

**WEST UNIVERSITY OF TIMIȘOARA  
FACULTY OF LETTERS, HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY AND  
THEOLOGY  
DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES**

**BRITISH AND AMERICAN STUDIES / XXXIV**

***Reconfiguring Borders and Boundaries in/through the Lens of Literature,  
Language and Culture***

**Conference Programme**

**TIMIȘOARA, MAY14-16, 2026**

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Prof. **Larisa Avram**, University of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. **Andrei Avram**, University of Bucharest, Romania  
Prof. **Pia Brînzeu**, West University of Timișoara, Romania  
Prof. **Daniel Dejica-Carțiș**, “Politehnica” University, Timișoara, Romania  
Prof. **Rodica Dimitriu**, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iași, Romania  
Prof. **Fernando Galván**, University of Alcalá, Spain  
Dr. **Mihăiță Horezeanu**, West University of Timișoara, Romania  
Prof. **Smiljana Komar**, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia  
Prof. **Ștefan Oltean**, “Babeș-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca  
Prof. **Hortensia Pârlog**, West University of Timișoara, Romania  
Prof. **Stephen Tapscott**, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA  
Dr. **Slávka Tomaščíková**, “Pavol Jozef Šafárik University”, Košice, Slovakia  
Prof. **Ileana Șora Dimitriu**, University of Kwazulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa  
Prof. **Titela Vîlceanu**, University of Craiova, Romania  
Prof. **Mihai Zdrenghea**, “Babeș-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca

**CONFERENCE ORGANISERS**

**Department of Modern Languages and Literatures,  
West University of Timișoara**

**CONFERENCE COORDINATORS**

**Luminița Frențiu  
Loredana Pungă  
Reghina Dascăl**

**Sponsored by  
West University of Timișoara; Faculty of Letters, History, Philosophy and Theology;  
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures; RSEAS.**

## **BAS KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

- 1991 None -
- 1992 Andrei Bantaş, University of Sibiu, Romania
- 1993 Andrei Bantaş, University of Sibiu  
Edward Thompson, University of Dundee, Scotland
- 1994 Valentine Cunningham, Corpus Christi, Oxford  
Roy Bird, University of Alaska, Fairbanks  
Peter Funke, Technical University, Dresden  
Andrei Bantaş, University of Sibiu
- 1995 Terence Brown, Trinity College, Dublin  
Paul Armstrong, University of Oregon
- 1996 Roy Cross, British Council, Bucharest  
Eve Patten, Trinity College, Dublin  
Maria-Regina Kecht, University of Connecticut  
Yves-Marie Leonet, Catholic University of Louvain
- 1997 Stephen Tapscott, MIT, Literature Faculty  
Nigel Townson, British Council, Bucharest
- 1998 Helmut Bonheim, University of Köln  
Patrick McGrath, novelist
- 1999 Gordon Campbell, University of Leicester  
David Snelling, University of Trieste
- 2000 David Snelling, University of Trieste  
Alan Pulverness, Norwich Institute for Language Education
- 2001 Adolphe Haberer, University of Lyon  
Mihaela Anghelescu Irimia, University of Bucharest  
Ádám Nádasy, ELTE Budapest
- 2002 Balz Engler, University of Basel  
David Snelling, University of Trieste
- 2003 Martin Kayman, Cardiff University  
Lachlan Mackenzie, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam  
Adolphe Haberer, University of Lyon
- 2004 Cay Dollerup, University of Copenhagen  
Norman Fairclough, Lancaster University  
Ştefan Avădanei, University of Iaşi
- 2005 Alan Munton, University of Plymouth  
Alexandra Cornilescu, University of Bucharest  
John Stotesbury, University of Joensuu, Finland
- 2006 Margaret Higonnet, University of Connecticut, Storrs  
Isil Baş, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul  
Tamás Bényei, University of Debrecen
- 2007 Irma Taavitsainen, University of Helsinki  
Jacques Ramel, University of Lyon 2

- 2008 Fernando Galván, University of Alcalá, Madrid  
Ranko Bugarski, University of Belgrade
- 2009 Liliane Louvel, University of Poitiers  
Allan James, Alpen-Adria University, Klagenfurt
- 2010 Zoltan Kövecses, ELTE, Budapest  
Francesco Ruiz de Mendoza, University of La Rioja, Logrono  
György Szönyi, University of Szeged  
Michelle Gadpaille, University of Ljubljana
- 2011 Maurizio Gotti, University of Bergamo  
Alberto Lázaro, University of Alcalá, Madrid
- 2012 David Crystal  
José Igor Prieto Arranz, University of Balearic Islands
- 2013 Susana Onega, University of Zaragoza  
Jean-Louis Duchet, University of Poitiers
- 2014 Marina Bondi, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia  
Giorgio Mariani, Sapienza University, Rome
- 2015 David Crystal
- 2016 Fernando Galván, University of Alcalá, Madrid  
Lachlan Mackenzie, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam  
Anna Mauranen, University of Helsinki
- 2017 Alexander Onysko, Alpen-Adria University, Klagenfurt  
Mircea Mihăieş, University of Timișoara  
Jeremy Parrott, University of Buckingham, UK
- 2018 Codrin Liviu Cuțitaru, “Al. I. Cuza” University, Iași  
Bledar Toska, “Ismail Qemali” University, Vlora, Albania  
William Issel, San Francisco State University
- 2019 Mona Baker, University of Manchester  
Marta Gibinska, Jagellonian University, Krakow  
Andrei Avram, University of Bucharest
- 2020 cancelled (pandemic)
- 2021 Aline Ferreira, University of Aveiro  
online Dirk Geeraerts, University of Leuven  
Vesna Goldsworthy, Exeter and East Anglia University  
Ștefan Oltean, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj  
Duncan Large, East Anglia University, Norwich
- 2022 Andreas Jucker, University of Zürich  
online Laurence Roussillion-Constanty, Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour  
Martin Will – President, Advanced International Translation Research Network  
Nicoletta Vasta, University of Udine
- 2023 Maria Socorro Suárez Lafuente, University of Oviedo  
hybrid Christian Mair, Freiburg University  
Ramunė Kasperė, Kaunas University of Technology
- 2024 Ruth Amossy, Tel Aviv University, ADARR

Jorge Díaz-Cintas, University College London  
Jeremy Parrott, University of Buckingham  
Rareş Moldovan, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj  
2026 Robert Asen, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Steven Conn, Miami University  
Elisabetta Marino, University of Rome Tor Vergata  
Ruxandra Vişan, University of Bucharest

## **READERS**

### **Prose**

Tom Whalen, US  
Patrick McGrath, UK  
Hugo Hamilton, UK  
Kevin Smith, Ireland  
Pamela Alexander, US  
Mary Rechner, US  
Rebecca Janson, US  
Christopher Cairney, US/Turkey  
Rani Drew, UK  
William Issel, US  
Creative writing MA students (winners of the national creative writing contest)

### **Poetry**

Flavia Cosma, Canada  
Stephen Tapscott, US  
Roger Craik, US  
Panos Bosnakis, US/Greece (poetry performance)  
David Stark, US  
Robert Ward, US  
Claire Crabtree, US  
John Drew, UK (prose, poetry)  
Claudia Doroholschi, Romania  
Ross Donlon, Australia  
Ana Olos, Romania

## **DRAMA PERFORMANCE**

- students, West University, Timișoara  
- students and teachers, Kragujevac, Serbia

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

### Thursday, May 14

- 8:30 – 9:30 **Registration\***
- 9:30 – 10:00 **Opening address**  
Dr Valy Ceia, Vice-rector for International Affairs  
Professor Dana Percec, Dean, Faculty of Letters  
Professor Loredana Pungă, Event Manager  
Prof. Titela Vilceanu, President of the Romanian Society for English and American Studies (RSEAS)
- 10:00 – 11:00 **Plenary lecture**  
Professor **Robert Asen**, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
*Prospects for Democracy in an Authoritarian Age – A Rhetorical Approach*  
Moderator: Dr **Diana Mădroane**  
**“Ioan Curea” Auditorium/Aula Magna, 1<sup>st</sup> floor**
- 11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30 – 14:00 Paper presentations
- 14:00 – 15:15 Lunch break
- 15:15 – 16:15 **Plenary lecture**  
Professor **Ruxandra Vișan**, University of Bucharest  
*Rethinking Linguistic Boundaries: Representations of Gender-Inclusive Language*  
Moderator: Prof. **Loredana Pungă**  
**A01 Hall, ground floor**
- 16:15 – 16:30 Break
- 16:30 – 19:00 Paper presentations
- 19:30 Cocktail – Zaza Resto & Pub, 9, Vasile Pârvan Blvd.

### Friday, May 15

- 10:00 – 11:00 **Plenary lecture**  
Professor **Steven Conn**, University of Miami  
*The Small Town and the Crisis of American Identity*  
Moderator: Dr **Loredana Bercuci**  
**A01 Hall, ground floor**
- 11:00 – 11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30 – 14:00 Paper presentations
- 14:00 – 15:15 Lunch break
- 15:15 – 16:15 **Plenary lecture**  
Professor **Elisabetta Marino**, University of Rome Tor Vergata  
*Crossing Borders, Defying Boundaries: Women Travel Writers in the Victorian Age*  
Moderator: Prof **Dana Percec**
- 16:15 – 16:30 Break
- 16:30 – 18:00 **ROUND TABLE: *Crisis in the Humanities/ Humanities in Crisis***  
**Convener(s): The American Studies Center (CSAM), West University of Timișoara**  
Moderator: Prof. **Cristina Chevereșan**  
Invited speakers: **Steven Conn** – Landscapes of Loss: Urban and Rural Crises;  
**Leah Perry** – Eating Empire: Foodways and the Establishment and End of US Empire  
CSAM respondents: **Cristina Băniceru**; **Cristina Chevereșan**; **Alexandru Oravițan**; **Gabriela Tucan**  
**Room: 204**

16:30 –18:00 WORKSHOP: *Rethinking Tools for Quality Assessment in Legal Translation*  
Convener(s): **Dr. Luminița Frențiu, Dr. Denisa Ungurean, West University of  
Timișoara**  
**Room: 205**

20:00 Conference Dinner – Calul Alb Restaurant, 14, Eugeniu de Savoya st.

**Saturday, May 16**

10:00-14:00 – outing: Wine-tasting party at Recaș Vineyard.

**\* The Registration desk is open in the main building of West University, in the entrance lobby, from 9:30 to 13.00 on Thursday and from 10:00 to 11:00 on Friday.**

**Thursday, May 14, 11:30 -14:00**

<b>BRITISH LITERATURE Room: 201</b>	<b>AMERICAN LITERATURE Room:202</b>	<b>CULTURAL STUDIES Room:203</b>	<b>GENDER STUDIES Room:204</b>	<b>LANGUAGE STUDIES Room: 205</b>	<b>ELT Room: 207</b>
<i>Moderator: Adriana Raducanu</i>	<i>Moderator: Ann Sand</i>	<i>Moderator: Slavka Tomašcikova</i>	<i>Moderator: Catherine MacMillan</i>	<i>Moderator: Alina Bugheșiu</i>	<i>Moderator: Giuseppe Capalbo</i>
<b>Florina Babici</b> How Absurd is the Theatre of the Absurd? Reimagining Meaning in <i>Waiting for Godot</i>	<b>Derya Alim</b> Orientalism in Ayad Akhtar's <i>Disgraced</i>	<b>Michael Chapman</b> 'World Literature': The Value of an Elusive Category	<b>Simina-Ioana Anton</b> Crossing the Borders of Womanhood: Species and Ontological Boundaries in <i>Circe</i> , by Madeline Miller and <i>Nightbitch</i> , by Rachel Yoder	<b>Mihaela Lazović and Predrag Novakov</b> Anglicisms in Romanian and Serbian Hospitality and Tourism Discourse	<b>Georgiana Lolea</b> Naming the Flaw: From Mistakes to Understanding in the Acquisition of Fallacy Literacy in Higher Education
<b>Ileana Șora Dimitriu</b> Moral Dilemmas and 'Bare Life' in Paul Lynch's <i>Prophet Song</i>	<b>Iulia Bandac</b> Crossing the Border between Personal and Biological Identity in Linda Hogan's <i>Solar Storms</i>	<b>Semih Yararoğlu</b> Navigating Friendship through Artificial Eyes in <i>Klara and The Sun</i> and <i>M3GAN</i>	<b>Luiza Caraivan</b> The Other on the Border: Intersectional Identities in Contemporary Southern African Fiction	<b>Sorin Ciutacu</b> The Contradictory in Semantics. English Cononyms Revisited in the Light of the Dynamic Logic of the Contradictory	<b>Alina Ioana Morar</b> AI-Assisted Marking in Times of Educational Crisis: Renegotiating Assessment Strategies in the GCSE English Context
<b>Milica Radenović</b> The Influence of Thomas Paine on Shelley's <i>The Mask of Anarchy</i>	<b>Maria Barbu</b> Below the Line, Beyond the Border. Reconfiguring U.S. Cultural Boundaries in Imani Perry's <i>South to America</i>	<b>Ileana Botescu Sirețeanu</b> Beyond Borders and Boundaries: Narratives of the Anthropocene and Cultural Hybridity in Elif Shafak's Recent Fiction	<b>Hamza Chafki</b> Dislocated Identities in Susan Abulhawa's <i>The Blue Between Sky and Water</i>	<b>Valentina Mureșan, Arianna Boldi, Leonardo Angelini, Francesca Marina Bosco and Ilaria Gabbatore</b> Qualitative and Conversation-analytic Methods to Examine Whether and How Pragmatic Cues Are Interpreted or Missed by the LLMs during Coding	<b>Jean-Pierre Gabilan</b> Status versus Actions: the English Tense System Revisited
<b>Hande Tekdemir</b> Nationalizing the Vampire: Boundary-Making in Turkish Dracula Texts	<b>Santosh Rajguru</b> The Frontier Paradox: Freedom and Conflict in American Literary Narratives	<b>Hatice Karaman</b> 'La scrittura che si ritira': An Eco-deconstructive Reading of <i>There Are Rivers in the Sky</i>	<b>Elliot Boodhan</b> Untitling <i>Galatea</i> : Erasure, Transformation, and Transgender Allegory	<b>Alexandru Oravițan, Maurizio Caon and Alessandro Silacci</b> Does the Agent Matter? Register and Politeness in Human-AI Exchanges	<b>Rashid Fakhri</b> Learner-centered Teaching in English Language Education
<b>Ayda Önder</b> Oceanic Circulation and Affective Boundaries in Abdulrazak Gurnah's <i>Desertion</i> (2005)	<b>Alexandru Budac</b> The Upside-down Arcadia: Mistranslations and Corrupted Innocence in Vladimir Nabokov's <i>Look at the Harlequins!</i>	<b>Oana Celia Gheorghiu</b> Bodies on the Edge: Shifting Borders of Subjecthood in <i>Gojira's Magma</i>	<b>Iuliana Elena Asoltanci</b> Intersecting Borders and Boundaries: Necropolitics and the Coloniality of Gender in R.F. Kuang's <i>Babel</i> and M.L. Wang's <i>Blood over Bright Haven</i>	<b>Diana Ștefan-Dinescu, Mihaela Zamfirescu and Cosmin Bădulețeanu</b> Romanian Deverbal Nominalizations in Specialized Discourse	
		<b>Maria David and Marius Crișan</b> Reconfiguring Count Dracula's Identity: Morality, the Supernatural and Technology in Fred Saberhagen's <i>The Dracula Tape</i>			

