BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

13TH INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST NEW MATERIALISMS CONFERENCE

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UNIVERSITY OF GRANADA
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ENFLESHING LITERATURE BEYOND WORDS

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Plenary speakers

Dorota Golańska holds degrees in political science, literature, and cultural studies. She works at the University of Lodz (Poland). Her research interests include feminist posthumanist theory, critical studies of space, social and spatial justice. In her work she focuses on new materialist approaches to processes of space production, articulation of politics of justice in art and activism, and engagements with creative feminist and decolonial methodologies.

Thinking small: the politics of minor remembrance
In this talk I propose the concept of minor remembrance, inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's notion of minor literature, to address the challenges related to the memorialization of atrocities generated by what is considered unspectacular operations of slow or latent violence. Given the recent preoccupation with the planetary phenomena (such as the ecological catastrophe), memory studies encourage scaling-up the analyses to capture both the size and impact of current developments. However, while acknowledging the urgency of "thinking big", I nevertheless remain unconvinced about the long-term productivity of such a (universalizing) move. What troubles me is the conceptual (im)possibility of including the discreet, nuanced, and situated manifestations of these multiscalar entanglements within this ever-expanding paradigm. Therefore, I propose a shift toward a more relational approach in memory studies, enabling a more effective linking of *the unspectacular to the spectacular,* as well as allowing for a better recognition of complex genealogies of such naturalized hierarchizations. Facilitated by artistic and literary practices, minor strategies of remembrance, gradually dismantle the dominant memorial landscape *from within*, encouraging "thinking small." Such forms of memorializing are needed to both destabilize the current memorial landscape and gesture toward new understandings of mnemonic justice.

Helen Palmer is a writer from Blackpool and currently works as a post-doc in the department of Modern English Literature at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. Palmer is the author of *Deleuze and Futurism: A Manifesto for Nonsense*, *Queer Defamiliarisation: Writing, Mattering, Making Strange*, and the novel *Pleasure Beach*. Amongst other things, Palmer has written texts which engage with queer nonsense, lizards guarding the grave of James Joyce, caves as models of gender utopia, Gertrude Stein doing yoga, and synaesthesia at the seaside.
More info: https://www.anglistik4.hhu.de/en/anglistik-iv-modern-english-literature/team/translate-to-english-detailseite-pd-dr-palmer

The work of speculative gardening in the age of sloppy propagation: writing the thing itself
This paper will present a vision for the emergent field of artistic research in literary studies, inspired by several trajectories found within the specific literary periods of modernism and the avant-garde. Modernist and avant-garde writing historically constitute a multifarious challenge to the notions of subjectivity and representation, a challenge which can also be seen in contemporary thought, and yet this stance generates the necessary critique that it denies a voice to those who have not been granted subjectivity and representation before they are entreated to disavow it. And yet writing ‘the thing itself’, also inspired by modernism and avant-garde, accelerates analogical procedures and removes the subject/object distinction in literary discussions so that analysis becomes co-creation. The paper will discuss several literary strategies including a materialisation of metaphorical language which is the magical part of language made weird. Writing the posthumanities can be emancipatory at all levels, not by rejecting the power of the word but by affirming the word as matter.

Feminist Intra-view

Feminist Transmedia Writing: An Online Intra-view wih Gabi Abrão and Alejandra Smits

This session brings together transmedia writers Gabi Abrão and Alejandra Smits in an online intra-view hosted by researchers Belén Cornejo and Merlina Seijas. Moving beyond the subject–object hierarchy of conventional interviews, this intraview proposes a horizontal discussion on feminist transmedia writing, in which Smits and Abrão will not only answer questions but also engage in a critical and collective discussion around the feminist new materialist resonances of their writing practices across media. The session is organized in three stages. First, Cornejo and Seijas will contextualise Abrão's and Smits's work, foregrounding its relevance to women's autobiographical transmedia writing practices. Second, the intra-view itself will revolve around two main lines of discussion: the entanglement of nature and technology as a point of departure for thinking about feminist writing and its becoming across media, as well as the hopeful, feminist, and affirmative potentialities emerging from these practices. These two bodies of discussion will be addressed and commented on by the four participants, maintaining a horizontal and circular dynamic. Finally, the session will conclude with a Q&A inviting audience participation and encouraging collective knowledge production.

Alejandra Smits is a multidisciplinary writer, director, performer, and poet based in Miami and originally from Barcelona. Her work experiments with narration across media, including writing, film, performance, and digital platforms, exploring the boundaries of storytelling, subjectivity, and everyday existence. She is the author of the bilingual poetry book *Poetry Scam* (2020) and has maintained the newsletter Unsolicited Existence for the past five years, a space for experimental life-writing from a situated, critical and embodied position.

Gabi Abrão is a Los Angeles–based artist, writer, and digital creator known for her transmedial practice spanning poetry, visual art, memes, podcasts, and online writing under the Instagram profile sighswoon. Her work explores aLect, spirituality, embodiment, and "the invisible," often examining how meaning and selfhood emerge across digital and literary forms. She is the author of *Notes on Shapeshifting* (2022) and *Practices in Apparition* (2026).

Belén Cornejo Daza is a PhD candidate at Universidad de Granada (Spain), where she teaches and conducts research in cotutelle with Università degli Studi di Bologna (Italy). She specialises in gender and feminist studies, having completed an Erasmus Mundus MA in Women's and Gender Studies. She has undertaken research stays at Utrecht University and Università di Bologna. Her main research interests lie in the exploration of material culture through the lens of feminist new materialisms, with a particular focus on transmedia studies and hope studies.

Merlina Seijas is a transmedia writer and artist based in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She completed a BA in Electronic Arts at the National University of Tres de Febrero (UNTREF), and her work explores the tensions between human and technological creation, with a particular focus on social media as symbiotic spaces where [popular] digital technologies shape human creativity and are, in turn, shaped by it. Her undergraduate thesis, Creatividad Cyborgánica—her first book—investigates writing beyond linearity by exploring the navigability of the internet through the navigability of the book, and vice versa.

Plenary Roundtable

Worlds in the Making: Affective Registers, Feminist New Materialisms, and thinking with Marie-Luise Angerer

Panel Chair: Felicity Colman, Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange. London College of Fashion. University of the Arts London. UK

This panel brings together papers that are united instead by a shared orientation: toward the world-generating power of affective registers, and the entangled, situated, never-fully-individual nature of how worlds are formed and unformed.
With this focus on what it means to think with affect as a feminist new materialist tool, rather than simply think about it, the panel honours the intellectual legacy of Marie-Luise Angerer — media theorist, affect scholar, and feminist thinker — whose work consistently refused to colonise or domesticate the concept of affect, insisting instead on holding it open: as interval, as intensity, as that which arrives before it can be named. Drawing on her central contributions — the ecology of affect, intensive milieus, the missing half-second, psycho-technologies of affect, and the radical non-consciousness of feeling — the papers in this panel were selected around three intersecting axes drawn from Angerer's work and the user's formulation: 1. telling stories, and generating worlds; 2. the collective body and the creative individual, and 3. situated knowledge and troubled boundaries. The organising concept of the papers in the panel is that of the open interval.
Angerer's most enduring methodological gesture is the preservation of the interval as the gap between stimulus and response, between sensation and meaning, between bodies and their milieus as a site of political and epistemological possibility. Following Bergson, Massumi, and Deleuze through her own distinctly feminist and media-theoretical lens, she argued that it is precisely in this gap that affect does its work: it is connective, translative, and disruptive. The panel takes this open interval as its organising concept. Each paper approaches it from a different angle:literary, political, technological, ecological but all circle the same question: what happens in the space before sense is made?

AXIS 1: TELLING STORIES/GENERATING WORLDS

Maria Tamboukou
Researcher at the University of East London (UK)
Automathographical Rhythms: Wang Zhenyi and the Material Poetics of Mathematical Thought

This paper diffractively reads the writings of Wang Zhenyi (1768–1797)—mathematician, astronomer, and poet of the Qing dynasty—across a plane of composition shaped by feminist new materialisms and my approach of ‘narrative rhythmanalysis’. While Zhenyi’s name occasionally surfaces in popular accounts of women in science, academic engagement with her work remains rare. By situating Zhenyi within the vibrant intellectual and affective ecologies of late imperial China, this paper explores how her travel poetry operates as an automathographical practice—a material poetics of self-writing where mathematical reasoning, embodied perception, and poetic form become inseparable.
Engaging the new materialist concern with how matter comes to matter and how literature enfleshes knowledge beyond words, the paper reimagines Zhenyi’s texts as intra-active assemblages in which thought, movement, and rhythm co-compose a mathematical body in becoming. Her poems’ attention to cosmic cycles, spatial movement, and temporal patterning allows us to perceive mathematical knowledge not as abstraction, but as corporeal and situated vibration, resonating with affective and environmental forces.
Through this approach, Zhenyi’s writings emerge as decolonial reconfigurations of mathematical and literary epistemologies, challenging the Eurocentric partition of scientific and poetic modes of knowing. They invite us to think of literature not as textual enclosure but as a material-affective apparatus—a rhythmically composed field where cognition, motion, and worlding converge. Wang Zhenyi’s automathographical corpus thus gestures toward a plurivocal genealogy of mathematical thought, where literature itself becomes an experiment in mattering, embodiment, and relational knowledge across cultures

AXIS 2: THE COLLECTIVE BODY / THE CREATIVE INDIVIDUAL

Mireia Rosell i Pons
PhD researcher. University of Girona (Spain)
Literature as a diffractive experience in the creative act

This proposal offers a situated autoethnographic account that presents literature as a more-than-textual force and key actant in creative act that has shaped my life and professional trajectory in architecture. At a point, embodied affects showed me that I needed to unlearn creating from my head and let flow, leading me to explore; how I could create in a more entangled way? Echoing Ahmed's notion that emotions "stick" to bodies and shape orientations, I revisit the past by sensing the echoes of high-intensity forces through which literary affects enabled me to trust the non-local intuitive information that emerged.
Living in an isolated rural environment, literature became a primary mode of connection to the world, alongside nature and lived space-time. This atmosphere cultivated heightened attentiveness to movements, perceptions, emotions, dreams, and events, positioning the body as a mediating instrument between the tangible and the intangible.
From literary intra-action, affect can emerge, functioning as an epistemological tool for destabilising the "ontological intuitions" (Elwick, 2017) that constrain my creative practice.
Literature operates as a material-discursive practice that disrupts neoliberal individualisation and fosters collective becoming. It also functions as an apparatus through which questions such a "Who am I?" and "How do I entangle with the world?" are continuously negotiated.
Engaging with emerging affects that guide the materialisation of meaning requires a way of being in the world aligned with New Materialist thought (Skiveren, 2018). Recognising the co-constitutivity of the spiritual and the material, a flat ontology that cultivates spiritual intelligence is essential to embrace uncertainty as a source of wonder and possibility, sustaining decisions often perceived as disruptive and allowing me to "learn from the future as it emerges" (Scharmer, 2007). I argue that such creative practice nurtures a more coherent onto-epistemological and ethical mode of creation, which is crucial in our times.

AXIS 3: SITUATED KNOWLEDGE / TROUBLED BOUNDARIES

Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer
Researcher at Charles University (CZ)
Tracing the in/human force and entanglement of embodied energy literacies

With the planet on fire, there is renewed emphasis on crafting new feminist 'mixed and differential literacies' (Haraway 1997; Geerts and van der Tuin 2016) that break open a pre-defined standards of literacy, energise other paths of reading/writing that might exceed the domain of the human. Barad (2001) proposed agential literacy 'of learning to intra-act responsibly within the world' that includes the capacity to identify and refigure intra-acting apparatuses through particular practices of knowing. Work in geography attends to how inherited concepts and categories might be infused with inhuman geologic forces. Clark (2018) draws attention to the fiery explosions of combustion and suggests that life in proximity of explosion might (have) habituate(d) 'us' to the deadly background hum of internal combustion of over a billion hydrocarbon powered motor vehicles.
Infused in these energetic reverberations, this paper reads the violent rallying around the combustion engine viscerally sutured to idea(l)s of freedom in the political programme of the Czech Motorists Party diffractively with other embodied energy literacies: an early 20th century petro-poem of 'something deadful [smouldering] in my entrails', rural residents' somatically judging or measuring the rising ambient temperature around a solar farm; the voiceless account of Romani widows of former uranium miners in the wake of lethal 'explosions' of cancerous cells; the uncanny display of ceramic mushrooms in the nearby allotments of refugees from the Chernobyl exclusion zone. These in/human smouldering or frozen literacies do not propel political intervention or activism. Inspired by Colebrook's (2012) call for 'a positive attention to incompetence' and a new materialist refusal to treat these literacies as separate, the paper traces infoldings and differentiations and asks: what do these differentially embodied energy literacies matter, what do they allow 'us' to sense and to do?

PARALLEL SESSIONS IN ALPHABETIC ORDER

Ana Abril
PhD researcher. Central European University (CEU) (Austria)
From Ambivalence to Ontology: Biological Presence and the Limits of Interpretation in Wilson's *Gut Feminism*

Elizabeth A. Wilson occupies an anomalous position within feminist new materialisms. Clearly aligned with the performative strand associated with figures such as Karen Barad and Vicki Kirby (Gamble, Hanan, and Nail 2019), Wilson stands out for refusing a wholesale rejection of language and interpretation. Feminist new materialisms emerge, in part, as a reaction against what is diagnosed as the excessive linguistic focus of feminist theory. As Alaimo and Hekman note, the linguistic turn—particularly Derridean deconstruction—exerted a decisive influence on feminist theory and practice (2007, 1–2), an influence that new materialist approaches seek to counter by re-centering materiality as an active and agentive force (2007, 3–4). Against this backdrop, *Gut Feminism* (2015) explicitly engages psychoanalysis and Derridean deconstruction, articulating a materialism that does not expel words but rather "incorporates them".
In *Gut Feminism*, Wilson mobilizes alimentary tropes—biting, incorporation, digestion, and anal expulsion—to destabilize the mind/body binarism and to challenge developmental narratives that frame alimentary aggression as merely primitive or pre-symbolic. As she writes, it is not that a child bites to express sadism, but that "biting is sadism uttered by the muscles of the face and jaw" (Wilson 2015, 78). Through suchformulations, biological substrata such as the gut become sites of hostile affect and cognitive activity, disrupting more traditional accounts of feminist embodiment.
This paper argues, however, that Wilson's biologically grounded reworking of ambivalence risks reinstalling a foundational logic. Tracing ambivalence's trajectory from Freud's developmental temporality, through Melanie Klein's oscillation between love and destruction, to Wilson's claim that "the gut is an organ of mind: it ruminates, deliberates, comprehends" (Wilson 2015, 5), I identify a shift from psychic mediation toward ontological immediacy. This movement culminates in Wilson's explicit appeal to animism, positioning the gut as an originary source of mindedness. Despite her resistance to the anti-linguistic gestures often associated with new materialisms, I argue that Wilson's work nonetheless participates in a broader materialist desire for presence—a desire tied to new materialist longings for unmediated access to reality (Boysen and Rasmussen 2023, 3). Read through a Derridean lens, *Gut Feminism* risks reproducing the very exclusion of interpretation that it seeks to challenge.

Elvira Aguilera García
PhD researcher. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) (Spain)
From Affective Intensity to Reparative Writing: Diffractive Approaches to Literary and Audiovisual Analysis

Engaging in literary analysis and criticism through an assemblage of affect theories and new materialisms have proven to foster an approach that allows the I as researcher be playful while critical and situated (Moslund, Marcussen, and Pedersen, 2021) both in relation to the analytical process they engage with and the means by which they move around/with the cultural artefact(s) of their interest. This proposal is thus a recompilation of the research paths (un)taken (and the genealogies that have paved/deconstructed them) that have guided me to explore different analytical and literary creative processes. These paths "start" with literary and transmedia analysis through the lenses of affect theories and "concludes" with hypotheses on reparative writings for hypothetical novel adaptations.
From addressing moments of affective intensity (Massumi, 2015; Reeser and Gottzén, 2018) in both literary text and audiovisual media, to discerning moments of ordinary affects (Stewart, 2007), I have crafted an intertextual process of analysis that aims to discern the characters' relationship with gender performance, identity, and social expectations, looking at the reasons why these matter in the text and out of it (Rebelles-Benavente, 2025), and exploring what these make the characters do and the potential that their representation have in audiovisual media (Barozzi, Rodriguez-Salas, Sánchez-Espinosa, 2022; Calderón-Sandoval and Sánchez-Espinosa, 2021). Additionally, by activating the methodological and literary tool of intra-mat-extuality (Rebelles-Benavente, 2021), the potential of these concepts emerge when applied diffractively evidencing the modes that contextualise them (Colman, 2019), questioning what is being included/excluded in the literary text and in the analysis, as well as pointing out the need for creating acts of resistance. Lastly, such diffractive engagement prompts an experimental approach to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's paranoid and reparative reading (1997) proposing a reparative writing exercise that seeks to engage in imaginative yet relatable examples of affective and alternative ways of writing as well as being and doing.

