



LIES IN/ON THE NET

"Literary [Non-]Fiction in Times of Crisis"

Book of Abstracts

Thursday, [13.05]

9.30-10.00 Conference opening

10.00-11.00 Plenary lecture

Jan Carson

[Northern Irish writer]

“Climbing Back Out of the Marvellous; Magical Realist Elements in Contemporary Literature from the North of Ireland”

Session A [11.15-12.45]

Ekrem Ulus

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“Schizophrenic Narrative as Subversive Political Act in Women’s Writing”

This paper examines how Sevim Burak’s short story entitled “The Window” (“Pencere” published in 1966) uses schizophrenic narrative with a politically subversive style. Sevim Burak is a Turkish author known for her plays, novel and short stories. Her works hold a significant place in Turkish literature and in the relatively short history of Turkish modernity. In *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought*, Louis Sass defines some of the basic characteristics of schizophrenic discourse with “the lack of a cohesive theme or narrative line, of conventional space-time structure, of comprehensible causal relations, and of normal regulation of the symbol-referent relationship” (156). Similarly, schizophrenic narrative is a literary technique that is quite modern (Sass, 158, 184).

Interested in here and now, the protagonist is somehow cannot conform to the social norms of his/her society, and uses a reality-bending narrative to shape his/her world through a creative use of language. In the example of Burak's "The Window," the central character establishes a unique relationship with the outer-world, in which the self is at the centre of all the things and events. The protagonist's playful technique cannot be reduced to random shifts in the plot, but she also plays with the notion of time and literary perspective. To be more specific, Sevim Burak's "The Window" melts time --the past-the present-future--all in the now or the present of the narrator's time. In addition to this, the doppelganger, or the literary double of the protagonist enables her not only to look at herself from the outside, but also incites the reader to question what real(ity) is and what it means. Sevim Burak's short story "The Window" (1966) is a literary response to traumatic experience created and/or aggravated by social values. In this state of non-conformity, protagonist's identity crisis is not merely articulated through literature: when the protagonist depicts her plight through schizophrenic narrative, she also subverts the traditional and androcentric mad-woman narrative that goes long way back in human history. In this respect, "The Window" shows its readers that literary works have the potential not only to narrate but also to challenge social inequalities, as the protagonist continuously shapes and re-shapes the world, as she likes. For these reasons, Burak's short story stands out as a literary fiction that contributes to Turkish modernity thanks to its modern perspective and creative use of its schizophrenic narrative. This paper contributes to literary studies on schizophrenic discourses in literature by analyzing Sevim Burak's unique literary response to the state of crisis, as well as by showing how modernisms are multiple, and how a prominent Turkish woman writer rejects and resists conventional roles of a society.

Keywords: Crisis, literary fiction, psychology, self-expression, schizophrenic narration, Sevim Burak, Turkish modernity, modern in literature.

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“An Autobiography Overheard. Trauma and Ineloquence in Édouard Louis’s History of Violence”

History of Violence by Édouard Louis is an autobiographical novel focused on a small fragment of the author's life: the night during which he was raped and almost murdered, and the crisis which was a consequence of these events. Louis uses first-person narrative, although he breaks the novel into multiple voices. The book can therefore be treated as a kind of testimony, an intimate confession of the harm suffered by the victim. This confession is multiplied: the author recalls his testimony to the police, describing the crime to his friends, telling strangers about it, and finally eavesdropping on someone else's narrative about the event. Thus, the author's narrative combines numerous discourses on crisis that are sometimes

convergent, sometimes contradictory, and partially mediating each other. In this way, he creates a polyphonic story about trauma, which is closer to everyday language than to poetic confessions. The unsteadiness of the main character's vocabulary is contrasted with the chiselled structure of the novel, based on precisely planned polyphony. The narrator limits information given to the reader, leading the story like in a detective novel and building tension and terror. However, while in the classic detective novel, the reader is waiting for the crucial information about the committed crime, in *History of Violence*, he waits for this knowledge to materialize in the narrator's words. In fact, in the very first sentence of the novel, Louis writes about an attempted murder in connection with which he made a criminal report, but these words are taken out of police jargon and have no performative power. The reader is waiting for this information to appear in the narrator's language, even if mediated by someone else's narrative. Louis creates a unique representation of both personal and collective trauma, linking the rape to broader topics, such as homophobic violence, class struggle and racism toward migrants. In my presentation I will analyse it using Lauren Berlant's theory on the ineloquence of traumatic expression.

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“Autobiographical Self as the Nexus of Communal and Individual Trauma: Reading Carmen Aguirre's Memoirs”

Carmen Aguirre is a Chilean-Canadian playwright, actor, director and facilitator, known in particular for her activity in the Vancouver theatre scene, and—more recently—for her two memoirs: *Something Fierce. Memoirs of a Revolutionary Daughter* (2011) and *Mexican Hooker #1 And My Other Roles Since The Revolution* (2016). In the memoirs Aguirre explores, among others, her life as a daughter of Chilean refugees—Allende supporters—who emigrated to Canada, but whose mother continued her revolutionary work wondering, with her daughters, through a number of Latin American countries. She describes her political and cultural experience of Latin American and Canada, and her development as a socially-conscious artist; but also her experience as a gendered and racialised individual, a rape victim, and a sufferer of PTSD. Her life is marked by deeply traumatic experiences, which, while essentially personal, are also shared with multiple communities, some of which she feels a “natural” part of (her extended family, Chilean refugee/immigrant community), and others which she is forced to embrace only after she is able to more consciously start working on her trauma (sexual assault victims, economically and ethnically marginalised communities, etc.). The aim of my paper is to examine the way Aguirre brings together different private and political crises she has gone through and constructs her autobiographical self as a nexus of communal and individual trauma. I hope to achieve this by locating the analysis in the broader context of transnationalism. I am using the term “transnationalism” in its most general meaning, i.e. as referring to a condition characterised by the existence of varied, multiple

links (for example of social, cultural, political, economic nature) that connect people and institutions across national borders (cf. e.g. Vertovec 1999); links that on group and personal level are related to movement between different states and cultures resulting in “transformations of identity, memory, awareness and other modes of consciousness” (Vertovec 1999). In the case of Aguirre and the Chilean diaspora in Canada modes of transnationalism they demonstrate and experience have transformed not only because of new developments of economic and technological nature, changes in travel and communication in the last forty years, but crucially because of the major political development, i.e. the dissolution of the Pinochet regime at the close of the 1980s, which resulted in the transformation from the exilic to diasporic condition that the community and Aguirre herself have experienced. Additionally, Aguirre’s memoirs, like other life writing texts, give access to what has been called “embodied transnationalism” (cf. Dunn), which focuses on transnational experience as intimate experience of embodied subjects moving through space and emplaced, on their “desires, needs and experiences” (Dunn 1). For Aguirre herself, the experiences are related among others to the trauma of the first days of Pinochet’s dictatorship, participation in the resistance, but also the brutal rape she experienced as a 13-year-old; and they all pivot around the formative fact of exile. Factors of race, gender and class also colour her transnational experience. The memoirs demonstrate, among others, the high cost the autobiographical subject and her community pay for living “transnationally.”