**Thursday, May 14, 16:30 –19:00**

<b>BRITISH LITERATURE</b> <b>Room: 201</b>	<b>AMERICAN LITERATURE</b> <b>Room: 202</b>	<b>CULTURAL STUDIES</b> <b>Room: 203</b>	<b>DISCOURSE AND RHETORICAL STUDIES</b> <b>Room: 204</b>	<b>TRANSLATION STUDIES</b> <b>Room: 205</b>	<b>ELT</b> <b>Room: 207</b>
<i>Moderator: Ileana Șora Dimitriu</i>	<i>Moderator: Stephen Tapscott</i>	<i>Moderator: Michael Chapman</i>	<i>Moderator: Irina Diana Mădroane</i>	<i>Moderator: Daniel Dejica</i>	<i>Moderator: Jean-Pierre Gabilan</i>
<b>Aba-Carina Pârlog</b> A Digital Paradox: Borderless Relations Isolating Humanity	<b>Mihaela Popuța</b> Writing After Loss: Grief as a Liminal Condition in Paul Auster’s Late Works	<b>Cristina Băniceru and Cristina Chevereșan</b> Crossing Over: Ominous Matter in <i>The Zone of Interest</i>	<b>Alina Bugheșiu</b> The Violation of Grice’s Conversational Maxims as a Source of Humour. A Case Study: <i>Pinky and the Brain</i> (1995-1998)	<b>Mihaela Cozma</b> A Translational Perspective on the Figurative Uses of “Love” in Romance Young Adult Novels	<b>Daniela-Angelica Bercian</b> Integration of Digital Tools and Artificial Intelligence in Teaching English in the Romanian and European Educational Systems
<b>Dragoș Ivana</b> Reconfiguring the Boundaries between Space and Text: The Literary Psychogeography of Ned Ward’s <i>The London Spy</i> (1698-1700)	<b>Anne Sand</b> “A Landscape Mirrored in these Men”: Recentring Appalachian Land and Laborers in Twentieth Century America	<b>Adriana Raducanu</b> Unassimilable Richard: Hostipitality, Adaptation, and Canonical Borders in <i>Richard III Will Not Take Place</i>	<b>Amalia Timofte</b> Reclaiming the Fleshly: A Sontagian Demand for the Unglamorized Corporeal Discourse in Illness Narratives	<b>Brankica Bojovich</b> AI’s Role in Translating Tourism and Hospitality Terminology: Characteristics of the English Language Register	<b>Claudia Doroholschi, Estela Ene, Cristina Băniceru, Andreea Dincă and Mădălina Chitez</b> Transnational Experience as Border Reconfiguration: a Collaborative Auto-ethnography of Five Romanian Scholars
<b>Beverley Jane Cornelius and Jean Rossmann</b> Border-Bodies in Karen Jennings’s <i>An Island</i>	<b>Gabriela Tucan</b> Roots and Routes in Transatlantic Modernist Culture	<b>Catherine MacMillan</b> Farage’s Responses to Accusations of Racism: Denial or Disavowal?	<b>Irina Diana Mădroane</b> Individual and Collective Ethos Construction in Community-Oriented News Discourse. Illustrations from the U.S.	<b>Ruxandra Drăgan</b> Threading One’s Way into Romanian	<b>Giuseppe Capalbo</b> An Environmental Toolkit for EFL: Presenting the EcoLingua Project
<b>Dana Crăciun</b> At the Eleventh Hour: The Selvedges of Storytelling, Time, and Self-fashioning		<b>Samantha Reavis</b> Listening across Lines: Sonic Bordering and the Politics of Audibility	<b>Gabriela-Anabella Costache</b> Redefining Borders between Humans and Animals: a Comparative Ecolinguistic Study of Animal Agency in English, Romanian, and French YA Literature	<b>Iulia-Corina Dobrotă</b> The Boundaries of AI Tools in Literary Translation	<b>Eliza Filimon, Theodor Grumeza and Robert Marcu</b> Assistive Technologies in Language Acquisition and Cultural Integration: Interdisciplinary Perspectives
<b>Tijana Parezanović</b> Fictional Travellers and Venetian Boundary Making in Contemporary British Literature			<b>Ștefania Schnakovszky</b> Reconfiguring Jewish Identity and the Discursive Boundaries of Antisemitism in British Literature	<b>Iasmina Velimirovici</b> Student Perceptions and Challenges in Note-Taking during Interpreter Training	

**Friday, May 15, 11:00-13:30**

<b>CULTURAL STUDIES</b> <b>Room: 203</b>	<b>LANGUAGE STUDIES</b> <b>Room: 204</b>	<b>TRANSLATION STUDIES</b> <b>Room: 205</b>	<b>GENDER STUDIES</b> <b>Room: 207</b>
<i>Moderator: Julius Rozenfeld</i>	<i>Moderator: Mihaela Lazović</i>	<i>Moderator: Mihaela Cozma</i>	<i>Moderator: Luiza Caraivan</i>
<b>Teodora Vasilescu</b> The Animal Turn in Maternal Narratives: Somatic Metaphors and Mental Spaces in the Adaptation of <i>Die, My Love</i>	<b>Jelena Danilović Jeremić and Gorica Tomić</b> The Suntastic Headlines: Lexical Blends in the British Tabloid	<b>Rita Filanti</b> Beyond the Color Line: Translating <i>Home to Harlem</i> (1928) in Fascist Italy	<b>Patricia-Anamaria Ciurdar</b> One Neighborhood and One Border Separating Gender: Gender Roles and Intersectionality in Gloria Naylor's <i>The Women of Brewster Place</i> and <i>The Men of Brewster Place</i>
<b>Bogdan Mihai Dascălu</b> Reconfiguring Cultural Boundaries: Titu Maiorescu's Imagological Construction of England	<b>Karla Csürös</b> Linguistic Archetypes in Workplace Sitcoms: A Corpus-Based Model of Managerial and Subordinate Characterization	<b>Cornelia-Patricia Grigoraş and Daniel Dejica</b> Inside the Translator's Mind: A TAP Study of Strategies in Technical Translation	<b>Gabriela Glăvan</b> Marginalia: Assia Wevill's Writings as Literary Feminist Recovery
<b>Saša Simović</b> A Transnational Vision: Emily Greene Balch's Perception of Slavic People and Culture	<b>Loredana Pungă, Mădălina Chitez and Gabriela-Anabella Costache</b> Stance Markers and Metaphorical Framing in Romanian Students' Talk about AI-Assisted Academic Writing	<b>Iasmina Velimirovici</b> Regulation and Interpreter Training in Romania and the United Kingdom: A Comparative Study	<b>Hoc Yin Lau</b> Comparative Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Technology and Social Actors in <i>Barbie</i> (2023) - Given Contexts of Feminism and Patriarchy
<b>Monica Ruset Oanca</b> Physical and Mystical Borders in <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i>	<b>Marina-Cristiana Rotaru</b> Formulating Rights: A Comparative Analysis of the Legal Language of the British Bill of Rights (1689) and the American Bill of Rights (1791)	<b>Samuel Ramapuram</b> Translating at the Edge: Gondi-English Translation as Boundary Work in Indigenous Borderlands of Central India	<b>Irina Rabinovics</b> Queer Diasporas: Jewish Lesbian Narratives and the Re-Making of Cultural Boundaries
<b>Andrea Velich</b> Can Films Help Us to Cope with Climate Change?			<b>Suparna Roy</b> Reconfiguring Border and Boundaries: Cultural Discourse of Menstrual Narratives
<b>Raul Săran</b> The Limits of Language and the Cultural Collapse in Thomas Pynchon's <i>Shadow Ticket</i>			<b>Hanim Türkyilmaz</b> Gender Representation in <i>Keçeli Kız</i> Folk Tale: A Critical Discourse Analysis

**Friday, May 15, 16:30-18:00**

<p>ROUND TABLE: <i>Crisis in the Humanities/ Humanities in Crisis</i> <b>Convener(s): CSAM – The American Studies Center, West University of Timișoara</b> <b>Moderator: Cristina Chevereșan</b></p> <p><b>Room: 204</b></p>	<p>WORKSHOP: <i>Rethinking Tools for Quality Assessment in Legal Translation</i> <b>Convener(s): Dr. Luminița Frentiu, Dr. Denisa Ungurean, West University of Timișoara</b></p> <p><b>Room: 205</b></p>
<p>Invited speakers: <b>Steven Conn</b> – Landscapes of Loss: Urban and Rural Crises; <b>Leah Perry</b> – Eating Empire: Foodways and the Establishment and End of US Empire CSAM respondents: <b>Cristina Băniceru</b> – Saving Literature: Connecting Students’ Personal Interests to Literature Research; <b>Cristina Chevereșan</b> – Making Humanities Public: Engaging Academic and Non-Academic Communities; <b>Alexandru Oravițan</b> – Crisis in the Academia: The Obsession with Performance Metrics and “Impact” Measurement in the Humanities; <b>Gabriela Tucan</b> – The Political Crisis in the U.S. Education System.</p>	

## ABSTRACTS

### Derya Alim

Orientalism in Ayad Akhtar's *Disgraced*

*Disgraced*, by Ayad Akhtar, is a Pulitzer Prize winning play that deals with the struggles of being a member of the Islamic community in the post-9/11 United States of America. Amir, the main character of the play, is perceived by others as Muslim and his actions, personality, and ideas are always associated with his country of origin and perceived as political statements by people at work, friends, and family despite him changing his name, apostatizing from Islam, and having an overall very "Western" lifestyle. His wife, on the other hand, romanticizes and appropriates the Eastern culture and, through her art, turns it into an exotic, fetishized object for Western use and fantasies about aesthetic Orientalism. The purpose of this presentation is to discuss how Ayad Akhtar exposes the damage Orientalism does to someone's identity and public image as they are shaped by events and misconceptions out of their control. I intend to analyze the complex and paradoxical experience of being a member of the Islamic community, focusing on themes such as self-hatred, assimilation, agency, and certain dynamics, suspicions and labels that come along with being associated with the Eastern culture. I will also include key ideas from Edward Said's *Orientalism*, as it approaches the same issues Ayad Akhtar talks about in his play.

### Simina-Ioana Anton

Crossing the Borders of Womanhood: Species and Ontological Boundaries in *Circe*, by Madeline Miller and *Nightbitch*, by Rachel Yoder

This paper considers a literary analysis of *Circe*, by Madeline Miller and *Nightbitch*, by Rachel Yoder, whose female protagonists cross species boundaries (human-divine, human-animal) and ontological boundaries (woman-monster), as a rebellion against patriarchal systems aiming to confine them. Drawing on Julia Kristeva's concept of "abjection", as well as on Rosi Braidotti's views on "posthuman feminism," this paper aims to analyze how species boundaries function as regulatory mechanisms which both protagonists destabilize. In terms of ontological boundaries, both novels question the concept of "womanhood" as a limited, monolithic identity. *Circe* defines herself through her evolution from a minor deity to a powerful self-authored figure, and ultimately through her decision to relinquish immortality, while the anonymous mother from *Nightbitch* undergoes a transformation that fractures her identity, crossing the boundaries of the self. By destabilizing these boundaries, both female protagonists reveal how patriarchal order constructs womanhood as a politically regulated category.

### Iuliana Elena Asoltanei

Intersecting Borders and Boundaries: Necropolitics and the Coloniality of Gender in R.F. Kuang's *Babel* and M.L. Wang's *Blood over Bright Haven*

This paper explores representations of imperial hegemony through physical borders and symbolic boundaries in R.F. Kuang's *Babel* (2022) and M.L. Wang's *Blood over Bright Haven* (2023). Within the frameworks of necropolitics, coloniality of gender and intersectionality, we argue that the academic institutions in these narratives reduce marginalized populations to expendable instruments for imperial progress. Both novels illustrate a matrix of domination, where gendered and racialized borders and boundaries intersect, categorizing individuals into simultaneous Manichean allegories (colonizer/colonized, civilized/savage, male/female) to justify epistemic violence. Concepts such as the god-trick and outsider-within explain how ignorance masks gendered and colonial commodification while showcasing systemic contradictions. However, borders and boundaries can be reframed through the protagonists' resistance and transgressions that destroy imperial illusions. This analysis demonstrates that academic institutions sustain imperial hegemony by marginalizing and commodifying the Other, where physical borders and symbolic boundaries can also be used to contest and critique systemic injustices.

