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# Book of Abstracts



1.

**Tomi Adeaga**

### **Transnational Migration Across Cultures in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century African Diaspora Literature**

This paper seeks to explore transnational migration by looking primarily at the works of 21<sup>st</sup> century African diaspora authors such as Teju Cole and Chika Unigwe, historicizing the concept of movements across national boundaries where they and other African diaspora authors have made their homes. Takeyuki Tsuda posits that transnationalism should not be conflated with transborder and simply refer to any social process that crosses national borders as 'transnational' if such transborder practices only have a nationalist impact on the sending nation-state (Tsuda, 2012, 633). Instead, Tsuda states that, to be truly transnational, they must have a simultaneous, bi-directional impact on both the sending and receiving nation-states (Tsuda, 2012, 633-4). Indeed, while living in these spaces, these migrants simultaneously participate in social relations that embed them in more than one nation-state, and through which they forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and the countries in which they have settled down and called their homes. This is essentially because their migration took place, is still taking place within fluid social spaces and identity-forming contexts, which are constantly reworked and modified through their simultaneous connectedness to more than one society. This paper will explore some of these migration and multi-locational strands and identity developments in Teju Cole's *Open City* (2011), and Chika Unigwe's *Better Never than Late* (2020). Focus will be on how the protagonists identified or did not identify with the cultural realities in the various locations in which they found themselves both in African and the African diaspora. Attention will also be given to how migration placed the protagonists at the intersections of race, gender, and class, and how each of them negotiated their new spaces in the African diaspora.

**Keywords:** Africa, diaspora, identity, migration, transnational.

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Takeyuki, Tsuda. "Whatever Happened to Simultaneity? Transnational Migration Theory and Dual Engagement in Sending and Receiving Countries." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38, no. 4 (2012): 631-649.

### **Bio**

Tomi Adeaga Ph.D. teaches African literature, Global Black Studies, Black European Studies, and Digital Humanities at the Department of African Studies, Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies of the University of Vienna, Austria. She also teaches Global Black Feminisms in the Gender Studies Department of the University of Vienna. She was a Visiting Professor at the Paris Lodron University of Salzburg from 2023-2024 where she taught Global Black Feminisms, Black European Studies, Translation and Transnational Studies. She is the author of *Translating and Publishing African Language(s) and Literature(s): Examples from Nigeria, Ghana and Germany* (2006). She translated Olympe Bhêly – Quénum's *C'était à Tigony* into *As She Was Discovering Tigony* (2017). She has also published book chapters and articles in literary journals such as "Sexuality, Resilience, and Mobility in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*," in *Women Writing Diaspora: Transnational Perspectives in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Rose Sackeyfio (ed.), (2021); Colonialism and Sexuality in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* and Peter Kimani's *Dance of the Jakaranda*," in *Journal of the African Literature Association (JALA)* (2020).

## 2.

George Allan

### **'After the British Left, We Kept the Trains': Drawing Hope from Crisis in Tade Thompson's *Wormwood* Trilogy.**

This paper will examine the presentation of hope against the backdrop of social and ecological crisis within a contemporary African speculative narrative, Tade Thompson's *Wormwood* trilogy (2016-19), which stages an alien invasion in near-future Nigeria. Such 'Africanfuturist' speculative fiction (sf) often 'skews optimistic' (Okorafor 2019) in its use of the fantastic to imagine worlds free from the weight of colonial history and contemporary marginalisation. Thompson's work, however, rejects this utopianism and instead situates itself squarely within the crises of the contemporary: civil war, international interference and devastating oil extraction. As a result, I read *Wormwood* alongside the work of Afropessimist scholars such as Christina Sharpe, who advocate modes of Black thought which remain 'occupied by the continuous and changing present of slavery's as yet unresolved unfolding' (Sharpe 2016, p. 13), cognizant of the persistent after-effects of these histories. I suggest that *Wormwood* sites itself within this 'unfolding' as a means of excavating modes of embodied living which can survive beyond the Anthropocene.

*Wormwood* plays on these extractive practices by presenting its alien invasion on a cellular level; extraterrestrial fungal spores are sent to Earth to convert human bodies into hosts for alien consciousnesses. Resource extraction thus takes place both 'on the surface' and 'in the depths of the body' (Rieder 2019, p. 338), as geopolitics becomes a matter of biopolitical agency. I argue that Thompson situates hope in such context in alternate modes of embodiment, as posthuman ecologies of a fungal/alien hybridity provide alternate epistemologies.

**Keywords:** *Wormwood* trilogy, Africanfuturism, Afropessimism, embodiment, alien

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### **Bio**

George Allan is a postgraduate researcher in English Literature at the University of Leeds. His PhD project focuses on animist ecologies in African and diasporic speculative fiction.

### 3.

Haneen Alkaraki

#### **Journeys of Hope and the Right to Aspire: Exile and Hybridity in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* (2001) and *Admiring Silence* (1996)**

Abdulrazak Gurnah's work provides a deep understanding of the realities of displacement, exile, and cultural hybridity, recognising him as a significant writer of postcolonial migration. This study analyses two of Gurnah's novels, *By the Sea* (2001) and *Admiring Silence* (1996), to look into his reconsideration of exile as not only a state of crisis but also as a point of aspiration and ethical responsibility. Applying Arjun Appadurai's concept of the "capacity to aspire" [Appadurai 2004], the discussion explains how displaced people navigate silence, safety, and belonging while imagining alternative futures.

Recent academic work has focused on Gurnah's exploration of asylum, memory, and colonial legacies. Postcolonial and decolonial theorists, such as Edward Said and Achille Mbembe, have also contended the significant role of literature in challenging reductive crisis narratives and revealing the uneven distribution of agency and voice.

While this body of work provides insight into many aspects of Gurnah's fiction, little focus has been directed towards how his novels portray aspiration as an ethical and creative response to displacement. This paper aims to fill that gap by contextualising Gurnah's work within cultural theory, migration studies, and postcolonial ethics.

In *By the Sea* (2001), Saleh Omar's story of seeking asylum shows how refugee regimes silence people by making them distrustful of witnesses and less able to act. *Admiring Silence* (1996), on the other hand, the unidentified narrator's switching between hiding and confessing shows how difficult cultural translation can be. Silence serves as both a protective barrier and a weight, revealing the challenges of belonging in exile while also indicating the possibilities of mixed identity.

When read together, through the lens of Appadurai, Bhabha [1994], Said [2004], Bauman [2000], and Levinas [1969], the two works show how crises of belonging mix with weak hopes, showing exile as a place where quiet, confession, and hybridity can ease the tension between being left out and being recognised.

Ultimately, this paper explains how *By the Sea* and *Admiring Silence* reveal how displaced people are both silenced and able to keep their imaginations alive. It also shows how storytelling is an ethical practice that goes against the simple language of crisis. Gurnah's fictions make us think about how literature can help us reinforce the humanities' responsibility in imagining more inclusive futures. In this sense, his work not only tells stories of optimism, but it also shows how powerful stories can be in dealing with the problems we face today.

**Keywords:** Abdulrazak Gurnah, exile, migration, hybridity, aspiration.

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## **Bio**

Haneen Alkaraki: a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Portsmouth, where I explore postcolonial dynamics in multicultural coastal communities, focusing on identity displacement and cultural hybridity in the fiction of Abdulrazak Gurnah. My research examines how colonial legacies and patterns of migration shape hybrid identities, particularly in East African coastal settings marked by historical intersections of diverse cultures. My work is rooted in contemporary postcolonial theory, with an emphasis on the relational aspects of identity formation and the impact of displacement. My academic interests also include investigating how Gurnah's narratives reflect and challenge traditional notions of identity, belonging, and the self in a globalised, interconnected world.

## **4.**

### **Kathi Ammann**

#### **On the Future of the Past - Colonial Echoes and Premature Black Death in the Wake of German Memory Culture**

German historical processing was long commended as a successful 'coming to terms' with the country's fascist past. Increasingly memory scholars, however, are pointing out that the 'hypermnnesia' of the Holocaust stands in glaring contrast to how other forms of racialised violence are remembered, for instance the German colonial legacy. Postcolonial scholars diagnose a state of 'colonial amnesia' as colonial memories are painfully absent from national identity and cultural memory.

In the wake of post-colonial and post-Holocaust cultural remembrance, this project interrogates premature Black death. More specifically, it examines state violence (i.e. border and migration regimes, policing and police killing) as haunting evidence of a failed memory politics and the illusion of historical closure. Within an abolitionist, critical Black framework, I theorise racialisation as an instrument of governance, as well as epistemological and visceral threshold producing displacement (geographically and ontologically), expendability, and premature death. Looking at violence inflicted by the German state on the non-white person, I trace how death and racial violence are rendered banal and inevitable as a consequence of white supremacist remembering. The bio- and necropolitical governance over the Black body is approached with a critical visual analysis. Methodologically reliant on 'the minor', 'the everyday' and practices of 'reparative reading', I will analyse various instances, expressions, and representations of Blackness to explore its unfolding between refusal and resistance, life and death. Mobilising the visual as a cultural narrative that is rooted in history, the project hopes to evince how non-white people are continually animated by fragmented and distorted historical processing, and how they struggle to survive beyond and amid colonialism, imperialism, genocide, and policing.

**Keywords:** hauntology, German memory culture, race, postcolonial echoes, visual analysis.

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Traverso, Enzo. *Germany's Reckoning with the Past Is no Longer a Model*. Jacobin, 2025.

## **Bio**

Kathi is a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne working within the 'History, Memory, and Decolonial Futures' research collective. Her current work is situated in the entangled memorial context of the Holocaust and German colonialism. Previously, she worked on the themes of postcolonial resilience of ecological communities, cinematic representation of subalternity, and embodiment and race. Before the PhD project, Kathi worked as an academic assistant at the Institute for Social History (Amsterdam), for the professors Britta Schilling and Sandra Ponzanesi (both Utrecht University), and the DeNazDB project (Copenhagen Business School). Kathi has a background in Sociology, Political Sciences (Erasmus University Rotterdam) and Gender Studies (Utrecht University).

## **5.**

### **Ayush Anand**

#### **The Social Robots across National Boundaries: Care and Cultural Production in "Saying Good Bye to Yang"**

Weinstein's "Saying Good Bye to Yang" is a short story about the loss of a beloved family member Yang, an android. Yang was purchased to help an adopted child, Mika, to comprehend her Chinese heritage. The story stages two simultaneous migrations: the physical migration of Mika through transnational adoption, and the migration of 'culture' itself through Yang's body, as a curated cultural artifact (Appadurai, 1996). The family seeks an alternative form of social connection by choosing Yang as a caretaker. The transference of culture in this context reflects a romanticized exploration of social relations through a robot (Coeckelbergh 2017, 4). The culture witnessed through Yang may be curated but it is the interconnectedness and interdependence (Hayles 2016, 50; The Care Collective 2020, 4) between Yang and the family that allows for a cultural hybridity to emerge. Thus, the story underscores lived culture rather than the culture's roots, highlighting the significance of values embodied in the cultural praxis of everyday life. There are limitations to Yang's functionality but its social relation with the family that translates a malfunction into the death of a family member. Yang is an example of how cultural possibilities expand through technology (Latour, 2022). A social relation mediated through technology serves as a warning for how different exploitations emerge in a technoscientific culture where technology itself is anthropomorphised and integrates socially on a deeper level. It shifts the meaning of social relation beyond the human and explores social relations in a technoscientific culture. Hence, the relationship with technology under capitalism often appears exploitative as Yang's ephemeral nature reflects. It is a technological solution to an often, human problem of social relations under the shifting alliances with the nation's migrant past. The paper investigates social robots as a transnational product and their impact on cultural production. It is an inquiry of the social act of care through technological mediation and its impact beyond mere sustenance of life. Hence, it requires the recognition of the interconnectedness and relationality of humanity with robots/technological artifacts. It examines the anthropomorphisation of robots and critiques the ephemeral nature of technology in late-stage capitalism, especially due to their ever-changing social role in cultural production.

**Keywords:** social robot, care, migration, anthropomorphic, ephemeral.

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### **Bio**

Ayush Anand is a researcher in English Literature and Cultural Studies. He completed his Master's in English Literature from the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, and is currently pursuing PhD at IIT Jodhpur. His research focuses on posthumanism and digital cultures, with a particular emphasis on their intersection with the human sciences. He is interested in exploring how evolving technological landscapes reshape understanding of identity, agency, and embodiment. The work engages with critical theory, philosophy, and literature to examine the shifting boundaries between the human and the non-human in contemporary cultural narratives. He was also awarded Best Paper Award at the conference organised by INMS in association with the Centre for Memory Studies, IIT Madras in October, 2025.

## **6.**

### **Mohd Asaduddin**

#### **Translation Studies in India: Historical Contexts and Current Trends**

The paper attempts to lay out the role of translation on interhuman space at various times and places in the world in general and in the Indian situation in particular. Renaissances in various parts of the world were a function of translation into those languages. Translation has an undoubted place in the history of ideas and the history of translation is the history of human civilization. The paper goes on to talk about the Indian situation in particular, both endotropic and exotropic. If the European Renaissance was made possible through the massive translation by Arab Muslims from the work of the Hellenic tradition, the Indian renaissance, if there was one, was made possible through extensive translation of European and mainly English works in different languages, not only of literature but also of social sciences, philosophy, ethics and morality etc. Raymond Schwab (1984) in his book, *The Oriental Renaissance*, has shown how a new kind of awareness took place and curiosity about the Orient aroused in the West through the translation of Persian texts from Sadi, Rumi, Omar Khayyam and others on the one hand, and Vedic and Sanskrit texts from India on the other.

Although translation has always been integral to Indian literature and culture, Translation Studies as a discipline is of very recent origin in India. It may be traced back to two collections of essays by Sujit Mukherjee who is the first scholar to think about the process of translation in a systematic way.

These two collections are: *Translation as Discovery and Other Essays* (1981) and *Translation as Recovery* (2004). Later, other scholars like Harish Trivedi and Ganesh Devy have made significant contributions to the field by engaging with the Western theories of translation and bringing into discourse Indian insights in the field. In recent years translation has received significant fillip after two Indian writers received the Booker prize for their work in translation. The volume of literary translation from Indian languages has increased manifold as also critical works on the process of translation. My paper would engage with this historical juncture and point out how translation is contributing to visibility of “little” languages, empowering marginalised people, dispelling parochialism and prejudices and bringing about a veritable cultural renaissance in India.

**Keywords:** Translation, culture, Oriental Renaissance, visibility, recovery.

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### **Bio**

Author, critic and translator in several languages Mohd Asaduddin writes on literature, language politics and Translation Studies. He was the Dean, Faculty of Humanities & Languages, Jamia Millia Islamia, and Advisor to the Vice Chancellor. He was a Fulbright Scholar- in-Residence at Rutgers University and a Charles Wallace Trust Fellow at the University of East Anglia, UK. He is the chair, IACLALS, and International Chair (2025-28), ACLALS. He was visiting professor at the universities of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and INALCO, Paris. Among his books are: *Complete Premchand Stories*, (Penguin Random House, 4 volumes, 2017), *Premchand in World Languages* (Routledge, 2016), *Filming Fiction: Tagore, Premchand and Ray* (Oxford U Press, 2012), *A Life in Words* (Penguin, 2012), *The Penguin Book of Classic Urdu Stories* (2006), *Lifting the Veil: Selected Writings of Ismat Chughtai* (Penguin, 2001) *For Freedom's Sake : Manto* (Oxford U Press, 2002) and *Image and Representation: Stories of Muslim Lives in India* (Oxford U Press, 2000). He was visiting professor at the universities of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and INALCO, Paris. Among his books are: *Complete Premchand Stories*, (Penguin Random House, 4 volumes, 2017), *Premchand in World Languages* (Routledge, 2016), *Filming Fiction: Tagore, Premchand and Ray* (Oxford U Press, 2012), *A Life in Words* (Penguin, 2012), *The Penguin Book of Classic Urdu Stories* (2006), *Lifting the Veil: Selected Writings of Ismat Chughtai* (Penguin, 2001) *For Freedom's Sake : Manto* (Oxford U Press, 2002) and *Image and Representation: Stories of Muslim Lives in India* (Oxford U Press, 2000).

7.

**Aminat Emma Badmus**

**PANEL: (Re)imagining the Canon: Resistance, Rewritings and Empowerment**

**A Postcolonial Stylistic Analysis of African Selfhood in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* (1964) and Chigozie Obioma's *An Orchestra of Minorities* (2019)**

This study examines Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* (1964) and Chigozie Obioma's *An Orchestra of Minorities* (2019) from a postcolonial stylistic perspective to bring to light how both Nigerian authors narrativise the African personhood as intrinsically embedded within the spiritual and physical realms through the notion of *Chi*.

Particular attention will be devoted to the stylistic choices deployed by both authors including the use of code-mixing, code switching, pidgin English, transliterations, translation, and the reference to Igbo deities and festivities, all of which serve for (re)validating and (re)affirming Igbo cosmology. The paper ultimately demonstrates how, through these communicative and narrative devices, these writers carve a space within the English literary canon in which African ontology and aesthetic practices are acknowledged as legitimate and complex, but also aesthetically worthy.

**Keywords:** Postcolonial stylistics; Nigerian literature; Igbo worldview; the Chi; canon formation and production.

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Obioma, Chigozie. *An Orchestra of Minorities*. Abacus Books, 2019.

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### **Bio**

Aminat Emma Badmus is an adjunct lecturer at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy). Her research extends across World Englishes, stylistics, and the representation of gender, queer identities and mental health in West African fiction.

She has participated in national and international Conferences and has published peer-reviewed papers, book chapters and non-academic articles on transnational migration, translation, queer and gender in West African literature. Her most recent work includes "Traduzione, rappresentazione e identità: Le poete afro-diasporiche come traduttrici letterarie e il mercato editoriale italiano" (2024) and "Queering Nigerian Literature: Blurring Gender Lines in Akwaeke Emezi's *The Death of Vivek Oji*" (forthcoming).

8.

**Harjot Banga**

### **Poetry as a Subaltern Archive: Narayan Surve's Testimony of Migrant Labour in Bombay's Cotton Mills**

The present article explores Mumbai's urban history with a specific focus on the city's vanished cotton mills and on the migrant workers of Girangaon. The central research question guiding this study is as follows: how can the poetry of textile worker and Dalit poet Narayan Surve serve as an essential archive for subaltern experiences that elude traditional historical records?

As is evident from the extant literature, the economic and political history of the textile district has been extensively documented (Chandavarkar 1994; Adarkar and Menon 2004), yet this focus has often come at the expense of its affective and subjective dimensions, which tend to be overshadowed by institutional and economic narratives of the mills. The present study addresses this lacuna by undertaking a literary analysis of Surve's oeuvre, situated within the paradigm of Subaltern Studies (Guha 1997) and theories of the "wasted lives" of modernity (Baumann 2003). It is argued that Surve's poetry is not merely reflexive, but rather an active agent of social memory, uniquely capturing the material and psychological realities of migrant life: the factory clock dictating the life pace, the blurred boundaries between life in the chawls and the outside world, and the negotiation of a new urban identity.

Building on this view, it can be argued that Dalit poetry provides indispensable epistemological access to subaltern consciousness, documenting nuances of alienation and resilience. This approach offers a methodological innovation for urban and postcolonial studies, demonstrating how cultural production illuminates the lives of those on the margins of modernity.

**Keywords:** Subalternity, Dalit Literary Archive, Bombay/Mumbai, Narayan Surve, Migrant Identity

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### **Bio**

Harjot Banga ([harjot.banga@unito.it](mailto:harjot.banga@unito.it)) is a PhD candidate in Anglophone Postcolonial Literature at the University of Turin and Genoa. His doctoral research is situated at the intersection of cultural and literary studies and Digital Humanities, focusing on the industrial and cultural significance of the textile industries in India, specifically the cotton mills of Bombay/Mumbai and the woollen mills of Biella. He is the author of the recent monograph, *Anita Desai's India: The Religious Plague, Holocaust, Decadence and Remembrance* (Ibidem Verlag / Columbia UP, June 2024), and his scholarly articles have appeared in both national and international journals.

## Faezeh Barghi Oliaee

### Decolonial Ecology and the Crisis of Imagination in Amitav Ghosh's Fiction

This paper seeks to reinterpret Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* and *The Great Derangement* through the lens of decolonial ecology and planetary ethics in an age marked by climate collapse, digital capitalism, and mass displacement. In *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016) Ghosh's narratives exposes the crisis of imagination that underlies both ecological degradation and the growing skepticism toward scientific knowledge — a skepticism born not of ignorance but of a failure to imagine our entanglement with the nonhuman world and the broader interconnections that link events, actions, and beings across space and time, a dynamic reminiscent of the butterfly effect, where small actions reverberate across complex planetary systems.

By connecting the imperial networks of the opium trade in *Sea of Poppies* with the narrative silences surrounding climate change in *The Great Derangement*, this study reveals how Ghosh exposes a shared imaginative failure underlying both colonial and contemporary crises. In *Sea of Poppies*, the reduction of people and nature to instruments of profit reveals an imperial worldview unable to perceive the interdependence of human and ecological life.

*The Great Derangement* extends this critique to the present, suggesting that our inability to narrate climate change stems from the same fragmented imagination that once sustained the empire (Chakrabarty, 2009). Ghosh thus invites a rethinking of imagination itself—as a mode of ethical awareness capable of reconnecting humans to the planetary networks they inhabit.

This paper contributes to current debates by showing how Ghosh's narratives transform crises of climate and knowledge into crises of imagination, where narrative becomes a tool for rethinking the authority of science and the ethics of representation (*The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, 2016). It thus repositions imagination as a site where literature contests epistemic hierarchies and envisions new forms of planetary understanding (Said, 1993), offering a framework of reciprocity and decolonial hope for the twenty-first century.

**Keywords:** Decolonial Ecology, Colonial continuity, Climate crisis, Narrative resistance, Imagination.

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### Bio

Faezeh Barghi Oliaee holds a Ph.D. in English Literature from Paris Diderot University (Université Paris Cité). Her research explores postcolonial studies, ecological thought, and the poetics of Derek Walcott. She is currently an English lecturer at the Université Catholique de Lille and the Leonardo da Vinci University Center in Paris.

10.

**Elena Barreca**

### **The Topos of Babylon in Rastafari-Reggae: A Lyrical Analysis**

This paper focuses on the Rastafari depiction of the Western world as Babylon, the land of oppression, as it is found in a corpus of Rastafari-reggae lyrics from 1970s Jamaica.

An expression of the African religious experience in the Caribbean (Stewart 2005), Rastafari emerged as an anticolonial-religious movement in the early twentieth century. At the core of the Rastafari movement lies the determination to deal with the historical experience of (neo)colonialism, as Rastas have consciously decided to face the four hundred years of crises that have followed the spread of European “civilization” (Price 2022).

Accordingly, Rastas have created a symbolic system which aims to reorder and reshape their social reality and, through music, they have carried their (marginalized) historical consciousness and their cry for “equal rights and justice” throughout the (capitalist) world (Edmonds 2002). The Rastafari cosmology expressed, recorded and organized by Rastafari reggae artists represents thus a “submerged form of knowledge” (Foucault 1980), which shows Rastas determination to survive the “crises” of ancestral trauma, racial discrimination and economic oppression, and to creatively imagine alternative futures. Within this framework, Rastafari's portrayal of the Western world as Babylon expresses the conviction that the social, political, and economic institutions that reproduce a multilayered system of (racial) oppression must be overcome.

Starting from the quantitative analysis of a lyrical corpus, this paper elaborates on Rastafari-reggae lyrical symbolism and places Rastafari cosmology in dialogue with the “faces of oppression” that have characterized our modern, global society and its recurring crises (Young 1990).

**Keywords:** Rastafari, Jamaica, African diaspora, Bible, 1970s

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### **Bio**

Elena Barreca holds a master's degree in European, American and Postcolonial Literatures from Ca' Foscari University of Venice and a Ph.D. degree in Languages, Literatures and Cultures in Contact from the “G. D'Annunzio” University of Chieti-Pescara, Italy.

Her Ph.D. project focuses on the systematical study of Rastafari-reggae lyrics from 1970s Jamaica. The thesis benefitted from a year of research at the University of West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica and in 2024 won the ASAI award for the best doctoral thesis in African studies.

More recently, Elena has translated and curated the first Italian edition of dr. Walter Rodney's masterpiece, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Mimesis 2025).

## 11.

**Elena Bastianoni**

### **«We're Only Birds of Passage»: Vulnerability and Resilience in Elsie Locke's *A Canoe in the Mist* (1984)**

This paper explores *A Canoe in the Mist* (1984), a novel by New Zealand author Elsie Locke. The narrative is a tale of hope and survival inspired by the 1886 eruption of Mount Tarawera, Aotearoa-New Zealand. The tragic eruption destroyed the Pink and White Terraces of Lake Rotomahana, part of Māori land and cultural memory. The catastrophe encapsulates multiple crises (ecological, cultural, colonial) linked to loss of territory, forced relocation and inherited trauma.

The novel revolves around the voices of two non-Indigenous girls: Lillian and Mattie, who undergo a process of decolonization and embrace an ecosophical approach.

Firstly, the paper investigates the tension between Indigenous epistemologies of care and risk awareness (Smith 1999) and Western frameworks rooted in risk negation. The adoption of TEK (Wolfgramm 2018) and orally transmitted cultural memory by the Māori offers an alternative to the colonial West. The study explores the Māori principle of *manaakitanga* and its resonance with Carol Gilligan's *ethics of care*, two epistemologies of care that open possibilities for dialogue.

Secondly, it highlights how vulnerability and structural inequality shape human responses to geological risk. The eruption operates as a *hyperobject* (Morton 2013), a vastly distributed entity that resists human control. In this light, resilience rises from shared vulnerability (Butler 2016) and discloses the limits of anthropocentric epistemologies in responding to geological crises.

The novel is a point of departure for a deeper analysis on how narratives from different contexts expose ideas of displacement and ecological loss, opening the way to a broader discussion within decolonial and ecocritical studies.

**Keywords:** Decolonial Studies; Geological Risk; Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK); Ethics of Care; Resilience

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## Bio

Elena Bastianoni is a third-year PhD candidate in English Literature at the University of Pisa. She graduated in Euro-American Languages, Literatures and Philology in 2022 at the University of Pisa, where she also received her BA degree in Foreign Languages and Literatures in 2020.

She is specializing in Anglophone Literature with a dissertation centered on Anglophone Pandemic Fiction. Elena Bastianoni is currently focusing on the narrative production of Margaret Atwood, Emma Donoghue, Cherie Dimaline, and Meg Mundell, with a special attention to the interplay between damaged ecology and the pandemic phenomenon in dystopian fiction. Her research interests range from Postcolonial Literature to Ecocriticism, Trauma Studies, and Northern American Indigenous Literature.

## 12.

### Christine Berberich

#### **Rain, Migrants, and the End of Human(Ident)ity: a Study of a Multitude of Crises**

In recent years, a number of novels dealing with a convergence of rising water levels and migrant crisis as well as, hand in hand with this, the question of what it means to be human / to show humanity have been published, most prominently among them John Lanchester's *The Wall* (2019) in the UK. Ian McEwan has just announced a September 2025 publication date for his new novel, *What We Can Know*, which also deals with the effects of the climate crisis on the UK in particular and humanity in general. Both of these novels, however, assess the convergence of different crises from a viewpoint of Western hegemony. This paper, while briefly touching on them, will offer a decolonial assessment by offering an introduction to and close analysis of Pitchaya Sudbanthad's 2019 novel *Bangkok Wakes to Rain*. Closely engaging with the slow but steady rise of water on the Thai capital via a narrative that spans many decades, Sudbanthad queries the effect of climate crisis not only on our shared humanity but problematises the future of human kind as a whole by offering a bleak vision of a trans- and post-humanist future.

**Keywords:** Climate crisis; slow violence; eco criticism; posthumanism; decolonial literature.

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Sudbandthad, Pitchaya. *Bangkok Wakes to Rain*. Sceptre, 2019.

## Bio

Dr Christine Berberich is Associate Professor in Literature at the University of Portsmouth, UK. She specialises in narratives of national identity (in particular Englishness and cultural representations of Brexit) as well as commemorations of the Holocaust in Literature and Culture. Her key publications include *The Image of the English Gentleman in Twentieth-Century Literature* (2007) as well as (as editor) *Trauma and Memory: the Holocaust in Contemporary Culture* (2021) and *Brexit*

and the Migrant Voice (2022). She has published widely in journals as diverse as the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, *Wasafiri*, *Social Identities*, *Journal of Holocaust Studies*, *National Identities*, and many others.

### 13.

#### Amitendu Bhattacharya

##### **Phantom Homelands: Refugee Memory and the Politics of Belonging in a Partition Memoir**

Sunanda Sikdar's Bengali-language memoir, *Dayamoyeer Katha* (2008), translated into English as *A Life Long Ago* (2012), is an essential narrative for comprehending the gendered experience and psychological aftermath of the Partition of India/Bengal in 1947. The primary objective of this paper is to analyze the text as a subaltern archive that challenges official histories and to argue that the Partition was not a finite historico-political event but a perpetual state of displacement, marked by an unresolved tension between nostalgic memory and traumatic rupture. Employing close textual analysis informed by postcolonial frameworks of crisis, conflict, crossing, and migration, alongside insights from memory studies, the paper investigates the multi-layered oppression—communal, caste-based, and patriarchal—that defined women's experiences. The analysis highlights how the physical crossing of a border results in enduring cultural and psychological alienation, as exemplified by the protagonist being cast as a perpetual outsider. Central to the discussion is framing the act of memoir-writing itself as a decisive crossing from silence into speech, and interpreting the act as a dual gesture of therapeutic healing and political resistance against erasure. The study concludes that in its attempt to recover the marginalized female voice within the broader discourse of Partition literature, Sikdar's work simultaneously complicates and contests nationalist historiographies. The memoir reconfigures displacement beyond mere geography, presenting it instead as a continuous emotional and psychological crisis, and ultimately provides an incisive account of resilience and the fragile reconstruction of selfhood in the long, unresolved afterlife of Partition.

**Keywords:** Partition of India, refugee narratives, gendered memory, Bengali literature, postcolonial Indian literature.

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##### **Bio**

Amitendu Bhattacharya teaches literary studies in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani – K K Birla Goa Campus, India.

## 14.

**Kathie Birat**

**“Navigating the Future Unknown”: Forests, Deforestation and the Climate Crisis in *Summertime: Reflections on a vanishing future* by Danielle Celermajer (Australia) and *Two Trees Make a Forest: On Memory, Migration and Taiwan* by Jessica J. Lee (Canada)**

This paper proposes to explore the ways in which nonfictional texts like those written by Danielle Celermajer and Jessica J. Lee contribute by their hybrid nature, a blending of scientific expertise and personal narrative, to an understanding of the postcolonial dimension of the climate crisis. While novels like Richard Powers’s *The Overstory* (USA) and Michael Christie’s *Greenwood* (Canada) incorporate scientific knowledge of trees and forests into fictional narratives, Celermajer’s and Lee’s books, which are nonfictional memoirs, offer different strategies for bridging the gap between scientific knowledge, literary/philosophical reflection, personal experience, and collective involvement. Lee, an environmental historian whose mother migrated to Canada from Taiwan, draws on her personal experience to link her visits to Taiwan and her exploration of its forests to the history of botanical exploration on the island and its connection with colonialism, but also to the history of her family and the displacements produced by the violent history of Taiwan. Beyond giving the “green imperialism” described by Richard Grove the impact of personal perception (Grove 1995), Lee’s memoir illustrates the necessity of joining a “lived experience of the biophysical world” evoked by Alder Saxena (Tsing, Deger, Saxena and Zhou 2024, 87) to the discourses of environmentalism. Danielle Celermajer’s recounting of her experience of the Black Summer bushfires in Australia in 2019-2020 similarly brings together her personal experience of terror and loss with the major issues explored by academic studies of climate change and environmental justice, such as the relation of the human and the nonhuman and indigenous consciousness of “the entangled relationships between different beings” (90). Both of these narratives, most importantly, explore the link between past violence, be it that produced by the Holocaust or by colonial domination, and the violence inflicted on the planet that is generating what Celermajer calls “the feared future” (21).

**Keywords:** forests, climate change, ecofiction, colonialism, environmental justice.

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### **Bio**

I am emeritus professor of American, African-American and Afro-Caribbean literature at the University of Lorraine. I have published extensively on writers from the English-speaking Caribbean, with particular emphasis on the works of Caryl Phillips. I edited a special issue of *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* (now entitled *Postcolonial Literatures and Arts*) devoted to Phillips in 2017. My most recent publications on the writer include an essay in the collection assembled in honour of

Bénédicte Ledent entitled *Caryl Phillips's Genealogies* (Brill, 2023) and an essay on Phillips's latest novel *A View of the Empire at Sunset* published in *Transnational Jean Rhys: Lines of Transmission, Lines of Flight*, a collection edited by Juliana Lopoukhine, Frédéric Regard and Kerry-Jane Wallart (Bloomsbury, 2021). I have recently become interested in issues related to the environment, especially the forest, and published an article on Richard Powers's *The Overstory* in 2024 (" 'Earth thinking aloud': The Agency of Trees in *The Overstory* by Richard Powers. *L'Atelier* 15, no.2 (2024): 77–95. <https://ojs.parisnanterre.fr/index.php/latelier/article/view/632>). An article on ecological grief in forest fiction is forthcoming in *Ecokritike* (2026).

