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di Anglistica



UNIVERSITÀ DELLA CALABRIA  
DIPARTIMENTO DI  
STUDI UMANISTICI  
DISU

**31<sup>st</sup> AIA CONFERENCE**

**FUTURE HORIZONS:  
NEW BEGINNINGS IN ENGLISH STUDIES**

**Book of Abstracts**

**University of Calabria  
Arcavacata Campus  
Rende (Cosenza)**

**13-16 September 2023**

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## Plenary Lectures

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 9:30-10:30** (Aula Iris, Cubo 29C, ponte pedonale)

**Janet Todd** (University of Cambridge)

*Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice: Romance, Comfort and the Politics of Heritage*

**Respondent:** Rossana Bonadei (Università degli Studi di Bergamo)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 14:00-15:00** (Aula Iris, Cubo 29C, ponte pedonale)

**Luise von Flotow** (University of Ottawa)

*The Linguistic Skirmishes in Anglo-American Feminism and Their Place in Transnational Feminism and Feminist Translation*

**Respondent:** Elena Di Giovanni (Università di Macerata)

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 9:00-10:00** (Aula Caldora)

**Edgar W. Schneider** (University of Regensburg)

*Creative Constructions in World Englishes – and What They Teach Us about How Language Works*

**Respondent:** Belinda Crawford (Università della Calabria)

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 14:30-15:30** (Aula Iris, Cubo 29C, ponte pedonale)

**John McLeod** (University of Leeds)

*Beginnings, again: Rethinking Personhood in the Literature of Adoption*

**Respondent:** Carmen Concilio (Università degli Studi di Torino)

## Abstracts

**John McLeod** (University of Leeds)

*Beginnings, again: Rethinking Personhood in the Literature of Adoption*

‘When did you begin?’ An innocuous question, perhaps, and one usually answered with the refrain of origins: a place, a date, a parturition. But what happens to our personhood if beginnings and origins are separate(d), if beginnings are obscured or concealed, if origins are no longer prized as the exalted insignia of self? This keynote address explores the creative possibilities of beginning our beginnings again, inspired by the recent literary representation of those such as unfamiliar persons or adoptees for whom beginnings are neither readily accessible nor productively explanatory. The loss of seemingly vital information concerning our beginnings – such as the cultural, national, and racial provenance of one's nativity – has been phrased recently in terms of 'origin deprivation' with harmful impacts on those for whom beginnings are kept shadowed, mysterious, or missing. That said, and without sidelining these harms, the work of several contemporary cultural figures invites us to think about the loss of origins in another mode, not simply as a grieving of self but a gifting of being: one which untethers us from received ideas about our proper or place and empowers all (not just the unfamiliar) to think again about the vectors and vitality of our personhood which may be as much

before us, on the horizon, as engendered in days gone by. Who may we be, and be with, if we are released from origins? Can we begin again?

**Edgar W. Schneider** (University of Regensburg)

*Creative Constructions in World Englishes – and What They Teach Us about How Language Works*

World Englishes, the stable varieties of English that have emerged mostly during the colonial period, are characterized by distinctive structures of their own which are “creative” in the sense that they modify and deviate slightly from established grammatical rules, and it has been a perennial question in applied linguistics whether such creative constructions are “errors” or “innovations” (and where the boundary lies between them). Traditional grammar, educational authorities and many linguistic schools assume that language is strictly rule-governed, and individual structures are either “correct”/“grammatical” or “incorrect”/“ungrammatical”. However, as Edward Sapir, an early leading structuralist, observed 100 years ago, “All languages leak”: rules can be bent and allow for exceptions, and linguistic usage can be creative. The question, then, is how this creativity of language processing can be accounted for.

I briefly survey leading linguistic theories (including traditional grammar, structuralism, and generativism) and their views on this issue, and I argue in favor of viewing language as a complex-dynamic system and in the light of the usage-based paradigm, which suggests that all utterances produced generate associations in individual mental entrenchment and community conventionalization – and these associations ultimately constitute grammatical knowledge. The point is illustrated amply by discussing four “creative” sample structures in World Englishes, namely *I’m lovin’ it*, popularized by McDonalds; *X is called as Y*, a construction spreading in South Asian Englishes; *All Things New*, the name of a Singaporean music festival, and *Looking forward to meet you*, observed increasingly across Asian Englishes. I consider the social settings of these constructions, including some corpus evidence, and the syntactic, semantic, and situational associations which they trigger, and I take them as points of departure to reflect on linguistic creativity and the nature of linguistic processing.

In conclusion, I argue that such “creative” constructions build new form-meaning associations, typically starting out from inconspicuous corners of the grammatical system, and may or may not spread and get established in a speech community, thus changing a variety's grammar – and these processes offer a window into how language works.

**Janet Todd** (University of Cambridge)

*Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice: Romance, Comfort and the Politics of Heritage*

In polls taken in the British popular press, Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* is often declared the nation’s favourite novel. This is an impressive achievement for a book over two hundred years old, and indeed the novel’s translation into film has made it globally popular. Its hero and opening words have become a brand almost universally recognisable when used in advertising or journalism. Unusually for any work of English literature, *Pride and Prejudice* is valued both by a common readership and by professional literary academics, suitably mingling the romance desired by the one with the irony valued by the other. In popular response to Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* comes to stand for her whole oeuvre of six published novels and fragments. The popular response can be embarrassing for academics, when they are asked not to talk about free indirect speech but to name their favourite characters, but Austen’s popular reception has also become an important subject of study itself. Conferences discussing Jane Austen are now often as much or more about the phenomenon of her popularity as about the original novels. The largest number of films, spin offs, mashup and so on are based solely on *Pride and Prejudice*. So, my question is: how does

this popular novel fare in an academy increasingly concerned with race, diversity, slavery and post colonialism?

**Luise von Flotow** (University of Ottawa)

*The Linguistic Skirmishes in Anglo-American Feminism and Their Place in Transnational Feminism and Feminist Translation*

While it has become common to pluralize the term “feminism” in recognition of the many different variations on the theme, especially in regard to the post-colonialist impetus and the “intersectionality” recognized in its wake, the question of “genders” – in the plural – and the neutralization of the feminine, as in “pregnant people” are complicated issues.

My focus in this talk is on how current struggles over “gender-critical” thinking are further complicating a movement that once seemed based on women’s solidarity, a solidarity that is certainly the professed goal of “transnational feminism” and “transnational feminist translation” (Castro and Spoturno 2022).

The first segment of my talk will review the “pluralization” of the language of feminism over the course of the 1990s and 2000s and the advent and establishment of queer theory. In the second segment, I will address the increasingly polarized and polarizing stances around the terms ‘terf’ and “gender critical feminism” in English, as examples of the current skirmishes around the pluralization of gender terminology and ideology, skirmishes that have led to the publication of a recent UN Human Rights position paper (May 2023), entitled “Allow women and girls to speak on sex, gender and gender identity without intimidation or fear”.

Finally, I will discuss the questions of translatability: how translatable is the language of Anglo-American feminisms? What does it mean to not translate it into other languages? Are the current debates and conflicts of importance to “transnational feminism” and “transnational feminist translation?”

## **S01 – Anglo-Italian Decadence: Cross-Cultural Networks**

**Convenors:** Raffaella Antinucci (Università di Napoli Parthenope), Elisa Bizzotto (Università IUAV di Venezia), Anna Enrichetta Soccio (Università degli Studi G. D’Annunzio di Chieti-Pescara)

**Saturday, September 16, 2023 – 9:30-12:00** (Aula Alcaro, Cubo 28B, piano terra)

Chair: Anna Enrichetta Soccio (Università degli Studi G. D’Annunzio di Chieti-Pescara)

**Elisa Bizzotto** (Università IUAV di Venezia)

*Unexplored Decadent Connections: Pascoli’s Debt to Pater*

**Paola Di Gennaro** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Suor Orsola Benincasa)

*Baron Corvo’s Eccentric Writing: Uranian Love, Religion, Italy*

**Sara Pini** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

*The Happy Prince and Other Stories: A Pedagogical Anthology of Friendships*

### **Seminar description**

Over the past decade the scholarly debate on Decadence has taken new turns, stressing its inherent cosmopolitanism and cross-culturalism. Recent scholarship (Desmarais and Weir, Evangelista, Murray, Potolsky) has agreed on viewing the decadent period as a transnational phenomenon in which artists, critics, and intellectuals exchanged ideas and poetics across cultures. In *The Republic of Letters*, Matthew Potolsky argues that Decadence defies conventional views on literary movements, tropes, and aesthetics and foregrounds “a characteristic mode of reception, a stance that writers take in relationship to their culture and to the cosmopolitan traditions that influence them” (2012: 1; 2021). Similarly, decadent writers and artists engage with social and historical contingency as much as they turn their gaze towards the past, which they refashion it in the light of the present. Emily A. Rabiner sees Decadence as “based on an ever-expanding network of texts and intellectuals” (2017: 8), a multifaceted web of encounters that are transcultural and transhistorical. However, while certain of these relations have been widely examined, in particular as far as the Anglo-French context is concerned, the focus has less often been directed towards Anglo-Italian networks. A few exceptions are the contributions dedicated to the visual impact of English fine arts and Pre-Raphaelitism (Oliva, Pieri), or the study of D’Annunzio’s relation to British culture (Woodhouse). Despite the scant critical debate, Decadence was the site of fruitful exchanges between Britain and Italy. Fin-de-siècle Florence hosted expatriate writers like Vernon Lee and Ouida, while Enrico Nencioni and Carlo Placci were among the intellectuals that kept the cultural dialogue between the two nations alive. Angelo Conti and Gabriele D’Annunzio were instrumental in disseminating the philosophy of the Aesthetic and Decadent Movements through Italy.

The panel intends to investigate Decadence as a wide-ranging aesthetic and intellectual phenomenon with a focus on the intersections, negotiations, and osmotic relations between British and Italian literatures and cultures between the 1880s and the first decades of the twentieth century. The convenors especially welcome original and innovative criticism that re-defines Decadence as a critical category in its multiple legacies and entanglements and re-assesses the potentially rich field of studies of Anglo-Italian Decadence, including Anglo-Italian Pre-Raphaelitism. Papers should examine the circulation of ideas, texts, and other cultural productions, as well as literature in translation.