Dunn, K. “Embodied Transnationalism: Bodies in Transnational Spaces.” *Population, Space and Place* 16. 1 (2010). 1–9.

Vertovec Sn. “Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22.2 (1999): 447-62.

Session B [11.15-12.45]

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“Climate Crisis in Amitav Ghosh’s Writings: Exploring Oral Histories and Regional Folklore”

Climate crisis is no longer a distant tale but a truth which simply cannot be neglected as Ghosh makes it very clear in his non-fiction work *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016) that aims to confront this urgent issue by reflecting on our ‘deranged’ modes of political and socio-economic organisation. Ghosh examines the reasons why ‘serious’ literary fiction (as he calls it) has found it difficult to engage with the crisis brought about by climate change. As soon as he published *The Great Derangement*, we are confronted with one of the central questions he asks - why authors of literary fiction do not tackle questions of climate change given its grave consequences for humanity. *Gun Island* is a

reply to that very question – a novel addressing the crisis of the littoral people residing in and around Sunderbans one of the largest littoral mangrove belt stretching into both the Indian and Bangladeshi coastline. However, Ghosh’s 2004 novel *The Hungry Tide* too brings to light the tales of the dispossessed and the displaced – both humans and non-humans who originally regard the Sunderbans as their home - by the catastrophic processes of displacement that are now unfolding across the Earth at an ever-increasing pace. *The Hungry Tide* arguably marked Ghosh’s acceptance into the ecocritical canon, as a writer concerned with environmental justice corresponding with anthropological and postcolonial concerns in general. His latest book *Jungle Nama: A Story of the Sunderbans* (2021) continues his engagement with climate crisis in Sunderbans and tells us, in verse form, of the ways in which the forest people try to establish the balance between the needs of the humans and that of the other beings. This paper aims to examine the folklore and local narratives in *The Hungry Tide*, *Gun Island* and *Jungle Nama* contextualising the author’s need to take recourse to fantasy and magical realism to drive home the grim reality of climate change both locally and globally. At the same time the paper seeks to interrogate the idea of the Anthropocene, the truth-claims and the ethical demands that it makes, and the effects of such claims and demands in multiple settings like the ones described by Ghosh arguing that indigenous knowledge systems and local lore render new insights into the human/non-human correlation. As we move from the lore of Bon Bibi - mythical tiger goddess of the tide country to the lore of the gun merchant and the shrine he built for snake goddess Manasa, we deal with varied ways of story-telling to highlight the cataclysmic effects of climate change and establish that the moment of crisis has actually arrived.

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“New (almost) Veggie World – Margaret Atwood’s Dystopian Trilogy”

The most recent period in Earth’s history is referred to as Anthropocene Epoch since human activity began to have a significant impact on the planet’s climate and ecosystems. We are facing a global ecological crisis, which is evidenced by climate change, overpopulation, contamination of oceans or air pollution, and “the sixth extinction.” Margaret Atwood’s trilogy (*Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood* and *Maddaddam*) takes the readers to the times when the world as we know it has been destroyed. First, it is gradual human-induced destruction, and then humankind becomes an endangered species as well (because a mad scientist releases a virus that wipes out most of humanity). The dystopian vision is not entirely surprising, since it refers to the current human activity, the use of the planet’s resources, and interference with nature through the use of genetic modifications. A handful of people and a group of the Crakers remain in this shattered world, in which eating or not eating meat is one of the essential issues. Judging by the number of passages that can be cited to illustrate how the issue of eating or not eating meat is presented, the first part of the trilogy gives the most

accurate picture of what the vegan/vegetarian diet is like in a world nearing an ecological disaster. In the next volume, the story is narrated from the point of view of those who want to protect the lives of animals, and do not intend to treat them as a mere source of food. God's Gardeners, who mix elements typical for a pro-animal movement and a religious group, become a refuge for many fleeing life in a carnivore society. In *Maddaddam* the destinies of human survivors intertwine with those of the Crakers, and the novel foretells the possibility of existence of some new community. As it could be expected from a dystopia, the image of humanity in Atwood's trilogy leaves no illusions. In this new (almost) veggie world, only those who are genetically incapable of feeling the need to eat meat, or rather, are genetically conditioned not to crave the taste of meat, do not include animal protein in their diet. In my presentation, I would like to refer to the way in which vegetarianism becomes an essential element of the story about the post-apocalyptic world prophesied by Atwood.

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“Environmental Crisis in José Saramago's Fiction”

José Saramago, the well-known Portuguese writer, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1998, was one of the most prominent voices of the contemporary era in the fierce criticism of the European economic, political, social and environmental crisis. Indeed, the environmental crisis was subject to careful and in-depth criticism in Saramago's literary and non-literary fictions, such as *Os Cadernos de Lanzarote* (1994) and *A Caverna* (2000 - English translation in 2002 - *The Cave*). In this article I intend to analyse Saramago's views on the environmental crisis in *A Caverna*, namely: 1) to show how a central place of the novel, the ironically called “Green Belt”, is in fact a dirty and dull area, and eoipsoan oxymoronic expression; 2) to comment on the denaturalized settings of the housing Center surrounded by the Green Belt, a space where natural phenomena and processes, such as rain and snow, are just artificially replicated; 3) to examine the mighty impact of climate change on the lives of characters in the novel; 4) to inquire the possibility that the author's opinions on the climate crisis could be extended to other of his fictional and non-fictional works.

Session A [13.15-14.45]

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“Personal Traumas in Christy Lefteri’s *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*”

Christy Lefteri was born in 1980 in London to Greek Cypriot parents who were refugees from Cyprus. Years later, her volunteering experience in a UNICEF-supported refugee centre in Greece during the European migrant crisis, which started around 2014 and has been continuing since then, became the basis for *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2018, but the edition of 2019 will be used). In the novel, Lefteri reflects on migrant experience through fictitious characters and their personal traumas. These traumas start even before their moving away from the city of Aleppo (Syria), which suffers from a crisis caused by a civil war, and continue haunting them throughout their journey to Turkey, the Greek islands, Greece, and the United Kingdom and result in an identity and relationship crisis. In addition, the migration process itself is not smooth and adds more weight to their earlier experienced traumas. In general, Nuri and his wife Afra, the main characters of the novel, are traumatised psychologically, but their traumas manifest themselves physically. For instance, Afra loses her eyesight when she sees her son die, while Nuri starts seeing a boy called Mohammed, who does not really exist, to overcome the same loss. Moreover, Nuri has nightmares about the man he helped to kill and exploding bombs (but he can hear the sound of them even while being awake), while Afra is raped by a smuggler in Athens. Even though these characters do create coping mechanisms, they never verbalise their traumas till they reach their destination, which is the UK, and suffer from PTSD for quite some time. Only when Nuri and his wife start speaking about their experiences and symptoms, the process of overcoming their traumas starts. For example, at some point Afra starts seeing shapes. Furthermore, the novel itself consists of fragments, flashbacks and flash-forwards and in turn contributes to the idea of traumatic narrative that is hardly ever linear. This conference presentation will discuss how the author represents her characters’ traumatic experiences. The analysis of the novel will be carried out within the framework of the so-called Literary Trauma Theory influenced by ideas of Cathy Caruth, who is considered to belong to the first generation of trauma theorists (Pederson 2014). Some of the key issues of the theory, which are relevant to the discussion, include unspeakability about traumatic experience, post-traumatic symptoms, belatedly experienced trauma, and others.