## 15.

**Rusha Biswas**

### **The Transhumance Gujjar of Kashmir: A Spatial Study of Conflicts in Mirza Waheed's *The Collaborator***

As a transhumant society, the Gujjars of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir in India, traditionally engage in the seasonal and cyclical migration from the higher altitudes of the Himalayas in the summer to the lower regions in the winter with their *rewads* (flocks) and domestic items. They constitute the third largest ethnic community in this union territory; however, most of them are now settled and have given up on the conventional mode of production and adapted to agriculture and small-scale business. This paper explores the predicament and politics of this erstwhile nomadic tribe in its attempt at settlement in a nondescript village adjacent to the LoC (the Line of Control), with particular reference to Mirza Waheed's *The Collaborator* (2011). The novel unfolds in this liminal, in-between space, charged with prolonged contestation and consternation. It is also embedded with innumerable unmarked graveyards that further complicate the lived experiences of this marginalised community. These conditions pose threats not only to their ecological background but also to the emerging economic stratification, thereby exposing serious challenges to the very process of sedentarisation. This paper considers it imperative to introduce spatial studies into the discussion of this community to recover the geography (and topography) of the region from a reductive reading that treats it as surplus, as an a priori set of inconsequential data, or as a mere backdrop. Instead, a more nuanced reading is attempted here, one in which the forest and its hideouts, the shadowy valley and its rivulet, the layout of the village and its neighbourhood, the carefully tended kitchen garden, and even the first concrete mosque, all saturated with sociological significance, become the loci of critical exploration. Thus, a phenomenological reading of geography, as proposed by Edward Relph, can shed light on the numerous ways in which places manifest themselves in our experiences or consciousness of the lived world. (Relph 1976, 7).

**Keywords:** Gujjar, Kashmir, Spatial Studies, Transhumance, Sedentarisation.

### **Bibliography**

Relph, Edward. 1976. *Place and Placelessness*. Pion Limited.

## **Bio**

Rusha Biswas is a PhD Candidate and UGC Senior Research Fellow at the Department of English, University of North Bengal, India. She obtained her M.A. in 2019 from the University of Calcutta and her B.A. in 2017 from Maulana Azad College, Kolkata. Her research interests are in geocriticism, Kashmir studies, and spatial studies.

## **16.**

**Giovanna Buonanno**

### **PANEL: (Re)imagining the Canon: Resistance, Rewritings and Empowerment**

#### **'Queen Lear' at the National Theatre: Tanika Gupta's *A Tupperware of Ashes* (2024)**

Rewritings of major works in the European literary canon have long been a feature of the work of Black and Asian British writers, who have turned to adaptation and revision to unveil "fissures in the supposedly solid foundations" of the original text (Thieme, 2001: 2). This paper will focus on Asian British drama, examining *A Tupperware of Ashes*, a recent play by Bengali British writer Tanika Gupta that premiered at the National Theatre in London in 2024. Gupta's acute awareness of the intricacies surrounding class, ethnicity, gender and religion forms the foundation of the play, which is loosely inspired by Shakespeare's *King Lear*. This production offers a distinctive British Asian perspective on the themes of colonial and postcolonial connections.

**Keywords:** Adaptation and Rewriting, British Asian Drama, Shakespeare, Tanika Gupta

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Schlote, Christiane & Giovanna Buonanno. "Introduction: Transnational Revision and Rewriting in Tanika Gupta's Theatre". *Journal of Contemporary Drama in English*, 10, no. 2 (2022): 261-265.

Thieme, John. Postcolonial Con-texts. *Writing Back to the Canon*. Continuum, 2001.

## **Bio**

Giovanna Buonanno is Associate Professor of English Literature at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. She is the author of the monograph *International Actresses on the Victorian Stage* (Modena 2002) and co-editor, among others, of *Remediating Imagination: Literatures and Cultures in English from the Renaissance to the Postcolonial* (Carocci 2016) and of a monographic issue on playwright Tanika Gupta (2022). She has published numerous journal articles and book chapters on intercultural drama, transnational Shakespeare, Black and Asian British literature and theatre, refugee writing, transnational women's writing.

17.

**Nadia Butt**

### **Conflicting Crossings in Contemporary Arab Migrant Literature by Diasporic Women Writers**

This paper sets out to investigate the ambivalence of multiple crossings involved in the process of migration as represented in contemporary Arab novels by women writers. My contention is that Arab women writers seek to capture territorial, national, cultural, social, religious, and 'racial' crossings in the frames of fiction to lay bare the challenges of migration for underage women, who struggle against their double marginalization – namely marginalization at home as simply women and discrimination abroad as 'Arab women'. To this end, the paper examines British Jordanian writer Fadia Faqir's Bildungsroman *My Name is Salma* (2007) and American Moroccan writer Laila Lalami's refugee novella *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2005). The main objective of the paper is to examine the outcome and impact of multiple crossings, however conflicting, on self and identity as the female protagonists undergo the experience of voluntary and involuntary migration. Whereas Faqir's novel demonstrates how the eponymous teenage protagonist Salma becomes Sal, Sally, and then Salma again as she crosses borders of her unnamed village (somewhere in the Levant) to come to England as an asylum seeker, Lalami's novella shows the cultural dislocation of another young teenager, Fetan, from Morocco to Spain after her perilous crossing of the Strait of Gibraltar on a small, overloaded boat. By focusing on the conflicting crossings of these women characters in two works of fiction, the paper seeks to shed ample light on the resistance and resilience of young Arab women, who refuse victimhood and exercise agency in their adopted homeland.

**Keywords:** multiple crossings; Arab migrant literature; diaspora; Fadia Faqir; Laila Lalami; self and identity.

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- Lalami, Laila. *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2005.

### **Bio**

Nadia Butt is Professor of Global Anglophone Literatures and Cultures at the Institute of English and American Studies at Goethe University in Frankfurt. Her research interests include Transcultural Theory and Literature, Travel Theory and Literature, Postcolonial Theory and Literature, especially South Asian, African, and Arab Anglophone Literatures. Recently, she has published a handbook on *The Anglophone Novel in the 21st Century: Cultural Contexts – Literary Development* (2023). She is currently completing her second monograph *The Travelling Imagination in Cross-Cultural Literatures*. Her most recent research has been published in international, peer-reviewed journals such as *The Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, *Studies in Travel Writing*, *The Journal of Transport History*, *Postcolonial Interventions*, *Mataw*, *The European Journal of Life Writing*, *The Journal of Victorian Culture*, *Caribbean Quarterly*, *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture*, and *Prose Studies*. Since

2023, she has been leading the *Forum of Global Anglophone Literatures and Cultures* together with her research assistant Michelle Stork.

18.

**Luigi Cazzato & Annarita Taronna**

**“Re-Reading the Question of Palestine through the Balfour Declaration and the Letters Written by Einstein and Other Outstanding Jewish Figures at the End of the Nakba”**

The question of Palestine, rooted in the legacies of nineteenth-century European imperialism and in the political transformations of the British Mandate, needs to be interpreted through perspectives that highlight its deep colonial dimensions and enduring power asymmetries, silenced by the mainstream media. The decolonial approach that we resort to along this contribution, allows us to examine both the material structures and the discursive devices that have contributed to shaping the political reality of the region. Within this framework, the 1917 Balfour Declaration stands as a foundational text whose legal-diplomatic rhetoric reveals the colonial matrix of power underlying the promise of a “national home for the Jewish people” formulated without consultation of the local Arab population.

In parallel, the letter that Albert Einstein sent in 1948 to the American Friends of the Fighters, along with another letter that later on in the same year was signed by 27 outstanding Jewish figures (among which Einstein and Ahrendt) and sent to the *New York Times*, offer a critical internal vantage point within the Jewish milieu of the time: a linguistic analysis of the document brings to light his use of an ethical-humanistic register, the deployment of markers of moral distance, and the construction of a reasoned denunciation of the violence perpetrated by certain Zionist militias.

Juxtaposing these texts allows us to illuminate, on the one hand, the institutional and performative function of language in the colonial processes of the British Mandate, and, on the other, the use of discursive strategies aimed at contesting nationalist escalation and articulating political alternatives. The interplay among history, language, and decolonial theory thus provides an interpretive lens through which we can understand how narratives produced at critical moments in the early twentieth century continue to shape representations and dynamics of the contemporary Palestinian conflict.

**Keywords:** Palestine, British imperialism, Zionism, coloniality, language and critical discourse analysis

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Aníbal Quijano, *Foundational essays on the coloniality of power*, 2024;

I. Pappé, *Dieci miti su Israele*, 2022.

**Bio**

Luigi C. Cazzato lives in Bari, where he works as a full professor at the University of Bari ALDO MORO, teaching English-language cultures and decoloniality. He coordinates the Communication Sciences course and the Master's degree in Journalism at the same university. His publications include: *Anglo-Southern Relations* (2011); *Sguardo inglese e Mediterraneo italiano* (2017); *Palestina fra Oriente e Occidente. Anglosfera, ferite coloniali, re-esistenza decoloniale* (2025).

Annarita Taronna is Associate Professor of English and Translation at the Department of Education, Psychology, Communication, University of Bari Aldo Moro. Her research interests include the role of gender in/and translation studies, cultural and postcolonial studies, the use of ELF in migration contexts, language mediation in intercultural contexts, digital English as a lingua franca in professional online communities. She has published widely on these topics in national and international journals and edited volumes.

## 19.

### Danica Čerče

#### **An Intersubjective Encounter as a Zone of Intimacy and Resentment in *River of Dreams* by Anita Heiss**

Australia's engagement with its colonial past was long shaped by denial and silence—an attitude that Charles Mills describes as “a white cognitive handicap” in acknowledging racial discrimination and systemic oppression (15). This sustained historical amnesia allowed institutionalised exclusion and brutality to endure well into the twentieth century. It was not until the growing prominence of Indigenous authorship across a broad range of artistic and literary forms, dismantling what Nicholas Birns refers to as the “sundry truisms of standard literary histories” (116), that the trauma of minoritised histories began to gain broader public recognition. Drawing on postcolonial and feminist theory, this article examines the historical novel *Bila Yarrudhanggalangdhuray (River of Dreams, 2021)* by Anita Heiss as a powerful intervention into Australia's colonial historiography. I argue that, through its emphasis on personal and collective memories and the inscription of subjugated knowledges, the novel reclaims narrative space for Indigenous agency and sovereignty. In addition to exposing the structural injustices of settler colonialism and reconfiguring Indigenous subjectivities, the novel also reimagines possibilities for ethical cross-cultural relationships.

**Keywords:** Australian Indigenous literature; settler colonialism; resistance; subjugated knowledges; cross-cultural relationality

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#### **Bio**

Danica Čerče is a Full Professor of Literatures in English, teaching at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Currently, she is Head of the English Department. Her research interests include Australian and American literatures, with the focus on Indigenous Australian prose and poetry,

Native and Black American drama and John Steinbeck's fiction. She is the author of three monograph publications, several book chapters, and a number of articles in Slovene and foreign academic journals. Čerče serves on the Editorial Board of *Coolabah*, *Steinbeck Review* and *Acta Neophilologica*. From 2019 to 2023, she was the President of the International Society of Steinbeck Scholars.

## 20.

**Simran Chadha**

### **The Origins of Conflict: A Postmodernist Study of the Punjab Crisis**

In this paper, I intend to explore the complex relationship between conflict and its representation in literature and the arts wherein I highlight these as strategic modes of postcolonial resistance that enable new understandings about conflict; understanding not grounded in transactional economic policy or crisis-ridden ethno-religious considerations only so as to enable the formation of inclusive national spaces rather than widen longstanding faultlines. For this I draw attention to the Punjab-crisis or the Khalistan question as it is usually referred to. Unfortunately, this conflict between the state of Punjab, located on the north-western region of the Indian subcontinent and the Gol has inevitably been treated like a regional conflict, and one that began in the eighties. Today, its globalized repercussions as also the continuing feeling of violated trust between the parties concerned cannot be ignored. It is for this reason that I turn to literature - a short-story narrative entitled "Blood Soaked Sky", written in 1993, a time when the people of the state lived under the constant shadow of ruthless and unrelentless violence, and a more recent bio-pic "Chamkila" (2024) which takes a fresh look, in hindsight, of this festering crisis.

Political conflict is usually narrated from the perspective of either the fundamentalists fashioning themselves as the voice of the people or the other hegemon, the state-funded media. With regard to the Punjab, as per both understandings any and every male between the ages 18-40 was a brainwashed terrorist/militant/traitor. The texts that I use here, give the lie to this universalist understanding. While both narratives contextualize the violence against the close-knit agriculture communities of rural Punjab, "Chamkila" does this by showing the meteoric rise of the lyricist by the same name (later referred to as the "Elvis of Punjab"). His lyrics bear testimony to the beating heart of the community and its contrapuntal stand regarding violence thereby negating the belief that the militancy was a grass-roots movement.

I offer here a post-modernist reading framed essentially by Walter Benjamin's theories of art in times of technological advancement and Hannah Arendt's concept of the banality of evil/violence. I compare this with the radical perspectives that creative narratives offer.

**Keywords:** militancy, hegemon, post/neocolonial, narrative-subversion, aftermath.

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Young, Robert. *Empire, Colony, Postcolony*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2015.

## Bio

Simran Chadha is an Associate Professor with Delhi University. Her research interests focus on contemporary south Asia, in literature and film. A few of her publications include "Refugees and Three Short Stories from Sri Lanka", published by Rodopi, Belgium; Not an island onto themselves but a part of the Main: *Women Voices from the Sri Lankan War*, published by Routledge, New Delhi and *Legendary Queens, Birds of Freedom and Everything in-between: Women Write the War Zone*, published by Speaking Tiger, New Delhi among others. She has designed curriculum for graduate courses on south Asia, literature, history, philosophy and politics and been a visiting scholar at the Valparaiso university, Illinois.

## 21.

### Sibendu Chakraborty

#### Reimagining Crisis: Magical Realism and Environmental Resistance in Alexis Wright's *Praiseworthy*

In the face of geopolitical changes and environmental degradation, human imagination rekindles hope to narrativise the 'crisis' that spans generations and continents. Alexis Wright's (b. 1950) work revises colonial historical narratives and challenges which can inscribe and represent such histories from below. The trauma of life in the bush at the hands of the prevailing totalitarian regime finds artistic and sympathetic portrayals in Wright's fictional world, in general, and in *Praiseworthy*, in particular. The red ochre haze above *Praiseworthy* is a reminder that we need to care for the land. This is especially important now, as people face major climate change events. By respecting the environment, humans can work together for a more sustainable future. This narrative and metaphorical take on the haze over *Praiseworthy* recalls an ancestral past that is still accessible through a totemic understanding of the land and its biotic and abiotic elements. The fractured sense of time inherent to Derridian 'hauntology' presages the unexpected emergence of unfulfilled futures, thereby prompting a reevaluation of the makeshift pastiche nature of postmodernity. This fiction rejects the Western approach to narration. Instead, it develops Indigenous orality as a technique, recentring the unique Aboriginal Knowledge System. The work uses allegory, satire, and Indigenous storytelling. The proposed paper exposes the effects of White colonisation and the struggle for Aboriginal sovereignty in Australia. It also looks to address climate change as an existential threat to First Peoples, showing how environmental harm undermines their ability to live in their traditional territories.

**Keywords:** narratives, crisis, climate, catastrophe, indigenous

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## Bio

Dr. Sibendu Chakraborty is working as an Assistant Professor (Department of English), Charuchandra College, Kolkata. Being awarded the Australian Studies Fellowship by the Australia India Council in 2012, he conducted his research at Monash University, Australian National University, University of Western Australia, UNSW, and Queensland University. His areas of interest include Indigenous Studies, Environmental Humanities, Performance Studies and Postcolonial theatre. He was awarded the prestigious Haskell grant to present his paper at Brown University in 2012. He presented a research paper titled "In search of Environmental Justice: Performing Postcolonial Ecocriticism in Wesley Enoch's and David Milroy's Aboriginal Theatre" at the EACLALS Triennial Conference held at Sorbonne Nouvelle University, Paris, 2023. He published an essay titled "Performing Trauma and 'Stolen Generation' Narratives in Jane Harrison's Stolen and Wesley Enoch and Mailman's *The Seven Stages of Grieving*" in a book titled *Global Literatures and Cultures of Modernity*, Routledge, 2025. He has coedited a book titled, *Theatre, Margins and Politics: An Introduction* published by Routledge in November 2024.

## 22.

### Anindita Chatterjee

#### **Singing the Fractures: Conflict, Dissonance, and 'Dvandva' in *Singing in the Dark***

*Singing in the Dark: A Global Anthology of Poetry Under Lockdown (2020)* transforms the Brechtian epigraph— "in the dark times / will there also be singing?"—into a radical proposition: where conflict is the very condition of song. Far from offering solace or resolution, the anthology stages poetry as an act of frictional defiance, where the human voice contends with silence, suffocation, and systemic collapse. This study conceptualizes conflict not as thematic residue but as ontological necessity: the darker the night, the more urgent the need to sing. The Covid-19 pandemic's widespread trauma and suffering, amplified by the media's portrayal, fuelled public fear, anxiety, depression and social isolation. Using the Indian philosophical lens the present paper would like to explore how *Singing in the Dark*, an anthology edited by K. Satchidanandan and Nishi Chawla (a compilation of 100 poems from poets across six continents, written in 20 languages published Penguin Random House India, 2020), offer an 'aesthetic archive' of the pandemic's psychological and structural disruptions. The poems bring out layered sense of strife amid isolation and uncertainty. Drawing on Realist Conflict Theory, Psychodynamic Dissonance, and the Indian philosophical lens of dvandva (duality), the present analysis reveals how pandemic poetry weaponizes opposition—class divides, biopolitical control, existential dread—into creative friction. The anthology does not resolve conflict; it preserves it as testimony, making singing about the dark a form of dvandvātīta (transcendence through witness). By offering catharsis without a closure *Singing in the Dark* posits that conflict is the oxygen of art in catastrophe—a fragile, furious breath against the void.

**Keywords:** conflict, Covid, dvanda, trauma, resilience

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### **Bio**

Anindita Chatterjee, (Phd) is Associate Professor and Head of the Department of English, Government General Degree College, Singur, West Bengal. Previously she was a faculty in Durgapur Government College. She did her Phd on "John Clare: Poetry of Madness" from Jadavpur University. She has completed two Minor Research Projects on *Representation of 'modern' India in the Fictions of Chetan Bhagat* (funded by UGC) and *Sari Story: Dressing the Indian Woman through History, 'Tracing the Origin, Growth and Evolution of the Traditional Indian Wear'* (funded by ICSSR). She has co-edited *Re-theorising the Indian Subcontinental Diaspora: Old and New Directions* (CSP, 2020) and *Covid-19 in India, Disease, Health and Culture* (Routledge, 2022). She has published book chapters in *Indian Feminist Ecocriticism* (Lexington Books, 2022), *Desertscape in the Global South and Beyond* (Routledge, 2023) *Modernist Transitions* (Bloomsbury, 2023) and articles in international journals of repute (*Textile- Cloth and Culture* by Taylor and Francis and *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* by Sage). She has guest edited an Issue of *Café Dissensus* on *(Re)storying Indian Handloom Saree Culture* (Issue 68: April 2023). Presently she is co-editing a book on "Discovering the city called Durgapur: Dwelling, Dreaming and Developing a Sustainable Urban Culture." Her areas of interest include Nineteenth Century British Literature, Gender Studies and Popular Culture. (<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1244-5544> )

## **23.**

### **Nilanjana Chatterjee**

#### **Can Naga Indigenous Conflicted History Hope Back?: A Reflection**

European colonial agents wrecked indigenous ecologies in America, Africa, Asia and Australia through the diffusionist myth of earth as *terra nullius*. The British colonial agents invaded and destroyed the ecologies of Naga peoples for almost one hundred years. The Battle of Khonoma (1879) and the Battle of Kohima (1944), although invisible in written historical records, have lived through cultural memory and oral traditions of the Naga survivors. Several forms of military and ideological subjugations were brought about by the British colonial agents to destroy Naga peoples, their ecologies, and their precolonial eco-centric value systems. The present study intends to initiate a meaningful discourse in the context of postcolonialism by reconstructing British colonial penetrations and ideological subjugations vis-à-vis precolonial 'staying alive' (Vandana Shiva) indigenous history of resistance and continuity. This study contextualizes the need to study Naga indigenous history in the context of world indigenous conflicted history. In so doing, it situates a postcolonial theoretical framework for 'reconstructing' (Eleke Boehmer) indigenous history with a commitment to restore Naga indigenous history. The study narrativizes the indigenous precolonial Naga ways of resilience frameworks as practised by the Naga people (at both individual and community levels) to resist and survive through the fiercest colonial violences (which include the Battle of Kohima during the Second World War) by undertaking a parallel reading of Naga literature and history. This study, thereby, seeks to trace an alternate indigenous history of hoping back in the

midst of colonial dystopia in order to take lessons of looking forward to the past when the future is uncertain.

**Keywords:** indigenous, history, Naga, reconstruction, literature, history

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### **Bio**

Nilanjana Chatterjee (Ph.D.) (<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0955-3480>) is Research Associate at Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. She is Associate Professor at the Postgraduate Department of English at Maulana Azad College (Kolkata, India). She is on the editorial board of the annual double-blind peer-reviewed journal *Parerga*, initiated by the PG Department of English at Maulana. Chatterjee completed her Doctoral thesis titled "House as Space in the Fiction of Contemporary Women Writers of Indian Subcontinental Diaspora" in 2016. She is the author of the monograph *Reading Jhumpa Lahiri: Women, Domesticity and the Indian American Diaspora* (Routledge 2022). She has co-edited *Covid-19 in India, Disease, Health and Culture* for Routledge 2023, and *Re-theorising the Indian Subcontinental Diaspora: Old and New Directions* for Cambridge Scholars Publishing (2021). She has published around 13 book chapters for national and international publishing houses which include Rawat Publications, Bloomsbury, Routledge and Rowman & Littlefield. Almost 18 articles of her have been published in journals which include SCOPUS indexed and UGC care listed journals such as *SAGE*, *Metacritic*, *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*. Presently she is co-editing a book titled "Discovering the City Called Durgapur: Dwelling, Dreaming and Developing a Sustainable Urban Culture."

## **24.**

### **Sayan Chattopadhyaya**

#### **Networked Futures and the Techno-Imperial Self: Reading Vauhini Vara's *The Immortal King Rao***

This paper examines *The Immortal King Rao* (2022) by Vauhini Vara as a critical exploration of the digital-computing and networking revolution of the late twentieth century and its ramifications for global power structures. Vara's novel poses a striking question: given that the post-World-War II era witnessed no major global war, dramatic reductions in poverty and infant mortality, expanding access to schooling, and the emergence of former 'third-world' nations such as India and China as

economic powerhouses, why did so many people at the turn of the twenty-first century feel that “the whole setup was bad for them”? Through a close reading of the novel’s portrayal of the networks of labour, capital, and data that underpin the neoliberal world order, I argue that these global circuits — via which the Dalit-protagonist migrates from a village in India to the apex of a US-based technology corporation — are structurally caught in a double bind. On the one hand, they promise empowerment, mobility and development; on the other, they spawn a techno-imperial regime which reproduces exploitation, dispossession and political regression. I trace how Vara envisions an alternative in the form of a politically-motivated vanguard — a group that seeks to break away from the corporate-technocratic order and trigger global change. Yet the text also suggests that such vanguardism may be incapable of upending the deeper “setup” that leads inexorably to a catastrophic end. Through my reading of Vara’s novel, I aim to engage with the current debates on neoliberalism, networked power, speculative global futures and the techno-imperial order, offering an intervention that links literature, data-capitalism and subjectivity.

**Keywords:** techno-imperialism; neoliberalism; network-capitalism; global subjectivity, Dalit literature

**Bibliography:** n.d.

### **Bio**

Sayan Chattopadhyay is Associate Professor of English in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur. He received his doctorate degree from the University of Cambridge in 2014. He served as the DAAD guest professor at the University of Heidelberg in 2022 and was the recipient of the 2010–2013 Smuts Cambridge International Scholarship. His research has been primarily in the area of Indian middle-class self-fashioning and its literary manifestations. He is the author of the book *Being English: Indian Middle Class and the Desire for Anglicization* (Routledge, 2022).

## **25.**

### **Sharada Chigurupati**

#### **The Chorus of the Forest: Agency and Resistance in Niyi Osundare's Poem, “Amazon Burning”**

This paper examines the representation of environmental catastrophe in the Amazon rainforest, a ‘sacred ecospace’ with intense repercussions for climate change and human sustainability on the planet, as depicted in the Nigerian poet Niyi Osundare's “Amazon Burning” (2021).

The poet advocates an ecocritical perspective, emphasizing the need to recognize and amplify the agency of the trees which echo the haunting warnings of a modern ‘Frankenstein's monster’ unleashed by thoughtless and visionless humans. By donning the dual roles of eco-conservationist and eco-activist, he centers the ecological crisis personified through the cries of the trees that resonate within the symbolic ‘universal parliament of trees’. The poem's innovative structure, which fuses elements of Greek theatre with African performance traditions, powerfully conveys the universal tragedy of ecological disaster and is interpreted in this study through the lens of ancient Indian Vedic Philosophy.

This study argues that Niyi Osundare's poem "Amazon Burning" essentially reimagines the human-nature relationship by ascribing agency and autonomy to non-human entities, particularly trees of the Amazon forest, thereby destabilizing anthropocentric paradigms and supporting a post-anthropocentric understanding of the environment. Situated within the theoretical frameworks of ecocriticism and posthumanism, as articulated by scholars such as Greg Garrard, Kate Rigby, Timothy Morton, Rob Nixon, Rosi Braidotti and Cary Wolfe, and scaffolded by the ecological vision of the Indian *Vedas*, this analysis challenges human exceptionalism and interrogates the complexities of ecological crises. By emphasizing and empathizing with the experiences, emotions and expressions of the trees, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the intersections between literature, culture, and environment. The study also focuses on the nuanced role of literature in nurturing an organic dialogue and debate on contemporary environmental crises.

**Keywords:** Nonhuman agency, Resistance, Ecocriticism, Posthumanism, Post-anthropocentrism, Greek tragedy, African performative poetry and Indian cultural ethos.

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### **Bio**

Sharada Chigurupati is a Professor in the Department of English Literature at The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India. Her research focuses on American Literature and Postcolonial Literature. She has published research papers in various journals and books, and co-edited two notable volumes: *American Literary Studies in Postmillennial India: Critical Perspectives* (Lexington, USA) and *Global Literatures and Cultures of Modernity: Critical Perspectives from India* (Routledge, USA).

## **26.**

### **Roberta Cimarosti**

#### **Environmental Crises Through Biology Stories, Eco-Narratives and Poems**

Two orders of things stand out from a humanist perspective, looking at the longstanding environmental crisis and wanting to make it the focus of one's English for Biology lectures. The first is the central role of naturalistic research, out of which, for instance, the matters of fact that it is habitat and ecosystems' destruction, incomparably more than climate change, to be the cause of the present environmental emergency; and that the non-human world is fighting back by transforming existing biomes and creating new ones, including natural carbon reservoirs able to

partly neutralize CO2. Somehow relatedly, the second order of things is the gamut of complementary story types that can help us understand the environment and realize how profoundly enmeshed we are with it. My paper would showcase the two storytelling types of *biology stories* and *eco-narratives*, lingering on their complementing differences and on the way a comprehensive environmental critical approach could further expand their positive impact: A) by relating bio- geological processes to socio-cultural and historical contexts that lay bare the nature of human intervention in single cases and on a larger scale, involving issues of environmental justice, such as territorial exploitation, indigenous vs settler cultures, and extinction; B) by exploring how the symbiotic relation between environment and humans emerges through materialising forms of literariness. I would conclude by comparing the biology- and environmental critique-informed language of bio- and eco-narratives to poems that also talk to the natural world, to see what the poetic medium offers to the ongoing fight.

**Keywords:** environment, environmental humanities, biology stories, eco-narratives, poems

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### **Bio**

Associate professor of English language, Translation and Linguistics at the University of Calabria. Research fields: World Englishes with focus on postcolonial cultures and literatures, Translation Studies, Critical Applied Linguistics, Cognitive Stylistics, Eco-poetics. Publications include articles on English language literacy and pedagogy in the Anglophone world, counter discourse analysis of J.M. Coetzee's essays and novels, Shakespeare's plays and postcolonial rewritings, the theme of English and identity in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Édouard Glissant's creolization and chaos theory, two monographs on Derek Walcott's poetics.

27.

### **Cédric Courtois**

**"[R]ising from the Dust of Wretchedness to an Envidable Status in a Strange Land": Precarious, Unlivable and In/visible Lives Elsewhere in Samuel Kóláwólé's "Adjustment of Status" (2023) and Gorette Kyomuhendo's *Promises* (2025)**

Both Nigerian writer Samuel Kóláwólé's short story "Adjustment of Status" and Ugandan writer Gorette Kyomuhendo's novel *Promises* foreground their protagonists' decisions to leave Nigeria and Uganda in response to multiple crises, including economic precarity. Both works bring to the fore what the narrator in "Adjustment of Status" calls "the allure of the West," reflecting a widespread African aspiration for mobility.

This paper offers an original comparative study of these recent works focusing on refugee mobility and the “precarious” (Butler) and “unlivable lives” (Butler and Worms) of those who succeed in crossing borders. Migration, in both texts, is not merely a spatial relocation but a lived condition of precarity, where subjects are rendered “vulnerable” (Ganteau) to “necropolitical” (Mbembe) border regimes.

While Kyumuhendo’s novel delves into the lives of Ugandan lovers separated by economic migration to the UK, showing how undocumented existence exposes migrants to exploitation and illness, Kóláwólé’s short story highlights the Nigerian migrant experience in the U.S.A., exposing the in/visibility of those who work in the shadows. In both cases, the pursuit and “adjustment” of status in a “strange land” — “from the dust of wretchedness to [what they believe is an] enviable status” — is intrinsically linked to vulnerability, exposure, survival, and lack of “recognition” (Renault). By juxtaposing Kyomuhendo’s panoramic narrative and Kóláwólé’s (satirical) vignette, this study sheds light on the aesthetic and political dimensions of the representation of (African) migration, revealing how contemporary fiction makes visible the intersections of conflict, crossing, and mobility.

**Keywords:** mobility, vulnerability, precarity, migration, recognition.

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### **Bio**

Cédric Courtois is Senior Lecturer in Anglophone studies at the University of Lille. He specialises in postcolonial literatures, more particularly Anglophone African literatures. His most recent publications include “‘I understand [...] closure is something I may never obtain’: (In)consolation in Yewande Omotoso’s *An Unusual Grief* (2022) and Onyi Nwabine’s *Someday, Maybe* (2022)” (2024) for *E-rea*, and “Caring about Plant Subjectivities and Life-Worlds in Niyi Osundare’s *Green: Sighs of Our Ailing Planet* (2021), Ben Okri’s *Every Leaf a Hallelujah* (2021) and *Tiger Work: Stories, Essays and Poems about Climate Change* (2023)” (2024) for *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism*.

28.

### **Lucio De Capitani**

#### **Beyond the Neoliberal Success Story: The Unruly Migration Narrative of Neel Mukherjee’s *A Life Apart***

Within neoliberal societies, xenophobic imaginings of migrants are often contrasted with a seemingly more benign model, best exemplified by the protagonist of the Broadway hit *Hamilton* (2015): like Alexander Hamilton in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s narrative, good immigrants “get the job done,” are independent and self-reliant, show ambition and entrepreneurial spirit, manage every disadvantage, and show endless dedication to work. This matches a specifically neoliberal scripting

of an ideal migrant type, validating the entrepreneurial individualism of neoliberalism and the logic that migrants can be meaningfully divided into desirable and undesirable ones. In this paper, after discussing the pitfalls of the 'neoliberal migration success story', I analyse Neel Mukherjee's first novel *A Life Apart* (2008) as an example of an 'unruly migration narrative', a sub-genre of migration fiction that polemically conjures histories of dispossession and failure that question the myth of the success story. Mukherjee's novel focuses on Ritwik, a young Indian man who leaves Kolkata on a two-year scholarship after his parents' death. I argue that Mukherjee uses Ritwik's search for freedom to test the limits of such a quest within the neoliberal world-system. Through Ritwik's tragic trajectory, he shows the extremely limited range of freedoms this system offers—ironically through a character that, stubbornly trying to escape constraints, constantly strives towards more freedom.