### Robert Asen

Prospects for Democracy in an Authoritarian Age – A Rhetorical Approach – **keynote address**

Across the globe, in different national cultures and contexts, authoritarianism is on the rise. Prominent authoritarian movements and politicians have threatened the communicative basis of democracy, casting dissent and disagreement as disloyalty and treason. Some defenses of authoritarianism state their case aggressively, pointing to the supposedly superior strength, leadership, and wisdom of the authoritarian as

justifying their rule and circumventing democratic norms and practices, including lively debate. In these arguments, debate itself appears as an unnecessary obstacle to effective action. Other defenses do not support authoritarianism as such, but justify institutional restrictions on debate and discussion as consistent within the values and practices of democracy. Exploring the latter, in this presentation I address what I call “anti-woke publics.” Originating in a US context but circulating transnationally, anti-woke publics oppose efforts to redress societal inequalities—particularly on issues of race, gender, ethnicity, and religion—as extremist threats to democracy and patriotic dedication to one’s nation. Positioning themselves as fair-minded occupants of a political middle ground, they distinguish their views from what they depict as the extremes of the ideological left and right. In their public engagement, anti-woke publics invoke democratic values of neutrality, fairness, individuality, free expression, and more. However, their advocacy constitutes a defense of an unequal status quo. In effect, anti-woke publics raise the banner of equality in defense of inequality. To illustrate this concept, I turn to a case study of a legislative hearing in the US state of Wisconsin. The hearing considered two proposals on education policy that would have restricted pedagogy relating to racial injustice and inequality. Proponents of the legislation claimed to support teaching about race, but they objected to what they characterized as “divisive” instruction that would segregate students by race. Proponents targeted critical race theory, a conceptual perspective first developed by US legal scholars to understand the societal dimensions of racism, as perpetuating racial division and unfairly maligning white people. My analysis shows how proponents of the legislation used discursive strategies of decontextualization to present themselves as supporters of equality while opposing classroom discussions of race and racism.

### **Florina Babici**

How Absurd is the Theatre of the Absurd? Reimagining Meaning in *Waiting for Godot*

Using the term coined by Corin Braga, one could state that *Waiting for Godot*, by Samuel Beckett, belongs to the so-called anti-theatre, and hence it is an “anarchetypal” text. The aim of the present paper is to try to go beyond the already acknowledged architecture of the theatre of the absurd and to illustrate that the characters’ fate (and, alongside it, the plot) is not absurd unless compared with the same scenario which can take place in (an)other possible world(s). To be more specific, in this study we aim at explaining, and reimagining/reconfiguring the borders of the theatre of the absurd through the lens of the theory of possible worlds, while also making use of the theoretical framework designed by Albert Camus. Put differently, we try to imagine Vladimir and Estragon happy, not in the least affected by (or aware of) the purposeless life some could claim they live.

### **Iulia Bandac**

Crossing the Border between Personal and Biological Identity in Linda Hogan’s *Solar Storms*

The word “border” generates in one’s mind the image of an invisible line which separates continents, countries or cities. Taking this noun in a metaphorical sense, we may refer to “border” as cultural or mental. For contemporary Native American communities, “border” represents the delimitation between reservation and federal territory. *Solar Storms*, written by Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan, is a novel which focuses on Angela Jensen, an Oklahoma teenager, who crosses one such border to live in the village of Adam’s Rib under the protection of Agnes Iron, her last maternal relative. Drawing on Gloria Anzaldúa’s borderland theory, this research aims to determine how the protagonist negotiates her identity on the background of Native Americans and state representatives’ interactions. The present article claims that Hogan’s main character discovers her true self by trespassing skepticism about the community she returns to and by becoming involved in their struggle to prevent White exploitation.

### **Maria Barbu**

Below the Line, Beyond the Border. Reconfiguring U.S. Cultural Boundaries in Imani Perry’s *South to America*

Besides its geographical function of separating Maryland and Pennsylvania, the Mason-Dixon line has long operated as a symbolic boundary between the pre-Civil War slave states of the South and the free states of the North. *South to America* (2022) recounts Imani Perry’s travels across several states situated below this dividing line, and this paper aims to examine how her social and cultural commentary reconfigures dominant understandings of the American “South”. Perry challenges canonical North American travel narratives by foregrounding the ways in which racism and historical violence have shaped the territories through which she moves, rather than reproducing the typical white, masculine road myth of freedom and self-discovery. As a Black woman traveler, Perry’s physical crossings of official borders become metaphorical boundary crossings

that reveal road space as a gendered and racialized site, where mobility is greatly influenced by power structures and affective geographies.

**Cristina Băniceru and Cristina Chevereșan**

Crossing Over: Ominous Matter in *The Zone of Interest*

The Gothic has always been concerned with borders between the seen and the hidden: specters haunting residences, landscapes, minds. While continuing to make its presence felt, the invisible triggers fear and unease. This paper examines how dividing lines operate in Martin Amis' novel, *The Zone of Interest*, and Jonathan Glazer's homonymous adaptation. Both foreground a strict spatial and moral frontier: domestic Nazi life unfolds in plain view, while mass extermination is kept out of sight by a separating wall. This partition organizes everyday interaction, normalizes violence, and enables denial. Drawing on Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter* and Jeffrey Weinstock's work on Gothic things, the paper argues that ordinary objects – smoke, ashes, clothes – cross lines that are meant to keep realities apart. They carry traces of violence into the domestic sphere, revealing how boundaries built to conceal horror collapse into haunted spaces, where ghosts attached to matter begin to speak.

**Daniela-Angelica Bercian**

Integration of Digital Tools and Artificial Intelligence in Teaching English in the Romanian and European Educational Systems

The paper draws on evidence from the European training course “Integrating AI & ICT into the Classroom” in Barcelona (in May 2026) and compares how digital tools and the use of artificial intelligence can be successfully applied to the teaching of English in Romania's educational context. Learning content courses included interactive platforms, educational games, collaborative digital tools, and AI applications for lesson planning, personalized learning, and resource creation. This paper points to positive factors seen along the broader area of interest across Europe, such as increased student participation, multiple dimensions of learning, and more efficient formative assessment, but also notes challenges such as ethical issues, data protection, and teacher preparation. The paper is important, as it provides significant recommendations for the translation of these practices to Romanian schools and states that European digital competence frameworks, as well as responsible, pedagogically grounded use of AI in English language classes, are essential to this effect.

**Brankica Bojovich**

AI's Role in Translating Tourism and Hospitality Terminology: Characteristics of the English Language Register

This paper examines the role of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the context of tourism and hospitality, focusing on the semantic analysis of specialized terminology, intercultural communication skills and the role of English as a global lingua franca. A corpus of 3,000 items was selected from the English for International Tourism series to analyze language use in this field. The paper also supports Byram's concept of the intercultural speaker. This ability, known as intercultural communicative competence, encompasses knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Recent studies (García-Serrano, 2020) emphasize the importance of collaboration between IT professionals and translators to bridge the gap between technology and human expertise. While AI can handle large volumes of text quickly, the need for human translators with specialized knowledge remains essential, particularly in areas where cultural context and accuracy are critical. Effective collaboration between AI systems and human translators ensures the production of high-quality translations that maintain both linguistic integrity and cultural relevance.

**Elliot Boodhan**

Untitling *Galatea*: Erasure, Transformation, and Transgender Allegory

Through examining John Lyly's *Galatea* through the lenses of queer theory and gender theory, it becomes clear that the play's titular character—herein referred to as Tityrus II—is an explicit example of transmasculine identity within renaissance literature. Drawing upon Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and Agnes Callard's theory of aspiration, the article explores the repeated enactments of masculinity that produce Tityrus II's gendered substance, revealing a persistent desire to live authentically as male. This close reading of *Galatea* analyzes the ways in which transformation and erasure function as strategies of self-construction and survival by contrasting Tityrus II's comfort in masculine performance with Phillida's resistance to boyhood.

In highlighting the relationship between gender enactments within the play, the article uncovers transgender possibilities within the scope of renaissance literature.

### **Ileana Botescu Sirețeanu**

Beyond Borders and Boundaries: Narratives of the Anthropocene and Cultural Hybridity in Elif Shafak's Recent Fiction

Grounded in the latest developments of ecocriticism and affect, this research aims to trace and investigate the intersectionality of tradition, cultural hybridity and contemporary ecological challenges in Elif Shafak's latest novels. Prompted by Crutzen and Stoermer's coinage of the Anthropocene in 2000, this paper argues that Shafak's *The Island of the Missing Trees* and *There Are Rivers in the Sky* articulate a distinctive discourse where cultural, spiritual, and environmental concerns are interwoven in polyphonic narratives of diasporic identities meant to narrate the disturbing realities of the Anthropocene. Drawing on ecocriticism, ecofeminism and transnational literary theory, this article explores how Shafak's novels define identity, both personal and cultural, as an ongoing negotiation between roots and routes, foregrounding uprooted protagonists whose experiences in and of the world blend attachment to tradition with environmental displacement, resulting in cultural syncretism. Thus, this research argues that Shafak's narrative depictions of diasporic identities allow for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the Anthropocene, as both cultural and individual survival depend on finding alternative modes of being in the world that require cooperation, transcending national and cultural barriers and reimagining the future.

### **Alexandru Budac**

The Upside-down Arcadia: Mistranslations and Corrupted Innocence in Vladimir Nabokov's *Look at the Harlequins!*

Vladimir Nabokov's fictions – especially those he wrote in English – transgress almost any border and boundary one can think of: territorial (they blend the writer's native Russia and adoptive America in one imaginary country), linguistic, by creating distinctive idioms, private and public, by subverting the rules of memoir writing, and moral, when they confront the readers with an aesthetic of cruelty. Nabokov's last novel, *Look at the Harlequins!* (1974), reiterates his favorite motifs and plays some new tricks on the audience. It is a relentless comedy whose main protagonist, a Russian émigré novelist not unlike Nabokov himself, struggles with the memory of his native country, the American way of life, his not always kind critics and clumsy translators, but most of all, with his conjugal life.

### **Alina Bugheșiu**

The Violation of Grice's Conversational Maxims as a Source of Humour. A Case Study: *Pinky and the Brain* (1995-1998)

The paper looks at how Grice's conversational maxims are unintentionally yet felicitously violated in the animated television series *Pinky and the Brain* (1995-1998). In general, failure to abide by these socio-pragmatic boundaries may hinder the speakers' aim to reach their communicative ends. However, in the context of the analysed animated series, the unintentional violation of the maxims acts as the catalyst that enables the achievement of an overarching discursive goal: making the viewers laugh. To illustrate this, the paper examines a recurring sequence in the series, consisting of the question "Are you pondering what I'm pondering?", asked by Brain, and the answer provided by Pinky. The reply fails to refer to the topic and context of the conversation and borders on the absurd, thereby generating humour. The corpus consists of 65 conversation sequences collected from the animated series. The analyses rely mainly on the theoretical and methodological framework of pragmatics.

### **Giuseppe Capalbo**

An Environmental Toolkit for EFL: Presenting the EcoLingua Project

In the introduction to *Engaging with Environmental Education Through the Language Arts*, Nicholas McGuinn and Amanda Naylor argue for approaches to environmental education that use "the language arts in ways that encourage interdisciplinary and creative approaches to ecoliteracy" (2024, 4). "EcoLingua", an Erasmus+ project involving Italy, Lithuania, Spain, and Turkey, responds to this call by integrating environmental themes into language teaching through digitally enhanced pedagogy. After a concise overview of the partnership, I will present the project's main outputs: the curriculum analysis and its integration strategies; an interactive educational toolkit (e.g., gamified activities). I then discuss how these materials support language development

while fostering climate-related vocabulary, critical thinking, and action-oriented communicative tasks. The paper closes with preliminary reflections on (1) the value of developing transnational open educational resources (OERs) for the English-language classroom; (2) issues of teacher uptake; (3) and the methodological challenges of evaluating eco-communicative competence across diverse settings.

### **Luiza Caraiwan**

The Other on the Border: Intersectional Identities in Contemporary Southern African Fiction

The study examines the novels of two women writers from Southern Africa (South Africa and Zimbabwe) through the lens of intersectionality in feminist theory. Kopano Matlwa's novels and Tsitsi Dangarembga's writings are representative of contemporary Southern African fiction written in English as they focus on the challenges that women face in the context of blurred borders. Hybrid identities emerge and they are situated at the intersections of race, gender, class, geography and cultural belonging.

### **Hamza Chafki**

Dislocated Identities in Susan Abulhawa's *The Blue Between Sky and Water*

This paper examines the reconfiguration of borders and boundaries in Susan Abulhawa's *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, focusing on the Palestinian experience of dislocated identities shaped by forced displacement and exile. The novel foregrounds borders not only as physical and territorial divisions but also as symbolic and affective boundaries that structure belonging, memory, and identity. Drawing on postcolonial and diasporic frameworks, the study explores how displacement destabilizes fixed notions of home, nation, and self, producing identities that are fragmented, fluid, and continuously renegotiated. Particular attention is given to gendered experiences of bordering, as female characters embody the intersection of political dispossession and intimate trauma, while simultaneously sustaining cultural memory across generations. Through narrative, memory, and embodied experience, Abulhawa challenges exclusionary boundaries and reimagines identity as a processual and relational construct. The paper argues that the novel transforms literature into a critical space where borders are both exposed as instruments of oppression and reworked as sites of resistance, agency, and rearticulation of belonging.

