do this quickly, some help will come from a digital edutainment movie produced by the author (and pre-viewable in HD here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YuzZoIozHZw>).

### **The Apocalypse is Always Urban: The Case of Korean Smart Cities Against Pandemics, Zombies and *Parasite***

Ken Fallas (Research Center for Regional and Urban Design, South Korea)

No matter whether it comes by divine wrath, nuclear war, climate change, zombies, a pandemic or by machines rebellion: the apocalypse will be urban. Cities are at the same time the most complex and valuable creation of our civilization, but also one of the most vulnerable environments to inhabit during an apocalyptic crisis. However, can they also be the key to our salvation? Either a fictional or part-real apocalypse, the delirium of destination has been a constant in many societies, but nature does not negotiate and with more than 50% of the world population living in cities, the current pandemic located them as main subjects in a real-time experiment of values collapse. What made some cities so resilient while others suffered the most impact? Just within weeks, South Korea shifted the world's attention from its *Parasite* (2019) film's satirical criticism on urban social inequality, to detecting its first COVID-19 infection and soon becoming the most affected territory outside China, to end up as one of the top success references on how to confront a crisis of this magnitude especially through the use of urban infrastructures, smart systems and efficient governance tools. But Korean cities were not new to the idea of fighting a —world-ender‖ enemy; from the North Korean war threat, to natural disaster stories such as *Haeundae* (2009), infection chaos in *Gamgi* (2013), to zombies invasion on *Train to Busan* (2016), *Kingdom* (2019), and *Peninsula* (2020), the increasing trend on catastrophic narratives has evolved though Korean culture beyond just entertainment, to become an open source to explore human reactions under extreme circumstances, our capabilities and reasons to survive. This presentation aims to explore the Korean vision on apocalypses and how its cities may have a valuable approach for planning our new world especially in the fight against inequality.

### **Movie Tropes of the End of Times**

Louise Jammet (Université de Bordeaux, France)

Looking at anticipation movies from the 70's to the 2000's is like looking at an endless remake of *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang). Cities are segregated, people are either under control or rebelling, and the architecture underlines the excesses of the society, between rigid authoritarian power and vernacular rebellion. Spatial and architectural tropes are explored through seven movies\* and show how the representation of dystopian futures benefits of an historic repetition of a specific esthetics by directors and the collective spectators imaginaries. All those movies take place after an end of times and picture what the world, or the remaining habitable parts of the world, looks like and what kind of rules and processes assure a new form of stability in regards to the past disasters. New architectures, laws, social mechanisms and authoritarian control (through police forces and/or surveillance technologies) take place and organize the post-disaster order. The outlaws awakening from the illusion imposed on them fight the forms of social and spatial manifestations oppressions in order to break it or escape it. We will review the principal social and spatial tropes of post-disaster anticipation movies both revealed by the redundancy of their use by movie directors and by the actions performed by the protagonists against the various forms of order and authority; this approach can open discussions about how the pandemic is a pretext today to change our social and spatial realities in order to construct

possible more liveable futures. The seven movies discussed: *Metropolis*, Fritz Lang, 1927; *THX 1138*, Georges Lucas, 1971; *Soylent Green*, Richard Fleischer, 1973; *Blade Runner*, Ridley Scott, 1982; *Demolition Man*, Marco Brambilla, 1993; *The 5th Element*, Luc Besson, 1997; and *Equilibrium*, Kurt Wimmer, 2002.

### DAY 3

#### Session 2A: Entanglements of Contagion: Narrative Agencies of Non/Human Bodies

Chair: Şafak Horzum (Social Sciences University of Ankara, Turkey)

*This is a set panel proposed by the participants.*

This panel is designed to discuss the material-discursive entanglements of natural and cultural bodies of contagion in literary and cultural productions from the early modern era onwards. In doing so, it investigates how these bodies narrate their inter- and intra-active stories by means of these entanglements. All three papers present how the literature and media productions reconfigure our understandings of and relations with diseases in new materialist and posthumanist terms.

#### **Intra-Species Stories of Plagues in Early Modern English Drama**

Zümre Gizem Yılmaz Karahan (Social Sciences University of Ankara, Turkey)

In an effort to adhere to an organic body so as to spread their diffracted agencies, viruses blur the distinctions and definitions between human and nonhuman along with living and non-living, hence complicating life and death, and forming life in death. Congregating ontological and epistemological formations with a unique intra-species story beyond human imagination, this paper focuses on early modern English drama by drawing on Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann's material ecocriticism. Reconfiguring the reciprocal relations of humans to supposedly nonhuman beings such as germs, viruses, bacteria, nonhuman animals, plants, and robotic bodies, plagues make inroads into new definitions of what it means to be human. To track the contagious history in the early modern England, the paper develops a critical analysis that enhances multispecies imagination and storytelling based on material ecocriticism with literary examples from *The Plague Pamphlets* (1603) by Thomas Dekker, *Timon of Athens* (1607) by William Shakespeare, and *Ho Trilogy*, that is Thomas Dekker and John Webster's *Westward Ho* (1607) and *Northward Ho* (1607), and Ben Jonson, George Chapman and John Marston's *Eastward Ho* (1605), and John Evelyn's pamphlet *Fumifugium or the Inconvenience of the Aer and Smoak of London* (1661). With these literary examples from the early modern period, the paper aims to examine how deeply plagues and diseases transform human imagination and cultural conceptions along with material and physical happenings, hinting at the naturalcultural emergences within novel, dynamic and complex entanglements of the human and the nonhuman environments. This paper further highlights that these entanglements are visible in the intra-action, trans-corporeality, and the porosity of viral, bacterial, and human agencies.

#### **“Survival is Insufficient”: Viral Environments and Ecosick Bodies in Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven***

Kerim Can Yazgünoğlu (Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University, Turkey)

Belonging to what Peter Boxall calls “environmental dystopianism,” contemporary postapocalyptic novels, from Sarah Hall's *The Carhullan Army* (2007) and Jim Crace's *The Pesthouse* (2007) to Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* (2014) and Clare Morrall's *When the Floods Came* (2016), serve as the embodiment of the authors' concern with the relationship between life, ecology, and epidemics. Emily St. John Mandel, for instance, is preoccupied with such a relationship in *Station Eleven*, dramatising the unprecedented ramifications of drastic social and environmental alterations and their impacts on human and nonhuman bodies. Scrutinising *Station Eleven* in the context of the literary challenges posed by such transformations, I contend that at stake in the novel is not merely a re-definition of

“naturecultures” as viral, but also a re-imagining of precarious lives as ecosick due to the Georgia Flu that sweeps all around the world, killing the majority of the world’s population. Exploring the predicament through which the survivors such as Miranda and Clark go in the novel, Mandel conjures up a pre-/post-epidemic vision of the world, not only questioning the common view of human beings as separate from the environment, but also offering a new perspective on how the ruptures between nature and culture delineate unruly ecologies of viruses that affect every realm. These viral environments in the novel illustrate how late capitalism and anthropocentric practices have exploited and destroyed the “natural” world, and how humans have based their cultures on an anthropocentric understanding of “nature.” Mandel in this sense suggests that plagues and epidemics are tied up with environmental breakdown, thereby deploying the epidemic of the Georgia Flu in the novel. In this context, this paper assesses how the novel not only inscribes the social, bodily, and environmental impact of the virus, but also presents a palpable critique of the Capitalocene.

### **Diseased Bodies Entangled: Literary and Cultural Crossroads of Posthuman Narrative Agents**

Başak Ağın (Middle East Technical University, Turkey) & Şafak Horzum (Social Sciences University of Ankara, Turkey)

Enthused by the intersectional burdens heightened by the COVID-19 outbreak, this paper employs the work of feminist-materialist-posthuman scholars and theorists – including Stacy Alaimo, Cecilia Asberg, Karen Barad, Jane Bennett, and Rosi Braidotti – as a springboard, and seeks to explore the ‘story-telling capacities of’ and ‘intra-activities between’ viral, non/human, and geographical bodies. The paper comprises three parts, focusing on an example from cinema, video game industry, and literature in each. Underlining the implied/obvious links between gender, class, race, and disease, the first part concentrates on the narrative agents in Steven Soderbergh’s film, *Contagion* (2011). It examines how disease-carrying non/human agents function as narrative, entangled, and lively agents. The second part of the paper intends to take a comparative look at how the stories of disease differs in a video game, namely *Plague Inc.* (2012), in which the player is expected to spread an infection, viral or bacterial, from patient zero to the entire world. The gendered nature of the virus-spreader is no longer visible in this game, and therefore, the focus of the narrative shows a different pattern than in the film, creating a diffraction. Still, this digital platform also portrays the virus as a nonhuman narrative agent that overshadows human control, allowing a recreation of stories on various levels, as the player continues the game. Offering a possibility of imagining how nonhuman agency works in an ideally ungendered space, such posthuman environments as in games present a synchronous narrativity for both the human player and the in-/nonhuman virus. The final part of the paper investigates the similar narrative trajectories of the virally agentic bodies in Nicola Griffith’s gynotopia, *Ammonite* (1992). Strolling on the thresholds of the gendered, classed, raced, and territorialised bodies, the posthumanist cyborgs of diseases in this work also expose novel material-discursive entanglements of interplanetary and interspecies environs. As the speakers, Ağın and Horzum, take turns in introducing the theoretical background and presenting the diffractive patterns of disease posited in each work, they seek to answer whether such diffractive patterns in differing narrative forms like films, games, and novels create a utopian or a dystopian understanding of the world in posthumanist senses.

## DAY 3

### Session 2B: Utopias & Dystopias

Chair: Zeynep Atayurt Fenge (Ankara University, Turkey)

#### **Climate Fiction, Climate Disasters and Dystopia: A Reading of John Lanchester's *The Wall***

Anindita Shome (University of Hyderabad, India)

Climate change and climate fiction are no longer tales and figments of the human imagination. With every climate disaster, the world wakes up to the grim realities of the present and impending climate catastrophes awaiting humanity. The COVID-19 pandemic has made humans understand more than ever the undeniable interconnections amongst all the species on the Planet Earth. Climate changes have been leading to destruction and displacement of human lives, especially the marginalised human lives. Where do the lives already affected by the climate change stand against a deadly pandemic? How will the world look for all of us post-pandemic, along with the looming climate disasters? What role do fictional narratives play in making readers more climate conscious and aware of existing inequalities amongst different groups? This paper would consider the dystopian novel, *The Wall*, by John Lanchester, that revolve around an imagined world (an island) of extremities of human and climatic forces. As the world, as we have known it, is changing due to the pandemic, can any of us affirm with conviction that the climate dystopian narratives won't become a traumatic reality in the future? This paper would attempt to understand how, through this dystopian fiction, the seething issues of climate disasters, refugees, the futures that await our youth, and so on, have been discussed. The importance of the discussions and deliberations that fictional and cultural forms could initiate will be highlighted through a critical study of this fictional work. The question of the "other", the politics of the borders, and the fragility of the human lives against climate forces are brought to the readers through this dystopian fiction. This paper, thus, would try to analyse the selected literary fiction to understand how the existing social and political power structures and prejudices in our present world would play a part in further creating boundaries in a dystopian future as well.

#### **Running in Circles: Representation of Social Structure in Bong Joon Ho's film *Snowpiercer***

Svjetlana Sumpor (Independent Scholar, Croatia)

Critically acclaimed Bong Joon Ho's film *Snowpiercer* (2013) is one of the most powerful filmic dystopias of the early 21st century. It is also a fine example which shows how century old genre of dystopia has greatly profited from interference and merging with postapocalyptic narrative; a procedure so typical for dystopias of the first two decades of our century. *Snowpiercer* presents a narrative which moves from showing a complete dissolve in postapocalyptic chaos to rebuilding of a society on the basis of unjustly accumulated and distributed wealth and power. It narrates a story about the last human survivors of the new ice age - an aftermath of the experiment with global climate - boarded on the train in perpetual circular motion. The living conditions on the train are luxurious for some and extremely harsh for others, depending on the socio-economic status of the individuals at the time of the boarding, which leads to the revolt and the revolution of the unprivileged ones. Human-induced catastrophic climate change therefore is a pretext for the analysis of the social structure, which is the true focus of the Bong Joon Ho's film. The film abounds in class symbolism: from the topography of train sections to the topography of human body, a strict hierarchy of functions is established and posited as a model for a class stratification. This paper will especially focus on analysing rich symbolism of the circle and circular movement in their ironically double nature, as they are presented in the film. The circular motion of the locomotive is advocated by

the “upper” class as the first and main prerequisite of sustaining all life, while “bottom” class recognizes it as a symbol of perpetuating the unjust system, and therefore strives to break the historical socio-economic vicious circle which entraps and enslaves them.

### **Viral Utopias; Utopia as Virus**

Alexander Popov (Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Bulgaria)

Prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, N. Katherine Hayles has recently argued for a reconceptualization of our relations with radically other life forms, such as viruses and bacteria. Viruses evolve by iteratively simplifying their genomes to achieve fast replication: such as SARS-CoV-2, which has optimized for long incubation periods, thereby maximizing its spread in a kind of “stealth mode.” Even though human-virus relations appear to be purely adversarial, viruses might have actually played a significant role in the evolution of DNA and the activation of human stem cells – allowing the latter a degree of pluripotency without which humans would not come to be. The emergent poiesis of such algorithmic, ontologically unstable coexistence has attracted attention from interdisciplinary scholars such as Donna Haraway, Lynn Margulis, and Timothy Morton. This paper will argue that human-virus encounters can lead not only to ruination, but also to new avenues for utopian thinking. From within a semi-metaphorical “viral paradigm,” we might re-conceptualize utopianism as a recursive self-editing process which strips away extraneous model features of societies, while preserving the potential for pluripotency. Viral utopias will then evolve to operate in stealth, to replicate fast and to survive in inhospitable environments – until they can hijack a superspreader networked ecology. By analogy with Fredric Jameson's concept of world reduction, we might term such a process worldview reduction – but in the positive sense of removing layers of anthropocentricity and privilege and seeking the lowest common denominator that maximizes wellbeing in more-than-human worlds. A kind of cyborgian utopianism for the Anthropocene. The paper will survey a number of such proto-viral utopianisms, such as: Octavia Butler's literal vampiric virus (*Fledgling*); the praxis of pronopia (Charles Stross' *Accelerando*); Kim Stanley Robinson's writing on eco-economics (*Mars Trilogy*), financial algorithms (*New York 2140*), and carbon coin (*Red Moon, The Ministry for the Future*).

## DAY 3

### Session 2C: Film & Media II

Chair: Gillian M. E. Alban (Istanbul Kultur University, Turkey)

#### **Coronapocalypse: Everyday Life in Corona Films**

Jana Fedtke (American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates)

In my presentation, I analyze representations of everyday life in films during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. I am particularly interested in the Netflix production, *Homemade* (2020), and the short films that featured in the Corona Short Film Festival (2020). Over the past few months, there has been a proliferation of films that deal with COVID-19 as the coronavirus pandemic has increasingly become part of everyday life and public discourses. While I would call the vast majority of these productions exploitation films, I show in my analysis that *Homemade* and the short films of the festival are examples of participatory culture (Henry Jenkins) during a time of crisis. Using Michel de Certeau's concept of the strategies and tactics in the practice of everyday life, my paper explores how the narratives address life during the coronavirus pandemic as an issue of spatial redistribution and the changing nature of consumption. I also examine what role gender and class play in this context of the pandemic as a presumed equalizer that is precisely not equal, but affects people of various genders and classes in different ways. The corona films show everyday life during the pandemic and in some cases during lockdowns in certain countries as they focus on the home as the new centre of everyday life. I argue that the space of the home has now become a heterotopia (Michel Foucault).

#### **Apocalypses Now: A Study of the Virus Apocalypse in Indian Cinema**

Rituparna Das (Independent Scholar, India)

Although there have been many Hollywood films on deadly viruses and zombie attacks, the Indian film industry is comparatively naive in that context. There are only a handful of films that deal with such apocalyptic vision and most of the time they treat this as a sub-theme to the main storyline. However, those few films that have deadly viruses as their main theme associate it with some supernatural intervention—either the cause or the cure of the pandemic is associated with the divine intervention. Earliest of the Indian epidemic films is the silent film *The Catechist of Kil-arni* (1923) directed by T. Gavan Duffy and R. Prakash. It is the story of the main characters, Ram and Sita, that is woven around the cholera epidemic in the village of Chetpet in Tamil Nadu. Most of the Indian virus-narrative and disaster films are made in the southern part of the country, namely the Tamil film industry. Two of such recent time films *Dasavathaaram* (2008) and *7aum Arivu* (Seventh Sense, 2011) have the noteworthy insight to offer. Both of them, like most of the mainstream virus-disaster films, present the significance of divine interventions. While *Dasavathaaram* has Govind (one name of Lord Krishna) as the central character who saves the nation from the spread of a deadly virus, *7aum Arivu* elevates the central figure, Bodhidharma, to the transcendental plane of the Demi-Gods. My paper, by analysing selected Indian films on the apocalyptic vision of viruses or zombie epidemic would like to address the following issues: Why Indian films have not widely explored the genre of zombie and virus apocalypse; What latent significance is added to such a theme by the incorporation of the divine intervention; How these films have the narrative consequence in the recent time of the pandemic.

## **The Fear of COVID-19 Positive Body: A Possible Posthuman Concern in Srinivas Sunderrajan's *Banana Bread***

Ujjwal Khobra & Rashmi Gaur (Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, India)

This research paper aims to examine the ecophobia induced by the potential COVID-19 positive body in Srinivas Sunderrajan's short film *Banana Bread* (2020) as an entanglement of life-threatening physicality and embodied otherness as a posthuman concern raised by the contagious body in the form of infected/non-infected dualism foregrounded by the ongoing pandemic. The paper analyses the infected human body as a site of grotesque by contextualizing apocalyptic fear of mass extinction while reinforcing notions of posthuman otherness and vulnerability. The paper demonstrates an ontological divide in the established epistemological category of the human resulting from an understanding of the viral non-human other. The paper attempts to reconceptualize human/non-human relationality by employing the concept of ecophobia in the context of the current pandemic while problematizing codes of social behavior, human interaction, and embodiment as depicted in Sunderrajan's *Banana Bread*.

## **The Invisible 'Culture Hero' in *Virus* (2019): Revisiting the Cinematic Documentation of Nipah Outbreak in Kerala**

Karthika V. K. (National Institute of Technology- Tiruchirapalli, India)

Pandemics are represented in Indian cinema in vivid ways. However, most of such representations are either from a science fiction perspective where zombies are picturized or a fictionalized account of a military or a nationalist's solo escapade after a possible declaration of a bio-war on India by a neighbouring country. *Virus* (2019) a Malayalam language medical thriller released in 2019 in Kerala, after a year of the outbreak of Nipah Virus in this southern state of India, is different from all other Indian films which have pandemic/s as a backdrop. It is different in its narrative which strikes a fine balance between the reel and real when it visualises the Nipah outbreak and narrates it as a documentary but makes it enough cinematic by structuring it in a non-linear manner and by carving credible characters and sequences where emotional melodramas are accepted. The present study is based on the data collected through personal interviews with film critics and randomly selected general public, scrutiny of social media responses to the film in the present context of COVID-19 outbreak, a detailed review of related literature and through a careful analysis of the narrative of the film. The film portrays how utopian ideals are framed and maintained during miserable times of a contagious disease and how the identity of the index patient and the epidemiological linking processes are politicized based on region and religion. The aim of this study is to identify the socio-political undertones of this film which take a clear stance with the left liberal ideology of Kerala government. The study also investigates how the image of a culture hero is constructed through the film narrative and how the reel image shapes the real image of the hero to the public by interpellating the ideology of the common mass.

## DAY 3

### Session 2D: Theory & Politics

Chair: Rhiannon Firth (University of Essex, UK)

#### **The Underside of Time**

Laura Denning (Bath Spa University, UK)

‘Pandemics and the spectre of eco-apocalypse don’t signal the end of all worlds or times but merely of the world as presently constituted; there is always the vital question of what comes after’. The Present as a future archaeological past is, currently, often identified as the Anthropocene. This contested term, however, continues to calibrate our human-scale perception of time as central to deep pasts and deep futures. This proposal draws upon a recent collaboration with a paleo-archaeologist, to question that calibration, and to consider ‘change’ within these massive scales. In doing so, our current emergencies are folded into different perspectives – ones which paradoxically marks the present moment as the most crucial moment of all. In November 2019 I collaborated with Paleo-archaeologist Suzi Richer on the Hothouse Residency hosted by art.earth at Dartington. Some of the questions that surfaced were: How can we un-map, backwards? What is revealed in the shift from the polar view to the equatorial view? What stories might evolve as companions in a changing world? What can we do with furrows, spores, apertures and spikes? Could hydrophobic materials adapt back towards their origins? Do humans just need to get over themselves? Could metals become future pollinators? How would oxidisation fold into future fertility narratives? And so forth. Timefullness, says Marcia Bjornerud, references literacy in relation to the longer view. She says ‘We need a poly-temporal worldview to embrace the overlapping rates of change that our world runs on, especially the huge, powerful changes that are mostly invisible to us’. *The Underside of Time* is an evocation of these insights, realised through visual and sonic metaphor. My proposal is to introduce the short film through reference to the present as a future archaeological past, asking what a poly-temporal world view might offer in a post-pandemic world. The Underside of Time can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/454969303>

#### **From the Enclosure of Experience to the Erotic Post Office: Benjamin and Marcuse in Concrete Utopian Paths Beyond Dystopia**

Martin Greenwood (University of Manchester, UK)

This paper looks at the work of two key utopian theorists to draw out insights into the relationship between routine experience and the means by which utopian desire might be stimulated and mobilised in service of a desirable and just social future. The paper begins from the position that routine experience is socially-normatively pedagogical – it presents lessons about how society ought to be - and that these lessons extend into and condition people’s sense of what’s possible and desirable regarding social futures. Walter Benjamin’s ideas about two modes of experience, *Erfahrung* (intersubjective, narrative-historic) and *Erlebnis* (subjective, psychological) are then introduced. For Benjamin, modernity effectively constituted a great enclosure of experience, with *Erfahrung* losing the conditions for its flourishing and *Erlebnis* rising to dominance through the rhythms and shocks of industrialised labour, urbanisation and the rise of information. The paper posits the idea of the public - as in public space, public services and the public sphere - as a flawed yet crucial means by which something like *Erfahrung* might come to be re-established. The degradation of the public under neoliberalism, and the new threats to it presented by the pandemic, are posited as representing stages on a possible path to a dystopian total enclosure of experience. The paper then turns to the utopian thought of Herbert Marcuse and the Marxist reinterpretations of Freud he presents in *Eros and Civilisation*. With the erotic here conceived as a drive to develop, and expand the conditions in which life can flourish, the paper considers how remnant resources of the public might be

repurposed such that they modify routine experience in service of this drive. Focusing on how this might apply to an extant, routinely encountered public institution, the paper concludes with a playful speculation: the erotic post office: what would that be like?

### **Redrawing Ends of Dreaming Friends**

Anton Nikolotov (Independent Scholar, Russian Federation)

This is a story about two of my young friends B. and Z. Both from Central Asia, they came to Moscow at different times for different reasons, but also to earn as much as possible. We met by chance or through my previous ethnographic research projects. Now, as the pandemic spread to the city, we found ourselves at different sides of the crisis, its unequal gifts and thefts of luck, opportunities, and emotional states. This paper is the reflection on my attempts to relate, empathize, and to dialogically re-imagine two types of Ends that they recounted to me during the pandemic. One being Z's nightmare reflecting her anguish in the face of the impending death of her sick mother and her desperate struggle to hustle enough money in order to care for her. Another being B's narrative of his dream as he temporarily lost his work in a bazaar during the lockdown. Here I want to critically examine two representational strategies that I've employed to represent, diffract, and relate to their experiences of pain and economic redundancy. The first includes reworking and therapeutic reimagining of the nightmare's continuation through comics drawing. The second involves making a short animation film. The latter juxtaposes my friend's dream narrative and diary entries onto the elite imagination of neoliberal techno-futures of floating cities. Both strategies are ethno-fictional experiments to imagine future scenarios where particular Ends become Beginnings for new fortunes, relations, and proximities.

## DAY 3

### Session 2E: Horror and Body Horror

**Chair:** Drew Thornton (Curtin University, Australia)

#### **Approaching the Medico-Ontological Singularity—Reductive Bodily Ontologies in SF and Ridley Scott’s *Alien* (1987), *Prometheus* (2012)**

Drew Thornton (Curtin University, Australia)

Human stories are fundamentally stories about bodies; fiction and myth relate narratives of bodies as they are variously created, transformed, corrupted, infected and destroyed. With the human body so central to human stories, it is no surprise that medical models of the body—their origins, ills, and ends—are both reproduced in and reinforced by storytelling practices. Indeed, through Mary Shelley’s telling of “the modern Prometheus” *Frankenstein* (1818), narrativised medical ontology is directly implicated in the emergence of the Science Fiction genre. Acknowledging that medical dogma disseminates into medical fiction, this paper tracks paradigmatic shifts in bodily ontology—from the humoral theory of Hippocratic medicine, to Galvanic theory in 18th century vitalism, and finally 21st century “GenoHype”—and observes their transit from medical “fact” into narrative fiction. The sequential (r)evolutions of medical dogma demonstrate a trend towards increasingly reductive explanations of bodies and disease—the paradigm narrows towards a post-genetic singularity. In fiction, however, elemental symbolism perpetuates even as the axioms of bodily ontology collapse. These diverging trajectories play out especially clearly in Ridley Scott’s *Alien* (1979) and *Prometheus* (2012) films; as Scott’s space horror stories expands outwards in complexity, there is a trend of simplification and infectious generalisation in the way those bodies variously combat, infect, plasticate and subvert one another. Join me for a irreverent critique of the medicalised body, and a search for granularity, meaning and order in the messy world of Sci-Fi gunk, goo, flames and chunks.

#### **Epidemic Memories in Bengali Horror Stories**

Srijanee Adhikari (Independent Scholar, India)

Bengal, while colonised under the British empire, was subject to several waves of epidemics. The horror unleashed by their unprecedented size, that the administration was unprepared to manage, left imprints in the region in the form of folk religion, legends, and literature. This paper examines three texts from the horror story genre, extremely popular in Bengali literature. These texts dramatise the phantasma of epidemics in Bengal. One stages a supernatural forewarning through a herald who announces a future epidemic. In the others, ghosts re-enact their past ‘normal’ lives after epidemics already have killed or displaced humans from the haunted location. Horror tropes thus intervene in scenes of idyllic Bengali country life- a son-in-law visiting his wife’s parents, a traveller seeking food and a night’s stay from a woman, and so on. When these events are initiated and foiled through inversions of expectations, the idea of Bengal as a rich, fertile land is left reeling under the weight of the imagery of the hauntings. The traveller, for instance, realises his hospitable surroundings had been turned into a ghost village by cholera earlier. The fertility and richness of Bengal was an idea reinforced by anticolonial sentiments, growing quickly in 1943. At this time Bengal experienced a violent famine, and epidemics which occurred as a result, with cholera, smallpox and malaria outbreaks. However, with Independence following in 1947, it became imperative to bolster a positive image of the nation. Bengal, and India by extension, was now described as “sujalang sufalang malayaja sheetalang” (Of pure water, pure fruit, and cool breezes), as described in the iconic song “Vande Mataram”. Horror stories remain as spectral reminders of the destruction once wrought by epidemics in this region, and may be read as fictional memorials to those who died silently in mass tragedies.