**Keywords:** neoliberalism, migration literature, freedom, Neel Mukherjee, *A Life Apart*.

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### **Bio**

Lucio De Capitani is a tenure-track researcher at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. His research interests include Anglophone, colonial, postcolonial, and Indigenous literatures (particularly the work of Robert Louis Stevenson, Amitav Ghosh, Anita Desai, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Cherie Dimaline), theories of world literature, connections between anthropology and literary studies, as well as ecocriticism and speculative fiction, with a focus on cli-fi, solarpunk, abolitionist, utopian, and dystopian imaginaries. He has co-edited the collection *Venice and the Anthropocene. An Ecocritical Guide* (2022, wetlands) and published *Ethnographic Narratives as World Literature. Uneven Entanglements in European and South Asian Writing* (2023, Palgrave).

## **29.**

### **Basuli Deb**

#### **Crossings and Crises: The Indian Ocean Slave Trade and Asian Expulsion from Africa in *Migritude***

Amidst today's renewed focus on borders, this paper turns to another migration history--of the Indian Ocean slave trade, foundational to poet and performance artist Shailja Patel's *Migritude*. The British indentured Patel's grandparents' generation and brought them from India to build the railroads in Kenya which remained a British colony till 1963. This paper draws on Dilip Menon's

concept of the paracolonial that moves away from the Eurocentric triad of the pre-colonial, colonial and the post-colonial to examine *Migritude* as an expression of the reverse movement of Afro-Asian local cultures across the oceans to the global north as art forms for political intervention from the global south.

Poetic memoir, political history, and spoken-word theatre, *Migritude* weaves together family history, reportage, and monologues that unfold hidden histories of women's lives through Patel's trousseau of saris—an attire worn by women of the Indian subcontinent. As the central metaphor, the sari binds histories, continents, and families across three cross-continental migrations—the early 20th century migration of South Asian indentured labor to East Africa, the expulsion of East African Indians from the 1970s onwards under Ugandan president Idi Amin; and Patel's own emigration out of Kenya—to the UK and, eventually, to the US. In *Migritude* the fear of Asian expulsion remains central to an understanding of the limitations of an Afro-Asian common-front in the wake of an incomplete process of decolonization despite the 1955 Bandung Conference around Afro-Asian political and economic cooperation.

**Keywords:** Migration, Indian Ocean, British Empire, Indenture, Afro-Asians

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### **Bio**

Basuli Deb is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies within the School of Advanced Study, University of London, and was recently a Professorial Research Associate at SOAS School of Law, Gender and Media. Prior to that, she was a Visiting Scholar at Columbia's Institute for Comparative Literature & Society and Institute for the Study of Human Rights, and a Global Scholar at the Institute for Research on Women at Rutgers. She is the author of *Transnational Feminist Perspectives on Terror in Literature and Culture*, and co-editor of four special issues and anthologies, including *Indigenous Feminisms Across the World* and *Transnational Inquiries*. Both her current monograph projects are attempts at rapprochement in the wake of empire—one between Indigeneity and transmigration and another between climate and contagion. Deb is a steering committee member of the international editorial collective Feminist Publishing Futures, and teaches/mentors undergraduate and graduate students.

Paola Della Valle

**PANEL: Multiple Crises in Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific: The Legacy of Western Imperialism**

**Sea-level Rise in the Pacific: Migration, Adaptation and Geopolitical Reflections in Jeff Murray's novel *Melt***

Jeff Murray's debut cli-fi novel *Melt* (2019) depicts the predicament of people living in a fictional low-lying island in the Pacific Ocean due to rapid sea-level rise caused by anthropogenically-induced temperature increase. While portraying life in an imaginative future (precisely in 2048), the novel also alludes to contemporary events and places in the Pacific, exploring the existential crisis of climate-afflicted refugees and the possibility of adaptation to the changing natural and geopolitical background. New Zealand is placed by Murray at the centre of the ecological turmoil, as it becomes the gateway to survival and a new possible home but also a site of conflict and negotiations, which shows the unequal neocolonial condition of migrants in a state of emergency. Meanwhile three powerful nations are in a race to settle on the melting continent of Antarctica: China, India and the United States. In *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*, Lawrence Buell (2005) argues that the environmental crisis is broadly a cultural issue, not the property of a single discipline, a view that is also supported by Ghosh in *The Great Derangement* (2018), where he maintains that climate change is a crisis of culture and imagination. The down-to-earth scenario offered by Murray, a first-time novelist with a professional background in strategy policy, represents an imaginative effort: an encounter between the genre of fiction and policy making (Murray & Maufort 2021). His pragmatic approach makes *Melt* a novel that prompts a reflection on the potentiality of narrative to inspire action-taking by policy-makers.

**Keywords:** Jeff Murray, climate change, sea-level rise, cli-fiction, New Zealand literature.

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**Bio**

Paola Della Valle is associate professor at the University of Turin. She specializes in New Zealand and Pacific literature, postcolonial/decolonial and gender studies, environmental humanities and drama. Her articles appeared in *Altre Modernità*, *Anglistica Pisana*, *Le Simplegadi*, *Lingue e Linguaggi*, *Loxias*, *NZSA Bulletin of New Zealand Studies*, *RiCognizioni*, *Semicerchio*, *Textus*, *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* and *Tolomeo*. She has published the monographs *From Silence to Voice: The Rise of Maori Literature* (Auckland, 2010), *Stevenson nel Pacifico: Una lettura*

*postcoloniale* (Roma, 2013) and *Priestley e il tempo, il tempo di Priestley* (Torino 2016). She has recently contributed to the volumes *Trees in Literatures and the Arts: HumanArboreal Perspectives in the Anthropocene* (Lanham, US, 2021), *The Bloomsbury Handbook to Ageing in Contemporary Literature and Film* (London & NY, 2023), *Always Connect: Transdisciplinarity and Intercultural Contact in Literary Discourse* (Göttingen, 2024) and *Reframing Souths. Ecological Perspectives on the South in Literature, Film, and New Media* (2025).

## 31.

**Nandini Dhar**

### **Speculative Histories and Contemporary Literary Archives of Indenture: Debarati Mukhopadhyay's *Narach* and the Vernacular Conflict Aesthetics**

Debarati Mukhopadhyay's Bengali historical novel *Narach* (2020) (translated into English as *Chronicles of Lost Daughters*) represents a failed rebellion of the indentured labourers at the Calcutta depot, as they are about to embark the ship that would take them to the sugar colonies in Indian Ocean islands and Caribbean, after the abolition of slavery in 1834. The mutiny occurs over a rather straightforward reason -- the "emigrants'" refusal to sign the indenture agreement. Arguably, no historical records of such a rebellion exist in the archives.

This paper argues, moving beyond issues of "historical accuracy" in literary narratives, the novel reinforces the importance of speculative histories and preceding fictional-imaginative archives to reconstruct a history of subaltern resistance within the "semi-forced" (Bahadur 2013) transoceanic labour migration that have been almost completely erased from both colonial and Indian histories (Bharadwaj and Misrahi-Barak 2022). For example, the novel deploys the tropes developed in earlier Indian indenture novels, most notably Amitav Ghosh's novel *Sea of Poppies*, focusing specifically on the instance of the ship mutiny, thus exposing a deeper intertextual connections between the Anglophone and vernacular literary cultures in South Asia (Dhar 2017; Forter 2019). In doing so, the novel formulates a bottom-up vernacular aesthetics which stands in conflict with the top-down corporeal aesthetics of capital's forced and semi-forced mobility of labouring bodies. Such representational confrontations, then, also reinforce within Mukhopadhyay's novel the "choice" versus "force" debate that already informs much of the conversations on the system of post-slavery indenture and the attendant traffic in human bodies (Bates 2017). Ultimately, the mutiny inscribes into the novel a labouring subjectivity that not only refuses to be accommodated into liberal discourses of "choice" but also reveals the contradictions inherent within liberalism's notions of subjecthood.

**Keywords:** Indenture; Semi-forced migration; South Asian Anglophone novel; vernacular literary cultures; Aesthetics of Mutinies.

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### **Bio**

Nandini Dhar is Professor of Literature, Gender Studies and Creative Writing in the Department of Language and Literature at Adamas University, Kolkata, India. Focusing on legacies of forced migrations of slavery and indenture, Nandini's work focuses on contemporary historical novels which re-constitute such histories, paying attention to the intersections between literary forms, neoliberal memory complexes and national histories. Her essays have been published in *ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, *The Comparatist*, *a/b:Auto/Biography Studies*, *Gender, Place & Culture* and other edited volumes. She is the editor of *Contemporary Gender Formations in India: In Between Conformity, Dissent and Affect* (Routledge, 2024). Nandini is also a bi-lingual poet who writes in English and her native tongue Bengali, and between these two languages, has authored nine volumes of poems.

## **32.**

### **Sarah Dimick**

#### **The Unhoused Poem**

Building on research conducted at the International Network of Street Papers in Glasgow as well as multiple South African libraries, this paper positions street papers—newspapers and magazines written or sold by unhoused residents of a city—as an archive of situated environmental knowledge. Focusing on Johannesburg's *Homeless Talk* as a case study, I argue that poems penned by unhoused writers in South Africa during the 1990s highlight the polycrisis of unhousing and climate change. Unhousing must be understood environmentally as well as demographically, as an experience that is perhaps best read through the lens of thermal insecurity. As they navigate the weather of Johannesburg, the writers of *Homeless Talk* portray a specific subset of the environmentalism of the poor: the environmentalism of the unhoused.

Moreover, the poetry published in *Homeless Talk* inverts the genre of the country house poem, emphasizing not abundance and security and hospitality but the lack of these virtues. Writing against a genre designed to praise the estates and property of the British empire, the poems in *Homeless Talk* call houses into being only to emphasize their absence. In doing so, they invent a counter genre, what I call the unhoused poem. In these unhoused poems, the degradations and injustices of surviving on the pavement of a newly liberated South Africa are laid bare. Working at the intersection of literary, urban, and environmental studies, this paper charts the imagined communities emerging among the unhoused of Johannesburg as the climate shifts and precarity sharpens.

**Keywords:** Unhousing, climate change, poetry, Johannesburg, urban studies.

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## Bio

Sarah Dimick is an Assistant Professor of English at Northwestern University, jointly appointed in English and the Environmental Policy & Culture Program. Her research, based in Anglophone literatures of the 20th and 21st centuries, focuses on literary portrayals of climate change and environmental justice. Her first book, *Unseasonable: Climate Change in Global Literatures*, was published by Columbia University Press in 2024. She co-edits the University of Virginia Press's Under the Sign of Nature series.

## 33.

### Alessandra Di Maio

#### **Mediterranean Slavery, Migration, and Black Sanctity: St. Benedict of Palermo**

The incessant arrival of numerous young Africans migrating to Europe through the so-called Central Mediterranean Route, of which Sicily is the main point of arrival, reminds us that Italy – and particularly its largest island, Sicily – has been, since antiquity, a crucial site of the African diaspora. This compels us to reflect on Italy's – and Europe's – cultural identity, and to question the traditional narrative of its ethnic and racial roots. Moreover, today's Afro-Mediterranean migrations prompt us to examine the various configurations of the African diaspora over the centuries, as well as the continuities and ruptures between past and present, slavery and migration. The figure of Benedict the Moor, born in 1524 in Sicily to enslaved African parents and recognized as the first Black saint canonized by the Roman Catholic Church, together with his traditional iconography and its interpretations in contemporary art, can serve as an exemplary guide in this exploration. This paper aims to briefly present the figure and life of Benedict, how he has been represented by the dominant national and catholic historical narratives over the centuries, and how he has been reinterpreted by contemporary visual artists such as Omar Victor Diop, Igor Scalisi Palminteri, and Nicola Lo Calzo.

**Keywords:** St. Benedict the Moor; Black Sanctity; Mediterranean slavery; Afro-Mediterranean Migrations; Black Portraiture.

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## **Bio**

Alessandra Di Maio is a Professor of English at the University of Palermo, Italy. A scholar of Migration, Africana, and Postcolonial Studies, she has been awarded fellowships by the Fulbright Commission, the Mellon and the MacArthur Foundations, the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University, and the FIAS/Iméra Institute (Marie Curie Action) at the University of Aix-Marseille. Among her publications *Tutuola at the University: The Italian Voice of a Yoruba Ancestor* (2000), *An African Renaissance* (ed. 2006), *Wor(l)ds in Progress: A Study of Contemporary Migrant Writings* (2008), *La letteratura nigeriana in lingua inglese* (2020), and *Black Italia: Migrazioni, narrazioni e immaginari afromediterranei* (2025). She has translated into Italian Nigerian Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, with whom she has curated the poetry/photo anthology *Migrazioni/Migrations* (2016) and guest edited *Transition* 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special Issue "The Black in the Mediterranean Blue" (vol. 132, 2021).

## **34.**

**Alessandra Di Pietro**

**PANEL: (Re)imagining the Canon: Resistance, Rewritings and Empowerment**

**(Re)Writing Afro-Caribbean Cosmologies within Contemporary Black British Literature: The Literary Case of Jacqueline Crooks' *Fire Rush***

*Fire Rush* (2023) by Jacqueline Crooks tells the story of Yamaye, a Jamaican woman who lives in England during the sub reggae sound revolution of the 1970s/1980s. Her life changes when she moves back to Jamaica. The presentation analyses Yamaye's voyage as a rewriting of Afro-Caribbean cosmologies within contemporary black British literature. The narrative is enriched by cosmological references related to the Yoruba deity of water, Yemaya. By using the "Ifá Paradigm" developed by Bess Montgomery, this presentation identifies the Afro-Caribbean symbols present in *Fire Rush* to demonstrate how they are used to deconstruct the protagonist's identity through her journey to Jamaica. This migration of return becomes a moment of decolonisation and of historical/spiritual retribution. Crook's novel rewrites Yemaya's divinity within the narrative, expanding the canon of contemporary black British literature through the inclusion of Afro-Caribbean cosmologies.

**Keywords:** Black British Literature; Jamaican Literature; Afro-Caribbean religions; Yoruba religion; decolonial studies.

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### **Bio**

Alessandra Di Pietro received her doctorate from the University of Bern, Switzerland, for her thesis on Contemporary Postcolonial Literatures as World Literatures: An Analysis of World-Making Narratives of Resistance, which will be published as a monograph by Palgrave Macmillan. She recently started a second PhD at the University “G. d’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara, Italy, which looks at the representations of African cosmologies in contemporary African and Caribbean Literatures. Her research interests include postcolonial and decolonial studies, feminist theory and queer studies. She has attended various international conferences and her articles have appeared in a number of peer-reviewed journals and edited collections. She is a member of the research group L&GEND: Literature and Gender Identity, which is funded by the University “G. d’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara.

## **35.**

**Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru**

### **“I ragazzi migranti”: Rethinking Kindness to Refugees and the Environment in Amitav Ghosh’s *Gun Island***

Amitav Ghosh’s work has significantly turned towards environmental concerns, advocating a deep ecology of respect towards human and non-human beings alike. This also implies manifest disapproval of hegemonic attitudes that have traditionally othered vast categories of non-western people. His 2019 novel *Gun Island* deconstructs traditional Eurocentric colonial mentalities through repositioning the city of Venice – one of the most representative strongholds of European culture and of Eurocentrism – in a triangular relationship with the Sundarbans (repositories of a different wisdom and spirituality, in symbiosis with nature) and the Californian west coast (where kindness towards the environment is rediscovered after centuries of capitalist exploitation of nature). Ghosh’s contention with the eco-destructive effects of colonial capitalism is expanded in his 2021 essay-book *The Nutmeg’s Curse*, in which a proto-global colonial machine replicates similar mechanisms of Eurocentric terraforming and violence with inhabitants of the Banda islands and Native American tribes of North American plains.

I will read Ghosh’s novel *Gun Island* through the lens of Arne Naess’s concept of deep ecology, positioned in a dialogue with Ghosh’s commitment to an ecology of the environment and inter-human relations, as well as in the light of Greta Gaard’s and Robin Wall Kimmerer’s analysis of environment-friendly cultures that see no borders between human societies and nature. I will argue that, through the South Asian immigrants (“i ragazzi migranti”), who have become crucial to maintaining an image of Venice sold to tourists as “authentic”, Ghosh invites a reconsideration of Eurocentric cultural tradition in a broader socio-cultural and ecological perspective.

**Keywords:** colonial capitalism, deep ecology, ecofiction, migration, terraforming.

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## **Bio**

Maria-Sabina Draga Alexandru is Associate Professor of postcolonialism and American Studies at the University of Bucharest. Her research interests include: ecocritical perspectives on global decolonial writing, ethnic American literatures, minority cultures in the media, postcolonialism and postcommunism, gender studies. She has published articles in journals such as *Comparative Literature Studies*, *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, *Perspectives*, *The European Journal of American Culture* and has authored and co-edited books, notably: *The Postmodern Condition: Towards an Aesthetic of Cultural Identities* (University of Bucharest Press, 2003); *Between History and Personal Narrative: East-European Women's Stories of Transnational Relocation* (co-edited; LIT Verlag, 2013); *Performance and Performativity in Contemporary Indian Fiction in English* (Brill Rodopi, 2015); *Women's Imaginary Cooking and Appetites Across Cultures* (co-edited, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2025). She is working on a book on private ecologies of the mind in contemporary women's writing and she is part of a team project on Indian Ocean literatures.

## **36.**

### **Sam Durrant**

#### **Disenclosing the Novel: Mahasweta Devi's *Pterodactyl*, Puran Sahay, and Pirtha (1995) and Eka Kurniawan's *ManTiger* (2015)**

Achille Mbembe has argued that decolonisation is a project of disenclosure that dismantles the identitarian structures that divide humans from one another and from the nonhuman world in order to promote a new planetary sense of solidarity and community. This paper argues that the realist novel, as a technology of modernity, is a form of enclosure. It looks at two novels that must disenclose their own realist structures in order to imagine planetary justice. In Devi's novel (la) a journalist visiting a starving tribal community encounters a dying pterodactyl who seems to be the community's ancestor. In *ManTiger* a young man inherits an ancestral female tiger-spirit and bites through the neck of a philandering patriarch. Both narratives begin as forms of social realism that are then disenclosed by the appearance of nonhuman ancestors. In novelistic terms, these figures are unhomely precisely because they expose the violence of the homely, the history of property which the realist novel, with important exceptions, has served to naturalise. In philosophical terms, these creaturely ancestors return to us as indexes of a more than human justice that I hope to relate to Walter Benjamin's conception of divine violence. While Devi's pterodactyl is as nonviolent as Kurniawan's tiger is violent, the appearance of both can be read as forms of revolutionary counterviolence that critique the foundational violence of modernity and the nation state by breaking the frame of the novel itself.

**Keywords:** Disenclosure, novel, planetary, animism, revolutionary violence

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## Bio

Sam Durrant is Associate Professor of Postcolonial Literature and Critical Theory at the University of Leeds. He is currently writing a book entitled *Planetary Becomings: Animism, Mimesis and the Disenclosure of Identity*.

## 37.

### Jasrah Farooq, Narendra Kumar

#### Coloniality of Gender: Women of Colour in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Dottie*

The 2021 Nobel Prize winner in literature, British novelist of Swahili Arab ancestry Abdulrazak Gurnah, offers incisive explorations of socio-cultural, political and economic hegemonic mechanisms and oppressions arising out of structural coloniality of power in colonial and diaspora spaces. This paper examines his 1990 novel, *Dottie*, which pioneers an early exploration of the intersectional oppression of women of colour in anti-immigrant post-WWII Britain. In the British diaspora space, structurally entangled hegemonies – built around the axes of race, gender, and poverty, and operating through cultural coloniality and economic exploitation – as instruments of slow-structural violence, function as sources of socio-economic trauma. "Coloniality of gender" (Lugones 2008), which is theorised at the intersection of "coloniality of power" (Quijano 2024) and "intersectionality" (Crenshaw 1989), remains pivotal in uncovering the instrumentality of the colonial/modern gender system in subjecting – both women and men of colour – and their socio-economic predicament, as depicted in Gurnah's *Dottie* ([1990] 2021). The paper analyses in *Dottie* – through Bilkisu and her daughter, Dottie (the central character) – coloniality of gender built around control and domination of subjectivity/intersubjectivity, sex, labour, their resources and products. The conclusion proclaims that a negotiatory engagement with inherited trauma and inevitable hostility can serve as a pathway for self-actualisation.

**Keywords:** *Dottie*, Gurnah, coloniality, gender, racism.

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## Bio

Jasrah Farooq is a PhD research scholar at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the LNM Institute of Information Technology, Jaipur. She finished her Master's in English from Central University of Kashmir, Ganderbal, with double gold medals. She is currently working on the fiction of Abdulrazak Gurnah to explore the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being occupying colonial and neocolonial spaces.

Narendra Kumar (PhD) is an Associate Professor of English at the LNM Institute of Information Technology, Jaipur. He worked on the fiction of Caribbean British author Caryl Phillips for his PhD. His research interests include Postcolonial Literature, Ethnic Conflict, and South Asian Literature. He has completed a major research project for the Indian Council for Social Science Research, New Delhi, on Ethnic Conflict and the Literature of the Indian Subcontinent.

## 38.

### Sophie Fennelly

#### **'Always Stressed and Stressing Me' (*Losing the Plot*): Migrant Motherhood, Cross-Cultural Upbringing and An Absence of An Ethics of Care in the Hostile Environment**

Maya Goodfellow (2019) argues that although hostile environment policy as we know it was not formally introduced until 2012, and was crystallised in policy in 2013, the concept of hostile environments summarises a historical attitude to those racialised as other in the UK that predates the policy itself by decades. *Losing the Plot* (2022), by Derek Owusu engages with ideas of identity, belonging and nationhood as a son, Kwesi, attempts to map the experience of his mother's migration to the UK from Ghana in the late 1980s. In this paper, I will argue that *Losing the Plot* is a hostile environment novel that highlights the mental and emotional crises that occur when migrating to a hostile society wherein government policy has dismantled systems that could support an ethics of care (Held, 2006) under the guise of tightening migration policy. Owusu depicts his characters as trapped in a constant fight for survival that manufactures a sense of perpetual crisis. My research explores the subsequent impacts of this perpetual crisis, particularly on familial structures of care and intergenerational migrant relationships. I argue that the hostile environment inverts 'characteristic [mother-child] intimacy and interdependence' (Bowden, 1997) to a crisis of emotional co-dependency in which Kwesi absorbs his mother's emotional disorientation and inverts familial dynamics of care by trying to care for his mother as a child, while simultaneously not receiving the care he himself needs, in this case, a secure sense of his mother's love for him.

**Keywords:** Hostile environment, Migrant Motherhood, Mental Health, Ethics of Care

### Bibliography

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Held, Virginia. *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Owusu, Derek. *Losing the Plot*. Canongate, 2022.

## Bio

Sophie Fennelly is a doctoral researcher in the School of English at the University of Leeds supervised by Professor John McLeod and Professor Clare Barker. Her PhD is titled 'Mental health in the hostile

environment: Contemporary Black British narratives of mental illness' and explores contemporary Black British literary and cultural depictions of mental health. Her research is fully funded by the School of English Gatenby Scholarship. Her wider research interests include contemporary postcolonial literature, border studies, and the medical humanities. She holds an MA in Postcolonial Literary and Cultural Studies, also from the University of Leeds.

39.

**Alberto Fernández Carbajal**

**The Trans\*versal Aesthetics of the Syrian Diaspora in Zeyn Joukhadar's *The Thirty Names of Night***

This paper will explore *The Thirty Names of Night* (2020), the second novel by Syrian-American trans and non-binary writer Zeyn Joukhadar (he/him/his; they/them/theirs), through the notion of trans\*versality, which shall be formulated in dialogue with Félix Guattari (2015), Hwa Yol Jung (2011), Rosi Braidotti (2010), and Abraham Weill (2017). The paper will undertake an examination of Joukhadar's novel that will demonstrate how his aesthetic sensibility breaks through manmade physical and ideological borders by calling attention to the historical and cultural contingency of national, cultural, gender, religious, and sexual identities. Through various close readings of the novel, it will be suggested *The Thirty Names of Night* deploys names, interwoven temporalities, art, and various religiosities, to vindicate the experiences of ethnic, gender, and sexual minorities often discriminated against by Western exceptionalism, racism, as well as cisheteronormative religious interpretation. In the face of societal ethno-religious prescription, the paper will argue Joukhadar's novel offers a peculiar blend of Sufism, speculative ornithology, and folk religion to empower sexual and gender minorities in a hostile world. The trans\*versal theoretical framework will be of particular use to postcolonial and decolonial scholars searching for a means of de-essentialising human identities and of forging coalitions across identity lines.

**Keywords:** Syrian, Arab, literature, trans, queer, transversality.

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**Bio**

Dr Alberto Fernández Carbajal (they/them) (alberto.fernandez-carbajal@roehampton.ac.uk) is Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader of the BA English Literature at the University of Roehampton (London, UK). They are the author of two monographs: *Compromise and Resistance in Postcolonial Writing: E. M. Forster's Legacy* (Palgrave, 2014) and *Queer Muslim Diasporas in Contemporary Literature and Film* (MUP, 2019). Their third monograph, on trans\*versality in contemporary global

literatures, has been recently contracted with Routledge. They are the exiting Vice-Chair of the Postcolonial Studies Association (UK).

40.

**Marta Ferrero**

**Narrating Borders and Belonging: Gender, Migration, and Resistance in *Forbidden Zones* and *La linea del colore***

The paper offers a critical reflection on the themes of borders, migration, and violence using an intersectional, decolonial and non-Eurocentric approach by comparing *Forbidden Zones*, a collection of short stories by Aydin Mehmet Ali, and *La linea del colore* by Igiaba Scego. The first work, authored by a writer of Cypriot origin, presents narratives of various individuals living in a Cyprus marked by barriers, as well as in the diaspora, shaped by the encounter or clash between cultures, religions, and political systems. These characters, particularly women, carry the burden of conflict on their bodies and in their stories, regardless of where they find themselves. The novel by Igiaba Scego, an Italian author of Somali descent, likewise highlights the challenges faced by people along the Mediterranean migration route. Binti, a young Somali woman attempting to reach Europe, embodies the journeys of hope, unfulfilled promises, and shattered dreams. Her story exposes the issue of gender-based violence, which many women endure along the route and which often brings their journeys to an abrupt end. Nevertheless, all the characters are endowed with agency: they assert their right to dream, their right to mobility, and their right to remain.

The analysis of the two works shows that the capacity for storytelling and the preservation of narratives can meaningfully engage with the challenges posed by contemporary conflicts and social and political crises, as it allows for the emergence of non-dominant perspectives and helps create a space in which alternative and previously unimagined futures can be envisioned.

**Keywords:** borders, gender, migration, violence, postcolonial narratives.

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**Bio**

Marta Ferrero graduated at the University of Turin with a degree in Italian Literature, Philology, and Linguistics, presenting a thesis on postcolonial Italian literature, specifically focusing on the works of Igiaba Scego. She completed a postgraduate master's degree in Religious Studies and Intercultural Mediation within the Department of Cultures, Politics, and Society at the University of Turin. She is now researching the educational implications of Italian postcolonial literature and leading reading

groups at cultural centres in the city of Turin. Her research interests include postcolonial Italian and comparative women's writing, as well as the use of literature in intercultural and interreligious education.

41.

**Megan E. Fourqurean**

**Imperial Appetites: Consumption, Colonialism and the Limits of Imagination in C Pam Zhang's *Land of Milk and Honey***

In its final chapters, C Pam Zhang's *Land of Milk and Honey* (2023) pivots from critiquing capitalist consumption to envisioning planetary rescue via billionaire-funded climate technology. Though one cannot help but feel dissatisfied with this ending, I argue that the novel provocatively explores the intersection of colonialism and excess while simultaneously demonstrating the limitations of a futurist imagination curtailed by existing power structures.

Set in a postapocalyptic future in which smog envelopes the planet and eradicates nearly all agriculture, *Land of Milk and Honey* re-enacts imperialism's consumptive mode through its characters' sensuous devouring of both food and wealth. Drawing from colonial culinary histories in which entire populations were subjugated to satisfy the metropole's cravings, I argue that Zhang's novel critiques the imperial project both spatially and temporally. As geopolitical borders harden amidst climate collapse and populism restricts palates to 'national' cuisines, cosmopolitan elites occupy a mountaintop in Italy where they replicate colonial consumption by gorging themselves on the culinary riches produced by private 'de-extinction' research that renders extinct species vulnerable to their appetites.

In depicting gastronomic exclusion and excess, *Land of Milk and Honey* frames racialised citizenship within colonialism's voracious appetite for human and animal lives. Moreover, its ending, in which a failed mission to Mars prompts fearful billionaires to return their attention to Earth, pushes us to question how and why futurist imaginaries can falter before prevailing nationalist, racial and colonial logics. Where indeed might the land of milk and honey lie, and how might we imagine its geography?

**Keywords:** colonialism, consumption, futurism, climate, speculative fiction

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**Bio**

Megan E. Fourqurean is Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Liverpool and a LAHRI Postdoctoral Visiting Fellow at the University of Leeds. Her current project explores queer animist approaches to climate crisis in contemporary African and Black diasporic speculative fiction. Her interests broadly include queer theory, postcolonial ecocriticism, and religious studies, with

emerging interests in diasporic Chinese and Taiwanese environmental speculative and science fiction.

42.

**Francesca Furlan**

### **Becoming with Mice: Rethinking Coming-of-Age through Posthuman Kinship**

This paper reads Yaa Gyasi's *Transcendent Kingdom* (2021) through the lens of Posthuman Theory, proposing that, within the novel, the rigid binaries that define the diasporic subject's life, and complicate her subject formation, are unsettled by, and overcome through, multispecies connections. Gifty, a Ghanaian American PhD student in neuroscience, grows up divided between her Pentecostal faith and scientific rationalism, blackness and whiteness, belonging and unbelonging. It is only in her encounters with nonhuman animals in the laboratory that Gifty is finally able to find a language for negotiating these divides. Drawing on Rosi Braidotti's work on Posthuman Theory and Donna Haraway's concept of "companion species" (2008), I will argue that Gifty's relationship to the laboratory mice is central in allowing the protagonist to reimagine the transcendence of her religious youth not as the impossible journey to an otherworldly plane, but as a position of immanent relationality. *Transcendent Kingdom* proposes a way out of the impossible resolution through compromise demanded by classical coming-of-age narratives, by showing how the recognition of kinship across human and nonhuman boundaries may be a way to create new communities of care. The novel's final notion of immanent relationality calls into question the oppositions of religion and science, blackness and whiteness, American and Other, by offering the humble hope of connection across species as a way to reimagine what it means to come of age in times of crisis.

**Keywords:** coming-of-age narratives, posthumanism, companion species, multispecies kinship, transcendence

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### **Bio**

Francesca Furlan is a PhD candidate in English and Postcolonial Literature at the University of Padua, where her project is funded by the Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies' *Transtext* program. Supervised by Annalisa Oboe and Anna Scacchi, her research explores contemporary African diaspora coming-of-age narratives, focusing on the interaction of processes of formation and transculturation. In 2025 she was a visiting researcher at the University of Leeds under the supervision of Professor John McLeod, working on kinship in diasporic families.

43.

**Anisha Gamblin**

**Alternate Stories, Alternate Endings in Alexis Wright's *The Swan Book* (2013)**

Set against a speculative, eco-dystopian world of climate refugees, Indigenous Australian author Alexis Wright's *The Swan Book* (2013) brings together concerns of ongoing settler colonialism, the practices of storytelling, and inter-creaturely solidarity in an eclectic exploration of extinction. In its depictions of ecosystem breakdown, authoritarian politics, and creaturely migrations, the novel can be read, in one sense at least, as a meditation on the multiple crises unfolding around us. But, as I will argue in this paper, its most compelling conviction has to do with narrative agency: where storytelling, from both human and more-than-human agents, stimulates a rethinking of the ways in which crises are told and understood in the Anthropocene.

Influenced by recent developments in extinction studies, I will position the novel as a “near-extinction” narrative – one which shifts its discourse of ecological crisis from loss and endings to renewal and regeneration. Examining the creaturely migrations of human and more-than-human characters alike, this paper will frame *The Swan Book* as a novel that elevates solidarity-oriented alternatives to the exploitative, authoritarian regimes depicted in the Northern Territory. Ultimately, this paper will conclude by suggesting how a “storytelling sovereignty” might help facilitate human/more-than-human survival in the context of global ecological crises.