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“Socio-political Crisis and Traumatic Dispossessions in Gayl Jones’s *Corregidora* and Octavia Butler’s *Kindred*”

An analysis of Gayl Jones’s *Corregidora* and Octavia Butler’s *Kindred* neo-slave narratives that invoke the past to expose how slavery has influenced the construction of black female identity. Different forms of sexual exploitation, rape and incest are exposed through these narratives. Previous scholarship has been extensively focusing on the origin and legacy of

trauma, inflicted on the black female body of the twentieth century, however there has been too little, if any criticism in relation to the active construction of black female subjectivity, located at the level of the body. I wish to explore how spectacles of violence against black female bodies function in the wider political imagery of the twenty-first century and more specifically in relation to the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM). Even though *Corregidora* and *Kindred* were written before the BLM movement emerged, they could be analysed in a way that asserts the continuity of African-American trauma and the perpetuation of systematic racism in USA. The intersection of blackness, queerness and gender needs to be examined in relation to the construction of identity. Drawing on trauma theory, this essay addresses the physical and mental wounds that trauma causes to Ursa Corregidora and Dana Franklin respectively. It also exposes how black female bodies have functioned as slates of inscription of the desires of the other. I explore the displacement of violence on the black female body and how it permeates the most intimate spaces of black female existence. Systematic violence threatens black women's wholeness. Ursa and Dana experience great anxiety due to the traditional role of an incubator imparted on them by the community they are part of. However, they disrupt this narrative as they are unable to reproduce and claim their identity in different ways. It is important to consider the role of trauma narratives not only for reconstructing history but also for reconstructing present realities, as the past and the present are interconnected. Jones and Butler directly engage with black aesthetics and ultimately leads the reader to broaden his understanding of the implications of the Black Lives Matter movement. Even though the practices of racial exclusion and dispossession largely differ in each generation, the outcome of racial violence has largely remained the same, as essentially the black subject's humanity is put in question. Contextualizing these works by connecting them to the present era while exposing the significance of the era in which they emerged, signals at the construction of a larger discourse with political and sociological implications.

Sofía Baliño

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“Writing Through Terror: Joan Didion and the ‘Untranslatable’ Experience of the Salvadoran Civil War”

Sofía Baliño In June 1982, the American writer Joan Didion spent two weeks in El Salvador as the country was being ravaged by conflict, one of many “proxy wars” between Washington and Moscow that played out across Latin America during the Cold War. In her book-length essay *Salvador* that followed, she describes trying to write through terror –only to find that “the texture of life in such a situation is essentially untranslatable” to those who had not witnessed it. Didion is a writer who is famously motivated by place, troubled by disorder, and wary of sentiment. Fifteen years before visiting San Salvador, she warned in “Slouching Towards Bethlehem” of a generation of young people coming of age in Cold War America

who lacked the “mastery of language” that would help them avoid becoming political pawns in a far larger game. Yet as *Salvador* shows, the damage being wrought by politicians in Washington, Moscow, and beyond is not limited to those living in the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Transported to Central America, far from the centres of decision-making, the concept of crisis has become warped, with the young people of El Salvador often paying for the whims of the Cold War powers with their own lives. In *Salvador*, Didion focuses not on the pawns, but on the players: on the linguistic push-and-pull between American and Salvadoran politicians, journalists, political analysts, nuns, and local residents of the Central American country. Terms like *solución* and *negociación* and *verdad* were part of the daily vernacular among the local and foreign political classes, and those who knew that those words could invoke a spectrum of definitions drew power from the same. To know how to play the system was no guarantee of survival, and to even visit San Salvador briefly meant accepting these distortions of language and the horrors they masked. This conference presentation considers how Didion adapts her approach to reportage when facing a crisis that resists narrative resolution, and which requires translating the “untranslatable” experience of terror, together with an unfamiliar geography, culture, and language. I look at how she revisits the techniques that are hallmarks of her non-fiction writing, including her attention to specific details, her allusions to literary archetypes and traditions, and her wariness of linear, progress-centered narratives, to highlight the “affordances” of the essay form in a new context. I also examine her frequent quotations from the novels of Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez and what it means for Didion to recast his work as “social realism” rather than “magic realism” after visiting El Salvador. I then make the case for a new approach to crisis reporting and analysis through literature, one that is not contingent on “righting a wrong,” but instead allows for engaging the crisis for what it really is—and facing what the actors involved, both political players and political pawns, are doing in the moment.

Session B [13.15-14.45]

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“Rebellion, Unrest, Outside Agitators, and Vicky Osterveils’s *In Defense of Looting*”

Martin Luther King begins his 1963 “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by fending off the label of “outside agitator.” *In Defense of Looting* (expanded from a 2014 essay by the same title <https://thenewinquiry.com/in-defense-of-looting/>), Vicky Osterveils examines the link between the myth of “outside agitators” and the demented logic of racist entitlement and state violence (“outside agitators” travelling to the south “to delude the otherwise content enslaved with ideas of freedom and equality,” currently transmogrified as, e.g., “George Soros and the employees of his organization”). No one wants to be associated with looting, but Osterveils’s book, like a Pandora’s box, forces its readers to examine their premises and assumptions in

regard to such inviolable concepts as “private property” (primarily used as a tool to enforce indentured servitude and slavery among the native people from the island of Hispaniola to North-American Great Plains). The anger and loss that rioters express nonverbally “emerge as an alternative form of care and remembrance for those the state’s patriarchal violence has destroyed: rising up in mourning for lost children and in outrage at the domination of daily life,” Osterveils says, but from the point of onlookers it “can be ugly, bloody, and frightening.” One is tempted to quote Thomas Jefferson’s *Declaration of Independence*: “Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed”; in other words, an agreement between citizens and the state relies, or should rely, on mutual consent (“But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government,” Jefferson continues); in sum, we are ruled as long as we allow it. The riot reminds the state that without our active consent, renewed daily, the state will either disintegrate or turn into a dictatorship to maintain its power. This paper will expand on violent and non-violent forms of protest and civil disobedience.

Keywords: Vicky Osterveils, M. L. King, Black Lives Matter, public protests, civil disobedience, social unrest, rioting.