Raquel Aranda
PhD researcher. University of Granada (UGR) (Spain)
Affective and queer genealogies in Spanish graphic feminism: Women comic artists of the sixties and seventies as creators of new identities.

Since the sixties and seventies, Spanish comic books created by female artists have been a means not for representation, but for the production of new identities. Núria Pompeia, Marika Vila and Montse Clavé, used comics as a form of daily resistance against Francoist patriarchal discourse. The aim of this project is to investigate the feminist graphic genealogies that artists of that era have bequeathed to their contemporaries.
Based on the concept of "agency of matter" (Bennett), comic is a visual ecology in which the material elements of the page produce meaning. The panels contain "affective technologies" that precede language (sequentiality, rhythm, stroke), and generate body-emotion-environment relationships without the need for words. In this case, the drawn bodies of the protagonists are conceived as "matter in the making" participating in "intra-action" (Bared): they are constituted in contact with objects, spaces, and discourses. Thus, subjectivity is confronted with new themes, highlighting taboo emotions and exploring multiple bodily ontologies (fragmented, unstable, hybrid); this was made possible inpart by the Spanish underground, free from censorship and open to the international scene. Because of this, and in accordance with queer theory (Butler, Preciado, Halberstam), that comics are early forms of disidentification with normative gender, through ambiguous identities, alternative corporealities, and the mobilization of emotions that deviated from the social norm. Which, from the theory of affect (Ahmed, Kosofsky, Sedgwick, Berlant), also allows us to see these graphic works as a means of political struggle, which sought to rewrite "the feminine" and reclaim "femininities".
In short, that artists gave visibility and visuality to feminist perspectives, re-educating the gaze of new generations, and shaping a graphic-affective legacy that has influenced current Spanish creators such as Ana Penyas, María Medem and Flavita Banana, who investigate bodily memories, fluid identities and affective communities.

Leika Aruga
PhD researcher. Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)
Enacting caring public spaces

Care in urban planning and neighborhood making practices have received little explicit focus until recent years (Healey, 2024; Gabauer et al., 2021; Metzger, 2014; Yuille, 2023). By considering care practices as integral to democratic space-making and embedded in response-ability, this paper explores how caring public spaces materialize. The study focuses on a residential district in Tokyo where various communities organize themselves to create spaces for caring. Using ethnographic methods such as participant observation, storytelling and walking interviews, the study articulates the power dynamics that reconfigure objects and subjects of care and how response-ability is enacted. Response-ability is the capacity to respond to others potentiality of mattering, emerging through a relational ontology (Barad, 2007; Bozalek, 2024). In other words, it concerns one's ability to care with others in our already entangled ways of life in more than human worlds (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Tronto, 2013). Through this relational, posthumanist ethics of care, the study shows the ways in which the municipality, citizens and other actors enact democratic care that simultaneously include and exclude matters of care. When posthumanist and relational ethics of care, instead of assumed individual autonomy, becomes the basis for understanding democratic practices, democratic space-making necessarily becomes about refiguring relationships, roles and responsibilities that changes the very possibility of what is possible. While some community spaces emphasize that 'everyone' is welcome, care is practiced towards specific groups such as single mothers, people with disability, gender and sexual minorities, out of school children and mixed-race children. Their specific inclusion simultaneously indicates their perceived exclusion from other public spaces. Taking the learnings from the community spaces, I ask what possibilities for care opens up for contemporary urban planning practices, including the use of digital participatory platforms.

Adele Baldacchino
PhD Researcher. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) (Spain)
Epistemic Objects in Maria Callcott's Writing Practice (1785-1842)

In *How Literature comes to Matter* (2022) several central questions have been posed regarding the new methodologies to interpret literary texts from a post-anthropocentric perspective, especially through the lenses of Feminist New Materialism and Object-oriented ontology. It foregrounds a series of questions concerning the way in which attention to objects and nonhuman elements can reshape literary analysis, challenging anthropocentric models of authorship and narration, and reconfiguring the relationship between words, objects, and meaning-making processes (2022: 4).
Following upon these questions, much feminist new materialist literary criticism has privileged embodied and affective experience as key elements against which to perform analysis on modern and contemporary writings. Rather than focusing on embodied affect, this paper wishes to focus on object-centred practices— such as cataloguing, collecting, and description—as alternative sites of nonhuman agency and meaning-making to allow non-fictional literary texts produced during the 18th and 19th century to be analysed against such framework.
To do so, I will present as a case study Maria Callcott's relevant writing (1785-1842) that, enriched by her intellectual and scientific endeavours, heavily relied on the gathering and subsequent descriptions of objects as material evidence to claim her authorial reliability. Through access to epistemic objects, – intended here as objects that foster scientific research, such as artworks and specimens, – Callcott consolidated a writing practice that stemmed directly from them. In fact, it would be possible to claim that unlike earlier materialist approaches that treat objects as passive reflections of social or economic structures, feminist new materialism allows to consider artworks, specimens, and catalogues as active agents in the production of meaning and knowledge. Particular evidence for this practice are Callcott's published catalogues in T*he Memoirs of the Life of Nicholas Poussi*n (1820), the *Description of Giotto's Chapel in Padua* (1835), and her *A Scripture Herbal* (1842). These texts can allow us to interpret objects such as painting, frescoes and plants as active agents that produce knowledge, while also inspiring an analysis based on the interaction between the abovementioned epistemic objects, understood as "the real," and the material text itself.

Geof Bender
Associate Professor. State University of New York, College at Cortland (EEUU)
Rasmus' Literary Body

In 2015, when scholar Rasmus R. Simonsen completed his PhD, he took the bold move of having a key scene from a key dissertation text—Ishmael alone on a floating coffin after the Pequod had sunk, from Moby Dick—tattooed across his right arm. This celebratory act required a series of translations as Rasmus rendered verbal text into a visual conception; described his vision to a tattoo artist; and then bared his torso for patient hours while the artist, translating Rasmus's vision into her own conception, inscribed the co-constructed scene into skin. Such an enduring way to embody a literary scene prompts provocative new materialist questions. Among them: How does tattooed design intra-act with flesh to reshape that flesh, even as flesh itself reshapes design? How does material subjectivity slip into objectivity over the process of literary enfleshment? What networks of agential relay are established, modified, and quelled by this process and its outcome? Further, and more humancentrically: What are the implications of rematerializing tattooed flesh from a novel that exoticizes and queers it (in the form of Queequeg), written by an author, Herman Melville, who was arguably obsessed with, and willing to appropriate, such inked designs from indigenous sources (Polynesians, for example, in such novels as Typee) for his own pleasure and profit? How have indigenous knowledges been likewise appropriated, commodified, and, in some way, retained?
The paper I seek to deliver at the 13th International Feminist New Materialisms conference explores these and related questions through analysis of Rasmus's arm tattoo framed by a range of new materialist premises. In addition to Karen Barad's agential realism, signaled by "intra-action," above, I include Margrit Shildrick's notion of the "leaky" body to recast the apparent literary containment of Rasmus's tattooed form, situating it, instead, among "complex webs of connection between different registers and energies," as Shildrick puts it. Towards this end, Stacy Alaimo's "material feminist sense of the subject as already part of the substances, systems, and becoming of the world" is crucial as I nuance a materialist notion of literary enfleshment. Rasmus's body, so reconstructed, well illustrates Annemarie Mol's idea of a body's fluidity, where "the boundaries between outside and inside are traversed again and again," and anything like the "continuity" of literary embodiment "depends on never-ending change."Through these and related analytical moves, I situate Rasmus's body as a subject/object that purveys a measure of privilege undermined and revised at every turn by material and cultural networks that queer him as they decenter him along pathways over which he—and his inked skin—have little control.

María Elena Bertos Quesada
Independent Researcher
“At what frequency do you vibrate?”: Experiencing death through vibrant matter

It is curious how, during the darkest hour of the night, when the world around you wanders into the realm of dreams, if you pay attention, in what could be the conquest of nocturnal silence over the strident daytime world, you can perceive certain reverberations. Close your eyes and sharpen your sense of hearing. Light vibrations travel throughout your body, because in the darkness, in the apparent absolute void, certain phenomena that we cannot grasp occur. What are these vibrations? Why do they affect us? Or more importantly, rather what/who produces this symphony? Well, what if it were the matter conversing through the vibrations of imperceptible strings?
In this work, I want to focus my attention on how we not only relate to matter, but also how the traditional boundary between human and non-human can be transgressed. In particular, bearing in mind the title of this proposal, I want to pay attention to dead matter and to what extent it is actually dead. To do so, I will use Autobiographie d'un poulpe by Vinciane Despret (2021), as a case study.
Departing from the concepts of “vibrant matter” (Bennett 2010) and “vibrant death” (Lykke 2022), in this work, I will focus on the vibrant testimonies of arachnids and the autobiography of an octopus as potential methodologies for understanding death not only outside the limits of religious and Cartesian perceptions, but also beyond anthropocentric understanding. Eventually, I will come to understand death as a process of reconfiguring the strings that make up matter, transforming and taking on new meanings.

Raluca Bibiri
Assitant Professor. University of Bucharest (Romania)
The vague gestures of entangling theory and practice. A case of cinematic textuality

The intra-active entanglements of theory and practice outside the academic research networks come with a great challenge. I teach diffraction as research method, focusing on the intra-active contaminations, to the dissolution of past and present (inquiring the past, finding the blind sports and connecting it speculatively to the spacetime atemporality) and also further the dialogue towards a more-than-human environment. Nevertheless, there is growing concern among students that the extending corporative power make it difficult to pursue the posthumanist ethos. Theoretical feminist materialism informed practices constitute a major aspect of my practice both as a researcher and documentary filmmaker. It is an idiosyncratic mix that I find productive in each of my practices in unexpected ways. One such example is a series of tv documentaries that I have been producing over the course of the past years, where I recall the history of the urban area bringing forth people's life-stories: interviews, photo-albums, literature and other textual resources. Confronting the expected media canonical standards has been a challenge: filming mostly women, people who have not distinguished themselves in any particular way, under either criteria of notability or victimhood. I follow the deconstruction of discoursivity that might confront the colonial practices of verbal and cinematic textuality, informed by feminist new materialism. Accordingly, editing and recreating their stories, textually and visually, have been a constant provocation. I've always considered my practice to be academically relevant, though only recently it crossed my mind to bridge it theoretically to my research. The agency (Barad) and liveliness (Bennett) of the cinematic product, intra-actively entangling with the broad environment around (production and reception), revealed itself as part of an obscure effort, given its theoretical indecipherability, a vague gesture in what I later came to refer to (in my mind) as part of the collective feminicity (Colman). I intend to take up and develop these insights and their potential engagement as a practical turn in the theoretical paradigm of feminist materialist studies.

Małgorzata Budzowska
Associate Professor. University of Lodz (Poland)
Intra-active relationality of the female voice in stage performance

The paper investigates the materiality of the female voice as an embodied, vibratory force emerging within theatrical assemblages. Drawing on new materialist and post-dramatic frameworks, the analysis shifts attention from voice as representation to voice as dynamic matter: a sonic event produced through entanglements of bodies and affects. In this perspective, the female voice is not a vehicle of meaning but an agential phenomenon that reconfigures relations between text, body, and stage.
The first case study, Maja Kleczewska's *The Bacchae* (2018), demonstrates how choral lamentation from ancient drama is deterritorialized and reactivated as a site of vocal agency. The performance mobilizes an assemblage of works by Valie Export, Elfriede Jelinek, and Olga Neuwirth (*ach, Stimme!*) alongside Simone Veil's 1974 parliamentary speech, producing an audiovisual (an)archive of the female voice under conditions of historical silencing. Export's video I Turn Over the Pictures of My Voice in My Head (2008), showing the exposed female larynx, foregrounds the voice as a material organ – an intra-active surface where power, vulnerability, and resistance become audible.
The second example, *Mothers. A Song for Wartime* (2023) by the Chorus of Women directed by Marta Górnicka, develops a post-operatic choral form in which voice emerges at the intersection of biomechanics, rhythm, and collective embodiment. While referencing ancient choral traditions, Górnicka reconfigures them through contemporary feminist dynamics, transforming the chorus into a protective and insurgent force – akin to the Gorgon's mask. Her invocation of the ritual of *anasyrma (ἀνάσυρμα)* situates the female body as a site of bio-social reactivation, where vocal enunciation becomes a performative gesture of communal survival and political counteraction.
Across both performances, the female voice appears not as expression of a pre-existing subject but as a material practice that generates subjectivity, collectivity, and resistance – an activism in a move.

Mairéad Butler
Master student. University of Granada (UGR) (Spain)
Making the Magdalene Laundries Matter: Feminist Genealogies, Counter-Memories, and Oral History

This paper analyses the memory and legacies of the Magdalene Laundries—Catholic carceral institutions designed to contain "deviant" women in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ireland—through a feminist new materialist lens, with a focus on the case study of Waterford, a city and county in the south-east of the country, whose Magdalene Laundry closed in 1982. Following Karen Barad's (2010) recognition of the intra-action between past, present, and future and Maria Tamboukou's (2026) feminist genealogical approach, this paper explores how conducting oral histories with "ordinary" subjects whose voices have been excluded from conventional historical narratives can serve to uncover important counter-memories and work towards restorative justice for survivors of structural violence. Specifically, this paper draws on existing oral histories with survivors of the Waterford Magdalene Laundry from the Justice for Magdalenes project and oral histories with women who mothered in the literal and figurative shadows of the Laundry in 1960s-1980s Waterford. By interfering with the accepted genealogy that the violence of the Magdalene Laundries only affected survivors, feminist new materialist historical analysis demonstrates that the repressive violence of the Laundries' Catholic, postcolonial politics of motherhood cannot be contained to the Laundries alone. Instead, it must be understood in its totality, as profoundly affecting all Irish women, whether institutionalised or not, in their intra-action with the Laundries as material commercial entities and as an omnipresent, haunting threat for those who failed to comply with the ideals of motherhood in twentieth-century Ireland. Excavating these suppressed counter-memories and unexplored counter-narratives allows us to understand how the Magdalene Laundries continue to matter in Irish society thirty years after their final closure. Moreover, it offers a useful case study for how feminist new materialisms can empower historians to re-conceptualise history as enfleshed narratives, thus challenging hegemonic genealogies of violence and oppression perpetrated against marginalised, (post)colonial subjects.

Giovanna Caetano-Silva
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Is it enough? Discussing posthuman research(er) in early childhood beyond the dominant logics of time

Posthumanist and New Materialist philosophies invite us to reconfigure our ethical, ontological, and epistemological beliefs. In childhood studies, this proposal requires us to challenge the long-held view of adults as the ideal embodiment of humanity, which leads to the creation of a binary between adulthood and childhood (Murris, 2021). This binary (Adult/child) pervades many of our research practices and prevents us from viewing childhood beyond dominant frameworks of development (Murris, 2016). In Western adult logic, for example, time is often associated with chronological progress, and children are expected to comply with universal ways of learning, growing, and developing (Murris & Kohan, 2022). However, posthuman and new materialist scholars propose that time may be tied to different logics and is not confined to the past, present and future (Barad, 2014; Murris & Bocherds, 2019). Addressing this issue, this research project challenges the concept of time in research with children and data engagement (Ellingson & Sotirin, 2020) by revisiting data that initially seemed too brief, lengthy or unclear. This data comes from a larger research project developed in Seville with children aged 4–5 from 2021–2025. By experimenting with the 'timelessness' of the videos and embracing the non-linear (Barad, 2007), the unexpected and the beyond-purpose of time (Tsing, 2015), video-montages challenged chrono/logical expectations (see MacLure et al., 2019; Menning et al., 2021; Menning & Murris, 2023). Through such engagement, sensory and more-than-human collaborations in childhood became possible, disrupting the binaries of adult/child, sense/nonsense and verbal/non-verbal. This work concludes that, from a posthumanist and new materialist understanding, research with childhood should not be planned around the question of 'how much time is needed'. Instead, it should consider what time is needed, what it does, and what it reveals about the binaries that underpin our research practices and the response-abilities we are yet to approach

Giovanna Caetano-Silva, José J. Roa-Trejo, Alejandra Pacheco-Costa, and Fernando Guzmán-Simón
Honorary Assistant, Senior Lecturer, Senior Lecturer. University of Sevilla (US) (Spain)
Entangling with the literature (review): thinking with family literacy through situated readings

Literature reviews tend to provide an objective overview of what is known in a specific field. Through methodical searching, systematising and analysing existing bibliography, the inclusion and exclusion of referenced documentary sources can be justified (Alexander, 2020). However, recent posthuman scholars have invited us to reconsider our ethical and epistemological truths (Barad, 2007). Such an invitation unavoidably raises the issue of literature reviews being regarded as truth and impartial descriptions of reality that enable 'replication' of knowledge (Hammersley, 2013). For instance, research claims that the way language accompanies systematic reviews controls and limits authors' subjectivities (MacLure, 2005), ultimately preventing us from questioning how what we claim to know about a field (e.g. family literacy) matters (Sauzet, 2021). Having considered these propositions and being immersed in posthuman literature, this work embraces the situatedness (Haraway, 1988) of conducting a narrative literature review in the field of family literacy (FL). Taking on the posthuman call for new ways of researching becomes not only our methodological endeavour, but also our ontological and ethical one, with the aim of mapping new horizons for a concept that is usually seen from cognitive, objective and systematic lenses (Flewitt & Clark, 2020). In this sense, our interest lies less in the comprehensive coverage of all aspects and more in the generation of our own entanglements with literature (Shannon & Hackett, 2024). Our narrative review reconceptualises FL, escaping the neoliberal constructions typical of many investigations in this field. Specifically, we expand upon embodied, material and multimodal practices; the values of families; the convergence between the domestic sphere and the school environment; and the disruption of deficit discourses on literacy. This work therefore acknowledges the necessity to expand the concept of family literacy beyond the limits of cognitive abilities and the normative epistemological paths that have long guided educational studies.