**Keywords:** near-extinction, creaturely, storytelling, sovereignty, survival.

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**Bio**

Anisha Gamblin is a postgraduate researcher at the University of Leeds, working in Postcolonial Studies and the Environmental Humanities. She is based in the School of English, but her research navigates multiple subject areas, including philosophy, Indigenous Studies, and human-animal relations. Her PhD project, which examines near-extinction narratives in Indigenous literatures of the Pacific region, is part of the Leverhulme-funded Extinction Studies Doctoral Training Programme at Leeds. As part of her doctoral project, she has conducted research in Aotearoa New Zealand and, within the last year, worked as an intern in Fiji, focusing on local projects that support Fiji's National Development Plan and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. She is currently in her final year of study at Leeds.

44.

**Gerald Gaylard**

**Ivan and the Soviets: A Peripheral Perspective of the USSR in Ivan Vladislavić**

Is history always told by the victor? What happens if history is narrated from the outside, the margins, the periphery? Further, what does the style of narration mean for the way that we understand that history? These questions arise from the satirical depiction of the collapse of the Soviet Union in South African author Ivan Vladislavić's *Propaganda by Monuments* (1996). In the eponymous title story, Vladislavić suggests not only the influence of socialist thought and practice on South Africa, but also the dark comradeship, ranging from romantic solidarity to instrumentalism, of a shared history of totalitarian nationalism. He further suggests that this dark comradeship has continued beyond the fall of the Soviet empire and apartheid by tracing the trajectory of perestroika into globalisation from the 1990s onwards. Nevertheless, whilst positing a grim commonality between South Africa and Eastern Europe, Vladislavić also points out the incompatibilities and incommensurabilities, many of them ironic and hilarious, between the two parts of the world and their histories, developing an oblique carnivalesque satire of monumentalism. Whilst Eagleton's post-carnivalesque critique is partly correct that Bakhtin's carnival is largely theatrical and has little effect on the modalities of power in late capitalism, this paper argues that Vladislavić's satire nevertheless allows access to the historical and contemporary effects of empire on far-flung corners of the globe, which reflect that empire in a revealing light.

**Keywords:** Empire, propaganda, monuments, satire, post-carnivalesque.

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**Bio**

Gerald Gaylard is Professor of English at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. His publications include *After Colonialism: African Postmodernism and Magical Realism* (Wits Press 2006), *Marginal Spaces: Reading Ivan Vladislavić* (Wits Press 2011), and *At Home With Ivan Vladislavić: An African Flaneur Greens the Postcolonial City* (Routledge 2023).

45.

**Samuele Grassi**

**Longing for Palestine: Vulnerability and the (Queer) Utopian Impulse of Writing for Justice**

This paper examines women's writing on Palestine within contemporary feminist and queer scholarship. By focusing on two lesbian feminists – Jewish-American Sarah Schulman and Australian-British Sara Ahmed – it argues that engagement with Palestine has long been embedded in queer and gender studies rather than emerging from the current political moment.

Schulman's *Israel/Palestine and the Queer International* (2012), written after declining a Tel Aviv keynote and travelling through the West Bank, was one of the first major academic-press books to address the academic boycott of Israel and the politics of pinkwashing. Ahmed's "Killjoys in Translation" centres on Refaat Alareer's poem "If I Must Die" – which I read as an instance of the "formation of a political *agency* from below" within the digitalisation of the Palestinian diaspora (Solombrino 2018: 22) – to raise awareness and transnational solidarity.

Recent scholarship suggests that the dispersed nature of Palestinian belonging finds resonance in the Internet's digital archipelagos: a "laboratory of modernity" in which non-territorial attachments are tested, echoing paradoxically aspects of Jewish diasporic experience (Chambers, in Solombrino 2018: 11). Within this context, both Schulman and Ahmed strategically employ their Western positionality through what G.C. Spivak calls "affirmative sabotage" (2012: 4), using instruments of Enlightenment critique against their own hegemonic frames to aim at decolonisation.

The two lesbian feminists – each with a long activist history supporting minoritised communities (HIV/AIDS-affected gay community in Schulman's case; trans communities in Ahmed's) – have come to view Palestinian justice as a life question: as a question of what it means to live today.

**Keywords:** Ahmed, Schulman, Palestine, vulnerability, writing

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**Bio**

Samuele Grassi (Monash University, Prato Centre-Università degli Studi di Firenze) is Lecturer in European Languages and Italian at Monash University in Prato, and Adjunct Lecturer in English language and Digital Cultures at University of Florence. He has published in both English and Italian in national and international top-refereed journals, as well as monographs, book chapters, co-edited special issues, and translations. His current research focuses on two main directions: queer gender

and sexuality studies, modern and contemporary literary and cultural studies in the Anglo-sphere, including English-Italian translation.

46.

**Dave Gunning**

### **Floods in the Age of Crisis**

The language of crisis and emergency is ubiquitous at present, reinforcing the millenarianism without hope that characterises our age (Berlant 2011). While the current diverse ecological and humanitarian predicaments can clearly be understood as interlinked, the pervasiveness of crisis talk can spark a tendency to figure the connections through analogy, with each crisis coming to stand in for all the others. This urge to read our situation in apocalyptic terms reduces the clarity through which real situations can be viewed. In this paper I acknowledge the ways in which the movement of refugees is frequently represented in terms of flooding or other diluvial metaphors (Taylor 2021; Walia 2021). I am interested, though, in novels that explore the implications of this metaphor by placing reading recent novels in which the metaphorical 'floods' of people requiring refuge are placed alongside the actual experience of rising water levels, such as Felicity Castagna's *No More Boats* (2017), Omar El Akkad's *American War* (2017), Season Butler's *Cygnets* (2020) and Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2020). Between these novels, different modes of imagining the relationship between environmental and migrant 'crises' are active, and the authors show different levels of awareness and scepticism of the ethical tensions raised in the concatenation. Each allows us to think further about the dominance of the idea of crisis in envisioning the present and perhaps to access the radical possibility of 'thinking at sea-level' to avoid that political and ethical paralysis that fixation on crisis can inculcate (Gilroy 2018).

**Keywords:** floods, climate change, refugees, metaphor.

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### **Bio**

Dave Gunning is Reader in English Literature at the University of Birmingham (UK). He is the author of *Race and Antiracism in Black British and British Asian Literature* (2010) and *Postcolonial Literature* (2013). He is beginning a project that looks at how the global Anglophone novel narrativizes the connections between economic, ecological and epidemiological ideas of crisis.

47.

**Doris Hambuch**

### **Zeina Hashem Beck's Third Text as Metaphor of Displacement**

This presentation traces Zeina Hashem Beck's development of a new poetic form called the "duet." Duets include equal parts written in two different languages, English and Arabic for the Lebanese poet whose last collection, *O*, includes six such duets. The ideal bilingual reader brings sufficient context in both languages to the understanding of the dialogue between the two duet halves, which Hashem Beck has called "third text." This third text emerges from an exilic imaginary that dominates all of her work. At times, references to Lebanon or specific locations within the country, sound contradictory in the different languages. Close readings of "daily كل يوم" and "blue أزرق" identify the characteristics and variations of the new poetic form. Analysis of "prophecy نبوة" and "Ode to Babel نشيد الانتظار" centers around translingual poetics. Scrutiny of "Dear white critic, رفيقي في الرحيل," and "Ode to Leaving غربة" highlights the impact of projected audiences on the duet development. Drawing on postcolonial concepts such as the contact zone (Pratt 1991), borderlands (Anzaldúa 1987), and third space (Bhabha 1994), the comparative analysis of the six duets interprets Hashem Beck's third text as metaphor of displacement. Having grown up in Tripoli during the long Civil War, the poet emigrated from Lebanon at the onset of the Second Lebanon War. Reminiscent of Said's ambivalent statements on exile (Said 2000), the concept of displacement appears as both stimulating and tormenting throughout her texts. The duet is a particularly suitable form to illustrate this ambivalence.

**Keywords:** displacement, duet, third text, translingual poetics, Zeina Hashem Beck.

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### **Bio**

Doris Hambuch is Associate Professor and Coordinator of the MA in English in the Department of Languages and Literature at United Arab Emirates University. She is the guest-editor of issue 6.2 of *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies*, on Caribbean cinema and, more recently, of issue 49.3 of the *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, on polyglot art practices. She is Past President of the Canadian Comparative Literature Association, and her current research focuses on eco-poetics and literary multilingualism. She is the author of three chapbooks, *All That Depends* (2019), *Monsters* (2021), and *Office Monsters* (2023).

48.

**Diana Harrison**

### **Feminine Border Crossing and Migrant Truths**

Using Lauren Beukes' *Bridge* (2023) and Yvonne Owuor's *The Dragonfly Sea* (2019) I will be exploring how these two novels show border crossing, and a search for identity from the feminine perspective. The female traveller is in search of belonging, a belonging that does not undermine the feminine voice and simultaneously recognises a heterogenous global citizen. The paper will unpack trauma from the experience of the 'other', that is, the feminine. It will also look at the experience of colonial trauma, and how the experience leads to distrust of a homogenous truth. Both novels involve journeys that are undertaken for the protagonists to discover truth; hence the paper will demonstrate how border crossing reveals multiple truths. Homi K Bhabha's ideas of culture translation will be used in the discussion. By examining these two novels and the journeys that the protagonists undertake, I aim to show how the female post-colonial migrant is an example of a global inequality, and the way these narratives display intergenerational trauma still experienced by the post-colonial subject.

**Keywords:** feminism; global citizen; global south; postcolonial.

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### **Bio**

Diana Harrison (nee Bloem) is a PhD candidate at the University of Western Cape and an English Literature Lecturer at North-West University in South Africa. Her research interests are creative writing, postmodernism, hybridity and postcolonial writing. She has had several poems published in South African and international literary journals. Her recent work has been published in the book, *Notes From the Body: Health, Illness, Trauma*. Diana was the recipient of the 2015 DALRO poetry award and in 2017 was shortlisted for the 2018 Sol Plaatjie European Union Anthology. Diana lives in a farming town, Lichtenburg, North-West Province, South Africa.

**Himan Heidari**

**Travelling Between Binaries: Ambivalent Performativity and Colonial Discourse in Kurdistan**

Victorian women travellers often adopted daring, ‘masculine’ personas while preserving a ladylike image. They confirmed yet disrupted traditional gender roles and were alternately complicit in and critical of Orientalist discourse. Although critics have noted this tension, scholarship still lacks a critical lens that joins gender theory to post-colonial ambivalence. I propose ‘ambivalent performativity,’ a concept integrating Judith Butler’s gender-as-performative with Homi K. Bhabha’s insight that colonial discourse is intrinsically ambivalent. The term captures the clash between the discursive enactment of identity and the multiple, contradictory meanings it produces. The paper charts this dynamic along four intersecting axes: a) mobility—the movement that enables continual restaging of the self; b) recognition—the pursuit of authority within the male-dominated sphere of Victorian exploration; c) rhetorical strategy—the humour, scientific, geographical, and biblical references that lend credibility to women’s travel accounts; and d) stereotyping—the oscillation between fixing and fracturing images of local peoples. I test the model on Isabella Bird’s *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan* (1891). Bird repeatedly reconstructs her identity, while her depictions of the Kurds shift from ‘Madonna-like’ village girls to ‘stage-brigand’ chiefs, from hospitable hosts to fanatical marauders. By naming and unpacking ambivalent performativity, the paper shows how Bird’s self-fashioning and imperial Othering emerge from the same unstable performance. This instability constitutes an early crisis of representation whose afterlives inform contemporary narratives about Kurdish spaces shaped by conflict, displacement, and contested national identity, demonstrating why humanities-based critique remains vital today.

**Keywords:** Women’s travel writing, Isabella Bird, ambivalent performativity, colonial ambivalence, Kurdistan.

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**Bio**

Himan Heidari is an AHRC-funded PhD candidate in English Literature at the University of Roehampton, London. His research offers an innovative reassessment of women’s travel writing on Kurdistan in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Employing his original framework of ‘ambivalent performativity,’ Himan sheds new light on marginalised women’s narratives, expanding current understandings of cross-cultural engagement and gendered travel. His work has been published in the *Journal of Victorian Culture* (2022). He has also presented at the British Association for Victorian Studies (BAVS) Conference at Oxford and the Kurdish Studies Conference at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Marie Herbillon

**Questioning Western Epistemological Frameworks from a Literary Perspective: Michelle de Kretser's *Theory & Practice***

*Theory & Practice*, the Australian (but Sri Lankan-born) author Michelle de Kretser's latest novel, is a story of crises. Not only is the protagonist, a novelist who migrated from Sri Lanka to Australia in her teens, facing a personal crisis, as she finds herself unable to keep producing "novels that read like novels" (24); she also starts looking for "a fresh form" (100) in an autobiographical yet highly self-reflexive text that seeks to problematise the very notion of crisis through, *inter alia*, "a quote from Gramsci: 'The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born'" (33).

This first-person life-story mostly focuses on her formative years in late 1980s Melbourne, when "French poststructuralist theory – Theory – had conquered the humanities" (40) and identified Woolf's writings as embodying "the disruptive Maternal" (43). Although building her "sense of self through Theory" (71) contributed to estranging her from her unprivileged family (and mother, specifically), the narrator originally subscribed to this Western epistemological framework and, in particular, allowed the Woolfmother to play a crucial part in her process of identity-formation and assimilation into Australian society. After relating how she stumbled upon an openly racist passage in Woolf's diary, however, her life-narrative becomes increasingly interspersed with stories of oppression and exploitation that can be construed as the violent legacies of colonisation in (as well as outside) Australia.

As early as 1991, K.A. Appiah aptly noted that "'postcoloniality' is [...] a condition in which even the intellectual attempt to think beyond the West remains under its shadow" (349). In this paper, we will examine how de Kretser explores the "breakdowns between theory and practice" (24) by questioning the messy truths that have informed some of the widely accepted structures of knowledge in the Western humanities and accounted for various forms of postcolonial violence. We will also investigate how de Kretser, through a character who has to navigate "the creative-destructive energies of the Maternal line" (160) as she gestures towards emancipation, addresses the issue of (af)iliation and the ways in which one can come to terms with the constitutive heritage of mother-figures without tearing it down altogether.

**Keywords:** Michelle de Kretser; Virginia Woolf; theory vs practice; Western epistemological frameworks; colonial legacies.

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**Bio**

Marie Herbillon lectures in the English Department of the University of Liège, Belgium. A member of *Centre d'Enseignement et de Recherche en Études Postcoloniales* (CEREP), which she currently co-directs, she has completed a PhD entitled "Beyond the Line: Murray Bail's Spatial Poetics" and published articles in international journals such as *Commonwealth: Essays and Studies*, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* and *Antipodes: A Global Journal of Australian/New Zealand Literature*. Between 2021 and 2024, she was also the chief editor of the

*Journal of the European Association for Studies of Australia (JEASA)*. Her research interests include postcolonial (particularly Australian) literatures, spatial studies, ecofeminism, autobiographical studies, trauma studies, cultural history, translation studies and intermediality. Her current research projects address the themes of history and migration in J.M. Coetzee's late fiction, as well as the issue of literary self-translation in postcolonial and minority contexts.

51.

## Graham Huggan

### Postcolonial Theory and (in) Crisis

In their introduction to the 2024 collection *Postcolonial Theory and Crisis*, editors Sandra Ponzanesi and Paulo de Medeiros suggest that the twenty-first century may end up being described as the Age of Crisis, just as the late historian Eric Hobsbawm previously dubbed the (short) twentieth century as the Age of Extremes. Postcolonial theory, they argue, is well equipped to address this Age of Crisis, which is in effect an age of multiple crises, many of them generated by colonialism and capitalism, the toxic effects of which are as much products of a neo-imperial present as legacies of the colonial past. Postcolonial studies, they imply, is something of a crisis discipline: one which is in semi-permanent crisis, and is continually reinventing itself to meet the urgent challenges of the times. Theirs is an unexceptionable view, likely to be shared by the vast majority of postcolonial critics and theorists; however, it also raises the question of what to make of the term "crisis" itself. This paper has the twin aims of interrogating a term that is now so massively over-used that it runs the risk of what linguists call "semantic bleaching," and of inquiring into some of the threats, as much internal as external, that the postcolonial project continues to confront. One of these is the move to supplant postcolonial theory with decolonial theory – a supposedly radical move which I will argue is profoundly mistaken, and is connected to the same forms of decontextualization and ahistoricism that bedevil the term "crisis" itself.

**Keywords:** Postcolonial theory, decolonial theory, crisis, crisis discipline, crisis narrative.

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### Bio

Graham Huggan is Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Leeds. His research straddles three fields – postcolonial studies, environmental humanities, and tourism studies – all of which are represented in the monograph *Colonialism, Culture, Whales* (Bloomsbury, 2018). Earlier work in the postcolonial field includes *The Postcolonial Exotic* (Routledge, 2001) and, with Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (Routledge, 2010). Huggan's article "Postcolonial Studies and the Decolonization of Everything" is forthcoming in *New Literary History* (2025).

**Tamara Dima Imboden**

**Authenticities in Conflict: (De)Mobilising ‘Authenticity’ in Shankari Chandran’s *Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens***

This paper explores the mobilisation of ‘cultural authenticity’ in Shankari Chandran’s *Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens* (2022). Despite the consensus that ‘authenticity’ refers to a non-existent and problematic cultural essence – as Doreen Massey (1994) put it, “[t]here is no simple authenticity – [no] unique eternal truth of the place” (119) – the concept still has a concrete impact on people: Cultural authenticity, following Nadine Naber (2012) provides an important “meaning system” for diasporic subjects to empower themselves in a new culture (66). This paper examines how, in *Chai Time*, “the politics of authenticity” (Naber 2012, 63) is employed in two ways, enabling the novel’s central Tamil Australian community a sense of orientation in their identity construction *and* fuelling racist anti-immigration sentiments against this community. By staging these debates, the novel provides a platform to explore how these discourses of authenticity are constructed in conflict with each other. Using Sara Ahmed’s (2000) work on the role of ‘strangers’ in the construction of the nation, the paper shows how ‘authenticity’ adheres to the logic of the imagined community, on the one hand following the nation’s character of being “both fantasy and material effect” (98), and on the other requiring an ‘inauthentic other’ to be constructed. In this way, the paper highlights both the continued prevalence of ‘authenticity’ in contemporary literature and considers how its meaning is driven dialectically and discursively. These findings make up part of a wider dissertation project that considers the discursive construction of cultural authenticity in migration novels since 2020.

**Keywords:** cultural authenticity, imagined communities, migration, belonging, xenophobia.

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Naber, Nadine. *Arab America: Gender, Cultural Politics, Activism*. New York University Press, 2012.

**Bio**

Tamara Dima Imboden is a doctoral researcher at the chair of North American and General Literature at the University of Basel, Switzerland. Her research focuses on migration fiction’s depiction of and engagement with cultural authenticity, drawing together her interests in postcolonial theory, migration fiction and identity theory. In May 2025, she was awarded a 12-month research grant by the competitive SNSF Doc.Mobility program: As of August 2025, Imboden is a visiting scholar at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, and she will begin her second 6-month research visit to the University of Vienna, Austria, in February 2026. As a research assistant, Imboden has taught BA courses in literary studies and literary theory, as well as seminars on memory, postcolonial urban settings, and African-American women’s literature.

Leonie John

**“Water Is Life, and Water Can Be Death.” Liquid Struggles in Tina Makereti’s *The Mires***

In this paper, I closely examine the way that liquidity permeates and critically shapes Māori author Tina Makereti’s most recent novel *The Mires* both formally and textually. As one reviewer has pointed out, “wai [water] is the fundamental essence of *The Mires*” (Lampard 2024). Water does not only enable Makereti to establish and illuminate the intertwining pathways of several main characters from vastly different backgrounds but also serves as a way to investigate contemporary issues such as ecological disasters and refugee politics, thereby clearly intersecting with the conference’s focal points of crisis, conflict and mobility (crossings, migrations). The author, I argue, skilfully highlights various internal and external kinds of conflict, all of which are connected and reinforced through the watery medium. Experiences of loss, grief, disconnection and uncertainty are balanced with moments of healing, hope and community. Drawing especially on the work of literary scholars Elizabeth DeLoughrey and Alice Te Punga Somerville, I highlight the cultural as well as regional importance and literary merit of Makereti’s use of water as a marker of relationality but also a tool for creating ambiguity. As one of the characters aptly points out: “You will find me in the meeting point between open seas and solid land, in the seam of sky and earth, between what you think you know and what you don’t...”

**Keywords:** water, climate fiction, conflict, refugees, mires.

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**Bio**

Leonie John is a literary studies postdoc and the academic project manager of *Australian Studies*, a digital master’s programme that is currently being developed at the University of Cologne in collaboration with several German and European universities. She successfully defended her PhD thesis on im/mobilities in Māori short fiction in 2021. Leonie John has published on Māori texts written in English, on teaching such texts in a German context, and on literary research ethics. Her academic interests include Indigenous and postcolonial studies, Pacific literatures and networks, memory and museum studies, mobility studies, and – most recently – nuclear literature and the environmental humanities. Leonie John is the vice chair of the German Association for Australian Studies.

**Shuchi Kapila**

**Migrant Stories, Migrant Memories in Contemporary Museums in India**

This paper explores the representation of memories of migrants in two museums in India, the *Partition Museum* in Amritsar, India, inaugurated in 2017 and *The Tibet Museum* in Dharamsala, India. In what ways do stories of migration, suffering, the trauma of border crossings and homes left behind provide an affective terrain to engage audiences, to provide “changed perception or behavior for the learner” in the words of Alex Drago in his article “The Emotional Museum”? I study an exhibit in the *Partition Museum* for its ability to engage and teach and the possibilities that were missed in its staging. *The Tibet Museum* is housed in a new building in the hill town of Dharamsala, which is explicitly political in presenting, for instance, uncompromising footage of the immolation of Tibetans in protest against repression by the Chinese government. The museum presents Tibetan nationhood in history, the temporal and spiritual power of the Dalai Lama at the center, and the modern history of Tibetans in exile. As Kavita Singh has pointed out, *The Tibet Museum* is a celebration of the cultural history of Tibet but has gathered around it protests by younger Tibetans at China’s atrocities against them. I study the different strategies of representing heritage and culture when a conflicted political identity is part of the mix and explore how museums open out to debate or seek to close it down. How does a museum combine both heritage and modern histories of persecution and protest?

**Keywords:** Migrant, stories, memory, museums, India

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**Bio**

Shuchi Kapila teaches in the English Dept at Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa, USA. Her scholarly work focuses on nineteenth and twentieth century British colonialism in South Asia and literary and cultural production in postcolonial South Asia. Her first book *Educating Seeta: The Anglo-Indian Family Romance and the Poetics of Indirect Rule* (Ohio State Univ Press, 2010) analyzes Anglo-Indian romances by British colonial writers as an expression of the ideologies of indirect colonial rule. Her second book, *Learning to Remember: Postmemory and the Partition of India* (Palgrave Macmillan 2024) studies Partition memory through oral history, and in institutions like archives and museums. She has a continuing interest in how memory travels and in cultural practices of memorialization that can be yoked to a progressive politics. She is working on a project on how museums narrate ‘difficult histories’ in different parts of South Asia and other parts of the Global South.

**Elisabeth Knittelfelder**

**“It Doesn’t Have to Be This Way”: South African Hydro-Fiction in Times of Climate Crisis**

Water has become a marker of our deranged relationship with the planet. In Cape Town, the 2017 water crisis left a deep mark on the collective consciousness of Capetonians, opening up not only the issue of climate crisis, but also raising questions around control of water, exposing lasting colonial entanglements with water, its infrastructure, and access. These (hydro-)crises, including water-apartheid, have informed contemporary South African writers who address these questions in their work and navigate in distinct ways the scarcity of water, means of (non-)survival, and new and old social orders in the aftermath of total climate collapse. This paper looks at recent South African climate fiction that deals with water, from Alistair Mackay’s novel *It Doesn’t Have to be This Way* (2022), to the short stories “The Serpent’s Handmaiden” (2022) by Vuyokazi Ngemntu and “Laatlammer” (2021) by Julia Louw. The selected texts engage with ecological collapse through African futurist elements and envision a future born out of contemporary environmental disaster, colonial extraction, and racial capitalism. This paper explores the entanglements of coloniality and climate catastrophe in contemporary South African fiction and it aims at contributing to a new critical framework in African speculative fiction and African climate fiction. By drawing on the works of Cajetan Iheka, Amitav Gosh, Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Isabel Hofmeyr, Sylvia Tamale, and others, this paper merges Black African feminist critique, decolonial thought, and environmental criticism. By thinking with water, this paper challenges submerged injustices through an exploration of environmental catastrophe and planetary crisis in contemporary South African hydro-fiction.

**Keywords:** water, climate crisis, hydro-fiction, African literature, climate fiction.

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**Bio**

Elisabeth Knittelfelder is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the Department of African Studies at the University of Vienna, Austria. She has worked on South African theatre at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in South Africa and at Potsdam University in Germany. Elisabeth Knittelfelder holds a PhD in English and American Studies from the University of Graz, Austria, and is an awardee of the Marietta Blau Scholarship and the OeAW (Austrian Academy of Sciences) postdoctoral fellowship. Elisabeth’s work exists at the convergence of literary studies, cultural studies, and theatre studies and is informed by global feminism, decoloniality, and Black studies. Her current research explores the nexus of hydrocolonialism, environmental crisis, and climate justice in anglophone African literature and theatre.

56.

**Michelle Keown**

**‘Blood-Red’: Creative Explorations of the Nexus between Nuclear Colonialism and Climate Crisis in the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

This paper explores a range of creative writing and visual material focused on the cultural, environmental and human health legacies of US nuclear testing in the Republic of the Marshall Islands during the Cold War. The 67 US nuclear bomb tests undertaken in the northern atolls of Bikini and Enewetak (between 1946 and 1958) resulted in the forced displacement of Bikini Islanders, and decades of exile for the people of Enewetak, as well as high levels of residual radiation that make certain islands (including the whole of Bikini atoll) uninhabitable for an estimated 25,000 years.

The first part of my paper discusses creative works commissioned as part of a UK-funded research project I led between 2016-2019. These include antinuclear poetry by Marshallese author and environmental activist Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, and a graphic novel by Hawaiian artist Solomon Enos, that explore the continuing impacts of US nuclear violence (and environmental devastation) in the Marshall Islands. The latter part of the paper will discuss a selection of creative writing and visual art produced during a 2023 nautical expedition (to the irradiated atolls of Bikini and Rongelap) organised by the Cape Farewell organisation, in partnership with Jetñil-Kijiner’s youth environmental NGO Jo-Jikum. Here I will discuss a range of creative material, produced from the expedition, that explores the nexus between nuclear colonialism and climate change across the archipelago. Works include poetry and art by youth members of Jo-Jikum; paintings by Hawaiian artist Solomon Enos; and a performance art installation by Jetñil-Kijiner.

**Keywords:** Marshall Islands; nuclear testing; climate change; forced displacement.

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**Bio**

Michelle Keown is Professor of Pacific and Postcolonial Literatures at the University of Edinburgh. Born in Aotearoa/New Zealand, she has published widely on Pacific literature, and has explored the

legacies of nuclear testing in the Pacific in a variety of articles, book chapters, and in her co-edited collection *Anglo-American Imperialism and the Pacific* (2018), as well as in her academic monographs *Pacific Islands Writing* (Oxford University Press, 2007) and *Postcolonial Pacific Writing* (2005). She is currently leading a UK-funded research and arts education project focused on Robert Louis Stevenson's Pacific writing and travels ([www.remediatingstevenson.org](http://www.remediatingstevenson.org)).

57.

**Daniel Koechlin**

**“If You Want to Live, You’re Going to Have to Do Something Illegal”: The International Migration Crisis in *Elysium* (2013)**

*Elysium* (2013), by South African director Neill Blomkamp, depicts a future in which the most affluent portion of humanity inhabit a fortified orbital space enclave while Earth's surplus populations are contained below, many willing to risk death to cross the border. This paper draws on Fredric Jameson's framework to analyze the ideological underpinnings of the film's allegory, which condenses the international migration crisis into a popular narrative that simultaneously discloses and mystifies global contradictions. On the one hand, the film offers a cognitive mapping of late capitalism's planetary order, visualizing the systemic relationship between technological sovereignty, securitized borders, and migrant precarity. On the other hand, its resolution through the familiar coordinates of Hollywood individualism—suggesting redemption through exceptional acts of hacking and sacrifice—also warrants close ideological scrutiny as it relates to twenty-first-century socio-political discourse.

Bringing Jameson's framework into dialogue with postcolonial and decolonial theorists such as Achille Mbembe and Sandro Mezzadra & Brett Neilson, I trace how the film stages necropolitical governance (the allocation of life and death), surplus humanity (populations rendered disposable), and the dream of inclusion through citizenship and healthcare. In dramatizing these contradictions, *Elysium* both exposes and contains the antagonisms of migration under global capitalism. Its ambivalence, I suggest, makes the film a valuable cultural text for thinking of the migration crisis not as a humanitarian spectacle but as a structural feature of late capitalist modernity.

**Keywords:** migration; borders; allegory; cognitive mapping; postcolonial studies

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**Bio**

Daniel Koechlin is a Professeur Agrégé in English at Le Mans Université, France, and a member of HDEA (Histoire et Dynamique des Espaces Anglophones) at Sorbonne Université. His research

focuses on film, ideology critique, and the intersections of Marxist cultural theory with postcolonial and decolonial approaches. His recent work has explored the role of affect, resentment, and identification in Hollywood ideology, especially in the context of dissent and containment after the 2008 Long Recession. His approach emphasizes how cognitive mapping and allegory function in cinema to represent class, crisis, and global capitalism. He has presented at international conferences on dystopian cinema, Marxist theory, and the politics of science fiction, and he is developing a book-length study on the aesthetics of class antagonism in contemporary Anglophone film.

**58.**

**Joel Kuortti**

**PANEL: Material Migrations: Rethinking Crises through Objects in Postcolonial Narratives**

**In the Twinkle of an Eye: Articulation of Other People's Things in Jhumpa Lahiri's Short Story "This Blessed House"**

In Jhumpa Lahiri's short story "This Blessed House" the US-based Indian young woman Twinkle finds things in their new house. First, she accidentally finds some objects left behind by the previous owners but soon she begins to go treasure hunting for them. This results in a conflict between her and her husband Sanjeev, but for Twinkle it is also a euphoric journey of collecting more and more things from the house. The tension between Twinkle and Sanjeev is further magnified into a difference between Christianity and Hinduism. In my paper, I look into the ways in which Twinkle articulates these through objects through reinterpretation.

**Keywords:** objects, materiality, storytelling, memories, writing

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### **Bio**

Joel Kuortti is Professor of English at the University of Turku, Finland. His major research interests are in postcolonial theory, hybridity, Indian literature in English, transculturation, gender and cultural studies. His research books include *Fictions to Live In: Narration as an Argument for Fiction in Salman Rushdie's Novels* (Peter Lang 1998), *Tense Past, Tense Present: Women Writing in English* (Stree 2003), *Writing Imagined Diasporas: South Asian Women Reshaping North American Identity* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2007), *Reconstructing Hybridity* (co-ed. with J. Nyman, Rodopi 2007), *Critical Insights: Midnight's Children* (ed., Salem Press 2014), *Transculturation and Aesthetics* (ed., Brill 2015), *Thinking with the Familiar in Contemporary Literature and Culture 'Out of the Ordinary'* (co-ed. with K. Ilmonen, E. Valovirta & J. Korkka, Brill 2019), and most recently, *Engagements with Hybridity in Literature* with Jopi Nyman and Mehdi Ghasemi (Routledge 2023).

Jaroslav Kušnír

**Nature, Conflict and Intercultural Crossings in Indigenous Oceanic Fiction: Julie Janson's *Madukka The River Serpent* and Michael Puleloa's *Children of the Shoreline*.**

Understanding the spiritual significance of nature has long been central to Indigenous cultures. In their fiction, Australian Aboriginal author Julia Janson and Hawaiian author John Pule frequently examine both the sacred power of the natural world and the consequences of its destruction in postcolonial contexts. Their works highlight tensions between Indigenous communities and the forces of commercial exploitation and environmental degradation introduced by settler societies. At the same time, Indigenous conceptions of nature—distinct from dominant Western frameworks—play a crucial role in shaping cultural identity. These identities emerge through a complex interplay of ancestral traditions, colonial and postcolonial experiences, and modernity, which collectively inform the uniqueness of Indigenous relationships to both land and community. This comparative study will analyze the formation of Australian Aboriginal and Hawaiian Indigenous identities within the aesthetic frameworks of the post-millennial, post-race, and post-ethnic (Saldívar; Hollinger). It will consider how these identities are shaped by postcolonial modernities, the influence of global media, and the dynamics of complex interracial relationships.