### **Michael Chapman**

'World Literature': The Value of an Elusive Category

Ever since Goethe in 1827 coined the term, 'world literature' has remained elusive of definition. Is world literature a set of great works or is it a concept, in which circulation beyond the original culture depends upon influential debate and dissemination? It is no coincidence that a renewed interest in world literature from the 1990s onwards has coincided with the end of Cold War politics and, in consequence, with US global expansionism. Yet, if Fukuyama in 1992 could speak of an 'end of history' – a triumph of liberal-democratic globalisation – Fukuyama in 2018 speaks of an 'elitist' neglect of local identity recognitions. This paper attaches such considerations to the category of world literature: what is it, what is its value, if any, and is it manageable as a teaching subject within the constraints of a literature curriculum?

### **Sorin Ciutacu**

The Contradictory in Semantics. English Contronyms Revisited in the Light of the Dynamic Logic of the Contradictory

Contronyms – words that carry mutually opposed meanings within a single lexical form – represent one of the most paradoxical phenomena in natural languages. Words such as *cleave*, *fast*, *sanction*, and *dust* simultaneously encode opposite semantic values, apparently violating the classical logical principles of identity, non-contradiction, and the excluded middle. Traditional linguistic explanations attribute contronyms to historical polysemy, pragmatic contextualization, or semantic divergence. While these explanations account for their diachronic development, they fail to explain their synchronic coexistence within the same lexical unit. This paper proposes that Stéphane Lupasco's dynamic logic of the contradictory provides a theoretical framework capable of explaining the internal structure of contronyms. Lupasco's theory posits that all phenomena involve antagonistic processes of actualization and potentialization, which generate a third state of equilibrium known as the included third (T-state). By applying this logic to lexical semantics, contronyms emerge not as anomalies but as linguistic manifestations of dynamic semantic antagonism. Language thus reveals a structural affinity with the ontological dynamics described by Lupasco, suggesting that meaning itself operates through contradictory potentials rather than static identities.

### **Patricia-Anamaria Ciurdar**

One Neighborhood and One Border Separating Gender: Gender Roles and Intersectionality in Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* and *The Men of Brewster Place*

Gloria Naylor's novels *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982) and *The Men of Brewster Place* (1998) offer valuable insight into an African American community, from fourteen different perspectives: seven women and seven men. While the characters are separated by their genders in two different novels, I intend to investigate the differences, as well the similarities they share. From the roles they have in their community, to the forms of discrimination they suffer from, the aim of this study is to identify the strength of the border that separates the characters into two categories, based on their gender.

### **Steven Conn**

The Small Town and the Crisis of American Identity – **keynote address**

A century ago the great political economist Thorstein Veblen wrote: "The country town is one of the great American institutions; perhaps the greatest, in the sense that it has had and continues to have a greater part than any other in shaping public sentiment and giving character to American culture." In this lecture, Steven Conn will examine the place of the small town in the American imagination, looking not simply at the fate of the small town across the 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, but at the meanings attached to the small town and what is at stake when Americans have believed the small town to be in crisis.

### **Beverley Jane Cornelius and Jean Rossmann**

Border-Bodies in Karen Jennings's *An Island*

Karen Jennings's *An Island* presents a fictional island as "brutalist" space, a space subject to "the process through which power as a geomorphic force is constituted, expressed, reconfigured, and reproduced through acts of fracturing and fissuring" (Mbembe 2023). The novel distills the histories of the African continent into a microcosmic island where Samuel, an ageing lighthouse keeper, lives in solitude for twenty-three years until a refugee washes ashore. Samuel, as prototypically "subject to history" (Boehmer 2023), suffers "exhaustion and depletion" (Mbembe 2023). We explore how the novel resonates with Mbembe's philosophies on migration, mobility, and border-bodies in the context of late capitalism and the postcolony. Further, *An Island* suggests that global anxiety about borders is inseparable from ecological precarity and resource scarcity in the Anthropocene; that xenophobia and environmental crisis may be two sides of a coin.

### **Gabriela-Anabella Costache**

Redefining Borders between Humans and Animals: a Comparative Ecolinguistic Study of Animal Agency in English, Romanian, and French YA Literature

This paper investigates how contemporary young adult (YA) literature reflects the evolution from an anthropomorphic perception of animals to a more ethical and ecological attitude, redefining the borders between the human and non-human across three linguistic and cultural contexts: English, Romanian, and French. Drawing on ecocritical and ecolinguistic frameworks (Buell, 1996; Prince & Thiltges, 2018; Goga et al., 2018; Stibbe, 2015), the research utilizes a comparative exploratory pilot corpus of approximately ten titles per language, including a mix of canonical and contemporary works. Using digital tools such as #LancsBox, we analyse keywords frequencies, collocation networks, the evaluative lexis surrounding animal entities, and sentiment polarity to identify discursive patterns for representing animals, allowing us to compare literary discourse across borders and identify both local and international contemporary patterns of representing animal agency and the porosity between the human and the non-human.

### **Mihaela Cozma**

A Translational Perspective on the Figurative Uses of "Love" in Romance Young Adult Novels

"Love" is one of the English words which, in addition to its basic meaning as the feeling of liking someone very much, is associated with a variety of figurative uses, often as part of metaphors, similes, or idioms which convey a particular idea in a creative and impactful manner. The paper will look at the figurative uses of "love" in a corpus of romance young adult novels with the purpose of revealing aspects of relevance for the translators from English into Romanian.

## **Dana Crăciun**

### At the Eleventh Hour: The Selvedges of Storytelling, Time, and Self-fashioning

Salman Rushdie's latest collection of short stories, *The Eleventh Hour* (2025), offers a compelling continuation but also reconfiguration of the author's long-standing engagement with narrative hybridity, historical memory, and the politics of storytelling. This paper argues that the stories collectively construct a "late-style" poetics in which temporal dislocation, intertextual play, and reflective irony shape representations of the self, memory, and political uncertainty. Particular attention is given to how the stories foreground storytelling itself as an act of resistance in a world marked by political volatility and cultural displacement. Ultimately, the analysis highlights how Rushdie's short fiction intensifies his exploration of storytelling's ethical and imaginative possibilities, reaffirming the short story as a vital site for negotiating questions of power, identity, and historical consciousness in the twenty-first century.

## **Karla Csürös**

### Linguistic Archetypes in Workplace Sitcoms: A Corpus-Based Model of Managerial and Subordinate Characterization

This paper introduces a corpus-driven account of how workplace sitcoms construct character archetypes through recurrent lexico-grammatical and phraseological patterns. Drawing on a 350-episode, seven-show corpus of workplace sitcoms, the study contrasts managerial and subordinate characters as sociolinguistic communities of practice shaped by institutional hierarchy. Using bidirectional keyword and key n-gram analyses, the study identifies distinctive "linguistic fingerprints" that map onto Bednarek's expressive, social, and representational cues. Managerial characters are shown to enact authority through directive constructions, evaluative stance markers, institutional terminology, and interaction-structuring devices. Subordinate characters, by contrast, rely on positive stance tokens, epistemic uncertainty, mitigated alignment strategies, and relational humour to negotiate reduced institutional power. These findings demonstrate that workplace sitcoms generate humour through systematic linguistic friction between informational and social goals, not simply through personality tropes. The study offers a replicable model for analysing characterization in scripted media and highlights applications for corpus-informed pedagogy.

## **Jelena Danilović Jeremić and Gorica Tomić**

### The Suntastic Headlines: Lexical Blends in the British Tabloid

Lexical blending is commonly considered a marginal, boundary-straddling word-formation process that merges two source words. In the process, at least one of the source words is typically shortened, occasionally with a graphemic and/or phonemic overlap, e.g. *Shampoooch* (shampoo x pooch), *queenagers* (queen x teenagers). The phenomenon is said to have been steadily gaining influence since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Adams, 1973; Lehrer, 2003), spreading into various domains of language use, such as advertising, product naming, and journalism. Nowadays it appears to blossom in times of significant socio-cultural events, as evidenced by Brexit, the spread of the Coronavirus, or the stepping down of senior royals Harry and Meghan. Bearing this in mind, the aim of the paper is to analyze a dataset of approximately 700 lexical blends extracted from the tabloid the *Sun* at the time of the aforementioned events. Our analysis will focus on the structural and semantic properties of blends, with the aim of identifying their specific features and (un)common patterns that delineate them from blends associated with other productive domains (cf. Tomić, 2023, 2025).

## **Bogdan Mihai Dascălu**

### Reconfiguring Cultural Boundaries: Titu Maiorescu's Imagological Construction of England

This paper examines the imagological construction of England in Titu Maiorescu's *Jurnal*, arguing that his London travel notes reconfigure cultural boundaries between Romanian identity and the English world. Combining critical editing and imagological analysis, the study situates Maiorescu's diary within the typology of imagogenic non-fictional texts and proposes a nuanced reading of hetero-, allo-, retro-, and ipso-images. England emerges not as a monolithic national stereotype but as a dynamic field of encounters structured by language, literature, science, and direct social interaction. The London episode (1882) reveals a complex negotiation between admiration, critical distance, and self-positioning, transforming alterity into a reflective mirror of Romanian modernity. By foregrounding the diary as a pluritext integrating journal, travel memoir, and correspondence, the paper contributes both to imagological theory and to border studies, demonstrating how cultural boundaries are symbolically constructed, crossed, and reformulated in literary discourse.

**Maria David and Marius Crişan**

Reconfiguring Count Dracula's Identity: Morality, the Supernatural and Technology in Fred Saberhagen's *The Dracula Tape*

In world literature, the representation of vampires as sympathetic figures highlights the fact that these creatures can be both violent and empathetic. This paper focuses on Fred Saberhagen's *The Dracula Tape* (1975), a novel that transforms Count Dracula into a sympathetic figure. The paper examines how Saberhagen used Dracula's confession to criticize Stoker's representation of the Count as an evil Other. The author challenged the boundaries between good and evil by portraying Dracula as having both a vampiric and a human nature. Saberhagen also reconfigured the boundaries between the supernatural and technology by depicting Dracula as a superior creature who rejects superstition and wishes to move to London to witness the progress of humankind. This paper argues that, by employing a subjective narrative, Saberhagen reshaped Dracula into a modern character and challenges readers to question the morality of Stoker's heroes.

**Iulia-Corina Dobrotă**

The Boundaries of AI Tools in Literary Translation

The fast growth of AI-powered translation tools has changed how translation is done today, especially in technical and practical areas. Nonetheless, their utilization in literary translation exposes distinct constraints that warrant rigorous scrutiny. This paper examines the limitations of AI tools in literary translation, concentrating on their treatment of figurative language, cultural specificity, and authorial voice. Utilizing examples from prose and poetry, the research illustrates that although AI systems attain significant semantic precision, they often neglect to replicate aesthetic subtlety, stylistic variation, and interpretive ambiguity components integral to literary significance. The analysis contends that literary translation encompasses creative and ethical decision-making that transcends algorithmic pattern recognition. The paper suggests a complementary model for AI, in which it serves as a helpful tool for drafting and exploring vocabulary, rather than as a replacement for human translators. The results add to the ongoing discussions about how people and machines can work together and show that a human translator is still needed in literary discourse.

**Claudia Doroholschi, Estela Ene, Cristina Băniceru, Andreea Dincă and Mădălina Chitez**

Transnational Experience as Border Reconfiguration: a Collaborative Auto-ethnography of Five Romanian Scholars

Writing involves navigating multiple kinds of borders – between languages, cultures, disciplines, institutions, registers – and the tensions that arise at points of intersection. However, scholars have also increasingly highlighted that these borders are “ever emergent, in construction, variable, fluid, and, above all, crossed” (Horner 2023). In this paper, five Romanian-born researchers reflect on their trajectories teaching and publishing in English in and across different contexts, using collaborative autoethnography (Chang et al., 2004). We reflect on how we have navigated multiple internal and external borders (East/West, communist/post-communist, English/Romanian, language/literature, academic/creative writing) and how moving across these various types of borders and boundaries contributed to reconfigurations of borders in our identities as researchers and our practice as researchers and teachers.

**Ruxandra Drăgan**

Threading One's Way into Romanian

The English WAY-construction is a semi-idiomatic syntactic pattern analyzed as a subtype of resultative. The V-Poss-WAY-RP combination denotes a change-of-location/state event undergone by the Subject coreferential with the possessive modifying the WAY DP ('He threaded his way out of the auditorium'). Since the WAY-construction, like resultatives in general, does not exist in Romanian, it is difficult to render, particularly its aspectual (durative) dimension and its more metaphorical manifestations. It is for this reason that its translation into Romanian is the focus of the present investigation, specifically the strategies used to compensate for its absence. It is argued that the identified compensation strategies are motivated by typological differences between Germanic and Romance languages (Talmy 1985, 2000). It is also shown that, unlike in the case of garden-variety resultatives, typically rendered via compensation by splitting/grammatical transposition, compensation by merging dominates the picture here, most likely due to the idiomatic nature of this construction.

## **Rashid Fakhri**

### Learner-centered Teaching in English Language Education

This presentation focuses on learner-centered approaches in English language teaching and their role in improving classroom interaction and student engagement. It highlights how shifting the focus from the teacher to the learner encourages active participation, collaboration, and independent learning. Practical classroom techniques such as pair work, group activities, and communicative tasks will be discussed. The presentation also explores the changing role of the teacher as a facilitator rather than a controller of learning. By using learner-centered strategies, English language teachers can create a more supportive and motivating learning environment. This presentation aims to provide simple and practical ideas that teachers can apply in different EFL contexts.