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## Abstracts

**Elisa Bizzotto** (Università IUAV di Venezia)

*Unexplored Decadent Connections: Pascoli's Debt to Pater*

My paper identifies and examines the complex and largely unexplored connections between Walter Pater and Giovanni Pascoli, especially as regards some central principles of the poetics of decadence they shared. Pascoli, a central figure in Italian symbolism and *decadentismo*, is still little-known abroad and very few critics have elucidated the apparently extensive – though never admitted by him – Paterian presence in his work. A renowned Latinist, with a transnational reputation and cross-cultural connections at the turn of the century, as well as an active member of the advanced Anglophile circles gathering around the Roman literary journal *Il convito* (1895-1907), Pascoli was alert to decadent networks beyond Italian borders. Conspicuous within these cross-cultural negotiations is his engagement with some of Pater's fundamental motifs and aesthetic principles, which I will foreground and discuss through comparative close readings of a number of texts by the two authors. The typically decadent subjects of religious syncretism in ages of transition, gods in exile, the last days of Rome, childhood and family as the origins of adult psychic reality and mythopoetic creativity, pervasive *cupio mortis*, the degeneration of language are distinctive to both Pater's and Pascoli's poetics and insistence on them in both suggest more than an indirect circulation of ideas within the decadent context, as my analysis aims to show.

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**Paola Di Gennaro** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Suor Orsola Benincasa)  
*Baron Corvo's Eccentric Writing: Uranian Love, Religion, Italy*

The Uranians were quite a consistent group of poets writing between approximately 1880 and 1930, who celebrated in their poetry the love of men and boys, "sharing a number of basic cultural and literary assumptions derived on one hand from Walter Pater, and on the other from Walt Whitman" (D.H. Mader, 2005). Numerous members of the group wrote from within or on the edge of the circle of 1890s writers including Oscar Wilde, Alfred Douglas, John Addington Symonds, and Frederick Rolfe. Rolfe, also known as Baron Corvo, was one of the most eccentric and ambiguous personalities: his life being divided between religious aspirations – he even dreamt of becoming pope – and attraction to young men, he was a writer, a poet, and a photographer. He appropriated the *fin de siècle* decadence and remodelled the typical imagery and styles adopted by the other members of the Uranian group in his own way, especially in his prose (*Chronicles of the House of Borgia*, 1901, *Hadrian the Seventh*, 1904, *The Desire and pursuit of the Whole*, 1909, *Three Tales of Venice*, 1913), where he blends mysticism and homoeroticism in a decadent style. Considering the few studies on Uranian authors (d'Arch-Smith, Kaylor, Reade), the aim of this paper is to examine the influence of Italy on Uranian works from late Victorianism to early Modernism, in particular in Baron Corvo's novels. The attempt will be to investigate not only the impact of our country on Rolfe's life and works, both as setting and subject of his compositions, but also the influence of Italian in his stylistic choices.

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**Sara Pini** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

*The Happy Prince and Other Stories: A Pedagogical Anthology of Friendships*

Oscar Wilde published *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* in 1888. In recent times, these tales have been studied from multiple perspectives that have highlighted, for example, the concept of atonement (Goodenough), environmental hope (Maclear), and Wilde’s development of a ‘moral code’ in line with his political ideas (Marsh). Inspired by Children’s Literature Studies, this presentation aims to show how *The Happy Prince* can be considered a pedagogical anthology of friendships (from a sincere friendship in “The Happy Prince” to opportunism in “The Devoted Friend”, from a unidirectional friendship in “The Nightingale and the Rose” to its absence in “The Remarkable Rocket”) that goes beyond the fairytale tradition, where morals are commonly supposed to teach children a socially accepted view of what is right and what is wrong. Wilde’s tales have a moral – which is never made explicit – but the author does not limit the pedagogical drive to it and

differentiates his collection from the late XIX-century literary production for children by offering a range of friendships that invites readers to pursue sound individualism. A comparison with Carlo Collodi's *Le avventure di Pinocchio* (1881-83) makes this more evident: the Italian masterpiece provides many examples of deceptive friendships from which the protagonist is expected to learn an essential moral: when he misbehaves, he is punished; when his behaviour is socially acceptable, he is rewarded. In *The Happy Prince*, caring for others, being generous, and developing good principles are fundamental but insufficient actions: they must be complemented by self-care, meaning that one should learn to distinguish between reciprocated and unrequited relationships. Wilde overcomes the risk of providing a dualistic idea of good and reprehensible behaviour by integrating an invitation to individualism for self-preservation, which prepares children for the hidden snares in social relationships.

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## **S02 – Business Communication and the Digital World at the Intersection**

**Convenors:** Olga Denti (Università degli Studi di Cagliari), Walter Giordano (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 15:30-17:30** (Aula Burgarella, Cubo 28C, piano terra)

Chair: Olga Denti (Università degli Studi di Cagliari)

**Sabrina Francesconi** (Università degli Studi di Trento)

*The Video Curriculum at the Intersection of Business Communication and the Digital World*

**Maria Antonietta Marongiu** (Università degli Studi di Cagliari)

But we aspire to more. To be a true front runner. *Metaphors in Environmental Discourse. A Corpus-Based Analysis of Corporate Websites*

**Ninfa Pagano** (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

*Destination Image/Branding of Sicily and Risk Factors: A Corpus-Based Analysis of Keywords in English Guidebooks Sections on the Mafia Phenomenon*

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 18:00-19:30** (Aula Burgarella, Cubo 28C, piano terra)

Chair: Walter Giordano (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)

**Federico Zaupa** (Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia)

*Accessibility and Transparency in Corporate Communication. A Cross-Cultural Corpus-Informed and Genre-Based Analysis of Accessibility Sections from the Field of Transport*

**Jessica J. Nocella** (Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia)

*Transparency and the Environment in the Rail Sector: A Comparative Case Study of the UK and Italy*

**Michela Giordano** (Università degli Studi di Cagliari)

In the spirit of care and empathy: *Cultural Parameters in Corporate Website Design*

### **Seminar description**

Business environment has been experiencing a remarkable makeover for about three decades, as print material and the analogic world have been migrating towards the digital one (Clark 2016). Accordingly, business communication has had to change: new genres, new perspectives, new communicative purposes (Campagna et al. 2012).

Disclosing the company's relevant information to its stakeholders in the right way has become increasingly strategic (Crawford Camiciottoli 2020), an essential aspect of socially responsible entrepreneurship (Piechocki 2004). This means, on the one hand, being perceived as transparent and trustworthy by the stakeholders and, on the other hand, reinforcing consumer confidence and corporate reputation. Building trust and legitimacy is key to successful communication in nowadays globalised and digital world (Crowley et al. 2015; Catenaccio 2021), and business discourse is an essential tool to achieve it, in different contexts and settings (Salvi and Turnbull 2017: xv).

We invite scholars to present contributions to highlight the re-mediation and the re-contextualisation of business communication: topics like advertising, storytelling, financial discourse, sustainability, along with brand new corporate communicative needs, such as cross-cultural management, environmental and social issues (Jackson et al. 2020), inclusion, equality and diversity company protocols, ethics, conduct as well as other gender-related codes deserve a focus in the panel.

We aim at eliciting discussion to gauge the contribution of linguistic research to interpret such momentous change.

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## Abstracts

**Sabrina Francesconi** (Università degli Studi di Trento)

*The Video Curriculum at the Intersection of Business Communication and the Digital World*

This presentation seeks to discuss the Video Curriculum (henceforth VC) as a genre at the intersection of business communication and the digital world. The concise recorded message can be used by job-seekers to accompany a written curriculum at the screening stage of a recruitment process, or for a permanent self-presentation on their LinkedIn profile (D’Alberto 2022). Being very familiar with video literacy, candidates in our digital age, especially digital natives, generally show a positive attitude towards the audio-visual form (Waung, Hymes and Beatty 2014). During a 3rd-year undergraduate seminar I organized during the past academic year, students (as digital natives) defined the VC genre as “innovative”, “creative”, and “effective” for self-presentation and self-promotion, in light of a prospective job application. In turn, recruiters appreciate the digital compact format and the communication potential: the VC can show the candidate’s educational background, work experience, as well as his/her soft and technological skills, and oral language competences (Hiemstra and Derous 2015).

Drawing on positive students’ feedback received on the occasion of the seminar offered by the UNITN Job Guidance, this presentation aims at honing a critical methodological framework for the use of the VC as a business genre within an academic class, in order to design a more articulated unit with students’ own digital products. To this end, the perspective of multimodal genre analysis will be adopted (Hiippala 2014), in terms of integration of semiotic resources (e.g., speech, size-of-frame, dress code) and page-to-screen remediation (Bolter and Grusin 2009). Meanwhile, ethical issues will be raised, related to fairness perception among applicants depending on ethnicity, age, gender and physical attractiveness (Hiemstra et al. 2012).

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**Michela Giordano** (Università degli Studi di Cagliari)

In the spirit of care and empathy: *Cultural Parameters in Corporate Website Design*

Starting from the assumption that all cultures can be related to one another according to the style through which they communicate and transmit information (Hall 1976, 2000; Hofstede 1980, 2001), this investigation analyses two websites of oil and gas refining and marketing companies, Chevron in the USA and Reliance Industries in India. Taking into account that “[n]o comprehensive and exhaustive description can be formulated about a particular social group or collectivity” (Denti & Giordano 2011: 148), the present paper tries to discover whether the “High and Low Context” communication framework devised by Hall (1976, 2000) can be considered relevant for these types of websites. The study examines how they are organised and designed in relation to certain particular cultural parameters. Three of these are scrutinised in particular: *informativeness* (to look at the quantity and quality of information, transparency and clarity), *time-orientation* (in order to explore synchronous and asynchronous communication, message speed, usability and type of technological tools) and *power distance* (with the aim of considering collectivism and individualism, status and hierarchy and trust, linear versus circular website navigation), all of which influence stakeholders’ intelligibility and usability of the websites. As Zhao *et al.* (2003: 81) have shown, web-based communication is neither fully neutral nor culture specific, therefore the similarities or differences in the design of the websites will be interpreted in terms of local adaptation to the forces of international and globalised communication and to the needs for transparent business frameworks and web architectures.

**Maria Antonietta Marongiu** (Università degli Studi di Cagliari)

But we aspire to more. To be a true front runner. *Metaphors in Environmental Discourse. A Corpus-Based Analysis of Corporate Websites*

Global warming and climate change urge corporate commitment in favor of environmental sustainability. Social pressure and stringent regulations compel companies to report on their web pages on how they are reimagining their business and creating value in sustainable ways (Capriotti and Moreno 2007).

This work investigates how two European energy companies elaborate on the issue of environmental sustainability on their web pages. Specifically, it studies what metaphors forge discourse, how they shape pledges of and commitment to environmental sustainability. By taking both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective, the study follows a Critical Discourse Analysis

approach (Fairclough, Mulderring, Wodak 2011). Besides, it complies with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) to analyse metaphors, viewed as a way to popularize information and knowledge, so as to make them accessible to the public (Garzone 2020). Furthermore, it also looks at the strategic function of metaphors in framing aspects of sustainability to show corporate commitment to the environmental culture (Semino 2008). It is claimed that metaphors help construct discourse on environmental sustainability, contribute to create meaning, and contextually define a text genre on the web. A first analysis of the data shows that companies' effort to show commitment and engagement in the process of change is often represented through metaphors reinforcing the idea of victory and success over a challenge. For their potential as a persuasive rhetorical figure, metaphors play a key role in influencing attitudes, since their conceptualization of the world is not a neutral phenomenon.