## **Violent Disease and the True Flesh: Pandemic Delirium and Disease-Derived Subjectivity in Antonin Artaud**

Daniel Kong (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore)

“The Theatre and the Plague”, written by Antonin Artaud in 1934 and published in his larger work *The Theatre and its Double* (1938, translated in 1958), provides a vision of pandemics that is as compelling as it is absurd. Drawing from apocryphal histories and dreams, Artaud rejects science for prophecy, positing that pandemics like the bubonic plague have little to do with microbes or viral transmission. They are instead, outbursts of collective spiritual delirium. Pandemics shatter stable notions of the self, transforming bodies towards ever-fluid states of permeability. Artaud, reveling amidst these gory images of bodily rupture, identifies a new kind of subjectivity and social relation that energises his theatrical project. His vision is frighteningly contemporary. COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that spreads through such intimate mediums as breath and spit. Our present situation resurfaces so viscerally, Artaud’s bodily model of the subject as intractable from the bodies of others. We breathe into other bodies, are breathed into in turn. Our fluids intermingle in an uncomfortable but unavoidable proximity. Artaud’s contemporary relevance prompts a reassessment of the criticism surrounding the modernist milieu he is often situated within. While he corresponds to György Lukács diagnoses of subjectivity melding into objective reality, Artaud’s project can hardly be criticised for what Lukács defines as a solipsistic retreat towards interiority. The “sequence of unrelated experiential fragments” (Lukács 602) that Lukács sees man being reduced to in Modernist Literature is in the work of Artaud, the sensory data of a new, radical subjectivity. This paper will explore how Artaud realises and models an interconnected, immanent subjectivity. It will posit that this manner of being is greatly heightened and made more expressive by the ultimatums and energies summoned by pandemics. Pandemics awaken us to our perilous interdependence, our being within and amongst each other as flesh.

## **The End of Humanity: The Infectious Body and the Limits of Community in Fictional Epidemic Narratives**

Shadia Abdel-Rahman Téllez (University of Oviedo, Spain)

In *Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative* (2008), Priscilla Wald re-examines the cultural narratives on epidemics. Wald opens her book defining the SARS-CoV outbreak in 2003 as a communicable disease that dismantled the modern assumptions on human interconnectedness: “The interactions that make us sick also constitute us as a community. Disease emergence dramatizes the dilemma that inspires the most basic human narrative: the necessity and danger of human contact” (2008, 3). This affirmation, albeit demoralising, synthesises the global impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic. How can we feel part of a community if our bodies are potential carriers of a deadly disease that is spread by contact? This situation seems to call for individualism, a stance that resists the very sense of humanity. This kind of dystopian disaster is the theme of a long tradition of epidemic narratives. Fiction, particularly, has opened several debates about the moral dilemmas raised in health crises, when a contagious disease tests the limits of humanness. One illustrative example is Ludmilla Petrushevskaya’s “Hygiene” (2009). Written as an allegory, this tale can be considered the fictionalisation of what Wald defines as “outbreak narrative”, but with a twist ending, which does not portray the containment of the epidemic, but the tragedy of surviving at all costs. In an undetermined place and time, a family lives in domestic seclusion to avoid contracting a haemorrhagic disease transmitted by contact with infected animals and humans. Personal hygiene as the only preventive method to avert the infection carries further

connotations, as it denotes individual responsibility, which, in turn, engenders the stigmatisation of the infectious body. In this apocalyptic setting, the selfless actions of the adult members of the family seem to disguise egotist intentions, whereas the intervention of a stranger sustains the values of humanness and community despite adversity.

## DAY 3

### Session 2F: Hope & (Post) Apocalyptic Beginnings

Chair: Emrah Atasoy (Cappadocia University, Turkey)

#### **Viral Worlds: Pandemics in North American Post-Apocalyptic Fiction**

Katrin Schmitt (University of Konstanz, Germany)

The twenty-first century is shaped by a persistent sense of catastrophe: Terrorist attacks, natural disasters, political insecurities, and fears of pandemics, not only due to COVID-19, have significantly affected (“Western”) society’s state of mind. The resulting individual and collective anxieties are mirrored in current literary trends; especially in the high number of apocalyptic novels describing an ultimate societal collapse. However, in almost “every apocalyptic presentation, something remains after the end” (Berger 1999, 5-6). Therefore, one should rather speak of post-apocalyptic fiction when regarding this popular genre. In my talk, I work with three exemplary works of contemporary North American post-apocalyptic fiction in which a pandemic causes the end of modernity, namely Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* (2003), Peter Heller’s *The Dog Stars* (2012), and Emily St John Mandel’s *Station Eleven* (2014). While the novels share a pandemic setting, they vary in their representations of said catastrophe, the changes initiated by the outbreak, and in their depictions of post-pandemic beginnings. In my comparative analysis I will focus on three main aspects:

1. Characterizing the pandemics: How are the pandemics depicted and in how far can they be read as allegorical representations of current anxieties? What causes the pandemics and which issues of responsibility are raised?
2. Ruins and remains: Who and what survives? How are the remnants of the post-apocalypse shaped by the catastrophe, especially with regards to nature and communities?
3. (Potential) new beginnings: Is there hope for a new start after the catastrophe? To what degree are pre-pandemic values and anthropocentric perspectives (re)negotiated? Additionally to answering these questions, my talk highlights the revealing function of contemporary post-apocalyptic narratives, which reflect present threatening conditions and developments. In conclusion, the results of my comparison will add a crucial puzzle piece to the research on North American post-pandemic end time stories.

#### **The Postworlds of Pandemic Fiction**

Dunja M. Mohr (University of Erfurt, Germany)

21st century speculative fiction has taken a prominent and widely visible dystopian turn, dystopia “defines the spirit of our times” (Claeys 2016, 498) and has become “fashionable” (Robinson 2018), if not “appropriated”, “tamed” (Baccolini 2020), and commodified. However, with COVID-19 our contemporary “golden age of dystopian fiction” (Lepore 2017) seems to uncannily become a global reality. Suddenly dystopian stock features—surveillance and tracing, lock-downs, enforced quarantines, border closures, deserted public spaces, wildlife roaming urban streets, food pantry lines, curtailed liberties and the upsurge of conspiracy theories, protests against state coercion and mask wearing, distrust in other human beings as potential virus spreaders, a looming medical crisis— have become part of the ‘postworld’ we live in. As fiction seemingly turns into reality, the question arises what the critical reading of pandemic fiction can contribute to our understanding of the pandemic reality we are experiencing. What narratives of utopian hope can such texts potentially offer? This paper first scrutinizes the representation of pandemics in 21st century Canadian dystopias, e.g. in Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy (2003-2013), Larissa Lai’s *The Tiger Flu* (2018), and Saleema Nawaz’s *Songs for the End of the World* (2020), and what socio-economical and political structures, what cultural practices and prevailing mindsets the texts criticize by use of

the literary motif of the pandemic. In a second step, I investigate what elements of utopian hope the narratives incorporate in the passage towards a pandemic postworld. I argue that Atwood and Lai create postanthropocentric postworlds that ambiguate the human status and explore the potentialities of transfusion, symbiosis, blending, webbing, and emphasize the cooperation between species, lifeforms, cultures, and genders, while Nawaz's novel—set in a more realistic setting—focuses on human cooperation, community, and interrelations. Pandemic postworlds critically upset ingrained cognitive schemas of human exceptionalism and binarisms through aesthetic representations of entangled materialities and invite readers to embrace hope as the “vision of a door” (Solnit 2004, 11) that leads to a more fluid and diffuse fictional reality.

### **The Politics of the End: Apartheid Solutions and Cosmopolitan Visions in Post-apocalyptic Films**

Mónica Martín (University of Zaragoza, Spain)

By positioning humanity, its institutions and the environment in the most extreme of situations, cinematic apocalypses provide a rich textual ground for moral and ideological discussion. As Barbara Gurr claims in *Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Post-Apocalyptic TV and Film*, film narratives of the end pose political questions such as “whose survival takes precedence (...) and how resources get shared or hoarded” (2015, 7). It is precisely the decision to distribute (or not) the available resources and redefine (or not) a more inclusive post-apocalyptic order that configures the two distinct political tendencies of film apocalypse analysed in this paper: apartheid responses, on the one hand, that stress the need of borders to contain risk and are often driven by “retrotopian” impulses (Bauman, 2017); and cosmopolitan solutions, on the other, that rely on world openness and cultural transformation (Delanty, 2006) for post-apocalyptic social reconstruction. Though contradictory discourses may co-exist in a single cinematic text, one of these ideological tendencies tends to stand out over the other, as already illustrated in early apocalyptic titles such as *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927) and *Deluge* (Felix E. Feist, 1933). From the 1960s to the late 1990s, bleak apocalyptic film endings tend to have strong reservations about the possibility of hope. Yet, as the 21st century develops, apocalyptic films such as *Children of Men* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2006) and *Blindness* (Fernando Meirelles, 2008) advocate for a culture of responsibility for the end that, drawing on Raffaella Baccolini's analysis of feminist dystopian literature, allows to “lay the foundations for utopian change” (2004, 521). These contemporary pandemic film narratives provide protagonists with no unspoiled corner from which to start again or monstrous creature to exterminate. But they trust the characters' capacity to reverse the apocalyptic situation, tying utopian possibility to cosmopolitan reformulations of the global.

## DAY 3

### Session 3A: Theorizing End Times: Cross-Disciplinary Practices

Chair: Rita Monticelli (University of Bologna, Italy)

#### **The Hybridity of Postapocalyptic Objecthood in Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven***

Vera Benczik (Eötvös Loránd University-ELTE, Hungary)

The apocalypse and the post-apocalypse are tropes that have been present in a variety of configurations in science fiction since the advent of the genre. No matter how the world ends—be it by natural catastrophe, alien invasion or human effort gone terribly wrong—it brings with itself a radical transformation of the familiar environment, and the survivors often find themselves in a hostile landscape which they have to negotiate and navigate in order to survive. The post-apocalyptic landscape through its unbreakable and explicit linkage to the familiar present is liminality and hybridity incarnate. In addition to ravaged nature, and the ruined built environment, a characteristic post-apocalyptic setting also abounds with hybrid objects which have become dysfunctional or modified to fit the requirements of the new world. Their use is manifold: they may stand as mementos to a world that has passed, and function as sites and triggers of nostalgia. They can be “boundary objects” for the communities of practice before and after the cataclysm, serving as linkage not only within the narrative but also between the present of the audience and the imagined future of the text. Their dysfunctionality may result in reconfigurations of their objecthood into museum exhibits, and their repositioning from everyday lives into heterotopic archives of the past. The paper intends to analyze the hybridity of objects and objecthood in Emily St John Mandel's 2014 novel *Station Eleven*, which alternates between pre-catastrophe and post-catastrophe North America. The paper will rely on theories of the phenomenology of space (e.g. Merleau-Ponty and Bachelard), objecthood and thing theory (Brown etc.), among others. It will explore the transformative processes objects go through, the ekphrastic presence of the titular comic book as object, and the examination of the metamorphosed space of the airfield into museum of past objects of use.

#### **Mutual Aid vs. Anti-Utopia in a Pandemic Dystopia**

Rhiannon Firth (University of Essex, UK) & Erica Lagalisse (Independent Researcher & International Inequalities Institute at LSE, Canada)

We can pay a professional to massage our bodies but can't hug our friends. To see them we must meet in a mall to shop for jeans. Physical proximity to humans is now only allowed while stroking commodities. Exorbitant fines punish socializing outside the household. Erica's step-kids have already been stopped by police: one is fair-haired but the other takes after his Peruvian Mom. She wonders which of her friends looks like a blood sister, or whether she looks queer enough today to go on a walk with K even though she is Vietnamese. Conspiracy theorists are in the stocks, but government pandemic responses have intensified oppression through indifference as much as intent. Our complicity exacerbates existing structures of violence: Let the working class absorb public risk, let women absorb private abuse, let the refugees die. Our presentation will interweave personal narratives with theoretical analysis to investigate power and the pandemic from the perspectives of radical political theory and anthropology. We stage a conversation between Lagalisse's ethnographic work on anarchism, intersectionality and Left responses to “conspiracy theory”, as well as her experience as editor of ‘Solidarity and Care During the Covid-19 Pandemic’; and Firth's work on disaster anarchism and mutual aid, including original ethnographic fieldwork with mutual aid groups during the Covid-19 crisis. We will critically consider utopian alternatives to state & capitalist methods of dealing with the pandemic from the cutting edges of our disciplines.

## **A Utopian and Ephemeral Representation of Mountains or New Social and Long-Lasting Living Models? Alps Facing Post-urban Life in Pandemic Times**

Maria Anna Bertolino (University of Turin, Italy)

In the 20th century depopulation in the Italian Alps was the result of the vision of a mountain word as isolated and of the persistence of stereotypes such as the “poor mountaineer”, closed mentally. At the same time mountains were exploited by cities to be transformed into a place of leisure for mass tourism. Consequently, the agro-pastoral activities related to this world were neglected as a symbol of backwardness. But in the last decade something happened. As a consolidated multidisciplinary literature shows, the Italian Alps are affected by “return” migrations and by a new political attention. The interest in rural world comes from the redefinition of the relationship between the city and the countryside and the leave behind of the urbanism paradigm. In fact, people who move to upland are strongly looking for a different relation with nature. If this phenomenon is not new to social scientists, it is true that with the onset of Covid-19 it is assuming unexpected dimensions and accelerated developments. The images of the escape from the cities, when the lockdown was announced in Italy last February, clearly demonstrate that some new visions of rural territories are emerging in the Western World. This paper aims to inquire about the contemporary perception of the Italian Alps and their rediscovery during these pandemic times starting from two different aspects: the over-tourism that took place this summer and the growing desire to live away from the city that brings abandoned villages back to life. The aim is to ask ourselves about the hold of this rediscovery, to what extent the representations are affected by a nostalgic attitude and how they can contribute, if well managed, to the development of a new post-urban living model.

## **An Glimpse into the Future of Science-Fiction?: Literary Procedures to Address the Last Pandemic as a Predictive Tool**

Manuel Santana Hernández (University of Salamanca, Spain)

Undoubtedly, COVID-19 has altered the world in ways which a year ago would have appeared Science-Fictional. One of the many questions this pandemic has set out is to what extent it will affect contemporary fiction and, specifically, Science-Fiction. ¿in which ways will literary texts address such matter? ¿on what elements will narrators focus? ¿will utopia and dystopia ever be the same? These and other conundrums remain unanswered to this day, mostly because it is still too soon to offer a satisfactory, accurate response. The goal of this paper is to offer a modest prediction of how Science-Fiction may assimilate the pandemic in the years to come. To accomplish such an ambitious purpose, I will re-examine the works of Aldous Huxley, Yevgeny Zamiatin, H.G. Wells and other authors who addressed biological issues and biohazards before and after 1920 —when the influenza pandemic ended—, and I will extract the mechanisms Science-Fiction used then to incorporate the last pandemic to their literary and discourse apparatus. Therefore, this paper aims to approximate to the procedures upcoming Science-Fiction may resort to or, at the very least, offer a depiction of how the last Pandemic permeated the genre in 20th century which can eventually serve to contrast the literary implications of COVID-19.

## DAY 3

### Session 3B: Pandemic Psychologies and Subjectivities

Chair: Bridget Vincent (University of Nottingham, UK)

#### Reading Pretrauma Dystopian Imaginaries in Lawrence Wright's Pandemic Fiction: "The End of October"

Elham Fatma & Rashmi Gaur (Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, India)

The rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic instils a substantive amount of pessimism and fear amongst people living through it that the end of the world is a potential reality. This pandemic's traumatic effects and global implications have already become the subjects of deliberation and overwhelmingly inaugurate the research prospects in trauma theory, which is replete with the representative accounts of the impacts of natural disasters, climate changes, man-made atrocities, racial hatred, gender disparities, and so on. Since trauma is analyzed in retrospect concerning a cataclysmic event, therefore, its impact through Post-traumatic Stress Disorder is studied. But, by conceptualizing the phenomenon of Pretraumatic Stress Syndrome, Ann Kaplan has added a new lens of interpretation to the dynamism of trauma theory. In terms of a simple temporal inverse of the PTSD, those afflicted with the PreTSS anticipate future disasters (biological warfare, global pandemics, etc.) unfolding in a dystopian world and also exhibit some forms of psychopathological symptomatology. Inspired by the representations of futurist-dystopian worlds in films and literature, Kaplan's concept of "Pretrauma Dystopian Imaginaries" implies the fear of the sheer annihilation of the natural and social environments. But this conceptual idea has not received scant research attention, however, this presentation finds it a timely framework to analyze Lawrence Wright's pandemic fiction: "The End of October" (2020). The uniqueness of the novel is the author's remarkable prescience in writing it, as it revolves around the fictional Kongoli virus, its outbreak, ramifications, and disarray brought in the world, which bears eerily realistic similarities with COVID-19. Explicating the novel, this presentation would bear significance for broadening the understanding of pandemic fiction dealing with the dystopian world against the backdrop of COVID-19 the entire world is struggling with while treading upon the unknown paths.

#### Standing Up to Pandemic in Stephen King's *The Stand*

Anna Bugajska (Jesuit University Ignatianum, Kraków, Poland)

It is undeniable that the present-day pandemic, besides grave health consequences, also powerfully impacts the psyche of the world population: in the dimensions of spirituality, emotionality and morality, extending even to those whose bodies have never been touched by the virus. For this reason King's dystopia *The Stand* (1990) becomes a relevant commentary on pandemics to be considered in the present times of crisis. The author not so much instructs the readers about the flaws of the biopolitical management of the highly developed societies, but draws attention to the fact that pandemics is not only a physical phenomenon. In his paradigmatic *La peste*, Camus wrote that the cure for this type of plague are honesty (Rieux) and sympathy (Tarrou). King does not provide easy, straightforward answers, but seems to suggest that the way to stand up to the evil of pandemic in all its forms, and to transcend the biotech dystopia, resides in vulnerability. Thus, in the first part of the paper I will present the double image of pandemics in King's dystopia, introduced as Captain Trips and Randall Flagg, and in the second one I will discuss the examples of confronting pandemic, taking especially into account various forms of vulnerability, like disability, old age, or pregnancy. Through a skillful use of paradox, contrast and elements of Southern Gothic and epic tale, King reflects on the failure of biotech utopia, at the same time showing a way to survive this failure, which remains in line with the appreciation of vulnerability, sensitivity and fragility in the

contemporary commentaries on the technological future of mankind, and which emphasizes the values important in everyday dealing with the current global health crisis.

### **Filicide in *The Road* and *On the Beach*: The Parent-Child Bond in the End of Times**

Djamila Houamdi (University of Algiers 2, Algeria)

To many the outbreak of Covid-19 came as an unanticipated surprise. To readers of (post)apocalyptic fiction, everything in 2020 seems familiar. The panic, the race for food, the lockdown, the contesting (unreliable) news, the confusion and the psychological turmoil are all represented in various literary works which picture the world coming to an end because of one cataclysm or another. Cormac McCarthy and Nevil Shute are among those who believe that life on earth can only collapse at the hands of man. They both advance the hypothesis that a nuclear war will damage the socio-ecological system way beyond repair. All species are doomed to drift into extinction and oblivion. The fate of the few who linger longer than the rest is suffering. For the survivors in *The Road* (2006) and *On the Beach* (1957), suicide is a soft and painless way to avoid the ramifications of a fatal sickness. However, that collective will for final departure involves children, too. Blissfully unaware and innocent as they are, the son and the daughter in McCarthy's and Shute's texts are the center of an unsettling parental—and even humane—dilemma. Can a parent take the life of their own child...when there is no life left for them? In *On the Beach*, the mother is in complete denial while the father is resolved to peacefully put his daughter to terminal sleep. In *The Road*, the mother—expecting the arrival of cannibals—is persuaded that filicide is their sole choice whereas the father defies such an act and carries on—despite all odds—his journey with his child. The present paper attempts to discuss such a morally provocative question by highlighting the impact of a global catastrophe on a bond that is as sacred as that between a parent and a child. In so doing, the analyses focus on the psychological dimension of the question as it is presented by the two novels. In other words, it explores how a child's fate is a reflection of his parent's—hopeful or despairing—adaptation to catastrophe.

### **Literary Dystopias and the Post-Truth Pandemic**

Liam Knight (University of Birmingham, UK)

Metaphors of contagion are commonly used to describe the so-called era of 'post-truth' that has shaped the politics and culture of the twenty-first century. When a piece of disinformation circulates online, it 'goes viral'; fake news 'spreads' like a disease and post-truth itself has been called an 'informational pandemic' (Peters, McLaren, and Jandrić 2020). However, this post-truth problem is not unprecedented. Politicians have always lied to gain power, even if the precise character of their lying today is particular to the conditions of the twenty-first century. Propaganda is a precursor to, and part of, fake news. Plato acknowledged the difference between the truth for those who rule and the truth for those who are ruled. It is more accurate instead to claim that we live in an era of intensified post-truth. In this paper, I will demonstrate the long-standing tradition of post-truth in literary dystopias, a genre that clarifies contemporary anxieties by exaggerating them to nightmarish extremes. One such concern is the corruptibility of truth. My argument is that literary dystopias provide simplified examples of post-truth thinking and action that are divorced from the noise of 'information abundance', and so more clearly expose post-truth's sinister mechanisms, enabling solutions to the post-truth problem to be more readily identified. To reach this conclusion, I will consider the following questions: Which perils of succumbing to a post-truth pandemic do literary dystopias analyse? Which remedies do they suggest with which to ward it off? How might reading fictional examples of post-truth help readers to combat today's informational pandemic? Several works, both canonical and contemporary, will be considered in relation to these

questions, including those by George Orwell, Sinclair Lewis, and Margaret Atwood, and Luke Kennard, Naomi Alderman, and Omar El Akkad.

## DAY 3

### Session 3C: Film & Media III

Chair: Giulia Champion (University of Warwick, UK)

#### **Deadly Leaves of Grass: The Pandemic of Anthropocentrism and the Revenge of Nature in *The Happening***

Stavroula Anastasia Katsorchi (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece)

M. Night Shyamalan's 2008 apocalyptic thriller *The Happening* features a swiftly spreading pandemic that manifests as mass suicide. The unexplainable is ultimately revealed to be the effect of a new defensive mechanism developed by plants. Nature's target, in particular, initially appears to be large groups of people, but finally it turns against individuals as well. Despite the film's controversial reception, mainly due to its failure to realize its full potential, there is a great deal of similarities that can be traced to the present situation initiated by the outbreak of Covid-19. The film does not only show the emotional response and the slow collapse of society that result from a pandemic, but it also features individual struggle and responsibility against oneself and others. However, it delivers another message, which people facing the threat of Covid-19 oftentimes forget: humanity's responsibility towards the environment. Countries around the world saw a decline in environmental pollution during lockdown, yet the production, consumption, and irresponsible disposal of plastic gloves and masks portray humanity's deeply rooted anthropocentric and exceptionalist attitude, even before the image of its own fragility. This very anthropocentrism is, in a sense, punished with suicide in *The Happening*, as a reminder that humanity cannot exist without nature. In a similar vein, as the outbreak of Covid-19 runs parallel to climate change, people should be reminded that their survival is not only guaranteed by the containment of the virus, but also by the adoption of an eco-friendly attitude, inspired by feelings of interdependence with other species and the natural environment. Otherwise, humanity is heading towards what *The Happening* also literally depicts: suicide.

#### **Rhetorics of the Pandemic: A Comparison of *The Rain* and the Greek COVID-19 Campaign**

Eleni Tsatsaroni (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece)

When I first took a look at the episode guide of *The Rain*, I was intrigued by the striking similarity between the titles of the episodes and the rhetoric regarding the current Covid-19 pandemic crisis. "Stay inside", "Trust No one", "Have Faith" are just some of the similarities someone might have read between Greece's crisis management. During the pandemic in Greece, the government preceded to a series of proclamations, the regularity of which was not only extraordinary, but also kept the civilians, who were forced into strict quarantine, alerted. By continually reminding the public of the emergency, the Greek government created a scenery of a dystopic/postapocalyptic sense, very similar to the one depicted in *The Rain*. The first season of *The Rain* starts with a family trying to reach out to a bunker to get protected from a rainfall approaching, spreading a deadly virus. After a series of unfortunate events (the father goes out there in search for the cure, the mother dead pretty much at the very beginning) the two siblings are left all alone, isolated in quarantine for six years. The first episode can be summarized as "You HAVE TO stay in!", "But, why?", "Because. It is dangerous outside". No questions asked, no further explanation. Now, not wishing to read too much into this, but since the quarantine experience is in our recent past, I have to admit that I was particularly engaged with the whole drama. A deadly virus, super contagious, spreading around like hell. Yeah, I totally get that! One of the most interesting tropes in *The Rain* is the representation of infection as a superhuman power. One of the main characters, Rasmus, is the patient zero of the pandemic. While, in the first season, Rasmus is not contagious, although infected, during

the second season, Rasmus not only can infect the others but also he gets to control the way the infection spreads as a means of super power. Rasmus is standing in the middle of ethics, being simultaneously both the hero and the villain, a scientific miracle as much as a scientific monstrosity. The depiction of the virus is, in the case of *The Rain*, a subject of controversy. On the one hand, the virus has caused the death of most humankind and it threatens every living thing on Earth, by its rapid spread. On the other hand, those who managed to survive the infection, by becoming carriers of the disease, turn out to be more powerful, practically superhuman. In that sense, the virus seems to be at the same time the problem and the solution to the destruction of all humanity.

### **Societies We didn't Want to Inhabit: Disease and Dystopia in the Spanish Productions "Los Últimos Días" and "La Valla"**

Débora Madrid (Independent Scholar, Spain)

In September 2015, The Guardian quoted Margaret Atwood's idea that dystopias function is to warn us from those kinds of societies we do not wish to inhabit. Current global pandemical circumstance, however, has forced to live in one of them. This presentation will address the specific case of two Spanish productions that imagined, shortly before, how it would be to live in Spain in a collapse situation due to a disease expansion: the film *Los Últimos Días* (Álex Pastor and David Pastor, 2013) and the TV show *La Valla* (Daniel Écija, 2020). *Los Últimos días* is set in Barcelona and proposes the population's confinement into indoor and subterranean areas due to an agoraphobia's epidemic that cause the death to those who go outside. *La Valla* (its premiere coinciding with the early times of the COVID pandemic) address a future Spain in which the advent of a mortal infectious virus propitiate a new political dictatorship. In this context, Health Ministry hides a criminal organization in the middle of the investigation for a vaccine. The main goal of this work is to analyze both productions in order to establish connections with social and political Spanish framework, as study cases for a wider research regarding to dystopias in Spanish film and television.

### **The Invisible Creatures of Science Fiction: Control and Assimilation in Garland's *Annihilation***

Thais Lassali (University of Campinas, Brazil)

Science fiction is a genre that shares an intimate relation with scientific imaginary. It deals with anxieties, fears, afflictions and even social prouds that are not literally related to scientific questions, but try to factionalize social issues utilizing a discourse that seems to approximate from science's conceptuals. I intend to debate the film *Annihilation* (Garland, 2018), taking into account its ability to illuminate the ways in which we are dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in relation to the daily use of scientific discourse. Alex Garland's film deals with the arrival of an unidentified object that falls on a lighthouse and makes it the epicenter of something called "the shimmer", a kind of invisible dome, separated from the rest of the world only by a thin brilliant layer of undistinguishable matter. At "shimmer's" frontier, a military complex has been set up aiming to keep up with its development and, at the same time, trying to prevent it from growing and reaching cities and, worst case scenario, annihilating human existence. As spectators, we followed the entrance of a group of five women with different scientific-military knowledge in this frightening and unprecedented place and we found out that it modifies the way the terrestrial cells reproduce, assimilating and reconfiguring the cellular functioning of everything "the shimmer" finds. This seems to be a way of fictionalizing the encounter between humans and invisible creatures with the ability to change the way of functioning considered healthy for our body, such as viruses. At the same time, the film presents us in, a very peculiar way, how the encounter with such beings can be

guided by bellicose metaphors that necessarily go through the way we deal with social control (or its lack) and end up replicating social inequalities.