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“(Non-)Fictional Black Lives Matter – Various Dimensions of the Crisis in the Works of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie”

The idea of the paper is to present the symptoms of contemporary socio-political and cultural crises in the context of the Black Lives Movement in the United States. For this purpose, selected narratives were used, including works of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, such as the novel *Americanah* (2013) or the most recent short stories *Zikora* (2020). Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a well-known American writer and activist of Nigerian descent, who lives both in the United States and Nigeria. Her literary activity in the field of spreading feminism and the idea of equality was positively received worldwide. With the voice of her protagonists, she comprehensively explores the issues of the sense of injustice and harm, race relations, and proposes the introduction of a new social order. Crises considered from the view of time are treated in social sciences as temporary phenomena. However, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, presenting various dimensions of crises – within gender, identity, agency, empowerment, skin colour, equality – describes permanent, stereotypical images of the life of ethnic minorities in the Diaspora, African immigrants, and also African-Americans. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s postulates, as the author argues in numerous journalistic interviews (e.g. Ted Talk about stories and their effect on how we perceive others), directly correlate with the ideological base of the Black Lives Matter movement, which intensified significantly in 2020

not only in the USA but also in Nigeria. The aim of my presentation is to show that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is critical of the structures of power and racism rooted in a patriarchal and multicultural society, reflecting the core tenets of Black Lives Matter and so-called ‘cancel culture’ movements. While raising awareness about things that have existed in the United States for a long time, she visualizes the symptoms of the crisis and notions of Black subjectivity.

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“Rectifying the Past’: The Egyptian Freedom Movement in Ahdaf Soueif’s *The Map of Love*”

The Map of Love (1999) by the Egyptian-British writer Ahdaf Soueif narrates the lives of three generations of an Egyptian-British-American family, beginning with a late nineteenth-century narrative about Anna Winterbourne, a widow, who comes to the writer’s native Cairo at a time of great anti-colonial turmoil. While Anna contends with her depression following her husband’s death, she falls for and marries an Arab freedom fighter, Sharif Basha al-Baroudi. Soueif’s tale spans from England to North Africa and America, recounting the lives of the divided family, living on three continents and struggling to connect all the disparate pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of the family’s past sketched against the turmoil of the early twentieth century, and what might be termed as the first “Arab awakening”. The novel begins with Anna’s great granddaughter Isabel and her cousin Amal (the granddaughter of Anna’s sister-in-law, Layla) opening a trunk that Anna apparently had left behind in Egypt and discovering Anna’s journal and letters. The “found manuscript” theme prompts the character’s investigation of the family history, and the reader’s inquiry into the history of modern Egypt. Anna’s voice then becomes the bridge between the past and the present, and her account eventually enables Isabel to discern the reasons for the rift between the two branches of her family. By depicting the positive liberal side of Islam, Soueif ostensibly refutes contemporary negative representations of Egyptian culture, thereby attempting to “rectify the past”, although not in the negative Orwellian sense but rather as a way of restoring the country’s formative moments. What follows, is subsequently the reading of the novel in the context of initial Arab liberation movements through the combination of fictional and non-fictional motifs, as Egyptians of Anna’s times fight to regain not only their freedom, but first and foremost their national identity.

Session A [15.00-16.30]

Megan Perram

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“Click Me: Multilinear cyberliterature as illness narrative for womxn with Hyperandrogenism”

In *The Wounded Storyteller* Arthur Frank wrote that major illness has the potential to disrupt the planned destination of our life, and that through the practice of illness narrative the capacity for telling our story is reclaimed. During times of global uncertainty and crisis, finding methods to cope with illness digitally has become especially vital. This project evaluates how literary hypertext can be used as an avenue for womxn (inclusive to trans, nonbinary, and femme identities) with hyperandrogenism to write illness narratives that construct positive relationships between their identities and the world. Literary hypertext is a form of digital story writing that calls on the reader to participate in the narrative’s unfolding by selecting hyperlink options which branch the narrative into nonlinear directions. Hyperandrogenism is a medical condition characterized by “excessive” levels of male hormones such as testosterone which, when identified in the female body, are associated with “masculinizing” symptoms. The condition has been employed as a justification to call into question which bodily signifiers and hormonal nuances quantify biological sex. Due to experiences of perceived subjugation in the medical encounter, some womxn with hyperandrogenism are turning to online illness narratives to write their “abject” bodies into a budding corporeal politic. Through an online story-writing module and hypertext tutorial, 10 participants with hyperandrogenism are currently writing their own stories based on their illness experience. This research will lead to the concrete realization of a novel pathway to inform therapeutic approaches for emotional well-being related to gendered illness.

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“Men Alone: Separatism and Mythology as a Response to the Crisis of Masculinity”

Some science fiction writers choose to effectively challenge the concept of gender by creating fictional worlds which question or criticize gender assumptions that exist in their own cultures. The genre of science fiction serves as a ground for such representations, as it very often describes worlds in which the perception of reality is altered and put into an unknown, fictional context, usually with the aim of speculating about actuality, criticizing the present and looking for the solutions to the problems. Therefore, some of those works also put into question the concept of masculinity or, so-called, masculinity crisis which is understood as a

kind of identity crisis experienced by men. Some science fiction writers incorporated in their novels the portrayal of men's world, providing analysis of the masculinity and speculating on the possible solutions to solve this alleged identity crisis. The work is going to analyze how the idea of masculinity, and possible solutions to masculinity crisis, are presented in two science-fiction novels: *Spartan Planet* (1968) by Arthur Bertram Chandler and *Ethan of Athos* (1986) by Lois McMaster Bujold. Both works present male single-sex societies based on old mythological archetypes and ancient social structures. The concept of single-sex societies may serve for writers as a tool to explore gender differences and to propose alternative vision of the world with the rejection of gender binaries, at the same time enabling deep analysis of gender identity. The research will be based mostly on the theories of Robert Bly who proposes symbolic, metaphorical and poetical description of male identity and seeks the real male essence in the world that faces deep masculinity crisis. The theories revolve around mythological reinterpretations of masculinity in which the author attempts to find and revitalize ancient, mythologized, instinctive male world.