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**Jessica J. Nocella** (Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia)

*Transparency and the Environment in the Rail Sector: A Comparative Case Study of the UK and Italy*

The global focus on environmental awareness has brought forth significant social consequences, with the transport sector being particularly impacted (EEA 2020). In the face of climate change, trains, airlines, cruise ships, and coaches are confronted with the task of reevaluating their safety guidelines and formulating sustainable marketing strategies. Within corporate and institutional contexts, transparency stands as a fundamental pillar. This paper aims to investigate how railway companies address issues of transparency in communicating environmental disasters while still building trust with their passengers and stakeholders. Specifically, this study will look at transparency in the environment sections of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reports of railway companies operating in the United Kingdom and Italy. By means of a small corpus, I will carry out a collocation and phraseological analysis of the texts (Sinclair 2004), identifying emerging trends in disclosure. Moreover, this study will also look at the language strategies that companies have implemented to convey public trust and confidence in relation to environmental matters (Fuoli and Paradis 2014). This research highlights how railway companies operating in two different lingua-cultural contexts navigate transparency issues, thereby contributing to a broader understanding of how the transport sector addresses environmental concerns. Results shed light on whether - and, if so, how - different discourses help readers to re-gain trust in the context of environmental change, while highlighting key aspects of risk communication.

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**Ninfa Pagano** (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

*Destination Image/Branding of Sicily and Risk Factors: A Corpus-Based Analysis of Keywords in English Guidebooks Sections on the Mafia Phenomenon*

It has long been acknowledged that the image of a destination is not only a relevant element of a tourist's destination choice process and subsequent behaviour but also of destination marketing and management strategies.

Besides, even in the age of the internet, guidebooks often remain a vital source both in planning tourism and in the experience of places visited and they also have the power to shape tourists' attitudes and expectations through what information is included. In other words, guidebooks, as well as websites, are influential in determining how tourists perceive a destination.

Through an analysis of tourism discourse – more specifically, of the English language as a specialised and promotional discourse in the tourism field – this study examines critically the manner in which three English language guidebooks to Sicily address the Mafia phenomenon. Whether viewed positively (Sicily as a 'film tourism' destination) or as a potential risk factor, the criminal phenomenon is arguably an aspect taken into account by tourists when visiting the island.

Hence, the study seeks to investigate how and to what extent the tourism discourse, when applied to guidebooks to describe the Mafia, may modify, positively or otherwise, the potential tourists' destination image of Sicily. A combined methodological approach, both qualitative and quantitative, is adopted, i.e. corpus linguistics approach combined with discourse analysis.

Besides destination marketing considerations, the research contributes to a further reflection on tourism discourse used for promotional communication to increase the tourist impact and potentially influence destination image formation and consumer purchase behaviour.

**Federico Zaupa** (Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia)

*Accessibility and Transparency in Corporate Communication. A Cross-Cultural Corpus-Informed and Genre-Based Analysis of Accessibility Sections from the Field of Transport*

Accessibility is an issue that should be considered to produce usable web pages. Initiatives to promote this include, among others, the guidelines issued by *Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)*, which concern aspects related to the correct and alternative use of technologies, and the choice of appropriate inclusive auditory and visual solutions, especially for people with disabilities. Contributions to this area have been published mainly in the field of informatics (see e.g., Rutter et al., 2007; Waddell et al., 2003; Brophy et al., 2007 for a review on web accessibility; Paciello 2000 for web accessibility and disability) for the construction and assessment of usable web pages. However, there is no research on how companies or institutions communicate principles of accessibility and usability or promote the inclusion of people with disabilities through accessibility sections in their websites, especially from a linguistic point of view.

Drawing on this background, using corpus-based and driven methods (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001), as well as the tools of genre analysis (Swales, 1990), this research analyses a small corpus of accessibility sections from web pages of companies operating in the field of transport – these range from the sectors of car hiring and sharing, railways, ferries and airplanes – across different countries, with the aim of identifying and investigating the linguistic strategies used to transparently communicate about the design of accessible pages and the inclusion of disabilities. Ultimately, research is also aimed at further exploring whether accessibility sections, in the light of the effects of digital technologies, may be considered as a stable genre in terms of both linguistic and rhetorical choices.

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## **S03 – Counsellors and Counseled: Political Advice in Medieval and Early Modern Britain**

**Convenors:** Allison Steenson (University of Sussex), Sibilla Siano (Università degli Studi di Padova)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 15:00-17:00** (Aula Filol 9, Cubo 28B, piano terra)

Chair: Allison Steenson (University of Sussex)

**Sibilla Siano** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

*Ideal Kingship and Political Advice in the Fifteenth-Century Lancelot of the Layk*

**Leonardo Bagnulo** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*Kings do not Fall Far from Bad Counsellors: The Figurative Representation of Kings and Flatterers in Shakespeare's Richard II and Marlowe's Edward II*

**Alessandra Petrina** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

*Non-identical Twins: Thomas More's Utopia and Niccolò Machiavelli's Prince*

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 17:30-19:30** (Aula Filol 9, Cubo 28B, piano terra)

Chair: Sibilla Siano (Università degli Studi di Padova)

**Alice Equestri** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

*George Whetstone, Italian novellas and the Mirror for Magistrates tradition in The Rocke of Regard (1576)*

**Allison Steenson** (University of Sussex)

*William Alexander's Paneresis to Prince Henry (1604): Political Counsel and Political Anxieties on the Eve of the Union of the Crowns*

**Carlo M. Bajetta** (Università della Valle d'Aosta)

*Too saucy in his advising of princes: Sir Walter Raleigh's 'advices' to King James I*

### **Seminar description**

In 1327, a young prince was about to take the place of his father on England's throne. The fourteen-year-old Edward III faced an immensely difficult task: he was supposed to restore peace and justice after Edward II's much-contested leadership, characterised by the overwhelming presence of self-interested advisors. It might come as no surprise that a copy of the *Secreta Secretorum* was commissioned for him shortly before his coronation. The pseudo-Aristotelian treatise allegedly written for the education of Alexander the Great was meant to provide appropriate instruction for the newly crowned king by offering both theoretical and practical advice. Throughout the Middle Ages, "advice to princes" literature flourished, giving birth to monumental treatises as well as to a broad reflection on the characteristics of good and bad kingship. The *speculum principis* is thus one of the literary genres that crossed the boundaries of time and survived from the Middle Ages down to the Renaissance by continuously readapting itself to the changing times. This tradition informed many literary works in which the idea of good and bad kingship as well as of loyal and treacherous advisors is explored at length. This session welcomes contributions analysing treatises with didactic intent dedicated to kings and princes, as well as other kinds of works in which the delicate balance between kings and counsellors is explored in both Medieval and Renaissance Britain.

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## Abstracts

**Leonardo Bagnulo** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*Kings do not Fall Far from Bad Counsellors: The Figurative Representation of Kings and Flatterers in Shakespeare's Richard II and Marlowe's Edward II*

This study aims at investigating a selection of passages from Shakespeare's *Richard II* and Marlowe's *Edward II* from a Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT) perspective, with particular attention to figurative descriptions of bad counselling/ors through organicistic and plant imagery. This investigation explores the intertwining of multiple imagery for the representation of the Body Politic in the staging of English monarchical history. Although the importance of both body- and plant-related images for figurative representations in Elizabethan drama has been vastly investigated and acknowledged by Shakespearean scholars, their copresence and conceptual integration have hardly been considered. For the purpose of better understanding such complex figurative representations and the flatterers' role within such descriptions, Conceptual Integration Theory, or Blend Theory, offers an apt linguistic framework to investigate not only selective projections from different mental spaces, but also the instruments to highlight the so-called “vital relations” (Fauconnier & Turner 2002), their compression, and the emergence of complex integrated structures, of which the instances analysed are linguistic representations. The dissection of conceptual structures behind these figurative descriptions of kingship and bad counselling will hopefully give appreciable descriptions of their complexity and – arguably – of the cognitive effort necessary to conceive and interpret them.

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**Carlo M. Bajetta** (Università della Valle d'Aosta)

*Too saucy in his advising of princes: Sir Walter Raleigh's 'advices' to King James I*

Sir Walter Raleigh's *A Discourse of War with Spain and the Protection of the Netherlands* is text which has been interpreted as Raleigh's vehement exhortation to James I not to make peace with England's arch-enemy, the Spanish King. This text is frequently seen in relation to a conversation Raleigh and James had in 1603, when the latter visited the house of Lady Raleigh's uncle, Nicholas

Carew at Beddington Park, Surrey (Edwards 1868: I, 364-5; May 1989, 66-7; Nicholls and Williams 2011, 193).

James, the *Rex Pacificus* was in this very year beginning his campaign to stop the long anglo-spanish conflict which had been going on since 1585. Intriguingly, Raleigh's tract circulated in numerous contemporary copies, and may have been meant to be read as widely as possible precisely while the peace negotiations were taking place. This may have not been the last time Raleigh advised his king by recommending precisely what James found irritating. Based on recent research for the new Oxford edition of Raleigh's *Complete Works*, this paper will endeavour to cast a new light on the text of *A Discourse of War with Spain* and on some other works attributed to Raleigh such as the *Observations on Trade and Commerce* and the tract on Prince Henry's marriage.

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**Alice Equestri** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

*George Whetstone, Italian novellas and the Mirror for Magistrates tradition in The Rocke of Regard (1576)*

The miscellaneous prose and verse collection *The Rocke of Regard* (1576) was George Whetstone's first published work and set the tone for all his subsequent publications, which aimed to improve human ethics and society through the promotion of good civic values. Claiming that Whetstone's pursuit of moral edification is deeply rooted in his legal training at the Inns of Chancery, I will point out how his verse adaptations in complaint form of three novellas originally by Matteo Bandello are central to his moralising project in *The Rocke*. Here, Whetstone employs verse as a means to expand on the Italian novellas, infusing them with legal tones to underscore their moral implications. Key to this intent is the influence of a seminal early modern literary work: *A Mirror for Magistrates* (1559) and its later editions. This was a hugely ambitious and popular project whereby a group of authors (led by William Baldwin) close to the Inns circles set upon themselves to guide the conduct of magistrates, lawyers, and those in positions of authority, while also involving the middle classes in a conversation about ethical lawmaking. This influence is most obviously reflected by Whetstone's adoption of the complaint, a form with strong legal connotations, for his translation of the novellas. The form, structure, and even wording of the versified novellas in *The Rocke* echo the fundamental characteristics of the complaints included in the *Mirror*. I will showcase this intertextuality by analysing the complaint of Bianca Maria, Countess of Cellant (from Bandello's *Novelle* I.iv through William Painter, *Palace of Pleasure* II.xxiv), the first of Whetstone's adaptations in *The Rocke*. It will become evident that this adaptation was seemingly crafted with the 1563 edition of the *Mirror* as a reference. Furthermore, similarly to the *Mirror*, Whetstone's work aims to engage a diverse audience comprising both high and middle classes. By eulogizing an equitable administration of the law and justice, he offers guidance to this composite audience.