## **Rita Filanti**

### Beyond the Color Line: Translating *Home to Harlem* (1928) in Fascist Italy TRANS ST

The notion of a ‘color line’ refers to an observable difference in skin color that should unerringly demarcate racial difference. In reality, however, the color line has a more expansive and less stable meaning. Rather than a fixed border, it is a socio-spatial relation adopted in racial regimes to justify existing relations of power. Fragile and in need of constant repair, the violence that accompanies it is proportionate to the necessity of reasserting it (Heatherton 2022). Claude McKay, one of the most radical representatives of the New Negro movement, famously interrogated the notion of a color line in his 1928 bestseller, *Home to Harlem*. First translated into Italian by Alessandra Scalero and published by ‘Modernissima’, Milan, in 1930, *Ritorno ad Harlem* challenged fascist notions of color, race, and national belonging revealing their unevenness and impossible definition.

## **Eliza Filimon, Theodor Grumeza and Robert Marcu**

### Assistive Technologies in Language Acquisition and Cultural Integration: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Our presentation will allow participants to test technology-supported tools, bringing a threefold perspective to inclusive multilingual education: assistive technologies (Lecturer Theodor Grumeza), teaching EFL (EFL teacher Robert Marcu), and intersemiotic translation (Associate Professor Eliza Filimon). Smart glasses “SoundSight”, a RoboChallenge 2024 award-winning project developed by the team of the Faculty of Informatics and Robotics of the West University of Timișoara, Romania, equipped with visual recognition and artificial intelligence, are a powerful tool for supporting English language learning among visually impaired students. By scanning barcodes and identifying expiration dates on everyday products, the device uses a large language model to provide clear, real-time audio feedback. Students interact with real objects from daily life, and they can hear accurate English vocabulary related to food items, safety warnings, dates, and nutritional information. This contextual exposure reinforces language acquisition and helps learners build practical, meaningful vocabulary. For students who encounter language barriers or are transitioning to an English-speaking environment, the system supports both understanding and active learning. By combining assistive technology with language pedagogy, these smart glasses become more than a safety device and enable an immersive approach to English instruction for visually impaired learners, enhancing their independence and accelerating vocabulary development through authentic, real-world interaction. You are invited to discover the capabilities of a new, inclusive educational resource in the context of intersemiotic translation from text to audio, facilitated by customised language teaching.

## **Jean-Pierre Gabilan**

### Status versus Actions: the English Tense System Revisited

Traditional grammar relies on actions to explain how tenses in English work. But in the case of “simple” versus “progressive”, to use traditional terminology, opposing routines to actions in progress never does justice to the system. Should we take as a fact of life that rules admit exceptions, or should we reconsider what has always been taught? Utterances in the simple present can refer to “here and now” when utterances in the progressive can refer to facts being true permanently. The key to understanding how the system works is that of status, a key concept in meta-operational grammar, a theoretical framework which was developed in France by professor Henri Adamczewski (1929-2005). Along with status, orientation is another central feature: utterances are either verb-oriented or subject-oriented. The roles played by ‘be’ and ‘-ing’ need reexplaining.

## **Oana Celia Gheorghiu**

### Bodies on the Edge: Shifting Borders of Subjecthood in Gojira's *Magma*

*Magma* (2016), an album by the progressive metal band Gojira, is a negotiation of ethical boundaries that reflects contemporary cultural anxieties about agency, responsibility, and collapse. Through a close reading of three songs ("Silvera", "The Cell", and "Stranded"), sequenced as acceleration, internalisation, and breakdown, this paper interprets *Magma* as a sonic reflection on how cultural subjects perceive bodily and discursive borders in contemporaneity. Michel Foucault's theorisation of biopolitics, Gilles Deleuze's notion of control societies, and Mark Fisher's account of affective exhaustion under capitalist realism are employed to argue that the album transforms ecological and sociopolitical crises, long present in the band's cultural and symbolic imaginary, into internal borders between self and system, agency and compulsion, and endurance and breakdown. From this perspective, *Magma* functions as a cultural text that reveals the shifting borders of subjecthood in late modernity.

## **Gabriela Glăvan**

### Marginalia: Assia Wevill's writings as Literary Feminist Recovery

The biography of poetry translator and copywriter Assia Wevill has long been intertwined with the lives and literary work of poets Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath. Literary history has yet to acknowledge the full extent of Wevill's influence on their work and on the narratives constructed around their lives, and to establish her distinct cultural profile. The 2021 publication of *The Collected Writings of Assia Wevill* (eds. Julie Goodspeed-Chadwick and Peter K. Steinberg) marks an important step in a necessary re-evaluation of Wevill's oeuvre and of the remarkable, unusual contexts of her life. This paper examines the literary significance of Wevill's writings while also clarifying their place within biographical discourse. It also addresses her marginal status within the literary and cultural canon and proposes a critical assessment of her feminist recovery.

## **Cornelia-Patricia Grigoraş and Daniel Dejica**

### Inside the Translator's Mind: A TAP Study of Strategies in Technical Translation

This paper examines the cognitive strategies employed by students during technical translation tasks, using Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs) as the main research method. Conducted in 2024 within the Translation and Interpreting program at Babeş-Bolyai University, the study involved twenty-three undergraduates translating an iPhone 15 product description from English into Romanian. The technical and culturally marked nature of the text enabled an exploration of how novice translators approach complex terminology and formatting. Analysis of TAP recordings, student reflections, and translation comparisons revealed recurring cognitive behaviours, including terminological search, self-monitoring, strategic revision, and growing metacognitive awareness. When reviewing machine-generated translations, students increasingly identified context-related errors and reflected on quality standards, highlighting the enduring importance of human judgment. Findings confirm the dual value of TAPs as a research tool for cognitive inquiry and as a pedagogical instrument that fosters reflection, strategic development, and awareness of translation norms and ethics.

## **Dragoş Ivana**

### Reconfiguring the Boundaries between Space and Text: The Literary Psychogeography of Ned Ward's *The London Spy* (1698-1700)

Drawing on Guy Debord's concept of "literary psychogeography", which scrutinizes the way in which literary characters' mental states and behaviour are shaped by urban space, this paper offers a short insight into Ned Ward's *The London Spy*, a well-known periodical which portrays London as a disreputable city. Ward's text outlines an urban imaginary that unravels the dangerous, filthy side of London life, highlighting the city's follies and low-life diversity. In stark opposition to Joseph Addison's decorous serial *The Spectator*, Ward's work blends factual documentary with fiction so as to inform his readers of the dark side of London they were not familiar with. By deliberately employing the perspective of the street walker who arrives in London for the first time, *The London Spy* raises the reader's awareness of unknown people and places and, concurrently, attests to the multiplicity of angles from which London was represented in the eighteenth century, when urbanization was in full swing.

## **Hatice Karaman**

'La scrittura che si ritira': An Eco-deconstructive Reading of *There Are Rivers in the Sky*

The disappearance of rivers is often framed as ecological loss. In *There Are Rivers in the Sky* (2024), Elif Shafak reimagines this disappearance as a meditation on shifting borders – geographical, temporal, textual, and cultural. Moving between ancient Mesopotamia, nineteenth-century London, and the present, the novel intertwines cuneiform tablets, archival fragments, and diasporic narratives, unsettling boundaries between land and water, past and future, text and terrain. Drawing on Roberto Esposito's 'terra che si ritira' the land that withdraws – alongside Jacques Derrida's reflections on trace and life-death, this paper reads the novel as an exploration of shifting ground. Rivers no longer secure identity or territory; their recession dissolves fixed borders while generating narrative(s). What withdraws returns as echo and fragment across languages and histories. Shafak thus reconfigures cultural inheritance not as stable inheritance within clear frontiers, but as engagement with receding foundations, where erosion becomes the condition of memory and survival.

## **Hoc Yin Lau**

Comparative Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Technology and Social Actors in *Barbie* (2023) - Given Contexts of Feminism and Patriarchy

This study uses multimodal discourse analysis to compare how technological use and social actors convey gender ideologies in *Barbie* (2023). Guided by Critical Discourse Analysis, it applies van Leeuwen's frameworks to visual and linguistic data from feminist Barbieland and patriarchal Kenland. Themes like "Career," "Daily Routines," and "Entertainment" involve interactive technology (human-controlled). Distinct interactive themes are "Enlightenment" (Barbieland) and "Sovereignty" (Kenland). Active technology (self-operating) shows "Humanitarianism" (Barbieland) and "Sovereignty" (Kenland). Key findings show women are more Activated and dynamic across most themes, while men are Passivated except in trivial daily routines in Barbieland. Nomination and Collectivisation foreground both genders, but only women are Individualised. In patriarchal "Sovereignty" themes, women are intensely represented with Overdetermination, highlighting transformation via interactive (not active) technology. This links control of technology to potentiality, suggesting feminism arises from patriarchal contexts.

## **Georgiana Lolea**

Naming the Flaw: From Mistakes to Understanding in the Acquisition of Fallacy Literacy in Higher Education

Over the past years, I have taught undergraduate skill courses in Reading with a core component of critical thinking. The course was designed to instruct students in the detection and identification of logical fallacies (and, ideally, their avoidance) helping students distinguish sound arguments from flawed ones, infusing them with a healthy dose of skepticism, and building resistance to the manipulations and distortions of contemporary discourse. Drawing on 85 questionnaire responses from two student cohorts and on written classroom assignments, the study applies Corder's Error Analysis framework (1967, 1981) and James's (1998) error typology to fallacy acquisition: treating the mistakes students make when learning to identify fallacies not as failures, but as evidence of how conceptual learning unfolds. By mapping the types of errors students make when acquiring fallacy literacy, the study proposes targeted instructional responses that may ease students' grasp of fallacies and promote higher-order thinking skills.

## **Catherine MacMillan**

Farage's Responses to Accusations of Racism: Denial or Disavowal?

This paper explores the responses of radical right populist politician Nigel Farage, currently leader of Reform UK, to several recent accusations of racism from the perspective of philosopher Alenka Zupancic's conceptualisation of disavowal and denial. For Zupancic, disavowal differs from outright denial in that it possesses the structure 'I know very well, but all the same'. Thus, in her view, both disavowal and denial are characteristic of contemporary political discourse with disavowal being more characteristic of mainstream discourse and denial (particularly in the context of conspiracy theories) of the populist radical right. An analysis of Farage's response to five recent accusations of racism (both personal and regarding Reform UK immigration policy), however, reveals that he rarely denies the accusations outright. Instead, he attempts to deflect the accusations using disavowal and other related strategies, including humorous disavowal, appropriation and contextual deferment.

## **Elisabetta Marino**

Crossing Borders, Defying Boundaries: Women Travel Writers in the Victorian Age – **keynote address**

This paper sets out to explore the way women travel writers acted as cultural mediators between Britain and Italy at the time of the Italian Risorgimento, a political and social movement (literally meaning *resurrection*) that led to the Italian Unification in 1861. The first part will be devoted to the exploration of Italophobic perceptions of Italy which, in those contentious years, became increasingly visible, alongside the Italophilic perceptions which viewed the peninsula as one of the cradles of Western civilization together with Greece. Drawing on climate theory (which portrayed what we now term the global South as enfeebled and enervated), Italy was often depicted as a subaltern, feminized country and its inhabitants as overgrown children incapable of self-government, prostrated by centuries of Catholic domination. On the other hand, for British women travellers, Italy became a site of emancipation and empowerment, where their physical and mental horizons (limited due to the doctrine of the separate spheres) could be broadened beyond the restrictions of domesticity, while consolidating their professional identity as writers. Moreover, Victorian travel writers projected their own urge to break free of patriarchal constraints onto the Italian rebellion against tyrannical powers, thereby also chronicling their own *personal* Risorgimento. In the exploration of these concepts, works by Theodosia Garrow Trollope, Frances Trollope, and Frances Power Cobbe will be examined as representative case studies.

## **Irina Diana Mădroane**

Individual and Collective Ethos Construction in Community-Oriented News Discourse. Illustrations from the U.S.

New types of journalism, emerging in the U.S. under the umbrella of “engaged journalism” (Robinson, 2023), in response to a far-reaching crisis in the profession, aim to fill community news needs and regain the trust of American publics. The paper examines the symbolic construction of community ethos in local news discourse produced and circulated against this backdrop, and, in correlation, of journalistic ethos, from the perspective of symbolic authority and legitimacy-giving, as well as from that of solidarity, care and grassroots action. It employs analytic tools from rhetoric and discourse analysis, working with an extended concept of ethos as “presentation of the self” (Amossy, 2010, 2025), and further interprets this type of discourse as a “public modality” (Brouwer & Asen, 2010) of enacting civic participation in novel, hybrid forms of news discourse.

## **Alina Ioana Morar**

AI-Assisted Marking in Times of Educational Crisis: Renegotiating Assessment Strategies in the GCSE English Context

Amid accelerating technological change and growing pressures on educational systems, AI-assisted marking is portrayed as a response to concerns about workload, consistency and fairness in English Language Teaching. This paper explores how assessment strategies are renegotiated through the integration of artificial intelligence in the marking of GCSE English Language assessments. The study examines the use of AI tools to support the marking of written GCSE English scripts in a classroom-based context with British secondary school students. Combining qualitative reflections with a comparative analysis of feedback patterns, the research investigates how AI-supported evaluation reshapes feedback practices and reframes perceptions of marking reliability. Rather than positioning AI as a threat to professional expertise or as a definitive solution to systemic challenges, the paper outlines AI-assisted marking as a dynamic space in which the boundaries of English assessment are constantly negotiated in times of educational crisis.