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**“Third Gender Identity Crisis Depicted in Lakshmi Tripathi Narayan’s Autobiography
‘Me Hijra, Me Lakshmi’”**

Socio-cultural perception of gender in the so-called "Western" culture is definitely binary, as it assumes that people occur only in two versions: male or female. Also, the assumption about biological sex predicts two genders whose dimensions are consistent. Meanwhile, reality shows that diversity at this level goes far beyond the dichotomous pattern from which emerges a category that does not fit into the two described above: intersex people, whose gender is undefined, hermaphroditic or not obvious. And although in ancient Greek or Roman literature there are images of the androgynous third gender in Plato or the bisexual Hermaphrodite in Ovid, these characters are considered to belong only to myths, because in the European perspective, *terzum non datur* (the third possibility was not given). In some non-European cultural circles the existence of three (and sometimes more) genders is officially accepted, which definitely more faithfully represents the reality that cannot be framed. An outstanding example of a social system that is not based on a rigid binary division is India, wherefrom the dawn of history there has been an awareness of the fact that apart from people with definitely male or female characteristics, there are also people who are in between. Transgender characters appear early in Indian literature; they can be found in both ancient Indian epics: Mahabharata and Ramayana. They have their place in Hindu and Islamic mythology. They are also mentioned in the Sanskrit "encyclopedias" of Hinduism: the Puranas, in treatises on politics and law, such as in Manusmriti, in historical documents from the Mughal era. They are present in the Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Islamic traditions. Inherently inscribed in the landscape of India, however, they are so far, despite the rights

restored in 2014 equal to the other two genders, pushed to the margin of the caste social structure that has been in force for thousands of years. Nowadays, they are commonly referred to as hijra, which is a kind of umbrella term that covers all non-heteronormative and non-cisgender people. They are one of the most controversial social groups in modern India, estimated at over a million people. From the dawn of time, they have co-created the culture of this country, perceived by non-Indians as transvestites due to their feminine dress and behaviour, they are in fact neither-men nor-women. The aim of the proposed speech is to reflect on the crisis of gender identity through the prism of the autobiographical story “Me Hijra, Me Lakshmi” by one of the most popular trance activists in India, Lakshmi Tripathi Narayan.

Keywords: crisis, gender identity, India, hijra, Lakshmi Tripathi Narayan.

Session B [15.00-16.30]

Jacek Olesiejko

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[Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland]

“Enta geweorc” as a hyperobject: Rethinking nature and culture in the Old English Wanderer and the Ruin”

Modern wars have a negative impact on the natural environment. While medieval warfare did not affect the environment to an extent that, for example, the 1990s Gulf War did, the practice of warfare in the Old English period (450 A.D. to 1100 A.D) could bring about in human beings a realisation that they exist in a relationship with the natural environment by displacing them violently from their superior ecological niche to the state of exile away from protective settlements. The question that the present paper poses is whether the experience of war and its aftermath that displaces the speaker of the Old English elegy *The Wanderer* from human society shapes his understanding of nature and his self. The present paper will investigate the concept of Germanic stoicism, whose practice, as is argued here, is predicated on an individual’s displacement from the comfort of the civilised life and on the redefinition of the individual’s relationship with the natural world. The analysis will attend to the poetic representation of the wanderer’s mind, portrayed metaphorically as a treasure-chest, and the poem’s imagery of binding and fettering it by the wanderer’s troubled self as modelled on the agency of nature; in *The Wanderer* nature too binds and fetters landscapes and ruins in acts of hostility and violence. In the poem, it is the movement to a lower ecological niche, resulting from war and human violence, that forces the wanderer to examine and imitate the agency of nature not only to physically survive but also to create a new self that is aligned with Christianity and its textuality rather than the subject’s heroic past and oral culture.

Magdalena Krzosek-Holody

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“Speculative Design and Critical Non-fiction as Ecological Practice”

Eco-critical speculative design practices operate mostly on models, visuals and inter-media installations. Rather than towards the construction of an actual object, they are oriented towards writing alternative scenarios for people, nature and space. They take on the form of lectures, publications, projections, interactive web projects or events. Their main goal is to *stay with the trouble* (as Donna Haraway called the already existing damages to world ecosystems) and create possible futures (as Rosi Braidotti could name them). Various artists and groups have recently been particularly active in this field. Among them an American collective Design Earth (Rania Ghosn, El Hadi Jazairy) and a Polish group Centrala (Małgorzata Kuciewicz, Simonede Iacobis). Design Earth focuses mostly on the topics related to current global crises: climate change, overexploitation of natural resources and pollution. Centrala, on the other hand, addresses issues related to architecture and natural phenomena. In my presentation I would like to focus on the specific mode of ecological engagement represented by the aforementioned artists. Both groups use non-fiction publications to promote their ideas and projects. I would like to compare and contrast their published works and take a closer look at the process of their preparation, their scientific relevancy and their ecological involvement. I want to ask two major questions concerning this form of activism within the field of speculative design: 1) who are the readers of such publications? 2) what is or might be their potential social/ecological/political/scientific impact?

Amanda Caterina Leong

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[University of California, USA]

“How Qajar Iranian Princess Taj al-Saltana Saw a 19th Century Global Pandemic”

Persianate cultures have been greatly influenced by the “mirror for princes” genre, which offers monarchs advice on how to treat their subjects justly and methods of being an ideal ruler. While scholars have chosen to study this genre from a patriarchal perspective, how royal women shaped this genre have remained under examined. This article argues that *Crowning Anguish: Memoirs of a Persian Princess from the Harem to Modernity 1884-1936*, one of the only female-authored memoirs written during the Qajar period of Iran by Princess Taj al-Saltana, offer new ways of seeing how women used memoir writing to challenge the dominance of their male counterparts during times of pandemics. Princess Taj al-Saltana, apart from being the daughter of Naser al-Din Shah, was a prominent intellectual and pioneering activist who fought for constitutionalism, freedom, and women’s rights in Iran.

She wrote her memoir as she watched a cholera pandemic devastate Iran, one of many in the late nineteenth century. Despite having been written more than a hundred years ago looking specifically at the cholera epidemic in Iran, by analyzing the ways Taj al-Saltana challenges genre conventions, specifically the strategies she uses to criticize the failure of Iran's Qajar government to control cholera, indicting patriarchy and corruption for the malaises facing the country, while also educating female readers on methods of being an ideal female ruler for a better Iran, this article aims to show the way *Crowning Anguish* functions as a "mirror for princesses" and how we can come up with better strategies of resistance especially in the age of COVID-19 with the failures of patriarchal governments to stop pandemics.

Friday, [14.05]

10.00-11.00 Plenary lecture

Dr Nathan Waddell

[University of Birmingham, Great Britain]

"George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and the Idea of Crisis"

Session A [11.15-12.45]

Urszula Terentowicz-Fotyga

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[Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland]

"The Spectacle of Social Media: Digital Dystopia in Ben Elton's *Blind Faith*"

The political, social and cultural shock caused by the election of Trump and the outcome of the Brexit referendum brought a surge of critical rethinking of the impact of social media on the shape of contemporary reality. Within five years, the utopian hope that accompanied the revolutions of 2011 and the Arab Spring in particular, whereby social media were deemed crucial for the construction of the new, participatory democracy gave way to a much grimmer, dystopian mood. The concepts of fake news, post-truth and echo chamber became the buzzwords that redefined the paradigms of culturalist, sociological and political research into information capitalism. The paper proposes to analyse the vision of digital dystopia in Ben Elton's 2007 novel, *Blind Faith*, in the context of the shift from utopian to dystopian thinking about social media. In the novel, the society of spectacle is combined with religious tyranny and produces a radically anti-humanist, anti-scientific world. The paper will analyse Elton's dystopian reality with the help of Bakhtin's idea of carnivalization and Jos de Mul's concept of ludic identity. It will demonstrate how corporatocracy and commodification of citizens'

privacy leads to a voluntary panopticon and the rule of the mob, which render principles of participatory democracy null and void. The second part of the paper will briefly focus on the novel's dialogue with George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and consider the contrasting moods of the two books.