## DAY 3

### Session 3D: Poetics of Apocalypse (Poetry, Music, and Mixed Media)

Chair: Hande Seber (Hacettepe University, Turkey)

#### The End of the Line: Verse Novels and Climate Apocalypse

Sabina Fazli (Goettingen University, Germany)

Treating science fictional themes in poetry sounds like a paradox combining seemingly incongruous cultural valuations as ‘high’ and ‘popular’, worldbuilding and subjectivity/interiority, and other generic expectations. However, since the popularization of ‘the novel in verse’ in the 1990s, there have appeared several texts that extrapolate science fictional futures which are shaped by environmental changes and ecological disasters written in verse. Verse affords a range of techniques and intertextual references to explore such an expansive theme not available in prose. In this paper, I will consider three recent verse novels that engage with environmental destruction, set in the near, far, or undefined future of humankind. All of them are concerned with endings suggested by looming or past climatic apocalypse forcing humans to adapt and live in transformed, postapocalyptic terrestrial and extra-terrestrial environments. John Barnie’s *Ice* (2001) imagines a far future in which most of Earth has become uninhabitable and the last survivors live in warring, autocratic underground city states. Lisa Jacobson’s *The Sunlit Zone* (2012) is set in near future Australia, threatened by rising sea levels and global warming while genetic engineers manipulate species and ecosystems to off-set and repair the damage. Although this suggests humans’ mastery over nature, it emerges that they are not exempt from the changes taking place around them, and the speaker witnesses a budding posthuman future. Oliver Langmead’s *Dark Star* (2015) takes place in a city on an unnamed planet which, had been settled by a fleet of human interstellar travellers and faces the extinction of its artificial source of light. Drawing on the epic, allegory, and the poetic language of magical realism, each text finds a specific poetic idiom to articulate the failing relationship between human communities and the planet.

#### Nigerian Popular Music Narratives on Climate Change and Net Zero

Olusegun Stephen Titus (Obafemi Awolowo University & Oxford University, Nigeria/UK)

Popular music studies have focused on romance and wealth with little attention giving to environmental sustainability and climate change. The catastrophic effect of fossil industries, agriculture, electricity and geological and built environments that geometrically increased the global warming is phenomenal. Also, the effects of global warming which further heightened the radiation of the sun on the earth surface, little is done till date from musical narratives perspective. This paper focuses on musical narratives on climate change. Engaging with Nigerian popular artists whose music directly focus on climate change and smoke include Olamide, Felix Liberty, Fela Anikulapo. The paper employs ethnographic, musical and audio-visual analysis. This paper is based on ecomusicology theory. The paper argues that environmental degradation through depicting of ozone layer by smoke is catastrophic. Which leads to wildfire in world cities, flood, hurricanes, cyclone, typhoon, tornado, storm, tropical storm, tempest, windstorm, drought, earthquake unpredictable climatic conditions with its socio-economic and security, food production challenges. It concludes that popular music has potentiality to engage current discourse on climate change. It could increase better understanding and need for individual and community responsibilities for net zero globally. It also brought nostalgia and apocalyptic experiences for global involvement in reducing positive emission.

## ***Ghost in the Shell*, Technology, and Anime: The Prophetic Visions of Shirow's Cyberpunk Future**

Dani Shalet (Canterbury Christ Church University, UK)

Masamune Shirow's manga, *Ghost in the Shell*, is a 'cyberpunk' classic of the 1990's. It focuses on a fictional counter-cyberterrorist organisation led by Major Motoko Kusanagi known as Section-9. This classic manga was made into an anime by Mamoru Oshii and became a cult hit in the mid-90s. Its popularity fuelled the production of several feature length animated films as well as two anime series. It once again gained popularity in 2017 with the release of the live-action film featuring Scarlett Johansson and Takeshi Kitano. What is interesting about *Ghost in the Shell* is its 'cyberpunk' leanings but also the way that it plays with transhumanist/futurist themes, giving one a glimpse into a proposed future where digitisation, trans-humans, cyber-augmentations and augmented reality reign. Transhumanism is a philosophy that was coined by Max More in 1990, an intellectual movement that sees a future where humans are no longer limited by human frailty and weakness. This future is one that envisions the cyberisation of the human body, its enhancement through cybernetic implants, computerisation and robotics, and is envisioned as a positive one. What makes Shirow's manga and Oshii's anime stand out is that it prophesises and depicts a transhuman future, but this future is uncertain and dark. One that has grown deviant, corrupt, sick, and inhuman due to robotics and Capitalism. This paper will demonstrate the cyberpunk themes woven throughout *Ghost in the Shell* whilst highlighting Shirow's and Oshii's prophetic visions of 2029, which draw striking similarities to 2020.

## **“And next, poetry is the what is left of life” – Poetry and Covid-19**

Julia Sattler (TU Dortmund University, Germany)

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed a world shaped by large-scale division – socio-economic, political, cultural, psychological. Yet, and despite these inequalities, the widespread experience of a health crisis and the global reaction to it has also created similarities between people in very different places and situation: In spring of 2020, most of the world was in lockdown – a truly global experience if there was one to be had in a situation where people had to stay at home instead of travel and explore. Interestingly enough, many turned to poetry as a healing force and a source of motivation and self-care. Starting from the observation that poetry is an important resource in crisis, in my talk, I aim to address poetry's immediate responses to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. These range from Ada Limon's "The End of Poetry" published in the New York Times in May of 2020 and discussing the subject of absence, to Juliana Spahr's careful reflection of the cultural and psychological shifts due to the pandemic in "Will there be singing." Poetry can sharpen one's focus in a moment such as this, can unite people despite their difference and bear witness in a situation of crisis. My talk will work with specific examples relating to Covid-19, but also speak to the larger relationship between poetry and meaning-making, as well as poetry and ethics.

## DAY 3

### Session 3E: Gender & Sexualities II

Chair: Elizabeth Russell (Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Spain)

#### **“This is the Way a New World Begins”:** Revolutionizing Masculinities in N.K. Jemisin’s *Broken Earth* Trilogy

Michael Pitts (University of South Bohemia, Czech Republic)

Feminist writers at the intersection of science fiction and gender studies utilize to great effect the dystopian genre to imagine transformed conceptions of gender. In envisioning a non-separatist society in which such new ideals of femininity are welcomed, feminist authors simultaneously outline new masculinities suitable for such an egalitarian polity. Feminist works envisioning the improved society and its attending masculinities are therefore invaluable sources for scholars within masculinity studies searching popular culture for improved conceptions of manhood. Contemporary American feminist utopias are an overlooked and invaluable site for mining new masculinities that reject hierarchical perspectives and value equality, fraternity, and freedom. Such texts therefore operate as invaluable manuals for constructing more ethical worlds after global catastrophe and central to these imagined polities are transformed conceptions of masculinity. The core argument delineated in this presentation is that one such feminist series, N.K. Jemisin’s *Broken Earth* trilogy, provides a map for re-envisioning society after “the end” in that it, while presenting minor utopian polities riddled with compromise, emphasizes as pivotal to the future of a post-apocalyptic humankind hope-driven efforts to completely dismantle the patriarchy and its masculinities. As this paper demonstrates, Jemisin’s trilogy is pivotal to discussions of life after a pandemic since it is marked by an optimistic attitude towards the future and a hope for the comprehensive transformation of society through activism and revolution. Jemisin emphasizes the historical contextualization of patriarchal masculinities, the impact of patriarchy upon ecological systems, and the necessity of comprehensively deconstructing and replacing the patriarchy and its masculinities. Her trilogy illustrates the opportunities science fiction grants for imagining improved societies and masculinities and are crucial for discussions concerning the future of both genre fiction and the world outside the text.

#### **Visions of the future, Christianity and Sexuality in the Short Stories of Gabriela Rábago Palafox**

Álvaro Arango Vallejo (University of Bonn, Germany)

The following proposal concerns two short stories by Mexican writer Gabriela Rábago Palafox (1950-1995) in which pandemics and representations of the future are utilized as a sharp commentary on Mexico’s ruling cultural and social discourses of the late 20th century. The word “underrated” is often abused to describe little-known authors. However, this attribute is perfectly applicable to the author in question: as a woman, a homosexual and an writer of horror and science fiction stories, Rábago Palafox reveals herself as a highly marginal literary figure, excluded from the Latin American canon for decades, despite (or perhaps because of) an intensive and relevant production and reception of fantastic literature in the continent. In many of her stories, transgressive and dystopian representations of Mexican society can be identified, elaborating complex and terrifying scenarios that serve as critical commentary on the different forms of discrimination and hypocrisy established by Catholic dogma in the spiritual, political, and cultural life of the country, often focusing on the control and repression of the sexuality of its protagonists. The purpose of this paper project is to highlight these schemes in two particularly telling stories in Rábago Palafox’s oeuvre: “Pandemia” (“Pandemic”) (winner of the 1988 Puebla Prize for Science Fiction), offers a post-apocalyptic vision of a country decimated by a mysterious virus and the subsequent persecution of its homosexual population,

which is revealed as an extremely direct commentary on the social taboo surrounding the HIV virus; “Resurrección” (“Resurrection”) is set in a future world where Christianity is nothing more than a historical curiosity, in which however the appearance of an undead saint reverses religious iconography to manifest itself as a horror motif.

### **Gender Pandemics: Pride in Pests and Political Turmoil to Impose Dystopian Regimes**

Almudena Machado-Jiménez (University of Jaén, Spain)

In the canonical feminist dystopia *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985), Atwood envisages the decay of the world, provoked by man’s radioactive experiments and the exploitation of inorganic farming and industry. The high levels of pollution have directly affected the country’s natality and this issue, together with feminist riots and women’s liberation, make radical conservative leaders to blame women of this apocalyptic result. Since Abrahamic religions, infertility has been strategically utilized to justify the establishment of patriarchal regimes in which men could fantasize about owning generative powers. The revival of feminist dystopia in the latest decade of the 21st century – with authors like Meg Elison, Jennie Melamed, Louise Katz or Louise O’Neill – exposes the direct connection between plagues, pests or pandemics and the imposition of patriarchal utopia. I refer to this phenomenon as gender pandemics, considering that natural disasters have an impact on gender roles and are treated as endemic maladies for female sociability, and even, biology. In the present study I aim to provide an overview of examples of contemporary feminist dystopia and their representation of gender pandemics, analyzing the relationship between environmental issues and the endangerment of progress towards a feminist society. Not only will this essay focus on pieces of dystopian literature, but a parallelism between fiction and reality is established through conflict-related sexual violence, a field which many feminist thinkers still find troublesome as it aims to acknowledge women’s victimhood without typecasting them as female stereotypes. Particularly, I articulate how COVID-19 is a perfect case of gender pandemics, from conservative political trends accusing feminist marches of spreading the virus to the increase of gender inequality within the workplace and the family, a space in which cases of domestic abuse have almost doubled.

### **Feminist Intersectional Perspectives on Pandemic Narratives: Larissa Lai’s *The Tiger Flu***

Chiara Xausa (University of Bologna, Italy)

Socially-constructed roles affect women’s experiences of and vulnerability to the broad impacts of pandemics. Although women are on the frontline of the Covid-19 response, as health-care workers and caregivers, they have less decision-making power than men in pandemic planning and post-pandemic recovery, and their voices and experiences go unheard. This article considers Larissa Lai’s visionary novel, *The Tiger Flu* (2018), as an entry point for conceptualising the gendered nature of the current Coronavirus emergency. A novel about the world to come, after climate change and mass death, *The Tiger Flu* brings women’s voices to the forefront of a flu pandemic that has jumped from animals to humans. By creating a world where men are vulnerable and women survive, Lai consciously writes against traditional end-of-world narratives that tend to rely on tiring gender narratives based on the tension between active male heroism and female fragility. Furthermore, *The Tiger Flu* explores the intersectional experiences of a global disease outbreak and imagines a new beginning from the viewpoint of queer voices of colour from marginalised communities. A feminist framework will be employed to shed light on the ongoing possibilities of life in the wake of patriarchy, environmental change and capitalism’s consumptive force.

## DAY 3

### Session 3F: Film & Media IV

Chair: Matt Hudson (Texas State University, USA)

#### **“We Did It”: Biological, Social, and Ecological Interdependence in *12 Monkeys* (1995)**

Ceren Kuşdemir Özbilek (Yaşar University, Turkey)

Terry Gilliam’s acclaimed movie *12 Monkeys* (1995) is more relevant than ever, now that we are facing a pandemic that has already killed over one million people. Starring Bruce Willis and Brad Pitt, it tells the story of our world in 2035 that has been nearly wiped out by a deadly virus, with 5 million dead. People are now forced live underground as the world above is uninhabitable. A group of scientists try to “save” the world by sending “socially deviant” inmates above the surface to collect items from which they hope to find a cure. Presenting a dystopic vision of the future through apocalyptic sceneries, *12 Monkeys* tackles the ways to investigate what happens to the world and how and why it happens using the flashback technique, taking us back and forth in time to help fathom the events. Slavoj Žižek writes in his most recent book *Pandemic!: Covid 19 Shakes the World* that “[t]he really difficult thing to accept is the fact that the ongoing epidemic is a result of natural contingency at its purest, that it just happened and hides no deeper meaning. In the larger order of things, we are just a species with no special importance” (14). The deadly virus in *12 Monkeys* is far from being natural, but the movie suggests that biological phenomena cannot be analysed in isolation: if the world is shaken by something biological, the influencing factors and the repercussions can always be found in social life and ecology. *12 Monkeys* problematizes the convergence of biological (in the image of the viral outbreak), social (with the upheaval in the society resulting from the pandemic) and ecological (the emergence of animals rights movement) degeneration and the spread of this degeneration. The film puts forward that one cannot be analysed without the other and the solutions should also be thought interdependently. If there is any hope at the end of the film, however indirectly, it is suggested that people need to act quickly and sensibly in order to ensure this hope of survival. In this respect, *12 Monkeys* brings together biological (medical), ecological, and social discourses in order to highlight the relevance amongst different disciplines of epistemology by revealing the power structures inherent in each.

#### **Worldwide Pandemic and Suture in the TV Series *Sloborn***

Fulya Kınca (University of Kırklareli, Turkey)

In cinema, drama is an ideological apparatus because it puts ideology up on screen. However the movie series *Sloborn* is one of the exceptions as it intentionally shows the contradictions in the dominant ideology. Most interestingly, the movie series reveal disjunctives in the social system of ideas by representing the influence of a worldwide pandemic on the people of small Northsee island *Sloborn*. The TV series talk about how the government and the army impose an identity of infectious island community on the people of *Sloborn* without sorting out the healthy and immuned ones. People in positions of power in the movie creates the way in which *Sloborn* community is signified as infectious and dangerous. As such, this process of reconciliation, between individual identity and collective culture in the movie series take us to what Jaques Lacan calls “suture”. From this point of view this paper discusses how Christian Alwart, the director of the TV series *Sloborn*, presents his narrative world by using the primary suturing devices to shape the spectator’s overall attitudinal outlook at the world of pandemic.

## **‘Are you allergic to community?’: Immunity, Auto-immunity and Community in Todd Haynes’s *Safe***

Bahar Memiş (Boğaziçi University, Turkey)

What are the limits of protection? In his 2002 treatise on immunization, Roberto Esposito poses this question to evaluate the predicament of self-preservation for individuals and social bodies, showing that the dialectics of self and other, inside and outside, and sacred and profane are embodied in the relation between bare life and politics. Drawing from literatures on biopolitics, immunization and the construction of subjectivity, I analyze the responses to disease and threat as processes of politicization and depoliticization: at one side, immunization creates the conditions of possibility for constructing communities; at the other side, it induces an auto-immunizing self that destroys the body’s own immunization; hence, leading to its self-destruction. I explore these themes with an analysis of Todd Haynes’s 1995 movie *Safe*, which narrates the life of Carol White, a privileged suburban homemaker, who becomes one of the vastly growing number of people suffering from “Environmental Disease”, an ailment that causes chronic fatigue, depression and, in more serious cases, severe convulsion and breakdowns on the patient who is exposed to chemical toxins. Afflicted by this syndrome, Carol sees fumes in the driveway, hairspray, her husband’s cologne and even her new couch as threats to her wellbeing. As she escapes her suburban life to live in a “nonprofit communal settlement dedicated to healing the individual”, her concerns with immunity turns inward to her own self which now becomes the site of threat. Within the nexus of industrial modern capitalism, self-contained communities, and the ideology of pure individuality, *Safe* provides an intriguing possibility that transcends the dichotomy between totalitarian banalization of communities and self-annihilating power of various forms of individualisms.

## **The Film: I-SCREAM**

Neet Neilson (UK)

We have been convinced that it is normal to consume animals and that they are good for us, when the truth is the complete opposite. Cognitive dissonance stalls change, makes people accepting to the horrors of animal agriculture and its impact. Propaganda disguised as health benefits further miseducates the population. Groups exposing the reality of the industry are being silenced because profit is more important than the planet, the animals, the population or the future. Thanks to social media, the truth is being exposed. But cognitive dissonance persists in the majority of the population. This film is designed to CHANGE PERCEPTIONS, to understand from a HUMAN PERSPECTIVE the horrors of animal agriculture. The Film: I-SCREAM Three generations have passed since the climate crisis destroyed the earth. Oceans rose, lands became barren, land erosion caused death and destruction. With minimal crops left to feed the animals, factory farming intensified to extreme levels where animals were fed other animals against their natural diet. Cannibalism caused disease and infection; soon all animals died. Overuse of antibiotics and animal diseases mutating to humans destroyed half the world’s population. Humans left were moved into crowded cities, the only place they could work. Food sources dwindled as the city populations died. Eventually, all that was left were the survivors, the ones that were resistant to infection. On a world where only humans existed and the wealthy elite, very soon human farming was established. A dystopian short film, set in the near future when human milk is a much-prized commodity. I-SCREAM follows the life of Hannah. Having just entered puberty her life now changes as she enters the human farming process. The film is a metaphorical look at the dairy industry designed to raise awareness of the reality of animal agriculture and change perceptions through human transference.

## DAY 3

### Session 3G: Zombies II

**Chair:** Ildikó Limpár (Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary)

#### **A World Not For Us: The Grey Ecology of Zombie Fiction**

Lars Schmeink (HafenCity University, Germany)

In our current times public discourse has been dominated by a debate weighing medical and economic costs of the pandemic against each other. And while interrelated, the medical challenges exponentially worsened by a neoliberal health system and the economic shut-down causing other severe medical issues, these discussions are similarly focused on a restoration of a status-quo. In that world, human existence is defined by a subsumption to neoliberal capitalist principles – our worth in this world defined by what and how we produce goods and consume them. But what these discussions erase and what zombie fictions have shown us is that a return to normal will not be feasible. As a posthumanist critique, zombies present us with a world that is no longer meant for the human that we know/are. The virus has turned all consumption into a question of essentials, reflecting the current debate of what we really need to survive. Clear-cut hierarchies are dissolved and instead our lives become relational, posthuman in their hybridity with other organisms and nature. Introducing the concept of a “grey ecology”, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen argues that we might gain a different perspective on our world by a “consideration of the violently inhumane” (382), either on the microscopic (the virus) or the macroscopic scale (the earth), beyond the limits of the human. I want to argue that zombie fictions in their mesoscopic view on the human, i.e. the survivors of the outbreak, produce a phantom presence (cf. Ücoluk) of both the microscopic (medical) perspective of life, of the zombie’s posthuman becoming-viral, and the macroscopic (ecological) perspective of life, of how a human exodus effects our planet and its survival. Both perspectives are part of a grey ecology that creates a new balance of live. Instead of seeing zombies as monstrous and endlessly consuming (humans), grey ecology reveals humans have been consuming both other life and nature itself. This posthumanist grey-ecological view of zombie narratives thus allows us to reposition our own priorities and to readjust our response to a crisis like Corona.

#### **The Fusion of Historical and Imaginary Epidemics: Polish Apocalypse by Robert J. Szmidt**

Ewa Drab (University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland)

Robert J. Szmidt is a Polish writer of science-fiction and fantasy, also known as the specialist of (post)-apocalyptic fiction. In many of his books, he shows the ability to combine the local with the global, which is visible, for example, in *Otchłań* (*Abyss*, 2015) the Polish variant of Dmitry Glukhovskiy’s *Metro 2033* series. The author adopts the same writing strategy in *Szczury Wrocławia* (*The Rats of Wrocław*, 2015), the story of an epidemic outbreak which turns into a zombie apocalypse, as the local is manifested in this novel through the reference to the history of Poland, with the point of departure for the plot being the real 1963 smallpox epidemic in Wrocław, and the global linked to the choice of the genre of (post)-apocalyptic and zombie fiction, widely present in English-language literature, cinema and video games but underexplored by Polish authors. The proposed paper would focus on the ways in which the author uses the fusion of real-life events with a zombie fantasy in order to create a complex and detailed image of an uncontrollable epidemic. Indeed, the combination of the two seems to allow for an observation of human behaviors visible under extreme circumstances since the historical elements lend credibility to the story, thus making it more engaging for the reader, whereas the apocalyptic component intensifies the reactions of individual characters whose perspectives constitute the base of the entire narrative. Furthermore, the use of popular patterns of apocalyptic fiction in the local context helps to recognize the universality of human emotions

and attitudes, common to entire societies exposed to a sudden menace. Hence, the image of epidemic in Szmidt's novel could also serve as a point of reference for a reflection regarding people's behavior in the face of a deadly danger, especially important in the context of the real-life coronavirus pandemic.

### **Survival of the Fittest in Zombie Apocalypse: Colson Whitehead's *Zone One* (2011)**

Olgahan Bakşı Yalçın (Istanbul Yeni Yuzyil University, Turkey)

The last few decades have observed a general increase in the popularity of the zombie apocalypse in fiction, films, television programs, video games, and other entertainment modes. The presence of the zombie has always arisen curiosity concerning the social, cultural, and political messages it delivers from the very beginning. Hence, it is common knowledge that zombies are considered to be a paradigmatic allegorical mode for retelling the current problems and the possible disasters that threaten human society especially at times of social upheaval and fear (Nagypal, 2014; Orpana, 2011). With the start of the 2000s, in the new millennium, a new theme is introduced into the zombie genre: a zombie-creating virus. Thus, the outbreaks in contemporary zombie fiction are a result of great biological warfare, a mysterious virus, or some kind of experiment. Zombie fiction usually deals with the unexpected ways that an outbreak can influence not just the public health but culture and politics, and economies. To stop the apocalypse and zombies from taking over the world, humans have to fight for their lives: however, the real question of the zombie outbreak is that of how the survivors, retain their humanity in a world of chaos and mayhem. In his zombie story, *Zone One* (2011), Colson Whitehead presents a Dystopian world after a majority of the population has been turned into wild, dangerous zombies due to a plague. This paper aims to investigate *Zone One* (2011) by Colson Whitehead for metaphorical readings which will involve an assessment of what survival strategies/skills are suggested by this contemporary zombie novel, as well as a critical interpretation of what zombie popular culture tells us about our fears and hopes, particularly those of the West millennial readers/ audiences.

## DAY 3

### Session 4A: Post-Colonial Futures

Chair: Tim Murphy (Oklahoma State University, USA)

#### **Beginning Again in the End Times: Finding Hope in the Collapse of a Dystopian Colonialism in Waubgeshig Rice's *Moon of the Crusted Snow***

Margaret Anne Smith (St Stephen's University, Canada)

Like Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy, Indigenous Canadian writer Waubgeshig Rice's novel *Moon of the Crusted Snow* (2018) features the collapse of the infrastructures that we have long held to be essential features of civilization. Where Rice, like other indigenous writers, differs is in the conclusion. Using many of the same tropes as Atwood, Cormac McCarthy and others, Rice creates a compelling portrayal of the unravelling of the world as we know it. However, construction of a post-pandemic or post-nuclear world isn't necessary. (Like Atwood and McCarthy, Rice doesn't make the cause of this apocalypse clear.) Instead, Rice reveals the colonial, capitalist world as the construct. The apocalypse has been an ongoing feature of indigenous life since European settlers first appeared on the shores of the Americas. Those who lived here first experienced a world-shattering with the advent of colonialism and have already been living in a "eco-dystopian" world for centuries; Rice starkly highlights the structural inequities that have devastated communities and traditional patterns of life since 1492. Because of this shift in perspective, the end of this settler-induced dystopia reveals hope. The answer to the postapocalyptic question "what comes after the end of the world?" is simple: we return to the world "before." For the characters in *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, this world of "before" is no utopian imaginary, but rather a legendary and remembered world of the ancestors. It is no idealized landscape, however, and his young protagonists leave the world of the reserve with their children, their supplies, and their traditional lore, with hope but no certainty. They don't look back.

#### **The Long Duree of End-times, and Beginning Again (with James Baldwin)**

Anita Girvan (Athabasca University, Canada)

In order to challenge the teleological ring of end-times, I offer an extended spoken word engagement (of which the above is a tentative beginning) inspired by those who have long engaged with what might be called "apocalypse" (including pandemic). While utopia-dystopia ring within certain imaginaries that see these times and eco-social as exceptionally recent, my creative intervention brings together the imaginaries of BIPOC thinkers who see these issues within a long history. These thinkers offer a way out of the utopia-dystopia trap by imagining a complex terrain of pleasure, pain and playfulness out of what constitutes life as an infusion of past present and future larger-than-human relations in less-than-perfect times.

#### **Survivance in the End Times: Exploitation and Dreaming in *The Marrow Thieves***

Leah Van Dyk (University of Calgary, Canada)

Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* reads as a powerful social critique on past and current colonial relations with the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, while also projecting these concerns into a future destroyed by capitalist consumerism, technological advancement, relentless industrialization, models of extraction, and exploitation of the land. While Dimaline acknowledges the novel's "dark" content, she insists that "this is history. All I did was move it into the future, so that people could understand we all have a part to play in making sure what happened in the past doesn't happen again" (Shazia). For, *The Marrow Thieves* is primarily a narrative of consumption: consumption of land, consumption of bodies, consumption of dreams. Yet the text functions as one of many models to finding self-representation and

embodied living within spaces of marginalization, violence, and exploitation, as Dimaline works to rewrite, reclaim, and embody Indigenous presence and persistence. I seek to explore how the dreams experienced by Frenchie and his chosen family, the threat and extraction of dreams, and the overarching dream narrative contribute to a communal and land-based hermeneutic, one which potentially provides healing and is healed, and how this furthers the novel's dystopic narrative of resistance and hope. This persistence, or Indigenous survivance (Dillon), is most powerfully evident through the alternative narratives posed by dreaming. Using theories of Indigenous survivance, non-Western utopic/dystopic narrative tropes, and "alterNative" epistemologies (Dillon, Dutton, Whitehead), I will explore the reparative—residing within that term and all its complexities—potentiality of dreams and dreaming, examining how dreams operate within and actively resist the extractivist desires of this dystopian (colonial, contemporary) society.

### **Dreams as Pharmakon: Memory and Resistance in Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl* and Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves***

Allison Mackey and Özlem Öğüt Yazıcıoğlu (Universidad de la República & Boğaziçi University, Uruguay & Turkey)

In Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl* (2002) and Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* (2017), speculative coming-of-age novels set in a not-too-distant postcapitalist Canada, a dreaming sickness—inducing primeval memories and suicide by drowning in the former, and a loss of the ability to dream in all but the Indigenous population in the latter—holds center stage. In both novels, the "epidemic" is connected to the exploitation of human and non-human (hybrid) bodies within capitalist systems of resource extraction; it also points to the necessity of recuperating difficult histories. Dreaming emerges as a kind of pharmakon, simultaneously poison and remedy, as the novels reveal narrative possibilities that reflect the ever-transforming fluidity of dreams as antidote to toxic monocultures. In *SFG*, one of the protagonists is born with a strange corporeal affliction and is eventually exiled from a sheltered corporate compound to the Unregulated Zone, where the bodies of women—cloned from the DNA of carp and racial minorities—are exploited in factories under dismal conditions, and where a laboratory that tests the "dreaming sickness" is also located. Central to the narrative of *TMT* is the articulation of memory through the telling of the "coming-to" stories of characters on the run from recruiters from the "residential schools" (a historically-charged euphemism for the institutions where bone marrow is extracted from Indigenous people who still have the ability to dream). In both novels, dreams carved in memory and passed on through stories, songs and poetry constitute the driving force behind resistance and healing through forms of kinship and community that cut across racial, sexual, ethnic and species boundaries. Envisioning the future through a re-inscription of the past, dreams signal the recuperation of individual and communal history, while at the same time refusing to idealize any kind of mythic or "pure" origin.