## **Valentina Mureșan, Arianna Boldi, Leonardo Angelini, Francesca Marina Bosco and Ilaria Gabbatore**

Qualitative and Conversation-analytic Methods to Examine Whether and How Pragmatic Cues Are Interpreted or Missed by the LLMs during Coding

The present study integrates conversation-analytic (CA) methods, applied by both human coders and large language models (LLMs), to investigate how LLMs interpret pragmatic meaning within structured communicative tasks. Using the Assessment Battery for Communication (ABaCo)—a clinically validated protocol for evaluating pragmatic processing—we examine the extent to which LLM-produced analyses show notable alignment with human interpretations. Our dataset consists of 21 healthy-aging adults, each participating in four short oral exchanges designed to elicit a range of pragmatic behaviors. Human coders evaluated the interactions using rubrics developed for four core conversational criteria: floor management, turn-taking, topic management, responsiveness, and pragmatic strategy. The same interactions were coded by

a LLM to establish convergence and divergence, especially at the level of pragmatic cues and interactional patterns. Results from this initial sample highlight the strengths and limitations of using LLMs to perform pragmatic analysis and support extending this approach to future work with clinical populations. The findings of the study reflect how human coders and LLMs interpret communicative intent, which is relevant not only for further clinical research, but also for the development of AI systems that are better at understanding interaction.

**Predrag Novakov and Mihaela Lazović**

Reconfiguring Cultural Boundaries: Anglicisms and Identity Construction in Serbian and Romanian Hospitality Discourse

This paper examines the role of anglicisms in reconfiguring cultural and discursive boundaries within contemporary Serbian and Romanian hospitality discourse. Drawing on discourse analysis and sociolinguistic approaches to language change, the study investigates how English lexical items such as ‘fusion concept’, ‘boutique experience space’, and ‘premium lounge’ increasingly replace traditional expressions in both languages or fill lexical gaps. The analysis demonstrates that these lexical choices function as identity markers positioning hospitality actors within a globalized symbolic economy. In both Serbian and Romanian contexts, anglicisms negotiate boundaries between local tradition and global modernity, redefining hospitality spaces as cosmopolitan, innovative, and experience-oriented. The paper argues that hospitality discourse can reflect broader sociocultural shifts in which English operates as a strategic resource for constructing aspirational identities and recalibrating cultural belonging in contemporary settings.

**Alexandru Oravițan, Maurizio Caon and Alessandro Silacci**

Does the Agent Matter? Register and Politeness in Human-AI Exchanges

This article examines how conversational AI reshapes linguistic manifestations of Theory of Mind (ToM) in digital-human interaction. Drawing on a corpus of 3,392 exchanges collected in an experimental study, the present research compares three contexts of interaction: human–human (HUM), human–agent with a human-like visual interface (SEPH), and human–agent with a cyborg-like visual interface (SEPC). Using corpus-based and pragmatic analysis, the paper maps how ToM is reflected in interactional style across the three communicative contexts, focusing on stance-taking, politeness strategies, lexical choices and interactional norms.

**Ayda Önder**

Oceanic Circulation and Affective Boundaries in Abdulrazak Gurnah’s *Desertion* (2005)

This study examines *Desertion* (2005) through the combined perspectives of oceanic and affect theory to argue that while national and territorial borders in the Indian Ocean world are porous, mobility generates forms of emotional and social residue that the novel names ‘desertion’. Drawing on oceanic thinkers such as Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Meg Samuelson, and Steve Mentz, the study foregrounds circulation as a constitutive condition of precolonial, imperial and postcolonial histories. Rather than celebrating fluidity, it turns to Sara Ahmed’s concept of affective economies to show how communities reassert boundaries through circulating emotions such as shame, fear, and silence. Focusing on the female protagonist Rehana’s experience of abandonment, it is argued that desertion emerges from affective boundaries produced within cultural communities. By aligning oceanic and affective frameworks, the study reveals that movement across seas coexists with the immobilisation of those left behind.

**Tijana Parezanović**

Fictional Travellers and Venetian Boundary Making in Contemporary British Literature

While Italian land- and cityscapes have for centuries been igniting British and American writers’ imagination, this research focuses more specifically on tourists in Venice in contemporary British fiction. Though it might appear liminal, Venice is neither geographically nor historically a border town. However, Daphne du Maurier, Graham Greene, Ian McEwan, Kazuo Ishiguro and, most recently, John Banville have contributed to the boundary making of Venice, i.e., constructing the image of the city as a borderland, by writing about tourists who unexpectedly experience something extraordinary in this city. To illustrate this, the present research relies on examples from John Banville’s latest novel, *Venetian Vespers* (2025), and the theoretical framework which leads from literary cartography and/or geography (Bachelard, Benjamin, Foucault, Turner) towards

contemporary border theory (Nail's critical limology). For tourists in British fiction, Venice is transformed into a liminoid space, a cellular border which confines them both physically and psychologically.

### **Aba-Carina Pârlog**

A Digital Paradox: Borderless Relations Isolating Humanity

I will be analysing Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* and the lack of clear borders between humans and androids which affects the characters' lives significantly. As defining poles in Josie's life (a protagonist who struggles to survive in a world dominated by digital beings and mysterious DNA digital changes) illness and isolation will be considered in order to offer a more comprehensive image of her limited options. The inclusion of Klara, an AF (artificial friend), in the midst of Josie's broken family creates destructive behavioural patterns which affect Josie's relations with human beings. The fluctuating path Josie and her family members take in their relationship with the solar robot corrupts their own psychology instead of adding to its solid foundation. Humanity in this literary work will be looked at from the prism of Hassan (denaturalisation), Baudrillard (simulacrum), Nikolaidis (transhumanism), Palinkas (psychology), Popov (AI and SF) and others.

### **Mihaela Popuța**

Writing After Loss: Grief as a Liminal Condition in Paul Auster's Late Works

This paper examines grief in Paul Auster's late works, *Winter Journal* (2012), *Report from the Interior* (2013), and *Baumgartner* (2023), as a liminal condition that reconfigures narrative voice, temporality, and self-representation. Drawing on approaches that conceptualize boundaries as processual and relational, the analysis argues that grief operates as an affective and temporal border between presence and absence, continuity and rupture. Rather than being thematically contained, loss structures the conditions of narration, producing a form of writing that oscillates between memoir, reflection, and fiction. The paper shows how Auster's late prose destabilizes linear autobiographical time, replacing it with recursive movements across past and present that mirror the unsettled temporality of mourning. By framing grief as a form of boundary work, the paper situates Auster's late writing within broader debates on crisis, identity fragmentation, and the ethics of narrating survivorship in contemporary literature.

### **Loredana Pungă, Mădălina Chitez and Gabriela-Anabella Costache**

Stance Markers and Metaphorical Framing in Romanian Students' Talk about AI-Assisted Academic Writing

This paper draws on a case study of how Romanian students linguistically position themselves toward the use of generative AI in academic (especially BA theses) writing in English. The study draws on semi-structured interviews recently conducted with MA students at a Romanian university, who completed their BA theses the previous academic year. The theoretical approach combines stance analysis (focusing on discursive and lexicogrammatical stance markers such as hedging, modality, the use of particular nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs when talking about AI) with conceptual metaphorical framing. Based on these, the paper shows how students linguistically construct their relationship with generative AI and negotiate questions of agency/epistemic control, authorship, and responsibility in expressing their opinions about AI-mediated academic writing.

### **Irina Rabinovics**

Queer Diasporas: Jewish Lesbian Narratives and the Re-Making of Cultural Boundaries

This paper examines how Jewish lesbian narratives emerging from the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century migration from the Russian Pale of Settlement to the United States illuminate complex practices of bordering and boundary-making across geopolitical, cultural, and sexual terrains. Reading Elana Dykewomon's *Beyond the Pale* (1997) as a feminist-queer diasporic archive, the analysis shows how Jewish women's lives were shaped by overlapping constraints—imperial antisemitism, communal policing of sexuality, heteronormative norms, and symbolic boundaries governing belonging and purity. Drawing on intersectionality, gender performativity, and diaspora theory, the paper argues that Jewish lesbian subjectivity arises through the continual negotiation of these borders. The novel depicts how stigma and exclusion coexist with chosen kinship, affective community, and the creation of counter-memories. Tracing the characters' movement from Eastern European borderlands to New York's immigrant neighborhoods, the narrative reveals how identities form through multiscalar bordering practices, from state regulation to family relations. Ultimately, queer Jewish women's stories challenge dominant accounts of Jewish immigration and early

feminist labor activism. They show how marginalized subjects confront, subvert, and re-script borders – geographical, cultural, and ideological – expanding understandings of identity formation across diasporic space.

### **Adriana Raducanu**

Unassimilable Richard: Hospitality, Adaptation, and Canonical Borders in *Richard III Will Not Take Place*

This paper reads Matei Vișniec's *Richard III Will Not Take Place* as borderwork: a meta-theatrical laboratory where thresholds between art and ideology, text and performance, past and present – and canonical borders – are continuously produced and contested. Using Post-Communist Gothic alongside Derrida's notion of "hostipitality," I argue that Stalinist censorship functions as a boundary regime that converts hospitality into surveillance and coerced legibility. Meyerhold, cast as host-director, attempts to "welcome" Shakespeare's Richard onto the Soviet stage by refashioning him into a politically usable figure, whereas the state reclaims hosting power by forbidding the production. Richard's response is a Gothic counter-bordering: through abjection, mechanical excess, and grotesque rebirth as a marionette, he resists assimilation and paradoxically survives inside the very apparatus designed to suppress him. The play ultimately figures the canon as an ineradicable remainder: the more power tries to redraw cultural boundaries, the more insistently the past returns.

### **Milica Radenović**

The Influence of Thomas Paine on Shelley's *The Mask of Anarchy*

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of Thomas Paine on Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem *The Mask of Anarchy*. Paine was an immensely influential political thinker whose writing was an integral part of revolutionary thought of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He was successful at reaching the ordinary people by using accessible and simple language, and this helped to solidify his popularity in North America and Europe. Shelley wrote his famous political protest poem following the Peterloo Massacre that took place in Manchester in 1819. Its simple style indicates that he meant it to be read by a larger audience and to function as a clarion call for change. The poem reveals Shelley's ability to convey his radical ideas through poetry. The study shows how Paine's work shaped Shelley's revolutionary thought and influenced the style and ideas behind *The Mask of Anarchy*.

### **Santosh Rajguru**

The Frontier Paradox: Freedom and Conflict in American Literary Narratives

The period between 1820 and 1840 played a decisive role in shaping America's self-image as a nation defined by mobility, industriousness, and opportunity, while simultaneously revealing deep internal conflicts. Central to this process was the idea of the frontier, a concept that came to symbolize the westward movement and the romanticized vision of the American West. The frontier referred to unsettled land lying beyond established American settlements, imagined as a zone of limitless free land and unlimited opportunity. This paper examines the frontier as both a historical reality and a powerful cultural myth, analyzing its economic, spiritual, psychological, and literary implications. Drawing upon Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis and major American literary texts, the study explores how the frontier shaped American identity and literary imagination. The paper argues that the frontier functioned as a formative force in American culture, producing distinctive forms of individualism, democracy, and literary expression.

### **Samuel Ramapuram**

Translating at the Edge: Gondi–English Translation as Boundary Work in Indigenous Borderlands of Central India

This paper examines translation as a form of bordering and boundary work through the case of Gondi–English translation in Central India, where the Indigenous Gondi language stands on the verge of extinction. Situated at the intersection of Translation Studies, border studies, and postcolonial theory, the paper conceptualizes translation not as a neutral linguistic transfer but as a performative practice that actively produces, negotiates, and contests sociocultural, epistemic, and political boundaries. In multilingual Adivasi regions marked by historical marginalization, state governance, and extractive development, translation becomes a critical site where Indigenous knowledge systems are either rendered visible or further erased. Drawing on examples from the translation of oral narratives, songs, ritual expressions, and community testimonies into English for academic, archival, and advocacy contexts, the paper explores how translation mediates between asymmetrical regimes of value: orality and literacy, local knowledge and global circulation, Indigenous epistemologies and

institutional frameworks. It argues that dominant translational norms often function as mechanisms of symbolic bordering, domesticating Gondi cultural meanings to fit hegemonic linguistic and disciplinary expectations. At the same time, ethically grounded and community-sensitive translation practices can operate as counter-bordering strategies, enabling epistemic justice and resisting linguistic dispossession. The analysis is informed by postcolonial and decolonial approaches to translation (Spivak; Bandia; Tymoczko), alongside theories of boundary-making that emphasize relationality, power, and process. By foregrounding translation from an endangered language, the paper highlights how linguistic mediation is deeply involved in struggles over belonging, recognition, and survival. It ultimately argues that Translation Studies, particularly when engaging endangered languages, offers vital tools for rethinking borders and boundaries – not as fixed lines, but as contested spaces where cultural futures are negotiated.

### **Samantha Reavis**

#### Listening across Lines: Sonic Bordering and the Politics of Audibility

This paper explores how sound reconfigures the experience of borders and boundaries – social, cultural, and affective. Drawing on ethnomusicological and literary case studies from diasporic Los Angeles, I examine how sonic practices – community concerts, ritual chants, and hybrid performances – mediate belonging and exclusion. Theories of border work (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019) and feminist listening (Cavarero, Oliveros) frame my analysis of how marginalized voices are heard, silenced, or transformed through mediation technologies. Listening becomes a border-crossing act: an embodied negotiation of visibility and recognition. By linking literary representations of listening with contemporary soundscapes, I argue that sonic bordering offers a model of relationality that resists fixed identity and national enclosure.