**Keywords:** indigenous literature, nature, conflict, cultural identity, post-race aesthetics

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**Bio**

Jaroslav Kušnír is Professor of American, British and Australian literature at the University of Prešov, Slovakia. He is the author of *Poetika americkej postmodernej prózy (Richard Brautigan and Donald Barthelme)*[Poetics of American Postmodern Fiction: Richard Brautigan and Donald Barthelme]. Prešov, Slovakia: Impreso, 2001; *American Fiction: Modernism-Postmodernism, Popular Culture, and Metafiction*. Stuttgart, Germany: Ibidem, 2005; *Australian Literature in Contexts*. Banská Bystrica, Slovakia: Trian, 2003; and *Postmodernism and After: New Sensibility, Media, Pop Culture, and Communication Technologies in Anglophone Literatures*. Nitra:ASPA, 2015. *Specificity of Place, Region and Space in Anglophone Literatures* (ed.). Nitra: SlovakEdu, 2019.

**Raja Lahiani**

**Colonial Echoes: Reassessing William Jones’s Translation of the *Mu’allaqāt* through Postcolonial Translation Theory**

This paper critically examines Sir William Jones’s 1782 English translation of the *Mu’allaqāt*, a canonical collection of pre-Islamic Arabic odes, through the lens of postcolonial and cultural translation theory. While Jones is often praised for introducing Arabic literature to Western audiences, this study argues that his approach relied on assimilationist strategies—reshaping the original Arabic poetics to align with neoclassical, pre-Romantic, and colonial British aesthetics. The research engages key frameworks from Said (2003), Bhabha (1994), Asad (1986), and Venuti (1995), focusing on how linguistic and cultural domestication in Jones’s work reflects broader Orientalist imperatives.

The methodology combines comparative textual analysis, discourse analysis, and cultural-contextual examination of Jones’s translation choices. By identifying patterns such as genre transposition, structural reordering, spatial acculturation, and explicative insertions, the paper uncovers how Jones’s translation both extended and constrained Western understanding of Arabic poetry. This duality positions translation as a space of cultural negotiation and asymmetrical exchange.

Building on the work of Lahiani (2008; 2020) and Tymoczko (1999), this study innovatively foregrounds the *Mu’allaqāt* as a site of mediated colonial knowledge production. It contributes to broader debates about the ethics of literary translation in colonial contexts and provides a model for evaluating foundational translations that shaped the literary canon. Ultimately, it advocates for more equitable, decolonial approaches to translation in cross-cultural scholarship.

**Keywords:** Postcolonial translation; Orientalism; *Mu’allaqāt*; Cultural domestication; William Jones

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**Bio**

Dr. Raja Lahiani is an Associate Professor in the Translation Studies Program at United Arab Emirates University, holding a PhD in Comparative Literature from SOAS, University of London. She has published numerous peer-reviewed articles in comparative literature and translation studies, focused on topics such as translation quality assessment, classical Arabic poetry, and relevance-

theoretic approaches to idioms and overtones. Drawing on her extensive international teaching experience across Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, Raja Lahiani's work bridges literary scholarship and practical intercultural communication in translation.

61.

**Eléonore Lainé Forrest**

### **Resisting the Capitalocene: Aboriginal Magic-Realism and Epistemological Shifts in Recent Australian Women's Writings**

Since the turn of the millennium, and more particularly since the 2010s, Australian women novelists, many of them Indigenous, have been producing stories that expose not only the environmental crisis confronting the planet, but also its intrinsic connection with colonialism and its modern patriarchal extensions. Through Aboriginal magic-realism often situated within dystopian settings, their writings effect an epistemological shift, compelling readers to witness not only "the scandalous position" that minorities - immigrants, refugees, First Peoples - and, above all, girls and women are subjected to (Brewster and Kossew, 2019), but also the relentless plundering of Earth's resources. Opposing this apocalyptic reality, Claire Coleman's *Terra Nullius* (2017), Elizabeth Bryer's *From Here On, Monsters* (2019), Nardi Simpson's *Song of the Crocodile* (2020), Kate Mildenhall's *The Humming Bird Effect* (2023) foreground knowledge as a central mode of resistance. Operating as an alternative epistemology, their writings deconstruct the destructive logic of the Capitalocene and call for multispecies reciprocity (Haraway), grounded in the ancestral teachings of the Elders.

Drawing on Decolonial studies (Mignolo; Tinker) and its Australian iterations (Robinson; Teaiwa), my work analyses how these novels expose "the double fracture of modernity" (Ferdinand), seen through the lens of gender violence, while dismantling dominant imperialistic ways of thinking. Particular attention is given to the ways they infuse reality with the supernatural, a reminder of the mystery that envelops humanity. Stripped to its firm young bones, knowledge thus emerges as the sole means of resistance these novels envision, should humanity want to survive.

**Keywords:** ecofeminism; minority; Indigenous Australians; decoloniality; capitalocene.

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### **Bio**

Eléonore Lainé Forrest is a senior lecturer specialising in Australian literature, with a particular focus on novels by women writers. She currently teaches at the University of New Caledonia, where her research and teaching centre on decolonisation, feminism, and ecology. She has recently published

two papers addressing these questions in *L'écriture de la migration* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2024) and *Littérature et Politique en Océanie* (MSH-P, Horizons Océaniens, 2025).

62.

**Bénédicte Ledent**

**Changing our Gaze on the 'Migrant Crisis': A Calibrated Reading of Caryl Phillips's *Another Man in the Street* (2025)**

Most of novelist Caryl Phillips's protagonists are migrants who have left their homes, willingly or unwillingly, and are obliged to start a new life elsewhere, an experience which unavoidably triggers existential issues. His latest novel, *Another Man in the Street* (2015), is no exception to this. It brings together four immigrants, both external and internal, who are trying to make a new beginning in post-war London: a man and a woman from St Kitts in the Caribbean, a Polish man who has survived the Holocaust, and a woman from the North of England.

While the so-called 'migrant crisis' has been seen recently as the cause of Britain's torn social fabric, Phillips's latest novel virtually repairs this fabric by concentrating on another type of 'migrant crisis', the one that binds migrating individuals who are supposed to reinvent themselves in a new environment. Taking my cue from Ato Quayson's 2003 *Calibrations: Reading for the Social*, I would like in this paper to adopt a reading that highlights the connections between the social and literary-aesthetic domains, which mobilise different types of discourses. While *Another Man in the Street* has regularly been presented in reviews as a Windrush narrative, thus as chronicling a sociological and historical phenomenon, I would like to complement that reductive description by focusing on the novel's multiple narratives strategies, which give intimate access to the characters' common alienation.

**Keywords:** Caryl Phillips, *Another Man in the Street*, migration, sociology, literature.

**Bibliography**

Ato Quayson, *Calibrations: Reading for the Social*, Minnesota UP, 2003.

**Bio**

Bénédicte Ledent is honorary professor from the University of Liège, where she taught anglophone literatures until 2021. She is also a member of the postcolonial research group CEREP (<http://www.cerep.ulg.ac.be>). Her research interests include Caribbean and Black British literatures, biographical fiction, slavery novels as well as the representation of madness in literature. She has published extensively on the work of Caryl Phillips and other writers of the Caribbean diaspora (see <https://orbi.uliege.be/profile?uid=p002117>). She is co-editor, with Delphine Munos, of the book series *Cross/Cultures* (Brill). Her most recent publication is an edited collection of Caryl Phillips's radio plays (Methuen, 2023).

63.

**Christine Lorre**

### **Crisis in Conflicted Materialism Theory**

This paper deals with the literary and artistic representation of the current ecological crisis in its material dimension, and examines how it has called for new critical frameworks, which itself is grounds for a theoretical crisis. The ecological crisis, which is primarily linked to human overexploitation of natural resources, has led to the transformation of ecosystems, tensions in social ecology related to unequal access to natural resources, and increased pollution resulting in environmental degradation. The “material turn” of the 2000s in the humanities and its interest in objects, materiality and the non-human world, has renewed the way critics approach human-nature relationships, ecology and the meaning of the social (Lettow 2017). With this new materialism, more attention is paid to “matter and its powers”, fostering “a greater sense of the extent to which all bodies are kin” (Bennett 2010). Yet, this often leads to losing sight of essential aspects of materialism, such as relations of power and domination (Lettow 2017). For instance, the risk of dematerialisation, “the process of becoming more and more out of touch with the material conditions (including ecological conditions) that support or enable our lives” (Plumwood 2008) means losing track of the labour – of other humans, of nature – that enables our lives. Adopting a postcolonial perspective, this paper will explore the variety of responses to the global ecological crisis, focusing on theories anchored in historical and new materialism, and will aim to establish a suitable critical position.

**Keywords:** ecological crisis, environmental justice, postcolonial world, historical materialism, new materialism

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### **Bio**

Christine Lorre is Professor of English Studies at the University of Caen, France. Her research focuses on literature from Canada and New Zealand, with interests in gender, the genre of the short story, and environmental humanities. Her most recent publications are “Janet Frame’s Commons in *Between My Father and the King* (2012),” *Literature, Critique, and Empire Today* 60.3 (2025) and a special issue of *Short Fiction in Theory and Practice* on “Materiality in Alice Munro’s Short Fiction,” edited with Corinne Bigot (2026). She convened the 2023 EACLALS conference at the Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris on the topic of “Environmental Justice in a Postcolonial World.” She is the current President of the SEPC (French Society for Postcolonial Studies) and Chair of EACLALS (European Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies).

64.

Deborah Madsen

**PANEL: Climate Crisis and Postcolonial Ecofeminisms: Plundering Lands, Exploiting Women. Literary Representations in Context**

**Fashion Victims and *fin-de-siècle* Vegan Ecofeminist Critique: Speciesism, Patriarchy, and "Murderous Millinery" in the Settler US and Australia**

At the end of the 1900s the craze for adorning women's hats (and other fashion accessories) with the taxidermied body parts of birds was an international phenomenon that reached from Paris to London to Melbourne and Manhattan. The demand for avian bodies was such that legislation – in many cases the first animal-protection legislation – was devised to prevent species extinction. Lyrebirds in Australia, Huia in Aotearoa New Zealand, Birds of paradise in colonial Papua are among the many species endangered by the feather trade and, as in the fur trade, Indigenous communities were culturally threatened by this exploitative hunting of relative-beings. The late nineteenth-century plumage trade was entirely consistent with the earlier North American fur trade that brought many species to near extinction and has been described as an "animal holocaust" that parallels the genocide of Indigenous communities under British settler colonialism.

In this presentation, I focus on the intersecting discourses of colonialism, speciesism, and patriarchy mobilized by this fashion craze. Notable social commentators of the time, women who would now be termed vegan ecofeminist activists, made this connection which was dramatically expressed by Frances Willard. She is reported to have seen the birds adorning the hats of her fellow suffrage campaigners and to have exclaimed loudly, "Can they not see that it is all connected?" The reasons why, in the name of fashion, women collaborated with these bloody trades was a question widely explored, for instance by the feminist reformer Charlotte Perkins Gilman. In *The Dress of Women* (1915) Gilman highlights the contrast between Victorian images of femininity and the violence of the mass killing committed by the fur and feather trades, asking "Would it not be reasonable for every woman of intelligence to determine once and for all, 'I will not decorate my body with death trophies'." Gilman connects the lack of conscience that is required to wear "death trophies" with the denial to women of the full rights of citizenship. The denial of civic participation, with the moral and ethical behaviors that implies, offers one explanation for women's subservience to the dictates of fashion; another is offered by an ecofeminist approach to the enabling discourses of speciesism, sexism, and the patriarchal commodification of "the feminine" -- human women and other-than-human beings – as a resource for the display of power.

**Keywords:** fashion, millinery, bird-hunting, speciesism, settler-colonialism.

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### **Bio**

Deborah Madsen is Professor of American Literature and Culture at the University of Geneva in Switzerland. She began her academic life with a specialism in literary allegory, which has led to a research career largely devoted to the ways in which different forms of rhetorical expression respond to social and cultural crises: American Exceptionalism, Feminism and Ecofeminism, race-based immigration, and US settler colonialism in relation to Critical Indigenous Studies. She is currently Principal Investigator of the project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation entitled "Vegan Literary Studies: An American Textual History, c. 1776-1900." Most of her publications are available in full-text from UNIGE's Open Access digital repository (<https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch>).

**65.**

### **Erika Magarelli**

#### **Translanguaging as Resistance: Decolonial Struggles in Migration Settings**

In an era characterized by forced mobility, global inequalities and ongoing structural violence, this study examines language mediation practices as a discursive field in which multilingual practices serve as forms of resistance to what Vespaziani (2015) calls the "grammar of authority". This dual role of language practices – as an instrument of domination and as a resource for contestation – makes mediation a critical site for the negotiation of power, identity and justice in migration contexts (Canagarajah 2013). This study is grounded in feminist and decolonial perspectives (Butler 2004; Mignolo & Walsh 2018) and draws on narrative interviews conducted using a narrative inquiry approach, as well as a cross-national survey of language mediators (Connelly & Clandinin 2004). The results show, among other things: (1) a heterogeneous linguistic landscape reflecting a complex history of mobility and linguistic hierarchies; (2) structural barriers, including time pressures, lack of care protocols, and long shifts, that reproduce institutional violence and limit language mediators' ability to intervene; and (3) the ambivalent role of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in both facilitating mobility and perpetuating inequalities. In conclusion, the article calls for a pragmatics of decoloniality in mediation practice and argues for the institutionalization of training programs that integrate feminist and decolonial approaches, address power asymmetries, and recognize translanguaging practices that cross and blend language boundaries as crucial resources for epistemic justice. Such measures aim to transform mediation into an empowered, politically engaged practice within dominant power structures.

**Keywords:** Language mediation; gender-based violence; translanguaging; decoloniality; resistance.

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## Bio

Erika Magarelli is a PhD candidate in Gender Studies at the University of Bari Aldo Moro, Italy. She holds a Master's degree in International Cooperation from the University of Turin. Her research interests lie at the intersection of gender and interpreting studies, cultural and postcolonial studies, migration and conflict. Her current work explores the relationship between migration and gender-based violence, with a particular focus on ethics, care, decolonial and feminist perspectives in language mediation.

66.

## Meenakshi Malhotra

### **Blurred Pasts, Uncertain Futures: Interrogating the Function of Nostalgia**

As migrations increase and multiple crises proliferate and attack societies, including sectarian violence and climate change, we are forced to reimagine ways of being in the world. In this paper, I examine the crisis of the Indian subcontinental partition of 1947 which caused the forced migration of unprecedented numbers of people, making it the single largest migration in history. While the partition has been explored through multiple lenses and from many perspectives by scholars, writers and artists, yet continuing waves of migration draw our attention and offer possibilities of fresh analysis and further exploration.

The reason why the Partition becomes a critical event is because it offers a lens to study the trajectories of modern Indian history in multiple ways, including political turmoil in present-day South Asia. In addition, it focuses on issues of home and belonging, displacement and exile. For many people living through the experience of Partition, troubled and traumatic memories continue to haunt, often resulting in generational trauma. One possible expression of this trauma is a tendency towards nostalgia, for a lost world and a home left behind. In this larger context, can one think of nostalgia as a symptom of an antidote to traumatic memory?

The paper will explore the sometimes contentious category of nostalgia, including both reminiscences and the choice to stay silent, through an analysis of primarily non-fictional texts like memoirs by women, both in English and in translation.

**Keywords:** Partition, migration, displacement, loss, exile, silence.

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## **Bio**

Prof Meenakshi Malhotra, from Hansraj College, Delhi University, has edited two textbooks on lifenarratives, which are read by students in University of Delhi. Her most recent work is a coedited book on *The Gendered Body in South Asia: Negotiation, Resistance, Struggle* (2024). Her other publications include articles in JIWS (Journal of International Women's Studies) and in dialogs, in books like *Making the Woman* (Routledge 2023), *WGS in India: Crossings* (Routledge, 2019), on "Subjugated Knowledges and Emergent Voices" in *Revolving around Indias* (Cambridge Publishers 2020), on Kali in *Unveiling Desire* (Rutgers University Press, 2018). She has been part of curriculum development with several universities, a consultant for school textbooks, a short-term Charles Wallace Fellow, visiting faculty at Grinnell College, Iowa (2019) and University of Minnesota at Duluth and a Nalanda Studies Fellow (2021). She has been a panelist at EASAS at Paris in 2018, AAS in Chicago (2015) and Toronto (2017).

**67.**

## **Mattia Mantellato**

### **PANEL: Multiple Crises in Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific: The Legacy of Western Imperialism**

#### **Myth, Power, and Epistemic Renewal in Albert Wendt's *Black Rainbow***

Albert Wendt's *Black Rainbow* (1992) imagines a dystopian Pacific future in which memory, spirituality, and cultural identity are systematically erased by an authoritarian system that privileges "scientific" rationality over human, ancestral, and relational or *partnership* ways of knowing (Eisler 1988; Glissant 1997). While frequently cited in postcolonial debates, this paper reads the novel through a decolonial epistemic lens (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2010, 2011; Mignolo & Walsh 2018), arguing that Wendt interrogates and destabilises the modernity/coloniality matrix by foregrounding Indigenous cosmologies as viable and necessary *alter-natives* for imagining futurity. Rather than embracing progress defined by technological acceleration and rationalist control, *Black Rainbow* suggests that sustainable futures for Pacific peoples, and for global modernity, must emerge from the spiritual, cultural, and genealogical archives violently marginalised by colonial domination (Sharrad 2002). The first section examines how Wendt disrupts dominant futurist imaginaries and reopens space for Indigenous world-making, emphasising that decolonisation is not solely political, but ontological and cosmological (Rieder 2018). In this sense, the novel articulates a manifesto for epistemic resurgence, positioning ancestral knowledge not as nostalgia but as a living, generative source of authority and possibility. The second section analyses key symbolic elements, ancestral presences, ritual practices, and mythic imagery, to demonstrate how Wendt mobilises non-Western, embodied, and spiritual epistemologies as strategies of resistance against technocratic

domination. These symbols function as communal memory technologies that re-root identity and re-enchant the social world. Ultimately, *Black Rainbow* asserts that meaningful futurity must draw from Indigenous epistemic inheritances, affirming that future-making is inseparable from ancestral knowledge, relational ethics, and sacred imagination.

**Keywords:** Decolonial Futurity, Pacific Literature, Narrative Resistance, Postcolonial Historiography, Epistemic Transformation.

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### **Bio**

Mattia Mantellato is Associate Professor of English Literature at the University of Enna 'Kore'. His research engages with World and Post-Decolonial Literatures, Blue Humanities, English Literature, Performance/Dance Studies, and Inter/Transmediality. In 2022, he received the UNIUD PhD Award for the Humanities and the AISCLI Prize for best academic essay by an emerging scholar. He has conducted research at leading institutions worldwide, including the Universities of Essex, Cape Town, Malta, and Barcelona. Also a professional ballet dancer and choreographer, Mantellato trained at La Scala Ballet Academy and danced for seven seasons with the corps de ballet of the National Ballet Theatre of Prague, performing across Europe, China, and major international festivals such as the Venice Biennale and Mittelfest.

68.

### **Elisabetta Marino**

#### **Recipes for Survival: Precarious Lives, Heterotopic Spaces in Two Contemporary British Novels**

This paper sets out to explore how undocumented migrants, refugees, and other marginalized individuals are depicted in two contemporary novels: *In the Kitchen* (2009) by Monica Ali and *You People* (2020) by Nikita Lalwani. The analysis will draw on Judith Butler's notion of precarity (*Frames of War*, 2009), distinct from precariousness (a condition inherent in our being mortal) and primarily experienced by the disenfranchised, the poor, and the marginalized. Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopic spaces—real locations that simultaneously reflect and potentially subvert societal norms, functioning as counter-spaces—will also serve the analysis. Significant portions of both stories, in fact, are set in a restaurant, which functions not only as the protagonists' place of

employment but also as a liminal and ethically complex setting where private and public, legal and illegal, familiar and alien converge while also challenging one another. The tensions, responsibilities, and moral ambiguities inherent in social and cultural power dynamics will likewise be the object of investigation.

**Keywords:** Monica Ali, Nikita Lalwani, Undocumented migrants, Heterotopia, Precarity

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### **Bio**

Elisabetta Marino is Professor of English Literature at the University of Rome Tor Vergata and head of "Asia and the West" research centre. She is the author of four monographs. Between 2001 and 2023 she edited/co-edited fifteen collections of essays (four more are forthcoming). She has published extensively on the English Romantic writers (especially Mary Shelley and P.B. Shelley), Indian diasporic literature, travel literature, and Italian American literature.

## **69.**

### **Richard Marotta**

#### **Decolonization of Narrative Form and Language**

The impact of Colonialism on family, language, identity, culture and the environment is catastrophic. History is impossible to reverse; societies can't seem to be reestablished. They can be reinvented through the power of voice, which is the only way to stand against the onslaught of colonial history. Fogarty demands that his voice be heard. Morgan claims her identity in the face of danger; Wright claims the narrative in the face of western traditions.

In 1788, (although initiated by Captain Cook in 1770) English forces invaded Australia, thus beginning a period of colonial occupation and destruction that continues to this day. Under the pretext of *terra nullius*, these forces displaced and began the attempted destruction of indigenous culture. The effects of colonialism took many forms, affecting areas of indigenous life: family, culture, language, and environment.

In the poetry of Lionel Fogarty, we see the impact on the "language of the Invaders" on the nature of poetic language. In Sally Morgan's, *My Place*, the horrifying effects of the "lost generation" on family and identity. In Wright's *Carpentaria and Praiseworthy*, the environment pays a terrible price for colonial and post-colonial economics.

This paper will examine the effects of colonialism and post-colonialism on these indigenous writers and explore how, what I have called, "The syntax of Resistance shapes their thinking, the language and their art. For the indigenous artist, the mission is to transcend the "strategies of containment," as Jameson called this attempt of restraining and shaping behavior, and to create within the language of the invader, English, a viable and powerful aesthetic of indigenous thought. The

indigenous writer uses post-colonial language to establish identity and to begin the reanimation of the time of the beginning, which they have called The Dreamtime.

This paper will create a critical context and then use individual works to make this to illustrate this practice.

**Keywords:** Australia, narrative, indigenous, decolonization, resistance

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### **Bio**

Richard Marotta retired (December 2024) from the English Department at Queens College, City University of New York, where he taught for many years. His recent work for the past ten years has focused on the indigenous literature of Australia, and in June 2022, he presented a paper to the MLA International Symposium held in Glasgow, entitled "The Syntax of Resistance: the use of language and genre to assert indigenous identity and inclusion in Australian Literature." That paper has since been published in IJAHSS, Volume 06, Issue 02, February 2025. In September-October 2025, Dr. Marotta presented a paper at the ENN\* Conference held at the University of Wuppertal, Germany, titled "The Narrative of Resistance and Healing in the indigenous Australian Writers Sally Morgan and Alexis Wright. His plan for the academic future is to develop this body of work about indigenous literature to give it a distinct critical presence in western scholarship.

70.

### **Judith Misrahi-Barak**

#### **Reading Reengagement in Anuk Arudpragasam's *A Passage North*: A Thanatic Ethics Perspective**

In the context of the aftermath of the civil war in Sri Lanka (1983-2009), Anuk Arudpragasam weaves his short novel *A Passage North* (Hogarth 2021) around Krishan, a young Sri Lankan man who developed a feeling of alienation and guilt from watching the conflict from the distance of Delhi. After having decided to move back to his native island to address his sense of dislocation and haunting, Krishan hears that the woman who had looked after his grandmother after losing both her sons to the war, has just died. His need to identify the causes of Rani's death takes him on a train journey across Sri Lanka, from South to North, to attend the funeral.

To demonstrate how this work of fiction leads Krishan and the reader to a renewed understanding of, and engagement with, the world, I will use text-based analysis to unpack the sophisticated narrative strategies chosen by Arudpragasam to address the individual and collective suffering induced by colonial divisions and ethnic violence. Relying on the analysis of the tensions built into the narrative, I will contend that the author has chosen geographical, physical, mental and

emotional *drifting* as the paradoxical mode that best exposes the protagonist's remote approach to life and to the world while it also enables the repair of the damaged link to himself and to others. In the forensic search and thematic journey at the heart of the narrative, accompanying the dead in an ethical manner appears crucial for the living to be able to reengage with the world even after it has been shattered by multiple crises.

**Keywords:** Anuk Arudpragasam, *A Passage North*, *drifting*, forensics, Sri Lankan civil war.

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Romdhani, Rebecca and Daria Tunca. *Narrating Violence in the Postcolonial World*. Routledge, 2022.

### **Bio**

Judith Misrahi-Barak is a former student at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (Fontenay-aux-Roses), is Professor in Postcolonial Studies at the English Department, University Paul Valéry Montpellier 3, France. Her areas of specialization are Caribbean and Indo- and Sino-Caribbean literatures in English, diaspora and migrant writing, as well as Dalit literature. She is General Editor of the series *PoCoPages* (Pulm, Montpellier). Her monograph in French entitled *Entre Atlantique et océan Indien: les voix de la Caraïbe anglophone* was published with Classiques Garnier (2021).

Besides her academic articles published in international journals, she has also co-edited Special Issues on Dalit Literature (*The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 2019) and on Thanatic Ethics (*Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 2023; *Cultural Studies*, forthcoming 2026), as well as co-edited volumes among which *Kala pani Crossings: Revisiting 19<sup>th</sup> century Migrations from India's Perspective* (Routledge, 2021), *Kala pani Crossings, Gender and Diaspora: Indian Perspectives* (Routledge, 2023) and *The Routledge Companion to Caste and Cinema in India* (2022).

## **71.**

### **Radhika Mohanram**

#### **Traumatized Postcolonial Theory**

First-generation Indian postcolonial theory has tended to focus on colonial rule, the hard-won independence, and its shaping of modern Indian identity. However, colonial rule was just one crisis that shaped Indian identity. Independence from Britain was accompanied by the Indian partition, the creation of two new nation-states, India and Pakistan, which was a catastrophic event that changed South Asian history completely with its focus on religious affiliation as determining national identity. The joy of independence was always accompanied by the trauma of partition that saw the largest peacetime refugee movement in history and that resulted in the deaths of 2 million people, the large-scale sexual violence undergone by 125000-200000 women as well as the abandonment or loss of over 50,000 children.

This paper focusses on the works of Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak who have influenced—and continue to influence-- the development of postcolonial thought in the academy. I will argue that their foundational texts are predicated on British imperial rule as fundamental to a postcolonial identity without any factoring of the brutal purisms of the partitioning of 1947. Both Bhabha and

Spivak are deeply invested in the problematics of representation—how the subaltern can or cannot speak, how identity is constructed through discourse, how hybridity destabilises colonial authority—but neither addresses the partition as a historical trauma that defies linguistic capture or rational theorisation. Are there theoretical and ethical limits to Bhabha and Spivak’s foundational concepts? How would early Indian postcolonial theory shift with the inclusion of trauma theory as the formation of both India and Pakistan included both, rejoicing *and* trauma?

**Keywords:** Postcolonial theory, hybridity, epistemic violence, trauma theory

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Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP. 1999.

### **Bio**

Radhika Mohanram teaches Critical Theory and Postcolonial Studies in the School of English, Communication and Philosophy in Cardiff University, Wales. She is currently completing her next monograph on the 1947 Indian partition. She was Chair of EACLALS between 2021-2023.

72.

**Tjasa Mohar**

**PANEL: Climate Crisis and Postcolonial Ecofeminisms: Plundering Lands, Exploiting Women. Literary Representations in Context**

### **Animal Exploitation and Sexual Abuse in Alice Munro’s “Vandals”: an Ecostylistic Approach**

Fur farming started in Canada in the late 1880s and was a lucrative business for Canadian farmers in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lately, there have been numerous efforts worldwide to ban fur farming for its exploitation of animals and nature; however, Canada remains among the few countries where it is still legal. The Nobel prize-winning author Alice Munro herself grew up on a fox and mink farm in southwestern Ontario. Unsurprisingly, fur farming features in several of her stories, particularly the more autobiographical ones. An early story, “Boys and Girls,” addresses a girl’s exposure to the animal slaughter occurring on her doorstep. “Vandals” is another of Munro’s stories that explores the exploitation of animals in connection with gender issues. The story’s male protagonist, Ladner, is a taxidermist who catches wild animals, skins them, and mounts them for sale to museums or for exhibit in his private collection. The story also reveals that he sexually abuses a young girl who lives next door, ‘collecting’ her as he does the mounted animal bodies. This paper therefore proposes an ecofeminist reading of “Vandals”, linking Ladner’s exploitation of nature to his exploitation of the girl’s body, in line with ecofeminist theory (D’Eaubonne 2022; Vakoch et al. 2018). The ecofeminist approach will be further supported by a stylistic analysis of descriptions of the natural environment where Ladner lives and operates and the concomitant discourse, which falls within the domain of ecostylistics (Douthwaite et al. 2017; Virdis 2022).

**Keywords:** Alice Munro, Vandals, animal exploitation, ecofeminist critique, ecostylistics.

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## Bio

Tjaša Mohar is an Assistant Professor of English and North American literature at the University of Maribor in Slovenia, specializing in Canadian Studies. In her PhD, she investigated the reception of Alice Munro's short fiction in Slovenia. Besides contemporary Canadian literature, her research interests include the short story and Modernist literature, particularly in connection with gender studies and stylistics. She has done research in literary translation as well and has translated several Alice Munro's works into Slovene. In a recent national research project, she investigated the framing of ecological issues in children's books and in the media, which has sparked her interest in ecofeminist critique. She is a member of the international Poetics and Linguistics Association (PALA) and the representative for Slovenia at the Central European Association for Canadian Studies.

73.

## Costanza Mondo

### Exploring Abdulrazak Gurnah's Arboreal Imagery as Figuration of "African Ecocriticism"

Abdulrazak Gurnah's oeuvre has been widely discussed with respect to the oceanic cosmopolitanism of the East African coast (Steiner and Olausson 2023, among others). Yet, scholars have not addressed ecocritical themes in the author's works, thereby making the ecocritical images of trees in his narratives an uncharted academic terrain. This paper applies a green ecocritical approach to Gurnah's novels by examining the narrative import and ecocritical relevance of two arboreal representations in his oeuvre: a breadfruit tree in *Paradise* (1994) and a jackfruit tree in *The Last Gift* (2011). While the first novel presents the coming-of-age of a Swahili boy in the world of caravan trade of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century mainland Tanzania, the second partly engages with 1960s Zanzibar. Drawing on Vierke's poetic concept of "figuration" (2022), the analysis aims to demonstrate the textual and pragmatic meaning of these arboreal images and their ability to elicit the Swahili world. By relying on Concilio and Fargione's research on trees in literature (2021) and Timothy Clark's reflections (2019), the essay argues that focusing on Gurnah's arboreal imagery grants access to further layers of meaning in his novels and that his representation of trees is in line with Vital's concept of "African ecocriticism" (2008). Aside from being an example of trees in literature, Gurnah's arboreal images invite ecocriticism to consider the historical and cultural specificity of the East African context, the entanglements between the nonhuman and memory, and the unique forms that ecocritical elements take on in a territory marked by European colonialism.

**Keywords:** arboreal imagery, figuration, African ecocriticism, Abdulrazak Gurnah, trees in literature.

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## Bio

Costanza Mondo (Orcid n. 0000-0002-2236-4580) is a PhD student in Digital Humanities at the Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Modern Cultures at the University of Torino, Italy. She is interested in Postcolonial literature and Ecocriticism. Her research interests include African and Indian Anglophone literature, and contemporary English literature. The authors she has particularly focused on are Amitav Ghosh, Aravind Adiga, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Ian McEwan and Kazuo Ishiguro. She has published in national and international journals and is the author of the monograph *Writing on Water: Blue Ecocriticism in Amitav Ghosh's Writings* (Mimesis, 2025).

## 74.

### Anuparna Mukherjee

#### **Longing for Riverine Spaces: Migration, Nostalgia and the Postcolonial Poetics of Reconciliation**

By dismantling the terra-centric narratives of space bounded by borders, this paper invokes an affective history of the 'waters' and the wet ecology in the "lowlands" of India and Bangladesh, against the memories of post-Partition migration for reconceptualising the conduits of *repair* through fecund fluvial imaginaries in South Asian fiction. Analysing postcolonial, anglophone climate fiction such as the *Gun Island* by Amitav Ghosh, or classics in translation like *A River Called Titas* by Adwaita Mallabarma, the *Boatman of Padma* by Manik Bandyopadhyay, the paper interprets the complex entwining of sensory, environmental and spatio-political narratives woven around the history of rivers and a shared lifeworld of communities that was sundered by the sudden political rupture and consequent migration of millions across the borders. This collective history of the riverine communities through their journeys in the novel of the rivers and "Chars" (shoals) prior to India's Partition, in the goo-political region, which constitutes the world's largest delta, is invoked in recollections at every site of displacement, including contemporary literature and art. This paper studies how nostalgia, enfolded in the dense memory of the rivers braiding themselves in the syncretic life of deltaic people, may mend the broken fabric of cultural life in post-Partition literature, despite the political chasm and the sporadic violence in the region. Thus, located against the larger history of migration, I interrogate through a synoptic reading of texts and contexts how memories of water resuscitate a more fundamental connection through "fluid" pathways that stand opposed to the dominant narratives of friction, amidst the escalating tension in postcolonial South Asia.