## DAY 3

### Session 4B: Capitalism & Biopolitics

Chair: Nicole Pohl (Oxford Brookes University, UK)

#### Threshold Events and “The Crunch”: Apocalyptic Temporalities, Finance Capitalism, and the Politics of US Survivalist Storytelling

Ben DeVries (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA)

Writing in January 2020 for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, anthropologist Natasha Meyers warns against the “lure of apocalypse” that so often attends discourses about ecology and the Anthropocene. Meyers’s warning is a timely one, and necessary. Yet insofar as she assumes an audience sympathetic to critiques of climate and capitalism—critiques that often originate from the putative left, at least in the US—Meyers risks universalizing an apocalypse that not everyone recognizes. After all, the right has its own fantasies of an end, whether they be the evangelical Rapture or the racist boogaloo. And for better or worse, leftist scholars must contend with these apocalypses, too. With that context in mind, this paper aims at prompting thought about apocalypse on the right, by considering the ideological work performed by what I call threshold events, or apocalyptic events that delineate a clear before and after for a given population. In particular, this essay focuses on US survivalism in the late 1990s and on the politics of survivalist storytelling as it pertains to the threshold event. A not-too-distant cousin of the modern US militia-movement, survivalism designates a lifestyle organized around anticipated disaster, and for this paper, I center a novel by James Wesley Rawles, a prominent white US survivalist and rural-retreat advocate. Titled *Patriots: Surviving the Coming Collapse (1995/1998)*, Rawles’s novel offers a representative example of the threshold apocalyptic event and the fantasies such an event can facilitate. Specifically, this paper builds on *Patriots* to argue that the threshold event—in this case, a global economic disaster that inaugurates widespread social collapse—does not just lend itself to easy justifications for imperialist violence enacted by conventionally white male heroes. Rather, it also highlights a perhaps surprising ambivalence: white modernity’s uneasy relation to the infrastructure and temporalities of finance capitalism.

#### Capitalism is the Pandemic

Jason Livingston (University at Buffalo, USA)

Capitalism is the pandemic. The crisis precedes the virus. The crisis will continue beyond the vaccine. Spring 2020. I was the media artist and key coordinating lead on a May Day action. I hired an airplane to fly around New York City. The airplane hauled a banner through the sky. It read “#CAPITALISMISTHEPANDEMIC.” I assembled an ad-hoc circle of comrades to crowd fund and document the event, and partnered with an indigenous women-led organization to craft a social media message which framed the action around “colonial capitalism.” This happened before the great people’s uprising of the summer. This happened at the peak of the lockdown at the site of global capital and media. Since our action, more sky interventions have appeared. An artist flew George Floyd’s words through the air in five US cities. An activist collaborative sky-wrote English and Spanish border-crossing phrases at 80 locations. A group sent a solidarity message banner in support of Breonna Taylor through the clouds above Louisville. None of these events was coordinated. Why the sky? Why the sky now? How might we think the sky as a site of inscription and critique? How do we write our imaginations and futurities in the air? Is the air commercial or public space? In pursuing these questions and framing my May Day action, I will offer a brief presentation that includes documentation and philosophical-political framings, as well as speculate on the return of sky actions, sky art, and air activism in 2020. David Antin’s 1980s Sky Poems, which he conceived as “immaterial public monuments” serve as a key reference, as does Roberto Bolaño’s Distant Star.

Contemporary poetry and conceptual interventions reposition the praxis of sky writing. The medium of air allows us to breathe and to see the sun. Any future requires an atmospheric rewrite.

### **Speculative Fiction after Capitalist Realism: Thinking Fatalist SF**

Jason Goldfarb (Duke University, USA)

The dominant critical perspective on speculative fiction—from Ernest Bloch to Darko Suvin, Tom Moylan, and Ruth Levitas—argues that its unique value lies in the ability to provoke “cognitive estrangement.” SF’s presentation of empirically grounded alternative realities (novums) are said to provide a reflexive distance on the present, estranging readers from their previously unquestioned suppositions about the world. Yet recent scholarship, often from a Marxist background, has claimed that this form of speculative imagination is no longer plausible. Mark Fisher, Fredric Jameson, and Slavoj Žižek have all argued that the “real subsumption” of late capitalism has ushered in a period of “capitalist realism,” barring the notion of alternative futures and imaginations. This poses a (under-theorized) difficulty for SF studies: how to produce cognitive estrangement and a notion of the new, when the future is foreclosed? In an effort to address this problematic, the present paper develops a Hegelian approach to speculative and utopic fiction. Rejecting the claim that thought exists outside of its contemporary horizon, it argues that SF’s unique ability lies not in thinking alternative worlds, but in over-conforming to the present world, thereby demonstrating its contradictions and limits. The perpetual attempt to think the “new” in fact reinforces capital, providing fertile ground for capitalist commodification. Once this attempt is rejected, and one fully accepts the fatalism of the present epoch, SF’s futural-temporal possibilities (re)appear. Subsequently this paper proceeds by developing the classical SF approach and then opposing it to a second, “Hegelian” understanding. It concludes by staging the alternative between the two positions as also a debate occurring in SF literature among Callenbach, Le Guin, and Delany. Here the “pre-critical” utopia remains tied to the prospect of an outside, while the later critical utopias of Delany and Le Guin re-work classic SF conventions through the anti-hero, and the failure of imagination.

### **Biopolitics and Resistance: Infected Bodies in *Contagion* and *Blindness***

Irena Jurković (University of Zadar, Croatia)

Pandemics and the transmission of infectious diseases seem to be a recurring theme in both literature and the visual arts. Most films dealing with the epidemic, as the main theme or background story, fall somewhere into the genre of fantasy, science fiction, or horror, while the emphasis is usually on the destruction of humanity and the subsequent (post)apocalyptic environment. This paper will focus on two recent films that seem to differ from early virus narratives by their somewhat realistic portrayal of events and by favoring the theme of infection of the social body rather than that of the individual body. The much-discussed *Contagion* (2011) is a film that narrates the outbreak of the deadly MEV-1 virus, but it is also a film about the societal response to perceived unsuccessful disease management by the authorities. Another film to demonstrate similar problems is *Blindness* (2008) whose story is following the fast spread of the unknown disease that causes epidemic blindness, but just like *Contagion*, the spread of the virus causes not only fear and panic but also societal disruption revealing unequal power distribution. Both films lack in visual abject images so typical of virus narratives, which further raises the question of the real enemy in the story, but also shifts the focus to the effects of the epidemic at the macro-level of society. The analysis of the aforementioned films will focus on the representation of the politicization of human biological life, and neoliberal governance systems drawing mainly on the understanding of the biopolitics by Giorgio Agamben and Robert Esposito. Particular attention will be given to the representation of

resistance in films and their success in raising question of whether any form of resistance to biopolitics is possible in modern society.

## DAY 3

### Session 4C: Apocalypse & Post-apocalypse

Chair: Claire Curtis (College of Charleston, USA)

#### **The Past and Present of the Plague in *The Doomsday Book*: Utopian Practices for Combatting Active Misinformation**

Amanda Pavani (Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil)

Amongst several representations of pandemic and epidemic processes in fiction, Connie Willis's *The Doomsday Book* introduces a re-examination of the black plague with an epidemic rapidly spreading around an imagined future Oxford, in the early 2060s. As the black plague affected Europe in the 13th century, Kivrin, Willis's historian protagonist, takes the first time jump into that century to understand life in what was considered the most dangerous period in (western) history. Her departure is followed by a mysterious infectious illness in Oxford, sending academics, doctors, and heads of department into emergency procedures. However, future scientists must work on infection tracing, treatment testing and fear management, hindered by institutionally political and religious agents who wish either to maintain their status and deny discoveries based on scientific information. Willis's panic and misinformation resonates particularly well against the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, revealing that technological development on itself does not guarantee improved stances in relation to epidemics. Active misinformation, fear, and faulty communication between scientists and political leaders remain rampant in Willis's future – as it has been for 2020 public policies in COVID-19 containment. Individual actions are futile (as Kivrin's actions in the Middle Ages reveal); public policies for infectious diseases demand effective and collaborative communication between scientific and political agents. Considering Christopher Medadue's (2020) statement that science fiction can foresee the questions, if not the answers for such global crises, Isaac Asimov's remarks on science fiction and perspectives for the actual future, in tandem with Tom Moylan's claim, that the strength of utopia lies more in the act or portraying it over whatever details in which its representation might incur, this paper looks at tensions between science fiction and the "reality" of epidemic and pandemic perspectives, with a view to promote preventive actions through critical and utopian readings of science fiction.

#### **Pandemics and the Utopian Potentiality of Grief**

Jill Belli (New York City College of Technology, CUNY, USA)

So much has been lost in this pandemic: lives, health, jobs, money, travel, routines, well-being, community, security, mobility, plans, hopes, dreams. Everything from the economy to, in the words of the now infamous dystopian novel *Station Eleven*, "all the small details that comprise a moment, a morning, a life." We grieve these losses, individually, but also interpersonally, collectively. This grief mediates our experience of the pandemic, just as the pandemic itself is mediated through our individual and collective grief. Where is there room for hope, for the good life, the "not yet," within such pervasive and global grief? How are we transformed by this loss and how might we, in turn, transform the world in return? In addition to more dystopian manifestations of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression), more generative later stages are acceptance, hope, and meaning-making. Out of the debris of despair, a reconstitution of what is possible, an integration of this devastating loss into our lives, a way of organizing the world anew. Cindy Milstein characterizes this radical possibility: "Our grief—our feelings, as words or actions, images or practices—can open up cracks in the wall of the system." Both grief and utopia prompt estrangement, highlighting the gap between the world as it is and ought to be. And they both trigger the desire to be otherwise and prompt transformation towards the "not-yet." In *Station Eleven*, as in our contemporary moment, the pandemic exists as "the

divide between a before and an after, a line drawn through [. . .] life”; “it is possible to survive this but not unaltered.” Pandemics disrupt. They alter our worlds, the way we live in them, and ourselves. Grief disrupts too, with loss offering an apocalyptic break that shatters the present and forces us to renegotiate our relationship to it. In this way, grief functions analogously to utopia; in Ruth Levitas’s words, “a process which disrupts the closure of the present.”

### **Literary Culture in End Times: Saleema Nawaz’s *Songs for the End of the World***

Wendy Roy (University of Saskatchewan, Canada)

Canadian writer Saleema Nawaz’s *Songs for the End of the World* created a sensation when it was released in spring-summer 2020, because it is set during fall 2020 and predicts a global pandemic occurring at the same time as the real pandemic of 2019-21. As its title indicates, *Songs for the End of the World* imagines a contemporary world that requires the written and sung word to allow people to manage their trauma during a time of crisis. In her 2005 study of apocalyptic fiction in Canada, Marlene Goldman argues that rather than focusing on the destruction of the existing world and a joyful future for the elect, contemporary Canadian authors concentrate on “the traumatic experience of those barred from paradise,” especially the “victimized non-elect”: “women, children, minorities, and nature itself” (Rewriting Apocalypse 5, 16). Nawaz’s novel focuses not just on the testimony of the traumatized but also on how such people use works of literature and music to cope with and perhaps even overcome apocalyptic trauma. Nawaz imagines the first five months of a pandemic in which literature and song play an important role in human beings’ perceptions of their changing world and relationships with one another. The novel is fundamentally self-reflexive in that its significant intertexts are imagined narratives that deal with surviving a pandemic or other apocalyptic event: a best-selling novel, two philosophical treatises, and a popular song. I argue that in Nawaz’s *Songs for the End of the World*, works of the imagination provide advice on how to live through the pandemic; ask and answer ethical questions about human behaviour during end times; and provide “a voice in the darkness” that compels people to understand that we are all in this together (Songs 384).

### **Stories of the Apocalypse: Re-reading the *Wastelands* Anthologies in Times of Pandemics**

Roberto Olavarría Choin (University of Granada, Spain)

In 2008 John Joseph Adams edited an anthology entitled *Wastelands: Stories of the Apocalypse*. This first collection included twenty first post-apocalyptic stories which provided very different scenarios to illustrate the collapse of civilization and the new, terrible consequences that the survivors had to face. It includes authors such as Octavia Butler, George RR Martin, Cory Doctorow and Gene Wolfe. The causes of the end of the world encompass a wide range of themes, such as worldwide epidemics, ecological collapse, atomic warfare or cosmic cataclysms. These stories are full of depth and complexity, not only because they provide a careful, logical explanation for the causes and results of the disaster, but because they also involve accurate insights about the psychological and sociological dimensions of catastrophe and chaos for the survivors. *Wastelands* received very favorable critics. After the good reception of the anthology, two more collections of stories were published: *Wastelands 2: More Stories of the Apocalypse* (2015), and *Wastelands: The New Apocalypse* (2019). They have also been translated into different languages such as Spanish, *Paisajes del Apocalipsis*, *Antología de Relatos Sobre el Final de los Tiempos* (2012). The themes and characteristics in some of the stories of *Wastelands* suggest a reading, or re-reading under the present crisis caused by the outbreak of COVID-19. My proposal will provide, first, a general overview of the *Wastelands* anthology, and second, I will focus on a particular story: Octavia Butler’s “Speech Sounds”. In this story a pandemic has affected most of mankind and people have lost language, so that most of them are unable to talk and read. Those who have preserved language

have to cope with the hostility of most of the mute population. I will demonstrate how, apparently, the story foreshadows some disturbing coincidences with the current situation.

## DAY 3

### Session 4D: Plague & Pandemic Fiction III

Chair: Conrad Scott (University of Alberta, Canada)

#### Landscape Imaginaries: Ecocritical Dystopianism and the Pandemic

Conrad Scott (University of Alberta, Canada)

The moment of a global pandemic like COVID-19 demands that we not only ask how society functions, but how we live in relation to nature (Carrington). Issues like ecosystem alterations accompanying pandemic processes, shifts in sovereignty and land use, and advancements with technology all forefront the question of what kind of environmental spaces will be left behind. What will specific places look like in our near future, and which social elements will inhabit them? Regional or even global outbreaks may alter not only how we live, but how we engage with the places we live in, as affected landscapes will never be fully returned to what they were before. These outcomes involve fundamental changes to a sense of place, and recent speculative narratives about the future imagine both the detriments from “business as usual” models and the potentialities for more environmentally-conscious societies emerging; these narratives present a spectrum from “nightmarish” (Moylan, *Scraps* 148) futures to ones informed by hopeful imagining. By engaging with Emily St. John Mandel’s *Station Eleven* (2014) and Larissa Lai’s *The Tiger Flu* (2018), this paper will examine a development in dystopian fiction that I argue hinges on narrative employment of environmental changes to place. That is, a distinct subgenre has arisen within contemporary dystopian fiction since Tom Moylan, Ildney Cavalcanti, Raffaella Baccolini, and Lyman Tower Sargent categorized the now-common “critical dystopia” for narratives written in the 1980s and 1990s. My intervention with the term “ecocritical dystopia” demonstrates that, sometime after the first critical dystopias, sf writing has been engaging with realism in a manner that entangles social concerns with environmental crises, but also with how near-future societies—and therefore present ones—might engage with a sense of place. This paper will focus specifically on intersections between ecocritical dystopianism and the fallout from pandemics in Mandel’s and Lai’s novels.

N.B. This paper is extended from my PhD dissertation, “Here, at the End: Contemporary North American Ecocritical Dystopian Fiction.” Different papers explaining the concept of the “ecocritical dystopia” were also presented at ICFA 2019, SFRA 2019 (winner of the Student Paper Award [www.sfra.org/Student-Paper-Award](http://www.sfra.org/Student-Paper-Award)), and ALECC 2020. To date, the concept already appears in my article published in *Paradoxa’s* “Climate Fictions” (ed. Alison Sperling), but this piece is stand-alone.

#### Pandemics, Viruses, Anomie in *Severance* and *The Freedom Artist*

Peter Sands (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, USA)

Two recent novels illustrate a range of possible responses to pandemics: one directly by imagining a virus spreading from China to the rest of the world and likely eradicating human civilization, and another by meditating on the viral load of the idea itself—the meme, the image, the thought—as a kind of infection that shapes human civilization over millenia and necessitates a cyclic rebirth of utopian hope. The first, *Severance*, by Ling Ma (2018), can easily be situated in a long line of literary engagements with pandemics, from Daniel Defoe’s *Journal of the Plague Year* to Charles Brockden Brown’s *Edgar Mervyn* to Emily St. John Mandel’s *Station Eleven*, and many others in between. *Severance* presciently imagines the same disease vectors as the current global pandemic, using the occasion to think through the possible terrible endgame of today’s late-stage capitalism. The second, *The Freedom Artist*, by Ben Okri (2019), is not so easily situated within pandemic literary traditions (or, for that matter, the novel itself), but instead is a novel-length quasi-fable that confronts the post-truth present

with a lengthy meditation on ideology and freedom centered on the central conceit of ideas as transmissible infections. In this short engagement with the two novels, I will first read each closely and then present a framework for reading their engagement with the critical utopia and dystopia as defined by Moylan (*Demand the Impossible* 1986) and Moylan and Baccolini (*Dark Horizons* 2003), as well as place those readings in conversation with other recent fiction and film, such as Alex Rivera's 2009 film, *Sleep Dealer*.

**Religious Fundamentalism, Corporate Capitalism, and Pandemics in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven*, and Ling Ma's *Severance***

Emrah Atasoy and Thomas Horan (Cappadocia University, Turkey and The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, USA)

While the rapid dissemination of COVID-19 took many people by surprise, major works of recent apocalyptic fiction anticipate global pandemics similar to the one we currently face. This speculative literature warns that epidemics can catalyze religious fanaticism, even in so-called modern societies, challenging the Wellsian notion that technologically advanced societies are less susceptible to religious extremism. Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003), the first novel in her *MaddAddam* trilogy, Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* (2014), and Ling Ma's *Severance* (2018) prompt us to consider how the persistence and recurrence of pandemics could affect mainstream religious views and practices. Epidemics in this literature highlight disturbing similarities between corporate capitalism and fundamentalism by portraying both as faith-based, hierarchical systems, indicating that our free market economic system may actually prime us for theocracy. These dystopias also show how sceptical, sophisticated characters can unwittingly acclimate to corporate capitalism and religious fanaticism almost as easily as they can be infected by illness. This emerging sub-genre of apocalyptic fiction indicates that organized religion and a market economy can only function beneficially when distinct from each other.

**"Because Survival is Insufficient" Living for and through Art in the End-Times: *Station Eleven* and Pandemic Hope-Questing**

Cassandra Bausman (The University of Iowa, USA)

Emily St John Mandel's *Station Eleven* envisions a global pandemic that heralds civilization's collapse. As in our now real-world experience, the pandemic serves as a great clarifier: of what we actually prioritize, of the broken state of so many institutions, of privilege enjoyed or taken for granted, of what we fight for, and what we remember, retain, or actively re-envision as we rebuild. Flashing between pre-outbreak life, the night the 'Georgia Flu' begins its wildfire spread, and the future 20 years later, Mandel tells more than just an apocalypse story, evoking both terror and empathy in a novel which is more than a story of crisis and survival. Centering on the value of friendship, love, and art, and the preservation of culture, kindness, and connectivity, hers is a story of the necessity of art, of family and memory and community, and the awful courage it takes to continue to look upon the world with fresh and hopeful eyes. As readers follow survivors in their struggle to retain their basic humanity and make connections with a vanished world and distant norms through art, memory, and remnants of popular culture, we find an overriding, strong testament to humanity's enduring, creative potential. Sheering from Shakespeare to SciFi, Mandel's audience accompanies a nomadic group of actors and musicians navigating a period of collapse and in quest for renewal and finds, insistently, in this novel as in our lived 2020-experience, the value of the utopian imaginary (or the productivity of the dystopian imaginary) boldly championed. Accordingly, this presentation will explore this particular articulation of hope in crisis and will set Mandel's lyric exploration alongside artifacts of real-world processing of the Covid-19 pandemic as carried in meme-culture and

social media. As both Mandel's novel illustrates and our own pandemic experience underscores, there is still such glory in humanity, in what we, through every plague and every age, continue to create, continue to say and share with our interconnectivity through our art, be it song, story, stage, or screen. "Because survival is insufficient," reads a central thematic line, one taken from Star Trek and spray-painted on the Traveling Symphony's lead wagon, in a lesson the novel makes emphatically clear: it's not just the residents of Mandel's post-collapse world who must live for more than mere survival; so do we all. And often, it seems, as creators and consumers, in the pages and worlds of *Station Eleven* or the realities of life under siege of the coronavirus, we find our reason, our inspiration and our solace, in our imaginaries, in our art.

## DAY 3

### Session 4E: Anthropocene: In & Beyond 'End Times'

Chair: Nora Castle (University of Warwick, UK)

#### Ursula Le Guin's *The Word for World is Forest* and the Feminist Critique of the Anthropocene

Marina Pereira (Fluminense Federal University, Brazil)

This presentation aims to analyze Ursula Le Guin's novel *The Word for World is Forest* (1972) and its relation to the theories of the Anthropocene that have taken place since Crutzen (2000; 2002) and Stoermer's (2002) studies, more specifically the feminist ones (HARAWAY, 2016; TSING, 2015). Written before the discussion of the Anthropocene took place, Le Guin's novel deals with anxieties very similar to the ones we face today about the imminent destruction of our planet. The novel suggests that the patriarchal logic of exceptionalism, exploitation and progress is directly responsible for a great part of the social injustices and environment devastation we face today, something Le Guin would later develop in "The Carrier Bag Theory" (1989), when she questions the narratives focused on the hero's story. In her essay, Le Guin proposes that long before the spear/weapon, the first tool that humans created must have been the bag – or some kind of container - and from that hypothesis she defends other possibilities in the way of telling stories. Taking into account Le Guin's influence on both Haraway and Tsing's theories, this presentation aims to analyze the feminist critique of the Anthropocene, establishing a dialogue with the novel *The Word for World is Forest* and its narrative of an Earth military logging colony set up on the planet Athshe where the colonists enslave the non-violent native Athsheans.

#### Eating Meals During a Pandemic/Epidemic: How Science Fiction Brings Food Commensality, Culture, and Taboos to the Experience

Tiff Graham (Otis College of Art and Design, USA)

This paper explores how the meal, a familiar activity in which a person or group of people consume food and drinks during a specific time, is re-imagined in six science fiction stories centered on pandemics and epidemics in various countries. The stories included are *Tóxico* (movie, Argentina, 2020), *#Alive* (movie, South Korea, 2020), *Perfect Sense* (movie, U.K., 2011), *The Rain* (series, Denmark, 2018), *Severance* (book, U.S., 2018), and "So Much Cooking" (short story, U.S., 2015). Each of these selected science fiction stories introduce a fictional virus that upturns the world of its characters as it stirs fear, insecurity, suspicion, and other unexpected responses in a world where eating a meal becomes a familiar/unfamiliar experience. I will connect these stories through themes of food ingredients, sharing and commensality, and social behaviors associated with preparation, presentation, consumption, avoidance, and taboo breaking. For example, the theme of commensality and sharing in the movie *#Alive* about a virus that causes the infected to become zombies is depicted through two non- infected characters preparing and eating noodles while describing how they like to customize the dish. This act suggests the building of friendship, trust, and solidarity. Later, they encounter a man who saves them from an attack in the hallway and generously shares his food and water supply in a time when resources are scarce. Unfortunately, it is a deceptive gesture; the man is attempting to gain their trust so he can feed them to his infected wife. These scenes can also be read as displays of cultural foodways and means to better understand human expectations and characters' states of mind.

**“Now There Would be Time for Everything”: Pandemic as a Liminal Moment in Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider***

Lydia Nixon (Indiana University, Bloomington, USA)

Reflecting on her brush with death after contracting influenza in 1918, American author Katherine Anne Porter describes the experience as a fragmentation of self: “The plague of influenza...simply divided my life, cut it across like that.” In her 1939 novella, *Pale Horse Pale Rider*, Porter traces the splintering effects of this traumatic experience through the dissociative musings and hallucinations of her protagonist, Miranda. As Miranda descends into this illness, the fractures in her life spread, dividing mind from body, body from environment. Yet, despite her illness and the death of her lover, the novella concludes with a gesture toward the possibilities that Miranda’s future yet holds. As we grapple with the trauma, isolation, and “layers of loss” (Elizabeth Outka) of the COVID-19 pandemic, Porter’s conclusion offers a fruitful perspective for our own post-pandemic future. In this paper, I draw on Cathy Caruth’s work on trauma and Timothy Morton’s ecological studies to point to the liminal moment that emerges in the wake of a pandemic, as our traumatic experience reorients humankind to better recognize and respond to the ecological trauma of climate change. Eli Clare’s critique of ableist notions of restoration offers a radical way of re-envisioning our road to recovery, and I suggest that the pandemic’s ecological fragmentation opens up the possibility of adopting such an approach. Miranda’s tragic narrative concludes with the abrupt disappearance of the visions from her past that have haunted her throughout the novella, and she symbolically turns toward her future with the realization, “now there would be time for everything” (363). Perhaps we, too, may discard the pre-pandemic “normal” of our past and instead view this break in our global routine as an ecological reset, using this moment to reinvent the way we conceptualize and interact with the world around us.

**The “US” of the Anthropocene: Biopower, Nationalism, and Reproductive Futurity in *Interstellar***

Joey Song (University of Michigan, USA)

In the time of the Anthropocene, the call for “species thinking” and associated concepts have been echoed by multiple scholars such as Dipesh Chakrabarty, Bruno Latour, and Jane Bennett. In our time of an unprecedented global pandemic intertwined with global warming, such efforts to bridge populations, species, and cultures together into a cohesive network will be as alluring as ever. One manifestation of this desire is seen in the rise of speculative fiction, which has become popular in academic discourse on ecocriticism. Enter Christopher Nolan’s film *Interstellar* (2014). Perhaps a cinematic experience about the end of the world due to climate change will fare better than statistics in the attempt to cultivate species thinking. Although I argue that *Interstellar* does not head Chakrabarty’s call to promote species thinking, the film does aesthetically represent many of the issues faced when attempting to speak for the future of “mankind” and the “we” of Anthropocene discourse. Indeed, the film does partially fulfill the Messianic promise of fiction to register the gravity of climate change that Amitav Ghosh prophesizes, but it does so by visually portraying the hegemonic undercurrents of biopower, nationalism, and reproductive futurity embedded in climate change discourse. Operating within the framework of cognitive estrangement, the unique aesthetic representation of the Anthropocene in *Interstellar* allows the viewer to register issues with global consolidation in reality by acknowledging the issues of global representation in the movie. Although the film does not posit a feasible global identity, it allows the viewer to visually comprehend the challenges and pre-existent corruption within any premise of species thinking. Fiction is a volatile ontological and epistemic battleground in our dystopian world, and as an area capable of various aesthetics, mediums, and representations, it is key in enacting or disavowing any attempt at species thinking.

## DAY 3

### Session 4F: Dystopias II

Chair: Etta Madden (Missouri State University, USA)

#### **Podcasting in a Pandemic: Dystopian Audio Fictions in 2020 Brazil**

Benjamin Burt (University of California, Los Angeles USA)

This presentation considers podcasting as a medium for dystopian storytelling during the Covid-19 pandemic. The release of three audio dramas during the height of the coronavirus crisis in Brazil drew significant media attention in a nation with little history of narrative podcasting. I will first present the three dramas, Gimlet Media's *Sofia*, Projeto Pytuna's *Rádio Pytuna*, and Jacqueline Vargas's *#tdvaificar... (#everythingwillbe...)*, before examining their divergent approaches to dystopian narration. Despite a common grounding in speculative fiction, the three works vary greatly in the specificity of their social and political critiques. Neither *Sofia*, adapted by Spotify from an American podcast, nor *Rádio Pytuna*, an allegory of Brazil's ongoing history of fascism, explicitly reference the Covid-19 pandemic. *#tdvaificar...*, on the other hand, details the vagaries and paranoia of quarantine in a fictionalized São Paulo. Through a comparison of each production's approach, I consider the advantages and challenges of dystopian storytelling during a major pandemic and the impact (explicit or implicit) of the coronavirus on each podcast. I conclude with remarks on the state of narrative podcasting in Brazil and this medium's applicability for adaptive, collaborative storytelling during moments of crisis.