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**Alessandra Petrina** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

*Non-identical Twins: Thomas More's Utopia and Niccolò Machiavelli's Prince*

Composed and disseminated in the same years, Thomas More's *Utopia* and Niccolò Machiavelli's *Prince* have much more in common than the dating and the general subject-matter. They both position themselves vis-à-vis the *speculum principis* tradition, implicitly challenging it by subtracting from the medieval genre the pivotal role of divine authority. Medieval *specula principum*, in fact, proposed the distinction between the good ruler and the tyrant as based on their relationship with divine intervention and ultimate divine judgement. Once divine intervention no longer plays a role, the new prince has to negotiate human forces; in this sense More's and Machiavelli's works mark the boundary from the medieval to the early modern perception of politics, opening the ways for the discussion on reason of state that will dominate the following century.

There have been recent scholarly attempts to identify closer links between the two texts: for instance, William Connell worked in the assumption that Machiavelli had read and was responding to *Utopia*. In the absence of definite proof for this theory, it may be more profitable to think of these two texts as non-identical twins, parallel reactions to a long-lived literary genre that was now showing its weakness against the emergence of the reality principle.

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**Sibilla Siano** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

*Ideal Kingship and Political Advice in the Fifteenth-Century Lancelot of the Layk*

In one of the most commented-upon passages from the late fifteenth-century Scottish poem *Lancelot of the Layk* King Arthur is given political advice by one of his closest friends, Amytans. The wise man's reflections do not appear to be limited to a theoretical sketch of ideal kingship, but rather extend to practical issues involving the ruling of the country and the pursuit of the common weal. Since this passage extends over a considerable number of lines at least within the extant text, it has always been considered the core of the romance, though the extent of what has been lost can only be inferred by comparing it with its source, the thirteenth-century French prose *Lancelot*. This Scottish version of the Lancelot story appears to be a fairly close translation of the French original; nevertheless, several adjustments and expansions can still be detected. Therefore, although the above-mentioned passage is hardly an invention on the part of the Scottish redactor, it appears to have been carefully reworked in order to comply with a specific idea of good kingship. The numerous additions appear to have drawn not only on the *speculum principis* tradition, but also on a possible network of allusions to the political struggles that plagued Scotland throughout the late fifteenth century. Although admittedly almost customary, the concerns raised by Amytans seem reminiscent of those expressed by the Estates during the realm of James III. This paper thus aims to analyse Amytan's advice in the light of the

*speculum principis* tradition as well as of the troubled political context characterising James III's realm.

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**Allison Steenson** (University of Sussex)

*William Alexander's Paneresis to Prince Henry (1604): Political Counsel and Political Anxieties on the Eve of the Union of the Crowns*

This talk focuses on the Scottish writer William Alexander's *A paraenesis to the Prince*, published in London in 1604, shortly after the Union of the Crowns of England and Scotland and the accession of James VI to the throne of England as James I.

The short volume is dedicated to James' heir, Prince Henry, the future Prince of Wales and heir apparent to the Scottish and English Crowns, and primarily constitutes an encomiastic text, celebrating the departure of the young Scottish Prince on his way to the south. However, with its several heads of political counsel, Alexander's poem can be seen as an example of "advice to princes" literature, a genre that had a long and quite illustrious tradition in Scotland.

That a court poet who was publishing closet tragedies with a Senecan inspiration and a Petrarchan sonnet collection should offer political advice is not as surprising as it may seem. At the Scottish court of the eminently literate James VI, poetry and politics had been closely intertwined, and James' own interest in discussing pins of both disciplines with his court poets is well known to scholars.

Texts such as Alexander's *Paraenesis*, coupled with his panegyric verse on James' accession, show how Alexander posed as a suitable royal advisor since the beginning of his career as a poet-courtier, highlighting political advice in his poetic production and providing *exempla* of tyrannical rules in his *Tragedies*. This positioning would apparently work in his favour, as his career at court rose to ever soaring heights during James' reign, from Gentleman Usher to Prince Charles (1603) to Secretary of State for Scotland (1626), and he rose to be one of the King's main literary and political confidantes.

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## **S04 – Decadence and Specialised Discourse: Linguistic Networks and Discursive Constructions**

**Convenors:** Massimiliano Demata (Università degli Studi di Torino), Tania Zulli (Università degli Studi G. D’Annunzio di Chieti-Pescara)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 11:00-13:00** (Aula Burgarella, Cubo 28C, piano terra)

**Chair:** Massimiliano Demata (Università degli Studi di Torino), Tania Zulli (Università degli Studi G. D’Annunzio di Chieti-Pescara)

**Marco Canani** (Università degli Studi G. d’Annunzio Chieti-Pescara)

*Against Decadence? Burrough, Wellcome & Co.’s Specialised Writing as Pharmaceutical Marketing*

**Maria Luigia Di Nisio** (Università degli Studi G. d’Annunzio di Chieti-Pescara)

*“Still attracted by beautiful things” : Reading the Images of Decadent Archaeology*

**Annalisa Federici** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Echoes of Krafft-Ebing’s Psychopathia Sexualis in Scientific Periodicals: Sexual and Mental Pathology in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Medical Discourse*

**Angelo Riccioni** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Parthenope)

*Decadence and the Specialised Discourse of Jewellery: The Language of Gemmology in Oscar Wilde, A. H. Church and E. W. Streeter*

### **Seminar description**

One fertile direction in the current research on Decadence concerns language, which shaped and responded to the epistemic changes and hermeneutical perspectives that characterised the “Morbid Nineties”. Linda Dowling rightly claimed that Decadence stemmed out of “a linguistic crisis” resulting from nineteenth-century language studies. This new turn “raised a spectre of autonomous language”, calling forth “a system obeying impersonal phonological rules” detached from human experience (Dowling 1986: xi-xiii). Undermining contemporary ideals of civilisation and progress, this outlook witnessed a proliferation of domain-specific discourses. The word *scientist*, for example, is a nineteenth-century coinage that marks the birth of a specialised figure identified with new branches of learning (Soccio 2020). This paradigm shift arguably implies specific linguistic features – lexical, rhetorical, and discursive – while calling for a redefinition of textuality and genre (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013; Dawson *et al.* 2020; Moulds 2021; Wale 2022). As the epitome of Decadence and science, Max Nordau’s *Degeneration* (1892) is an example of these changes, being a sociological attack “couched as a medical text” (Kistler 2019: 244). Likewise, von Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1866), Cesare Lombroso’s *Criminal Man* (1876), and Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds’s *Sexual Inversion* (1897) reflect changes in conceptions of science and discourse, as Michel Foucault was to demonstrate, while stretching the chronological boundaries of Decadence as a wide-ranging cultural category. In addition, the circulation of these texts suggests the extent to which specialised discourse was also influenced by cross-cultural dynamics in keeping with Matthew Potolsky’s argument on Decadence as “a characteristic mode” of reception and writing (2012:1). This is also proved by Decadent political texts, which are inherently constructed on discursive networks that hinge on recurring pillars: tropes pertaining to the traditional political theory, the support of what Foucault would term “counter discourses” (Foucault 1970), and references to historical contingency (Potolsky 2020). Within this cultural and critical framework, the panel aims to investigate texts highlighting the development of special languages and specialised discourses in response to Decadence. The convenors welcome original and innovative contributions examining

Decadent dialogues among disciplines and textual typologies in disseminating domain-specific discourses (especially, but not exclusively, scientific and political). Contributions addressing the analysis of the discursive strategies employed in such texts, as well as a focus on their terminology and/or genre are especially welcome, as it is through this kind of analysis that the social and cultural elements constituting the “discursive struggle” or the struggle for social and cultural hegemony through discourse (Fairclough 1992; Laclau 1993; Laclau and Muffe 1985) typical of Decadence will be revealed.

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## Abstracts

**Marco Canani** (Università degli Studi G. d’Annunzio Chieti-Pescara)

*Against Decadence? Burrough, Wellcome & Co.’s Specialised Writing as Pharmaceutical Marketing*

From Max Nordau to Arthur Symons, decadence and disease form a metaphorical pair recurring in fin de siècle culture (Bernheimer 2002: 139 ff.). In this paper I investigate a genre hitherto largely neglected, i.e., medical texts that appeared in late nineteenth-century specialised publications to inform as well as to promote pharmaceuticals. More specifically, I focus on Burroughs Wellcome & Co. (now part of GlaxoSmithKline) as a case study. An American salesman, Silas M. Burrough moved to London as a representative for Wyeth in 1878. Two years later, he and Henry Wellcome began to import ground-breaking products into the British market. Their venture was sustained by pioneering marketing techniques, with the company submitting their pharmaceuticals to specialised journals for testing (Sheppard 2022: 183). (Church 2005). My contribution examines a corpus of reports from Lancet, Medical Press and Circular, and Chemist and Druggist, and addresses two research questions. Firstly, a key word in context analysis will try and assess the extent to which Burroughs Wellcome & Co developed a science-based pharmaceutical firm in keeping with the

contemporary interest in body and health against decadence and disease (Haley 1978); secondly, these reports will be discussed from the viewpoint of genre theory to assess the extent to which they may be considered as early instances of editorials (Rollins and Perri 2014). The analysis is meant to provide insights into Burroughs Wellcome & Co.'s strategies to manage, share, and disseminate knowledge (Nonaka et al. 1996).

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**Maria Luigia Di Nisio** (Università degli Studi G. d'Annunzio di Chieti-Pescara)

*"Still attracted by beautiful things": Reading the Images of Decadent Archaeology*

If the term "archaeology" appeared in the seventeenth century, when it referred to "ancient history generally" or to "the systematic description or study of antiquities" (OED), – archaeology as a science is a nineteenth-century coinage. Archaeologists, we read in the 1880 example provided by the OED, "have raised the study of antiquities to the rank of science". Central to the Victorian imagination, it has nonetheless been relatively less explored than other sciences in its multiple connections with literature and culture at large (Blumberg 2018) and overall "ill-defined until late in the nineteenth century" (Zimmerman 2008: 3). Much of the most recent scholarship on Victorian archaeology underlines its "disciplinary fluidity and inherent suggestiveness" (Blumberg 2017: 241), as well as the instability of its position, at the intersection of art and science: the object of professional and amateur interest, élite and popular dissemination, British archaeology at the fin de siècle "pervaded multiple fields of study and traversed popular discourses" (Blumberg 2018: 2). It was also crucially divided between past and present concerns, and bound up with discourses around sexuality (Dowson 2000; Voss 2008; Blumberg 2017).