### **Marina-Cristiana Rotaru**

#### Formulating Rights: A Comparative Analysis of the Legal Language of the British Bill of Rights (1689) and the American Bill of Rights (1791)

This paper aims to compare and contrast the British Bill of Rights (1689) and the American Bill of Rights (1791) from the point of view of their linguistic input and architecture. In the course of a century separating the two documents, the formulation of the guarantee of rights and liberties changed. If, in the British constitutional tradition, Parliament is the body which issues and safeguards the rights of individuals, in the American tradition, it is the people who are the source of rights and liberties as enshrined in the formula “We the People”. The turning point in this shift can be identified in the evolving meaning of the verb “to declare”, which sheds a new light on how rights and liberties were conceptualized and articulated after the ratification of the American Constitution.

### **Suparna Roy**

#### Reconfiguring Border and Boundaries: Cultural Discourse of Menstrual Narratives

This paper examines menstruation as a symbolic and moral boundary through which gendered power is produced and regulated within Bengali cultural contexts. Drawing on queer post-structuralist feminist theory and Judith Butler’s critique of “woman” as a linguistically unrepresentable category, the study conceptualizes menstruating bodies as positioned at the threshold of social intelligibility. Menstrual practices and taboos operate as everyday forms of boundary work, enforcing purity/impurity binaries that discipline bodies, restrict mobility, and govern access to domestic, religious, and public spaces. Through an intersectional lens, the paper demonstrates how these embodied boundaries are unevenly experienced across gender, caste, class, and religion, revealing menstruation as a multiscalar process of bordering rather than a purely biological phenomenon. Based on qualitative interviews and empirical observation, the study foregrounds menstruation as a performative site where symbolic boundaries are continuously reproduced and contested, linking intimate bodily regulation to broader structures of sociocultural hierarchization.

### **Monica Ruset Oanca**

#### Physical and Mystical Borders in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

This paper will examine the multiple meanings of the border, in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, by distinguishing, on the one hand, the territorial border between England and Wales and, on the other hand, the boundary separating the Christian world from the realm of the magical (although under English rule, Wales retained a distinctive political and cultural identity in the fourteenth century). The historical reality will be

analysed in order to identify the elements that characterise the borderlands in which *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* was written. Secondly, the spiritual context will be considered, starting from the assumption that the real world is implicitly Christian and that Sir Gawain regards the Virgin Mary as his unquestioned source of protection and guidance, whereas the magical realm is characterised by deception and treachery, subjecting Gawain to a series of trials that test not only his courage but, more importantly, his moral integrity.

### **Anne Sand**

“A Landscape Mirrored in these Men”: Recentering Appalachian Land and Laborers in Twentieth Century America

“These are the roads to take when you think of your country,” Muriel Rukeyser begins in her documentary poetry collection *The Book of the Dead*. The verses that follow recount the 1930 Hawk’s Nest Mining Disaster, in which at least 764 men died of severe lung damage caused by unsafe working conditions in a Union Carbide mine. Scholars have long noted that American corporations and institutions treat Appalachia as a sort of internal, geographic other, a spatial margin from which they extract resources – both natural and human – with little concern for the damage caused. Indeed, in 1963 historian Harry Caudill called Appalachia “the last unchallenged stronghold of Western colonialism.” In her poems, Rukeyser reverses this historic conception of space, treating the traditional power centers of America – New York, Washington D.C., Los Angeles – as far-flung outposts that must constantly refer to and find identity in their shared Appalachian heart.

### **Raul Săran**

The Limits of Language and the Cultural Collapse in Thomas Pynchon’s *Shadow Ticket*

It is arguable that *Shadow Ticket*, Thomas Pynchon’s latest novel, revolves around the attempt to “express” the inexpressible failure(s) of history. By creating a climate of instability, a historical “void” (also related to the collapse of the society) and an absurd reality, Pynchon works at his best when the language of his literary works cannot comprehend the vast irrationality of cultural and political life altogether. From the bizarre, surreal and even slapstick scenarios to the deconstruction of the noir detective story, the American author creates a world in which the limits of expression are continuously tested, as the unbelievable and the absurd slowly become a matter of definitive (and defining) status-quo of a nation and, also, of an era. Through a close reading and a narrative analysis of the novel, the purpose of the paper is to highlight and express the ways in which *Shadow Ticket* tries to express the inexpressible not necessarily from a transcending point of view, but rather from a satirical one, where the comic (to a point of absurdity), parody and pastiche create a narrative background that, while different from Pynchon’s earlier works (focused rather on maximalism), highlights the struggle against the limits of expression, in a story that says as much about the 1930s as it says about today.

### **Ştefania Schnakovszky**

Reconfiguring Jewish Identity and the Discursive Boundaries of Antisemitism in British Literature

This paper examines how British literature redefines the symbolic, social, and ideological boundaries surrounding Jewish identity from the early modern period to the post-Holocaust era. Drawing on discourse analysis (Fairclough, Wodak, van Dijk) and cultural theory (Said’s Orientalism, Anderson’s Imagined Communities), the study explores the persistence, transformation, and rhetorical reconstruction of antisemitic narratives in key texts. Through close readings of works by Christopher Marlowe, Shakespeare, Isaac Rosenberg, David Vogel, Adrienne Rich, and Emma Lazarus, the paper analyses how literary discourse negotiates alterity, belonging, trauma, and collective memory. Special attention is given to the representation of Jewish women, whose identity is shaped by double marginalisation at the intersection of gender and ethnicity. The findings argue that literature not only reflects but actively reshapes ideological borders, challenging inherited stereotypes and generating new spaces for reimagining Jewish subjectivity within British cultural discourse.

### **Saša Simović**

A Transnational Vision: Emily Greene Balch’s Perception of Slavic People and Culture

Emily Greene Balch, a Nobel Prize winner, an economist and sociologist, a university professor and researcher, peace proponent and a traveller, left a distinguished stamp in the field of cultural studies. In 1905 she travelled to the then Austria-Hungary due to her meticulous research on Slavic emigration to the United States of America since she wholeheartedly believed that if one wanted to understand an immigrant, one had to know “the conditions which have shaped him and which he has shaped”. She visited Slavic colonies in her homeland

and spent some time with a Bohemian family in New York City – all of this for the sake of writing her seminal book *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens* (1910). The aim of this paper is to highlight and discuss Emily Greene Balch's perception of the most relevant aspects of Slavic (primarily South Slavic) emigration and immigrants in the USA expressed in *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens*.

### **Ileana Șora Dimitriu**

Moral Dilemmas and 'Bare Life' in Paul Lynch's *Prophet Song*

Paul Lynch's Booker Prize-winning novel, *Prophet Song* (2023), engages with the moral dilemmas and anxieties in contemporary societies faced with dictatorial state actions, violence and imploding social structures. What is remarkable about this novel is its obsessive gaze at the deeply personal emotional impact that malignant state interventions have on ordinary people: how well-established social boundaries can be gradually dismantled, and brutally reshaped. The surveillance state's insidious infiltration into the quotidian eventually explodes into full-blown civil war. Drawing on Foucault's 'heterotopia' and 'othered spaces', Agamben's 'bare life', and Arendt's 'banality of evil', I consider aspects of dystopia and political allegory; lives reduced to a bare minimum; moral dilemmas and the limits of agency – as applied to Lynch's portrayal of a single family, in which a mother has to take radical decisions about mere survival. Set in an ahistorical Ireland, the novel finds a resonance wherever we live in a world in which fragmentation, violence and uncertainty characterise our times.

### **Diana Ștefan-Dinescu, Mihaela Zamfirescu and Cosmin Bădulețeanu**

Romanian Deverbal Nominalizations in Specialized Discourse

The paper is based on the hypothesis that Romanian, unlike English, exhibits the property of affix specialization in deverbal nominalizations (Ștefan-Dinescu, 2023). Thus, suffixes such as *-ție*, *-anță/-ință/-ență*, *-eală/-ială*, etc. yield result nominalizations, while the infinitive *-re* and the supine *-t/-s* form complex event nominals, as seen in *-re/-ție* doublets where *-ție* occurs in RNs, while its *-re* counterpart functions as a CEN. (1) *Declararea/ \*Declarația averilor de către parlamentari* CEN declare. INF-the/ \*declare.ȚIE-the assets-the. GEN by MPs 'the *declaring/ \*The declaration of assets by MPs*. However, there are exceptions, with *-ție* & Co. occurring in CENs even though there is also a *-re* nominalization available (2): *Extracția/ \*extragerea molarilor de către dentist* CEN extract.ȚIE-the molars-the. GEN by dentist 'The extraction of molars by the dentist.' Hence, the aim of this paper is to provide evidence that such exceptions are motivated by their occurrence in different specialized registers, such as law, medicine, or religion.

### **Hande Tekdemir**

Nationalizing the Vampire: Boundary-Making in Turkish Dracula texts

In the scholarship on Gothic fiction, vampire characters canonically represent a threatening other that challenges the boundaries between life and death while at the same time overturning binaries such as woman and man, East and West, human and animal, among others. At the end of the 18th century (when Western, especially English writers produced initial examples of the Gothic) and throughout the 19th century, the representation of the other has been envisioned mostly in reference to the Catholic population. In many works from the period, Catholic Mediterranean countries are chosen as the setting. (Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* [1764]; Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* [1796]; Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* [1797] and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* [1794]). In this regard, the choice of the setting in Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897) as Eastern Europe is unusual. At the same time, this unique approach points to a changing notion of the "other" for the English public at the end of the 19th century. We meet the character Dracula as a hybrid character who is also potentially Jewish, Catholic, Eastern-European, and with anti-Turk connotations whereby the boundaries of the identity of the "other" are increasingly ambiguous. This paper focuses on Turkish adaptations and interpretations of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, examining how these texts represent and modify the vampire's foreignness and hybrid identity. By analyzing Ali Rıza Seyfi's novel *Kazıklı Voyvoda* (1928) and its cinematic adaptation *Drakula İstanbul'da* (1953), I would like to discuss how the figure of Dracula is reconstructed through a Turkish nationalist perspective that re-invents new national, cultural and religious boundaries.

### **Amalia Timofte**

Reclaiming the Fleshly: A Sontagian Demand for the Unglamorized Corporeal Discourse in Illness Narratives

This paper centrally addresses the restoration of the sick body across discursive boundaries, challenged by Susan Sontag, in her study *Illness as Metaphor* (1978). The shift between the figurative, metaphorical

representation of corporality and the raw, veritable unwellness of it is highly required not only by the author herself, but by other critical thinkers, who point out the whole unethical aestheticization of the morbid. The infection has been glamorized in a way that the visceral facet is veiled, in order to polish the malady, as we can observe in Franz Kafka's letters about bodily decay. The rupture of this boundary – of concealing the corporality beneath the metaphorical framework – represents a revolutionary imperative, of course given the gravity of the dialogue surrounding illness. The call for suffering body's recognition is heard, and the symbolic redemption is criticized by Sontag, invoking the phenomenological approach and neutrality, deprived of any mythological-imposed condition.

### **Gabriela Tucan**

#### Roots and Routes in Transatlantic Modernist Culture

Since the mid-nineteenth century, many American writers and intellectuals have crossed both physical borders and symbolic boundaries by travelling to or settling in Europe. Beginning with the cosmopolitan figure of Henry James, American esthetic identity emerged from a sense of displacement, of being anchored in neither the Old World nor the New. Two major factors contributed to this development: the early 20th century transnational climate that enabled transatlantic movement and the climate of postwar uncertainty and displacement. Within this context, the transnational framework serves as a crucial catalyst for American modernism. For the expatriate 'Lost Generation', roots and routes further became their mode of artistic expression. While roots signify identities grounded in stability and continuity, routes suggest identities forged through movement and disruption. The paper examines how transnationalism informs our understanding of American modernism and asks what it means to perceive modernist culture as based on migration, enhanced mobility, and a heightened awareness of space.

### **Hanim Türkyılmaz**

#### Gender Representation in *Keçeli Kız* Folk Tale: A Critical Discourse Analysis

This study probes gender representation in the Central Anatolian folktale *Keçeli Kız* through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. Drawing on Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the analysis scrutinizes how linguistic choices, narrative structure, and character positioning contribute to the construction of gendered identities and power relations across textual, intertextual and social levels. At the textual level, linguistic items such as nouns/noun phrases, adjectives, verbs, and transitivity patterns have been studied to examine how gender ideology is encoded in explicit linguistic items. The second step attempted to understand how intertextuality helps to represent gender ideology through folkloric elements. Lastly, social analysis tries to probe into social context and how it affects or is affected by gender ideology. As for methodology, a purposeful sampling method has been utilized to select the most relevant and information-rich data serving the aim of this study. Purposeful sampling has been carried out under the scope of inter-rater reliability. Further, a content analysis method has also been used to analyze folk tales under specific themes. The findings indicate that femininity is predominantly constructed through passivity, patience, moral virtue, and domestic alignment, whereas masculinity is associated with authority, agency, and decision-making power. These representations function not only as reflections of sociocultural norms but also as mechanisms that reproduce and legitimize patriarchal ideology. By situating a traditional folktale within a CDA perspective, this study highlights how narrative discourse operates as a site of ideological production and transmission, shaping collective understandings of gender ideology across generations within a specific cultural context.