#### **Escaping the Dystopia, Forgetting the Utopia: Iran in the Age of Corona**

Ata Mohamed Tabriz (Independent Scholar, Turkey)

Dystopia is the negation of one society's collective will, and limiting the chances of "good life" on the contrary, utopia, is the situation of affirmation of those possibilities that a group or citizen willed within a specific construction. A large part of Iranian society, with the onset of the Corona pandemic and mostly through social media, tried to resist the will of the ruling apparatus, which was continually narrowing social life possibilities. These limitations were about over-controlling the internet, restricting freedom of speech by arresting the activists, and shutting down the different communication platforms like podcasts. Besides these limitations, the most important part of narrowing down the possibilities of "good life" occurred by not controlling the country's economic situation, which deals with extreme inflation. The government, primarily because of the possibilities created by the pandemic, started a militarization both in all bureaucratic grades (using the retired Sepahi's) and streets; these acts restricted the "spaces of freedom" and enabled the suppression of the smallest inconsistency with the regime's ideology. Thus, under the pressure of both internal and external forces, the government centralized the national security discourse. In this case, a significant part of Iranian society has moved away from its utopia, abandoning the "human ideals" that it has created in its own culture to live a relatively comfortable life. This portion launched constant "don't do" campaigns on social media to the state and opposed the dystopia that was being created. Living in dystopic conditions eliminates the possibilities of utopic thoughts and actions.

#### **Fiction as Prediction: Pandemic Response in Greg Bear's *Darwin's Radio***

Jayde Martin and Benjamin Horn (University of Birmingham, UK)

This paper analyses Greg Bear's *Darwin's Radio* using the critical framework of posthumanism. Bear presents the reader with the injustices of ill-informed pandemic responses under neoliberalism. By combining science fiction with pandemic fiction, Bear provides a plausible model of future crisis response scenarios by which Euro-American responses to

COVID-19 may be examined. A key aspect of posthumanism is post-anthropocentrism, in which the formerly ‘autonomous’ human subject is situated in a network of material relationships (Ferrando, 2019). The fictive SHEVA virus mutates Homo Sapiens into a post-human species, highlighting the co-dependency of the material body and the environment. Bear uses the resulting genetic mutations to provide the possibility of a utopian, post-anthropocentric future. He explores both personal and national political injustices, illuminating the inabilities of neoliberal society to support citizens under pandemic conditions. Capitalism requires the production of a uniform type of body (Ferrando, 2019; Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 1985), which necessitates the regulation of material and political bodies. Bear challenges the regulation and control of the productive body under capitalism. This is achieved by depicting the biopolitical control of state and industrial actors as functioning like an auto-immune condition. He then explores the effects of such biopolitical control over its subjects. During a pandemic, existing inequalities are worsened (Gauthier et al, 2020). In the character of Delia, Bear demonstrates the lived experiences of racialised, gendered subjects who have been failed by crisis response strategies. In *Darwin’s Radio*, bodily mutation affirms our reciprocal relationship with the material world. These mutations are responses to climate change and societal pressures; global issues requiring global, collective responses. The new ways in which the SHEVA children communicate promotes collectivity. Therefore, Bear deconstructs the default “image of Man” (Braidotti, 2013) by creating a species that can foster empathy regardless of race, culture, language, and gender.

### **Pandemics in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction: Rethinking the (Post)Human**

Tânia Cerqueira (University of Porto / CETAPS, Portugal)

Due to the worldwide popularity of Suzanne Collin’s *The Hunger Games* trilogy (2008-2010), dystopian narratives took the young adult publishing world by storm. The dystopian boom in young adult literature has offered multiple dreadful new worlds, which emerged from the ashes of societies destroyed by violent wars, climatic changes, deadly contagious diseases, and so on. Our society is currently facing an infectious disease that is leaving a strain on the social order while scientists relentlessly develop a vaccine. Young adult dystopian literature has represented the outcomes of a pandemic in the world we know: the loss of human life, the paranoia caused by the fear of being infected, how the infection or the cure can alter the body – the body might evolve or regress, changing in ways that it can no longer be defined as human. This paper takes under discussion how pandemics and its effects on the human body are represented in YA dystopian texts through the lens of Posthuman Studies. The analysis will focus on novels such as James Dashner’s *The Maze Runner* (2009-2011), Marissa Meyer’s *The Lunar Chronicles* (2012-2015), and Rory Power’s *Wilder Girls* (2019). In these texts, the characters are confronted with the consequences of a viral outbreak differently – from zombie-like creatures to monstrous bodily changes. This presentation argues that the infection and/or cure creates posthuman bodies, which forces us to rethink what it means to be human. Posthumanism will be explored in light of Pramod K. Nayar’s and Cary Wolfe’s seminal works as well as will take into consideration notions presented in *Posthumanism in Young Adult Fiction: Finding Humanity in a Posthuman World* (2018), edited by Anita Tarr and Donna R. White.

## **Presenter Bios**

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*Listed Alphabetically by First Name*

### **Adam Stock**

Dr Adam Stock is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at York St John University. He is author of *Modern Dystopian Fiction and Political Thought: Narratives of World Politics* (Routledge, 2019). His research explores utopian and dystopian fictions, modernisms, and science fiction. He is currently writing an article on dystopias of migration connected to a longer project on deserts, wastelands and borders.

### **Alan Marshall**

Dr. Alan Marshall is a lecturer in Environmental Social Science at Mahidol University's Faculty of Social Science and Humanities. He is the author of many papers and numerous books in environmental humanities, including *Ecotopia 2121* published by Skyhorse Publishers (NY), *Wild Design* published by North Atlantic Books (Berkeley) and *The Unity of Nature* published by Imperial College Press/World Scientific (London/Singapore). His writings and designs for these projects have been featured in international mass media outlets like CNN, ABC Radio, *National Geographic*, *The New Statesman*, *The Independent*, *Daily Mail*, Lithuania Radio & Television, and Al Jazeera.

### **Alastair Lockhart**

I am an Academic Director at the Centre for the Critical Study of Apocalyptic and Millenarian Movements in Bedford, and a member of the Faculty of Divinity and a Fellow at Hughes Hall in the University of Cambridge. I published a monograph, *Personal Religion and Spiritual Healing: The Panacea Society in the Twentieth Century* (State University of New York Press) in 2019. I have broad research interests in aspects of contemporary religion and religious change in the 20th century, with a special focus on the psychology of religion, and apocalypticism and millenarianism.

### **Alexander Popov**

Alexander Popov is a researcher in natural language processing and artificial intelligence, with a PhD on the topic of lexical modeling from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. He also teaches linguistics and science fiction at the Department of English and American Studies at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski." Currently he is working on a research project at the Center for Advanced Studies, Sofia, where he studies the representation of artificial intelligence in science fiction, as seen through the theoretical lenses of computer science, philosophy, and literary theory. He has published articles on the topics of utopia, posthumanism, ecofiction, narratology, and digital reading.

### **Alice Breemen**

Alice Breemen graduated in Theatre Studies and Media and Performance Studies (Utrecht University, 2009 & 2011) and Philosophy (Tilburg University, 2013). Currently she is a PhD researcher at the University of Amsterdam, working on her thesis titled "New Dramaturgies for (after) the Anthropocene: Theatricality, Climate Change and Future Scenarios", in which she researches how contemporary theatre makers create new dramaturgies that engage with

climate change, analyzed through the lens of theatricality. She presented her research at conferences in Paris, Dublin, Amsterdam and online. She experiments with composting in her urban garden and is a fan of cli-fi and fantasy books, trying to integrate both in her writing.

### **Allison Mackey**

Allison Mackey is Professor of English Literature at the Universidad de la República, Uruguay, and Research Associate in the Department of English at University of the Free State, South Africa. Her research interests straddle the areas of human rights & literature, postcolonial literary & cultural studies, and environmental humanities, focusing on ethics/aesthetics/affect from feminist, queer, and critical posthuman(ist) perspectives. She has published her work in a selection of international peer-reviewed journals. As founding member of her university's environmental humanities research group, she is currently co-editing a special issue of *Tekoporá: Latin American Journal of Environmental Humanities and Territorial Studies*, on "Writing Environment, landscape and territory: ecocriticism and cultural studies in South America.

### **Almudena Machado-Jiménez**

Almudena Machado-Jiménez is a PhD student at the University of Jaén, where she works as a lecturer at the Department of English Philology. She is the Vice-President of the Association of Young Researchers on Anglophone Studies (ASYRAS), and is actively engaged in the field of English Studies, working as the associate editor of international journals like *Gaudeamus* and *The Grove*, Working Papers on English Studies, and contributing to the organisation of international conferences. Her research interests are gender studies, postcolonialism and utopian studies, particularly the notions of sisterhood and motherhood in contemporary patriarchal utopia written by women authors.

### **Álvaro Arango Vallejo**

I am a research assistant at the Institute for Ibero-Romanic Literature and Cultural Studies of the University of Bonn, Germany. Since February 2020 I started working on my doctoral thesis on horror in 20th century Latin American literature under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Mechthild Albert, also at the University of Bonn. Accordingly, I am trying to gain my first experiences regarding participation in conferences and publishing. So far I have been able to give my first lectures on the poetics of horror in José Donoso's *The Obscene Bird of Night* (2019 in Kassel, Germany, publication in progress) and on vampiric motives in the short fiction of Gabriela Rábago Palafox (2020 in León, Spain, publication also in progress), as well as publishing articles on the role of evil in Ernesto Sábato's *The Tunnel* and Jorge Luis Borges' *The Book of Imaginary Beings* as a postmodern bestiary.

### **Alyaa Dawood Al-Lami**

Alyaa Dawood Al-Lami is a graduate of English Department in Baghdad University and an MA student in the English Language and Literature Master's Programme in Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University. She is presently writing her MA thesis entitled "Oedipus through the Arab Lens: Anthologized English Translations of Arab Adaptations of *Oedipus Rex*". Her main research topics are translation anthologies, Arab rewritings of Western canonical texts, and interaction between Arab and Anglophone literary traditions through translation. Her languages are Arabic, English and Persian.

### **Amanda Pavani**

Professor of English Language and Literature at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. Doctor in Literary Studies from the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Research interests include mediation, simulations, figurations of science in sf, afrofuturism, feminist sf, Brazilian sf, and Brazilian short fiction.

### **Amjad AlShalan**

Amjad AlShalan is a PhD holder specialised in Samuel Beckett with special focus on his 1930s. She is an assistant professor at King Saud University.

### **Amy LeBlanc**

Amy LeBlanc is an MA student in English Literature and creative writing at the University of Calgary and Managing Editor at filling Station magazine. Amy's debut poetry collection, *I know something you don't know*, was published with Gordon Hill Press in March 2020. Her novella *Unlocking* will be published by the UCalgary Press in their Brave and Brilliant Series in 2021. Her work has appeared in Room, PRISM International, and the Literary Review of Canada among others. She is a recipient of the 2020 Lieutenant Governor of Alberta Emerging Artist Award. She is currently at work on her SSHRC-funded Master's thesis.

### **Anamta Rizvi**

Anamta Rizvi is a senior research scholar with the department of English at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. The title of her PhD thesis is "Language, Identity, Authority: Canon Formation in Indian Writing in English Post 1950 and the Contribution of Writers Workshop, Calcutta." Anamta has presented many papers in national as well as international conferences, and has many published articles to her name in reputed journals.

### **Andrea Burgos Mascarell**

Andrea Burgos-Mascarell holds a degree in English Studies, a Masters in Advanced English Studies, and a PhD in languages, literatures and cultures by the University of Valencia, in Spain. She specializes in utopian and dystopian fiction in English with a particular interest in fiction aimed at young adults. She has participated in several national and international conferences on utopia and dystopia, such as the 20th conference of the Utopian Studies Society, *Dystopian Worlds: From George Orwell to Kazuo Ishiguro*, *Revisiting Dystopia in Literature and the Visual Arts*. She has published articles on bibliometrics, interdisciplinary approaches to literature, and cultural aspects of dystopian fiction in national and international journals such as *ES Review: Spanish Journal of English Studies* or *Cauce: Revista Internacional de Filología, Comunicación y sus Didácticas*. She is a lecturer at the University of Valencia and the Polytechnic University of Valencia.

### **Andrew Milner**

Andrew Milner is Professor Emeritus of English and Comparative Literature at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. His recent publications include *Tenses of Imagination: Raymond Williams on Utopia, Dystopia and Science Fiction* (2010), *Locating Science Fiction* (2012), *John Milton and the English Revolution: A Study in the Sociology of Literature* (2013),

*Again, Dangerous Visions: Essays in Cultural Materialism* (2018) and (with J.R. Burgmann) *Science Fiction and Climate Change: A Sociological Approach* (2020).

### **Angela Patricia Heredia**

Angela Patricia Heredia is pursuing a PhD at the Department of Gender Studies, Central European University. She holds an M.A in Gender Studies from Central European University in Budapest and an M.A in Philosophy, as well as B.A in History and Philosophy from Los Andes University in Bogota. Her research focuses on feminist theory, posthumanisms, postcolonial theory, decolonial theory, critical race theory, as well as continental philosophy. Her PhD project critically approaches posthumanisms, particularly feminist new materialisms, by exploring the relation between corporeality, historicity and the notion of the human from a de-colonial point of view. Previously, she has been interested in the way in which existential phenomenology and poststructuralist philosophy have theorized about the body in relation to political subjectivity.

### **Anindita Shome**

Anindita Shome is a PhD Candidate at the UGC Centre for the Study of Indian Diaspora, University of Hyderabad, India. Her research interests lie in the literary and socio-cultural aspects of the South Asian migration and diaspora from the pre-modern times to the contemporary era. She takes a keen interest in the areas of Youth Studies, Digital Humanities, Environmental Humanities, and Transnational Studies.

### **Anita DeMelo**

Anita de Melo completed her undergraduate studies in Brazil, her home country. Following, she moved to the United States to work on her postgraduate degrees. Anita has a PhD from the University of Georgia, in Athens, United States. She also taught in a few north American universities before moving to Cape Town. Currently she teaches Portuguese studies and Lusophone literatures at the University of Cape Town. Her research publications and interests include critical pedagogy, comparative literatures of the Portuguese speaking-world and Latin America, environmental humanities, and animal studies.

### **Anita Girvan**

Anita Girvan is a settler woman of colour currently living on Lekwungen and WSANEC territories (Vancouver Island, Canada), and an assistant professor of cultural studies at Athabasca University, Alberta, Canada. Working at the juncture of ecology, race and politics, Girvan's research and teaching center stories and metaphors as potential sites of insurgent and resurgent knowledge that trouble Euro-western canons and extractive colonial systems. Her book, *Carbon Footprints as Cultural-Ecological Metaphors* (Routledge 2018) critically analyzes the mediating role of metaphors in the cultural politics of climate change. Girvan's work also appears in *Political Ecology and CTheory* and in the edited collection *Found in Alberta: Environmental Themes for the Anthropocene* (Boschman and Trono, eds WLU Press).

### **Anna Bugajska**

Anna Bugajska, PhD, an Associate Professor at the Jesuit University Ignatianum. The head of the Institute of Modern Languages and the Language and Culture Studies Department. Collaborates with the Department of General and Applied Ethics at the same university. A

member of Utopian Studies Society – Europe. The author of *Engineering Youth. The Evantropian Project in Young Adult Dystopias* (2019), and of the articles on human enhancement, new technologies and juvenile dystopias. Interested in the philosophy of biotechnology, especially ethics, biotopias and dystopias, and biopolitics.

### **Anna Campbell**

Anna Campbell is a PhD researcher in English Literature at the University of St Andrews. Her primary research is on the theoretical technology of ectogenesis as it is conceived through utopian literature from the Renaissance through to modern history, with a special focus on the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Her other research interests include genetic engineering and eugenics in literature, assisted reproductive technologies, pregnancy and the figure of the pregnant woman/person in the history of class struggle in Britain and Europe.

### **Annette Magid**

Publications of Professor Annette M. Magid, PhD, affiliated with SUNY Erie Community College, Buffalo, NY, USA. include: *Speculations of War: Essays on Conflict in Science Fiction, Fantasy and Utopian Literature*, to be published 2020; *Quintessential Wilde: His Worldly Place, His Penetrating Philosophy and His Influential Aestheticism*, 2017; *Apocalyptic Projections: A Study of Past Predictions, Current Trends and Future Intimations as Related to Film and Literature*, 2015; *Wilde's Wiles: Studies of the Influence on Oscar Wilde and His Enduring Influences in the Twenty-First Century*, 2013; *You Are What You Eat: Literary Probes into the Palate*, 2008 and a volume of poetry, *Tunnel of Stone*, 2002.

Her areas of expertise include American/British Utopian literature and film, poetry, theater, Science-Fiction literature and film, as well as children's literature. In addition, she has published articles in a variety of Utopian journals and monographs.

### **Annika Gonnermann**

After completing my Master's degree at the University of Heidelberg in 2016, I started my PhD project called "Absent Rebels: Criticism and Network Theory in Contemporary Dystopian Fiction" at the University of Mannheim, Germany. I finished this project at the heights of the Corona-crisis in July 2020 with *summa cum laude*. At the moment, I am preparing the publication of said project (Spring 2021), while concentrating on expanding my contribution to the dystopian studies. My areas of interest include pop culture, dystopian fiction, Fantasy and the Gothic, which I like to approach from an interdisciplinary vantage points. My most recent project, an edited collection of essays on literature and neoliberal capitalism written in German called *Literarische Perspektiven auf den Kapitalismus* will be available as of Spring 2021 (Narr Francke, Tübingen).

### **Anton Nikolotov**

Anton is a multimodal anthropologist with a PhD from the Institute for Asian and African Studies of Humboldt University in Berlin. His research interests are situated at the borders of anthropology of migration and art practice, critical border research as well as studies of religion and affect. Having a BA Fine from Central Saint Martins College and MA in Cultural Theory and History from Humboldt University, Anton is engaged in transdisciplinary research of migrant workers' precarity in post-Socialist Eurasia.

### **Ariel Kroon**

Ariel Kroon is a PhD candidate in English Literature, studying narratives of crisis as they can be found in Cold-War-era Canadian post-apocalyptic science fiction in order to think about how the imagination of crisis has been shaped, and alternative narratives for survival. Her work has become distressingly relevant of late. Her latest publication, on the Anthropocene, solarpunk, and feminist posthumanism, can be found for free online here: <https://scholars.wlu.ca/thegoose/vol18/iss1/2/>.

### **Ata Mohamed Tabriz**

Ata Mohamed Tabriz completed his B.A. and M.A. degrees in sociology and cultural studies in Iran and completed his PhD in political science and international relations at Istanbul University. Ata's field of study is on the contemporary history of Iran and Turkey; he has published articles and books in different languages in this area.

### **Ayşe Çelikkol**

Ayşe Çelikkol is Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at Bilkent University. She is the author of *Romances of Free Trade: British Literature, Laissez-Faire, and the Global Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Her work on cultures of capitalism, nationhood, and secularism has appeared in journals such as *American Literature*, *ELH*, and *Victorian Poetry*. Her most recent work, which attends to the intersections of ecology and the economy in Victorian literature, has been published or is forthcoming in the *Journal of William Morris Studies*, the *Journal of Victorian Culture*, and *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, as well as in the edited collection *From Political Economy to Economics through Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Palgrave, eds. Hadley, Jaffe, Winter). This presentation is derived from a book project on agrarian capitalism and Victorian literature.

### **Bahar Memiş**

Bahar Memiş, received her bachelor's degree in Western Languages and Literatures from Boğaziçi University in 2019. Following graduation, she has started English Literature master's program in the same university. For her undergraduate dissertation project, she focused on the themes of social memory and subjectivity in the novels of W.G. Sebald and Teju Cole. Currently, she continues her studies on comparative literature with an interest in post-orientalism in Turkish and Anglophone novel.

### **Başak Ağın**

Dr. Başak Ağın is lecturer at Middle East Technical University, School of Foreign Languages. She is the author of several articles and book chapters on the posthumanist and new materialist discussions of literary and cultural texts, mainly focusing on gothic, science-fiction, and ecomedia. Her monograph, *Posthümanizm: Kavram, Kuram, Bilim-Kurgu*, which has recently come out from Siyasal Kitabevi, is the first book to introduce posthumanism as a merger of theory and practice to the Turkish audience. She is currently editing the Turkish translation of Simon Estok's *The Ecophobia Hypothesis* by Sibel Dinçel (forthcoming from Cappadocia University Press) and co-editing a volume entitled *Posthuman Pathogenesis: Contagion in Literature, Arts, and Media* with Şafak Horzum, forthcoming from Brill.

## **Başak Ergil**

Başak Ergil is a translator, editor and Translation Studies scholar with an MA in Boğaziçi University and a PhD in Istanbul University, both in the field of Translation Studies. She is the author of *The Image of Nâzım Hikmet and His Poetry in Anglo-American Literary Systems*. Ergil's main fields of interest and specialization are translation ethics, translation criticism, cultural/collective memory through translation, translation theory, translation blogging/v-logging, publication of translated literature, and translation in the anthropocene.

## **Belgin Bağlılar**

Belgin Bağlılar, assistant professor, is currently working at the department of English Language and Teaching at Aydın Adnan Menderes University in Turkey. Holding a Ph. D. in English Language and Literature. Dr. Bağlılar has many studies in the area of contemporary British, Canadian, and Turkish theatre.

## **Ben DeVries**

Ben DeVries is a PhD candidate in American literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His dissertation, which focuses on North American apocalyptic literature from the 1990s to present, brings together enclosure (as the process by which the common becomes the proper) and closure (as a feature of narrative) to consider how apocalyptic stories can preserve the status quo, even in the process of imagining the status quo's dissolution.

## **Benjamin Burt**

Benjamin Burt is an Assistant Adjunct Professor in UCLA's Department of Spanish and Portuguese and a Research Fellow at the UCLA Center for Brazilian Studies. His dissertation "Cities of Dreams and Despair: Utopia and Dystopia in Contemporary Brazilian Film and Literature" (2020) uses a utopian studies framework to analyze recent representations of Brasília and São Paulo. His current, comparative research project considers ecological dystopia and post-utopia in Brazil, Cuba, and Mexico.

## **Benjamin Horn**

Ben Horn is a PhD student at the University of Birmingham. His project examines selected science fiction texts by Philip K. Dick through the lens of 'Speculative Realist' philosophy. Drawing on thinkers such as Graham Harman, Ray Brassier and Timothy Morton, his work examines how Dick's fiction critiques post-Kantian 'correlationist' philosophy (Meillassoux, 2007). His interest in ontology, genre fiction and science has developed since his undergraduate dissertation. His project is supervised by two literary critics, one trained in phenomenology, the other in post-humanism. He is a fellow of the English PEN society, has participated in the 'Anthropocenes' and 'Productive Futures' conferences, and co-organised the 'Speculative Futures' event at the University of Birmingham. He is a co-founder of the University of Birmingham Contemporary Theory Reading Group (now CTRL Network). During his undergraduate degree, he was awarded a Royal Holloway bursary of £1,500. His work has been published in *Foundation* and *Fantastika*.

## **Berrin Demir**

Berrin Demir received her BA degree in the department of English Language and Literature from Selçuk University/Turkey in 2008, MA degree in 2012 and PhD in the department of Comparative Literature from Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Turkey in 2020. The title of PhD thesis is “Venice as a Mythical Topography: A Cultural Ecological Approach”. Her research areas are comparative literature, theory of literature as cultural ecology, ecocritical topographies. She has been working in the International Relations Office of Kütahya Dumlupınar University as the responsible person for Erasmus+ and Mevlana Exchange Programmes along with EU Projects since 2014.

## **Brianna Bullen**

Brianna Bullen is a Deakin University PhD creative writing candidate writing about memory in science fiction. She won the 2017 Apollo Bay short story competition and placed second in the 2017 Newcastle Short story competition. Her poetry chapbook 'Unicorns with Unibrows' is currently forthcoming as part of Puncher & Wattmann's Slow Loris series.

## **Burcu Kayışcı Akkoyun**

Burcu Kayışcı Akkoyun is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Boğaziçi University, Turkey. She received her MA degree in English literature from the same department in 2007 with a thesis on the dystopian novels of Margaret Atwood and Ursula K. Le Guin. After completing the coursework for PhD there, she went to Monash University in Melbourne to continue her doctoral studies. She completed her PhD in Literary Studies at Monash University in 2015 with a dissertation on the literary representations of the end entitled “Imagining the End: Comic Perspectives and Critical Spaces.” Her fields of interest are utopian and dystopian fiction, contemporary literature, ecocriticism, identity politics, and narrative theory.

## **Çağdaş Ö. Duman**

Çağdaş Duman completed his Bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature at Bilkent University (2016) and his Master's in English Literature in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Boğaziçi University (2020). In his master's thesis, he explored queer theatrical possibilities in the American theatre of HIV/AIDS as well as the relation between the HIV/AIDS stigma and the spatio-temporal coordinates of normative heterosexuality. He presented papers at international conferences held in the UK, Spain and Turkey. Recently, he co-wrote a book review on Ian Williams' *The Lady Doctor* which was published in *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* (July 2020). He is interested in twentieth century literature, critical theory, philosophy, and film studies.

## **Caroline Edwards**

Dr Caroline Edwards is Senior Lecturer in Modern & Contemporary Literature at Birkbeck, University of London and Director of the Birkbeck Centre for Contemporary Literature. Her research focuses on utopian and science fictions, apocalypticism and theories of temporality. She is author of *Utopia and the Contemporary British Novel* (Cambridge University Press, 2019) and is currently writing a book about science fiction and ecocatastrophe.

## **Cassandra Bausman**

Cassandra Bausman holds a PhD in English Literature and an additional certificate in Rhetoric from the University of Iowa, where she currently teaches. Her areas of expertise include contemporary literature and culture, gender and genre studies, feminist media studies, and adaptation and intertextuality studies, with specialties in genre fiction and film. Amongst these, fantasy literature features most prominently, as her dissertation focused on intersections between feminist revisionism and metafiction in a consideration of fantasy literature and its heroines that helped earn her the International Association for the Fantastic in the Art's Emerging Scholar Award. Organically positioned on the boundaries of complementary discourses, her work as a teacher and scholar is consistently influenced by these productive intersections--particularly fantasy's multi-media-dominance in pop culture—and the exciting ways they co-inform our collective tapestry of contemporary storytelling and cultural transmission.

## **Cenk Tan**

Cenk Tan received his BA. degree in American Culture and Literature from Hacettepe University in 2002. Following his BA. he decided to continue with his MA. in English Literature. He wrote his thesis on David Mitchell's contemporary, dystopian novel *Cloud Atlas* and successfully graduated with a Master's degree from Pamukkale University in 2014. Upon graduation, he was admitted to the PhD program in English Literature of the same University which he completed in 2019 with his thesis entitled: "An Ecocritical Study of J.G. Ballard's Climate Fiction Novels." Cenk is fluent in English, French and Dutch and focuses on topics such as speculative fiction, film studies, ecocriticism and contemporary English novel. He currently works as a lecturer at Pamukkale University's department of foreign languages.

## **Ceren Kuşdemir Özbilek**

Ceren Kuşdemir Özbilek is an instructor of English in the School of Foreign Languages at Yaşar University. She is also a PhD candidate at Ege University, in the Department of English Language and Literature. Her academic interests include James Joyce, Irish literature, narratology, Marxism, science fiction, and philosophy.

## **Chiara Xausa**

Chiara Xausa is a PhD fellow at the University of Bologna. She has been a visiting PhD fellow at Bath Spa University (Research Centre for the Environmental Humanities), and a visiting student at the University of Warwick. She earned a MA in Modern Philology from the University of Padua (2016), and a MA in Women's and Gender Studies from the University of Bologna and the University of Utrecht (2018). She is currently writing on the representation of environmental justice in contemporary Anglophone women's writing.

## **Chun-Yu Lu**

Chun-yu Lu received her PhD of Chinese and Comparative Literature from Washington University in St. Louis. She taught at Hobart and William Smith Colleges and The College of William and Mary. Her research interests include literary modernity, gender studies, popular culture, postcolonial studies, emotion and affect theory. Her essay "Lovable Foe" is forthcoming in *Taiwan Studies: New Directions and Connections*. She's working on her book

projects, *Make Love and War: Chinese Popular Romance in Greater East Asia, 1937-1945* as well as *Masking Up: Dystopian Affects in Sinophone Cultures*.