Using the tools of visual grammar, this paper considers late-nineteenth-century archaeological discourse in a multimodal perspective, looking at some examples from scientific and popular sources in the periodical press that describe the site of Pompei and relate recent discoveries in the surrounding area. It draws attention to the visual mode as a tool for making meaning alongside the written text, focusing on composition to see how a series of images – illustrations and/or photographic reproductions – variously arranged, have a crucial semiotic potential, defined by the "semiotic resources available to a specific individual in a specific social context" (Kress and van Leeuwen 2021: 11). In fin de siècle archaeological discourse dealing with Southern Italy and Pompei in particular, they articulate specific ideological positions and are motivated by specific and changing "interests", functioning as a semiotic mode, in that they construct a representation of reality, embed it in mediated social interactions, and, no less important, form texts, that is "complexes of signs which cohere both

internally with each other and externally with the context in and for which they were produced” (2021: 17-8).

The analysis of visual design hence contributes to a deeper understanding of decadent archaeology, bringing to the fore its contested status, as “the latest born of the sciences”, as W. M. Flinders Petrie famously described it at the turn of the new century, barely “out of the swaddling clothes of dilettante speculations, [...] still attracted by pretty things rather than by real knowledge” (Petrie 1904), and yet with its professional methods and aims.

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**Annalisa Federici** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Echoes of Krafft-Ebing’s Psychopathia Sexualis in Scientific Periodicals: Sexual and Mental Pathology in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Medical Discourse*

This paper proposes a corpus-based terminological analysis of the language of moral decadence, sexual deviance and mental degeneration introduced by such a seminal text in nineteenth-century medical-psychiatric literature as Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis* (trans. 1892). It also investigates the resonance that this domain-specific terminology may have had in British medical journals between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when periodicals played a crucial role in consolidating communities of scientific practitioners characterised by an increasing intraprofessional specialism, as well as in propagating various forms of medical discourse. Corpus linguistics methodology, both quantitative and qualitative, is employed to scrutinise Krafft-Ebing’s treatise, particularly to extract and contextually analyse specialised terms in the domain of sexual and mental pathology which might have contributed to the dissemination – also facilitated by the ample diffusion of the periodical press – of psychiatric and sexological discourses of decadence. Once a set of terms has been individuated (some of which actually Krafft-Ebing’s coinages), their frequency and collocational behaviour is then examined in a corpus of scientific articles compiled by selecting texts from two leading nineteenth-century medical journals – the *British Medical Journal*, focusing on general medicine, and the *Journal of Mental Science* as a more specialised publication – in which such terms have been found to occur by means of simple searches within the journals’ archives. Since terms represent concepts within a specific domain, this paper aims to demonstrate that a corpus-based terminological analysis can provide useful insights into the specialised knowledge, cultural values and ideological positionings of a particular community of experts, and the various domain-specific discourses it contributed to circulate. Between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the continuous recreation of such discourses in a profusion of medical texts belonging to different genres determined the pathologisation of certain sexual behaviours and caused at least some of these notions of sexual and mental malady to become cultural and ideological constructs.

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**Angelo Riccioni** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Parthenope)

*Decadence and the Specialised Discourse of Jewellery: The Language of Gemmology in Oscar Wilde, A. H. Church and E. W. Streeter*

One of the main features of Decadent texts, both literary and scientific, that is usually acknowledged by critics, is their artificiality. Dowling for instance does not hesitate to define Aubrey Beardsley's Venus and Tannhauser "a world [...] entirely fashioned out of archaism and argots, [...] fully conceded to be artificial" (Dowling 1986: 146); on the other hand, handbooks and gemmology

treatises published during the end of the nineteenth century appear interspersed with lyrical passages (Phillips 2019: 120). Thus, fin de siècle texts appear to be characterized by a language that relies not only on obsolete words, but also on terms that are usually taken from a wide range of specialized discourses, ranging from botany to jewellery. For this reason, decadent texts seem quite apt to be investigated through a terminological diachronic perspective that focuses on the terminology of specific domains such as jewellery and gemmology, given the relevance of precious stones (notably diamonds) during the last decades of the Victorian Age (Gere and Rudoe 2010).

In this context, the works of Oscar Wilde, one of the most celebrated authors of the period, and the scientific output of experts such as A. H. Church and Edwin William Streeter – both renowned connoisseurs of gemstones and jewels – seem to be focused on the exploitation of the discourse of jewellery. The purpose of my analysis is to investigate how these texts are characterized by a specialized jewellery terminology focused on the shades and properties of semi-precious stones. From this point of view, the adoption of the technical language of many sectoral areas relating to the world of jewellery in all its features (e.g.: precious metals, gemstones, styles and techniques) seems to reveal a predilection, on the part of Decadent culture, towards a technical literature of great impact on late nineteenth-century language, which often borrows from the lexicon of arts and crafts and of fashion.

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## **S05 – Ecological Discourse: Theoretical, Methodological and Thematic Perspectives**

**Convenors:** Maria Bortoluzzi (Università degli Studi di Udine), Daniela Francesca Viridis (Università degli Studi di Cagliari)

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 15:30-17:30** (Aula Alcaro, Cubo 28B, piano terra)

Chair: Daniela Francesca Viridis (Università degli Studi di Cagliari)

**Emilio Amideo** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Parthenope)

*Water and the Colour Line: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of the Flint Water Crisis' Political Cartoons*

**Assunta (Susie) Caruso** (Università della Calabria), **Ida Ruffolo** (Università della Calabria)

*What if Nature Fought Back? Multimodal Metaphor in Green Non-profit/Social Advertising*

**Mariasophia Falcone** (Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia)

*Analysis of Negation as an Indicator of Implicit Polyphony in GenZ Environmental Associations*

**Maria Bortoluzzi** (Università degli Studi di Udine)

*The Representation of Plants in Verbal and Visual Discourse*

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 18:00-19:30** (Aula Alcaro, Cubo 28B, piano terra)

Chair: Maria Bortoluzzi (Università degli Studi di Udine)

**Denise Milizia** (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro), **Laura R. Olson** (Clemson University)

*Comparing Political Leaders' Statements and Tweets to Public Opinion: The Climate Change Challenge in the U.S. and Italy*

**Esterino Adami** (Università degli Studi di Torino)

*Ecological Parables in Amitav Ghosh's Prose*

**Daniela Francesca Viridis** (Università degli Studi di Cagliari)

*Ecological Stylistics: Ecostylistic Approaches to Discourses of Nature, the Environment and Sustainability*

### **Seminar description**

Discourse (both verbal and multimodal) instantiates, construes, reproduces, challenges how we perceive issues and how we act on them in our fast-changing and diverse societies. This panel focuses on theoretical frameworks, methodologies and practices which contribute to reflecting on and discussing how (multimodal) discourse is a means for ecological positive change through a variety of textual practices in diverse contexts, different participants and across media. More specifically, this panel centres on the variety of methodological issues that arise in ecological communication for action taking. The panel aims at establishing a dialogue between different perspectives (theoretical, methodological and thematic) to explore the complexity of awareness raising and action taking through (multimodal) discourse within an ecological framework. We therefore seek contributions addressing the crucial problem of how present-day reflections on (multimodal) discourses about the extreme ecological crisis we are experiencing can be relevant to raising awareness about this challenging situation and to promoting sustainable behaviours in and towards the ecosystems that sustain life. The contributions will be in the area of ecolinguistics, ecostylistics, multimodality for ecological communication, critical and positive discourse studies, ecoliteracy, and related fields.

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## Abstracts

**Esterino Adami** (Università degli Studi di Torino)  
*Ecological Parables in Amitav Ghosh's Prose*

According to Indian anthropologist, essayist and novelist Amitav Ghosh, the present-day environmental crisis is deeply entrenched in wide historical and political processes, in particular those connected with colonialism and neo-colonialism. To illustrate this point and warn about the degradation of the world we live in, his 2021 book *The Nutmeg's Curse* aims to pick up the story of the material exploitation and human extermination of the Banda Islands (1621), and applies a particular rhetorical frame since the subtitle reads *Parables for a Planet in Crisis*. Bearing in mind that narratives do not merely represent the world, but somehow construct it, ideologically and culturally, Ghosh articulates his prose through cognitive structures such as parables, which operate via projection, intertextuality and blending (Burke 2003). Interestingly, the subtitle of his new novella *The Living Mountain* is markedly echoic in this respect: *A Fable for our Times*. For the author, parables and stories in general influence readers, and can endorse complex beneficial discourses that suggest how "Traditional Ecological Knowledge", in reality, has to be rebalanced by considering the resources of storytelling and lore to refresh epistemological paradigms and encourage environmental awareness and change.

In this paper, I implement a mixed methodology based on ecolinguistics, ecostylistics, and postcolonial studies (Huggan and Tiffin 2010; Stibbe 2015; Virdis 2022) to investigate Ghosh's text, in particular focusing on 1) the discursive, metaphorical and symbolic configuration of parables, 2) the persuasive and affective power of narratives, and 3) the author's ecosophy and commitment towards social justice and resistance.

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**Emilio Amideo** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Parthenope)  
*Water and the Colour Line: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of the Flint Water Crisis' Political Cartoons*

When in April 2014, during a financial crisis, the state of Michigan (USA) changed the water source of the city of Flint from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department to the Flint River, drinking water became contaminated with lead and Legionella bacteria giving way to a major public health crisis. Since Flint's population is constituted mainly by Blacks and other ethnic minorities (62.2% according to a 2018 census) and 32.6% of its total remains below the poverty level, Flint water crisis can be considered as a poignant example of environmental racism (Bullard 1993; Pulido 2016) that once again demonstrates how the exposure of more vulnerable communities to environmental and health risks is not fortuitous but influenced by racism, which remains a crucial element in environmental planning and decision making.

The aim of this paper is to analyse a series of political cartoons about the Flint water crisis to highlight the linguistic, visual, and rhetoric strategies employed by cartoonists to portray the crisis and the public and governmental response to it. Drawing on a methodological framework influenced by multimodality (Kress and van Leeuwen 2021), appraisal theory (Martin and White 2005) and general theory of verbal humour (Attardo 1994 and 2017), the analysis aims at exploring the way in which the co-articulation of different semiotic resources in the creation of the cartoons play a role in reframing people's ideologies and mindsets while contributing to raising awareness on issues of environmental racism and simultaneously creating strategies of resistance.

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**Maria Bortoluzzi** (Università degli Studi di Udine)  
*The Representation of Plants in Verbal and Visual Discourse*

This study is part of ongoing research about the representation of plants in a variety of text-types. Research work in discourses about plants is under-represented in ecolinguistics (Poole and Micalay-Hurtado 2022, among the exceptions). This study focuses on multimodal analysis of institutional texts promoting the positive role of plants against the present climate crisis, and investigates the (dis)alignment of plant representation in written discourse and images within the same text. Research questions are: How do visual and verbal modes contribute to representing the role of plants and their actions on the ecosystems in institutional texts?