**Keywords:** migration, river fiction, Partition, repair, memory/nostalgia.

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## Bio

Anuparna Mukherjee is an Assistant Professor in the Department of HSS at IISER Bhopal. She holds a PhD in Literature from the Australian National University, Canberra. Her research interests include memory studies, cities and neighbourhoods, and colonial modernity. Anuparna's article, "After the Empire: Narratives of Haunting in the Postcolonial Spectropolis", was published in *South Asian Review*. Her publications include "Viral Nostalgia" in EPW and "Knots of Time Reading Nostalgia in Bengali Literature from the 13th to the 19th Century" in the anthology, *Retelling Time* by Routledge. Anuparna's piece, "Imperial Malady: Empire and Affect in Colonial Narratives", in *Ecological Entanglements* has been published by Orient Blackswan. She co-authored the essay "The Poem and Its Audience" with Arka Chattopadhyay in *The Cambridge Companion to the Poem*. Her recent article, *Memory of landscapes: nostalgia, migration and the exilic memory of the East Bengali refugees,* with Prititi Roy, was published in *Contemporary South Asia*.

## 75.

### Durba Mukherjee

#### **Life, Death, and Migrant Imaginations: The Right to Aspire in Salman Rushdie's *Knife***

Salman Rushdie's *Knife: Meditations after an Attempted Murder* (2023) reclaims the memoir form as a space where life, death, and narration converge to articulate an ethics of survival. Written in the aftermath of a near-fatal attack, *Knife* transforms private trauma into a meditation on creativity and mortality, testing the limits of what Arjun Appadurai calls, 'the capacity to aspire'. Rushdie's act of writing becomes a means of reclaiming both his life and his voice, asserting the resilience of imagination amid the crises of intolerance, identity politics, and ideological extremisms that define our times, across the globe.

The memoir's form itself functions as a narrative of life, ironically, posited on the fulcrum of a near-death experience. In confronting his own wounding, Rushdie reflects on the fragility of human aspiration in contrast to their realities, in what Zygmunt Bauman terms 'liquid modernity', an age marked by moral uncertainty and relentless mobility. Within this frame, the figures of Rushdie and his assailant again confront each other to negotiate divergent relationships towards homeland, host countries and each other. Their opposed worldviews demonstrate how migration may engender either creative pluralism or destructive rigidity. Drawing on Martha Nussbaum's conception of narrative imagination as central to ethical, democratic understanding, this paper argues that *Knife* reanimates the humanistic function of storytelling as reconciliation, transforming injury into art, and affirming humanities as a necessary force for sustaining life against violence.

**Keywords:** *Knife*, Salman Rushdie, migration, life writing, literary imagination.

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### **Bio**

Durba Mukherjee <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7244-926X> is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Gokhale Memorial Girls' College, Kolkata. She holds a PhD from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, where she worked on the travel memoirs of Indian middle-class returnees in a dissertation titled "Literature of Return: Portrayals of India in the Travel Memoirs of Indian Middle-Class Returnees." Her research interests include life writing, travel literature, and Indian writing in English. She is revising her doctoral thesis into a monograph, which has been initially accepted for publication by Routledge. Her research works have appeared in *Life Writing*, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, and *Studies in Travel Writing*.

76.

### **Nibedita Mukherjee**

#### **They Still Sing of Crossings and Conflicts: The Indigenous Song Culture of Santal Women of Purulia Ecotopia**

The Ajodhya Hills have been part of the extended mountain range of the Eastern Ghats in India. These Hills are covered with forest lands since pre-historic times and are home to many Indigenous communities. In particular, the Santals have a long history of displacement and discrimination. Their resistance against the Dikus (outsiders) in the form of small movements in their respective regions for their right to existence is noteworthy as an instance of a thunderous collective voice as evident in the Kherwar Movement of 1833 and the Santal Movement of 1855. Protest songs have been part of these movements and are indicative of a shared pattern of active agency and reclamation amongst Indigenous communities. Times have changed but these communities still remember their leaders who had fought against all odds. Songs sung, usually by women, during the festivals such as Baha, Tusu and Bhadu festivals, speak not only of the long history of protest but also deep-rooted connections with the land.

Through ethnographic fieldwork, oral history, and lyrical analysis, the study investigates how indigenous Santal women use song as a medium to remember, resist, and reimagine their histories of displacement, migration, and ecological belonging. These songs, often performed during communal rituals, agricultural cycles, and women's gatherings, encode deep environmental knowledge, ancestral memory, and gendered labour narratives. In examining the intersection of

voice, land, and identity, the paper argues that these performative traditions function as living archives—continuously negotiating the past and present in the face of socio-economic marginalization and cultural erasure. The study foregrounds the agency of Santal women as cultural custodians and creators, emphasizing their role in sustaining indigenous ecologies and epistemologies through embodied musical practice. Ultimately, the paper contributes to decolonial methodologies by centering indigenous women's voices in conversations around cultural continuity, ecological ethics, and historical memory.

**Keywords:** Santal women, migration, conflicts, performative traditions, living archives.

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### **Bio**

Nibedita Mukherjee is Professor of English at Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia, India—an institution serving largely indigenous communities. Her research interests include Feminist Studies, Digital Humanities, and Ecocritical Studies with a focus on Indigenous folk literature and sustainability practices. Author of five books, she received the USA State Fellowship Award (SUSI) and gained academic experience at Seattle University, USA. Professor Mukherjee has served as Editor of the *Wesleyan Journal of Research* and on several editorial boards. She collaborated with the Teaching Learning Center, IIT Kharagpur, as Research Collaborator and Subject Expert on the MHRD-funded project "*Graphic-Novel Based Pedagogy in Teaching Grammar in Schools*." She also worked as Principal Investigator on the ICSSR-funded project "*Folklores and Folkvoices: Preserving the Environmental Ethnospace*" and is engaged as Co-Principal Investigator in the ICSSR major research project "*Digital Empowerment and Traditional Knowledge Systems: A Case Study from Bankura and Purulia, West Bengal*." In 2025, she has also been an International Collaborator for a project on Indigenous Resilience under the York Environmental Sustainability Institute (YESI), University of York, UK.

Francesca Mussi

**A “Postcolonising” Reading of Melissa Lucashenko’s *Edenglassie* (2023): Truth-Telling, Indigenous Vulnerabilities to Colonial Legacies and Intergenerational Stories**

In the last decade, Australia has seen an increasing number of governmental and local truth-telling initiatives to address the colonial history of dispossession and assimilation of its Indigenous inhabitants (Boer 2024). Statistics, however, indicate a gap between Indigenous peoples’ calls for truth-telling as a key component in transforming Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships, and non-Indigenous Australians’ knowledge about and engagement with truth-telling. This gap might be caused by a different approach to the concept of truth-telling: while for Indigenous peoples truth-telling is “the prelude to the acknowledgment of sovereignty and a pathway to self-determination”, for non-Indigenous Australians “it is an end in itself, the recognition of a past [they] can put behind them” (Graves 2024, 10).

In this connection, scholars have highlighted how Australia’s rhetorical framing of reconciliation policy has sought to situate the *truth* of colonial injustice as *historical*, thus creating a “temporal disconnection” that overlooks the colonial roots of ongoing structural violence and discrimination against Indigenous peoples in the present and that, in turn, “reimagine[s] Australia as a harmonious and post-colonial state” (Hand & Short 2024, 309).

Through analysis of *Edenglassie* by Goorie writer Melissa Lucashenko, this paper seeks to demonstrate how Indigenous literature can amplify and complicate current debates on truth-telling and reconciliation, foregrounding the concept of Australia as “postcolonising” – a term coined by Goenpul sociologist Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2003) to emphasise the ongoing nature of colonial domination. This novel, as I argue, employs intergenerational storytelling to reshape understandings of the past, present and future, and bring to the fore Indigenous resilience and relations to the land.

**Keywords:** Australia; truth-telling; reconciliation; postcolonising; Melissa Lucashenko’s *Edenglassie*.

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**Bio**

Francesca Mussi is currently an independent scholar, academically affiliated as Cultore della Materia in English Literature with the Department of Philology, Literature and Linguistics at the University of Pisa. She has held positions at the University of Northumbria and, more recently, at Sapienza

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78.

**Valentina Napoli**

**PANEL: Multiple Crises in Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific: The Legacy of Western Imperialism**

**Climate Crisis and Ecocriticism in New Zealand and Pacific Fiction**

As Buell points out, “the ‘environmental crisis’ is not just a matter of threat to land or nonhuman life forms, but it is a comprehensively civilisational phenomenon. [...] it concerns the daily experiential behaviour of the whole human species” (quoted in Qingqi 79-80). Although fiction does not develop strategies for coping with global climate change (a responsibility of specialized disciplines like ecology, public policy and law), it can however be an important instrument of cultural policy, contributing significantly to understanding environmental degradation and increasing awareness that the protection of natural resources is vital for present and future generations. The purpose of this paper is to investigate ecocritical perspectives in a selection of works by indigenous New Zealand and Pacific authors, showing the educational potential of their fiction in respect to environmental responsibility. In particular, the paper will analyse environmental issues in short stories and novels by Māori writers Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace, and in the works of Pacific writers and activists Haunani-Kay-Trask, Cita Morei and Dewé Gorodé, pointing to the way in which literature can play an important role in stimulating awareness in readers' attitudes toward the environment. A close reading of these works reveals how the ‘eco’ aspect of Pacific fiction is deeply entwined with colonial history and Pacific resistance to land dispossession. In this sense, Pacific works can provide examples of the intersections of postcolonial and environmental texts and their study can be situated within the two apparently independent disciplines whose boundaries have been recently crossed, as testified by Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin in their *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*.

**Keywords:** New Zealand literature, Pacific literature, ecocriticism, Pacific environmental activism, postcolonial criticism.

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### **Bio**

Dr Valentina Napoli holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Auckland. She has published articles and book reviews in several academic journals, among which *Journal of New Zealand and Pacific Studies*, *Italian Studies in Southern Africa* and *Linguistics and Literature Studies*. She has also translated and edited John Mulgan's novel *Man Alone* into Italian (Kappa, 2015). She has worked as Guest Lecturer and Teaching Assistant in the School of European Languages and Literatures of the University of Auckland. She has presented several papers at the University of Sydney, at the University of Melbourne, at the University of Goroka (PNG), at the University of Witwatersrand (Johannesburg), and at five New Zealand Studies Association Conferences (Radboud University in 2013, Oslo in 2014, Vienna in 2015, Lugano in 2016 and Strasbourg in 2017).

## **79.**

### **Giulia Nonno**

#### **Monisha Rajesh's "Hyphenated" Cultural Identity in *Around India in 80 Trains* (2012)**

The present paper sets out to explore the complexities of migration and identity formation by examining the writing of the British travel writer Monisha Rajesh, who investigates her multicultural origins and, what Carl Thompson calls, 'hyphenated' (2025, p. 258) cultural identity by travelling by train in the Republic of India. In 2010, Rajesh set out on a journey that would take her across India on board a selection of trains for four months to rediscover her Indian cultural heritage and a country she was becoming estranged from. This exploratory endeavour was deeply documented in *Around India in 80 Trains*, a travel book Rajesh published in 2012, in which she illustrates the complexity and richness of migration experiences, from her non-resident Indian perspective, by studying the cultures, traditions, and communities of the regions from which her family originates. Travelling around India and dealing with feelings of belonging, estrangement and marginalisation constituted a pivotal moment in the formation of Rajesh's identity. This reinforces her complex relationship with her parents' place of origin, previously threatened by her geographical and cultural distance. This paper aims to demonstrate how travelling compels Rajesh to broaden and re-evaluate the intricacies and richness of migration experiences, thereby facilitating a more profound comprehension of her identity as an Asian British. *Around India in 80 Trains* provides an insider-outsider stance, in which Rajesh is not wholly external but to some extent speaks from, and for, the community she describes from a second-generation immigrant perspective.

**Keywords:** Migration; gender; hyphenated identity; travel writing.

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## **Bio**

Giulia Nonno is a PhD student at the G. d'Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara in Italy, funded by the International PhD Programme run by the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures. Her research project is entitled 'A netnographic analysis of women's travel literature' and investigates current developments in travel literature with a focus on the Middle East through a netnographic approach. Her research areas include women's writing and gender studies with a focus on travelogues written by Italian and English women writers who travelled to the Middle East from the long nineteenth century to the present. Nonno teaches English Legal Language in the Law Department at the Carlo Bo University in Urbino, Italy.

**80.**

## **Aleksandra Novaceskovic**

### **Dystopia and/or Future? Mapping Critical Subtexts in John Lanchester's *The Wall***

This paper examines John Lanchester's novel *The Wall* (2019), which not only exposes the shortcomings of restrictive migration policies and the rise of national isolationism in the face of climate change, but also reveals continuities of Orientalist discourse in a dystopian (near) future world, thus allowing for a critique of Western (neo)colonialist practices. Merging the genre of critical dystopia with Brexit literature, CliFi, and social criticism, the novel creates a future dystopian world that is disturbingly familiar. Lanchester depicts a world in which Great Britain has literally isolated itself behind a concrete Wall surrounding its entire coastline. The Wall protects the country not only from rising sea levels caused by "the Change," but also from migrants, who are dehumanisingly referred to as "the Others." Alongside close reading and textual analysis, this paper draws on the work of Zygmunt Bauman, Sara Ahmed, and Edward W. Said to analyse the novel's potential for social and colonial critique. Bauman's concepts of retrotopia and neotribalism, and Ahmed's insights into emotions and their role in constructing otherness complement Said's arguments in his seminal postcolonial work *Orientalism* (1972). Reading the novel through the lens of Orientalism reveals its anti-imperial and anti-colonial subtext, enabling Lanchester to test dystopian limits and critique Western imperial and colonial politics. The novel demonstrates that fortification and exclusivity are not viable solutions to environmental change and emphasises the interconnectedness of today's globalised world. It can therefore be read as a warning to contemporary society to change its current course.

**Keywords:** John Lanchester, *The Wall*, Orientalism, climate change, critical dystopia.

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## **Bio**

Aleksandra Novaceskovic is a master's student of Anglophone Literatures, Cultures and Media at Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany, specialising in Transcultural Anglophone Studies and Literature and Cultural History. She is currently writing her master's thesis titled "Entangled Memory

in Selected Nigerian and Sri Lankan Historical Fiction.” Her research interests include Anglophone and postcolonial literatures, transcultural theory and literature, and memory studies.

81.

**Maria Olausen**

**PANEL: Material Migrations: Rethinking Crises through Objects in Postcolonial Narratives**

**“The Words Themselves Came Bursting through the Earth:” Writing through Objects in Zoë Wicomb’s *Still Life*.**

In Zoë Wicomb’s last novel *Still Life* (2020), one of the narrators is learning how to write. In this depiction, the narrator stresses the physical aspects of writing as she explores the possibilities of writing on a mud bank, etching letters into stone or writing on paper. In this presentation, I want to look at how the scenes of writing and depiction of letters as objects are used alongside the techniques of metafiction and the figure of the amanuensis in a novel with a thematic focus on slavery and abolitionist discourse. I want to read the novel alongside Wicomb’s essay ‘Reading, Writing, and Visual Production’ from 1995, where she explores the visual properties of writing placed within the context of a discussion of literacy in the New South Africa. This paper aims to show how Wicomb’s exploration of the connection between the acquisition of writing skills and subjection is echoed in her novel.

**Keywords:** objects, materiality, storytelling, memories, writing

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### **Bio**

Maria Olausen is Professor of English at the Department of Languages and Literatures at the University of Gothenburg and a research affiliate in the Department of English at the University of Stellenbosch. She has published widely within the area of African literature, Indian Ocean Studies and Gender Studies and she is the author and editor of a number of works, including a *Forceful Creation in Harsh Terrain: Place and Identity in the Novels by Bessie Head* and *Africa Writing Europe: Oppositions, Entanglements, Juxtapositions*. With Professor Tina Steiner she co-edited the volume of *Critical Perspectives on Abdulrazak Gurnah*. Her forthcoming article on “Slavery, Peonage and Unfree Labour” in the Cambridge UP handbook series on African literature studies literary representations of slavery in African societies across a wide range of different texts and areas. Her most recent research project deals with representations of human-animal encounters in African literature and the use of animal narrators in African texts.

**Marie-Lise Paoli**

**Decolonial Resonance on the Canadian Operatic Stage. Echoes of Migrant Memory in the Soundscape of *Sophia's Forest*.**

This paper examines *Sophia's Forest* (2017), a chamber opera by Canadian playwright Hannah Moscovitch and Estonian-American composer Lembit Beecher, through the lens of decolonial sound studies and postcolonial migration narratives. Focusing on the Canadian première at City Opera Vancouver in May 2025, the study approaches the work as a constructed soundscape (Schafer 1978)—a dynamic environment where migration, memory, and listening practices intersect within a Commonwealth framework of crossings, conflicts, and diasporic re-imaginings. The opera's storyline—of a young war refugee resettled in North America—resonates with Canada's evolving discourse on migration, hospitality, and cultural memory.

*Sophia's Forest* mobilizes sound as a decolonial medium of testimony: Beecher's use of robotic sound sculptures externalizes Sophia's fractured memories, transforming the operatic stage into a resonant archive of displacement. These instruments of memory disrupt the essentialising tendencies of the "figure of sound" (Eidsheim 2018), opening more relational modes of hearing identity, trauma, and belonging. By unsettling the Eurocentric codes of operatic form, the work creates an aural cartography of survival that both challenges and redefines the colonial inheritance of Western art music.

Through analysis of the Vancouver production's spatial design and sonic dramaturgy, this paper argues that *Sophia's Forest* enacts a decolonial ethics of listening. It invites audiences to *hear* migration as an ongoing act of resonant negotiation—a polyphonic response to multiple global crises in which memory, technology, and sound collaborate to imagine new forms of collective awareness and healing.

**Keywords:** decolonial; soundscape; opera; migration; Canada.

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**Bio**

Marie-Lise Paoli is an Associate Professor of English Literature at Bordeaux-Montaigne University, France, and director of the research centre on women's creativity (ERCIF-UR Plurielles). In 1998, she was awarded the Margaret Atwood Society Prize for her article "Fertility and Sterility in The Handmaid's Tale: The Waste Land of Gilead." She has published numerous articles and book

chapters on musicalized fiction, opera, intertextuality and intermediality, gender, and the rewriting of myth in contemporary British and Canadian literature. She serves as the director of the Canadian Studies research centre (CECIB) in Bordeaux, where she oversees interdisciplinary projects on Canadian literature, culture, and society.

83.

**Marek Pawlicki**

**Communicating Crisis in Post-Apartheid Literature: A Reading of Nthikeng Mohlele's *A Little Light and Revolutionaries' House***

In an interview conducted in 1992, Nadine Gordimer spoke about “the crisis of expectation” (Gordimer 1992, 142) that the liberation movement faced in the post-apartheid era. Over thirty years after this interview, the term is still relevant in South Africa, as both writers and critics continue to explore the disappointment and frustration of the new dispensation. Economic and social inequalities have greatly contributed to the growth of tensions, often manifesting themselves in conflicts and acts of violence that further destabilize the political situation. The aim of this paper is to explore the state of social and political crisis by analysing the works of the South African writer Nthikeng Mohlele. Concentrating on Mohlele’s short story collection *A Little Light* (2023) and his most recent novel, *Revolutionaries’ House* (2024), I will consider the individual and collective dimensions of political crisis, as conveyed in Mohlele’s first-person narratives. I will argue that his writing can be productively explored from the viewpoint of the emotions expressed in it (for example, anger and sadness), which create a certain affective atmosphere that can be analyzed in the context of South Africa's social and political reality. Referring to the studies by Rita Barnard, Andrew van der Vlies, Bede Scott, Dennis Walder, and others, this paper contributes to a wider debate on crisis, impasse, and disappointment in post-apartheid literature. At a more general level, this critical intervention engages with the wider issue of how political and social crises are communicated in post-colonial texts.

**Keywords:** Nthikeng Mohlele; communicating crisis in post-apartheid literature; representations of political impasse in postcolonial literature; affect studies; postcolonial studies.

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- Van Der Vlies, Andrew. 2017. *Present Imperfect: Contemporary South African Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Bio**

Marek Pawlicki is an assistant professor at the Institute of Literary Studies at the University of Silesia in Katowice. He is the author of the studies *Between Illusionism and Anti-Illusionism: Self-Reflexivity in the Chosen Novels of JM Coetzee* (2013) and *“Enactments of Life”: The Short Stories of Nadine Gordimer* (2023). He has published articles and essays on the works of J.M. Coetzee, Nadine

Gordimer, Damon Galgut, and Henrietta Rose-Innes. His critical interests include South African literature, postcolonial studies, and affect studies. His latest research project focuses on the representations of masculinity in apartheid and post-apartheid literature.

84.

**Luisa Percopo**

### **Migration and the Translation Practice in Creative Multilingualism**

In an interview conducted in 1992, Nadine Gordimer spoke about “the crisis of expectation” (Gordimer 1992, 142) that the liberation movement faced in the post-apartheid era. Over thirty years after this interview, the term is still relevant in South Africa, as both writers and critics continue to explore the disappointment and frustration of the new dispensation. Economic and social inequalities have greatly contributed to the growth of tensions, often manifesting themselves in conflicts and acts of violence that further destabilize the political situation. The aim of this paper is to explore the state of social and political crisis by analysing the works of the South African writer Nthikeng Mohlele. Concentrating on Mohlele’s short story collection *A Little Light* (2023) and his most recent novel, *Revolutionaries’ House* (2024), I will consider the individual and collective dimensions of political crisis, as conveyed in Mohlele’s first-person narratives. I will argue that his writing can be productively explored from the viewpoint of the emotions expressed in it (for example, anger and sadness), which create a certain affective atmosphere that can be analyzed in the context of South Africa’s social and political reality. Referring to the studies by Rita Barnard, Andrew van der Vlies, Bede Scott, Dennis Walder, and others, this paper contributes to a wider debate on crisis, impasse, and disappointment in post-apartheid literature. At a more general level, this critical intervention engages with the wider issue of how political and social crises are communicated in post-colonial texts.

This paper examines how multilingual novels enact migration through their translation practice, highlighting the “right to aspire” (Appadurai 2004) and the transformative potential of the humanities. Building on postcolonial (and) translation scholarship (Bertacco 2013; Walkowitz 2017; Venuti 2008), it explores what Preece and Reece (2021) term the “Non-Translated” novel—texts marked by snippets of untranslated dialogue that challenge monolingual literary norms. Works such as Junot Díaz’s *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Americanah* (2013), Preti Taneja’s *We That Are Young* (2017), and ultimately Elaine Castillo’s *America Is Not the Heart* (2018), exemplify a conscious refusal to simplify linguistic diversity.

Methodologically, this study uses comparative textual analysis to show how authors embed multiple languages without offering explanatory translations, thus compelling readers to navigate linguistic gaps. This “language sovereignty,” it argues, is a strategic opacity that subverts colonial legacies of linguistic dominance and redefines the reader’s role in navigating multiple languages. Through the careful weaving of different tongues, these novels mirror the lived experiences of diaspora communities, revealing how code-switching fosters empathy and communal solidarity.

Ultimately, this paper demonstrates that translation practice in multilingual fiction not only represents migratory processes but also performs them. By uniting languages across textual borders, these authors push beyond static notions of cultural belonging. The findings underscore the value of creative multilingualism for literature’s role in building inclusive spaces in an era marked by conflict, displacement, and divided societies.

**Keywords:** Multilingual Fiction, Migration, Postcolonial Translation, Code-switching, Cultural Hybridity.

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### **Bio**

Luisa Pèrcopo is a Lecturer in Translation and Cultural Studies at Cardiff University, where she teaches both undergraduate and postgraduate modules. Her multidisciplinary approach integrates critical perspectives on Translation and Minoritized Languages, Queer and Postcolonial Studies, and the intersections of Photography, Film, and Screen Cultures. Through this broad lens, she explores how language, identity, and power converge and diverge in global contexts, focusing especially on marginalized voices. Her work on Queer and Postcolonial Studies draws attention to how translation can both perpetuate and challenge dominant narratives, highlighting the fluidity of cultural meaning in multilingual settings. Informed by an interest in Multilingualism, Mobility and Migration, she investigates the impact of transnational movement on linguistic practices, cultural production, and individual agency. At Cardiff, she also mentors emerging scholars, fostering intellectual collaboration and critical debate. Her scholarship underscores the transformative potential of inclusive translation practices in shaping cross-cultural dialogue and social justice.

**85.**

### **Maria Sofia Pimentel Biscaia**

#### **Labour, Land, and the Non-Human: Reimagining Postcolonial Justice in Laura Jean McKay's *Gunflower***

Laura Jean McKay's *Gunflower* (2023) presents a speculative reimagining of crossings – of species, bodies, borders, and time – that disrupts colonial narratives of separation and control. This presentation explores how McKay situates migration and conflict not only within human geopolitical frameworks, but also across species boundaries, drawing out the entangled experiences of women, animals, and the environment under extractive and imperial systems. The stories foreground forms of forced and voluntary movement, each revealing how colonial and capitalist structures continue to govern mobility and access to space, labour, and autonomy.

Central to this analysis is the way McKay aligns gendered labour with animal exploitation, particularly in relation to reproductive rights and caregiving. The collection critiques the commodification of bodies – human and non-human – as sites of extraction, framing reproduction, migration, and ecological survival as intersecting arenas of struggle. Female and non-human

characters are often depicted navigating environments shaped by conflict, scarcity, and systemic violence, yet they also resist, adapt, and cross thresholds in ways that subvert imposed boundaries. Through speculative storytelling, *Gunflower* challenges the human exceptionalism embedded in colonial hierarchies, advocating for a postcolonial ethics grounded in multispecies justice and mobility. By illuminating the relational nature of conflict and migration – whether between species or empires – McKay reframes postcolonial critique as not only a human concern, but a planetary one. This presentation argues that *Gunflower* urges us to rethink belonging, borders, and the politics of care in a world increasingly shaped by displacement.

**Keywords:** multispecies justice, Critical Animal Studies, gendered labour, ethics of care, postcolonial resistance.

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### **Bio**

Maria Sofia Pimentel Biscaia holds a doctoral degree in Literature (2005). She has published extensively in domestic and international journals and is the author of the book *Postcolonial and Feminist Grotesque: Texts of Contemporary Excess*. She also co-edited the collection of essays *Intercultural Crossings: Conflict, Memory, Identity*. She has presented numerous papers in international conferences on related issues ranging from gender, animality, food studies, advertising and national identity, feminist and postcolonial intersections. Since 2022 she is the invited guest speaker on Literature in English for the postgraduate course Animals and Society held by the University of Lisbon. She is working on the manuscript *Zoopolitical Narratives: Postcolonial, Gendered, Ecological, and Posthuman Perspectives*.

**86.**

### **Jill Planche**

**Rethinking "Assemblages of Consciousness" through Modise Sekgothe's *Gabo Legwala*: a Case for Theatre's Potentiality in a Layered Milieu of Crisis.**

*In the Wilderness you shout in a million different directions. And nothing speaks back. Not within all of infinity. No one is ever coming. Not in any time frame within the bounds of eternity. Yours is a lonely road. Yours isn't even a road. It's a riddle. Unsolvable. No one knows you in person or in passing. You are a passing wind barely detectible. You are a fading picture that still imagines itself visible . . . You are nothing to everything around you. You are something forgotten that was never*

*known. Everything discarded that was never made. You are the paradox of space and time. For you have no place, thus no story, no face, and thus no memory. You are a sound that sunk into the ground. A tremor unnoticed. A glimmer of a glimmer.*

- Modise Sekgothe, *Gabo Legwala*.

This paper views the crisis as a long process of slow violence over time, per Barenboim and Nixon, to argue the endurance of psychological and physical conditions in South Africa that erased basic humanistic expectations and aspirations—decades after the end of apartheid—is such a crisis. Through close reading of Modise Sekgothe’s poem/play *Gabo Legwala*, I will explore the potential of immanent theatre’s relational embodied processes to rethink this “assemblage of consciousness” (Lalu) in order to express new subjectivities, implicating Deleuze’s generative notion of bodies, mind and space moving beyond identitarian grounding of assumed identities in affirmative processes of becoming. Apartheid’s laws and boundaries created a condition of alienation, negation of existence and loss of aspirations. Deleuze’s ontology offers decoloniality as a way of theorising anew, thinking differently, toward creation of new potentialities and ways of life. *Gabo Legwala* evinces such an imminent process in a dynamic blend of music, poetry and storytelling. At the centre is the meditation of Nish, a young boy growing up without a father in apartheid Soweto’s landscape of spatial denigration and negation of selfhood in which, he says, “you have no place, thus no story, no face, and thus no memory”; a place with no aspirations. Echoing Fanon’s theory of decolonization as self constitution through “dialectic of time, life and creation,” and Ngugi’s notion of self-realization in relationship to other selves (Mbembe, 53), Sekgothe believes hope lies in language; in telling your stories, in finding “you,” in the community of theatre.

**Keywords:** aspirations, immanence, Deleuze, theatre, decoloniality.

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### **Bio**

Jill Planche is an independent scholar and sessional instructor (Philanthropy, Toronto Metropolitan U, and Humanities, Brock U). Education: PhD English Literature (“*In a Large Landscape*”: *The Resonance of Land and Landscape in the Literature and Art of South Africa*. York U, 2007) and PhD Interdisciplinary Humanities (*The Larger Stages: The Becoming ‘Minor’ of South African Theatres*. Brock U, 2020). Research interests include: postcolonial/decolonial literature; ‘minor’ theatre’s role in South African and Canadian contemporary discourse; decolonizing knowledges; posthumanism, and social justice. Publications include: “Discovering the ‘in-common’ in Magnet Theatre’s *Every Year, Every Day, I am Walking*.” Ch. 10, in *Ruptured Commons*, edited by Anna Guttman and

Veronica J. Austen (Benjamins, 2024) and “Recuperating Historical Narratives of Violence and Dislocation in Rehane Abrahams’ *What the Water Gave Me*.” Ch.13 in *Forays into Contemporary South African Theatre*, edited by Marc and Jessica Maufort (Brill, 2020).

87.

Iva Polak

### **Decolonising Futures: Techno-Animism in Indigenous Australian Speculative Fiction**

In the current era of liquid modernity, which has replaced “the fears recorded in Orwellian and Huxleyan-style nightmares” (Bauman 2000, 15) with “the unnerving feeling of unmitigated uncertainty” (Bauman 2000, 61), it is becoming increasingly apparent that the techno-driven Western epistemology is proving unsustainable in addressing a planetary crisis caused by the “constant reproduction of ‘coloniality’” (Mignolo 2005, 450), which has persisted and mutated across multiple sectors. Often operating under the guise of globalisation, development, and innovation, these systems extract not only resources but also futurity itself. Given that Western epistemological Ouroboros cannot provide answers to sustainable futurity, Indigenous knowledge systems, which fuse nature and culture, offer a powerful tool not only for mitigating the effects of the climate crisis but also for rethinking technological developments. One such approach can be found in Indigenous Australian cultures. However, while Indigenous ontology eludes interpretation through Western epistemological frameworks, Indigenous speculative fiction, which fuses Indigenous knowledge systems with contemporary scientific thought, renders Indigenous Country-centred ontology more accessible to wider audiences. By examining several short stories from the first anthology of Indigenous Australian speculative fiction, *This All Come Back Now* (2022), the discussion will demonstrate how Indigenous writers draw on Indigenous sciences stemming from practical environmental knowledge steeped in so-called “Deep Time” and “Country”, to imagine techno-animist futures. Collectively, these texts expand the project of Indigenous Futurisms (Dillon 2012), which aims to decolonise the future by disrupting the assumptions of liquid modernity and envisaging different tomorrows.

**Keywords:** Indigenous Australian speculative fiction, liquid modernity, techno-animism, decolonisation, Indigenous Futurisms.

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### **Bio**

Iva Polak is Associate Professor in the Department of English, University of Zagreb, Croatia, where she teaches courses on Indigenous Australian storytelling, theory and history of the fantastic, contemporary British fiction, graphic novel, and Anthropocene fiction and film. Her research interests lie in Indigenous Futurisms, cli-fi, posthumanism, environmental colonialism, and decolonial ecology. Her most recent monograph in English is *Futuristic Worlds in Australian*

*Aboriginal Fiction* (Peter Lang, 2017). Some of her recent papers in English include “Wording Mute Posthumanism in Alexis Wright’s *The Swan Book*”, *Antipodes*, 36/1, 2022: 107-122; “Indigenous Futurism” in *The Cambridge History of the Australian Novel*, ed. David Carter (Cambridge University Press, 2023); and “Claire G. Coleman’s *Terra Nullius: Welcome to Australia’s ‘future past’*” in *Mapping the Megatext: Essays on Global Science Fiction*, ed. Dale Knickerbocker (University of Wales Press, forthcoming). She chairs the European Association for Studies of Australia (EASA) and serves on the advisory board of Peter Lang series *World Science Fiction Studies*.