### **Claire Curtis**

Claire P. Curtis is a Professor of Political Science at the College of Charleston. She is the author of *Postapocalyptic Fiction and the Social Contract: "We'll not go home again."* (Lexington, 2010). Most recently she published "Standards of Justice for Human Being and Doing in Kim Stanley Robinson's 2312 and C. S. Friedman's This Alien Shore" *Open Library of Humanities*, 3(2): 6 (2017) and "The Politics of Living Together: Butler's Short Stories and Teaching Political Philosophy" in *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Octavia E. Butler*, Ed. Tarshia Stanley, Modern Language Association (2019). She lives in Charleston, South Carolina.

### **Clifton Evers**

Dr Clifton Evers is senior lecturer in cultural studies at Newcastle University, UK. His research addresses cultures of masculinity, sport, pollution and leisure, as well as community responses to 'just transitions'. Clifton employs creative methods and shares research creatively. He has also published widely in critical surf studies as well as masculinity studies, cultural studies, and sport/leisure studies. He is currently participating in the Spanish National Research Programme funded Research Project "Illness in the Age of Extinction: Anglophone Narratives of Personal and Planetary Degradation (2000-2020)" (grant number: PID2019-109565RB-I00/AEI/ 10.13039/501100011033).

### **Conrad Scott**

Conrad Scott holds a PhD from and is an Instructor in the University of Alberta's Department of English and Film Studies, on Treaty 6 / Métis lands. He researches contemporary sf and environmental literature, and his current project examines the interconnection between place, culture, and literature in a study of environment and dystopia in contemporary North American fiction. His reviews and essays have appeared in *Science Fiction Studies*, *Extrapolation*, *Paradoxa*, *The Goose*, *Environmental Philosophy*, *UnderCurrents*, and *Canadian Literature*. He is also the author of *Waterline Immersion* (Frontenac House 2019).

### **Dan Byrne-Smith**

Dr Dan Byrne-Smith is a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art Theory at Chelsea College of Arts, UAL. He is the editor of *Science Fiction: Documents of Contemporary Art* (2020) published by the Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press. His practice makes use of improvised electronic sounds in relation to site and visual elements, exploring dimensions of narrative, affect and deep listening. Since 2017 he has been a Research Fellow at the Horniman Museum in London, exploring relationships between the museum's natural history collections and science fiction.

### **Dani Shalet**

Dr Dani Shalet is a Research Fellow in Science, Religion and Education at Canterbury Christ Church University. Her speciality is in religion and popular culture with a special interest in religion and myth in film and video games. Dr Shalet was an MMO podcaster, a fan of videogames, particularly RPGs, anime and sci-fi. She is also passionate about ancient history and is an amateur field archaeologist.

## **Daniel Kong**

Daniel Kong is a first-year MA candidate and research scholar of English Literature in Nanyang Technological University. His research focuses on the body as it appears in literary thought and performance, and he is particularly interested in the work of Antonin Artaud, Giles Deleuze, and contemporary performers like Melati Suryodarmo for their contribution towards a somatic sensibility in the arts. Daniel is developing an MA thesis on the idea of the Body-In-Exertion, a new term put forth in his undergraduate final year paper that focuses on the phenomenological transience of the body and its consequent disturbance of the discursive means used to assess it. He is deeply interested in how the body can unite the often separated fields of creative and critical work, and how bodily-writing can speak to the pressing issues of today.

## **Darren Webb**

Dr Darren Webb is Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Sheffield, UK. His research explores the relationship between hope, utopia and education, with a particular focus on the theory and practice of utopian pedagogy.

## **David Gray**

David Gray is a senior lecturer in English at the Department of Foreign Languages in Dalarna University, Sweden. He has published on eighteenth and nineteenth century British and Irish literature, as well as representations of the Nordic countries in twentieth-century life/travel writing. Currently he is working on a monograph on The Natural World in Ulster-Scots poetry c. 1790-1850. He is also co-editor of the e-journal *Landscapes: the Journal of the International Centre for Landscape and Language*.

## **Debarati Choudhury**

Debarati is pursuing her research in public policy and social conflict, from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad, India. Her domain of study is situated at the intersection of caste, class and gender, and associated vulnerabilities in the unique context of India. She is currently working on atrocities against women from scheduled castes, sexual violence, migrant labourers and precarity, access to healthcare and justice in India, and equity in policy-making. She is available at cdebarati98@gmail.com.

## **Déborra Madrid**

Doctor in Arts, Literature and Culture Studies (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, UAM, Spain). She graduated in Art History (Universidad de La Laguna) and she has a master's degree on Contemporary Art History and Visual Culture (UAM, Universidad Complutense de Madrid and Museo Reina Sofía). During her period as PhD Candidate at the Department of Art History and Theory (UAM) she was a visiting researcher at Margaret Herrick Library (AMPAS, Los Angeles) and at The Graduate Center (CUNY, New York). She also has been a member of the research project "Narrations of Spanish Contemporary Art for Wide Audiences" (Economy and Competitiveness Spanish Ministry and UAM). Currently she is participating in the international research project "Speculative Spain/España especulativa" (Youngstown State University, Ohio) and she is an editor in the *Revista Historia Autónoma Journal* (UAM). Her research interests are related to Spanish Cinema and Science Fiction Film.

### **Demet Karabulut Dede**

Dr. Demet Karabulut-Dede is a postdoctoral visiting fellow in the English Department at the University of Exeter. Her postdoctoral project focuses on time-space compression in the works of Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce. She gained her PhD from the English Language and Literature Department at Ankara University where she also worked as a Research Assistant for four years. Her PhD dissertation was a comparative analysis of the works of Virginia Woolf and Arnold Bennett in terms of space and gender. She is also a Faculty Member in the English Language and Literature Department at Munzur University, Tunceli, Turkey.

### **Denise Blunn**

Denise teaches organizational psychology, people and international management courses for US institutions, including: University of Pittsburgh, University of Minnesota, and Purdue University. A Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, she presented on the power of narrative for blended experiential learning at the CIEE 2018 conference in Barcelona.

In a previous career at IBM, working with colleagues from around the world, Denise provided organizational and service design consultancy for clients across Europe.

Liberal arts majors often take Denise's classes as electives, and she uses philosophical, literary and cultural references to make management topics more engaging and accessible. Over the summer of 2020 she taught a project-based learning module for University of Hartford students researching the emerging challenges and opportunities facing their host global remote internship organizations during the coronavirus pandemic. She is currently working with other US institutions to develop similar curricula.

### **Diego Carretero Román**

Diego Carretero Román is a young PhD candidate who, after a period of independent research, in which he presented and moderated panels at London Centre of Interdisciplinary Research, has started, this academic year, a PhD in Literary Studies at Universidad Complutense de Madrid. He is specialized in English Literature, with a deep interest in postmodernist and postcolonial literature. Thesis TBC.

### **Dilara Parslow**

Dilara Parslow is a Preparatory School Instructor working at Kapadokya University, Sabiha Gökçen Campus. She received her Bachelors Degree from Celal Bayar University and her Master of Arts Degree from Ege University from the department of English Language and Literature. Currently, she is a PhD Student at Izmir Demokrasi University in the department of English Language and Literature. Her fields of interests are postmodern novel, historiographic metafiction, and ecocritical novels.

### **Djamila Houamdi**

Djamila is a lecturer at the department of English, University of Algiers 2. She is currently preparing her PhD thesis defense. For years, she devoted attention to questions of style, spirituality and reception in the works of Cormac McCarthy. Her main academic publications

revolve around contemporary American literature, modernism, postmodernism and reader-response theory.

### **Drew Thornton**

Drew Thornton is a PhD pre-candidate at Curtin University (Perth, Western Australia), attached to the research project “Experiments in Animal Knowledge: Transformative Concepts and Methods in the Posthumanities, Animalities, and Environmental Humanities”.

In 2019, Drew completed the Master of Biological arts at SymbioticA, University of Western Australia, exhibiting an original two-player sci-fi arcade game for humans and house flies.

Drew has previously presented papers on the changing representations of monsters and hybrids in contemporary science fiction and fantasy—elements of these will appear in a chapter contributed to the edited book *Fantasy and Myth in the Anthropocene*, which is due for publication by Bloomsbury Academic in 2021.

### **Dunja M. Mohr**

Dr. Dunja M. Mohr, English Department, University of Erfurt, Germany, has published extensively on speculative, dystopian, and Anthropocene fiction, particularly on Margaret Atwood’s speculative fiction, critical posthumanism, ecocriticism, post-9/11 literature, new materialism, and postcolonialism. Her publications include the award-winning *Worlds Apart? Dualism and Transgression in Contemporary Female Dystopias* (2005), *Embracing the Other: Addressing Xenophobia in the New Literatures in English* (ed., 2008), *9/11 as Catalyst: American and British Cultural Responses* (ed., 2010), *Radical Planes? 9/11 and Patterns of Continuity* (ed., 2016). A monograph on 20th and 21st century Frankenstein media adaptations is forthcoming. As a long-standing officer of the Margaret Atwood Society and Head of Women and Gender Studies, Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries, she organizes the first-ever all Atwood conference “Artpolitical: Margaret Atwood’s Political Aesthetics”, Oct. 2021. For her current research project “Approximating the non-human”, she received a DAAD guest professor and research fellowship at the CCEAE/IRTG, Université de Montréal, Canada.

### **Eduardo Marks de Marques**

Eduardo Marks de Marques is an Associate Professor of Anglophone Literatures at the Federal University of Pelotas, Brazil. He has been studying dystopian fiction for about 10 years now – from the time where the genre was merely fiction! – and focusses primarily on the interconnections between dystopia and posthumanism.

### **Eleni Tsatsaroni**

While studying for my BA in social anthropology at the University of Thessaly, I was introduced to and developed a particular interest in the field of technology and its effects on contemporary society. After completing my BA, I undertook an MA in social anthropology at the same department during which I further focused my studies on the field of digital anthropology and anthropology of new media and technology. My MA thesis was on the topic of the construction of the identity of humanoid robots in Westworld TV series. Through my research on the digital field of Reddit, I examined the representation as much as the perception of the technological artifacts of contemporary science fiction and the construction of the

contemporary definition of humanness through this representation. The past year I have been working on my PhD proposal, trying to combine the anthropological methodology with a philosophical approach of contemporary technological research and innovation. In my research, I wish to philosophically negotiate the interconnection between science fiction and scientific reality in the framework of the postmodern society. I examine this contemporary subject of technologic influence as a posthuman subject, determined by its opposition to the humanistic ideal of Enlightenment and modernity.

### **Elham Fatma**

Elham Fatma is going to submit her doctoral thesis on “Women and Trauma in Contemporary Kashmiri Fiction,” at the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, India. She is a recipient of the Fulbright Scholarship, at Undergraduate Level, and did her B.A. fourth year from Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV, USA in 2008. She did M.A. (2010) in English, from the Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University, India, and won the gold medal for standing first in the batch. She has more than two years of teaching experience with undergraduate students in the same Department. Elham has also published research papers with Routledge and Taylor & Francis on the Quran Bride, Half-Widows, and Conjugal Homes in Diaspora. She has presented several papers at the Indian as well as foreign universities, like AAB University, Kosovo and the University of Cambridge, UK, where she has chaired a session also.

### **Elzem Nazli**

Elzem Nazli is currently a PhD candidate in the Program of English Literature at Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. He has been working as a Research Assistant at the same university since 2013. He earned his Master’s degree in 2016 in the same field. His research interests include the British novel, literary theory, narrative theory, cultural studies, and psychoanalytical studies. He has given conference papers and published some articles in these areas.

### **Emrah Atasoy**

Emrah Atasoy is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities at Cappadocia University, Turkey. He completed his PhD at Hacettepe University’s Department of English Language and Literature in 2019 with a dissertation on twentieth-century dystopian fiction entitled “From Ignorance to Experience: Epistemology and Power in Katharine Burdekin’s *Swastika Night*, Anthony Burgess’s *The Wanting Seed* and P. D. James’s *The Children of Men*.” He spent an academic year as a visiting scholar under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor at Penn State University between 2015 and 2016. His most recent publications include the article, “Pandemics and Epidemics in Speculative Fiction” (2020), published by *Ankara University Journal of Languages and History-Geography* and the chapter “Epistemological Warfare(s) in Dystopian Narrative: Zülfü Livaneli’s *Son Ada* and Anthony Burgess’s *The Wanting Seed*” in *Speculations of War: Essays on Conflict in Science Fiction, Fantasy and Utopian Literature* (2021), edited by Annette M. Magid. He is a member of both Utopian Studies Society-Europe and the Society for Utopias Studies (SUS). His fields of scholarly interest include speculative fiction, dystopia, utopia, science fiction, apocalyptic fiction, Turkish utopianism, and twentieth-century literature.

### **Ercan Gürova**

I am a graduate of Hacettepe University from the Department of English Language and Literature. I have completed my dissertation on “The British Apocalyptic Novels” at Atılım University. I have been working as an instructor at the School of Foreign Languages at Ankara University. My research interests include Science Fiction, Fantasy Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia, Magical Realism, Cultural Studies, Animal Studies, Japanese Culture, and Film Studies.

### **Erica Lagalisse**

Erica Lagalisse is an anthropologist and writer, a postdoctoral research fellow at the London School of Economics (LSE), editor of *Solidarity and Care During the Covid-19 Pandemic* at *The Sociological Review*, and author of *Occult Features of Anarchism – With Attention to the Conspiracy of Kings and the Conspiracy of the Peoples* (2019). She can be found on Twitter at @ELagalisse.

### **Ewa Drab**

Ewa Drab works as an Assistant Professor at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. In her academic research, she focuses upon the study of 21st-century imaginative fictions written in English, French or Polish, mainly fantasy (historical fantasy), dystopia or steampunk. Additionally, her academic interests center around the specifics of contemporary fantasy translation (literary and audiovisual: novels, films, video games), mostly in reference to the secondary world reconstruction. Her latest publications include: “Medievalisms and romance traditions in Guy Gavriel Kay’s *Ysabel*”, in A. Czarnowus and M.J. Toswell (eds.), *Medievalism in English Canadian literature: from Richardson to Atwood*, D.S. Brewer, 2020, and “The Fantasy Reflection of the Real in Myke Cole’s Control Point”, *The European English Messenger* (ESSE Messenger), 28-1 Summer, 2019.

### **Frances di Lauro**

I am a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Writing Studies at the University of Sydney. I am an interdisciplinary scholar and formally trained in archaeology and religious studies. I teach rhetoric and argumentation, and academic, business, public and encyclopaedic writing. My research expertise lies in the analysis of communicative texts and artefacts from apocalyptic and works of otherworld literature, to letters and chronicles, to performative art, exhibitions, films, monuments and songs. My current research projects focus on the digitisation of shrines and sites of dark tourism, and the uptake of religious apps.

### **Freya Lowden**

Freya Lowden is a second-year PhD student at the University of York, writing on twenty-first century dystopian fiction from the Middle East and Muslim South Asia. After having completed an undergraduate degree in English and German Literature at The University of Warwick, Freya spent a year in China, studying Mandarin on a British Council Scholarship and working at the British Embassy in Beijing. She then moved to Durham to complete a master’s degree in International Relations, writing her dissertation on the legal structures surrounding statelessness in the Middle East. With experience working in education, she teaches part-time and coordinates a Model United Nations course. Freya has so far enjoyed combining her previous studies in literature and international politics to harness her PhD’s

interdisciplinary potential at York. She has received funding from various bodies, such as the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust and the Sidney Perry Foundation Trust.

### **Fulya Kincal**

Fulya Kincal was born in Turkey in 1982. She received her BA from the Department of American Language and Literature of University of Dokuz Eylül, İzmir, Turkey, in 2003. She received her MA from the Department of English Language and Literature of University of Atatürk, Erzurum, Turkey, in 2007. From 2005 to 2009, she worked as an English teacher at high schools. She similarly received her PhD from the Department of English Language and Literature of University of Ege, İzmir, Turkey. She has published articles on fiction and drama by John Osborne. She has been working as a lecturer and the director in the School of Foreign Languages since 2008 at Kırklareli University, Turkey. Her research and teaching interests cover Victorian Poetry, 20th century drama, modernist poetry and theories of identity.

### **George Sieg**

Dr. George J. Sieg teaches philosophy and English at the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, one of the only two federally-funded all-Native-American colleges in the United States. His 2010 doctoral thesis from the University of Exeter Centre for the Study of Esotericism, supervised by Professor Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, traced the genesis and transmission of occult warfare beliefs resulting from the Western reception of Iranian dualism. His subsequent work has examined the conditions for violent reaction in esoteric minority religions and New Religious movements, the formation and differentiation of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic narratives, the role of human intimacy in the contexts of disaster utopia and survival euphoria in the zombie apocalypse, the rationale of the Spanish Inquisition, the significance and influence of sinister and Left-Hand Path esoteric traditions, radicalism and extremism in the context of esoteric metapolitics. He is Area Chair of Esotericism, Occultism, and Magic at the Southwest Popular/American Culture Association.

### **Gillian M.E. Alban**

Associate Professor Dr. Gillian M.E. Alban is currently teaching English Literature at Istanbul Kültür University; her interests are particularly in women's writing and its interplay with mythology, as well as modern and contemporary literature, and Shakespeare. She has published two books; *The Medusa Gaze in Contemporary Women's Literature: Petrifying, Maternal and Redemptive*, published by Cambridge Scholars Press (2017), and *Melusine the Serpent Goddess in A.S. Byatt's Possession and in Mythology*, published by Lexington Books (2003).

### **Giulia Champion**

Dr Giulia Champion is an Early Career Research Fellow at the University of Warwick. She is currently working on transdisciplinary climate change communication, material histories and energy humanities. She has recently co-edited a collection entitled *Ethical Futures and Global Science Fiction* with Palgrave Macmillan, published in early 2020, and another one entitled *Interdisciplinary Essays on Cannibalism: Bites Here and There* is forthcoming with Routledge in 2021. She is currently co-editing a journal special issue on "Activism and Academia in Latin America" with BLAR.

## **Gökben Güçlü**

Assistant professor Gökben Güçlü was born in 1979 in Istanbul. After receiving her BA in English Language and Literature from Beykent University in 2002, she has begun her academic career at Beykent University, where she also worked as a lecturer and coordinator in the Academic Language Support Unit between 2002-2012.

She received her master's degree in English Language and Literature at Beykent University in 2005. In 2018, she completed her PhD in English Language and Literature at Istanbul Aydın University. She has been working as a lecturer for 18 years. Currently, she is the head of English Language and Literature department at Istanbul Atlas University and she continues her academic studies in the field of English Literature.

Field of Interest : Life Story Model of Identity, Narrative Identity, Literary Gerontology, Sexual Stigma and Prejudice in literature.

## **Gönül Bakay**

Gönül Bakay is a full professor in Bahçeşehir University -İstanbul- Turkey, holding a PhD in 18th century English novel. Her teaching expertise covers Women's studies and English literature from 18th century to the present. She has published several books in Turkish; *Virginia Woolf ve İletişim* (Virginia Woolf and Communication), *Günümüz Türk Kadını Başarı Öyküleri* (Success Stories by Contemporary Turkish Women), *Kadın ve Mekan* (Women and Space), *Atatürkü Yaşayanlar* (Memories of Atatürk) and *Simone de Beauvoir, her life, philosophy and her Works*. She has one book published abroad: *William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft and their offspring Frankenstein* by Mellen Press and is one of the editors of two books being published in Vienna by Peter Lang publishers: *The Trading Women and Traded Women: A Historical Scrutiny of Gendered Trading* and *Memorable Encounters of Atatürk*. She has published many articles both in Turkey and abroad; she has written chapters to three books published abroad: *Mary Wollstonecraft: Reflections and Interpretations*, "Mary Wollstonecraft: A female Libertine or a Liberator of Women: A Turkish Approach", Rehilya Geybulleyava, Peter Orte, *Stereotypes in Literatures and Cultures*, "Turks or Jews", May 2012. Şebnem Toplu, Hubert Zapf. *Redefining Modernism and Postmodernism*, "How do we seize the past? In search of lost history in Flaubert's Parrot and A History of the World in 10/2 Chapters", England: Cambridge Scholars publishers, September 2010.

## **Gözde Ersoy**

Gözde Ersoy is an assistant professor of English Language and Literature at Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Turkey. She received her PhD in English Literature from Brunel University, London (UK), in 2016, with a thesis entitled "Trajectories, thresholds, transformations: Coming of age in classic modern fantasy fiction." Her main research interest is the literature of the fantastic in all its forms.

## **Greg Campbell**

Greg Karim Campbell is a PhD student in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. With a background in Rhetoric and Communication Design from the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Waterloo, Greg brings a praxis that synthesizes academic and artistic investigations that informs knowledge translation discourses.

Greg's area of interest as a doctoral student is at the intersection of experiential learning, human-nature relationships, onto-epistemologies, learning science, rhetorical theory, leisure productions, and research-creation methodologies. His PhD work focusses on exploring leisure as a space for learning how to challenge individual and societal experiences of exclusion through human-nature frameworks.

### **Gregory J. McClure**

Greg McClure has an MFA in English from the University of California, Irvine, where he is a Continuing Lecturer in rhetoric and composition.

### **Gregory Marks**

Gregory Marks is a PhD student and tutor in English and Creative Writing at La Trobe University, Australia. His thesis is on the Gothic narratives and posthuman nightmares of Thomas Pynchon's novels. He has presented locally and internationally on Gothic fiction and its intersections with ecology and philosophy. His chapter "Undead Matters: The Life and Death of Gothic Materialism" in *Dark Glamor: Accelerationism and the Occult* is forthcoming (Punctum 2021).

### **Hannah A. Barton**

Hannah A. Barton is a current MLitt English Fantasy student at the University of Glasgow. She has a BA in English from Texas State University, which included engaging in courses on Existentialism, Tolkien, and the American novel. Her current work focuses on post-apocalyptic worlds and using the Weird as a lens for ecocritical discussions. With a lifelong interest in horror, science fiction, and fantasy, Hannah's work will continue in areas of cross-platform narratives, utilizing Weird fiction to discover more about literature, podcasts, video games, and more.

### **Heather McKnight**

Heather McKnight is a critical utopian scholar and activist with research interests in unions, protest, climate crisis, education, feminism, gender, aesthetics, utopian analysis of science fiction television, and speculative fiction. She is currently a Doctoral Researcher at the University of Sussex Law Department, studying resistance to the marketisation of higher education through the lens of a reimagined academic freedom.

### **Heike Sieger**

Heike Sieger graduated from Münster University, Germany, with an M.A. in English, German and Russian Literature in 2006. Her thesis, in which Aldous Huxley played a central role, dealt with "Literary Representations of Drug Experiences in America's 1950s–1970s." Afterwards, she worked as a journalist for a German wedding magazine for eight years before returning to literary studies in 2014. Heike is currently working on her dissertation entitled *The Correlation of Music and Satire in Aldous Huxley's Literary Utopias*. Besides her interest in Huxley's affection for music, she is interested in the movie and stage adaptations the writer created based on own as well as on foreign works. Apart from her studies she works as editor in a publishing house specialized in local advertising journals in her home region near Dortmund.

### **Hira Sheikh**

Hira Sheikh is a PhD Candidate with the Urban Informatics Research Group at the QUT Design Lab and Digital Media Research Centre. She is an architect and an urban design theorist, with a research focus on a more-than-human conception of environmental sensing technologies and data governance in urban design futures.

### **Hope Caitlyn Roulstone**

My area of research consists mostly of Gothic, American and Horror literature, with particular focus played to the works of Stephen King. My Masters' thesis was entitled 'King's Traumatic Children: An Exploration of Childhood, Family and Paternity in the Horror Fiction of Stephen King'. My PhD is dedicated to the study of American Identity in the works of Charles Brockden Brown and Stephen King. I have presented research on King's work at several international conferences, most notably in London and Gdansk.

### **Hülya Yağcıoğlu**

Hulya Yagcioglu is an Assistant Professor of English at Zayed University, U.A.E. She earned her PhD in English Literature from Boğaziçi University, Turkey in 2015. She also holds a B.A. degree in English literature and an M.A. degree in Cultural Studies. A member of ACLA, BCLA and NCSA, she presented papers in many international conferences in Canada, Germany, Oman, Turkey, U.A.E, UK, and USA. She published book chapters and articles in the field of comparative literature, specifically on the interaction between material culture and literature. Her research areas include comparative literature, material culture in literature and object-oriented ontology. Her most recent publications include an article "Reifying Innocence: Material Contexts of Love in The Age of Innocence and The Museum of Innocence" (Routledge, 2018) and a co-edited book *All Things Arabia: Arabian Identity and Material Culture* (Brill, 2020).

### **Ikram Lecheheb**

I am Lecheheb Ikram. I am a PhD student at the University of Jordan. I undertake the journey of writing my thesis which is entitled "Corporeality of Trauma in Postmodern Fiction: A Reading of Margaret Atwood's fiction." I have interests in Arabic literature in English, Diaspora, Ethnicity, Identity Studies, and Trauma Studies.

### **Ilaria Bianco**

I'm a postdoctoral independent researcher in the field of intellectual history with a focus on political and religious studies. My main research topics are secularization theory and the postsecular, political secularism and the representation of religious experience and historical events in contemporary fiction, especially seriality. I held a PhD in "Political Studies. History and theory" from University of Turin, Italy (2015) and I worked as postdoc fellow from 2015 to 2019 in high profile research centres such as Fondazione Einaudi and Italian Institute for Historical Studies. I published my work in several academic journals and edited books and I'm currently working on a monograph about contemporary debates on political secularism and the postsecular.

## **Ildikó Limpár**

Ildikó Limpár, Senior Lecturer of English, Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest, holds a PhD in English and an MA in Egyptology. Her research in Monster Studies has resulted in various publications on the monster and the monstrous in international journals and anthologies. Her book to be published by McFarland in 2020 focuses on the use of monsters as literary tools addressing life challenges in coming-of-age fantasy and science fiction. She has a special interest in the undead, and thus she examined the paradigm shift of the literary vampire and the zombie detectable in contemporary film and fiction. She edited an anthology of essays entitled *Displacing the Anxieties of Our World: Spaces of the Imagination* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017) and an anthology of essays in Monster Studies written in Hungarian to be published by Athenaeum in March 2021.

## **Irena Jurković**

Irena Jurković is a PhD candidate at the University of Zadar. Her research interests focus on contemporary cultural studies, gender and sexuality, popular culture and 20th and 21st century American literature. In particular, her dissertation research seeks to interrogate the role of the sexed body in American popular culture by focusing on different ways of (re)presenting the male and female heterosexual body and the homosexual and transsexual body as the non-normative body.

## **Işıl Şahin Gültür**

Işıl Şahin Gültür is currently teaching at the department of English Language and Literature, Fırat University, Turkey. She holds a BA from the Department of American Culture and Literature of Hacettepe University, Turkey, and a PhD (Integrated) from the Department of English Language and Literature of İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University, Turkey. Her current areas of interest are colonized and gendered spaces in Early Modern and Restoration-period dramatic productions. She has published a number of journal articles on these issues and her first monograph explored the representation of the Ottoman Turks in English Restoration dramatic productions (*The Ottoman Turks in English Heroic Plays*, Cambridge Scholars, 2019). She is currently researching on Ottoman sultanate woman imageries in English literature with a special reference with Hurrem Sultan.

## **Jana Fedtke**

Dr. Jana Fedtke is Assistant Professor of English at the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. Her research and teaching interests include gender studies and transnational literatures with a focus on South Asia. Dr. Fedtke's work has been published in *South Asian History and Culture* (Taylor and Francis), *Asexualities: Feminist and Queer Perspectives* (Routledge), and *South Asian Review* (Taylor and Francis).

## **Jari Käkälä**

Jari Käkälä, PhD, has previously focused his research extensively on the work of Isaac Asimov, other Golden age authors, themes of frontier and pulp publishing. He currently works as a university lecturer at the University of Helsinki and has presented at ICFA and SFRA conferences among others, and published, e.g., in *Extrapolation* and *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*.

## **Jason Goldfarb**

Jason Goldfarb is a PhD candidate at Duke University. Most recently, his work has appeared in *The International Journal of Žižek Studies*, *The Hong Kong Review of Books*, and *ROAR Magazine* among other publications. He is also an editor at *Polygraph: An International Journal of Culture and Politics*.