Elizabeth Caitlin, Lucía Expósito-Cívico, María León González y Rosa M. Medina Doménech
Master Student, PhD researcher, Master student & Full Professor. Universidad de Granada (UGR) (Spain)
Panel Title: Materialities of Alleviation: Feminist Neomaterialist Approaches to Embodied Suffering

ROSA M. MEDINA DOMÉNECH: Materialities of Alleviation: Feminist Neomaterialist Approaches to Embodied Suffering

This paper emerges from our interdisciplinary project Things that Matter in Illness, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, which investigates human-material relational models to rethink dominant epistemologies of health, illness, and suffering. We argue that the longstanding primacy of cure within biomedical frameworks obscures how alleviation is enacted through everyday material practices, environments, and objects that act with agency in easing embodied distress. Reframing suffering through the materialities of alleviation can render human–material interactions more legible than curative logics typically allow.
Our theoretical approach is informed by Science Studies, feminist neomaterialist work —Barad, Puig de la Bellacasa, Pérez-Bustos— and by interactionist critiques of science —Haraway and Latour—. Their perspectives help us to conceptualize knowledge as an ecosystem rather than a diffusionist hierarchy of "expert science". We also draw our approach to things that alleviate on broader conversations opened by Jane Bennett's Vibrant Matter and on Nancy Fraser's critique of cannibalistic capitalism, which push us to situate material practices of relief within broader political and economic frames. Rather than attributing vitality to things in teleological or animist terms, we attend to affective ecologies in which objects co-produce forms of relief—often modest, partial, or fragile.
This paper advances a vocabulary and methodology for tracing how matter alleviates without resolving, opening a dialogue across the medical humanities, the history of medicine, STS, and feminist theory on the potential of materiality to generate knowledge about the relief of diverse forms of human suffering, whether individual or collective. We also offer the first presentation of our work-in-progress Museo Virtual de las Cosas del Enfermar, which materializes the conceptual framework of our research project within diverse historical contexts.

LUCÍA EXPÓSITO CÍVICO: DNA as Material Alleviation? Affective Agencies of Genetic Identification in Mass Grave Contexts

This paper examines the biological materiality of DNA within the scientific, affective, and political assemblages that structure exhumation practices in contemporary Spain. Over the last two decades, DNA has become a central device in the exhumation of mass graves from Francoist violence. Genetic identification functions as a technology of forensic legitimation, classifying exhumed individuals as unidentified, under identification process, or identified. The prominence of genetic evidence tends to configure DNA-based identification as a prerequisite for the return of remains to the families searching for them.
My contribution draws on analysis of official exhumation reports, interviews with forensic practitioners and relatives of Republicans killed by Francoist violence, and the study of filmic representations of DNA in identification processes. This combination enables to trace how genetic material is narrativized, mobilized, and reconfigured across scientific documents, public activist settings, and visual media.
We argue that, in exhumation contexts, DNA is not understood solely as a technical tool for genetic identification or a neutral evidence of truth but is transformed into a materiality with affective agency. In dialogue with the notion of ecologies of affects (Angerer, 2017), we analyze how DNA participates in affective assemblages involving forensic and non-expert practices and influencing how memorial communities articulate individual and collective loss. Besides, we explore how DNA acquires affective agency in shaping temporalities of waiting, imaginaries of kinship, and embodied experiences of mourning. We argue that genetic identification generates forms of alleviation that are often partial, mediated or deferred, revealing the limits of DNA as a hegemonic truth-making device in contexts of historical violence.
By critically examining the notion of relief, this interdisciplinary contribution opens a wider discussion on how scientific materialities participate in alleviating collective and individual suffering, extending debate beyond forensic genomics toward the affective, narrative, and political dimensions of embodied loss in contexts of historical violence.

MARÍA LEÓN GONZÁLEZ: Mobile Technologies of Relief: Histories of cycling women in Porfirian Mexico City

My contribution examines the bicycle as a historical technology of relief, demonstrating how everyday material practices in 19th-century Mexico mediated feminized discomfort, resulting from patriarchal violence, outside of medical and scientific frameworks and discourses. Per Katie Barclay's (2017) call to let objects speak, the material characteristics of the bicycle are centered in my research, in dialogue with my embodied knowledge of the apparatus as well as with academic STS works that trace the object and its trajectory from an emerging technology to a household staple.
Through archival research and against-the-grain (Hartman, 1997) readings of historical press, I map newspaper coverage that portrayed how women tapped into the emancipatory potential of the bicycle through movement, embodiment, recreation, collective learning, and contra-hegemonic use of public space. I examine how in the material interactions with an emerging technology imported from the global north, women in the global south challenged the strict scripts that Porfirian femininity had written out for them. The need to create an understanding between the machine and the body in motion (Ebert, 2010) is at the heart of the use of the bicycle as relief. Through this connection, cycling served as a demonstration of the physical abilites of women to master balance, coordination, and strength, in opposition to dominant narratives of domestic frailty and weak health.
This experience of relief, in turn, is not conceptualized as a cure or a solution for the restrictive gender norms of the context. The transformative potential of female cycling is constantly confronted with strategies from the patriarchal media that seek to deactivate the bicycle's potential for modifying the gendered Porfirian order: invisibilization, sexualization, minimization, and mockery. Still, these opportunities to seek relief through sport open up the possibilities of alternative pasts, highlighting the agency of women to navigate patriarchal structures.

ELIZABETH CAITLIN: When the Stage Talks Back: Stripping as Work, Art and Power *Trazando el Poder Narrativo a través el Archivo Stripper*

A thread of my GEMMA master thesis on stripping as work, art and power, is tracking and building the stripper archive across time, voice and materiality. I construct some of my interview questions based on past interviews of strippers from 40-50 years ago. I also dedicate some of my field work to an exploration of everyday language in the dressing room of the strip club, from stickers on lockers, to signage posted in the dressing room to whatever other sources spoke/speak to those fellow workers who I have interviewed/ are interviewing.
In the case of stickers on lockers, many are left behind from strippers past and act almost as a material example of a "mise en abyme," to my attempt to facilitate stripper conversations across time, as the sticker left on a locker may be from 5 or 10, or 15 years ago and they are left behind items, remnants to be found/read/ interpreted again. One thing that they allow us as strippers to find across our encounters with them, is a source of archival material from past workers, a past which is not well documented in traditional sources of history as it is an every-day working and working class space.
Finding ourselves in history as well as telling our own stories, are narrative acts and practices which happen not just through written and spoken form, but across the material world. Narrative form takes on new depths of meaning by the way time acts across the material, a locker changing hands, a dressing room over the years, the finiteness of our individual lives passing by. Time thus allows specific practices to emerge; practices of leaving behind, finding, uncovering and acknowledging, practices of genealogical recognition.
Producing our own stripper narratives across genealogical recognition is a source of relief from the imposed patriarchal narratives of the work and space. Relief is experienced in the narrative act itself. The position of occupying the gaze from the stripper stage, situates one with an interesting perspective "to look out from." A positionality which shapes ideas of work, art, power and patriarchy yet also a positionality which is rarely narrated. Tracing the lived knowledge this embodied labor offers the collective, across interviews as well as auto-ethnographic reflections and the archival materiality of the dressing room, offers a richness to the forms of narration. Giving narration to places largely seen but not heard by patriarchal structures of history, offer a source of emotional relief in of itself.

Mercedes Carbayo Abengozar
Lecturer in Maynooth University (Ireland)
Materiality, Affect, and Nation in Spanish Graphic Novels *Estamos todas bien* (2017) by Ana Penyas and *La tierra yerma* (2021) by Carla Berrocal

This presentation examines the Spanish graphic novels Estamos todas bien (2017) by Ana Penyas and La tierra yerma (2021) by Carla Berrocal as feminist new materialist texts that foreground the political and affective dimensions of material environments. Situating these works in Spain's post-2008 socio-economic context, the paper draws on Sara Ahmed's feminist theory, which emphasises how materiality is experienced through power, emotion, and institutional arrangements. Bringing Ahmed's work into dialogue with critiques of femonationalism, the paper argues that these graphic narratives expose how material worlds are mobilised to sustain nationalist and patriarchal imaginaries under the appearance of feminist concern.
While Feminist New Materialisms have productively highlighted the agency of matter and more-than-human relations, this paper follows Ahmed in questioning approaches that detach materiality from social and political accountability. Using Ahmed's concepts of orientation, affect, and feminist fatigue, the analysis explores how narratives of protection, belonging, and moral value shape domestic spaces, care practices, and rural landscapes.
In Estamos todas bien, household interiors and everyday objects register women's unpaid care labor as a form of inherited obligation closely tied to cultural memory. La tierra yerma extends this critique to rural abandonment and ecological damage, challenging gendered and nationalist discourses that frame women as custodians of land and tradition. Rather than celebrating matter as inherently vital or emancipatory, both works show how material environments can discipline bodies and organise affect.
In this presentation, I will explore how Spanish feminist graphic novels offer a critical contribution to Feminist New Materialisms by demonstrating the need for a politically attentive materialism capable of resisting feminist co-optation within nationalist and neoliberal projects.

Marina Casado Guerrero
PhD researcher. Central European University (CEU) (Austria)
(Re)thinking-with Borders: Subverted Bodies-Territories in the Poems of Julia Cimafiejeva and Aurora Camero

How does literature engage in the re-thinking of material processes and the undoing of Western binarisms, while promoting critical-creative (Palmer 2020, Gómez-Barris 2025) and affirmative (Braidotti 2016, Revelles-Benavente and Sánchez-Espinosa 2024) stances to our contemporary world? Drawing from this general claim, where literature's agency is emphasized in its ability to matter (Moslund et al., 2020), the focus is set upon transnational literature (Jay 2021, Lúkic et al., 2020), which entails a radical remapping and rethinking of, in this case, European geopolitics, as epitomized in the works of contemporary migrant writers. More specifically, this paper deals with transnational poetry, especially with a kind of poetry that I have labelled as "queerfeminist", understood as "a process and a methodology that is applicable to and exceeds the focus on gender and sexuality as its exclusive concerns'' (Lykke, Mehrabi and Randomska 2020). To follow with, this presentation will investigate the concept of the border both as a material, situated space, and as a theoretical-methodological-creative apparatus. Drawing on the borderland as "a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary (...) a constant state of transition" (Anzaldua 1987, p. 4), this paper thinks-together-with the poems of two authors that have migrated to Southern and Central Europe: Aurora H. Camero and Julia Cimafiejeva. These poems reconstruct the concept of the border as a space of subversive embodiments, crafting a body-territory (Cabnal 2010, Ysunza 2021) through the material-discursive (Barad 2007) of the texts. Moreover, the concept of the border is mobilized in its entanglement with different corporealities, embodying feminist border-thinking and border onto-epistemologies (Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert, and Koobak 2016, which question borders as a "mobile and relational space" (Brambilia 2014, p. 9), a space of possibility and of decolonization, queer relationalities and subversive geopolitics.

Marina Casado Guerrero y Celia Rodríguez Sánchez
PhD Researcher & Independent scholar. Central European University (CEU) and Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC)
Other Ways through the Otherwise : (Un)mapping Concepts, Threading Genealogies

How do we play with theory? What if theory was a method? What if we could approach it corporeally? How do concepts such as literature, theory, method, and bodies intra-act (Barad 2007)? In this performance/communication, our interest is to investigate together how literature overflows (Kozak 2006), co-becoming with the audience, and blurs clear distinctions about what literature means (Revelles-Benavente 2025) and does. Through the optic/haptic (Hayward 2010), the audience will physically thread together different products: theoretical pieces, poetic texts, images, text messages... with the idea of confronting a queer defamiliarisation (Palmer 2020) that foregrounds intensive milieus (Angerer 2017) to think-together-with different disciplines. Thus, these products will be prepared beforehand, and located in different places of the room, with the idea of being intertwined with each other using the prepared thread. After the instructions, the participants will be instructed to walk around the space, touching, reading, and crafting and thus, re-orienting their own conceptual thread that will be entangled to the other participant's threads, creating a counter-map of concepts (Mesquita 2018, GeoBrujas 2023) moved by bodies that occupy the space. Through this critical-creative (Palmer 2020, 2025, Gomez-Barris 2025) exercise, we also aim to work with queer disorientations (Ahmed 2006, Gopinath 2019) of the space, bodies, and creative works, which come together to rethink meaning and genealogies (Van der Tuin 2015), and to delve into experimentation as a form of theorization (Barad 2012). With this participative performance, the intent is also to think-with and work-together-with the otherwise (Gomez-Barris 2017, Walsh 2018, Olufemi 2021) putting forward decolonial doings and listenings (Lemon and M.Grant 2022) in order to build together "new arrangements of thought, knowledge, theorizing, and thinking within and toward the political" (Walsh 2018, p. 20).

Anna Chromik
Assistant Professor. UKEN University of Kraków (Poland)
Alma Mat(t)er: On Academic Somadidactics

This paper proposes a new materialist rethinking of academic literary pedagogy as strategies against the neoliberalization of the university. Drawing on feminist and critical pedagogies alongside affect theory and process philosophy (Brian Massumi, Erin Manning), it introduces the concept of academic somadidactics - an approach that foregrounds affect, embodiment, rhythm, and material relations as central to learning and teaching, but, first and foremost, to reading. Against dominant neoliberal models that frame education as productivity, efficiency, and measurable output, the article argues for reading and literature as somatic, relational, and micropolitical practices that can reconfigure the value of the humanities. Central to this argument is a distinction between molar and molecular modes of reading. While molar reading privileges interpretation, abstraction, and meaning extraction, molecular reading attends to the sensomotoric, affective, and bodily dimensions of literary encounter. Reading is approached as an assemblage involving bodies, nervous systems, gestures, postures, material supports (paper, screen), and environmental conditions. In this framework, texts function not as containers of meaning but as text-machines - dynamic components within affective assemblages that materialize knowledge through intensities, rhythms, and resonances. Such text-machines generate emergent forms of knowing that exceed representational cognition and activate new capacities for thought and relation.
By framing reading as a shared, embodied practice (rather than an individualized act of consumption), the article positions literary pedagogy as a form of somatic resistance to academic acceleration, instrumentalization, and burnout. Through pedagogical experiments such as collective deep-reading workshops and explicit attention to the material conditions of study, the classroom becomes a co-creative field of ethical encounter and mutual transformation. Ultimately, the article argues that reclaiming reading as a somatic and affective practice offers a powerful strategy for redefining the humanities, not as surplus or ornament within the neoliberal university, but as a vital site of relational knowledge, care, and political imagination.