88.

**Vanja Polić**

**Indigenous Resistance and Indigenous Gothic: Healing Trauma and Nature in Jessica Johns’s *Bad Cree***

Drawing on Johns’s novel *Bad Cree* (2023) the paper examines how Indigenous writers respond to the Western strategies of continued dominance, and environmental as well as cultural destructions of First Nations. Namely, the novel crosses the Western-imposed borders between dream and waking world as the protagonist is drawn to remember/reconstruct the circumstances of her sister’s death with the help of her female family members. Her sister’s murder represents generational colonial trauma that is also closely tied to a location culturally significant for the family. The location reflects not only the family trauma but climate crisis as well: it is polluted and unrecognizable. Thus, long-term exploitation and generational trauma of First Nations and environment are inextricably intertwined, echoing Rob Nixon’s notion of slow violence, in which long-term, often invisible environmental harm is inseparable from the protracted violences inflicted on marginalized communities (2011). Within the novel’s storyworld, the novel’s portrayal of dreamworld and waking world as equally ‘real’ are in line with Daniel Heath Justice’s claim that “Indigenous wonderworks are neither strictly ‘fantasy’ nor ‘realism,’” and that they “push against the expectations of rational materialism” (Justice 2018, 154). By proposing an alternative to Western ways of seeing and exploitation, Johns’s novel heavily relies on traditional Nehiyaw cosmology, with the aim to “decolonize the imagination by bridging the ideological boundaries that often separate the beneficiaries of colonialism from those who are objectified and impoverished by it” (Cariou 2014, 32). The novel ultimately offers an alternative ontology and ethics to the Western exploitative strategies.

**Keywords:** Indigenous gothic, Indigenous resistance, *Bad Cree*, intergenerational solidarity, decolonial literature

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- Nixon, Rob. 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press.

## Bio

Vanja Polić is Associate Professor at the Department of English at the University of Zagreb, Croatia, where she teaches literary theory, contemporary Canadian literature, and the 18<sup>th</sup>-century British novel. Her research interests include contemporary Canadian literature, settler colonialism and anglophone contemporary literature. Her current project concerns contemporary western Canadian literature, with special emphasis on the revisions of the myth of the West. She has published articles on the topic in journals and volumes. She is a member of the editorial board of *Canadian Literature: A Quarterly of Criticism and Review*.

89.

## Raihan Rahman

### **Precarious Lives in the Anthropocene: Capital, Sovereignty, and the Question of Bare Life in South Asian Fiction**

My paper examines the politics of precarity in the Anthropocene, pivoting on bare life, through readings of postcolonial South Asian fiction. The Anthropocene, besides signifying epochal planetary transitions, also signals reconfigurations in politics (Chakrabarty 2021, 13). Moreover, it posits a planetary limit to capital, challenges the order of territorial sovereignty, and invokes the state of exception in the name of crisis management (Wainwright and Mann 2020, 28-38). The entangled crises of this disputed epoch are intensifying vulnerabilities, enabling new modalities of biopolitical and necropolitical determination of life that culminate in the continuous reproduction of bare life. Giorgio Agamben theorizes bare life – the disposable form of life stripped of political rights and legal standing – as that which is implicated by sovereign power through warranting the state of exception (Agamben 1998, 181). In this paper, I contest Agamben’s predominantly juridical reading of bare life and instead explore the possibility of situating it within the “relative surplus population” produced through the accumulation of capital (Marx 2009, 512). In my investigation of bare life, I read Amitav Ghosh’s *Gun Island* and Saad Z. Hossain’s *Kundo Wakes Up* as novels that locate precarity in the nexus of displacement, crossing, and migration in the wake of planetary ecological collapse. Through close literary reading and theoretical analysis, my paper provides a critical understanding of both precarity and politics in the Anthropocene, considering bare life in postcolonial and transnational contexts. Here, I argue that the interplay of capital and sovereignty enforces states of exception by exploiting planetary crises to reproduce and regulate bare life.

**Keywords:** Anthropocene, bare life, capital, sovereignty, precarity.

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## Bio

Raihan Rahman (Legal name: S A M Raihanur Rahman) is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of English in the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His areas of interest include Marxian theory, environmental humanities, postcolonial and decolonial studies, global anglophone fiction, and Bengali literature. Currently, Raihan’s research focuses on politics in and of the Anthropocene. Raihan’s PhD dissertation examines how the interplay of capital and sovereign power conditions the

re/production of bare life and complicates liberatory political possibilities in the Anthropocene. A writer and translator, he works both in Bengali and English.

90.

**Priyadarshini Rajendran**

**The Cure is Death: Narrative Logic, Gendered Erasure, and Memory Migration in *Tamarind History***

This paper examines *Oru Puliyamarathin Kathai* (trans. Tamarind History, 2013) by Sundara Ramaswamy as a meditation on the limits of literature as both an archive and an artifact, particularly in its selective remembrance of gendered trauma. Situated within Tamil literary modernism's engagement with developmental modernity, rural transformation, and the constraints of social realism, the novel adopts a polyphonic narrative form that nonetheless produces significant silences. Through a close reading of narrative organisation and representational strategy, this paper argues that such silences are structurally produced, revealing how gendered erasure is embedded within the novel's representational design. Focusing on the marginalised figure of Chellatayi, a woman who dies by suicide after learning of the death of the man who sexually exploited her, the paper examines how women's suffering, especially that of oppressed and Dalit women, is displaced within the novel's communal memory. Although Chellatayi's death is emotionally charged, her narrative presence is sharply curtailed and absorbed into a male-dominated oral history. This narrative minimisation exemplifies what V. Geetha describes as the "common sense" of caste patriarchy, wherein women's pain is acknowledged only as a metaphor rather than as a lived historical experience. Drawing on Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's formulation of epistemic violence, the paper argues that Chellatayi is rendered visible but not audible within the novel's representational economy. While the text stages multiple narrative registers—oral memory, bureaucratic modernisation, and fragmented folk histories—these remain organised around a narrative centre that privileges male perception. Engaging Bakhtin's concept of dialogism alongside Saidiya Hartman's critique of the archive and Veena Das's work on everyday violence, the paper demonstrates how *Tamarind History* reveals literature's dual function as a site of sanctioned memory and structured forgetting.

**Keywords:** Archive-Artifact, Caste, Patriarchy, Gendered Trauma, Memory, Forgetting, Narrative Displacement

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## **Bio**

Priyadarshini Rajendran is a doctoral researcher in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras. She completed her undergraduate studies in English Honours at Hindu College, University of Delhi, and earned her master's degree from the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. Her research focuses on caste, gender, and aesthetics, with a particular emphasis on Dalit literature and Tamil writings. She explores how marginalized voices navigate literary and social hierarchies, investigating questions of representation, narrative form, and the politics of erasure. Priyadarshini's work examines the ways in which literature by and about oppressed communities challenges dominant cultural narratives and reshapes critical traditions. Her scholarship engages with theoretical frameworks from Dalit feminist thought, subaltern studies, and aesthetic theory, offering nuanced readings of narrative strategies, structural silences, and the aesthetics of suffering. Through her research, she seeks to foreground voices often excluded from mainstream literary discourse and to rethink the intersections of caste, gender, and literature.

91.

## **Katherine Ann Roberts**

### **Mystery, Magic and Reverse Migration in *The Deportation of Whopper Barraza* by Maceo Montoya**

This paper builds on the well-established connections between Chicana and postcolonial literatures to analyze *The Deportation of Whopper Barraza* (2014) by Maceo Montoya. Chicana communities have been immersed in crisis since the 9/11 era, when increased border enforcement measures and U.S. authority crackdowns began detaining, displacing and deporting their members. The Trump administration's deportation frenzy is an augmented and emboldened continuation of decades of attacks on the poor and undocumented. The current crisis summons us to look at how US-to-Mexico deportation is reflected and retold in contemporary Chicana literature. Montoya's *The Deportation of Whopper Barraza*, the story of an underachieving youth's deportation from Woodland, California to his family's land in Michoacán and his rise in local politics thanks to a village woman, challenges a plethora of narrative tropes (heroism, resilience), gender stereotypes and reader expectations about bleak deportation stories. Blending folkloric, fantasy and social realist elements, Montoya offers a radically different yet empowering and provocative transnational tale about settlers, newcomers, deportees and returnees. This paper will examine the novel in the context of current research on deportation and Chicana narrative, highlighting the imaginative power of fiction to legitimize, humanize, and complexify the migrant experience in ways that challenge and provoke existing discourses.

**Keywords:** Chicana literature, migration, transnationalism, deportation, borders

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Ulibarri, Kristy L. *Visible Borders, Invisible Economies: Living Death in Latinx Narratives*. Austin: University of Texas Press. 2022.

### **Bio**

Katherine Ann Roberts is Associate Professor of North American studies and French at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario (Canada). She is the author of, *West/Border/Road: Nation and Genre in Contemporary Canadian Narrative* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 2018), on Canadian fiction, film, and television's appropriation and redefinition of American genres. She is also the author of numerous articles on Quebec women's writing, Quebec cinema and the literature and culture of the Canada-US Border. Most recently, she has been working on various aspects of US-Mexico border culture, including Chicano memoir, the representation of the Juarez Femicides and migration narratives.

92.

**Gerardo Rodríguez-Salas**

**PANEL: Multiple Crises in Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific: The Legacy of Western Imperialism**

### **Female Democracy and Spiral Temporality in Patricia Grace's *Potiki***

Although the role of spiral temporality in Patricia Grace has been studied systematically by critics such as Elizabeth Deloughrey, 'Umi Perkins or Barbara Joyce Kinnane, among others, this study contends, in contrast to the "ahistorical" perception of critics such as Norman Simms (1986) and Simon During (1990), that there is a democratizing effect in the cyclical temporalities implemented by female characters in Grace's novel *Potiki*. This use, which will dialogue with Zygmunt Bauman's Western notion of "retrotopia", will lead to rethinking models of imperial democracy in patriarchal tribal spaces and envisioning what critics like Steve Friedman call "open-ended" models of democracy. Although the focus is female characters, Toko, a disabled young boy, is presented as a new form of sacrificial male leadership, who blending Pākehā and Māori cultural values, embraces a matrilineal genealogy that ultimately leads to open models of democracy. Linked to this notion of retrotopia, I contend that Grace relies on spiral temporality as closely intertwined to potent Māori women (Roimata, Mary and Granny Tamihana), who collaboratively devise a democratic model for the clan that is then implemented by a Messianic male figure, Toko, that destabilizes the notion of leadership. He is metaphorically sacrificed for the sake of his community and stands for New Zealand biculturalism (both Jesus Christ in the Christian tradition and Māui in the Māori one), thus embracing a matrilineal genealogy as part of the open and collaborative democratic model that he will leave behind as a gift for the clan and a promise of change.

**Keywords:** Patricia Grace, Kaupapa Māori, Mana Wāhine, nostalgia, imperial democracy, utopia, retrotopia, spiral temporality.

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## Bio

Gerardo Rodríguez-Salas is Professor of English Literature at the University of Granada (Spain). He holds an MA in Women's and Gender Studies from Oxford University. His research interest lies in the intersection of community theory, transparency, democracy, gender and race in contemporary New Zealand literature. He is the author of four research monographs on Katherine Mansfield (Septem, 2007; Verbum, 2008; Edwin Mellen, 2011; Comares, 2023) and two edited collections (Palgrave, 2013; Routledge, 2018). His most recent research has been published in journals such as *Literature, Culture and Empire Today* (previously *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*), *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture*, *Australian Literary Studies*, *Antipodes*, *Journal of New Zealand and Pacific Studies* or *Atlantis* and in publishing houses such as Palgrave, Routledge, Continuum or Bloomsbury. He is a full member of the Council of the International New Zealand Studies Association.

93.

## Mathilde Rogez

### **"In the shadow of the lion-mountain": Craig Higginson's *The Ghost of Sam Webster* as an Ecocritical and Magical Realist Rewriting of the Battle of Sandlwana**

Craig Higginson is known for his willingness to tackle key issues in South Africa, like that of the land and reconciliation in *Dream of the Dog* and *The Dream House*, in ways which often imply a rewriting of canonical genres, such as the *plaasroman* or farm novel. His latest novel, *The Ghost of Sam Webster*, is no exception: it tackles contemporary ecological concerns while tapping into a vein developed earlier in yet another of his works, *The Landscape Painter*. This time the protagonist and *alter ego* of the author is not a painter but a writer, Daniel Hawthorne, come to Zululand, also the site of part of *The Landscape Painter*, to investigate the disappearance of his friend's daughter, Sam Webster, while he tries to put together a novel on "his disgraced ancestor, the soldier and lepidopterist, Lieutenant Charles Hawthorne".

This presentation aims to fathom the way in which Higginson intertwines representations of conflicts at the individual and collective levels, which are part of both a national past and a contemporary present, and riddled with racial as well as economic and ecological issues. Discarding the tone of the historian, his chronicle of iSandlwana suggests we look at the “lion-mountain” and its role in national or political narratives through a more literally down-to-earth lens, and learn to adjust the scale of human conflicts to that of the rhythm of the land itself. This landmark in South African colonial history thus unexpectedly becomes a new way to approach contemporary ecological challenges in KwaZulu-Natal.

**Keywords:** Genres, Epic, Historical novel, Ecocriticism, Magic Realism

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### **Bio**

Mathilde Rogez is a Senior Lecturer at the Université de Toulouse (CAS EA801), specializing in South and Southern African literature. She is the Commonwealth editor for *Miranda* and a member of the editorial board of *Etudes littéraires africaines*. She has recently co-edited *The Suburbs: New Literary Perspectives* (Fairleigh Dickinson, 2022) and *The Legacy of a Troubled Past: Commemorative Politics in South Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Liverpool UP and PU Provence, 2022). She presented a paper on ecocriticism in Sol Plaatje and Alexis Wright at the 2025 ACLALS conference in Nairobi, and was invited in 2025 to present two seminars on Craig Higginson at the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of Pretoria.

**94.**

### **Jack Rondeau**

#### **The Right to Breathe: Breath and Belonging in Three Postcolonial Novels**

The word ‘aspire’ stems from the Latin ‘*aspīrāre*’, meaning ‘to breathe upon, seek to reach’ (OED, 2025). In this paper, I argue that the individual’s right to breathe critically relates to Arjun Appadurai’s (2004) claim about the individual’s capacity to breathe.

Because breathe enables life it frequently becomes a target of prejudicial violence. This paper foregrounds the link between breathe and belonging in three literary examples – Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* (1988), Kamila Shamsie’s *A God in Every Stone* (2014) and Mohsin Hamid’s *Exit West* (2017). Across these novels I demonstrate how government neglect, military violence, and national borders delineate who has access to air, and through it, the freedom to live. I argue that the migrant’s access to breathable air determines their ability to operate as a political subject and secure a sense of belonging.

In 2021, Achille Mbembe wrote in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that breathing is ‘*an originary right to living on Earth*’ that ‘cannot be confiscated and thereby eludes all sovereignty’

(2021, S62). Nevertheless, imperial powers often attempt to appropriate air as an unevenly distributed component of belonging. From Qayyum's survival of a gas attack at Ypres 1915 (*A God in Every Stone*) to an arson attack (*The Satanic Verses*) and Saeed and Nadia's ability to teleport between different war-torn countries (*Exit West*), my selected texts each demonstrate how air becomes a target of exclusionary violence. Read together, they prompt one to consider the individual's right to respire when engaging perennial postcolonial questions about belonging.

**Keywords:** Aspire, Respire, Breath, Belonging, Aerial Violence

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### **Bio**

Jack Rondeau is a PhD student in the School of English at the University of Leeds. His research focuses primarily on literary depictions of aerial violence, warfare, and terrorism in contemporary Central and South Asian literature. His broader research interests include issues surrounding the environmental risks of nuclear power; planetarity, globalization and cosmopolitanism; the relationship between theory and practice, and the application of psychoanalytic approaches to postcolonial fictions. Jack Rondeau has published in *The Journal of Postcolonial Writing*.

95.

### **Moumita Roy**

#### **"Boat-People" Battling Climate and War: The Wayward Venture in Global South Narratives**

The contemporary times are defined by geopolitical instability and the convergence of acute security and climate vulnerabilities. The paper analyses interacting forces driving this instability—accelerating nuclear proliferation, escalating terrorism, civil unrest, war and profound neo-colonial environmental degradation—which have entangled human beings in a flux of climate and war. Their "wayward venture" signifies both the physical reality of a precarious existence at sea or crossing rivers and the profound, metaphorical state of statelessness and abandonment. This paper argues that this crisis creates a vulnerable class whose "waywardness" embodies both the physical reality of precarious littoral existence and the profound, metaphorical state of indelible transience. This transience, in turn, maps memory and displacement for the future generations of South and Southeast Asia.

The chosen fiction reckons with this hardship: *The Storm: A Novel* (2018) by Arif Anwar uses the boat as a polyvalent symbol of survival and premonition; *The Last Wave: An Island Novel* (2014) by exposes the violent transience of island life through the 2004 Tsunami; and *Crossing the Farak River* (2020) centers on the perilous river crossing as a symbol of forced flight during the Rohingya refugee crisis. Amitav Ghosh's "The Town By The Sea" (2025), on the other hand, offers a crucial,

non-fictional reckoning with the 2004 Tsunami's aftermath in the Nicobar Islands. It grounds the narrative in the vulnerable littoral zone, connecting the islands' history, the sudden nature of the catastrophe, and the transience of human existence when faced with the raw, destructive power of nature. By exploring these literary narratives, this paper argues that there is an urgent need to make sense of the planet ( Heise 2008) in times of humanitarian crisis.

**Keywords:** climate, migration, war, littoral-zones, refugee

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Thin, Michelle Aung. *Crossing the Farak River*. Toronto and Berkeley: Annick Press, 2020.

### **Bio**

Moumita Roy is a PhD scholar in the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi. Roy's primary research and teaching interests lie in diaspora studies, ecocriticism, gender studies, partition literature, postcolonial literature, migration, and Global South/Asian literatures.

96.

### **Sadananda Sahoo**

#### **Narratives in Home Politics: The Case of Indian Diaspora in the Digital Space**

Building narratives are one powerful way to influence public opinions and mobilize action. The role of diaspora media in identity construction and cultural reproduction has been so fundamental that it has been one of the major forces in the process of transnationalism impacting personal as well as collective lives cutting across the national boundaries. It is through such spaces that individuals and communities in diaspora communicate, form associations and mobilize their identities to sustain their social and cultural connections that spans trans-national space. Today's politics are largely shaped by narratives. Increasingly these narratives are amplified through social media. The diaspora communities have played a major role in the recent decades in shaping the narratives of Indian politics. The paper is based on content analysis of various digital platforms of diaspora activism from host-home and host and transnational spaces. The objectives of the paper are two folds: 1. to contextualize the emergence of "digital Indian diaspora" and mobilization of identities in the national (home) and transnational (host and beyond) spaces; 2. To comprehend the diaspora engagements in the politics of national (home) and transnational (host and beyond) spaces. The paper tries to explore the engagement of "digital diasporas" that unfolds a new paradigm that impacts the very imaginary of human existence and identity formation, cultural expression, political participation and mobilization and so on and so forth.

**Keywords:** Digital diaspora, diaspora narratives, political mobilities, Indian diaspora.

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### **Bio**

Sadananda Sahoo is an Associate Professor at the School of Interdisciplinary and Trans-disciplinary Studies (SOITS), Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi. He is the programme coordinator of Master of Arts in Migration and Diaspora. As a team member he has conceptualised and operationalized Certificate programmes such as Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and Migration Governance and Diaspora Engagement in collaboration with various international organisations including IOM. He is the founder editor of the journal "Migration and Diaspora: An interdisciplinary Journal" published by GRFDT. His research interests include migration governance, diaspora, climate migration.

97.

### **Blaise Sales**

#### **Thinking with Fluidity: Flesh, Emergence and Water Crisis in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms* (1995)**

Drawing on water's embodied practice, 'a practice of cycling that is global, that is permeable and brings about a continuous rebirth on our planet' (Simpson 2025), this paper examines how the Chickasaw Indigenous writer, Linda Hogan's novel *Solar Storms* (1995) invites methods of learning from and relating to water that challenge and resist the extractive practices of industrial capitalism. Like the etymological sense of the word 'crisis' as a critical turning point, Hogan's novel intertwines a narrative of individual self-'emergence' with the collective context of environmental 'emergency'. The novel specifically refers to the historical protests over land and water rights during the 1970s, following the James Bay Hydroelectric Mega-Dam project that 'called for the damning and diversions of five rivers in Northern Quebec' (Huang, 2016), displacing local Indigenous communities and their ways of living and being. Hogan's narrative describes the protagonist, Angel, a 'rootless teenager', who returns to her grandmothers in this watery, northern region and learns a non-dualistic way of living and 'thinking with water' (Chen, MacLeod, and Neimanis, 2013) as something beyond an objectified chemical compound. My paper draws on ecological discourses of trans-corporeality from 'posthuman feminist phenomenology' (Neimanis, 2017), but also importantly, Indigenous frameworks of 're-membrance' and 're-cognition' (Hogan, 2013) to show how Hogan's aesthetic articulations of the human-nature relationship put pressure on and expand a dangerously narrow and exploitative way of treating and relating to water under contemporary global capitalism.

**Keywords:** water, body, nondualism, Indigenous studies.

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## **Bio**

Blaise Sales is a PhD student and poet at the University of Leeds, funded by the White Rose College of the Arts and Humanities. She holds a BA in English from King's College London, and an MA in the Medical Humanities from the University of York. Her thesis brings models of embodied cognition into dialogue with ecocritical concerns to rethink the neoliberal ideology of bounded individualism in the context of global climate change. Her comparative methodology explores brain-body-world relations through different cultural epistemes and novelistic mediums beyond the universally exported models of Anglo-American cognitive science.

98.

**Asma Sayed**

### **Climate Change, Capitalism, and Ethics: Reading Farah Ghafoor's *Shadow Price***

"I defend the literary imagination precisely because it seems to me an essential ingredient of an ethical stance that asks us to concern ourselves with the good of other people whose lives are different from ours" (xvi).

- Martha Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice*, xvi

Farah Ghafoor, an award-winning Pakistani-Canadian poet, in her debut poetry collection, *Shadow Price* (2025) which is a finalist for the Canadian Governor General's literary award, examines the human relationship with non-humans and the impact of human pursuits on our ecosystems. In the collection, she raises concerns about issues ranging from climate change and the loss of traditional ways of living as a result of the damage to the natural ecologies by unsustainable and unregulated industrialization, but also as a consequence of cultural colonization by Europeans and capitalist socio-economic structures. Her poems reject the settler-colonial, capitalist, and extractivist agendas, and provide pathways for thinking biocentrically and moving forward with hope towards a sustainable society. Ghafoor questions the neoliberal capitalist mindset which assigns 'value' to everything and works against the Indigenous ways of knowing and living. Informed by postcolonial and decolonial theories, in this paper I will interrogate how Ghafoor takes a deep ecological approach and questions the neoliberal aesthetics of the contemporary society pushing us to take an "ethical stance" in our fight against climate change. Through a close reading of Ghafoor's poems,

the paper aims to explore the interconnections of capitalism, climate change, and ethics, and analyze how the text offers a pathway for moving beyond experiences of solastalgia (climate grief), presenting hope as a potential antidote to the psychological and environmental effects of our current socio-political arrangement.

**Keywords:** capitalism; poetry; solastalgia; sustainability; hope; ecocriticism.

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### **Bio**

Dr. Asma Sayed is the Canada Research Chair in South Asian Literary and Cultural Studies in the Department of English, and Vice President, Equity and Inclusive Communities, at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Canada. She specializes in postcolonial and diasporic literatures with a focus on narratives of exile and displacement from South Asia and East Africa, as well as feminist literary and cultural studies related to these geographies. Sayed's research and teaching is informed by Critical Equity Studies, Critical Race Theory, Critical Hope and Solidarity Studies, and Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies. Her publications include seven books and numerous articles in a range of periodicals, anthologies, and academic journals. She is the past president (2019-22) of the Canadian Association for Postcolonial Studies (formerly CACLALS).

**99.**

**Tara Senanayake**

**"What Does Language Matter?..."**

**"For One Without a Homeland, What Inscription Shall We Write?"**

**Excavating the Hidden Narrative of the Muslims through its Re-Presentation in Sinhala and Tamil Literature in the Work of M.A. Nuhuman, Nissanka Wijemanne, Sharmila Seyyid and Ottamavadi Arafath**

Literature has become a crucial medium to reflect on trauma, explore communal identities and imagine reconciliation in the aftermath of Sri Lanka's protracted ethnic conflict. While the binary of Sinhala-Tamil identity construction and possible alter-narratives to it by Sri Lankan Anglophone writers has been investigated, this paper excavates "another Other": the Sri Lankan Muslim. The important but often overlooked identity of the Tamil-speaking Sri Lankan Muslim vis-à-vis the ethnic conflict will be addressed in this paper by examining its representation in Sinhala and Tamil literature respectively. I contend that this excavation and examination of the Muslim narrative is imperative at a time when the Sri Lankan post-war context is riven with calls to forge a reconciled

“Sri Lankan” identity. The “Muslim voice” in literature will be analysed through the short fiction and poetry written in Sinhala and Tamil, by M.A. Nuhuman, Nissanka Wijemanne, Sharmila Seyyid and Ottamavadi Arafath. I consider these literary interventions alter-narratives: narratives which give voice to a neglected people through the excavation of hidden stories, and are divorced from the Sinhala-Tamil nationalist discourse. Muslim authors in particular, articulate post-war identity, memory, and the ethical imperatives of reconciliation. The writers under consideration witnessed and experienced trauma and violence first hand, and it is their personal, collective and cultural trauma which they craft as stories and poems for the “generation after”: the generation which “remembers” these experiences only by means of the stories and images which were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right.

**Keywords:** Sri Lankan literature, identity, conflict, alter-narratives, postmemory

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### **Bio**

Tara Senanayake is a Lecturer in English at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. She received an Honours Degree in English from the University of Peradeniya and subsequently obtained her Master of Philosophy Degree from the Postgraduate Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences of the same University. A recipient of the World Bank AHEAD Scholarship, Tara is currently reading for her PhD at King’s College, London. Tara teaches literature and theory at Peradeniya and has also worked at the Open University of Sri Lanka. Her work is influenced by post-colonial literature and theory and interrogates the construction of identities, nostalgia and memory. Tara has published both nationally and internationally with a focus on themes of postcolonial literatures, migrant writing and gender studies. Her research interests include areas of Discourse Analysis, Sri Lankan Fiction in English, Cultural and Gender Studies and Comparative Literature. A contributor to the *Literary Encyclopedia*, Tara’s latest book chapter was published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing in *Gendered Ways of Transnational Un-Belonging from a Comparative Literature Perspective* (2019). She is an Executive Committee Member of the Sri Lankan Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (SLACLALS).

**Poonam Sharma**

**A Pterodactyl in the Archive: Animism and Decolonial History in Mamang Dai's *The Black Hill***

What happens when Indigenous animism confronts colonial historiography—can the nonhuman speak where the subaltern cannot? How does animistic worlding expose the limits of colonial archives and their claim to truth? What does it mean to imagine ancestry not as human lineage but as planetary entanglement? This paper examines how animism and planetary ancestry are mobilised in Indian author Mamang Dai's novel *The Black Hill* (2014). It draws on Gayatri Spivak's reading of the pterodactyl—a figure that interrupts historical representation and reveals the impossibility of speaking for the subaltern—and argues that the novel employs a form of decolonial imagination, relocating ancestry in deep time (Spivak 2003, 66).

*The Black Hill* explores the historical unrest and ethnic conflicts triggered by colonial and missionary interventions in Arunachal Pradesh's Indigenous territories during the mid-nineteenth century (1847–1855). Dai opens this largely hidden past by connecting it to recorded history, focusing on a Mishmi tribe chief named Kajinsha, who was sentenced to death for the alleged assassination of two French missionaries. The novel fictionalises these events in the absence of archival records. I examine the character of the missionary and his ghostly presence around the female protagonist. Can history account for what it has rarely represented—ghosts, spirits, and nonhuman ancestors? Drawing on the novel's animistic core, the paper examines the relation between history and incommensurability and concludes that the text reads ancestry and identity in an ironic way, questioning the very categories through which colonial archives classify Indigenous lives.

**Keywords:** Animism, Deetime, Indigenous tribes, Planetary ancestry, Decolonial history.

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**Bio**

Poonam Sharma is a PhD scholar at the School of English, University of Leeds. Her PhD is fully funded by White Rose College of Arts and Humanities, AHRC studentship. Her thesis deals with an ecocritical and planetary reading of contemporary Indian historical fiction in English. She did her MPhil from the University of Cambridge as a Commonwealth Shared Cambridge Scholar. Her MPhil dissertation focused on the Indian English novels after economic liberalisation in India. Her research interests include postcolonial studies, planetary humanities, animism, eco-materialism, environmental history, neo-colonialism, globalisation, Hindi modernism, and Indian English fiction. Prior to joining Leeds, she taught as Assistant Professor at the University of Delhi, India. She has done her BA honours and Masters in English Literature from the University of Delhi.

101.

Laura Singeot

**“The Rupture of Exile” (266): Conflicting Histories and Truth-Telling in *The Great Undoing* by Sharlene Allsopp (2024)**

In *The Great Undoing*, when visiting a War memorial, Australian protagonist and “truth-teller” Scarlet Friday wonders: “how was the loss of [Indigenous] life after invasion any less of a war than the conflicts remembered here? Is it because of how we define war?” (234) This questioning haunts Scarlet. In a dystopian future, all information is encrypted in a digital language contained in people’s blood, which, after its global hacking, leads all travellers and other temporary migrants to being stranded in London. While trying to get back to Australia, Scarlet manages to write her “heresy”—the story of her survival jotted in the margins of Ernest Scott’s *A Short History of Australia* (1916). This paper constitutes one of the first scholarly engagements with the novel, drawing on decolonial theory, sci-fi and Indigenous frameworks. It will demonstrate how in *The Great Undoing*, the entanglement of international politics with the poetics of un-becoming reconfigures history through truth-telling, toward new forms of belonging and reconciliation. First, this paper will explore how the disruption of colonial histories and conflicts, echoed in the novel’s dystopian future, asserts sci-fi as a decolonial tool (Dillon). Then, History reconfigured as Truth-Telling enables epistemological sovereignty (Smith), which follows Scarlet’s own ethical arc. Finally, going back to where one belongs and crossing national borders offers new ways of considering community and relationality (Ahmed et al.; Moreton-Robinson) as a new world order that offers hope for a future freed from political neo-colonial agenda (Mignolo).

**Keywords:** truth-Telling, Indigenous Australian Sci-Fi, epistemological sovereignty, relationality, decoloniality.

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**Bio**

Laura Singeot is an Associate Professor in Anglophone Literatures and Visual Studies at Université de Tours, France. She is interested in the representations of Indigeneity in contemporary Indigenous literatures from Australia and Aotearoa-New Zealand, from novels and poetry to dystopic Young adult fiction and Sci-fi. She is also researching new museology and Indigenous visual art, focusing on its integration into global networks of creation, curation and reception. Her latest research project seeks to integrate both of her research interests by examining the ways in which contemporary Indigenous literatures and visual arts engage with and critically reflect upon ethnographic museums. Her methodology rests on a comparative transdisciplinary approach, drawing from concepts

theorized in decolonial thought. She is the guest-editor of an upcoming special issue of *ARIEL*, entitled “Decolonizing Museums, Collections and Archives in Postcolonial and Indigenous Literatures in English” (2026).

102.

**Eckard Smuts**

### **Disposability, Ecological Ruin, and Planetary Affect in Geography of Robot’s *Norco***

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina exposed what critics describe as a new biopolitics of disposability in the United States. Black and poor communities, left destitute by the storm and labelled as “refugees” in neoconservative media, found themselves inhabiting a no-man’s-land beyond the care of the state. My paper examines the imaginative regrouping that occurs in the face of such exclusion from sanctioned narratives of belonging in the American Deep South. To do so, I analyse Geography of Robot’s prize-winning video game *Norco* (2022), which evolved from a multimedia project documenting Katrina’s impact on Louisiana and its landscape. Set in a dystopian, near-future version of the refinery town of Norco in Louisiana, the game explores the linkages between expendability, social alienation, and continued ecological devastation in a post-Katrina milieu. Meticulously pixelated renderings of the decaying town and its toxic environment draw attention to hyperlocal experiences of dislocation and disposability, even while the futuristic plot gestures towards a shifting, seemingly boundless terrain of techno-surveillance and controlled mobility. In the interstices of these seemingly debilitating conditions, the game articulates alternative narratives of identity, belonging, and place-making. Drawing on the scholarship of affect and kinship, I argue for a politics of planetary belonging that resists the increasingly hostile exclusionary logics of the neoliberal state.