## **Jason Livingston**

A media artist, programmer, and writer, Jason Livingston has made over 20 films. He has worked with non-profits and engaged with collaborative activist, media, and social practice efforts. His award-winning work has screened widely, including Rotterdam, Anthology, the Austrian Museum, and the Vancouver Art Gallery. *Under Foot & Overstory* is distributed by the CFMDC, and *Lake Affect* is available through EAI's Experimental Television Center collection. Awarded residencies include the Millay Colony and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts.

Jason is pursuing a practice-based PhD as a Presidential Fellow with the Department of Media Study at the University at Buffalo. He holds a B.A in Philosophy from Cornell University, and a M.A. and M.F.A. in Cinema from the University of Iowa. He currently serves on the Board of Trustees with the Flaherty Seminar, one of the oldest independent non-profit media arts organizations in North America.

## **Jayde Martin**

Jayde Martin is a PhD student at the University of Birmingham. Her project analyses feminist science-fiction by three authors: Octavia Butler, Nany Kress, and Margaret Atwood. She uses posthumanist philosophy as a critical framework to analyse the representation of genetic science and species identity within their work. Her MA dissertation focused on genre fiction and science communication. She is co-director of the Central Posthumanist Research Network and the co-financier for the Midlands Network of Popular Culture. In 2019, she was the postgraduate research assistant for the University of Birmingham's Centre for Digital Cultures. She has organised and chaired a panel on the importance of humanities methodologies in science and technology studies at the Nordic STS conference 2019. She has acted as co-general editor for *Ad Alta: The Birmingham Journal of Literature and Arts and Humanities Research* Council funded. The latter is a branch of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

## **Jenna Mikus**

Jenna Mikus is a design futuring strategy consultant and PhD candidate with the Urban Informatics Research Group, QUT Design Lab. With a background in engineering, sustainable design, and digital transformation, her work and research focus on developing innovative yet pragmatic solutions to attain optimal human and environmental health and wellness.

## **Jill Belli**

Jill Belli, PhD, is Associate Professor of English at New York City College of Technology, CUNY (City University of New York). Her interdisciplinary research focuses on utopian studies, positive psychology, happiness studies, writing studies, digital humanities, education, and pedagogy. She's actively involved in the North American Society for Utopian Studies, serving on the Steering, Teaching, and Digital Presence Committees. Jill is a founding member

and developer of the Writing Studies Tree, a digital humanities project creating an open-access, interactive academic genealogy for the field of writing studies. For many years, she also served as Co-Director of the OpenLab, City Tech's open-source digital platform for teaching, learning, and collaborating. You can learn more about Jill and her work on her website: <http://jillbelli.org/>

### **Joey Song**

My name is Joey Song, and I am a second-year PhD student in English Language and Literature at the University of Michigan. I study the intersections between race, science, critical theory, and ecocriticism. I often work with speculative fiction as my primary texts, and I am drawn most to clone narratives and how bodies are racialized in neoliberal biocapitalism. I am in the process of founding a Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop (RIW), a student-led interest group with my friend and colleague Audrey Bransfield tentatively called ECO, which will focus on interdisciplinary approaches to ecology, ecocriticism, and the Anthropocene.

### **Julia Sattler**

Julia Sattler is an Assistant Professor of American Literature and Culture at TU Dortmund University in Germany. In her research and teaching, she focuses on the intersection of activism and writing from a variety of angles – from questions of citizenship and social justice to 20th century female poetry. Following her dissertation on mixed race autobiography of the 1990s, she is currently working on a second book project on the potential of an interdisciplinary cooperation between American Studies and Urban Planning. As a side interest, she investigates iconic female characters and their different renditions on stage and screen, and specifically, the work of the actress Gillian Anderson.

### **Kalina Maleska**

Kalina Maleska teaches Utopian and Dystopian Narratives and English and American literature at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University – Skopje. Her articles of literary theory and criticism have been published in Macedonian and international journals. She is a writer, and has published three collections of short stories, two novels, a play, and a children's novel/story collection. Her stories have been translated into several languages and published in various magazines and anthologies in Macedonia and abroad. Her story "A Different Kind of Weapon" is part of the anthology *Best European Fiction 2018*. Maleska also translates literary works from English into Macedonian and vice versa; including translations of *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne, *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, *Selected Stories* by Ambrose Bierce, and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum.

### **Karthika V. K.**

Dr. Karthika V.K. is Assistant Professor of English in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirappalli. She earned her Master's degree in TESOL Studies from the University of Leeds, United Kingdom after a Master's in English and Comparative Literature from Pondicherry Central University, India. She obtained her doctorate in English Language Education from the English and Foreign Languages University (EFL-U), Hyderabad. She pursues second language acquisition research and works extensively on speaking strategies for language proficiency development. She is interested in cultural studies, film studies and translation studies too. She has published articles in journals

of national and international repute. She has been a teacher of English language and literature for more than seven years.

### **Katarzyna Ginszt**

Katarzyna Ginszt is an assistant lecturer and a PhD candidate in English Studies at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland. Her academic interests mainly entail dystopian literature and film. As a graduate of American Legal Studies Program at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, she also investigates the US and international legislation. She conducts an interdisciplinary research on the impact of law on literature, film and culture. She focuses especially on representations of human rights violations in dystopian narratives as well as the image of new technologies in science-fiction literature and film with reference to the legal solutions and tendencies in the field of technological development.

### **Katrin Schmitt**

Katrin Isabel Schmitt is a doctoral researcher in the field of literary and cultural studies at the University of Konstanz and holds a doctoral scholarship from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. She is currently working on her dissertation project titled “Beginning after the End: Narrative and Trauma in Twenty-First Century North American Post-Apocalyptic Fiction” under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Reingard M. Nischik and Prof. Dr. Silvia Mergenthal. Previously, she successfully completed her state exam in German and English (teaching degree), including an Erasmus stay abroad at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. Her focus on contemporary North American Literature is also reflected in her teaching at the University of Konstanz, namely in seminars such as “Margaret Atwood’s Dystopian Fiction” and “North American Post-Apocalyptic Short Fiction” for graduate and undergraduate students. Further research interests of hers include Contemporary Literature, Speculative Fiction, and Environmental Humanities.

### **Kavita Gonsalves**

With a background in architecture, design strategy and research, Kavita Gonsalves is currently a PhD candidate with QUT Design Lab, Brisbane, Australia. In her research, she focuses on the use of low-tech augmented reality and interactive storytelling as tools for marginalised communities to engage in creative placemaking.

### **Ken Fallas**

Ken Fallas is a Costa Rican architect and urban planner based in Seoul, Korea. He holds a Master degree by the Seoul National University of Science and Technology, he is the founder of RRRurban Collective and a partner researcher in the Research Center for Regional and Urban Design (ReCUD). His work focuses on smart cities, design theory, social inequality and urban innovation in Korea, South East Asia and Latin America.

### **Kerim Can Yazgünoğlu**

Dr. Kerim Can Yazgünoğlu is Assistant Professor of English Language and Literature at Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University, specializing in contemporary British novel, ecocriticism, green cultural studies, and gender studies. He obtained his Bachelor’s degree in English Language and Literature from Ankara University (2010), Master’s degree in English Literature from Hacettepe University (2012), and his PhD in English Literature from Hacettepe University

(2018). He visited the University of British Columbia (Canada) and did his PhD research on 21st century British fiction, ecotheories and pollution. He has also written on such topics as ecogender, body, animals, toxic environments, pollution and ecoaesthetics.

### **Khawla Bendjemil**

Khawla A. Bendjemil holds an MA degree in English literature from the University of Jordan. She is now a lecturer of English at the department of Letters and English at the University of 08 May 1945, Guelma, Algeria. She taught introduction to literature, British and American literatures, contemporary world literature, Third World literature among others. She spent a year teaching Arabic for college students at Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville as a Fulbright visiting scholar for the academic year 2015-2016. She also took graduate classes of TESL, Creative Writing, Literary theory, Modern Literary Criticism, Black Diasporic Feminisms and Studies in Women, Language and Literature. She has also been participating at different national and international conferences in Algeria, Qatar, Turkey and the U.S.A. In addition, she has organized and participated at different cultural and scientific events at the universities she studied and worked at. Her research interests focus on literary theories and contemporary world literature and she currently submitted her PhD thesis on the convergence between postcolonialism and ecocriticism.

### **Koray Kırmızısakal**

Koray Kırmızısakal completed his undergraduate studies in Marmara University, Department of Radio, Cinema and Television. He holds a master's degree in Marmara University, Department of Communication Sciences, with a thesis on a reading of Oğuz Atay's *Disconnected* (1971) in light of Kojin Karatani's theories on the 'discovery of the landscape'.

He is currently a PhD candidate in Kocaeli University, Department of Communication Sciences working on his dissertation on utopian imaginaries in contemporary science fiction literature.

He is the co-editor in chief of Terrabayt, a magazine covering latest news and thoughts on science fiction, literary theories and cultural studies. He publishes in several journals and publications including Adhoc, Birikim, Post Dergi, Gazete Duvar, e-Skop, sosyal bilimler, T-24.

### **Kristín María Kristinsdóttir**

Kristín María Kristinsdóttir is a PhD student in Literary Theory and Comparative Literature at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. In her research she focuses on anxiety in contemporary dystopian and utopian literature. She holds a master's degree and a bachelor's degree in Comparative Literature from the University of Iceland. In her master's thesis she wrote about the dissolution of bodily and societal boundaries in plague narratives. She is also a founder and an editor at a small independent book publishing company in Iceland that publishes new poetry and fiction as well as older texts that have previously been underappreciated or fallen by the wayside of the male-dominated Icelandic literary canon.

### **Krzysztof M. Maj**

Krzysztof M. Maj, PhD. is an Assistant Professor at the AGH University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Humanities, and editor-in-chief at *Creatio Fantastica* scholarly journal

(creatiofantastica.com). He authored two Polish books, *Allotopias. Toward the Topography of Fictional Storyworlds* (2015) and *World-building in the Fantastic. From Representation to Inhabitation* (2019) as well as co-edited, among others, a monograph *More After More. Essays Commemorating the 500th Anniversary of Thomas More's Utopia* (2016).

### **Kübra Baysal**

Having graduated from Hacettepe University English Language and Literature Department in Ankara in 2008, Kübra BAYSAL had her MA degree at Atatürk University English Language and Literature Department in 2013. With a PhD title that she earned from Hacettepe University English Language and Literature Department in January 2019, Kübra BAYSAL works at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University School of Foreign Languages as a lecturer. Her main fields of interest are climate fiction, apocalypse fiction, Doris Lessing, feminism, environmental studies, the Victorian novel and contemporary novel. She has several publications including book chapters, articles and translations in national and international books and journals.

### **Lars Schmeink**

Dr. Lars Schmeink works in digital transformation of teaching at the HafenCity University Hamburg and as project lead for the “Science Fiction” subproject of “FutureWork”, an interdisciplinary research group funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research. He was the inaugural president of the Gesellschaft für Fantastik-forschung (2010-19) and has recently been awarded a Leverhulme Visiting Professorship at the University of Leeds (pending due to Corona). Recent Publications: *The Routledge Companion to Cyberpunk Culture* (Co-editor, Routledge, 2020); *Cyberpunk and Visual Culture* (Co-editor, Routledge, 2018); *Biopunk Dystopias: Genetic Engineering, Society and Science Fiction* (Liverpool UP, 2016).

### **Laura Denning**

Recipient of the inaugural scholarship in Environmental Humanities at Bath Spa University, Laura Denning has recently successfully defended her PhD thesis “Hydrofeminism: bodies, spaces, practices”. This practice-led research positioned art practice within experimental geography in order to open up the registers within which art might operate, and to foreground the environmental and ecological focus of her art practice. Using Hydrofeminism as a trigger to generate speculative artworks, all of which attracted Arts Council England funding, Laura is now developing new works as proposals for post-doctoral opportunities that have an arts/science crossover. These works explore transcorporealities in relation to temporal shifts – including the moment, and extending to considerations of deep time. Laura is the recipient of a number of awards and commissions and her work has featured in a number of publications.

### **Leah Van Dyk**

Leah Van Dyk (she/her) is a doctoral student and Killam Laureate in the Department of English at the University of Calgary. She gratefully researches and studies as a settler on the traditional territory of Treaty 7, with her primary research interests located around the environmental humanities and radical revisionings of being in community—both pedagogically and practically—as a model of literary practice. She recently published an article in *English Studies in Canada*, is passionate about community projects, and is overly fond of coffee.

## **Liam Knight**

Liam Knight is a second-year English Literature PhD student at the University of Birmingham. His research focuses on the tradition of post-truth in literary dystopias, drawing on the assessments of post-truth being offered by today's most engaged social critics, among them Peter Pomerantsev, Timothy Snyder, and Jason Stanley. In particular, he locates this tradition within the 'endotexts' (fictional texts within works of fiction) of literary dystopias, using theories of transtextuality, metafiction, and reader response to account for how post-truth functions in fictional worlds, and how fictional examples of post-truth can help readers to combat the post-truth problem of the twenty-first century. He is former general co-editor of *Ad Alta: The Birmingham Journal of Literature*, founded the university's 'Dystopias Reading Group', is part of the 'Pandemic Perspectives' collective, and posts video essays, book reviews, and educational content on his YouTube channel, 'DystopiaJunkie'.

## **Lidia María Cuadrado Payeras**

Lidia María Cuadrado Payeras is a Young Researcher at the University of Salamanca, working under a National Competitive Scholarship [FPU17/05519] awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Education. She holds a MA in Advanced English Studies, for which she was awarded the Premio Extraordinario [Extraordinary Award for Academic Merit in a Master's Programme] and a MA in Translation and Intercultural Mediation. She is currently pursuing a PhD in English Studies on the subject of contemporary Canadian speculative fiction and posthuman philosophy, while collaborating in two nationally funded and recognized research projects on Vulnerability and Resilience (IP: Dr. Ana María Fraile Marcos, USAL) and Distribution of Resources (IP: Dr. Santiago López, USAL). Her academic interests include (post)apocalyptic fiction, pandemic literature(s), science- and speculative fiction, ecocriticism and cultural studies.

## **Louise Jammet**

Louise Jammet is an architect and currently a PhD student in sociology under the direction of Guy Tapie and Kent Fitzsimons in the PAVE laboratory (ENSAP Bordeaux), associated with the Émile Durkheim Centre (University of Bordeaux). She studies the discourses and urban production of "city projects" in the 21st century.

Professional page: <https://pave.hypotheses.org/louise-jammet>

## **Lucia Opreanu**

Lucia Opreanu is a lecturer at Ovidius University, Constanța, where she teaches contemporary British fiction and cultural paradigms in prose. She got her MA in Cultural Studies at Ovidius University and has completed a doctoral thesis on David Lodge's novels at Al. I. Cuza University, Iasi. Her research interests include Romantic literature and contemporary prose, with a special emphasis on dystopian fiction, rewriting and reception. She is the author of *David Lodge's Fiction: A Quest for Solutions to Problems of Literature* (2011) and she has published articles on Romantic poetry, postcolonialism and postmodernism, intertextuality and identity.

## **Luz Mar González-Arias**

Dr. Luz Mar González-Arias is senior lecturer in the English Department, University of Oviedo. Her research is primarily in the areas of body theory and Medical Humanities, as applied (mainly, but not exclusively) to the work of contemporary Irish women poets and visual

artists. Recent publications include her essay on PTSD ‘Impossible Returns: The Trope of the Soldier in Celia de Fréine’s Poetry’ (Irish University Review, 2018); “‘A pedigree bitch, like myself’: (Non)Human Illness and Death in Dorothy Molloy’s Poetry”, in *Animals in Irish Literature and Culture* (Palgrave, 2015); and ‘Ageing Iconography: Non-normative Representations of the Irish Maternal Bodies’ (The Nordic Irish Studies Journal, 2018). She is the co-editor of the special issue of *The Polish Journal of Aesthetics* on The Affective Aesthetics of the Body in Pain (51-4/2018) and is currently the P.R. of the research project “Illness in the Age of Extinction: Anglophone Narratives of Personal and Planetary Degradation (2000-2020)”, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science (grant number: PID2019-109565RB-I00/AEI/ 10.13039/501100011033).

### **Lydia Nixon**

Lydia Nixon is a PhD candidate and Associate Instructor at Indiana University, concentrating on 20th-21st century American literature. She studies ecologies and identity-making in the context of the Anthropocene, focusing on the intersections of postcolonial literature and ecological studies. She received her B.A. in English Education from Morningside College in Iowa, and her M.A. in English from Angelo State University in Texas.

### **Lynda Haas**

Lynda Haas received her PhD in Rhetoric from the University of South Florida and teaches rhetoric and composition at the University of California, Irvine.

### **Mabiana Camargo**

Mabiana Camargo is an English PhD student at the University of Saskatchewan. Her PhD Dissertation proposal is entitled “Space in the Configurations of Femininity and Sexuality in Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, *The Testaments*, *Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood*, *MaddAddam* and *The Heart Goes Last*”. Her research focuses on the representations of women’s bodies in enclosed spaces in Atwood’s speculative oeuvre. Mabiana is interested in Canadian speculative fiction, women’s literature and feminisms. She comes from Brazil.

### **Manuel Santana Hernández**

Graduated with honors in Hispanic Philology in 2018, Master’s degree in Literary Theory and Comparative Literature in 2019. Currently, Manuel is coursing his PhD in Latin-American Science Fiction funded by the Spanish Government. Member of the project ‘Exocanonicos: márgenes y descentramiento en la literatura actual en español’, funded by the Spanish Government; Member of the Research Group ‘Estética y Teoría de las Artes’, funded by the University of Salamanca. Manuel’s academic interests revolve around 21st century Science-Fiction Literature; the connection between Literature, Politics and Ethics; the literary and aesthetic responses to 9/11 and, specifically, the current rise of science-fictional literature.

### **Marek Oziewicz**

Marek Oziewicz is Professor of Literacy Education and holds the endowed chair as Sidney and Marguerite Henry Professor of Children’s and Young Adult Literature at the College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Marek is the author of three monographs and has co-edited five collections of essays.

### **Margaret Anne Smith**

Margaret Anne Smith is the president and a professor of literature at St. Stephen's University in St. Stephen, New Brunswick, Canada. She holds a PhD from Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario, and teaches and writes in the fields of American, Canadian and environmental literature, and arts education.

### **Maria Anna Bertolino**

PhD in Social and Human Sciences, I'm specialized in alpine anthropology. The main topics on which I work are: demographic changes in the Alps, local cultural heritage, landscape transformations and alpine tourism. I'm Lecturer for the AY 2019-2020 at the Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Modern Cultures (University of Turin) and I work as a consultant for different public and private organizations. Among my publications: *Eppur si vive. Nuove pratiche del vivere e dell'abitare nelle Alpi occidentali* (Meti edizioni, 2014); *Cultura alpina contemporanea e sviluppo del territorio* (co-author with Federica Corrado, Franco Angeli, 2017); "La ricerca antropologica in area alpina: metodi, temi e sviluppi attuali" (in Kottak C.P., *Antropologia Culturale*, Mc Graw-Hill, 2020).

### **Marina Pereira**

Marina Pereira Penteado is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Fluminense Federal University (UFF, RJ, Brazil) with a MA in Literary Theory (PUCRS) and a PhD in Comparative Literature (UFF). Her research interests include North American Literature, Cli-Fi, Anthropocene and Feminism.

### **Martin Greenwood**

After many years of being some sort of skint musician, Martin is now a third-year PhD student in the Sociology department of University of Manchester. He's interested in utopia, social reproduction, public services and the political-pedagogical nature of routine experience.

### **Mehmet Zeki Giritli**

Dr. Giritli graduated from Boğaziçi University Western Languages and Literatures department and holds a PhD on Comparative Literature from Istanbul University. His PhD dissertation is on Comparative Drama. He is a lecturer at Koç University/Istanbul and a professional theater actor/director and translator. His fields of research include but not limited to the works of Beckett, Pinter, Jean Genet, and Sevim Burak. His latest publication is a translation of collected plays of Harold Pinter, (October 2020) by Kırmızı Kedi Publications. His upcoming publications are the translations of *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Richard III* (expected January, February, and March) and a book chapter for the "Samuel Beckett and World Languages" project (to be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2021). He has presented papers at international conferences organized by Samuel Beckett Society, has conducted research at Samuel Beckett School at Trinity College/Dublin. He has recently been invited by King's College London to conduct his post-doc studies between the years 2021-2022.

### **Michael Pitts**

A recent PhD graduate of the University of Arkansas, Michael Pitts has accepted a position as an assistant professor at the University of South Bohemia in the Czech Republic where he will

begin teaching in spring 2021. His research interests are positioned at the intersection of gender theory, speculative fiction, and utopia studies.

### **Mirna Radin-Sabadoš**

Mirna Radin-Sabadoš is Assistant Professor of English Language and Culture at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad in Serbia. Her research focuses on areas in which literary and cultural studies overlap with the study of language and translation in contemporary mediated environments.

### **Mónica Martín**

Monica Martin is a Lecturer at the Department of English Studies of the University of Zaragoza. Her research interests include utopia and dystopia in cinema, cosmopolitan hopes in 21st-century films, social movements, feminism, ecocriticism and the sociology of globalization.

Monica's PhD thesis (2020) analyses cosmopolitan aspirations in contemporary movies. It explores how the films of globalization illustrate the rebirth of utopia, conceived as an open method grounded in egalitarian and ecological principles. Monica holds an MA in Film Studies from University College London and is a member of the research project "From Utopia to Armageddon: The Spaces of the Cosmopolitan in Contemporary Cinema."

### **Mono Brown**

Mono Brown has English degrees from University of Waterloo (BA, Rhetoric and Professional Writing) and the University of British Columbia (MA, PhD). Mono has been an instructor in English at snøweyəl leləm Langara College since 2015, and before that worked in the English department at UBC. They regularly teach courses in literature, communications, English-as-an-Additional Language, and academic writing and research. Their doctoral research examined the rhetoric of personal responsibility in public health messaging such as vaccination and handwashing campaigns. Their study of hand hygiene promotion appeared in a 2019 issue of the *Journal of Medical Humanities*. During their doctoral program, they worked on several collaborative, tri-council-funded research projects, including a CIHR-funded study of vaccination history in Canada. Funded as part of Langara's Research and Scholarly Activity Fund, their current research explores the culture surrounding universal or all-gender washrooms on campus.

### **Mukuta Borah**

Dr. Mukuta Borah works as an Assistant Professor in the department of English in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Sharda University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh. She has done her PhD from Delhi University on the impact of conflict on women and its representations in Assamese literature. She has presented papers in more than 15 National and International seminars and published many chapters in National and international Publishing Houses like Lexington Books, Niyogi Books, Rawat Books, and Harper Collins. She has an edited book to her credit too. An ardent follower and practitioner of Creative writing, Dr Borah has translated many short stories from Assamese to English and vice-versa. Her areas of interest include Women Writings, Gender Studies, Conflict and Trauma, Translation, Assamese Literature, British Literature, Comparative literature, World literature and Visual documentations/Representations of the Diaspora.

### **Murat Kabak**

Murat Kabak is a research and teaching assistant at the Department of English Language and Literature, Istanbul Kültür University. He received his M.A. degree in English Literature at Boğaziçi University in June 2020. He is currently a doctoral student in the English Literature program at the Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences, Boğaziçi University. His research interests include contemporary novel, contemporary theory and criticism, and media studies.

### **Murathan Kaya**

Murathan Kaya is a research and teaching assistant at the Department of English Language and Literature, Istanbul Kültür University. He is currently an M.A. student in the English Literature program at Yeditepe University. His research interests include science fiction, fantastic literature, climate fiction, ecocriticism, posthumanism and film studies.

### **Murtaza Mohiqi**

Murtaza Mohiqi is a member of the Department of Private Law, Faculty of Law at Gharjistan University where he has taught subjects on Afghanistan law since 2014. At the university, he was also appointed as the Executive Secretary of Gharjistan Research Center. He has also taught guest lectured at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. His previous work experience includes being employed as a legal consultant, a human rights researcher, and a law lecturer.

He works as a researcher at the Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies. Besides doing research, he also teaches legal research methodology. He has previously held positions as a journal editor in several national accredited journals, such as the scientific and research journal of Gharjistan University. He has produced leading publications on a number of legal issues. Mohiqi has published in Afghanistan and international journals. With a background in journalism as well as law, he has been involved in multiple research projects aimed at improving the media's reporting of violence against women and children in Afghanistan.

### **Muzaffer Derya Nazlıpınar Subaşı**

Muzaffer Derya Nazlıpınar Subaşı works as an Assistant Professor at the Department of English Translation and Interpreting in Kütahya Dumlupınar University, Turkey. Holding a PhD in English Language and Literature, Dr. Nazlıpınar Subaşı has participated in many international and national conferences and published original articles in the area of her studies including her book, *The Female Identity Exploration in a Patriarchal Society as reflected in Virginia Woolf's 'The Voyage Out' and Halide Edip-Adivar's 'Handan': A Comparative Study* (VDM Verlag, 2009). Her research interests include, but not limited to, comparative feminist studies and women's writing, feminist literary theory and criticism, critical translation studies, and women's and gender studies.

### **Nafisa Oliveira**

Nafisa Oliveira is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Goa University. In addition to completing her post-graduation in English, she also has a Master of Laws degree, specializing in Human Rights Law. She is currently registered as a part-time PhD research scholar at Goa University and is working on the topic: "Twentieth Century Dystopian Fiction: Science, Technology, and the Human Rights Discourse". Her research interests include: Law

and Literature; Culture Studies; and Translation Studies. Prior to her current position she has taught at various institutions in Goa at the graduate/post-graduate level since 2013.

### **Neet Neilson**

Neet has written poetry, short stories, four novels, one musical, three screenplays and a children's book. Her most recent novel co-written with her sister was longlisted for the Lucy Cavendish Fiction Prize 2020 for unpublished novels. Neet made I-SCREAM into a short film to promote veganism through changing perceptions. Neet has a background of university nurse lecturer with a PhD in cancer studies and author of many university online materials at degree and master's level. Neet tends to find most of her writing has subliminal messages that educate through entertainment and story telling. Neet's ambition is for a better future through story telling delivered by any means to reach the widest possible audience.

### **Niğmet Çetiner**

Niğmet Çetiner graduated from Hacettepe University, the Department of English Language and Literature in 2012. She got her MA degree from Atatürk University, the Department of English Language and Literature. She is working as an English lecturer at Kastamonu University, School of Foreign Languages. She presented several papers at international conferences.

### **Olea Morris**

Olea Morris is an anthropologist and PhD candidate in Environmental Studies and Policy at Central European University, and is currently based in Berlin. Her forthcoming dissertation, provisionally titled "Communing with Others: Multispecies Entanglements in Mexican Ecovillages", draws on extended fieldwork in intentional communities throughout Mexico.

### **Oleksandr Okhrimenko**

PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Ancient and Medieval History, History Faculty, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (Ukraine). My dissertation was dedicated to the daily life of medieval urban centres in England during 11-13 centuries (2016). Now I am working on the project dedicated to the newly discovered manuscripts from the collection of Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine and introducing those codices to the scientific and general public. At the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv I also teach utopian studies in the ancient, medieval and early modern literature and art.

### **Olgahan Bakşi Yalçın**

Having studied English Language and Literature at Ankara University between 1996- 2001, Olgahan Bakşi Yalçın earned her M.A in the same field and institution in 2009. She holds a doctoral degree from American Culture and Literature, Kadir Has University, Istanbul. Her principal research area includes English and American Literature as well as Film Studies, with specific interests in Gender Studies. Dr. Bakşi Yalçın has published a few articles in National and International journals: she has also presented papers in the national/international conferences and published in refereed conference proceedings. She has more than 19 years of experience in teaching English Language, culture, and literature. As a full-time Assistant Professor in the department of English Language and Literature at İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl

University, she currently teaches graduate and undergraduate courses such as Women's Literature, Adaptation Studies, and Gothic Tradition in Literature.

### **Olusegun Stephen Titus**

Olusegun Titus is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Music, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria. He obtained a PhD in Musicology from University of Ibadan. His research focuses on ecomusicology, medical musicology, music and migration, urban studies, race, space, place and peacebuilding. He has published in high impact journals. He is a Fellow, IFRA-Nigeria 2012; Fellow, Leventis and visiting scholar, University of London 2014; Fellow, Ife Institute of Advance Studies 2017; Fellow, AfOX-TORCH and visiting scholar Oxford University 2019 and Fellow, ACLS/AHP 2020.