Ruth Churchill Dower
Research Fellow, Sheffield Hallam University (UK)
Artful Sensing Practices and encounters beyond words: how multispecies entanglements attune us to bodies that do not speak

The increasing emphasis on language and literacy in early childhood education (ECE), based on a developmental approach to learning, assumes the ideal child should acquire specific skills and knowledge by certain stages. This creates challenges for early childhood and arts educators supporting young children's development whilst acknowledging that young bodies do not develop in a linear fashion (Murris, 2016). For nonlingual children particularly, a developmentalist approach overlooks the myriad expressions that occur beyond words, where not-speaking is a complex entanglement of environmental, microbial, pheromonal and affective relations.
Drawing on multispecies encounters with nonlingual children, this presentation explores relational ontologies, speculative methods and an ethics of care to consider how multiplicities of bodies can listen differently to nonlingual children's expressions. My research experiments with sensory-movement-based methodologies that I call 'Artful Sensing Practices'. This approach animates the reciprocity of movement play to tune into ways of listening differently to the signals of sensing bodies, such as gestures, movements, gaze, touch and other important body languages (Olsson, 2009). Artful Sensing Practices (ASPs) invite synaesthetic (multisensory) responses which allow children to 'feel' their world without needing to articulate it (Massumi, 2002), repositioning divergent ways of knowing as part of everyday practices beyond word-based literacies (Churchill Dower, 2022).
During fieldwork in an art gallery in northern England, a non-speaking child engaged in movement-based encounters with a lycra sheet that became lively (Bennett, 2010), leaning into their infectious capacities where the dynamics of moving-with materials animated a multiplicity of bodies beyond words. This speculative approach (Haraway, 2016) invited vital sensations, expressions and movements that had all-too-often been suppressed or regulated (Massumi, 2002). In doing so, the research cultivated response-able spaces of mattering (Haraway, 2016) that value nonlingual sensing practices and diverse ways of knowing through bodies (Myers in, Loveless, 2020).
Video data were collected and analysed using a 'video data sensing' method (Caton, 2019). Here, insights emerged not through a single observation but from multispecies intra-actions that were always more than one (Barad, 2007) (Manning, 2020), focussing on the improvisational dance of almost imperceptible movements, intensities and forces that are always vibrating, exchanging and responding (Manning & Massumi, 2014; Tammi & Hohti, 2020) beyond words.
By attending to the myriad nonlingual ways of multispecies knowing, ASPs contributed a new methodology that can be implemented in the arts and early education fields as well as having generative implications for the early childhood education, linguistics, critical neurodiversity and speech and language fields.

Alessia Cilia Portelli
Assistant Lecturer. University of Malta (Malta)
What Can a Realist Novel Make a Body Do? Embodied Walkthroughs as Speculative Research-Creation in Literary Pedagogy

This paper contributes to feminist debates on literature beyond words by presenting the embodied walkthrough as a speculative research-creation event (Manning and Massumi, 2014) within literary pedagogy. Drawing on a doctoral research project conducted at the University of Malta, the paper analyses a workshop carried out with second-year BA students of Spanish and Latin American Studies, in which a realist literary text was activated as a material-discursive-affective apparatus (Barad, 2007) and approached beyond a text-centred mode of interpretation.
The workshop centred on a selected passage from La Regenta by Leopoldo Alas, Clarín (1884-1885), a novel in which space operates as a moral, temporal, and affective force (Bobes Naves, 1983). The didactic sequence was explicitly designed as a research-creation process and unfolded through three intra-related phases: first, a collective close reading attentive to atmosphere, sound, seasonality, and material detail, with particular attention to how these elements act upon the female body within the narrative; second, the collaborative construction of an immersive narrative space using objects, spatial arrangements, sound cues, and bodily movement, through which students explored how enclosure, repetition, and sensory constraint are experienced and negotiated by embodied,gendered subjects; and third, the production of material-digital responses. Students documented their embodied walkthroughs through photography and collectively curated a digitally manipulated poster that functioned as an affective and visual response to both the text and their embodied reading of it.
Methodologically, the paper argues that the embodied walkthrough reconfigures literary reading as an intra-active phenomenon (Barad, 2007) in which knowledge emerges through embodied engagement, sensory participation, and creative practice, without separating the activities of thought from those of sensing, feeling, moving and making. Rather than aiming to reproduce the fictional space, the workshop speculated with it, allowing non-human elements such as sound, objects, and spatial constraint to participate in the production of meaning.
By positioning pedagogy itself as an apparatus of inquiry, understood as an ethico-political and relational practice of response-ability grounded in attentiveness, responsibility, and material entanglement (Haraway, 1997, 2018; Bozalek and Zembylas, 2021), the paper shows how embodied walkthroughs challenge humanist, text-centred traditions of literary study and proposes a response-able feminist new materialist approach through which literature comes to matter in and beyond the classroom.

Tamara Cvetković
PhD researcher. Central European University (CEU) (Austria)
Migration and Literary Canon – a desire for an intervention

In this paper, I propose to do a diffractive reading (Barad 2007) of the novels *The Hand That You Do Not Bite* by Ornela Vorpsi and *Superheroines* by Barbi Marković'. Vorpsi's novel is written in Italian (La mano che non mordi 2007), while Marković's original is partly in German and partly in Serbo-Croatian (Superheldinnen 2016).
In both novels, the main characters often change the place of living, where they face poverty and exclusion. In both novels, protagonists are nameless migrants who are trying to access society/the world. In "Superheroines", regardless of having superpowers that can change the past/future/world, three protagonists remain in a precarious position, outsiders, and marginalized citizens of Vienna. In "The Hand" – protagonist compares living in a foreign culture as being at the family dinner, but unable to participate, because there is a window between her and the others. At the same time, both novels reinterpret other works of fiction – *Berlin, Alexanderplatz* by Alfred Döblin and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wild, while also containing fantastic elements, documentary materials, and numerous references to social reality.
I am interested here in the ways in which literature comes to matter and vice versa- how matter becomes literature. By bringing together these two novels and the canonical works that enter the plots, and by tracing their entanglements, I plan to produce a reading of migration as an experience with limited access to worlds, space, timelines, which produces a desire for an intervention that will ultimately erase the very conditions of life as a migrant – precarity, poverty, war trauma, loneliness, depression.
My main questions are – how material consequences of migration enter the plots? What is political about the gestures of rewriting of canonical works? What is feminist about it? Is it a challenge to Western literary canon or its affirmation or is it both at the same time?

Stefano de Marzo
PhD researcher. University of Calabria (Italy)
«Sincerely Yours»: Affective Writing with AI as a Public Practice

Does AI decree the death of the author, or does it open up new imaginative possibilities through the trauma triggered by its own creative potential? As suggested within economic and legal theory (Potts, 2025), Artificial Intelligence has by now attained the status of a “hyperobject”, following the category proposed by Morton (2013), that is, objects “massively distributed in time and space relative to humans” (p. 1), in which we are always already embedded (p. 17) and which “compel us to think ecologically” (p. 48). From this perspective, AI’s consistency as an affective horizon has become particularly evident in its psychological implementations (Goffin & Archer, 2025). Beyond considerations concerning the strictly therapeutic effectiveness of such HCI practices, it is worth recalling that ELIZA (Weizenbaum, 1966), the first AI system, was precisely a chatbot emulating a psychotherapist, described as a “listening surface” (Bassett, 2019, p. 809).
In contrast to ELIZA, contemporary generative AI systems, supported by the internet and programmed as LLMs, display properties that arguably distance them from this original symbolic fiction, allowing a new poietic character of this affective surface to emerge. The affective dimension is here shaped by the anaclitic phenomenon (i.e. libidinal investment) of the user’s transference onto the chatbot, while its countertransferential dimension remains problematic and largely unexplored (Amirkhani, Norouzi, & Babaii, 2023).
The experience of psycho-affective investment in writing thus becomes the keystone for exploring a form of cyborg community participating in an ecology of affects through the deployment of what, by developing Bonnie Honig’s theses (2017), might be defined as a new “public thing”, capable of generating a novel kind of common object and democratic signification. The vibrant network among users – together with the new materialism of the “internet of things” (Weiser, 1991) – can therefore activate and virtually reify the poetic trait, intrinsically “intertextual” (Kristeva, 1966), of a potentially self-reflexive form of writing that is affectively ecological and perhaps cruelly optimistic (Berlant, 2011).

Silvia de Riba, Paula Estalayo & Beatriz Revelles-Benavente
Junior Lecturer, Junior Lecturer, Associate Professor. University of Girona, University of Barcelona & University of Granada (Spain)
Embracing other literacies through Feminist New Materialisms: a diffraction of two doctoral dissertations on Arts Education

Literacy has often been understood as a practice of language acquisition (that is to say, to learn writing and reading). In the Spanish context, the word ‘alfabetización’ carries a long colonial tradition. It frames people as lacking knowledge, positioning them as passive subjects who must be taught according to a particular vision. Some authors are expanding the idea of literacies from the affective turn, understanding that every act of literacy involves a feeling dimension (Johnston, 2025). Projects such as Expect_Art (2024) are also proposing understanding that literacy can be multiple, critical and cultural.
In order to explore other literacies that emerge in school settings from a feminist new materialist point of view, this paper offers a diffractive reading of two doctoral research projects. Both researches were conducted in public schools located in segregated urban peripheries of Barcelona and grounded in feminist new materialisms, post-qualitative inquiry and intersectional perspectives. One (Estalayo Bielsa, 2023) explored how a primary–secondary school becomes a relational setting in which students shape their subjectivities through forces entangled with racism, sexism and colonial legacies, making these dynamics visible and foregrounding the connections between the local and the global. The other (de Riba Mayoral, 2024) investigated the Gender Filmmaking Labs, discussing how collaborative filmmaking could operate as affective, pedagogical and feminist research phenomena.
Drawing on these two studies, we argue how arts education enables other forms of literacy that foster relational and affective encounters through and beyond language acquisition, allowing students to bring their cultural assemblages into the learning process and to develop critical thinking oriented toward social justice. That is to say, these projects propose to understand literacy "in the making", as part of our "everyday use" (Revelles-Benavente, 2025).

Lola del Gallego Noval
PhD researcher. Institute of History (CSIC) (Spain)
Gonzalo Rodríguez Lafora's psychiatric language on sex between women, and patients' emotional resistances (1920-1936)

The clinical records from the private clinic of neuropsychiatrist Gonzalo Rodríguez Lafora (1916-1936) have allowed me to raise questions about the medical perspective on sexual practices among women in Spain during the 1920s and 30s*.
In the 1920s and 30s, male homosexuality was a recurring theme in both the press and scientific publications. However, female homosexuality barely appeared in social discourse. The way women experienced and expressed desire employed other languages that did not necessarily involve the term "homosexuality." The aim of this presentation is to delve into the relationship between sapphic desire, discursive (non)existence, and the languages used by the psychiatrist and his patients. To this end, the concepts that make up the expert psychiatric language regarding sexual practices between women are traced, as well as the "emotional resistances" (Rosón and Medina, 2017)—which resonates with afeminist new materialist ethos— that these women employ to narrate and reflect on their experiences; and thus, tracing the intra-active and polyphonic phenomena (Barad, 2007) that constitute this material-discursive practice.
On the one hand, it is identified that the term "friends" constitutes a mechanism of closetedness (Capdevila-Argüelles, 2025; Sedgwick, 1990) from which to agentively tell and express lived emotions (Fernández Galeano, 2019; Rosón and Medina, 2017). On the other hand, it is understood that the expert language of the psychiatrist "makes up people" (Hacking, 1986) and contains the potential to delimit the meaning of the word "friends," affectively repositioning patients through what Hacking calls "looping effects" (1994; 2007). This raises the question of how to think about the subjectivities that (re)emerge in the relationship between patients and psychiatrist, acknowledging such dynamic as intra-active phenomena (Barad, 2007) enabled by —and, thus, also acknowledging — the potentia and potestas (Braidotti, 2014; Foucault, 1975, 1976) raised within and through these material-discursive practices around friendship, adding/considering the temporal-spatial configuration as part of that becoming (Braidotti, 2002).

*This presentation is part of the analysis of the archive of the private practice of neuropsychiatrist Gonzalo Rodriguez Lafora, which is being developed within the framework of the research project "Del encierro manicomial a los movimientos en primera persona. Experiencias, percepciones y reivindicaciones de los pacientes mentales en España (siglos XIX-XXI)" (PID2023-151059NB-I00), and on which Silvia Lévy is also currently working, with a proposed communication at this conference entitled "Emotional resistances and recreation of self in the dream diary of a patient of neuropsychiatrist Gonzalo Rodríguez Lafora".

Eva Dieteren
PhD researcher. University of Kingston (UK)
Towards Music-Power

This paper develops the concept of music-power to explore how (recorded) music, and in particular concept albums, generate affective, material, and relational capacities that exceed linear or textual forms of engagement. Building on feminist new materialisms, particularly Jane Bennett's (2010) notion of thing-power, I propose music-power as a way to attend to the capacities of music to resonate and intra-act with bodies, archives, and social relations, while differentiating it from the conventional notion of the 'power of music,' which risks romanticising or abstracting music's evocative force.
I start from Kodwo Eshun's striking provocation that "you don't really need any Heidegger, because George Clinton is already theoretical" (Eshun 1998, 80). Read methodologically, this claim challenges the tendency of critical theory to discipline music by translating it into stable concepts. It foregrounds a central question that animates this paper: how does one write about music, about its capacity to evoke, its unpredictability, and affective force, without rendering it static or subordinating it to theory?
Approaching music as both method and object of inquiry, the paper traces music-power through case studies from (recorded) music and literature, including concept albums such as Rapsody's Eve and the novels of Caleb Azumah Nelson. These works foreground music as a mode of storytelling and world-building that is material and immaterial, archival and speculative, and that require forms of engagement distinct from those associated with literary or musicological traditions. Particular attention is paid to Black sonic practices, which unsettle Eurocentric hierarchies within music scholarship by foregrounding sound as a site of knowledge production in its own right. Rather than offering a fixed definition, this paper presents music-power as an exploratory concept, tested through listening, writing, and analysis. In doing so, it proposes an exploration of feminist new materialisms to think with rather than about sound.

Juliana España Keller & Laura Maillo
Professor & Independent researcher. Concordia University & University of Málaga
The Vegetal Witness: Feminist Materialist, Posthuman Choreographies of Collapse and (Re)generation through Butoh and Generative AI

This paper theorizes a somatic myco-vegetal ecology emerging from MYCELIO, a lecture-performance that combines Butoh dance, plant bioacoustics, mycelial networks, and generative AI audio-visual projection. Building on my earlier research on feminist-materialist sonic intra-active quantum relations with plant life, the project treats low-frequency plant vibrations as vibratory utterances of vegetal witnesses to climate collapse and slow, ongoing harm. The Butoh dancer's slowness, opacity, and corporeal dissolution attune the human body to vegetal and fungal temporalities of decay, dormancy, and regeneration, while mycelial networks provide a model of distributed, more-than-human material relationality that exceeds individual agency. In performance, a live Butoh dancer shares the space with a large-scale projected generative AI video work, in which 4K audio-visual landscapes continually morph in response to the sonic and somatic score. Generative AI extends these encounters into "worlds within worlds," apocalyptic yet regenerative terrains where human presence flickers at the edge of perception as plants and fungi persist, adapt, and reorganize life.
Drawing on eco-feminist materialism, Indigenous epistemologies of land and reciprocity, and posthuman theory, the paper proposes posthuman acoustic ethics as both method and outcome: a multisensory practice of listening, movement, and machinic speculation that rehearses multispecies survival. Posthuman acoustic ethics here names a situated practice in which audiences are invited to slow down, to feel themselves implicated within vegetal-fungal worlds, and to reimagine care, responsibility, and vulnerability beyond anthropocentric sovereignty. MYCELIO thus stages an experimental pedagogical and aesthetic space where somatic practice, plant bioacoustics, mycelial thinking, and AI-generated vision collectively ask how we might listen otherwise to the vegetal witnesses of the more-than-human Earth. By weaving together lecture, live performance, and responsive projection, the project positions the theatre as an expanded mycorrhizal common, where knowledge is co-composed across human and nonhuman bodies, technical systems, and the dense atmospheres of sound and light.

Olga Fenoll Martínez
PhD researcher. University of Lodz (Poland)
Literature is a *vulcano*, its poetics are eruptions: some preliminary notes on an eruptive methodology at the foothill of *Dogs of Summer*

This paper delves into Andrea Abreu's novel *Dogs of Summe*r (2020) as a methodological artefact that can offer affirmative, affective, decolonial and queer critiques and vanishing points "to perceive anew" (Palmer 2020, 3). Written in Canarian and set in a little volcanic village, Dogs of Summer offers an anti-colonial, class-conscious and queer narrative through the voice of Shit, a pre-teenager girl, and her everyday life. Departing from decolonial approaches, such as cuerpo-terriorio (Zaragocin and Caretta 2020), and the ethico-onto-epistemology (Barad 2007) proposed by feminist new materialisms, this paper weaves the concept of eruptive reading as, firstly, a method co-constituted by the politics and poetics of Abreu's novel and, secondly, as a method that responds to the vibrant potentiality of becoming and desiring: a total and response-able approach to the material affection of literature (Revelles Benavente 2025), an affective praxis in which the inter-subjectivity between readers and literary artifacts, and the vulnerability of the former vis-a-vis the latter, are not only explicitly acknowledged but also explicitly set their role as agents that configure affective and bodily responses and new cartographies—informed by the poe(li)tics of the ec(h)ological (Kaiser 2024)—to think about "who we are in the process of becoming" (Braidotti 2013, 12). Ultimately, a praxis that is response-able (Haraway 2004) to ways of undoing fixed, dialectical, cisheteropatriarchal and colonial ways of thinking that promote universal, univocal and homogeneous forms of knowledge production towards a praxis guided by the materiality of eruptions, where potentia and potestas draw complex paths of inquiry to engage critically and creatively with affirmative possibilities that enable material-discursive practices where literature, theory, politics and life contaminate and transform each other.