The theoretical framework draws on complementary areas: 1. studies in ecolinguistics (Fill and Mühlhäusler 2001; Steffensen and Fill 2014; Fill and Penz 2018; Stibbe 2021); 2. the adoption of a multimodal framework of analysis (in the present study, the socio-semiotic approach by Kress and van Leeuwen 2021; van Leeuwen 2022) to widen the methodological perspective. The data analysis is qualitative and addresses the issue of subjective and collective identity representation of plants (verbal and visual), and plant action on and within the ecosystems.

In the data, visual features both complement and contradict verbal construals. The study confirms the advantages of combining ecolinguistics with multimodal studies (which several scholars are already doing, as shown in this seminar) and promotes a ‘multimodal turn’ for ecological communication studies as ‘ecomultimodality’. This expands perspectives beyond verbal language and its limitations to investigate discourses and reach out towards more-than-human participants.

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**Assunta (Susie) Caruso** (Università della Calabria), **Ida Ruffolo** (Università della Calabria)  
*What if Nature Fought Back? Multimodal Metaphor in Green Non-profit/Social Advertising*

“Our Common Future Report” released by the UN in 1987 describes sustainability as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland, 1987). Ever since its publication problems such as climate change, pollution, environmental degradation, and resource depletion have heightened environmental awareness, as seen in the choices, perceptions and expectations of consumers towards eco-friendly products and services.

While academic studies in the field of green marketing and green advertising have increased, much of it has focused on profit-based organizations which promote green image and products (Kotler, 2011), leaving room for research on non-profit organizations, which instead focus on changing consumer behaviour (Trudel, 2019). Indeed, advertising aimed at creating a conscious environment culture highlighting our commitment to protecting natural resources has steadily increased.

Based on these premises, this paper investigates the use of multimodal metaphor in green social advertising in light of the fact that they are widely employed in various media to effectively understand complex environmental issues (Koteyko and Atanasova, 2016; Väliverronen and Hellsten, 2022). This paper adopts the definition of *green non-profit/social advertising* by Stöckl and Molnar (2018:262), namely, “[...] noncommercial campaigns aimed at raising ecological awareness and thereby calling on the recipient to support social action or adopt an eco-oriented opinion.”

Particularly, this project adopts both a verbal (MIPVU) (Steen *et al.*, 2012) and visual (VISMIP) (Storm and Steen, 2018) metaphor identification procedure, to address how environmental discourse is conceptualised in a corpus of green non-profit/social advertising in order to understand to what extent the messages conveyed are inviting sustainable behaviour.

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**Mariasophia Falcone** (Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia)

*Analysis of Negation as an Indicator of Implicit Polyphony in GenZ Environmental Associations*

The climate change debate has been characterised by a wide range of voices and positions within a multifaceted context (Fløttum 2010; Fløttum 2014; Fløttum & Gjerstad 2017; Dahl & Fløttum 2014; Hulme 2009). Younger generations, particularly GenerationZ, have played a pivotal role in the recent developments of this debate. Nonetheless, recent studies have highlighted a concerning narrative where the youth perceive a lack of acknowledgment and struggle to make their concerns heard, with intergenerational conflict gaining ground (Andersen & Fløttum 2022). While studies have been conducted on the multivoiced nature of this debate on various mediums and genres (Fløttum & Gjerstad 2017; Gjerstad 2017; Kanerva & Krizsán 2021), the possible presence of heteroglossia in texts produced by this generation on digital platforms needs to be further investigated. Delving into the assumption that a single utterance can encompass multiple voices or points of view beyond that of the writer (Dahl & Fløttum 2014; Kanerva & Krizsán 2021), this paper aims to analyse the presence of linguistic polyphony (multivoicedness) in a corpus of web texts from three GenZ environmental associations by focusing on the use of negation (*not*) with refutative meaning as an indicator of implicit polyphony (Gjerstad 2017; Dahl & Fløttum 2014). Results were analysed based on the framework for polyphony for the climate change debate as illustrated in Dahl & Fløttum (2014) with the objective of uncovering the possible argumentative orientation of the text, revealing the range of voices within online discourse on climate change by the youth.

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**Denise Milizia** (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro), **Laura R. Olson** (Clemson University) *Comparing Political Leaders’ Statements and Tweets to Public Opinion: The Climate Change Challenge in the U.S. and Italy*

This study starts by looking at the way national leaders emphasize the gravity of the climate crisis both in institutional settings and on social media, and then goes on investigating whether public opinion reflects that concern.

Thus, we first present an analysis of speeches about the extreme ecological crisis we are experiencing delivered by the Presidents of the United States and the Prime Ministers of Italy between January 2020 and June 2023, and then we look at social media posts (Zappavigna 2012), to see whether and to what extent a multimodal narrative may raise awareness and action taking (van Leeuwen 2022), thus producing ecological positive change. Barack Obama and Donald Trump were defined the “twittering presidents” (Wignell et al. 2021), in that they relied heavily on social media to have their narrative heard, just like Joe Biden in the current administration, who is adamant that climate change is an existential threat and “we have to hurry, because time is not on our side” (Milizia forthcoming). With the exception of Mario Draghi in Italy, Giuseppe Conte and Giorgia Meloni have made extensive use of Twitter and social media in general to get their message out, both convinced that the effort to reach the Paris Agreement goals has to be a whole-of-society effort, or “the world will risk a collective suicide”, thus marking a change with other right-wing parties like the Republicans in the U.S. who question the science of climate change.

The second part of our paper analyzes survey data from the two countries collected by the Pew Research Center in March 2021 (Poushter et al. 2022). We ask whether there is a correlation between the leaders’ statements (and relative degree of concern) about the climate crisis and their citizenries’ (1) perception of climate change as a threat and (2) whether social problems can be solved by working with other countries.

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**Daniela Francesca Virdis** (Università degli Studi di Cagliari)

*Ecological Stylistics: Ecostylistic Approaches to Discourses of Nature, the Environment and Sustainability*

Moving from the results achieved in my recent book-length study and in the latest volume I edited, this presentation discusses ecostylistic approaches to nature, the environment and sustainability as represented in contemporary non-literary discourse. Firstly, the presentation introduces the terms and theories in the disciplines of ecolinguistics (ecosophy, beneficial, ambivalent and destructive discourses) and stylistics (foregrounding, point of view, metaphor) which are applied in this ecostylistic analysis. Secondly, the presentation examines the occurrences of five marker words (nature, environment, ecosystem, ecology, sustainability) on the websites of five environmental organisations and agencies (Forestry England, Greenpeace International, National Park Service, Navdanya International, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)). Five selected texts from the websites and the stylistic devices emerging from this examination are compared with and evaluated against the ecosophy of this research and its seven norms. The main research purpose of this study is to identify beneficial discourses in the environet and to investigate the beneficial ecostylistic strategies utilised to produce them; it also aims to promote a beneficial use of language and of these beneficial discourses and strategies among the general public. Furthermore, and above all, this presentation reminds all of us humans that we do not stand apart from nature: we are a part of it. The presentation will fall within the disciplinary aims and scope of stylistics and ecolinguistics, and will be relevant to such neighbouring areas as ecocriticism, discourse analysis, environmental communication and environmental humanities.

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## **S06 – Facing Crisis in Literature from the Middle Ages to the Modern Period**

**Convenors:** Davide Pafumi (University of Lethbridge), Lorenzo Zaggia (Università degli Studi di Padova)

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 18:00-19:30** (Aula Filol 9, Cubo 28B, piano terra)

Chair: Lorenzo Zaggia (Università degli Studi di Padova)

**Andrew Brayley** (Università degli Studi di Catania)

*Reactions to the Crisis of the French Revolution*

**Arianna Granata** (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, University of Glasgow)

*History as Crisis: New Perspectives of Studying and Teaching Walter Scott in Italy*

**Lorenzo Zaggia** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

*Aaron, Bezeleel, Moses: Shades of Crisis in Contemplative Practice in The Cloud of Unknowing*

### **Seminar description**

The recognition of a generalised condition of crisis has been almost an anthropological constant in the fabric of British literary culture. The echoes of multiple historical events have reverberated throughout the centuries up until the present day. Throughout time, this deep-rooted sense of falling in, whether actual or perceived, has found its way in the creative efforts of many artists from the Old English elegies to the modernist novels. Confronting this feeling is essential as it allows to engage with prospects of renewal.

Amidst this multifaceted uncertainty, writers gather glimmers of hope to provide a blueprint for new beginnings to emerge, undertaking the same task as the figure of the Angel of History so powerfully evoked by Walter Benjamin, who endeavours to “make whole what has been smashed.” From the tumultuous upheavals of the Medieval era to the anxieties of the modern world, crises have provided a fertile ground for writers to channel their imagination yielding fresh insights into the complexities of the world around them through literature.

This panel welcomes submissions that explore literary responses to crises, focusing on multiple authors and works through various periods from the Middle Ages onwards. We intend to analyse how literature may contribute to our understanding of these complex and often transformative periods. Topics of interest include – but are not limited to – the sentiments attached to the acknowledgement of crises, their depiction, their fruitfulness in fostering reflections, the strategic use of rhetorical devices to convey their complexity, and the attempts to make sense of them.

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## Abstracts

**Andrew Brayley** (Università degli Studi di Catania)

*Reactions to the Crisis of the French Revolution*

William Wordsworth “[i]n the French Revolution [...] saw a great movement for human freedom, welcoming it as many young men of a certain generation welcomed in the twentieth century the coming of the Union of Soviet Republics” (Evans 1970:67). Others, such as Percy (1919) and Mary Shelley (1987), shared his enthusiasm while Edmund Burke (1986) did not.

The aim of my paper will be to explore the contrasts that emerge, not only between Burke’s hostility to the Revolution and the enthusiasm of others but also to examine the disappointment felt by some of the supporters of the uprising. While some, like Percy Shelley, felt betrayed by the way it degenerated into the Reign of Terror:

See how kindred murder kin:

‘Tis the vintage-time for death and sin:

Blood, like new wine, bubbles within... (Shelley, P., *Prometheus Unbound* 1.573-5)

They nevertheless continued to believe in its basic principles and perhaps considered the atrocities as regrettable excesses. Wordsworth, on the other hand, became increasingly disillusioned when he saw that “... the France of the young Buonaparte was following, not the vision of the liberties of man, but the path of Charlemagne” (Evans 1970:68).

The final part of my paper will be a reflection on England as the bastion of freedom against Napoleonic imperialism as expounded by Burke. Napoleon’s plan to invade England, which in the event failed, created a psychosis, so much so that it has been said that the most important event in nineteenth century England was one which never took place but was long dreaded: a revolution similar to the French one.