### **Onur Karaköse**

Onur Karaköse currently works as a Research Assistant in the Department of English Language and Literature at Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University. He obtained his BA in Political Science and International Relations in 2013 from Yeditepe University with a double major in English Language and Literature in 2014. He finished his M.A. in English Language and Literature at Ankara University with a thesis on Post-1990s Contemporary British Drama. He is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of American Culture and Literature at Hacettepe University. His research interests are American Drama, Fantasy and Science Fiction, Psychoanalysis and Horror Fiction.

### **Özlem Gülen**

Özlem Gülen graduated in 2016 from the Department of English Translation and Interpreting of Istanbul University. During her undergraduate education, she participated in the Erasmus Student Exchange Program in the Summer Semester of 2014 and studied English Philology at the Pedagogical University of Cracow. Along with her internship experiences in the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce and Dragoman Translation, she worked as both in-house and freelance translator/interpreter for several translation agencies. Now she continues her master's degree education in the program of European Union of Istanbul University and also works as a professional translator in Turkish, English and German. While her specialized fields in translation include politics, economy and law; her academic research interests focus on European Union, European history, translation in special fields, translation sociology and cultural studies.

### **Özlem Ögüt Yazıcıoğlu**

Özlem Ögüt Yazıcıoğlu is an Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures of Boğaziçi University, Istanbul. She holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from Purdue University, with focus on English and German literature, and literary theory. She is the author of a book titled *Major Minor Literature: Animal and Human Alterity*. She has published articles and chapters in refereed journals and books in her areas of research, including modern and contemporary fiction, postcolonial literature, gender and ethnic studies, ecocriticism and critical animal studies. She was chair of the organizing committee of Interdisciplinary Ecological-Ethical Encounters Conference series held at Boğaziçi University from 2017 to 2019.

## **Öznur Karakaş**

Öznur Karakaş holds two master's degrees in philosophy in Galatasaray University and l'Université de Toulouse-Jean Jaures. She has obtained her PhD in the Department of Information and Knowledge Society/ UOC (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya) on an analysis of Gezi Movement as an 'assemblage.' Her research areas include Nature-Culture divide, assemblage theory, Deleuze studies, body politics, science and technology studies and technofeminism.

## **Paweł Kaptur**

Paweł Kaptur, PhD – Assistant Professor at the Department of Foreign Literatures, Institute of Literary Studies and Linguistics, Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland. His research focuses on the social and political life in 17th century England and historical and political literature. The author of a monograph John Dryden as a Political Poet, published in 2019.

## **Peter Sands**

Peter Sands is Director of the Honors College and Associate Professor of English at UW-Milwaukee, and the President of the Society for Utopian Studies (North America). His current research focuses on the intersections of slow movements (food, philosophy, pedagogy, etc.) and utopianism.

## **Rashmi Gaur**

Rashmi Gaur is a Professor of English, she teaches courses in Communication, Culture, Gender Studies and Media (Film and Literature) at the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee. In her career, spanning three decades, she has guided about 12 PhD theses. She has published four books, also to her credit there are more than ninety research papers in national and international journals. Besides, she has traveled extensively and has participated in many conferences in India and abroad. She also runs consultancy projects in related areas. She is a member of several academic bodies. At present, she is working in the area of Media, Digital Humanities, and Professional Communication.

## **Rhiannon Firth**

Rhiannon Firth is a political theorist and writer, a senior research fellow in sociology at the University of Essex and author of *Utopian Politics: Citizenship and Practice* (Routledge 2012). She has two forthcoming books on anarchist disaster relief social movements: *Coronavirus, Class and Mutual Aid in the UK* (with John Preston, Palgrave 2020) and *Disaster Anarchy* (Pluto, 2021). She wrote the Afterword for the new edition of M.L. Berneri's *Journey Through Utopia* (PM Press, 2019) She can be found on Twitter at @RhiFirth.

## **Rituparna Das**

Presently working as an independent scholar, by the side of holding a position of contractual faculty of English in Techno India University, India, have completed PhD from Calcutta University, India, have published several articles and chapters on different aspects of cultural studies in various national and International journals and books also a poet and short story writer, has published short stories and poems in magazines and literary journals. Have delivered invited lectures and workshops in various universities including University of Graz,

Austria, Cambridge University, Montreal University. Have developed course curriculum of communication skill, M.A in English, designed PhD Course for Techno India University, India, Have worked as an examiner for the University of Calcutta, Have worked as an Examiner for W.B.U.T. By the side of fulfilling the academic tasks, acting as the secretary of an Indian NGO dedicated to the welfare of under-privileged street children and women of West Bengal, also working as an animal activist and more than 50 strayed animals are sheltered by personal initiative.

### **Roberto Favalli**

I am Roberto Favalli, I am a PhD student in social sciences at the University of Padua. My master's degree is in Sociology of Culture. I am a member of Pa.S.T.I.S., an Italian research group focused on STS (scientific and technological studies) with a focus on the communication process, the perception of technoscience and new media. My main research interests are the sociology of science, future studies and utopian studies, and how these dimensions affect each other.

### **Roberto Olavarría Choin**

Roberto C. Olavarría Choin is a Spanish scholar whose main interests include Horror Literature, Archaeology and History. He was born in 1975 in Granada (Spain). His education includes two degree courses in History (1995-1999) and English Philology (2006-2011), a postgraduate degree in Archaeology and Territory (1999-2001) and a Master Degree in English Literature and Linguistics (2017-2018). The Master Thesis of the latter was entitled “The Shadow in the Mind: A New Interpretation of HP Lovecraft's *The Shadow out of Time*”. He currently works as a teacher in a Secondary School in Spain, but he is also enrolled as a PhD Student in the University of Granada. He is fluent in English, Spanish and French and has written different articles about Archaeology and Literature. His main hobbies include archery, traveling, reading and writing stories about his favorite topics: horror, science fiction and crime fiction.

### **S. Patrick Mahoney**

I have been affiliated with and taught in the department of sociology at Colorado State University for over 20 years. In my current position as an Assistant Professor I teach upper division and graduate courses in the subject-areas of Classical and Modern Sociological Theory, Health and Medicine, Political Sociology, along with a co-taught course in climate fiction with a colleague in the English Department. My scholarly research is in the areas of environmental sociology and community-based health. More specifically, I focus on the questions related to the future trajectory of climate change, along with the impact medical technologies have on our conceptions of what it means to be human. I have presented and published in the areas of global pandemics and the environmental impact of global tourism in Antarctica. My academic work applies a critical perspective to our knowledge of the world to promote effective and meaningful social change.

### **Sabina Fazli**

Sabina Fazli has completed her PhD in Victorian literature at Goettingen University. She is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer in English literature at Goettingen University and Mainz University, Germany and has published on Victorian and neo-Victorian literature and contemporary magazine culture.

## **Şafak Horzum**

Şafak Horzum is a PhD Candidate in English at Hacettepe University and former Fulbright Fellow at Harvard University. He received his B.A. and M.A. from Hacettepe, too. In 2016, Horzum was awarded the Translation Grant of the ASLE with his Turkish-English translation of Oya Baydar's metafictional post-apocalyptic fiction *The General of the Garbage Dump* which awaits its publisher in English. His latest publications focus on the theories of men and masculinities in British drama and novel. His research interests are on humour, sexualities, new materialisms, and posthumanism. He is currently co-editing a volume entitled *Posthuman Pathogenesis: Contagion in Literature, Arts, and Media* with Başak Ağin, forthcoming from Brill.

## **Sara González Bernárdez**

Sara González Bernárdez is a graduate in English Language and Literature by the University of Santiago de Compostela, where she also obtained a master's degree in Advanced English Studies. She is currently undertaking a PhD in the same institution as part of the research group Discourse and Identity (GRC2015/002 GI-1924), with support from the Spanish Ministry of Education. Her thesis project deals with the possibilities which the fantasy genre affords as a site of resistance and expression for marginalised identities, and how this impacts their representation within the fiction's possible worlds. Her focus is on female identity as an exemplary case study, owed to her interest in feminist theory and criticism. As such, her research has mostly revolved around the concepts of identity, representation and empathy.

## **Sarah Lohmann**

Sarah Lohmann is an Honorary Associate in the Department of English Studies at Durham University in the UK, having recently completed her PhD in the same department under the supervision of Professors Patricia Waugh and Simon James. Her interdisciplinary thesis, which passed viva examination by Drs Siân Adiseshiah and Jenny Terry in April, presented a case for the classification of utopian literature in terms of structural Bakhtinian chronotopes based on systems theory; in particular, it focused on an analysis of the feminist 'critical utopias' of Joanna Russ, Marge Piercy and Ursula K Le Guin as examples of complex adaptive systems. Now based once more in her hometown of Munich, Germany, Sarah is currently preparing her thesis for publication, among other projects, as well as developing new areas of research and teaching, having just passed her Postgraduate Certificate of Academic Practice.

## **Şebnem Düzgün**

Şebnem Düzgün is Assistant Professor of English Translation and Interpretation at Ankara Science University. She received her PhD degree in English Culture and Literature from Atılım University in 2017. Her main research interests include 18th and 19th-century English literature, utopia, dystopia, science fiction, women's literature and gender studies. She is the author of a book chapter on Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World*, and of several scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles.

## **Seçil Erkoç**

Seçil Erkoç received her B.A. (2010) from the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Boğaziçi University. She had her M.A. degree (2013) in English Language and Literature Department at İstanbul University, with her dissertation entitled "Deconstruction of

the Self in Aldous Huxley's *Island* and John Fowles' *The Magus*." During her graduate studies she worked as a Research Assistant at İstanbul University, and then at Hacettepe University where she got her PhD from English Language and Literature Department in July 2020 with her dissertation entitled "'Out of the Maze of Dualisms': Posthuman Space in Mario Petrucci and Alice Oswald's Poetry." Her research interests include Contemporary Nature Poetry, Ecological Posthumanism, Comparative Literature, Contemporary Literary Theories and Criticism.

### **Seda Arıkan**

Seda Arıkan works as an associate professor of English at the Department of English Language and Literature, Firat University/Turkey. She studied as a visiting researcher in Centre for Iris Murdoch Studies at Kingston University/London in 2012 and she has completed her postdoctoral study on "Virtue Ethics in the Novels of Doris Lessing" at Fordham University/New York in 2019, which will be published as a monograph. She has officially managed the full doctorate course load at the Department of Philosophy at Yıldız Technical University/Turkey. She has studies on psychoanalytic literary criticism, comparative literature, philosophy&literature, ecology&literature, gender studies, and three monographs published in Turkish titled *Iris Murdoch's Novels in the Light of Lacanian Psychoanalytic Method* (2014) which was awarded the best dissertation of 2013 on Social Sciences by Atatürk University; *Cefer Cabbarlı: (Non)Reflections in the Mirror* (2019) which was honored with Cefer Cabbarlı Award of 2019 in Azerbaijan, and *Doris Lessing: A Philosophy of Life from Marxism to Sufism* (2018) which was awarded the best monograph of the year on English Literature in 2019 by IDEA (English Language and Literature Research Association of Turkey).

### **Seda Pekşen**

Seda Pekşen completed her BA in 2000 at Ankara University's Department of English Language and Literature, MA in 2003 and Phd in 2008 at Middle East Technical University's English Literature Programme. She has been working as an instructor at Ankara University's Department of English Language and Literature since 2010. Her fields of interest are fiction since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, science-fiction and fantasy literature, children's literature, and literary theory.

### **Sezgi Öztop Haner**

Sezgi Öztop Haner is an English language instructor at Dumlupınar University. She received her doctorate in English Culture and Literature from Atılım University. Her research interests include sexuality and gender studies, transgender theory, cultural studies, critical theory.

### **Shadia Abdel-Rahman Téllez**

Shadia Abdel-Rahman Téllez graduated in English Studies and in the Master's Degree in Gender and Diversity at the University of Oviedo. She is currently a PhD candidate in the programme of Gender and Diversity at the University of Oviedo and her thesis deals with autobiographical representations of chronic pain. She was awarded a pre-doctoral grant by the government of the Principality of Asturias in the programme "Severo Ochoa" and she is currently a member of the research group HEAL that is working on the project titled "Illness in the Age of Extinction: Anglophone Narratives of Personal and Planetary Degradation (2000-2020)". Her research interests include phenomenology, the medical humanities, as well as poetry, fiction, and autobiographical literature on illness.

### **Shé Mackenzie Hawke**

Dr. Shé Mackenzie Hawke is an interdisciplinary scholar and Head of the Mediterranean Institute for Environmental Studies, at the Science and Research Centre, Koper, Slovenia. She is also a ficto-critical poet who writes elementally and at the nature-culture interface. Her latest book, *Flight Mode* (Recent Work Press: Canberra), appeared in 2020 and narrates the journeys of air, oxygen, water and spirit through changing times. Her book on water *Aquamorphia: Falling for Water, a genealogy and love song for water*, appeared in 2014 (Brisbane: Interactive Publications). *End on Sea* is forthcoming 2022. She is co-investigator on the project “Surviving the Anthropocene through Inventing New Ecological Justice and Biosocial Philosophical Literacy” funded by the Slovenian Research Agency (2019-2022. Grant No. ARRS J7-1824). She is also a Visiting Professor at Alma Mater Europa, (AMEU: ISH) Maribor, Slovenia in the department of Humanities.

### **Shraddha A. Singh**

Shraddha A. Singh is currently pursuing her PhD (English) at the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Shraddha teaches Literature in English at the Department of English, Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi. Shraddha has several publications; and has presented papers at national and international seminars and conferences, most recently at the Posthumanism 20/20 international conference organised by Aarhus University, Denmark in October 2020. Her research areas include speculative fiction, genre fiction, posthumanism and post-structuralism.

### **Siân Adiseshiah**

Dr Siân Adiseshiah is Reader in English and Drama at Loughborough University. Her research interests are in contemporary theatre, utopianism, and age studies. She is author of *Utopian Drama: In Search of a Genre* (Methuen Drama, 2022, forthcoming) and has published books on the playwright Debbie Tucker Green, 21C drama, 21C fiction, and the plays of Caryl Churchill.

### **Simon Spiegel**

PD Dr. Simon Spiegel is project manager in the ERC Advanced Grant research project FilmColors at the Department of Film Studies at the University of Zurich. From 2014 to 2018 he was a collaborator in the research project Alternative Worlds. The Political-activist Documentary Film funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation which resulted in his professorial thesis on utopias in nonfiction films (published in 2019 with Schüren as *Bilder einer besseren Welt*). From 2012 to 2014 he was part of the interdisciplinary SNF research project Analog vs. Digital – The Emotional Impact of Film Recording Processes on the Audience which dealt with the emotional impacts of different recording technologies. He is co-editor of the interdisciplinary *Zeitschrift für Fantastikforschung*.

His research interests include science fiction and utopian film, digitalization, theory of the fantastic, genre theory, documentary film, and film dramaturgy.

### **Sotirios Bampatzimopoulos**

Sotirios Bampatzimopoulos has been working as a Foreign Lecturer at the Department of American Culture and Literature at Ankara University since January 2015. He completed his

PhD on “The Use of Violence in Contemporary American Cinema” in the department of American Literature at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He holds an MA in Media and Communication from the University of Santiago de Compostela and an MA in Creative Writing from the University of Leeds. He has worked for several years as a film critic.

### **Sotirios Triantafyllos**

Sotirios Triantafyllos holds a Dphil in History from Oxford University on the subject of early modern utopia and science. He has published articles in academic journals and websites. His book *The Social and Cultural Conception of Space in Early Modern European Utopias* is due to be published in 2021.

### **Soumaya Bouacida**

Soumaya Bouacida is a lecturer of English Literature at Skikda University in Algeria. She has got her PhD degree in English Literature from the University of Jordan. She is interested in postmodern studies, postcolonial literature and African American literature. She has participated in some international conferences and has published some interesting papers on postmodernism.

### **Srijanee Adhikari**

The author has an M.A. degree in English from Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India. Her research interests include science fiction, fantasy, horror and postcolonial literature. During her M.A. she has completed a dissertation on “Ashapura Devi, and Women’s Self-Education and Self-Writing in 19th Century Bengal”. She has also co-translated *Thakurmar Jhuli* (1907), a collection of Bengali fairytales, into *Grandmother’s Bag: Fairytales of Bangala*, for a class project.

### **Stavroula Anastasia Katsorchi**

Stavroula Anastasia (Lina) Katsorchi is a PhD candidate at the University of Athens, Greece. She holds an MA on English Literature, Culture and Theory from the University of Sussex, UK, and a BA on English Literature from the University of Athens. Her PhD thesis focuses on posthuman feminist theory and Anglophone dystopian fiction. Her other research interests include ecocriticism, film theory, cultural criticism, and modernist fiction. She has delivered paper presentations at the University of Barcelona, the University of Sussex, and the University of Kent. She has published two poetry collections.

### **Steven Holmes**

Steven Holmes is a lecturer at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. He has published in *Studies in the Fantastic*, *The Written Dead: The Zombie as a Literary Phenomenon*, *War Gothic in Literature and Culture*, and *Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Popular Fantasy*. He is currently revising his dissertation into a book project provisionally entitled *Exploding Empire: Imagining the Future of Nationalism and Capitalism*.

### **Steven Shaviro**

Steven Shaviro is the DeRoy Professor of English at Wayne State University, and the author of *Connected, Or, What It Means to Live in the Network Society* (2003), *Discognition* (2016), and *Extreme Fabulations* (forthcoming, 2021).

### **Sümeyye Güllü Aslan**

Sümeyye Güllü Aslan has been working as an English instructor at Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey since 2010, and has been coordinating the Beginner Group since 2019. She has received her MA degree from Middle East Technical University in English Literature in 2018 with the thesis named “A Foucauldian Reading of Power in the Harry Potter Series: Speciesism and Discrimination Based on Blood Status”. At the moment, she is pursuing a PhD degree in the same field, at Middle East Technical University. Sümeyye is interested in a number of areas including but not limited to posthumanism, ecocriticism and psychoanalysis in dystopian fiction, science fiction and climate fiction.

### **Svjetlana Sumpor**

Svjetlana Sumpor, PhD, is an interdisciplinary scholar, curator and critic. She has a degree in art history and comparative literature and a PhD in literature, performative studies, film and culture. She wrote PhD thesis “Irony as a Strategy in the Genre of Dystopia”, a number of books in the area of art history and the script for a documentary film about an artist. She works as a curator, while pursuing her interests in dystopian studies as an independent scholar.

### **Tânia Cerqueira**

Tânia Cerqueira holds a Master's degree in Anglo-American Studies from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Porto. She obtained it with a dissertation titled ““Are you afraid of your own shadow?”: The Monster and the Construction of Identity in Monsters of Verity.” She is currently a PhD candidate at the same university. Her PhD thesis main focus is the relationship of the Gothic tradition and young adult dystopias. She is a collaborator at the Centre for English, Translation, and Anglo-Portuguese Studies (CETAPS) and a member of the Young Adult Studies Association. Her main research areas of interest include Young Adult Fiction, Dystopian Studies, Gothic Studies, and Posthumanism.

### **Thais Lassali**

Thais Lassali is a PhD student on Social Anthropology at the University of Campinas, Brazil. She also has a bachelor degree on Social Sciences and a master degree on Social Anthropology at the same university. Member of the Laboratory of Fiction and Science (LABFICC) and of the Atelier of Anthropology and Symbolic Production (APSA), both of University of Campinas. Her research interests are science fiction, Hollywood cinema, film, media and gender studies and anthropology of science.

### **Thomas Horan**

Thomas Horan is a Professor of English at The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, in Charleston. His teaching and research interests include dystopian literature, twentieth-century British and Commonwealth literature, and modern and contemporary drama. His monograph, *Desire and Empathy in Twentieth-Century Dystopian Fiction*, was published by

Palgrave Macmillan in 2018. He edited *Critical Insights: Nineteen Eighty-Four* (2016) and *Critical Insights: Animal Farm* (2018). His work appears in *Modern Drama*, *Extrapolation*, *The Arthur Miller Journal*, and various edited collections.

### **Thomas Kelly**

My name is Thomas Kelly and I am a cross-institutional PhD student based in the Literature department at King's College London (KCL), and Geography department at University College London (UCL). My research examines the ways modernist writers, artists, planners, architects, and filmmakers in response to the accelerated growth of architectural and technological structures became fascinated with highly-verticalized imaginaries of the future city. By analysing imaginative visions of the vertical city, I argue there is a symbolic and geopolitical transformation of urban verticality from a spiritual or theological concept to a pure, expression of capitalistic values. Overall, I examine how representations of vertical futures can act as critical reflections on the vertical hierarchies of power and capitalistic politics released by architectural verticalisation. They offer a unique perspective into the social relationships, spatial configurations, and political ideologies created by the complex, three-dimensional volumes of infrastructures and architectures that still define the early twentieth century phenomenon of vertical modernity.

### **Tiff Graham**

Tiff Graham teaches at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles, California. She has taught Anthropology Through a Sci-Fi Lens, Cultural Studies, Occupational Culture, Festivals, American Folklore, and a few digital media courses. Graham holds a PhD in Culture and Performance (University of California Los Angeles), M.S. in Occupational Health (University of Toledo/Medical College of Ohio), and B.A. in English (University of Missouri Columbia). Also, she photographs and writes about parades, protest marches, festivals, foodways, costumes, environmental issues, and other topics at [www.ParadeHistory.com](http://www.ParadeHistory.com) though Covid-19 has put a damper on some of these activities.

### **Tim Murphy**

Murphy is Houston-Truax-Wentz Professor & Regents Professor of English at Oklahoma State University. He is the author of *Wising Up the Marks: The Amodern William Burroughs* (1998) and *Antonio Negri: Modernity and the Multitude* (2012) as well as numerous essays and book chapters on modern and contemporary literature, culture, philosophy, and politics. He has translated five books and dozens of articles from French and Italian, and he served as general editor of the scholarly journal *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture* from 2000 to 2013.

### **Trevor Jackson**

Trevor Jackson received his PhD in Interdisciplinary Humanities from the University of California at Merced in 2018 and currently is on the faculty at Modesto Junior College in California. His current book project is entitled *Unspeakable Geographies in the American Novel: Fiction and the Failure of the Real*.

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Tuğba Aygan is an assistant professor at Ataturk University. She completed her Masters and PhD in English contemporary drama. Her research focuses on war and trauma.

## **Ujjwal Khobra**

Ujjwal Khobra is currently pursuing her PhD from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (India) in Posthuman Studies and Literature and Science Studies. She completed her B.A. in English Literature from the University of Delhi (2012- 2015) and earned her M.A. in English Literature from the Department of English, University of Delhi (2015- 2017). Her areas of interest include Digital Humanities, Women and Gender Studies, Posthuman Studies, and the Anthropocene. She has also participated in several workshops and conferences in India. She has recently published her research article entitled “Live (Life) Streaming: Virtual Interaction, Virtual Proximity, and Streaming Everyday Life during the COVID-19 Pandemic” (2020) in the *Rupkatha Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*.

## **Valentina Adami**

Valentina Adami holds a PhD in English Studies (University of Verona, 2010). She has been a Post-Doc Research Assistant of English literature at the University of Verona and is currently Adjunct Professor of English Language at the Free University of Bolzano/Bozen, Italy. Her fields of research are literature and trauma; law, literature and culture; ecolinguistics and ecocriticism; the digital humanities. She is Assistant Editor of *Pólemos: A Journal of Law, Literature and Culture* (De Gruyter).

## **Vera Benczik**

Vera Benczik is senior lecturer at the Department of American Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. She has published several studies about science fiction, popular culture, and the fiction of Margaret Atwood. Her current projects focus on the spatial rhetorics of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic science fiction narratives, and the use of place and space in Margaret Atwood’s dystopian fiction.

## **Wendy Roy**

Wendy Roy is Professor of Canadian Literature at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Canada. Her research is on gender and culture in Canadian literature, with her current project on dystopian and apocalyptic fiction by Canadian women writers. Her publications include *Maps of Difference: Canada, Women, and Travel* (2005), *The Next Instalment: Serials, Sequels, and Adaptations of Nellie L. McClung, L.M. Montgomery, and Mazo de la Roche* (2019), and the co-edited volume *Listening Up, Writing Down, and Looking Beyond: Interfaces of the Oral, Written, and Visual* (2012).

## **William Coker**

William Coker, who received his PhD in Comparative Literature from Yale in 2010, has taught in the Program in Cultures, Civilizations and Ideas at Bilkent University since 2008. His work focuses on poetics, hermeneutics and critical theory in the legacies of the Enlightenment and Romanticism in German, English, and French literature, and cultural exchange between Turkey and the West. Having published articles on Rousseau, Jean Paul, Keats, Blake, Hegel, Žižek and others in such journals as *Comparative Literature*, *Criticism* (forthcoming), and *Religion and Literature*, and multiple edited volumes, he is currently working on a book project on narrative authority in the Romantic-era novel.

### **Yıldıray Çevik**

Asst. Prof. Dr. Yıldıray Çevik, now employed as lecturer at Faculty of Science and Letters, has worked as EFL/ESP teacher at various levels and institutions. He co-wrote a number of proficiency exam books, grammar course books and vocabulary development self-study materials. He also acted as lecturer at various English and American Studies Departments. His interests are British Fiction, Afro-Anglo fiction, American Drama, and the use of literature in ELT.

### **Zsolt Czigányik**

Zsolt Czigányik is an associate professor at the Department of English Studies of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest, Hungary. His research interests include utopian and dystopian literature, the relationship of literary studies and the social sciences, and contemporary literature. His publications include a monograph written in Hungarian on the role of human freedom in modern dystopias, and an edited volume on the relationship of ideology, politics and literature (*Utopian Horizons*, 2017). Currently he is working on a book project on Hungarian utopian literature.

### **Züleyha Çetiner Öktem**

Züleyha Cetiner-Oktem is an associate professor in the English Language and Literature department at Ege University, where she teaches comparative mythology, classical and medieval literature as well as science fiction and fantasy. She is the editor of a collected volume titled *Mythmaking across Boundaries* published by Cambridge Scholars Press in 2016 and co-editor of *Languages, Cultures, and Gender* published by Ege University Press in 2017. She is currently working on her monograph entitled *On Monsters: A Comparative Study in Medieval Literature* funded by the Scientific Research Projects Coordination Unit of Ege University.

### **Zümre Gizem Yılmaz Karahan**

Dr. Zümre Gizem Yılmaz Karahan obtained her Bachelor's degree in 2010, her Master's degree in 2012 (with her thesis entitled "The Illustration and Function of Epic Theatre Devices in Selected Plays by Caryl Churchill"), and her PhD in 2018 (with her dissertation entitled "The Discord Between the Elements and Human Nature: Ecophobia and Renaissance English Drama") at Hacettepe University in the Department of English Language and Literature. Her recent publications include an article "Ecophobia as Artistic Entertainment" (ISLE 26.2) and a book chapter entitled "Othered Bodies and Ecophobia: Mamak Garbage Area" (*Through the Working Class: Ecology and Society Investigated Through the Lens of Labour*).

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Finally, we would like to thank all our speakers for kindly choosing to share and present their research at our conference, and our chairs for lending their time and expertise. It goes without saying that none of this would have been possible without your participation.

This conference generated more interest and engagement than we ever could have imagined. We received 239 abstract submissions from 48 different countries. Of those, we were able to accept 177 individual or jointly-presented papers, 2 set panels, and 1 participant roundtable alongside our 4 keynote presentations, for a total of 209 speakers. We are absolutely thrilled by the diversity on display amongst our delegates, with speakers from 42 different countries. It has been a privilege to be part of such a truly international endeavour, which has ironically been made possible by the very pandemic that has kept us all physically apart.

This turbulent era of late capitalism has seen the imposition of 'end of times' on countless human and nonhuman populations the world over. However, the always-unfolding nature of reality is such that there is never an end in an absolute sense. Potentiality always abounds. We hope that the discussions held at the conference and following on thereafter inspire people to imagine and strive towards the implementation of more ethical and liveable worlds in the uncertain terrain ahead.

'Another world is possible. Another world is coming. Another world is reality.'