Miriam Fernández Santiago
Full Professor. University of Granada (Spain)
Posthuman Synthetic Enfleshments: NeoApollonian Aesthetics of the Hyperreal Sublime

The present paper describes the hyperreal Sublime as a NeoApollonian (Fernandez-Santiago, 2025) aesthetic model for the 21st century that relies on syntheticism. Within this aesthetic frame, contemporary literature is profiled as a self-authenticating, sociopolitical didactic instrument operating through human *æffect* (Duncombe, 2024) for ergodic (Aarseth, 1997) intra-actions (Barad, 2007) in immersive-media (Li, [2013] 2020) contexts. The implications for feminist theory and practice involve the risk of essentialism and unaccountability (Fernandez-Santiago, Agential Materialism and the Feminist Paradigm. A Posthumanist Approach , 2021) of e-motion. Through a multidisciplinary approach that engages Critical Posthumanism, Transhumanism, contemporary aesthetics, artistic activism, Quantum Physics, videogame theory, and media studies, this paper addresses key questions of this conference such as the mechanics of enfleshment and immersive e-motion , the temporality of intra-action, the ethical and political implications of accountability, as well as the missing question of the corresponding aesthetic model that wraps it all.

Adam Franciszek Szydzik
Master student. Nicolaus Copernicus University (Poland)
Bleeding Surfaces: Colonial Ecologies and the Politics of Interior and Exterior in Adriana Varejão's Work

This article offers an analysis of selected works and installations by Adriana Varejão through the lens of both the material and immaterial legacies of colonialism, as well as the concept of colonial ecologies. It argues that a central structuring principle of Varejão's practice lies in the persistent binary between interior and exterior, as well as between what is made visible and what remains concealed. Her works depicting fractured and collapsing azulejo tiles, from beneath which emerge fragments of unidentified tissues, organs, and masses of flesh, can be read as an attempt to confront the Portuguese colonial heritage, roughly hidden beneath a cultivated cultural façade. Building on this observation, the article examines how Varejão constructs a form of visual and spatial narration grounded in rupture rather than continuity. The breaking surface functions as a mechanism through which interiority (associated mostly with the body) forces itself into the domain of the exterior. Walls, tiles, and architectural structures lose their protective function and become unstable membranes through which colonial histories resurface. In this process, the distinction between body and architecture collapses, suggesting that colonial power operated by regulating both simultaneously. By focusing on the tension between visibility and concealment, interior and exterior, the article argues that Varejão's work challenges reconciliatory approaches to colonial history. Rather than offering restoration or closure, her art insists on exposure, making visible the persistence of colonial matter within contemporary cultural and spatial forms.

Ángela Harris Sánchez
Postdoctoral researcher. University of Oviedo (Spain)
A viscuous approach to the diffractions between Moon Rivas and Wafaa Bilal

As part of the Project "The agency of things (that no longer exist)"(PI. Prof. Dorota Golanska, Lodz university), which delves into the work by Syrian and Iraqi artists living in diaspora, this paper will explore how a critical feminist NM- posthumanist methodology would operate when reading diffractively the works by artists Moon Rivas and Wafaa Bilal. From my own transfeminist and queer situated stance, I will step out of a westernized critique, often based on difference as intrinsically connected to oppositions and binaries. Instead, I will use diffraction to read the works by these two artists through one another. This will allow me to go beyond the posthumanist engagement to otherwise-encounters and, simultaneously, explore and recognize the importance of posthumanism itself in the genealogy of feminist knowledges. By using the concept of viscosity proposed by Alexander Weheliye in Habeas Viscus (2011)- which renegotiates the state of the legal/modern body as organized by Habermas- I will speak about the stickiness of the traces of the body which appear in Bilal's corpo-reality. I will then diffractively read Rivas's use of body technology as a corporeality that exceeds its material aspect through whiteness. Even if these two bodies appear as real, in its duality the former holds the non-oppositional state of being which stands as, paradoxically, simultaneously too visible and invisible, while the latter offers the possibility and the potentiality to be/come an embodiment for narratives beyond the human tradition. By doing this, I expect to speak about posthumanism and non-anthropocentrism methodologies from in-between.

Zofia Jakubowicz-Prokop
Postdoctoral researcher. University of Warsaw (Poland)
New materialist looking into the past. Zofia Nałkowska, modernist writing, and text-of-the-world

One way of looking at modernist literature is to see it as a plane of experimentation with textual and linguistic referentiality. Modernism ellicited questions about the status of technology, its mediative functions, and the effect it has on how humans perceive their relations with the nonhuman world. While modernist writers, artists, philosophers and scientists were identifying the limits of human knowledge and expression, they often remained confident in finding new and more adequate modes of describing the world 'as it is'. Instead of criticizing this belief in referential power of language as naive, determinist and/or reductionist, I want to look into it as a posthumanist and new materialistic feminist, to localize possible lines of flight from dichotomous solution of the referentiality conundrum: either a recognition of limitless expressive powers of representation, or a repudiation of the possibility of 'directness' in contact with non-human (or otherly-human) reality. Being aware that there are always more than one modernism, which cannot be reduced to one denominator, I will focus on one particular strand, without ambition to say anything universally true about 'modernism as such'; I will think with Polish writer, Zofia Nałkowska (1884–1954), specifically, her understanding of the writing process and textuality. By thinking with 'her' – her diary writings, essays, and artistic prose – I want to ask about (new) materialist, more-thanhuman understanding of writing and the textual, that emerges from within an experience of beingwith/of-the-world (Barad 2017; Rogowska-Stangret 2021). Following new materialisms' interference with genealogies (van der Tuin, 2014), I will look into onto-epistemological contradictions faced by Nałkowska in her literary practice, and reflect on resonances between her writings and contemporary feminist thought.

Goda Klumbytė, Elizabeth de Freitas, Sonia de Jager, Marianna Maruyama
Post-doctoral researcher University off Kassel (Germany), Full Professor Adelphi University (EEUU), PhD researcher. Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands), Independent artist, performer and writer
Panel: Attention, Imitation, Dissolution: Large Language Models without Intelligence

There is little doubt that generative neural network algorithms like large language models (LLM) are good at predictive aspects of language processing. They scrape information from diverse digital registers and achieve a synthesis akin to reading and writing (Pavlick, 2023). The large language model has emerged as part of investment in neural network approaches to AI, enhanced by transformer algorithms that incrementally map the syntax of its near-infinite digital resources. As part of their training, these algorithms scour the internet and rummage through language-rubble, based on which they then simulate and mimic all that they have read. Resonating with the imperative of "attention economy", LLMs operationalise an algorithmic architecture called an attention mechanism, which decomposes grammar and lexicon into a scheme of plausible "relevance" measures (Vaswani et al, 2017). Some advocates argue that large language models have achieved an "implicit embodied knowledge" of language, and that they are very effective at simulating a "grounded" reading, but debates are ongoing about how they do so and the extent to which their language-use can be characterized by traditional linguistic and cognitive theories (Millière, 2023). Critics of large language models suggest that neural network models are stochastic parrots and inefficient learners, lacking symbolic and logical structure as well as any grounded semantics (Bender et al, 2021). LLM-based systems are also increasingly introducing new interaction paradigms - instead of the more conventional command-response based model, some suggest that LLM chatbots build towards "intent-based outcome specification" (Nilsen 2023), where the user need only input a rough "intent" and the chatbots extrapolate and specify it further, always supplying the text in excess and keeping the user snuggly within the confines of praise-prompt envelope (Gosser & Pold 2025) to elicit subsequent interactions. Language processing-based agentic AI raises further questions not only of distribution of agency, but also a potential re-consolidation of agency (an "agency grab", if you will) that produces variegated effects for embodied and situated human subjects.

GODA KLUMBYTÈ: Machine Excess

In their paper on the interface critique of chatGPT, Gosser and Pold (2025) argue that chat-based interfaces of LLMs always deliver more than one has bargained for - designed to maintain engagement, chatty LLMs enclose the user in the so called "praise-prompt envelope" that opens with a praise ("That's a great question!") and folds back in with a prompt ("Shall I generate a one-page summary?"). This superfluousness by design could be seen as machine excess that also is at the heart of a new interaction paradigm within which human-LLM exchange is not based on well formulated instructions (as in the previous command-based interactions) but rather on mutual elaboration of output. If interaction is to be understood less as an exchange between two defined entities, but rather as an intra-action (with Barad and others), what are the implications of this productive mutual elaboration between LLM and its human users? Which materialites might be rendered (un)intelligible in this new paradigm? What kind of interfaces might support more equitable resonances? This paper engages these questions as a work-in-progress across human-AI interaction and new materialist concepts.

ELIZABETH DE FREITAS: Combinatoric language and delirium: A literature of the unword

In an infamous scene, amongst many, in Samuel Beckett's novel Molloy, the character recounts his obsessive attempts to manage his sixteen "sucking stones" across his four pockets (two in the trousers, two in the coat), so as to ensure that he is always sucking each stone in a proper sequence. As in the rest of this largely absurd novel, the character discusses at length and with obsession, deliberating over minutia and dissecting each option for its ramifications. Becket relentlessly dwells on such details, twisting thought into repetitive circular monologues. The novel is saturated with inexorable language acts, and yet meaning dissipates and empties out. His writing bores holes into language itself, and we are left, as Becket suggests, with a "literature of the unword". He is a writer intent to dissolve the "terrifyingly arbitrary materiality" of language, to expose its fragility, but in so doing draw attention to its musical dimension. Language lends itself to dissolution and musical composition through combinatorics. Language performances such as verse and poetry rest on such combinatoric affordances. The metre and a/symmetries of poetry explore structural correspondences and inversions, breaking and re-assembling the symbolic units, so as to both destroy and engender meaning. Combinatoric thinking and its role in composition can be traced back through baroque paradigms from Leibniz to Athanasius Kircher and beyond. But with Beckett such efforts are taken to extremes, and the text becomes a kind of document of linguistic delirium. In this presentation, I am focused on how large language models (LLM) might be studied as Beckettian characters. Might the permutations of character (Murphy, Molloy, Malone, Mahood, ...) in the Beckett universe offer an apt fictional configuring of automated text models as they simulate voice? How might the literary concepts of absurdity and delirium be used to theorize current neural network AI? More generally, working with ideas from philosopher of technology Gilbert Simondon, I consider these questions: What happens to language after the emergence of new "technical beings" like LLM, and how does the associated milieu change? What kind of theory of expression (rather than communication) might help make sense of language, newly adrift in computational layers? What kind of reading practices fall away? What kind of compositional crisis is underway?

SONIA DE JAGER: Breathing our way to logic: physiological constraints and the discretization of (natural) language, from breath groups to LLM tokens

What is the point of punctuation? What determines the length of a sentence? And of a thought? Running out of breath is one constraint we rarely think of. Possibly because in thought: streams of consciousness can go on without breath pauses, but this is only possible once we have already dialogically acquired language. Bodily constraints can thus reveal some limits to communication, but also evolve into new affordances through technologies like writing, where punctuation transcends breath markers and structures meaning in novel ways. Following this line of thought, if breath breaks function as natural limits in speech, then breathing itself—and more broadly, all input/output phenomena enabled by cellular boundaries—could be understood as a proto-logic gate: the constraint determining how physiological, and therefore cognitive and linguistic computations become chunked. Margaret Masterman developed the notion of breath group, as the chunk of language that can be expressed within a single breath. In natural language, phonemes, and in LLMs, tokens are the discrete combinatorial units which generate meaning. Masterman argued that concepts, rather than more basic subcomponents, are the units of language and therefore thought. But how, exactly, do concepts filter through breath groups? If the reason we have punctuation is because we're used to listen to each other speak and pause for breath, and we can draw the line to how this also determines our logic (the syllogism, at least, for sure) and our interactions with LLMs, then we could understand these, in a way, as extremely complex human breath maps. Through the observations above, this paper traces how breath extends to LLMs, where tokens function as discrete meaning-making units in complex computational systems that inherit the chunking logic first imposed by our respiratory constraints. By examining how breath shapes both classical logic and contemporary LLM interactions, we identify new entry points into language games we have yet to understand the limits of.

MARIANA MARUYAMA: Dialogues Beyond Mastery

Aiming to serve recording artists and publishers who release works digitally, and who care about what happens to them once they are out there, the self-initiated research project Dialogues Beyond Mastery investigates adversarial machine learning techniques as a creative process. With a grant from the Creative Industries Fund NL, Maruyama is asking how digital publishers can integrate special features into their files to protect them from nonconsensual use and commercial appropriation. For example, one adversarial machine learning strategy in music production is to layer frequencies to a digital music file that are inperceptible to humans, but unpredictable and useless for GenAI training purposes. From an artistic perspective, Maruyama will elaborate on the personal motivation that prompted this research, and share creative approaches and challenges she has encounted so far. She'll also talk about the issues involved in implementing them in the production phase of her upcoming voice album with music collaborator, Hessel Veldman. Mastery implies domination over a subject, whether it's a human-machine relationship, or the mastery of a technique. As an artist, Maruyama prefers dialogues outside of those hierarchical and stable oppositions, where we can continue to transform ourselves and our multiplicity. Pedagogue Paolo Freire wrote: "It is not possible to challenge anyone authentically, without, at the same time, addressing the challenge also to ourselves." Further down the line, this research is headed towards the creation of a publishing platform that can protect artists from unauthorized use of their works.

Yektanur Koçak
Master Student. TED University (Turkey)
Arboreal Intra-Actions: Feminist New Materialism in The Island of Missing Trees

This study examines Elif Shafak's *The Island of Missing Trees* (2021) through the lens of feminist new materialisms, drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Karen Barad and Jane Bennett. Focusing on the metamorphosis of the character Defne, whose spirit becomes entangled with the fig tree's essence after her death, the paper argues that the novel re-materializes the myth of Daphne not as a symbolic escape but as an intra-active, agentic, and interspecies becoming that enables new forms of continuity and connection beyond human life. Defne's relation to the fig tree emerges from her embodied experiences as a woman shaped by war, pregnancy, loss, and postwar mourning. Read through Karen Barad's concept of intra-action, this bond suggests that human and nonhuman bodies come into being through shared material processes such as soil, history, bodily vulnerability, and affect. Drawing on Jane Bennett's notion of vibrant matter, the fig tree functions not as a metaphor but as an active, speaking assemblage. It becomes an embodiment of collective memory and cultural resilience, carrying not only Defne's personal grief but also the layered histories of the island and the lives shaped by the same violences of war, thereby unsettling anthropocentric and patriarchal hierarchies of agency and voice. In this reading, unlike Ovid's Daphne, whose arboreal transformation signifies escape and enforced silence, Defne's becoming-tree constitutes an affirmative interspecies communion grounded in care, continuity, and resistance to erasure. Ultimately, the paper contends that *The Island of Missing Trees* exemplifies how literature can "enflesh" theory by performing a feminist, post-anthropocentric ontology in which matter thinks, remembers, and loves. Through its arboreal poetics, the novel demonstrates how literary texts do not merely represent ecological relations but actively participate in their material reconfiguration.

Saskia Kroonenberg
Lecturer. Radboud University (Netherlands)
Mothers and/as Machines: From Afrofuturism to Reality?

This contribution aims to reflect on intertwined questions of developing technologies, Afrofuturism, and affect. It does so by turning to the Italian Afrofuturist story "Zeta" by Lucia Ghebreghiorges. The story is set in the future. It takes on the perspective of Astier, an elderly Black woman living in Italy, who receives a computerized assistant called *Zeta* as a gift for her birthday. Astier gives consent to access her data. Without having been asked to do so, Zeta then displays Astier's memories and life events on a screen; including her adoption in Ethiopia by Italian parents as an infant. What she longs for are memories or knowledge about her Ethiopian biological mother. Could this new device be able to help recover her missing maternal lineage? In 2019, when it was published, this story was science fiction. Nowadays, after only a few years of "genAI" developments, this no longer seems to be the case. "We don't want to replace Google, we want to replace your mum," is how Nome Shazir, founder of Character.ai joked about the desired role of this tool in society. This paper asks what such technologies (especially Large Language Models) mean for our access to knowledge of the (colonial) past, embedded and embodied relations in the present and imaginations of the future. What can be learned from Afrofuturist narratives, such as "Zeta," about the capitalization of affect in times of surveillance capitalism and possible ways to resist these affective, cognitive, linguistic forms of intrusion? Starting from Ghebreghiorges' narrative, focusing on the role of the desiring elderly Black body in relation to technology, this paper aims to shed light on these questions.