Anton Belenetskyi

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“Of Gods and Monsters Incarnate: The Anthropocene Crisis of Hyperstition in Jeff VanderMeer's *Area X: The Southern Reach* Trilogy”

A word hybrid of “hyper” and “superstition,” hyperstition is an idea, a cultural construct, that brings itself into material and thus “real” existence. The term was collectively coined and theorized in the late 1990s by a group of renegade academics from the CCRU (Cybernetic Culture Research Unit) at the University of Warwick to study how certain ideas—apocalyptic and reality-bending—materialize into the seemingly unified reality of the world and dismantle it into the panoply of realities they themselves created. In other words, hyperstition is an attempt at conceptualizing the metamorphic mechanism of self-fulfilling prophecies, of fictions becoming truths, of mere lies, if people believe in them hard enough, being able to exercise their agency over the “reality.” The CCRU's ambitious visionary project to bulldoze the static rationality of our world was happening on the verge of the second millennium—roughly at the same time when the term “Anthropocene” started resurfacing in the general discourse, finally realized as an urgent threat of a monstrous immeasurability. This monstrosity in itself has become a popular metaphor—clumsily yet commonly used for lack of a more expressive wording—to talk about the rationally incognizable and unimaginable crises already unfolding around us, ubiquitous: environmental calamities and pandemic outbreaks, global warming, land destructions, etc.—countless manifestations of the Anthropocene. Hence, in a sense, we may here and now observe how the metaphor of the monstrous Anthropocene is acceleratingly becoming hyperstition, assuming it has not done so already. As Nick Land, a cofounder of the CCRU, delineates: hyperstition marks the return of the irrational or the monstrous—“Cthonic” and “Lovecraftian”—Other into the everyday socio-cultural discourse. However, whereas the CCRU originally embraced the deconstructing powers of monstrous hyperstition as a solution to the self-solidifying reality of neoliberal capitalism, these days hyperstition appears to be more of a problem. If not revised accordingly to the latest ecological findings of new materialism and posthumanism, hyperstition and realities it reifies risk becoming obsoletely human-centric—as exemplified by the popular albeit dangerously anthropomorphic idea of Gaia's revenge. This paper argues that Jeff VanderMeer's *Area X* trilogy undertakes this daring enterprise of reinterpreting hyperstition from a perspective acutely aware of the Anthropocene crisis. Continuing the old tradition of the literary Weird and its hyperstitious monstrosities started by H.P. Lovecraft, VanderMeer both theorizes and practices the New Weird, a meta-conscious genre amalgamation that

aspires to rethink the largely problematic heritage of the Old Weird and readapt its potent toolkit to the copious challenges of our time. This paper thus seeks to elucidate the fresh, ecologically informed insight into the complexly entwined nature of hyperstition—both the emancipator from the rational, Modern (in Latourian sense) reality and yet the propulsive embodying force of it—as represented by VanderMeer’s seminal work of the New Weird praxis, the *Area X* trilogy.

Marta Komsta

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[Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland]

“The Dystopian Domestic in Maureen F. McHugh’s Short Stories”

The paper examines the representations of the domestic in the context of crisis and trauma in the selected short stories taken from Maureen F. McHugh’s short stories collections *Mothers & Other Monsters* (2006) and *After the Apocalypse* (2011). As the moment of crisis reveals the fragility of the seemingly stable familial relationships, McHugh’s protagonists are challenged with the need to redefine their own roles as both individuals and family members, forced to readapt to the dystopian reality marked by conflict and deprivation. Following Michel Foucault’s definition of heterotopias as “counter-sites” and Yuri M. Lotman’s concept of the anti-home as spatiotemporal models that contravene the dominant socio-political discourse, I seek thus to explore the semiotics of the domestic sphere in McHugh’s stories and its reconfiguration under the impact of various external and internal catastrophes, such as global economic collapse or a pandemic as well as abuse, bereavement, and disability. The cataclysm and its aftermath frequently engender a profound identity crisis that finds its reflection in the structure of domestic spatiality, whose function is that of “saying the unsayable” (James Berger); in what follows, I aim to demonstrate how space becomes a potent conveyor of meaning in McHugh’s narratives, with sites such as refugee camps, hospitals, or desolate wastelands operating as signifiers of the disasters affecting the domestic sphere in the contemporary world. At the same time, the examined stories point to the concept of home as a locus of semiotic resistance in the increasingly hostile semiosphere. Hence, as a counterpoint to the crisis of representation brought about by the catastrophe, the domestic takes on a role of a meaning-making mechanism, whose potential for renewal and restoration constitutes one of the key interpretative dominants in McHugh’s fiction.

Session B [11.15-12.45]

Palanisamy Boopathi

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“Homeland, Exile and Diaspora: Narrating Palestinian Refugee Crises through Life Narratives”

Palestinian refugees, numbering nearly two thirds of Palestine population, are scattered across the world, compelled to live with varied hostile socio-political, cultural and economic situations. The two major conflicts such as al-Nakba (catastrophe)-1948 and al-Naksa (setback)-1967 needless to mention created more than one million Palestinians as refugees. The subsequent conflicts like Black September (1970), the October revolution (1973), the two Intifadas (1987 and 2000 respectively), etc had further produced more number of refugees, making the question of Palestine and its refugees as complex. The Palestinians who were forced to carry the status of refugeehood owing to above mentioned political conflicts, leaving behind their ancestral lands, relatives, etc, were settled in three places: internal refugee camps, refugee camps situated in nearby countries and Western countries. For the convenience of theorizing the subject position of their refugeehood placed in the three places mentioned above, I categorize these locations as homeland, exile and diaspora. It is established from their life narratives and available research works that Palestinians look at these three places as distinct ones in terms of their livelihood opportunities, safety, medical conditions and the scope for community building, which creates the plurality of their refugee status. While a lot of works have been produced on the condition of refugee camps, healthcare facilities, educational opportunities for the children of refugees and the role of international organizations like UNRWA, Red Cross and others by Palestinian scholars, there has been hardly any work on varied status of refugee crisis of Palestinians located in homeland, exile and diaspora. This paper, by looking at the multiple narrations of refugee crisis among Palestinians situated in these three places, will attempt to analyse how socio-political, cultural and economic milieu of each location puts Palestinians in different conditions, thereby refuting the theorization of Palestinian refugee hood as homogeneous entity. The paper will also bring in various examples from the life narratives of Palestinians who live in the three places to demonstrate how they narrate their diverse refugee crises. To support this argument, the following life narratives of Palestinians will be analysed: Jacob Nammar's *Born in Jerusalem, Born Palestinian: A Memoir* (2012), Fawaz Turki's *Sole in Exile: Lives of a Palestinian Revolutionary* (1988) and Najla Said's *Looking for Palestine: Growing up Confused in an Arab-American Family* (2013).