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**Arianna Granata** (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, University of Glasgow)

*History as Crisis: New Perspectives of Studying and Teaching Walter Scott in Italy*

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) is the emblem of the representation of historical evolution following moments of profound political, cultural, and social crisis. Thanks to his iconic novels such as *Waverley* (1814), *Rob Roy* (1817) and *Ivanhoe* (1819), he was able to deal with issues of his contemporaneity through the device of narrating the past. The first to recognise and praise the political conflict described by Scott as an essential step for human progress and the entry into modernity was György Lukács in his writing *The Historical Novel* (1937), translated into Italian in 1965. From Lukács’ study onwards, many contributions were published that discussed in detail all the facets of the representation of crises in the author’s works. Not only political crises but also related to issues such as identity, nationalism and recently also ecology and climate. Some examples are recent international studies such as Caroline McCracken-Flesher’s *Possible Scotland: Walter Scott and the*

*Story of Tomorrow* (2005); Julia Meldon D'Arcy's *Subversive Scott: The Waverley Novels and Scottish Nationalism* (2005) and Susan Oliver's *Walter Scott and The Greening of Scotland* (2021).

As we are inhabitants of an era marked by a moment of profound crisis due to wars, climate, economy, and above all the role of human beings related to artificial intelligence, this paper aims to illustrate the recent developments of Scott criticism and put forward hypotheses for his critical re-evaluation in Italy. Scott is still studied as a 'father of the historical novel' and a romantic writer, but by exploiting new modern (and post-modern) approaches it can be highlighted how the author's works and his dealing with major crises can be contextualized in our era and can find interesting new perspectives for his study and teaching.

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**Lorenzo Zaggia** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

*Aaron, Bezeleel, Moses: Shades of Crisis in Contemplative Practice in The Cloud of Unknowing*

With the rise of epistemological models of knowledge such as nominalism and scepticism, the 14<sup>th</sup> century can be seen as a period of crisis for the possibilities of human knowledge. This paper seeks to trace the influence of such crisis in the late Middle English devotional manual *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and particularly in its allegorical figuration of the contemplative community.

*The Cloud of Unknowing* introduces its reader to the highest degree of Christian living — contemplative life, where the soul is united to God through meditation upon his naked being. Still, the text is also concerned with the role of community in developing this practice and providing a standard to assess its orthodoxy.

But the author's efforts to organize the Christian community through allegorical readings of selected biblical passages shows that it is still an active process. First, the active and contemplative modes of Christian life are separated through the biblical examples of Martha and Mary. This establishes the primacy of the contemplative and spiritual over the active and bodily, which is problematized when contemplative life risks being associated with ecstasy (*rauisching*). As a phenomenon that only the body can record, it represents a potential epistemological danger that risks compromising communication and understanding within the contemplative community. The author uses the Old Testament narrative and the characters of the Ark of the Covenant to think of the different types of contemplation, rearranging roles and meanings into a continuum to conceive a unitary image for the contemplative community.

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## S07 – Feminine Energy in Audiovisual Translation

**Convenors:** Simonetta Falchi (Università degli Studi di Sassari), Serenella Massidda (University of Roehampton), Alessandra Rizzo (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 18:00-19:30** (Aula Filol 2, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

**Chair:** Simonetta Falchi (Università degli Studi di Sassari), Serenella Massidda (University of Roehampton), Alessandra Rizzo (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

**Ilaria Parini** (Università degli Studi di Torino)

*Saints or Whores? Italian American Women in American AV Products and in Italian Dubbing*

**Luca Valleriani** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*Feminine Powerful Language in Translation: The Italian Dubbed Version of Domina (2021)*

**Simonetta Falchi** (Università degli Studi di Sassari), **Serenella Massidda** (Roehampton University)

*Subtitling the Handmaid's Tale for an Italian Audience*

### Panel description

This panel intends to investigate the portrayal of feminine energy in Audiovisual Translation (AVT) with the scope of tackling gender issues and gender-related language within the context of inclusion. ‘Feminine energy’, embodied by Maya Angelou’s “Phenomenal Woman” (*And Still I Rise*, 1978), alludes to a set of attributes associated with women, such as creativity, emancipation, empathy, empowerment, intuition, and motherhood. However, these traits are frequently misrepresented and at times devalued in our culture, more attuned to objectified versions of women, while their portrayal in audiovisual media is often controversial, limited, and stereotypical.

In time, a plethora of TV shows’ scripts and movie adaptations have brought to the stage feminine roles often fighting for their voice to be heard: e.g., *Thelma and Louise* (1991), *The Hours* (2002), *The Handmaid’s Tale* (2017-). Therefore, this panel aims to analyse how AVT contributes to the reclaiming of feminine empowerment through the depiction of more diverse representations of women and their experiences.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- The impact of the representation of women on the translation process of audiovisual media.
- The analysis of the use of language and cultural references aimed to convey feminine energy in AVT.
- The challenges and opportunities of translating feminist and gender-sensitive audiovisual content.
- The significance of incorporating diverse voices and perspectives in audiovisual translation.

Panellists will use their expertise in audiovisual translation, gender studies, and media studies to provide a critical reflection on the potential for AVT to promote a more equitable and inclusive portrayal of women and feminine energy.

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## Abstracts

**Simonetta Falchi** (Università degli Studi di Sassari), **Serenella Massidda** (Roehampton University)  
*Subtitling the Handmaid’s Tale for an Italian Audience*

The regained popularity of Atwood’s dystopian novel, *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985), produced by Miller’s TV adaptation, inspired a revival of interest in her work, topping the world’s bestseller lists in 2017. The great success of Miller’s adaptation with its most iconic markers, the maiden’s red coat and white wings, symbols of female empowerment, has enthused Atwood herself to respond by transforming Offred’s story from a novel of repression into a narrative of rebellion with her 2019 sequel, *The Testaments* (Danneil 2022).

The visual appeal of the *Handmaid’s Tales* series is derived from the faithful adaptation of some key passages into ‘painterly, cinematic, and other intertextual allusions’ (Kröller 2021: 194). Such audiovisual aspects of the adaptation of the *Handmaid’s Tales* for the media will be included in our analysis along with other dimensions, such as the treatment of Atwood’s ‘newspeak’ (Orwell 1949), the expressions conveying the imbalanced relationships between men and women through specific gendered utterances, as well as the powerful influence of the Italian official dubbed version on the subtitled version of the TV show.

This paper will describe the methodology devised for the linguistic and technical analysis of the Italian subtitled version of the *The Handmaid’s Tale* created by *Deluxe Toronto* for *Amazon Prime Video*, and measure how the content of the above-mentioned categories was transposed. Eventually, through the presentation of a series of case studies, we will report on the assessment of the linguistic and technical dimensions of the overall quality of the output.

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**Ilaria Parini** (Università degli Studi di Torino)

*Saints or Whores? Italian American Women in American AV Products and in Italian Dubbing*

Gender relations and sexuality play an extremely important role in the characterization of the stereotype of Italian Americans in American audiovisual products. Masculinity is seen as a paramount quality for an Italian American man, who is most often portrayed as somebody for whom the fact of being perceived as strong, virile, and manful is extremely important. The Italian American woman is also represented in a rather stereotyped way. In fact, the role of women usually falls into two separate and very distinct categories: the wives and mothers on the one hand, and the lovers on the other one. As far as the formers are concerned, they are honourable women who were usually virgins before getting married and embody the epitome of the virtuous Italian woman: the “Madonna”, the “saint”. They take care of the house chores, raise the kids, and tolerate their husbands’ unfaithfulness.

On the other hand, there are the mistresses, the whores, who are extremely different from the women who belong to the category of the “saints”. First, they look different. They are always glaringly dressed, and they wear heavy make-up. Secondly, they are gross and uncouth, and quite often they swear and make use of foul language. In short, they do not possess the finesse and pure qualities that are necessary to belong to the category of the wives and mothers. Besides conveying their ethnic origins, women’s speech connotes their belonging to one or the other category on various levels. The language they speak, in fact, is a powerful tool in the construction of their identity, and the use (or not) of taboo language is one of the elements which act as sign of identification. This presentation investigates the representation of Italian American women in a corpus of American films and in their Italian dubbed versions. Interestingly, Italian dubbing professionals seem to opt for a series of strategies which clearly aim at reinforcing the two stereotypes: the “saints” speak a rather standard and unmarked variety, while the dialogues of the “whores” are sometimes even more vulgar than the originals.

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**Luca Valleriani** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*Feminine Powerful Language in Translation: The Italian Dubbed Version of Domina (2021)*

Robin Lakoff, pioneer in the field of language and gender (1975), argues that the power differential in society between women and men is reflected in the use of a ‘powerless’ language by women, characterised by emphatic speech, and men’s use of a ‘flatter’ intonation, as indicator of a ‘powerful’ language (among other features). Lakoff’s outcomes (ibid.) may be considered as generalisations and stereotypes from a contemporary perspective, but the difference in women’s and men’s language is arguably a common stereotypical representation in audiovisuals, so they are still useful as a framework in this area.

Building on this notion of ‘powerless’/‘powerful’ language, this contribution focuses on the linguistic representation of the historical figure of Livia Drusilla in TV series *Domina* (2021). Thanks to the qualitative analysis of selected scenes, building on previous studies on the topic (Schirmer et

al. 2002, Sauntson 2020, Von Flotow and Kamal 2021) and the use of the tools of conversation analysis (Sidnell 2009) and software for acoustic analysis (e.g. WASPS), a first step in this research showed that Livia's utterances are short and direct and that her voice is monotone, thus marking a distance from her female peers. The ultimate aim of this study, instead, is that of looking at the translational strategies to recreate a similar idiolect in the Italian dubbed version, with a particular attention to prosodic and conversational traits, so as to verify whether the product can be considered as a deviation from the tendency to erase female energy in TT (Von Flotow and Josephy-Hernández 2019).

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## S08 – Future Horizons: Re-thinking Sociolinguistic Variation

**Convenors:** Siria Guzzo (Università degli Studi di Salerno), Renato Tomei (Università per Stranieri di Perugia)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 11:00-13:00** (Aula Filol 1, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

**Chair:** Siria Guzzo (Università degli Studi di Salerno), Renato Tomei (Università per Stranieri di Perugia)

**Siria Guzzo** (Università degli Studi di Salerno), **Renato Tomei** (Università per Stranieri di Perugia)  
*Language Contact and Variation in the Cook Islands: Music and Linguistic Creativity*

**Carmen Ciancia** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)  
*Investigating Covariation in UK Dialects*

**Giulia Pepe** (University of Westminster)

*Dialect and English in Italian Communities in the England: An Intergenerational Analysis*

**Chioma Juliet Ikechukwu-Ibe** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*How Coherent Are Ethnic Varieties of Nigerian English? A Verbal Guise Study of Accent Recognition*

### Panel description

Sociolinguistic variation research, throughout the years, has mostly focused on a key concept: “orderly heterogeneity” (i.e. linguistic diversity is not random, but it is systematically organised). Such systematic organisation is reflected in the correlation between linguistic variables and social factors. Traditionally, variationist studies in the three waves have examined how multiple social factors condition linguistic variables by focusing on one linguistic variable at a time. Recently, linguists have focused on the relationships between multiple linguistic variables in terms of coherence and social meaning (Beaman and Guy, 2022).