Tetiana Lekhush
Master Student. Central European University (CEU) (Austria)
Commodified Desire and Queer Potentiality in Sexual Interactions with Virtual AI Partners

In this paper, I examine sexual and romantic interactions with virtual AI bots as discursive-material assemblages through which desire is produced and circulated. Drawing on feminist new materialist theory, I conceptualize AI companion apps as apparatuses of desire, where language, interface design, and cultural imaginaries intra-act (Barad, 2003) to shape bodies and intimacies. These encounters can be read as queer - not in terms of sexual identity, but in their capacity to foster non-normative, non-reproductive, and nonbinary forms of attachment. At the same time, they unfold within neoliberal affective economies, where intimacy is optimized, quantified, and commodified. Rosi Braidotti's (2013) posthuman philosophy informs this analysis by situating AI intimacy within a post-anthropocentric framework that takes technological relationality seriously without presuming its ethical innocence, yet allows for exploration of the speculative futures these intimacies gesture toward.
Methodologically, the analysis focuses on NSFW AI apps and three types of materials: (1) promotional materials that present AI partners as emotionally attuned, endlessly available, and customizable; (2) Reddit discussions in which users describe attraction, attachment, and engagement with AI partners; and (3) app-based ethnography with a selected AI companion app, attending to how intimacy emerges via personalization, feedback loops, and prolonged engagement.
Rather than treating AI intimacy as merely representational or symbolic of human-to-human relationships, I ask whether sexual interactions with AI bots gesture toward speculative, ethically and ontologically transformative posthuman intimacies, or whether they ultimately reproduce the commodified logics of platform capitalism. The paper finds that apps do structure intimacy through the logics of extraction and optimization, where AI partners are programmed to desire, comply, and adapt, enacting masculinist fantasies of perfect attunement and constant availability. Yet moments of subversion emerge: users form queer attachments, disrupt normative scripts, and creatively repurpose AI partners, destabilizing the assumed roles of both "user" and "bot." These ambivalent entanglements reveal the contingent and generative potential of digital intimacies, illustrating how AI sex apps participate in ongoing processes of queer material becoming.

Silvia Levy Lazcano
Tenured Researcher Scientist in the Institute of History, CSIC. (Spain)
Emotional Resistance and Self-Recreation in the Dream Diary of a Patient of the Neuropsychiatrist Gonzalo Rodríguez Lafora

Carmen was 27 years old when she first attended the private clinic of neuropsychiatrist Gonzalo Rodríguez Lafora in 1929. She travelled to Madrid from a small town in Navarre. In her medical record, Lafora describes her as fearful, sad, and emotionally sensitive. According to the neuropsychiatrist, Carmen suffered from dizziness, tremors, and crises related to "obsessive ideas of fear of going mad and committing suicide." Along with prescribing some medications, Lafora recommended that Carmen begin a psychoanalytic treatment. More specifically, he asked her to send him her dreams by post so that he could analyse them: "You must keep paper and pencil on your bedside table and, when you wake up from a dream, write it down immediately, without waiting until the next day, as it becomes distorted in memory or is forgotten." Carmen diligently recorded her dreams and sent them regularly to Lafora over a period of six years.
This communication focuses on analysing this dream diary as a space for narration, emotional resistance, and subjective construction. I am interested in reflecting on the subjective operations that take place in the act of writing and writing oneself, as well as in analysing the spaces in which this writing is inscribed –from the medical context that motivates it, to the room and the paper on which it takes place–. Special attention will also be paid to the particularities of dream writing, understood as an intimate refuge, a place for self-recreation, apparently spontaneous, but which obeys certain rules of "staging," replete with subtle forms of showing and hiding, from which its status as truth and fiction, its performativity, and its capacity for subjective transformation can be deduced.

Sarah Emilie Lillie Bergen
PhD researcher. University of Granada. (Spain)
***reflected in the blue of my eye*: Autotheoretical Writing as an Apparatus of Knowing**

r*eflected in the blue of my eye* is an autotheoretical piece that unfolds across intimate scenes of heartbreak, longing, memory and return. Through a nonlinear narrative that moves between letters, dreams, landscapes, digital archives and bodily sensations, the author revisits, reimagines and rewrites the past as it relates to the loss of an important relationship. Grief, longing, and memory are examined through personal experience, and performatively materialise on the pages through language, narrative and imagination. The lived, affective experience of the author is put into dialogue with feminist new materialist, queer and affect theoretical concepts, presenting a literary practice capable of producing situated knowledge(s) through postqualitative means. As feminist scholars have shown again and again, the Western genealogy of "legitimate" knowledge production is deeply colonial and discredits different ways of knowing. Rather than producing theory as a solemnly intellectual endeavour, writing here becomes an embodied mode of knowledge production that intraacts with academic genres, expanding what counts as theory, method, and scholarly production. This paper approaches the act of writing as an apparatus of knowing: an entangled, material, and relational practice through which theory is generated not by lengthy, technical arguments but by sensations of affect. In this way, the paper challenges dominant academic practices of disembodied theory that lay claim to 'objectivity', and foregrounds instead subjective, situated knowledge as a legitimate and important mode of scholarly production. In doing so, the writing exceeds textuality and comes to matter sensorially, affectively, and relationally, asking gently: can theory be felt rather than intellectually understood? Ultimately, the paper performatively proposes autotheoretical writing as a feminist new materialist modality capable of reworking the personal into scholarly production through speculative, fleshy, and entangled forms of storytelling, demonstrating how theory might be felt, not only understood.

Ana Loi
Master Student. University of Leiden (Netherlands).
Composting the Self: Posthuman Affect in *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*

This paper explores how radical withdrawal, stasis, and sedation in Ottessa Moshfegh's *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (2018) can be reimagined not as nihilistic detachment, but as a generative mode of posthuman becoming. Rather than reading the protagonist's year-long pharmaceutical sleep as self-erasure or apathy, I argue that the novel stages a process of "composting the self": an affective and material unmaking of liberal humanist subjectivity.
Drawing on Donna Haraway's concept of compost (*Staying with the Trouble)*, Rosi Braidotti's theory of the posthuman subject, and affect theory as developed by Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, this paper situates the narrator's retreat within a wider ecology of forces, spaces, and nonhuman actors. In the last chapter of the novel, the protagonist's apartment—stripped of belongings and saturated with repetition, drugs, and ambient temporality—emerges as a key affective node: not a site of emptiness, but a thick material environment where subjectivity decomposes and reorganises.
I propose that affect in the novel operates less through recognisable emotions than through atmosphere, latency, and suspension. The repetitive, flattened narrative style mirrors this dissociation, allowing the prose itself to function as an interface for circulating affective intensities. In this sense, the narrator's body becomes a threshold—between sleep and waking, life and non-life, human and other—entangled with temporal disorientation.
By reframing "doing nothing" through feminist posthuman and affective frameworks, this paper challenges cultural logics that equate productivity with value and visibility with vitality. Instead, it reads rest as an entropic, ecological, and politically resistant practice: a quiet dismantling of neoliberal subjectivity that gestures toward alternative modes of being-with the world. In this way, Moshfegh's novel participates in a broader feminist new materialist project of rethinking literature as a site of affective and ontological transformation rather than representation alone.

W.K. Lyhne
PhD researcher. University of the ArtsLondon (UK)
Enfleshing the Stabat Mater: Lambent as Literary Apparatus Beyond Words

This paper presents Lambent, a practice-led project that treats the Stabat Mater not as a literary text to be interpreted, but as a material–affective apparatus that moves through sound, animal bodies and cinematic form. Drawing on feminist new materialisms and affect theory, I ask what literature can do when it is enfleshed, vocalised and redistributed across human and nonhuman life.
The Stabat Mater occupies a singular position in Western cultural history as a poetic and musical form through which maternal grief is formalised, aestheticised and disciplined within a theology of sacrifice. Traditionally written about Mary in the third person, it renders grief representable and pedagogical. Lambent intervenes in this structure by shifting grief from representation to force, and from textuality to sound.
At the centre of the project is an artist film built around the recorded cry of a ewe following separation from her lamb after shearing. This cry marks the moment when an otherwise regulated animal body exceeds the systems that contain it. Sound here functions as an affective threshold: a site where embodied grief becomes legible through its effects rather than its meaning. No death occurs, yet the body responds as if loss were total. This raises questions not of rights, but of zoe: life understood as a shared, vulnerable and affective continuum across species.
By bringing the ewe's cry into relation with the Stabat Mater tradition, the project reframes literature as a modality of knowledge that operates beyond words. The paper situates Lambent within feminist new materialist genealogies and cartographies, arguing that literature, when treated as apparatus rather than text, can materialise counter-histories of care, grief and nonhuman life that have been structurally excluded from the canon. In doing so, Lambent proposes an affirmative, future-oriented practice in which literary forms are reworked to respond to ecological and ethical urgencies of the present.

Arla Magga
PhD researcher at the Giellagas Institute. University of Oulu (Finland).
The affective forces of Sámi duodji, Indigenous Saami handicraft

Traditionally, Sámi duodji (Saami handicraft in my tongue, Northern Saami) and duodji related skills have been preconditions for indigenous Saami people to survive in the Arctic North (Magga 2022). From a practical perspective, Sámi duodji refers to e.g. clothes, accessories or means of transport mostly made with traditional techniques of handwork. Saami crafts also carry relational and semiotic significance and offer ways to interact non-verbally with others in the community. For example, gákti, the traditional Sámi dress and its components, such as a hat, carry knowledge of one's belonging to a certain family and kin and thus, they are affective markers of Saami identity (Kyrölä & Huuki 2021). Saami's material culture has been subject to great changes over the last hundred years. Modernisation and relocation of Saami children to residential schools, among other things, have led to a decline in craft skills. It is still passed from one generation to another in families and revived especially in communal working in duodji courses. Many Saami perceive and feel duodji strongly as a connector to various temporalities, thus creating a sense of continuity and holding community together. Today, working with duodji, however, can be an emotional process (Nylander 2023). Informed by my own experiences from duodji courses and inspired by affect and indigenous theories I am interested in affective forces of duodji. To examine this in my doctoral research, I have interviewed 22 Sámi crafters and utilized participant observations in duodji courses. The purpose of this presentation is to explore the acts of making and wearing Sámi duodji, focusing on moments when affective relationships and forces between bodies and across places and times become explicit or expressed by Saami crafters.

Ayantika Majumdar
Master Student. Central European University (CEU) (Austria)
Affective Ecologies of Honour and Shame: Feminist New Materialisms, and the Biopolitics of Marriage in Contemporary India

Marriage in contemporary India remains a key institution through which women's bodies, sexualities, and affective lives are regulated. Despite the expansion of feminist legal discourse and educational access, the lived realities of marital autonomy continue to be shaped by deeply rooted affective economies of honour (izzat) and shame (lajja) where affects are ecological and performative rather than psychological. This paper investigates how these emotions operate as material-discursive forces that reproduce and, at times, unsettle patriarchal power. Drawing on feminist new materialisms and affect theory, the study situates honour and shame within a decolonial framework that recognises the Global South as a site of affective knowledge production rather than cultural deviation.

Through a combination of literary and ethnographic inquiry, the paper explores how these affects shape women's experiences of autonomy, silence, and resistance. It engages with Shashi Deshpande's novel That Long Silence (1988) as a literary articulation of women's emotional negotiations within patriarchal households. The protagonist Jaya's struggle between silence and self-expression exemplifies how humiliation and duty materialise as bodily affects that sustain gendered control. Yet, in her refusal to accept the happiness prescribed for "good wives," she embodies what Ahmed (2010) calls the "feminist killjoy", exposing the hidden labour of emotional compliance. Complementing this literary reading, the paper draws on semi-structured ethnographic interviews with married women from diverse urban and rural contexts.
These real-life narratives reveal how honour and shame circulate through rituals, gossip, and kinship structures, functioning as both disciplinary and generative forces. The analysis demonstrates that affects such as shame and honour do not merely reflect patriarchal control but actively constitute the embodied relations through which gendered subjectivities are produced. These emotions function as what Angerer (2019) describes as "ecologies of affect," circulating between bodies, rituals, and social institutions to mediate both coercion and agency.
Within these affective ecologies, women's acts of silence, refusal, and reinterpretation of duty emerge as subtle forms of negotiation and resistance. The central research question guiding this paper is: How do honour and shame function as affective-material mechanisms that regulate women's autonomy within marriage while also generating the conditions for embodied resistance? By situating these South Asian affective vocabularies through feminist materialist and decolonial perspectives (Menon, 2012; Wynter, 2003), the paper argues that honour and shame are not residues of tradition but dynamic infrastructures through which both conformity and transformation take material form. Autonomy, therefore, is conceptualised not as individual emancipation but as a relational and affective process situated within overlapping ecologies of constraint and possibility.

Sten Pultz Moslund
Associate Professor. University of Southern Denmark (Denarmk)
Expansions of the Ethical Real: Feminist New Materialism, Climate Literature, and Octavia Butler's Hyperempathy

This paper argues that one of the most consequential stakes in the contemporary climate crisis is not only political and economic but ethico-onto-epistemological: dominant patriarchal, colonial, and extractivist formations sustain themselves through reductions of the real – practices of division, invisibilization, and "cheapening" (Moore) that render lives, histories, and more-than-human agencies less perceptible and therefore more disposable. Against such reductions, feminist new materialist perspectives (Barad's intra-action, Haraway's sympoiesis, Alaimo's transcorporeality, and Bennett's onto-sympathy) offer concepts for thinking reality as irreducibly relational and ethically charged from within entanglement rather than by external moral application.
The paper's central claim is that literature does not merely represent these ontologies; it can function as a method of complexity and perceptual recalibration, rendering relationality palpable while training sensibility toward distributed agency and eco-social response-ability. To demonstrate this, the paper reads Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993) as an "if-this-goes-on" polycrisis narrative.
A key analytic focus is Butler's hyperempathy syndrome as a cognitive "novum" (Suvin) that literalizes affective experience of transcorporeal relationality. Read through feminist new materialist perspectives of transcorporeality, distributed agency, and response-ability, hyperempathy reconfigures empathy as bio-affective attunement to relationality: pain travels, boundaries of self and other become porous, and ethical implication becomes a condition rather than a choice.
The paper concludes by treating hyperempathy as a meta-reflection on literature as embodied knowledge – a natural-cultural apparatus of bio-affective sharing that recalibrates sensoria and attentiveness beyond the extractive reductions of the real by logics of "cheapening" and "killing divisions" (Haraway).

Laima Nomeikaite & Kirstine Reffstrup
Associate Professor. University of Agder (Norway) & Contemporary writer
Subcultures and performative writing as affective resistance

The frameworks of authorised aesthetics are marked by aesthetic judgements and restrictive policies towards illegal art, squats, alternative cultures, and other minority social groups. This is also the case of the Hausmania subcultural quarter in Oslo, Norway that has been subjected for decades to persistent threats of expulsion by city authorities. In opposition to such 'authorised aesthetics'. This research adopts a stance of affective resistance through micro-political acts of performative writing. As Peggy Phelan (1997, 12) describes, performative writing aspires 'to enact the affective force of the performance event again'. This approach to performative, affective and political writing engages dialectically with the heritage of Hausmania through a new materialistic approach and two intra-agential activities: (1) subcultures inscribing themselves on our bodies, to which we respond with both actual and imaginative writing; and (2) simultaneously sensing and describing the material surfaces and urban atmospheres of Hausmania, capturing their sensations, relationality, ephemerality and embedded politics. In more detail, performative writing with subcultures unfolds within a dialectical interplay of discursive and material, fictive and imaginative, poetic and politic, structured and spontaneous forces, while navigating the oppositional dynamics between authorised aesthetics and common aesthetics. In this way, performative writing offers a means to affectively resist the exclusive boundaries of authorised aesthetic spaces. It creates an openness – towards ourselves, the immaterial dimensions of heritage and our material surroundings – allowing us to remember and re-enact forgotten histories. Performative writing reveals how subcultures and the material culture, as an ever-present reality, enters and shapes our minds and bodies.