### **Teodora Vasilescu**

#### The Animal Turn in Maternal Narratives: Somatic Metaphors and Mental Spaces in the Adaptation of *Die, My Love*

This paper explores the animal turn in contemporary maternal narratives through a cognitive analysis of Lynne Ramsay's adaptation of Ariana Harwicz's *Die, My Love* (2025). I analyse how the transition from text to screen reconfigures the representation(s) of motherhood. Using conceptual integration theory (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002) and grounded cognition (Barsalou, 2003), I argue that the film translates text-based animal imagery into somatic metaphors that trigger embodied simulations of maternal psychosis. Drawing on Lisa Feldman Barrett's (2017) theory of constructed emotion, I demonstrate how cinema deconstructs and reconfigures maternal identity, shifting from a domestic script to an instinctual, animalic mental space. Ultimately, my research highlights how multimodal metaphors of animality function as conceptual tools, redefining motherhood as a sphere of primal agency and (somatic) resistance.

## **Andrea Velich**

### Can Films Help Us to Cope with Climate Change?

The goal of this paper is to promote sustainability in coping with climate change by introducing different filmic representations of sustainable cities, water-related issues and innovations in British Cinema. After contextualizing contemporary city, climate and water-related issues as part of the UN's 2017 SDGs I will be discussing several contemporary British films in this context. Films quoted will vary from documentaries (e.g. *David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet*, 2020, dir. D. Attenborough and auteur/indie films to disaster movies (like *Flood*, dir. Tony Mitchell, 2007) to prove how far films and filmmakers are responsible for climate-related issues both by educating and entertaining audiences. Raising awareness of the dangers and consequences of climate change is the joint responsibility of politicians, educators and also of the film industry. The film industry introduced its own regulations to go greener by stimulating greener production with introducing the Green and the Gold Seals. Moreover, tools like albert carbon calculator ([wearealbert.org](http://wearealbert.org)) have been implemented, while BFI and BAFTA also launched the "Culture declares emergency" movement. We shall discuss how the various filmic representations of the city and water-related climate issues like flashfloods and droughts could influence our perception of the climate change and our attitudes, how academics and artists could educate/influence the wider public. The talk will also highlight promising solutions such as NaBa-MAR and its visualization as part of the Water4ALL EU funded ClimEx-PE project.

## **Ruxandra Vişan**

### Rethinking Linguistic Boundaries: Representations of Gender-Inclusive Language – **keynote address**

In recent years the use of gender-inclusive language has elicited a significant number of emotional public debates in various countries. However, both detractors and proponents of gender-inclusive language often imagine language(s) based on essentialized representations of certain groups. Focussing on metalinguistic discourse and anchored in the interdisciplinary framework of language ideology research, the present talk dwells on current representations of gender-inclusive language in the attempt to examine how communities (re)construct or attempt to dismantle boundaries in processes of language. Drawing on both English and Romanian examples and underlining the current significance of concepts such as 'translanguaging' and 'transcriptivism', this talk will address the role of standard/monolingual language ideology and of prescriptivism in current conceptualizations of gender-inclusive language.

## **Iasmina Velimirovici**

### Regulation and Interpreter Training in Romania and the United Kingdom: A Comparative Study

The field of interpreting has evolved considerably in recent decades, with research increasingly emphasizing regional particularities. Following the 1990s, post-Soviet countries encountered new professional and institutional demands associated with European integration, which reshaped national interpreting markets. This paper investigates the regulatory framework governing interpreting in Romania and its impact on university-level training. The Romanian context is examined in comparison with the United Kingdom, where the profession is supported by more robust regulation and a longer-standing institutional tradition. The study draws on an analysis of legislative documents, ARACIS requirements, NRPSI standards, and selected university curricula to assess the coherence between professional expectations and academic preparation. The findings point to persistent inconsistencies in interpreter education, as well as structural challenges affecting graduates' transition into the Romanian labor market. By highlighting these gaps, the paper contributes to ongoing discussions on the alignment between training, regulation, and professional practice in emerging interpreting environments.

### Student Perceptions and Challenges in Note-Taking during Interpreter Training

This study examines students' perceptions of note-taking during interpreting tasks, with particular attention to how note-taking strategies are understood, valued, and applied within training contexts. While note-taking is largely considered a fundamental component of consecutive interpreting, learners face cognitive challenges in managing simultaneous listening, processing and recording of information, as well as in selecting, organizing, and representing content through symbols and structured notation. Using semi-structured interviews, the research investigates students' attitudes toward note-taking conventions, their confidence in employing symbols and structures, and the ways these cognitive demands influence their interpreting performance. Findings indicate an overall positive perception of note-taking as a supportive tool; however, they also reveal considerable variation in preferred techniques and proficiency levels. By foregrounding the learner experience,

the study contributes to interpreter-training pedagogy and offers insights that may inform the development of instructional practices aimed at strengthening note-taking competence in the classroom.

### **Semih Yararoğlu**

Navigating Friendship through Artificial Eyes in *Klara and The Sun* and *M3GAN*

Friendship as a philosophical concept has always been a topic for investigation. New models of social interaction have emerged as a result of technological advancement, and this has led to renewed interest in the nature of friendship. By drawing on Jacques Derrida's *The Politics of Friendship*, this study attempts to discuss the idea of friendship between AI and humans in the novel *Klara and the Sun* and in the film *M3GAN*; specifically, it explores whether the idea of friendship is still relevant in today's society and offers suggestions for further investigation.

## **ROUND TABLE**

### **Crisis in the Humanities/ Humanities in Crisis**

This roundtable addresses the ongoing crisis in the humanities, influenced by events and systemic issues such as political polarization, the rise of illiberal social movements and regimes, and decreasing academic freedom. Such crises are reflected in shrinking support for the humanities and higher education in general. We invite discussion on how literary, artistic, media, and institutional discourses, as well as the pedagogical strategies and community engagement of public humanities, work and think through crisis to foster social coherence, critical reflection, resilience, and resistance. How can the humanities reclaim and preserve relevance in times of crisis? The panelists will address such generic and specific concerns mainly from the perspective of American Studies as a field of study and research, but perspectives from other angles are also welcome.

#### **Convener(s): CSAM – The American Studies Center, West University of Timișoara**

Invited speakers: **Steven Conn** – Landscapes of Loss: Urban and Rural Crises; **Leah Perry** – Eating Empire: Foodways and the Establishment and End of US Empire

CSAM respondents: **Cristina Băniceru** – Saving Literature: Connecting Students' Personal Interests to Researching Literature; **Cristina Chevereșan** – Making Humanities Public: Engaging Academic and Non-Academic Communities; **Alexandru Oravițan** – Crisis in Academia: The Obsession with Performance Metrics and Measuring "Impact" in the Humanities; **Gabriela Tucan** – The Political Crisis in the U.S. Education System.

## **WORKSHOP**

### **Rethinking Tools for Quality Assessment in Legal Translation**

The workshop seeks to examine the application of a quality analysis tool developed to evaluate nouns and noun collocations through a graded classification distinguishing between absolute and partial correspondences. It aims to address several key questions: How can this analytical grid contribute to the identification and comparison of translation challenges specific to legal texts? What insights can it provide into issues of linguistic precision, coherence, and terminological consistency? Furthermore, how might the tool be effectively incorporated into university-level translation pedagogy? Participants will have the opportunity to engage hands-on with the tool and to discuss its potential pedagogical value as an instrument for enhancing quality assessment practices in specialised translation.

**Convener(s): Dr. Luminița Frențiu, Dr. Denisa Ungurean (West University of Timișoara)**

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- For **BAS. British and American Studies** (British and American Literature, Linguistics, Cultural Studies, Translation Studies), no later than **1 October 2026**, to bas.journal@gmail.com. Please refer to the “Instructions to Authors” here: [https://bas.journals.uvt.ro/wp-content/uploads/Style\\_Sheet\\_BAS\\_May2023.pdf](https://bas.journals.uvt.ro/wp-content/uploads/Style_Sheet_BAS_May2023.pdf). For inquiries only, you may contact Prof. Loredana Pungă at loredana.punga@e-uvt.ro.
- For **Gender Studies** (Gender Studies), no later than **15 June 2026**, to the Editorial Manager submission system on the journal’s webpage (<https://www2.cloud.editorialmanager.com/genst/default2.aspx>). For manuscript formatting and style, please follow the Instructions for Authors on the journal’s webpage, under the “For Authors” heading (<https://reference-global.com/journal/GENST?tab=submission-guidelines#journal-tabs>). For inquiries only, you may contact Dr. Irina Diana Mădroane at irina.madroane@e-uvt.ro.
- For **Romanian Journal of English Studies** (ELT, ESP, Translation Studies, British and American Literature, Cultural Studies, Linguistics), no later than **15 September**, to rjes.journal@gmail.com. Please refer to the “For Authors” section (then select “Instructions for Authors”) on the publisher’s webpage: <https://sciendo.com/journal/RJES>. For inquiries only, you may contact Dr. Eliza Filimon at eliza.filimon@e-uvt.ro.

Manuscripts submitted after the deadlines indicated will not be processed for the most recent issues of the journals following the conference.

**Please send your contribution to one journal only.**

Prior to publication, papers will be refereed by an editorial committee.

**Acceptance and confirmation of publication will be sent to you in April 2027 at the latest.**

### BAS – Timișoara 14-16 May 2026

#### Information for Participants

The **BAS** Secretariat

office hours: - Thursday, 14.05 – 9:30 - 13:00

Friday, 15.05 – 10:00 -11:00

main building UVT, 4, V. Pârvan Blvd., entrance lobby

Mobile +40 744 792238

You will receive your conference badge and participant bag containing the programme. **Participants are required to wear their badge throughout the conference and social events.**

If you have any questions or require assistance at any time during the conference, please ask a member of the conference administration team.

### **Local Transport**

The conference venue is within walking distance (5-20 minutes) from your accommodation sites.

Reliable taxis are: Tudo - tel. 0256-945; Fan – 0256-944; Radio - tel. 0256-940;

Visit <http://www.timisoara.ro> to view useful information and the map of Timisoara.

### **Conference Venue**

The following *BAS Timișoara 2026* events will be held in the main building of West University: Timișoara, 4, Pârvan Bd. The cocktail on Thursday night will be held at Zaza Resto & Pub, 9, Vasile Pârvan Blvd.

- Registration - West University main building, entrance lobby
- Plenary Sessions – “Ioan Curea” Auditorium/Aula Magna and A01 Hall
- Concurrent Sessions – main building West University, rooms according to the programme

### **Conference Opening Times**

Thursday, May 14 – 8:30 – 9:30 - registration  
9:30 – 10:00 - opening address  
10:00 – 11:00 - keynote lecture  
11:00 – 11:30 - coffee break  
11:30 – 14:00 - concurrent sessions  
14:00 – 15:15 - lunch break  
15:15 – 16:15 - keynote lecture  
16:15 – 16:30 - break  
16:30 – 19:00 - concurrent sessions

Friday, May 15 – 9:00 – 9:30 - registration  
10:00 – 11:00 - keynote lecture  
11:00 – 11:30 - coffee break  
11:30 – 14:00 - concurrent sessions  
14:00 – 15:15 - lunch break  
15:15 – 16:15 - keynote lecture  
16:15 – 16:30 - break  
16:30 – 18:00 - round table/workshop

Conference dinner (for those who register) – 20:00 Calul Alb Restaurant, 14, Eugeniu de Savoya st

Saturday, May 16 – wine-tasting party at Recaș vineyard; departure time 10:00

### **Smoke Free Legislation**

Smoke free legislation states that virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces in Romania will be smoke free. This includes cafes, restaurants, bars, hotels and public institutions.

At the conference venue smoking is only permitted outside the building.

### **Photocopy Service**

No free photocopying is available.

The nearest photocopying services are at a 10 minutes' walk from the University.

### **Information for Presenters**

#### **Presentation Date, Time and Room**

The timing and the room of your presentation will be confirmed by e-mail. The first figure in the room number indicates the floor.

A full copy of the provisional programme is available at:

If you have any queries, please contact Reghina Dascăl at: [reghina\\_dascal@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:reghina_dascal@yahoo.co.uk)

### **Presentation Rooms**

All presentation rooms have a theatre-style layout, i.e. tables or desks, and chairs are in rows facing the presenter. Rooms can each sit approx. 30 people.

### **Presentation Equipment**

All presentation rooms have the following equipment:

- Laptop
- Projectors (beamers) and LCD screens with HDMI connectors; please note that in order to be easily visible on LCD screens font size should be reasonably large (e.g. 24 and up for Arial)
- Whiteboard

### **Presentation Equipment: Technical Specifications**

Every laptop has:

- Microsoft Windows 10 or 11 operating system
- Microsoft Office 2016 to MS Office 365

### **Internet connection**

If your home institution is affiliated to the Eduroam network, you should be able to connect with your home login details to the Eduroam wi-fi network available in all University buildings and on campus. If you do not have an Eduroam account, you can use the UVT-Guest network, for which you do not need a username and password. Note that on the UVT-Guest network the internet speed is limited and you need to reconnect every 60 minutes.

### **Timing**

Speakers in elective sessions are allotted 20 minutes for their presentation and 10 minutes for discussions.

It is important that each presentation finishes at the time specified to allow the next presenter to start on time and have his/her full 20 minutes. The session moderator will assist presenters with their timing by holding a sign to indicate that it is nearing the end.

In every presentation room, a member of the conference administration team will be available to assist participants before, during and after their presentation.

### **Cancellation**

Should a presentation or attendance be cancelled for some reason, please inform the BAS organisers by March 30. If a presenter hasn't registered one hour before the start of his/her presentation, it will be assumed that the presentation won't take place and a "cancelled" notice will be displayed.

### **Special thanks to the members and students of the English Department involved in the organization of this conference**

Conference chairperson: **Hortensia Pârlog**

Event manager: **Loredana Pungă**

Scientific programme coordinator: **Reghina Dascăl**

Registration coordinator: **Luminița Frențiu**

Programme proofreading: **Mihai Horezeanu**

Webmaster and IT technician: **Adrian Cîntar**