Keywords: Homeland, Exile, Diaspora, Refugeehood, Palestine, Life Narratives, Collective Memory, Place and Identity.

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“From Unparalleled ‘Greatness’ to Could-be-expected Insularity. A Composite Sketch of ‘Englishness in Crisis’ as Drawn in Contemporary Fiction”

Brexit, as seen from the present perspective, is seemingly a success story. Taking into account a myriad of voices expressed in the public domain over the past few years, it is legitimate to make a cautious claim that some of the expectations people shared before/during the referendum have been inflated in post-plebiscite reality. In 2016, across the majority that voted for the divorce, there had been a consensus on the soundness and solidity of pro-Leave arguments as provided by proponents of the policy of national identity/national dignity. That mode of reasoning, though still present within current mindsets, has been confronted with the ‘unplanned’ turbulence of change. The whole process of bidding farewell to the European Union, rather than with a sense of satisfaction/relief, is resonating with detected sentiments of uncertainty/regret. Therefore, it would be both vital and interesting to juxtapose the former passion about restoring trust in the nation and its ‘exceptionality’, with more sobering projections of a new post-Brexit world. In order to discuss the ramifications of this self-inflicted condition, I tend to elaborate on selected literary texts. Created in recent years, their authors come up with similar conclusions that run parallel to what Benedict Anderson underlined, namely that communities [nations writ large], especially in times of crisis, share the general predilection for a self-deluding [re]construction of collective identity.

Marta Frątczak-Dąbrowska

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“British Empire in an (economic) crisis through the example of *New Day* (1949) by V. S. Reid”

New Day is a canonical text of Jamaican historical fiction which spans a century from the 1830s to the Second World War. The novel is a family saga, but its main focus falls on the (r)evolution of the British Empire as a political and socio-cultural unit. After the abolition of slavery, the Empire tries to retain its influence over the island of Jamaica and its inhabitants, while the Jamaicans begin to openly contest the legitimacy of the old regime and a new socio-economic force, the United States of America, enters the picture. In the past, the novel was criticised for its ideological ambiguity and lack of a revolutionary zeal. As Sylvia Wynter wrote, it remains “evasive and ambivalent”. On the one hand, Reid sympathises with the poor, criticises injustice and systemic violence but, on the other hand, all his hot-blooded, revolutionary characters are punished (Wynter 96). The novel, hence, does not propose any clear-cut solution to the problems of long modernity which, however, it captures and describes very accurately. The present paper takes this characteristic ambiguity of the text as its departure point and argues that the conflicts depicted in the novel, as well as its somewhat ‘apathetic’ message, correspond to how we conceptualise economic, ideological and climate tensions of today. Like *New Day*’s protagonists, we are facing a redefinition of socio-economic relations and, like most of them, we find it difficult (if not impossible) to envision a valid alternative to the global capitalist system in which we all are trapped. This is why, the

paper argues, it is timely and important to have a closer look at Reid's novel trying to better understand the present moment of a systemic crisis we are living through right now.

Session A [13.15-14.45]

Jadwiga Biernacka

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“Causing or Exposing a Crisis? Literary Journalism’s Role in the Current Predicament of the Catholic Church in Poland and Worldwide”

Spotlight Investigation: Abuse in the Catholic Church published in the „Boston Globe”, *His Holiness: The Secret Papers of Benedict XVI*, written by Gianluigi Nuzzi, Frédéric Martel’s *In the Closet of the Vatican. Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy*, Justyna Kopińska’s *Pedophile Priest Carries on* (Ksiądz pedofil odprawia dalej) and *Will God Forgive Sister Bernadette?* (Czy Bóg wybaczy siostrze Bernadecie?) or *The Nuns Go Quietly* (Zakonnice odchodzą po cichu) by Marta Abramowicz are just few examples of stories published in Poland, Italy, United States or France in the last twenty years, focused on problems of modern Catholic Church and troubles of people involved with it – whether they are representatives of the congregation, its disciples or otherwise connected to this organization. All of these works demonstrate depths of crisis in which Vatican has found itself in the 21st century, but only some shook up public opinion and triggered nation- and worldwide discussions, actions and movements. All of them expose hypocrisy, corruption, lust, greed or bigotry responsible for the mass exodus of members of the largest Christian community, but only some sparked the process. Can we say then that they caused a crisis in the Catholic Church? Definitely not. Problems and wrongdoings described by journalists in their books and articles were not made up, only discovered and announced to the public. Reporters’ goal was to protect victims and hold accountable people responsible for their pain and suffering. Lately however, intentions of some journalists have changed or at least it feels like it. More and more reportages prove the assumed thesis rather than present search for the truth. Their authors demonstrate fixed points of view and no longer are interested in asking questions, because they believe they know all the answers. Those works can be accused if not of causing the crisis, then of intensifying and amplifying it. This change is very easily noticeable for example when we compare subjects of non-fiction articles and books written in the last twenty years or during stylistic analysis of those works. Amount and character of adjectives, rhetorical figures, number of introduced heroes – all of these aspects of narration can alter the meaning of a story, and all of those are intentionally used by journalists dealing with the subject of the Catholic Church. The first goal of this presentation will be exploration of means and ways of writing about crisis in the Catholic Church in reportages. Second one – comparison, how those means and ways vary from author to author, country to country, even continent to continent, but most importantly – from one crisis to another. The result of the study will

hopefully allow to answer the question posed in a title, and determine, what role should journalism take in the face of this particular crisis.

Dominika Buchowska-Greaves

[Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland]

“Crisis of social orthodoxies in Thomas Burke's *Limehouse Nights*”

With the publication of his *Limehouse Nights. Tales of Chinatown* (1916) a collection of short stories about life in the impoverished Limehouse area of London's East End, Thomas Burke achieved instant notoriety. Rejected by the mainstream press for its alleged promotion of immorality, the work was published serially in three magazines *The English Review*, *Colour*, and *The New Witness*. Other modernist writers, including H. G. Wells, A. Bennett, Ford Maddox Ford, and Eden Philpotts, welcomed the book with keenness sending Burke and his editors letters of approval and encouragement. Yet the book was banned from public access at the circulating libraries, for promoting degeneration and perversity. The work was controversial at the time of its publication because it contradicted popularly held views about Chinese men living in London, reducing them to criminals, drug traffickers, gamblers, and white slave dealers. Partly due to poor integration and a dissonant social order, this bachelor community was seen to threaten British ideas of race and sexual morality. The relations between Chinese men and white English women perceived to lead to prostitution and degeneracy undermining social orthodoxies, racial purity, promoting promiscuity and crime. In particular, in a time of war, foreign neighbourhoods – “the enemy within” as the newspapers referred to them – posed a threat to a society that wanted to diminish rather than promote its cultural and ethnic diversity, undermining the hierarchy of racial structure. Burke's short stories do not embrace the moralizing tone and disgust with the scandalous effects of miscegenation that was preached by his contemporary conservative authorities and the establishment. His stories do not to portray the Chinese as a malignant, sinister, and unwanted ‘alien’ element that dominated in the literature and culture of the time, but see them in the context of the exotic modernist ‘Other’, which can be both dangerous and attractive. “There was the blue moon of the Orient. There, for the bold, were the sharp knives, and there, for those who would patiently seek, was the lamp of young Aladdin” Burke writes (Burke, *LN* 155). The book's embrace of painful naturalism with romantic lyricism, showing unique ethnic acceptance, contradicted popular expectations and racial taboo, revealing Sinophobic sentiment in Britain. The aim of the paper is to analyse Burke's modernist dichotomic portrayal of London's Chinatown and his new understanding of ‘Otherness’ which challenges the conventional Victorian stereotypes, revealing a crisis in social and cultural hierarchies held in Britain.