**Keywords:** disposability, eco-refugees, petroculture, new media, planetary affect.

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### **Bio**

Eckard Smuts lectures in the Department of English at Stellenbosch University. He has published academic essays in *Safundi*, *English Studies in Africa*, *Social Dynamics*, *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, and *English in Africa*, as well as short fiction in *The Johannesburg Review of Books*. His work explores the confluence of social and ecological issues in literary texts, focusing especially on postcolonial writing. Currently, his research focuses on the intersections of ecocriticism, planetarity, and digital media, with an emphasis on cultures of the Global South.

Sandrine Soukaï

### Archipelagic Crises: Remembering Indentureship and Partition across the Indian Ocean and Caribbean Worlds

This paper examines how postcolonial fiction enables us to reimagine crisis as a site of transoceanic connection between South Asia and the Caribbean. Focusing on Ismith Khan's *The Jumbie Bird* (1961) and Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* (2008), it traces how the distinct yet connected histories of indentureship and the Indian Partition generate multidirectional memories of displacement, survival, and renewal. Rooted in imperial logics of extraction and exploitation, both events stage multiple crises that exceed national and temporal boundaries. *Sea of Poppies* exposes the systemic crises economic, ecological, and epistemic—triggered by the colonial opium economy, while *The Jumbie Bird* explores a postcolonial diasporic crisis of identity and belonging. These crises continue to resonate today: the Partition's unresolved conflicts reverberate in contemporary violence across Kashmir, while the long-silenced memory of Indian indenture resurfaces through new memorial and political tensions. Drawing on Édouard Glissant's *Poétique de la Relation* (1990) and on the recent theorization of *archipelagic memory* as “an epistemic modality that transacts simultaneously with the fragmented and the isolated to enable relations of contiguity that do not aspire to unbrokenness to make sense” (Kabir and Raimondi 2024, 3), the paper examines how these novels transform rupture into reconnection. The notion of “archipelagic crisis” designates this paradoxical moment when fragmentation produces relation. Reading indenture and Partition together rethinks the global geography of colonial modernity and its postcolonial reconfigurations. The Indian Ocean and Caribbean worlds emerge as spaces of narrative creation where literature negotiates crisis, reinvents memory, and imagines ethical coexistence across oceans.

**Keywords:** Partition; Indenture; Archipelagic memory; Crisis; Transoceanic literature

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Khan, Ismith. *The Jumbie Bird*. London: Longman Group Limited, 1985 [1961].

#### Bio

Sandrine Soukaï is a Senior Lecturer in postcolonial Anglophone literature who teaches at Gustave Eiffel University (France) and a member of the research center LISAA (Littératures, Savoirs et Arts). Her work explores South Asian and Caribbean histories of trauma and displacement. Her research focuses on the cultural and literary afterlives of the Indian Partition and the indenture system through frameworks of multidirectional and archipelagic memory, creolization, and transcultural dynamics. She has presented her work at international conferences on South Asian and Caribbean studies and has published book chapters and essays in international journals like *Postcolonial Literatures and Arts*, *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*, *Archipélices*, *Gerflint Synergies Inde*, *The Journal of Indentureship and its Legacies*. She is co-editor, with Ananya Kabir and Luca Raimondi, of the book *Island Indias: Archipelagic Memory* (Brill, 2026). She serves on the board of EACLALS and SEPC (French Society of Postcolonial Studies).

104.

**Lotta Strandberg**

**PANEL: Material Migrations: Rethinking Crises through Objects in Postcolonial Narratives**

**Tracing Lives through Objects: Aanchal Malhotra's Life Writing in *Remnants of a Separation: A History of the Partition through Material Memory***

My paper looks at how objects feature as repositories of memories and translate materiality into lived lives and narrated memories. I explore Aanchal Malhotra's book *Remnants of a Separation: A History of the Partition through Material Memory* (2017), in which she collects oral life stories initiated by and through objects. The life stories Malhotra collects are by refugees from the Partition of India. The objects acquire a central role in these stories and actively engage in the ethical considerations of identity, rights and trauma.

**Keywords:** objects, materiality, storytelling, memories, writing

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Malhotra, Aanchal. *Remnants of Partition: 21 Objects from a Continent Divided*. Hurst, 2017.

**Bio**

Lotta Strandberg is Associate professor of English at the University of South-Eastern Norway. Her research deals with South Asian literature, gender, postcolonial literature, and human rights and ethics. Her most recent publication is co-edited with Brenda Werth: *The Ethics of Becoming: Aesthetics, Representation, and Human Rights*. Palgrave (Forthcoming 2026) and "The Ethics of Language and Translation: The Grievances of Being Minor in Jhumpa Lahiri's writing" in Valen-Senstad and Abusalem (eds.) *Dignity and its Discontents* (Forthcoming 2026).

105.

**Michelle Stork**

***Maid in Dubai: Narrating Gendered Labour Migration in Global Anglophone Literature***

From the Netflix series *Dubai Bling* (2022–2025) to Unnikrishnan's novel *Temporary People* (2017) – Dubai's global image is marked by the contrast between luxury and labour exploitation. The 'City of Gold' lends itself to the study of tensions and conflicts produced in and through the encounter of migrant workers, as Dubai's social fabric ranges from an ultra-rich upper class; via 'expats' working as financial analysts, real estate agents and teachers; to maids and care workers, mostly from the Philippines and Sri Lanka; and finally to oil workers, builders and taxi drivers. Evidently, Dubai depends on labourers from all over the world.

While studies on ‘Anglo-Arab Literature’ proliferate (Nash 2007, Gana 2015, Gallien 2017), representations of Dubai – and the Gulf region overall – remain understudied despite their potential to contribute to World Anglophone Studies. This paper analysis Anglophone narratives about care workers, in which gender, migration and conflicts resulting from asymmetrical interdependencies take centre stage. My hypothesis is that the close encounters produced by live-in nannies and maids highlight, despite uneven power relations, the interdependencies and transcultural exchanges occurring in the domestic sphere, employing Zana Bonafe’s novel *Maid in Dubai: Dusting Sand, Changing a Life* (2018) as an exemplary case study.

**Keywords:** Labour Migration, Care Work, Gendered Mobilities, Transculturality, Dubai.

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Nash, Geoffrey. 2007. *The Anglo-Arab Encounter: Fiction and Autobiography by Arab Writers in English*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

### **Bio**

Michelle Stork is a Research Associate and PostDoc at the Department of English and American Studies at Goethe University, Frankfurt. Her research interests include Road Narratives and Automobility, Literary Mobility Studies and Transcultural English Studies. Her first monograph *Transcultural Automobilities in Contemporary Anglophone Road Narratives* is under contract with Palgrave (2026). Her research has been published in *Jesmyn Ward: New Critical Essays*, *The Anglophone Novel in the Twenty-First Century*, *Anglistik*, *Postcolonial Interventions* and *Kairos*. She has recently co-edited three Special Issues: “The Poetics and Politics of Gender, Mobility and Migration in Global Anglophone Literature” for the *European Journal of English Studies*, “Representing Automobilities in Fiction and Film” for *The Journal of Transport History* and “‘Africa in Europe, Europe in Africa’: Transcultural Histories in African Anglophone Literature and Media” for *Matatu*. Together with Nadia Butt, she leads the research network *Forum of Global Anglophone Literatures and Cultures*.

106.

**Andrea F. Szabó**

### **Reading Against Fate: A Social-Cognitive Critique of Alice Munro’s “Deep-Holes”**

I propose reading Alice Munro’s “Deep-Holes” (2009) as a story exploring familial disruption, personal guilt, and stifled ambition, revealing how crises extend beyond ideological or national dimensions into the realm of individual lives. By building on previous scholarship uncovering how geological imagery serves to naturalize crisis, transforming avoidable adversities into seemingly inevitable features of the landscape and reframing agency as destiny (Lorre-Johnston 2014; Bigot 2020), my paper draws on social-cognitive theory, particularly Albert Bandura’s framework of moral disengagement (Bandura 2016), to reveal how narratives reallocate blame and erode empathy. It

introduces moral disengagement as an interdisciplinary lens that offers a fresh approach and clarifies the cognitive–affective strategies at work in Munro’s parent–child narratives (Lavoie 2015) where failure stems less from abuse than from absence and self-protective disengagement; through this lens, it becomes visible how naturalization displaces parental responsibility and how parents rationalize withdrawal. In this context, close reading emerges as an ethical endeavor, unmasking the narrative strategies that normalize crisis and restoring crisis as a site of judgment and decision. The presentation will offer a methodology for analyzing and teaching diverse narratives: (1) it elucidates how metaphors render crisis appear inescapable; (2) it demonstrates techniques to challenge these metaphors; and (3) it reinvigorates the concept of responsibility. By integrating Bandura’s theory with a detailed examination of Munro’s short story, this paper underscores the role of the humanities in encouraging readers to reject “nature” as an excuse and to rediscover agency where it has been subtly obscured.

**Keywords:** Alice Munro, Canadian Literature, social psychology, moral disengagement, *krisis*

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### **Bio**

Andrea F. Szabó, PhD, is associate professor in the English and American Studies Institute at the University of Pannonia, Hungary. She teaches courses in North-American literatures, popular culture and media representations of gender. Her research focuses on Gothic and literature with Alice Munro’s fiction in the center.

107.

### **Tarika Na**

#### **Redrawing Colonial Cartographies: North-East Indian Poetry Anthologies as texts of Resistance**

The proposed paper will analyse *The Dancing Earth*, an anthology of North-East Indian poetry, as a text which offers a powerful lens through which to study the complex crises of conflict, forced movement, and identity that have come to define postcolonial life in the region. Rather than picturesque wilderness or untouched Eden, a trope born through the colonial discourse, these texts foreground landscapes marked by political violence, displacement, and ecological trauma. In doing so, they challenge simplistic binaries of centre/periphery, local/national and *Margi/Desi* that have historically dominated literary and cultural studies of the region (Baral 2013). The poets use nature as a symbolic reservoir to express the dislocation of their way of life. Poems proliferate with images

like “Blood-smeared Dawn” (Bidyasagar 2009, 63), “Pomegranate flowers burning in tears” (Phukan 2009, 227), “...the river./It is a drowning spirit...” (Dai 2009, 90). Editors Nongkynrih and Ngangom state how the consequence of the work of the North-Eastern poets, which describes violence, is harsher than that of their counterparts from the ‘mainland’ (2009, xii).

The anthology itself embodies the canonical impulse of the zeitgeist of a literary culture. As such, the anthology of ‘north-East’ Indian poetry is itself a marginal entity. To study it, one requires reconfiguring the critical lens through the specific cultural modes, which can be facilitated through decolonial techniques. This paper positions poetry anthologies as discursive archives that document and protest layered injustices. It argues that these collections do more than resist canonical marginalisation: they assert indigenous epistemologies and embodied poetics that reframe crisis as an ongoing negotiation.

**Keywords:** Environmental Humanities, Postcolonial Ecologies, Conflict and Displacement, Anthologies as Archives, Indigenous Epistemologies

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### **Bio**

Tarika has been working in Satyawati (eve) college, University of Delhi, as an assistant professor in the English department. She was the Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant with UC, Davis, in 2012-13. She is currently pursuing her doctoral research from the Department of English at Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, India. She has been an active contributor to journals like Sahitya Akademi’s ‘Indian Literature’ and ‘Foretell’, among others. She has participated in many national and international conferences over the years. Her English translation of award-winning Kashmiri essays titled *Meditations* was published by Sahitya Akademi in 2021. Her translation of Urdu writer Mirza Hamid Baig’s short stories was published in 2025.

108.

Terri Tomsy

### **Autofictional Interventions about Iraq: Trauma and the Fantastical Realities of Sinan Antoon and Hassan Blasim**

This paper examines two texts by diasporic Iraqi writers that turn to autofiction – a form of creative, fictionalised autobiographical writing – to explicate the experience of displacement, trauma, and loss following the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. Autofictional writing, a mix of subjective testimonial witnessing and objective documentation, tells and complicates stories of (neo)colonial trauma. Written after the Iraq war, Sinan Antoon's *The Book of Collateral Damage* (2019) and Hassan Blasim's *God 99* (2020) search for ways to narrate the story of Iraq to an international public that has mostly received its information filtered through a Western media lens.

I focus on how autofiction provides a fantastical reality, a productive, complex way of recording loss. Antoon's text provides a decolonial reversal of what Aimé Césaire called *thingification*. Focused on the construction of a catalogue of cultural artifacts, Antoon endows *things* with a voice to speak their story. In his polyphonous narrative, *objects* speak to the subsequent erasure of people and experiences in ways that illuminate the value of Iraq's culture and its communities, as well as the untold scale of its collective trauma. In contrast, Blasim's *God 99* elaborates the aftermath of war through a focus on his refugee-narrator, which brings him into the clandestine journeys of others. Blasim uses horror and the fantastical to express the unimaginable, presenting these elements as the only way to articulate refugee trauma. This paper explores the contribution of autofiction to postcolonial theory, and their critical insights into the legacies left by neoimperial wars.

**Keywords:** autofiction; Iraq war; trauma; decolonial; fantasy.

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Moore-Gilbert, Bart J. *Postcolonial Life-Writing: Culture, Politics and Self-representation*. Routledge, 2009.

### **Bio**

Terri Tomsy is an Associate Professor of contemporary literature in the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta in Canada. She has published in the areas of postcolonial literary studies, life writing, cultural memory, trauma, and cosmopolitanism, as well as the Global War on Terror. She is the co-editor (with Eddy Kent) of *Negative Cosmopolitanism: Culture and Politics of World Citizenship After Globalization* (McGill-Queen's UP, 2017) and has recently completed a book manuscript entitled, *Mediating Guantánamo: Human Rights Narratives and Activism in the War on Terror*, which examines the many forms of activism inspired by the prison's injustices.

## Petra Tournay-Theodotou

### Union and Division in Nora Nadjarian's Collection of Short Stories *Ledra Street*

This paper examines Armenian-Cypriot writer Nora Nadjarian's collection of short stories titled *Ledra Street* (2006) drawing primarily on insights gained from partition (Joe Cleary, 2002) and postcolonial memory studies (Gilroy, 2005; Kadir, 2007). The collection takes its title from the main commercial street in the historical center of the capital of Nicosia, Ledra Street, which was severed in two following the island's partition in 1974. As a strong spatial symbol of partition, the title programmatically reflects the collection's dominant theme of division that pervades the majority of the stories. If many of the stories deal with the legacy of colonialism which led to the island's division, Nadjarian equally takes into account the changed demographics and geopolitical shifts occurring in a globalised world as they affect the small island nation. Some of her stories offer an intervention into Cypriot memory politics while others provide a critical perspective on the current state of this historically and presently multicultural nation. In a European context the case of Cyprus is quite unique in *combining* colonial memory and global encounters in one and the same space. In terms of its complex identity politics this former colonial nation which became a member of the European Union in May 2004 is struggling to negotiate between these two experiences: its colonial history and the challenges of "cosmopolitan conviviality" (Gilroy, XV). More specifically, in this talk I explore issues such as the politics of space, encounters with the other, memory and trauma and the contradictory themes of separation and division on the one hand and love and union on the other as represented in Nora Nadjarian's stories.

**Keywords:** union, division, memory, colonial legacy, cosmopolitan conviviality.

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### Bio

Petra Tournay-Theodotou is Professor of English at European University Cyprus in Nicosia, Cyprus. She has published widely on contemporary Black and Asian British literature with a special interest in the work of Caryl Phillips and Jackie Kay. Besides many book chapters in edited volumes published by prestigious publishers Brill/Rodopi and Routledge, her work has appeared in leading journals such as *Transition*, *Wasafiri*, *Kunapipi*, *Matatu* and *Atlantis*. She further co-edited a special issue for the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* titled "Britishness beyond New Britain: British identities and the identity of Britain in recent black and Asian British Writing". She has also published literature about Cyprus written in English. Recently, her interest has shifted to children's literature which has so far led to a publication about Jackie Kay's YA novel *Strawgirl* published in the *Scottish Literary Review* in 2022.

110.

**Anne Ulentin**

**Crisis, Carcerality, and the Afterlives of Slavery: Necropolitics in the Post-Emancipation Bahamas**

This paper explores the emergence of the penal system in the post-emancipation Bahamas through the lens of necropolitics, as theorized by Achille Mbembe (2019). In the wake of slavery's abolition, colonial authorities constructed the prison not as a site of reform but as a new technology of domination, designed to manage the perceived crisis of Black freedom. I argue that the post-emancipation penal regime functioned as a death-world, a space in which the newly freed were rendered socially dead, subject to premature death, and excluded from full civic life. Through forced labor, harsh disciplinary regimes, and ideological narratives linking Blackness to criminality, the prison became a site where freedom was redefined as threat, and where empire reasserted its sovereignty through the right to decide who may live and who must die. Drawing on archival records, colonial legislation, and contemporary postcolonial theory, the paper situates Bahamian carcerality within broader decolonial critiques of crisis governance, racial capitalism, and state violence. I demonstrate that the penal system was central to the colonial state's project of managing disorder, racializing deviance, and re-imposing hierarchies dismantled, at least nominally, by emancipation. Far from marking the end of bondage, the post-emancipation period saw the transformation of slavery's logics into new forms of coercion and containment, under the guise of law and order. In doing so, the paper challenges linear narratives of progress and highlights the afterlives of slavery in carceral modernity.

**Keywords:** necropolitics, carcerality, Post-Emancipation, colonialism, racial capitalism.

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**Bio**

Anne Ulentin received a Ph.D. in History from Louisiana State University (United States). She is an Associate Professor in American History at Université Clermont Auvergne (France). Her current research examines incarceration and the intersectionality of race, class, and gender in the colonial Bahamas. Her publications include "The Scale of Punishment has been Framed Specially for the Black Man': Imprisonment, Race, and Punishment in the Colonial Bahamas, 1840-1973," *The Journal of Caribbean History*, Vol. 55, No.1 (June 2021): 57-84; "She Has Not Been Seen or Heard of Since': Gender, Incarceration, and Punishment in The Bahamas, 1860s-1920s," *New West Indian Guide / Nieuwe West-Indische Gids (NWIG)*, Vol. 96, No. 3-4 (2022): 233-65; and "Gender-Based Violence in The Bahamas in the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries" in *Gender-Based Violence in the Caribbean: Historical Roots, Contemporary Continuities*, Dalea Bean and Verene Shepherd, eds. The University of the West Indies Press, forthcoming, 2025.

111.

**Anna Helena van Urk**

**As Dante Alighieri Did for Tuscan': Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's Championing of Vernacular Languages, and Its Forerunner**

This paper will offer an overview of the late Kenyan postcolonial critic and novelist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's frequent citation of Dante Alighieri as a champion of vernacular literatures, and as a forerunner of his own crusade for linguistic decolonisation and the empowerment of minority languages and literatures. Whilst such comparisons involving Dante are not new, they are commonly restricted to the European 'minority' language writers (Lombardi 2010). Through close readings and comparisons drawn from texts such as *De vulgari eloquentia*, *Il Convivio*, the essay collection *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*, and various interviews given in the final two decades of his life, this paper will propose that Ngũgĩ saw Dante as a 'radical' interlocutor (Ascoli 1993). His determination to write in his Tuscan dialect – the language of children, women and servants (Botterill 1996) – rather than the more culturally authoritative Latin, offers a model for Ngũgĩ's Marxist-Fanonist conception of the peasantry as the stewards and producers of vernacular languages and literatures in postcolonial conditions, and his wish for a democratic levelling, a 'decentering,' between the literatures of the core and the periphery (Ngũgĩ 1986). While it is certainly true that the socio-political context of and post- and neo-colonial Kenya and 14<sup>th</sup> century Italy are far removed from each other, and that the Dantean oeuvre is itself implicated in the advancement of the Italian imperial project in modern-day Somalia (De Luca 2020), the radical linguistic choices of Dante and Ngũgĩ are deserving of closer comparative scrutiny.

**Keywords:** Ngũgĩ, Dante, vernacular, minority literatures, comparative

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- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind*. East African Educational Publishers, 1986.

**Bio**

Anna Helena van Urk is a comparative literary researcher at Corpus Christi College at the University of Cambridge, where she is a second-year PhD student in English. Her chief interests lie in postcolonial literature and the oeuvre of Dante Alighieri, and her current research explores how various works of East African and Afro-Caribbean writers engage with, draw from, and subvert the movements and allegories of the *Divine Comedy*. She completed her MPhil at Cambridge in 2023 with a dissertation on Dante Alighieri's, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's, and Kamau Brathwaite's championing of vernacular literary production. She has previously published on South African literature, with a

forthcoming publication offering a critical appraisal of the 'proletarian' pastoral character of the Dantean *Eclogues*. She has been awarded a Cambridge Trust Scholarship and a Jebb Studentship for advanced study of European literature.

112.

**Shubhra Verma**

### **Through Dark Doors: Thresholds of Dislocation in Migration Narratives**

This paper examines the evolution of the literary motif of doors in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), and Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* (2017), tracing how thresholds shift from whimsical entryways to fractured sites of rupture. Carroll's small door to Wonderland reflects Victorian fascination with childhood imagination, which is absurd yet safe, playful yet restorative [Carroll 1865]. Lewis's work, written in the shadow of World War II, transforms the portal into a moral testing ground where sacrifice and redemption replace fantasy, providing clarity and consolation in an uncertain world [Lewis 1950]. Hamid defies this convention: his doors are stark, abrupt, and irreversible, transporting migrants not to enchanted lands but to precarious geographies where loss, displacement, and grief linger without resolution [Hamid 2017]. When analysed together, these texts demonstrate that doors are never fixed devices but cultural thresholds that absorb the anxieties of their historical contexts, whether Victorian curiosity, wartime morality, or contemporary displacement. This paper contends that the portal's persistence lies in its ability to mirror changing social circumstances, transforming from a metaphor of imaginative escape to a symbol of displacement, urging readers to reconsider the significance of crossing thresholds in both literature and lived experience.

**Keywords:** cultural thresholds, magical escapism, magical realism, displacement, portal-quest narratives.

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### **Bio**

I am a PhD scholar in English Literature at NIIT University, Neemrana, where my research examines the entanglement of violence, memory, and trauma in South Asian migration narratives. I completed my BA in English (Hons.) from Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi, and my MA in English from Hansraj College, University of Delhi, both with First Division. I have three years of teaching experience as a Teaching Assistant and hold the Higher Education Teaching Certificate from Harvard University's Derek Bok Centre. An avid reader and passionate student of literature, I am especially interested in how texts address identity, belonging, and displacement.

113.

Isabella Villanova

**Afropean Migrant Subjectivities and Emotional Entanglements: Lola Akinmade Åkerström's Sequel Novels**

My presentation begins with an overview of 21st-century Afro-European narratives authored by women of African descent and focuses on the notion of "Afropean identities and subjectivities", explored in both literature (Brancato 2008) and socio-political theory (Miano 2020), particularly in relation to migrant experiences and their emotional dimensions in contexts shaped by social, political, and post-9/11 crises.

The second part of the presentation examines, as case studies, the sequel novels *In Every Mirror, She's Black* (2021) and *Everything is Not Enough* (2023) by Nigerian-born, Swedish-based writer Lola Akinmade Åkerström. These post 9/11 narratives foreground the crisis of belonging experienced by four Afro-descendant women who have moved to Stockholm, Sweden, where they navigate multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination (e.g. racism, sexism, classism, and tokenism), highlighting how structural inequalities shape daily life and emotional realities.

In contextualising Afro-Swedish experiences (Skinner 2022), I adopt a methodological approach that combines an affective lens (Ahmed 2004) with intersectional perspectives (Crenshaw 1991; Ahmed 2014, 2017). This framework allows for a nuanced analysis of how emotions function both as sites of oppression and as tools of agency, demonstrating the strategies of resistance employed by Afro-descendant women in navigating a predominantly white and structurally racist society.

By intertwining literary and socio-political frameworks, the study contributes to the discourse on Afropean migrant identities, offering insights into the cultural, emotional, and political dimensions of diaspora experiences. Moreover, it emphasises the role of literature in imagining alternative futures where Afropean subjectivities can thrive despite systemic discrimination and global crises.

**Keywords:** Afro-European migrant subjectivities, Lola Akinmade Åkerström, sequel novels, emotion and resistance, racism.

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**Bio**

Isabella Villanova is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Linguistics and Literary Studies at Vrije Universiteit Brussel. She has previously held postdoctoral positions at the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence at the University of Bayreuth and in the Department of African Studies at the University of Vienna. In 2023-24, she served as an Adjunct Professor of Anglophone Literature at the University for Foreigners of Perugia and, prior to that, was a visiting

scholar at the University of Leeds. She earned her PhD in Anglophone African women's writing from the University of Padua in 2021. Her first monograph titled "The Politics of Gender in Nigerian and Zimbabwean Women's Fiction: Agencies and Strategies of Resistance", is forthcoming with Peter Lang in 2025. Her research interests include Afro-European literature, African and diaspora literature, contemporary women's writing, postcolonial literature, affect studies, gender and queer studies, and postcolonial and decolonial thinking.

114.

**Kerry-Jane Wallart**

**PANEL: Climate Crisis and Postcolonial Ecofeminisms: Plundering Lands, Exploiting Women. Literary Representations in Context**

**Selling Sea Shells by the Sea Shore: Women, Natural Resources and Tongue-Twisting in Vahni Capildeo's *Venus as a Bear***

Plundering Euro-American art has long been read as subversive (and paradoxically, canonical) postcolonial writing back. More recently, the emergence of ecocriticism makes it possible to read such gestures as doubly political; they function as cultural reappropriation as well as a mimicking of colonial extractivism. This paper reads Vahni Capildeo's collection of poetry *Venus as a Bear*, published 2018, as a reflection on the bias of centuries of European art exalting culture as shaping matter and therefore, natural resources; on the natural world and the affects it can conjure nowadays; and on how language turns into a maze for female voices attempting to phrase their grasp on both nature and culture.

The collection includes numerous descriptions and commentaries of monumental pieces of art and colonial interventions on the landscape: the Antonine Wall in England, built to separate Roman civilisation from "barbarians", marble statues in the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich or in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, the Dun Laoghaire pier near Dublin but also lion heads in Waterloo, Trinidad and the Castillo San Felipe del Morro in Puerto Rico – two places belonging to the plantationocene. A number of poems also mention such hallowed figures as Petrarch, Ronsard, Shakespeare, whose art of the sonnet petrified the female body within a strictly coded form of 14 lines, through an accumulation of spun metaphors, conceits and other types of comparison between women's corporeality, and the natural world.

The poetic voice navigates between a shaping of wood and stone into colonial landscapes and classical art, on the one hand, and poetic forms of the past which have turned women into objects of adoration and desire and relegated them to animal or vegetable imagery. It does so through a striking irregularity in form. Some poems are written in prose, others in free verse; some poems run over several pages, others are two lines long; some are divided into stanzas, others are not, etc. The one continuity running throughout the poem consists in a playful approach to language through sound. Thus, the poetic voice reinvents a form of lyricism which includes the Romantic lamenting of the devastation of nature but also deconstructs the regularity of the ballad to recast the range of formal tools elaborated throughout the long twentieth century. One of the poems, set in Saint Lucia and entitled "She sells ... by the sea shore", alludes to how after centuries of slavery, the natural resources are still extracted to be sold to tourists; but it does so in an allusion to tongue twisters and an explosion of sonorities which violently severs signified from signifier. I contend in this paper

that such a strategy attempts to render structures of feelings and perceptions silenced and overlooked by dominant regimes: colonial and patriarchal.

**Keywords:** monumental art, Petrarchan sonnet, lyricism, avant-garde experimentation, Vahni Capildeo.

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### **Bio**

Kerry-Jane Wallart is Professor of Black Atlantic Studies at the Université d'Orléans, France. Her research interests include generic hybridity, transnational and transcultural exchanges, and gender issues in postcolonial contemporary arts and literatures – with an emphasis on the Caribbean, diaspora included. She has co-edited a monograph on Jamaica Kincaid (Wagadu, 2019) and two monographs on Jean Rhys (Bloomsbury, 2020; Routledge, 2023) as well as several journal issues. She is the editor-in-chief of the journal *Postcolonial Literatures and Arts* and is currently conducting a CNRS research programme on imaginary journeys, with the research unit ECHELLES (Paris Cité).

**115.**

### **Alex Nelungo Wanjala**

#### **The Pictorial Narration of Kenyan Culture and History: Terry Hirst's PICHADITHI Series**

Terry Hirst's PICHADITHI comic series holds a significant place in Kenya's cultural heritage, warranting preservation and academic study for its contribution to Kenyan literature. Created during a time of political repression and limited freedom of expression, the comics provided much-needed entertainment to a young audience, cleverly promoting national unity and encouraging youth engagement in nation building through didactic narratives. The series fostered national cohesion by visually narrating traditional legends from different Kenyan communities, such as the stories of Lwanda Magere (Luo) and the Orkoiyot (Kalenjin). This revival of cultural history not only

awakened cultural consciousness among urban readers but also instilled a sense of pride and appreciation for Kenya's diverse cultures. The Pichadithi comics drew upon Isidore Okpewho's literary continuum, elevating oral epics and legends over folk tales, and creatively incorporated characters from folk narratives—like the Hare, Tortoise, Lion, and Hyena—to address contemporary societal issues within a diachronic perspective. Their success was partly due to a readership familiar with earlier pictorial magazines like African Film and British comics (Beano, Dandy, Topper), as well as oral folktale traditions passed down through generations. As both a participant in and observer of this cultural history, the author intends to critically examine the form and content of the Pichadithi series through a representative sample, assessing their portrayal of Kenyan society and their role as archives of the nation's history, guided by a New Historicist approach.

**Keywords:** Pichadithi, Comics, Oral narrative, Kenya, Popular culture

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### **Bio**

Dr. Alex Nelungo Wanjala is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Literature, University of Nairobi. He is also the immediate past chairperson of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS). He is the Editor-in-Chief of the Nairobi Journal of Literature, the Regional Editor, East Africa, of *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*, and a co-Editor of *Matatu: Journal for African Literary and Cultural Studies*.

116.

### **Chiara Xausa**

#### **Form, Narrative, Nature: Queer Ecologies and Decolonial Potential in Times of Global Crisis**

This paper offers a comparative analysis of Ellen Van Neerven's short story "Water" (2014) and River Solomon's novel *Sorrowland* (2018), examining how queer ecological narratives enact decolonial imaginaries through formally experimental storytelling. While queer ecology has often emphasized thematic or identity-based intersections between the queer and the natural, this study foregrounds how narrative form itself holds queer, ecological, and decolonial potential. In "Water", shifting focalizations and interspecies relationships between the protagonist and the "plantperson" generate ethical and political engagement, foregrounding care and accountability across human and nonhuman actors within a postcolonial Australian setting. In *Sorrowland*, experimental narrative structures and nonlinear temporality destabilize anthropocentric and heteronormative assumptions, while modeling survival, resistance, and queer Black futurity in the American South. By reading these texts comparatively, the paper demonstrates how formal experimentation produces a queer ecological sensibility that challenges extractivist, colonial, and biopolitical logics. Both works illustrate the ways narrative form can cultivate ethical and imaginative engagement with intersecting crises of environment, governance, and social injustice. This analysis argues that queer

ecological narratives from diverse postcolonial and diasporic contexts can extend both queer theory and environmental humanities, showing how literature can generate alternative models of relationality, care, and decolonial futurity in times of global instability.

**Keywords:** Queer Ecologies, Narrative Form, Decolonial Imaginaries, Econarratology, Speculative Fiction.

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### **Bio**

Chiara Xausa is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellow at the University of Bologna (IT), the University of Idaho (US), and Ghent University (BE), where she leads a project exploring YA climate fiction, econarratology, and both empirical and affective approaches to ecocriticism. She was previously a postdoctoral fellow in Anglophone literature at the University of Bologna (2022–2024). She completed her PhD in 2022 with a thesis on feminist environmental humanities and dystopian Anthropocene narratives. Her first monograph, *Intersectional Futures in Climate Fiction: Undoing the Anthropocene Master Narrative*, was published by Peter Lang in 2025. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in journals including *European Journal of English Studies*, *Studies in the Novel, Humanities*, *From the European South: A Transdisciplinary Journal of Postcolonial Humanities*, and *Il Tolomeo: A Postcolonial Studies Journal*.