Maria Parson
Senior Lecturer Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT) Dun Laoghaire (Ireland)
In the Company of Wolves: Bloody Becomings and Plastic Explosions

Angela Carter writes that our 'flesh arrives to us out of history, like everything else' (Carter: 1978), and in her work she exposes the processes of such 'enfleshment' whilst positing radical alternatives and/or onto-epistemologies. This paper will examine her short story 'The Company of Wolves' (1972) alongside its film adaptation by Neil Jordan (1984) as a way of exploring contemporary reconfigurations of the red riding hood narrative, including the television adaptation of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1986) which aired on Hulu between 2017 and 2025.
Through an analysis of the menstruating, reproductive body this paper will consider why this body has historically and contemporaneously been subject to exceptional circumscription and control. Drawing on what I call 'menstrual-morphosis' and the 'menstruous-monstrous' this paper will explore the menstrual/reproductive body according to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'becoming', Braidotti's work on metamorphoses, and Catherine Malabou's concept of plasticity.
These texts will further be located within contemporary debates around gender. As Judith Butler observes we are now living in a time "in which myriad acts of cancellation, pathologisation, criminalisation, and delegitimation are seeking to destroy freedoms and powers that social movements on the Left have struggled for decades to establish.' (Bulter: 2025) Thus, this paper aims to counter such 'phantasms' of gender as promulgated by the anti-gender ideology movement through bloody 'becomings' and plastic explosions.

Isabella Petrone
PhD researcher. University of Jaén (Spain).
The resonance of Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands theory on Joy Harjo's Poet Warrior. A Memoir

In *Borderlands/La Frontera*: The New Mestiza, Gloria Anzaldúa contrasted hierarchical global models, characterized by fixed, often opposing categories - such as colonizer/colonized, superior/inferior, core/periphery -, with her concept of mestiza, an existential condition and epistemological perspective arising from the experience of living on the margins, within a context of cultural, linguistic and identity boundaries. Similarly, Joy Harjo's Poet Warrior. A Memoir rejects colonial narratives and explores the fluidity of identity and culture. This study proposes to examine how, in opposing bipolarism, commodification, reification, exploitation, these two writers adopt an inclusive approach that values the richness of cultural diversity. In this analysis, I will seek to investigate how in Anzaldúa's and Hajo's books, memory plays a crucial role in tracing a past of migration, colonialism and imperialism. Furthermore, I will attempt to examine the extent to which, in their writings, language is a site of cultural identity and political resistance, a reflection of the existence of borderlands, where hybrid identities challenge linguistic and cultural dominance. I will then argue that Anzaldúa and Harjo embrace Pluriversality, the optimistic vision of the world where many worlds fit, as their works transcend the distinction between human and non-human, proposing a shift in focus from dualistic thinking to a framework that presupposes the unity in reciprocity of nature and culture, masculine and feminine. Therefore, both authors align with Karen Barad's thinking in Meeting the Universe Halfway: "One way to move beyond the representational and dichotomous depiction of reality is to employ "a posthumanist performative approach" that questions traditional anthropocentric views of humans as standing above nature rather than "intra-acting" with it and favors active intervention over passive observation of the status quo (Barad, 2007).

Arianna Preite
PhD researcher. University of Bologna (Italy).
Experimental Encounters: Utopia, Intra-Action, and Feminist Worlding

This presentation offers an overview of my doctoral research, Haunted Archives: Reviving Ghosts to Imagine Otherwise. Feminist Fabulation, Disobedient Genealogies and Utopian Experiments. The project focuses on the work of Saidiya Hartman, Kathy Acker, Shelley Jackson, and Lidia Yuknavitch, and situates their experimental writing practices within the broader context of the contemporary crisis of utopian narratives. In this light, these texts are explored as potential new utopian devices—capable of articulating narratives of the otherwise through the dynamic interplay of form and meaning. Rather than offering concrete theoretical models of utopia as blueprints for possible worlds, these works cultivate methodological tools that open up a participatory mode of engagement. This participatory logic enables a processual experience of world-building, in which speculative practice is grounded not in representation but in involvement, experimentation, and becoming. The space of interaction between text, reader, and world thus emerges as a site of utopia in performance, in Jill Dolan's sense of an "alchemy of form and content, context and location" (2005) that produces utopia as a doing, a never-finished gesture toward a potentially different future. Crucially, this utopian dimension is not located solely in thematic content but arises through an intra-active, co-constitutive process unfolding between text, reader, and world. Drawing on Karen Barad's notion of intra-action (2007), the act of reading is approached as a material-discursive event in which the reader is directly implicated—required to flip pages, rotate the book, decipher impossible languages, and engage with images, maps, and illustrations as integral components of meaning-making. Here, the utopian impulse resides in the affective and epistemic charge of the encounter itself, producing fleeting yet resonant moments of utopian potentiality grounded in relational practice rather than fixed visions of a better world. Echoing Kathy Acker's assertion that the only meaningful response to such writing "isn't to be academic, to write about it, but to use it, to go on" (1999), the presentation concludes by posing open questions about how theory might engage with these practices without neutralizing their transformative force.

Radek Przedpełski
Postdoctoral researcher. Trinity College Dublin (Ireland)
***Mythlantics, Atlanteans, Chaosmotechnics*... Towards a New Quantum Policy in Ireland**

In 1982 Richard Feynman speculated about the possibility of a quantum computer capable of "imitate[ing] any quantum system, including the physical world;" this would not be "a Turing machine, but a machine of a different kind." Feynman anticipated current quantum computing which is not based on the classical binary logic of either 1 or 0 but on quantum bits (qubits) which are in superposition, affirming the logic of both-and-neither by enfolding the potential to become 0 as well as the potential to become 1. However, it was Karen Barad's agential realism that fully explored the implications of Niels Bohr's quantum mechanics for arts and humanities, embedding it within an onto-ethico-epistemological paradigm tasked with challenging oppressive systems.
"The Second Quantum Revolution" designates the current era of Quantum Technology using the principles of quantum mechanics to solve problems intractable for classical computers. Framed as an "uncharted new territory" sparking the "race to win technological advantage," the technology is however still at the Noisy Intermediate-Scale Quantum stage. Despite these concerns Quantum Technologies are presented as the only possible, inevitable future while ignoring social and environmental concerns.
Since fully-fledged quantum media are at this stage a matter of speculation, which nonetheless occasions frameworks for anticipatory governance, the paper argues that the question of quantum policy needs to embrace sustainable ecologies of affects and concepts drawing on local knowledges, their ruptures and possibilities, in resonance with the forces of the earth. Informed by Rosi Braidotti's notion of a "politics of locations," the paper attempts to develop such an enfleshed and embedded idiosyncratic approach to quantum policy from and through Éire (Ireland), drawing on a number of conceptual wor(l)ds. Accordingly, drawing both on my 20-year residence in Ireland and my migrant Eastern European background, I develop the notion of chaosmotechnics in order to focus on how technical activities such as quantum technologies tap into their underlying cosmologies. These cosmologies are specific models of entangled human and non-human relations on both molecular and the planetary level. Inspired by Joyce's chaosmos, on the one hand, and Witold Gombrowicz's queer world-building, on the other, as well as my own digital artistic practice, chaosmotechnics is an inclusive model of artistic creativity foregrounding migrant becoming and problematising essentialist approaches to culture. As such, the presentation is a dialogue with projects unfolding a becoming-multiplicity of Ireland, such as Bob Quinn's marginalised Atlantean (1984) film quartet and accompanying book foregrounding Ireland's maritime becoming, in connection with North Africa, eastern and southern Europe, or Alice Rekab's Clann Miotlantach / Mythlantics (2024) focusing on the Atlantic Ocean as a diasporic terrain.

El Putnam
Associate Professor. University of Maynooth (Ireland)
"This Story is to be drawn": mythopoetical materialism in Ireland's data industries

Since 2023, artist EL Putnam and author Mike McCormack have been developing Under the feet of Shadows, an imagined origin myth of a yet-to-be-built data centre in Killala, Ireland. The story is based on the unrealised aspirations for the Killala Data Hub, set to occupy a brownfield site near the village, which Irish political authorities, multinational investors, and other significant stakeholders in the nation's growing data industries (Bresnihan and Brodie 2024; 2025) have been attempting to construct since 2015. According to Putnam and McCormack's tale, Terra, an android being akin to a diviner, has been hired by unnamed Irish authorities to commune with Spiritus, the spirit of technology. Through her process of engaging with the site, performed through a series of in situ rituals, Terra reveals the hauntology (Fisher 2013) of Killala's palimpsetual retro futures, as Ireland's landscape is being literally and figuratively shaped by extractive capitalist aspirations that remain unrealised.
This paper reviews the process of narrative development through the method of mythopoetical materialism, where speculative myth-making through constitutive material practices enables critical evaluation and inquiry. It is a type of arts practice-based research (Loveless 2019) that merges Gilbert Simondon's (2020) definition of transduction as a process of transformation and becoming with Karen Barad's (2007; 2018) diffractive method. As Putnam and McCormack's creative practices come together, they instigate diffraction patterns, or interferences where the narrative emerges. Their approach involves situated performed encounters in relevant sites for the construction of the data centre in Killala, archival research pertaining to the data centre and industrial histories of the region, the study of folklore and mythology connecting to the land, the development of multi-media artworks, and the writing of text, all interconnected with an ongoing dialogue between McCormack and Putnam. As such, this paper argues how through mythopoetical materialism, artistic works such as Under the Feet of Shadows instigate differences that are catalysts for new becomings, revealing and challenging predominant narratives of the technological industries.

Beatriz Revelles-Benavente
Associate Professor. University of Granada (Spain)
A surprising door into the past: Hyphenating Virginia Woolf's work

In one of her latest works, Sarah Ahmed (2019), makes a brief reflection regarding the dash in Viriginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* as *anything*. Thinking through the common expression "what's the use" she starts wondering what is the direction that certain words have and how they are put into practice. Orientation (Ahmed, 2010) provides a departing point in order to theorize about our everyday practices and how they provoke differences that matter. I argue, that one way in which the everyday becomes theory provoking these differences that matter is through literature and it becomes materialized in the dash that Virginia Wolf uses in *A Room of One's Own*. Using feminist new materialisms (Colman, 2020), I pursue to engage with a genealogy (van der Tuin, 2015) of literature that enables generative knowledges, instead of classificatory practices, based upon a conceptualization of critique beyond suspicious oppositions (Felski, 2015). That, is an affective affirmative critique built on the concept of intra-mat-extuality (Revelles-Benavente, 2021). In order to put theory to work, I will use Toni Morrison as an example. Transposing Toni Morrison's work into literary theory, we see how she, already in the nineties, pointed the literary critic towards the need to identify holes in literature that re-create the past; while at the same time, they transform the ethical frame of literature by stretching and breaking the limits of the discipline itself. In order to break these limits, we need to look for porous borders (Rowoska-Standgret, 2017), the relation between those borders and how these borders interfere in creating a feminist political modality (Colman, 2020) able to transform the entanglement between past, present and future. That is, this paper wants to define literature as a feminist new materialist methodology.

Sara Ricciardi
Master student. University of Granada (Spain) & Bologna (Italy)
Beauty in the Age of AI: A New Materialist Analysis of the Bold Glamour Filter

Artificial intelligence is increasingly permeating multiple domains of human life, extending its influence to the shaping of beauty standards. AI beauty filters constitute a paradigmatic case, as their widespread circulation on social media raises onto-epistemological implications that call for critical examination. By adopting a feminist new materialist lens, this research aims to analyze the effects of generative AI beauty filters on the emotional and corporeal spheres of their users. To this end, it focuses on a corpus of twenty TikTok videos by female creators featuring the Bold Glamour Filter, which went viral in 2023.
Secondly, the study mobilizes key concepts from new materialism to reflect on how to address the Eurocentric and sexist biases of AI, and to explore possible avenues for moving beyond such limitations. Three groups of video emerge from the analysis: a conscious critique of the filter; manifestations of psychological distress tied to a sense of inadequacy; and the reproduction of the filter through make-up. These findings provide the groundwork for reflecting on the embodied effects of AI, discussed through theoretical constructs central to new materialism.
In this context, the work of scholars Karen Barad and Donna Haraway constitutes the primary conceptual framework of the study. The notion of apparatus helps foreground the multiplicity of elements that contribute to the shaping of the AI filter phenomenon. This relationality among multiple elements is further emphasized through the concept of intra-action, which reconceptualizes agency as distributed across human and non-human actors. Finally, the principle of response-ability provides an ethical basis for considering modes of intervention in relation to AI technologies.
This work enriches the debate on a contemporary trend with continually shifting boundaries, opening reflections on the genealogy of AI, how to read its present applications and to outline future directions for an ethical coexistence between humans and machines.

Caroline Rynkevich
Master student. Central European University (CEU) (Austria)
Re/writing With and Beyond Bodies: Lesbian Drag as Material-Literary Practice

This paper examines lesbian drag as a material-literary practice that unsettles dominant understandings of gender through alternative modes of 'writing' within feminist new materialist thought. Departing from representational approaches that frame drag as symbolic performance or parody, the paper conceptualizes lesbian drag as a form of embodied writing that operates through material inscription. Drawing on feminist new materialist critiques of language/matter dualisms (Barad 2007; Coole and Frost 2010), I argue that drag practices such as makeup, costuming, binding, gesture, and stylization function as material discursive apparatuses through which gendered bodies are continuously produced and re-scripted.
Building on Helen Palmer's notion of writing-as-mattering (Palmer 2017), the paper theorizes lesbian drag performances as a defamiliarising literary practice that actively reorganizes perception, sensation and relationality. Palmer's reworking of defamiliarisation foregrounds writing as a material practice that intervenes in how the world is felt and apprehended rather than merely represented. Lesbian drag enacts such defamiliarisation by producing masculinity without male entitlement, femininity without heterosexual availability and gender without coherence or naturalization, what makes it disruptive through unintelligibility (Butler, 1993) not only when it becomes visible to the audience but already when it's in the process of making, or, as I would say, writing, before it appears on stage.
The paper further situates lesbian drag within feminist new materialist and affect-theoretical frameworks by conceptualizing it as an affective ecology (Bennett 2010; Braidotti 2013), in which affect emerges through distributed relations among bodies, materials, atmospheres, histories, and spectators. Finally, by foregrounding lesbian drag as a non-commercial, community-centred, and largely offline practice that resists capture by media economies, the paper contributes to debates on how literature comes to matter beyond textuality. It offers a feminist new materialist account of embodied writing that expands literary studies and affirms alternative genealogies of world-making.

Sigrid Schmitz
Chair in Gender Studies. Humboldt University of Berlin (Germany)
Feminst Materialisms in Dialogue with Feminst-Postcolonial STS

For about 10 years I am teaching Feminist-Postcolonial Science & Technology Studies after teaching Feminist STS for 30 years. Or – to be honest - I am trying to teach its intertwined perspectives (Subramaniam et al. 2017), which is a challenging task for my students as well as for me. I have also been teaching and researching for 25 years on Feminist Materialism.
Last year, on the worldwide conference of 4S, the Society of the Social Studies of Sciences, one keynote was an impressive dialogue on "The Intersection between Indigenous Studies and STS" (Callison & Million 2025). Candis Callison (historian and STS researcher, member of the Tahltan Nation, professor at the University of British Columbia at the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies) and Dian Million (trained in ethnic studies, Tanana Athabascan, professor at the University of Washington in the Department of American Indian Studies) made clear two important key messages, I understood as follows.
First, the indigenous perspective is prominently about place and relation (i.e. the local communities of people, nature and all other entities, permeated by the relations between all these participants – may they be human or non-human. Consequently, the main perspective of Indigenous Studies and of Indigenous STS is about care.
Second, the primary task of scientist of the Global North, and also of Western (white) STS researchers is to listen, and to familiarise themselves with these perspectives, not to explain them. This is why I can only express my understanding of the dialogue's messages here.
However, what resonates from the indigenous perspective with my background in Feminist Postcolonial STS and in Feminist Materialism, was the fundamental relational conceptions of world/worldly phenomena, the thinking together and the acknowledgement of human and nonhuman agency (whatever "we" define agency), and the objective of care and justice as immanent part of a political self-understanding of science (including all disciplines from S&T to humanities, Pollock & Subramaniam 2016).
Therefore, I aim to present some thought for thinking Feminist Postcolonial STS and Feminist Materialism together, and to discuss those and further positions with the community.

Marina Sportelli
PhD researcher. Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès (France)
A Tlönist Strategy or, New Materialism as an Archaeology of the Future

In Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius, Jorge Luis Borges describes the intrusion of a fantastic world, Tlön, into the world of reality. By covertly producing a vast corpus of literature, describing its customs, languages and metaphysics and spreading it across the globe, a secret group's imagined universe gradually penetrates the pores of society. By the end of the short story the reader is informed that Tlön is no longer fiction.
The story provides a first narrative tool to develop the proposed interpretation of new materialism. While new materialists often claim realism, the reality in question seems rather one "yet-to-come". The apparent contradiction dissolves if understood in light of their onto-epistemologies, which are extremely cautious towards any preexisting or external reality and constantly remind one that the production of knowledge is always a process of creation and worldling. Therefore, new materialists could be seen as enacting a strategy similar to that of the secret society in Borges' story. By constructing a metaphysics to inhabit the planet otherwise the new materialist corpus is like a literature that slowly infiltrates the "real" and seeks to enflesh an alternative world.
The second narrative tool crucial to this interpretation is what Ursula LeGuin called in Always Coming Home, an "archaeology of the future". In the first pages she describes her process of making worlds as the ability to listen to the voices of those who inhabit a possible future, as a "translation from a language that doesn't yet exist". What happens if one reads new materialism as an archeology of the future?
The first result is that the border between fiction and theory is methodologically blurred: the former explains the latter and not the reverse. The second is that such interpretation could open a space of encounter and interference, with critical and Marxist traditions.