Lucía Gastón Lorente

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“ProPublica, Netflix and the Use of Emotions to Talk about Sexual Abuse”

The ProPublica and Pulitzer prize winner journalistic story *An unbelievable story of rape* (2015) and the Netflix based-on-real-life-event mini-series *Unbelievable* (2019) that this journalistic work inspired are two different ways of telling a story about sexual abuse trauma; the story of a girl who was raped and that, after reporting the assault to the police, said she had lied and that she had not been assaulted because the police and some people around her made her believe that she had made everything up. But she had not. Here, the story of a woman becomes the story of many women, and allows the audience to understand the psychological effects of this kind of trauma upon its victims and how the police’s failure in investigating it can affect them. However, the effectiveness of the story in doing so does not only depend on the story itself, but also in the way it is told. And, in this case, both narrations work perfectly. Thus, journalism and fiction appear as two manners of telling a story capable of making the audience understand a complex and relevant reality. The question would be then if these two works, the journalistic piece and the mini-series, have something in common. And the answer is yes: they both make an outstanding use of emotions. Thus, this paper seeks to analyse the narrative devices of both stories in order to understand how they deal with emotions. For that matter, this research will analyse and compare the fragments of the journalistic work and the scenes of the mini-series that narrate the same event with the aim of determining what are the differences and similarities between their use of emotions.

Session B [13.15-14.45]

Jeremy Pomeroy

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[Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland]

“Centrality of Translations in Eavan Boland’s *The War Horse* and the Crisis of Poetic Identity”

Eavan Boland’s second book of poems, *The War Horse* (1975), represents a transitional moment in her vocation, and may be convincingly argued as the moment she began to explore her mature style and subject matter. As both critics and Boland herself have noticed, her forging of a new voice at the time was contextualized by two crises: the political crisis of beginning of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, and the personal crisis of striving to reconcile her role of poet with that of a housewife after having retired from Dublin to the suburbs. One begins by considering the structure of the book, which, aside from a brief opening poem dedicated to her husband, is divided into three sections. The first, including the titular piece, is heavily weighted towards an elegiac treatment of political violence and empathizing with

historical victims; the third, commencing with “Ode to Suburbia”, largely explores the poetic potential of Boland’s quotidian domestic life. The book thereby broaches two central preoccupations to be developed throughout Boland’s later career, and sees her deploy her characteristic persona as a stridently *female* poet.

The chief focus of this presentation is the second section of the *The War Horse*. Sandwiched between Boland’s originals, one encounters a series of translations and adaptations. At a moment when Boland’s style was evolving and she sought to take a disruptive stance against traditional Irish poetics, it is difficult to regard the translated works as being arbitrarily included, and, as such, one may consider Boland’s choice of poets and poems as a form of self-depiction. At a moment when she was significantly breaking with an Irish poetic tradition she was to vociferously contend had been male-dominated, Boland’s translations simultaneously provide an anchoring and situating within wider poetic tradition. Additionally, they anticipate strategies and characteristic themes of her *oeuvre* in later years. One looks at the translations as an integral and coherent part of *The War Horse*, considers the motivations for each choice, and finally contemplates their importance in grounding and contextualizing the authority of Boland’s evolving poetic *parti-pris*.

Keywords: Eavan Boland, *The War Horse*, translations, poetic identity, crisis

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[Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland]

“Crisis of Identity in Old Age on the Basis of Horace Walpole's Familiar Letters”

Humanistic gerontology teaches that ageing into old age, or growing old, involves a series of crises, experienced both on a social and personal level. The very notion of crisis, in turn, is within this related to conflict, not only seen in the very attempt to define old age but also in the social repositioning that late life usually entails. Such an intergenerational transition and the problem with the definition of the onset of senescence are, of course, not the products of our contemporary society. In the presentation, I wish to show how such age-related *crises of identity* were experienced, embodied and narrated in the familiar letters written by Horace Walpole. The presentation will discuss Walpole’s bold plan to take control of his late life/old age and a failure of this blueprint, engendered by the fact that his ‘embodied experience’ did not match ‘the imagined old age’ scenarios. While studying a lifetime of Walpole’s letters, the presentation will offer evidence to Thomas R. Cole’s opinion that “[a]ging, like illness and death, reveals the most fundamental conflict of the human condition” (1987: 5), and Walpole managed to write it all down into existence.

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[Jagiellonian University, Poland]

“Crisis of the Body in Mike McCormack's *Solar Bones*”

The paper will consider numerous crises addressed in Mike McCormack's *Solar Bones*. The novel revolves around Marcus Conway, a middle-aged engineer from west Mayo, recently deceased, who returns on All Souls' Day to his home kitchen to reminisce about his past life's events. Though no longer constrained by embodied existence, the protagonist obsessively concentrates on the material aspects of the world – environment, infrastructure, “circum-terrestrial grid of services” on which we all depend, and which have a bearing on our overall physical condition. Since “collapse is never far from an engineer's mind”, Marcus seems particularly attuned to signs of dereliction, things falling apart and imploding, ultimately pressing on the human body and tearing it asunder. My focus will be on the somatic, kinaesthetic experience of crisis, captured in the descriptions of physical suffering of, for instance, an environmental campaigner on a hunger strike, the bodies of protesters in Tiananmen Square, torture victims, Marcus's wife affected by a virus and the protagonist dying of cardiac arrest. McCormack's novel is attentive to various fluids and humours of the body; it is also, to use the author's own words, “a book of the heart” which possesses “almost a systolic beat” while offering a comment on how precarious all of life is. What Marcus discovers is the way in which the consequences of (usually male) politicians' and engineers' decisions can affect his family's physical well-being, for example when his wife experiences “history and politics” in the form of “a severe intestinal disorder”. Her violent spasms of vomiting and diarrhoea challenge Marcus to renounce his neat engineer's posturing and assume the role of a carer, which eventually wastes him away. Earlier in the novel, Marcus is also challenged by his daughter, a budding visual artist who uses her body as a rhetorical field. She addresses the problems of the world with her own blood painted on the gallery walls, and by staging a happening in which she jumps naked off the rooftop of the City Hall. Her gendered, somatic critique precipitates Marcus's existential crisis and brings him to a fuller understanding of the forces which weigh upon society in general, and women in particular.