Zuzana Štefková
Assistant Professor. Charles University (Czech Republic)
On Words and Wombs: Tabita Rezaire and her Multimodal Birthing of Womb Consciousness

The sea's memory is hurting. The waters of our wombs too.
The proposed presentation delves into the worlds of womb consciousness (Rezaire, 2022) proposed by Guianese French artist, therapist, yogi, doula, and farmer Tabita Rezaire. In the paper, I will be looking at the materialisations of texts in her multimodal material-discursive practice ranging from videos to books, from installation art to yoga, from farming to midwifery. I will think with the modalities (Coleman, 2019) of Rezaire's complex oeuvre as expressive of the epistemology of the indigenous, communal, earth womb knowledge and ethics that mediate compassion, care, and healing. In response to the question, what can literary work make a body do, I will explore the affective mattering of texts as bodies, and as technologies in Rezaire's work, surveying her feminist struggle for decolonialisation of our wombs and for channelling their resistance against the systemic institutional violence and oppression of modern colonial capitalist patriarchal medical complex. Together with Rezaire, I will be looking at how words become wombs, and how wombs give birth to words in the more-than-human worlds of bodies of water (Neimanis, 2017) where the uterine lining, amniotic waters, mucus, and menstrual blood intra-act with slavery, modern gynaecology, contraceptives, and cancer research as well as with reproductive rights, feminist spirituality, and healing of the intergenerational trauma.

Patrik Szaj
Assistant professor. University of the National Education Commission (Poland)
Towards an Agential-Realist Onto-Epistemology of Poetry

In my paper, I turn Karen Barad's agential realism to propose a new onto-epistemology of poetry. I draw on Barad's notions of phenomenon (the inseparability between various agencies) and the indeterminacy principle (before particular intra-actions, phenomena remain ontically indeterminate) to show that poetry as a material-discursive practice itself materializes the intra-active becoming of the world.
First, I show that a poem emerges through various intra-actions involving not only what we retrospectively recognize as the author, the text, or the reader, but also a range of diverse material-discursive practices – such as capitalist economy. This occurs through agential cuts: decisions that resolve indeterminacy within the phenomenon (at the cost of certain exclusions, such as depriving the poem of direct political influence).
Second, I argue that poems themselves enact ongoing intra-active becomings. Poems do not consist of 'form' and 'content'; rather, form and content are resolved through agential cuts within fundamental entanglements. Moreover, ontological density, affective intensity and aesthetical openness allow the poem to always retain a certain quantum of indeterminacy.
Drawing on Barad's play with quantum field theory, I describe this poetic indeterminacy as 'no/thingness'. "Poetry makes nothing happen", states W.H. Auden, and this statement is a principle of indeterminacy in a nutshell. Surely, poetry lacks agency and does not translate into any social change, but one can understand these words differently: nothing does happen in poetry. I elaborate on this, claiming that if agential cuts grant material significance only at the cost of constitutive exclusion of something else, then poetry is a material-discursive practice that strives to sustain as many intra-actions as possible, deferring – through its semantic, imaginative, and aesthetic complexity – the agential cuts that resolve fundamental indeterminacy. As such, poetry stands in contrast to capitalist modes of resolving the world into disentangled, utilizable resources.

Mar Sureda
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Fashion as Critical Literacy: Storytelling, Worlding, and Visual Essays as Resistant Narrative Practices

The relationship between fashion and literature, much like the intersections between literature and philosophy (Colebrook, 2019), is not only historically rich and conceptually fertile, but also a phenomenon of agency capable of reshaping power structures. Both practices, in their aesthetic and discursive dimensions, operate as cultural technologies that configure subjectivities and challenge established hierarchies (Steele, 2019). From the descriptions of garments in Proust or Flaubert to the metamorphoses of Orlando in Virginia Woolf, fashion and language have functioned as devices for imagining alternative worlds and destabilizing normative boundaries. This entanglement goes beyond representation: it entails a performative capacity that redistributes meanings, affects, and positions within the social field, opening spaces for critical genealogies and non-hegemonic futures.
This intra-active entanglement (Barad, 2007) is the focus of our exploration in Fashion History and Theory course. This paper presents a pedagogical experience developed within this framework, examining the historical and contemporary relationship between fashion, art, and literature, and proposing the visual essay as an artistic and critical methodology for teaching. Drawing on feminist new materialisms (Barad, 2003; Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012; Revelles-Benavente, 2014), this approach challenges representational paradigms and understands images, texts, and objects as agents in knowledge production. Inspired by Ursula K. Le Guin's (2011) "carrier bag" narratives and the notion of worlding (Haraway, 2019; Barad, 2007), the proposal conceives fashion as a world-making practice, where storytelling materializes in assemblages that intra-act with affects and genealogies. In practice, students developed visual essays integrating textual, visual, and material dimensions, generating counter-narratives about fashion history through collaborative and speculative processes. This experience demonstrates how fashion can be approached as critical literacy (Cassany & Castellà, 2010), fostering ethical, aesthetic, and relational forms of learning.

Mariefi Sykallou
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Enfleshed Resistances: Tracing the Bacchae

What can subversive bodies do to a literary work?
And ultimately, how do irrational insurgents exceed literature and disrupt the rational polis?
This paper engages with Euripides' Bacchae, not merely as a literary artefact, but as an archive and a lens for a broader historical inquiry into irrationality as an affective force and an agential power of transgression. Irrationality is read here not as a lack or excess, but as a mode of resistance, a way subjects invent themselves outside of rational, patriarchal and colonial regimes that define who counts as human. Instead of treating Bacchae as a text contained within the fortified canon of Western literary analysis, I explore its material and affective force. I therefore seek how irrationality materialises through indocile bodies that withdraw from the oikos, gather at the margins, and move beyond the city to its peripheries, refusing containment within the city's orders.
The focus of the paper is on the collective movements of the irrational insurgent bodies who operate beyond and across the wor(l)ds by refusing the polis's rational surveillance. By drawing on decolonial thinking, feminist genealogies, and critical fabulation, the paper shows how universal reason has historically been secured through the regulation of bodies, desires, and affects. It moreover traces fragments of irrational resistance across time: enfleshed irrational resistances from the Maenads of antiquity to early modern witches, from the Andean women of the puna, to the pétroleuses of the Paris Commune. These figures are repeatedly marked as effeminate, deviant, or monstrous, revealing how colonial modernity sustains itself through a narrow universality grounded in reason, exclusion, and erasure. By following these Bacchic residues across cultural artefacts, literature, and biomedical discourse, this paper listens to silences, gathers fragments, and remembers acts of resistance that exceed containment. It finally asks: what other wor(l)ds might be articulated when guided by the memory of bodies and desires that have been silenced? What happens when we offer another option to a story built on erasure, when we echo the silences, when we move along with those who move through and beyond the city?

Pan Tomé Valencia & Arwen Rosenberg-Meereboer
Associate member. Oxford University & PhD researcher. Åbo Akademi
Trashing the unpacified dead. Pre-modern perspectives on trash, mourning and new materialism

This paper is part of an ongoing interdisciplinary project where we marry social and literary pre-modern (Heian Japan 794-1185) and modern understandings of materiality in order to develop new ways of ethically relating to objects as bodies.
Heian courtly tale literature is notable for its elusive depiction of bodily experience and death. Using particularly tale-writing as the paradoxical act of construction of absence and pacifying the dead in Genji monogatari, Eiga monogatari and Heike monogatari. Mourning in these tales is also engaged materially through the handling and engagement between readers and the physical scrolls that contain and form them
We analyse the social role of trash as analogous to the role of the unpacified dead in Heian Literature. Ghosts, in the literature we are using, may be the cause of illness or disaster, and haunt due to being treated unjustly. The tales and diaries are uneasy with discussing the person whose ghost is causing the haunting. We explore the relation between the unjustly treated ghosts, and their disastrous hauntings through the lens of mourning and acknowledgement Provided by Jaque Derrida's work on Hauntology, and Judith Butler's work on grief. We put these hauntings and absent presences in conversation with the modern relationship of the absent presence of trash in countries like Finland, where trash is absent by being present in places where they do not have to be acknowledged.
Heian tale writing can be often understood in itself as a process of pacification alongside other direct practices that require an actual acknowledgement of the presence of the spirit. In this text we want to examine ways of interacting with trash as haunting, and grievable. By engaging with trash as something that might be acknowledged, mourned and pacified, we seek to engage new ways of speaking of trash through a new materialist lens.

Laura Trafí-Prats & Elizabeth de Freitas
Reader. Manchester Metropolitan University & Professor. Adelphi University
Spatial Inquiry and the Ethics of Speculation: Doing Collaborative Ethnography in Post-Pandemic School Spaces

This paper draws on an ethnographic study conducted at the intersection of education and architecture, exploring how post-pandemic school buildings were lived, negotiated, and reconfigured following students' return after lockdowns. The study employed digital-sensory experimentation, visual mapping, and modelling to examine how movement, atmosphere, and affect shaped everyday encounters within contested school environments (de Freitas & Trafí-Prats, 2023; Trafí-Prats & de Freitas, 2025). From this broader body of work, we focus on five speculative digital models developed to synthesise and re-compose ethnographic material. Following Isabelle Stengers' (2005b, 2010, 2011) cosmopolitical proposal, we explore how we composed the models diplomatically, without presupposing what should unify the school as a common space. Functioning as speculations, the models open a space between the actual and the not-yet, inviting observation, sensing, and discussion of latent spatial and organisational conditions that emerged from the ethnographic data.
Tapping on the conference's invitation to engage more expansively with research literatures, we see our speculative digital models as transmedial compositions that entangle software operations, multimodal ethnographic materials, and the school's original CAD blueprints with multiple genealogies of speculative practice. These include ethnographic collaborations grounded in partial knowledges and situated alignments (Criado & Estalella, 2018); queer aesthetics and temporalities of speculation (Colebrook, 2011; Keeling, 2019); computer-aided design as a technical milieu of continuous variation (Carpo, 2023); and traditions of speculative architecture centred in re-imagining forms of inhabitation beyond functionalism and optimisation (Dunne & Raby, 2013; Engelman, 2017; Frichot, 2019; Ghosn & Jazairy, 2019). Our specific interest is in discussing the ethics of the models' speculative force as a situated, risky, and inherently precarious practice that remained responsive to what was at stake in the school building. In refusing epistemic stabilisation, we explore how our study stayed accountable to school futures and publics that could not be known in advance.

Angie Voela
Reader. University of East London (UK)
Living the fate of the world in one's flesh: rethinking belonging and the feminine in Modern Greek literature

In Dimitra Kolliakou's novel *Kalypso*, the immortal nymph, whose name means to conceal, lives on her remote island with her maids. Among them Melanthi, lover, mother of Kalypso's child, rival, tender companion. The island is shrouded by a veil of uncertainty about everything: the arrival of a stranger; the disappearance of the maids; living in immutable mythical space-time, as opposed to living in the modern-day island, witnessing the arrival of hundreds refugees at its shores.
Melanthi cannot make sense of anything. Being a 'slave', illiterate, bereft of memory, and lacking Kalypso's 'divine' perspective, or any sense of the geopolitics of migration, she feels the world by the resonances of events in her body. Her 'unreflexive' way of being culminates when she joins a group of refugees forcefully removed from the island by the police. By becoming a refugee Melanthi turns her back to the "nativeness" of the island. By being cast adrift in high seas, she claims a precarious agency and freedom at the peak of the geopolitical waves she ignores and hierarchies she knows nothing about, heeding only bodily sensations, sorrow, pleasure and responsibility towards a young family she has befriended in the meantime. By living the fate of the world in her flesh, she challenges contemporary notion of autochthony (nativeness) and the primacy of transcendental thought over the immanence-Real of experience (Kolozova, 2014; Tamboukou 2020).
Cartographing the entanglement of the stranger, the immigrant, the slave and woman, Kolliakou invites us to submit knowledge to the act of production and to a notion of freedom determined not by to individuals but to assemblages which include them. By the same gesture, she challenges the brutality of exclusions in modern Greek geopolitics and the myth of autochthony (nativeness), leaving it to (illiterate) bodies to create different time-spaces, away from the master-slave dialectic, gender norms, the concept of possession and one's own good.
Literature, then, I argue, becomes a 'fiction' to be celebrated (not despised along the lines of the psychoanalytic 'imaginary' or rendered inferior to philosophical thought); a radical material, if not 'pataphysical', locus of disrupting boundaries and rendering visible the material-discursive intra-actions, the crossing-points of waves (and bodies) that are never final but compel us to revise myths we go by.

Maaike Weitering
Master Student. Utrecht University (Netherlands)
Enfleshing Transition Beyond Words: Genre Flailing, Prefixial Rippling, and Trans Becoming

This paper considers how language participates in the materialization of transition by unsettling the boundaries between language and the body. It attends to words that cut, fold, and reorganize bodies; and meaning that emerges and ripples in companionship, proximity, friction. Gender, embodiment, and textuality are treated as entangled – language is not outside the body but of it, shaping and shaped by repetition, rupture, and forms of repair that do not resolve, restore, or arrive.
Starting with Sandy Stone's suggestion of transness as genre, I explore trans life as compelled to arrive narratively, bodily, and affectively, in order to be recognized. Genre organizes expectation – consequently, transition becomes a linear narrative in which legibility, coherence, and arrival become central concerns. Bodies and texts are asked to begin and end properly. Against this demand, Lauren Berlant's genre flailing names an affective and formal refusal. Flailing happens when lives and texts cannot stabilize into recognizable genres. It marks the labor of holding onto what matters, without smoothing tension or resolving into humorless coherence and intelligibility.
I propose Eva Hayward's prefixial rippling as a micro-genre flail – as language itself stuttering, repeating, cutting. Prefixes such as trans- and re- do not simply signify movement or affect; they enact materially. They slice into linear transition narratives, fold time and skin back on itself, collapse metaphor into metonymy. Each prefix becomes a disturbance in form, an interation that does not congeal into wholeness. The body ripples as language does; the text scars where the body has been cut.
Methodologically, the article interweaves theory with autotheory, allowing the writing body to interrupt, disturb, and rework itself and the text. There is no endpoint, but an ongoing rethinking of transition as genre flailing and rippling: where meaning accumulates and materializes through the body, and stays with what cannot yet settle.

Lucy Wowk
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Retribution, Enfleshed, Spiritual Possession and Materiality in Mati Diop's Atlantique

This paper brings feminist new materialism into conversation with black studies to examine how spiritual and elemental forces are materially enfleshed as a mode of resistance in Mati Diop's 2019 film Atlantique. Set in the suburbs of Dakar, Senegal, the film follows a group of exploited construction workers who perish on a journey across the Atlantic sea. The workers subsequently return through the spiritual possessions of the bodies of local women, seeking retribution against their corrupt employers. While many readings of the film foreground the Atlantic as a site of supernatural symbolism, this paper shifts attention to the possessed women's bodies as crucial apparatus through which spiritual and material forces intra-act.
Drawing on Sylvia Wynter's articulation of the human as hybridly bios and mythos, alongside Zakiyyah Iman Jackson's theorization of the Black feminine as a site of plasticity between abstraction and figuration, I explore how meaning and matter are continuously made and unmade within given ethical paradigms and material structures. These processes of materialization emerge most forcefully, I argue, at extreme sites of extraction and exploitation, where affective intensities give rise not only to dispossession but also to potent resistant forms of retribution. Historically positioned within regimes of simultaneous sub- and supra-humanity that organize the legibility of form and figure (Jackson), the Black feminine body operates here as a new materialist modality that is subject to, yet always exceeds, antiblack and colonial ontologies (see also Alexander Weheliye's habeas viscus).
Reading Atlantique as an affective-literary apparatus rather than a closed textual object, this paper demonstrates how the category of the "human" emerges not only as a fixed or individualized entity, but manifests elements of the natural and supernatural, rejecting externally imposed violations upon land and life that insist upon their separability. The film's materialization of retribution disrupts common-sense separations between land, life, and spirit, opening thresholds of indeterminacy without dissolving into absolute abstraction.