On the one hand, Guy and Hinskens (2016: 2) suggest that “the orderly variables that define the community should collectively behave in parallel: variants that index a given style, status, or social characteristic should co-occur.” On the other hand, linguists have developed different approaches, from bricolage (Eckert, 2008) – according to which speakers create a particular correlation of variants to signal their identity and to construct social meaning. Studies on translanguaging (Garcia and Wei, 2014; Baynham and Lee, 2019) have also focused on multi-level sociocultural meanings and acts of identity – a dynamic contemporary sociolinguistic approach to study linguistic variation by taking into account the use of elements from various linguistic repertoires (Tsiplakou 2016).

This panel focuses on this prime contemporary debate in sociolinguistics, more specifically concentrating on a post Covid-19 society, and encourages theoretical/methodological approaches, synchronic/diachronic analyses and perspectives investigating language variation and change in all its forms and across a wide range of linguistic and cultural contexts. More specifically, we invite the submission of contributions on original and unpublished studies.

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## Abstracts

**Carmen Ciancia** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*Investigating Covariation in UK Dialects*

Most sociolinguistic research deals with covariation between linguistic variables and social factors. Although many speech community surveys examine multiple linguistic variables, little systematic research exists, in the UK, on their co-variation with each other (Guy & Hinskens, 2016). This study addresses this prime theoretical debate in contemporary sociolinguistics by investigating whether (t) and (h) co-vary in Ipswich and Norwich. Data for (t) glottaling (n = 3,051 tokens), and (h) dropping (n = 603 tokens) was gathered by means of sociolinguistic interviews, reading passages and word lists from 24 respondents, stratified by social class, age, and sex. While (t) has completed its social change word-finally, (h) has historically been retained in both Norwich and Ipswich (Trudgill, 1983). Data was transcribed in Elan, with scripts run in Praat, and mixed-effects Rbrul regression analysis was carried out for each variable. Following Guy (2013), factor weights were extracted for each individual and then correlations were calculated using Pearson’s r. Results show that (t) and (h) are significantly correlated in Ipswich, indicating community coherence. A significant correlation between these two variables was also found amongst Ipswich females. By contrast, (h) dropping is not significantly correlated with (t) in Norwich, and no correlation surfaced when investigating potential gender cohesion between (t) vs. (h).

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**Siria Guzzo** (Università degli Studi di Salerno), **Renato Tomei** (Università per Stranieri di Perugia)  
*Language Contact and Variation in the Cook Islands: Music and Linguistic Creativity*

This contribution investigates the dynamics of language contact and variation in the Cook Islands, with specific reference to youth linguistic practices in the artistic domain.

While variationist studies have largely examined the relationship between multiple social factors and single linguistic variables (Campbell-Kibler 2007; Eckert 2008), the present research, in line with most recent studies on coherence and social meaning (Beaman and Guy 2022), includes multiple linguistic variables.

By observing and describing the youth-speak and the multilingual local context informing it (Rampton 1995; Zimmermann 2009; Nassenstein and Hollington 2015), the focus is on translinguistic practices (García and Wei 2014; Canagarajah 2013) and the relation between Māori and English, its world varieties, and English-lexified languages. The post-colonial variety of English known as ‘South Pacific English’, including the non-native varieties of English spoken in the Fiji, Samoa and the Cook Islands (Lynch 1998; Fischer 2002; Biewer 2008, 2015) has recently drawn much attention. However,

not many academic studies have exclusively concentrated on the language of the Cook Islands so far (Ciancia and Guzzo, 2023).

To fill this gap, the present contribution reports findings from fieldwork research carried out both in situ in 2009 and February 2020, and on the Web, drawing from a wide corpus of data, including interviews, audio/video recordings, and examples pertaining to the Cook Islands contemporary music scenario.

The artistic domain, and in particular the music context, represents an extremely relevant case, being a pivotal site of language contact, where creativity is used at all stages of the artistic process (Alim, Ibrahim and Pennycook 2009; Berger and Carroll 2003; Cooper 2004; Niaah 2010).

Taking into consideration variation and change in the context of different indigenous and non-indigenous music genres, the present analysis highlights the correlation between multiple social factors and multiple linguistic variables.

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**Chioma Juliet Ikechukwu-Ibe** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*How Coherent Are Ethnic Varieties of Nigerian English? A Verbal Guise Study of Accent Recognition*

Research on Nigerian English has identified linguistic features that differentiate three major ethnic varieties of English: Hausa English (HE), Igbo English (IE) and Yoruba English (YE) (Igboanusi 2006; Jowitt 2019). In these studies, features that mark HE include the mappings of [p] onto [f], [b] onto [v], [z] onto [ð] and [ɛ] onto [eɪ]. IE is characterised by realising [nʲ] as [ɲ], [eɪ] as [e], [ʌ] as [ɔ], and dentalisation of [t]. YE is characterised by [h] insertion and deletion, the realisations of [ʒ] as [ʃ], and [ə] as [ɑ:]. To test this ‘orderly heterogeneity’ (Beaman and Guy 2022), six native speakers, two each speaking in HE, IE and YE, served as speakers in a verbal-guise experiment. They read a 95-word paragraph on research with these ethnic markers of speech (Giles, 1979). 406 students from three Nigerian universities located in Southeastern, Southwestern and North Central Nigeria listened to the voices and indicated their perceived ethnicity of each speaker. Employing usage-based framework of linguistic coherence (Ghyselen and Grondelaers, 2022), the findings indicate 59.2%, 56.6% and 39% accurate ethnic identification of the HE, IE and YE speakers, respectively. While 35% of the respondents identified the YE speakers as IE, 14.7% of respondents identified IE speakers as YE. For the HE speakers, 15.1% and 10.5% of respondents identified them as IE and YE, respectively. On one hand, the statistics demonstrate a progressive change from ethnic-sounding speech to ethnic-neutral speech as a result of intercultural contact. On the other hand, the mistaken identity suggests potential linguistic solidarity among IE and YE speakers.

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**Giulia Pepe** (University of Westminster)

*Dialect and English in Italian Communities in the England: An Intergenerational Analysis*

In 2008, Italian mass emigration to the UK has re-started after forty years of dormancy (Tintori and Romei 2016). The previous mass migration to the UK dates back to post-WWII decades, when Italians migrated to industrial towns (Guzzo 2014), as a consequence of the immigration agreement between the UK and Italy. Conversely, London is the favourite destination of the post-2008 crisis generation (Licata 2019). Although numerically smaller than other migrations, the post-WWII Italian migration to the UK present some specific characteristics that attracted several scholars (Barni 2011; Di Salvo 2018; Guzzo 2014; Rocchi 2006) who observed how dialects played a central role in the preservation of a sense of regional identity in tight-knit communities. Starting from an analysis of the data collected by these scholars and comparing them with data collected for my doctoral research on the post-2008 migration (Pepe 2022), I show differences and similarities in the uses of dialects and the relation between dialects and English in translingual discourses of migrants from different generations. Considering three variables – the migration generation, the context of migration (London vs small towns), and the level of education of the speakers – I suggest dialects have different roles in

the negotiation and performance of migratory identities. The paper discusses the impact dialects had on language mixing realisations of post-war migrants, in particular at lexical borrowing level. On the other hand, post-2008 migrants refuse these types of practices since indexically loaded and engage with different instances of translanguaging (Mazzaferro 2018) to perform diverse identities.

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## **S09 – “How did it all begin?”: Historical Insights into the Teaching and Learning of English in Italy**

**Convenors:** Giovanni Iamartino (Università degli Studi di Milano), Polina Shvanyukova (Università degli Studi di Udine)

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 15:30-17:30** (Aula Filol 3, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Polina Shvanyukova (Università degli Studi di Udine)

**Cristina Guccione** (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

*Eugenio Wenceslao Foulques and his Contribution to the Development of English Language Studies in Italy*

**Silvia Pireddu** (Università degli Studi di Torino)

*“Broadcasting is the prerequisite of successful teaching”: English on the Italian Radio (1930-1950)*

**Eleonora Ravizza** (Università degli Studi di Catania)

*Learning English without a Teacher. A Pragmatic Study of Language Magazines in Italy from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present Day*

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 18:00-19:30** (Aula Filol 3, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Giovanni Iamartino (Università degli Studi di Milano)

**Alessandra Vicentini** (Università degli Studi dell’Insubria)

*A New Start for English Language Teaching and Learning in 1950s Post-Fascist Italy: Exploring Textual Genres, Glottodidactic Methods, and Educational Policies*

**Antonella Giacosa** (Università degli Studi di Torino), **Stefania Cicillini** (Università degli Studi di Torino)

*The Spread of CLIL and IGCSE Courses in Italy from the Beginnings to the Present*

### **Panel description**

The panel entitled ““How did it all begin?”: Historical Insights into the Teaching and Learning of English in Italy” aims to showcase historical research conducted in the area of English didactics in Italy starting with early modern times. In relation, for example, to the history of teaching and learning of French in Italy, which has been a burgeoning field of research since 1990s (see Pellandra et al. 1997; Mandich 2002; Minerva 2003), there has been only a limited amount of research into the history of teaching and learning of English in the Italian context (see Pireddu 2010; Vicentini 2012; Nava and Pedrazzini 2019). Against this backdrop, the general goal of this panel is to stimulate historical research and strengthen research impact in the area of the history of English language teaching and learning in Italy by inviting participants to explore a range of neglected aspects of ELT practice, including, but not limited to, the evolution of didactic materials and language teaching approaches; the contribution of individual teachers and authors of ELT textbooks; the broader social, educational and legislative contexts for the teaching and learning of English in a historical perspective. Apart from being interesting per se, historical research can enhance our understanding of current practical concerns by reviving pioneering ideas, approaches, methods, materials, etc., and thus contribute to the development of English language studies in Italy.

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## Abstracts

**Antonella Giacosa** (Università degli Studi di Torino), **Stefania Cicillini** (Università degli Studi di Torino)

*The Spread of CLIL and IGCSE Courses in Italy from the Beginnings to the Present*

Since the early 1960s the Italian school system has been gradually enriched by the consolidation of foreign language teaching, which was at the core of teacher training projects between the 1970s and the early 1990s (Balboni and Porcelli 2022). Over the years, the educational orientation in Italy has shifted from a French-oriented to an English-oriented instruction (Pulcini 2023). In the late 1990s, a turning point was the introduction of the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) method and the Cambridge International IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) programmes (Cenoz, Genesee and Gorter 2014). CLIL is a form of bilingual education that involves the teaching and learning of a subject through a foreign language (Coyle, Hood and Marsh 2010). It was promoted by the Council of Europe and the European Commission to improve students' multilingual competence in school and build intercultural communication skills (García, Kleifgen and Falchi 2008). At this favourable moment for multilingual practises, IGCSE programmes were introduced in Italy. So far, they have been offered by 350 secondary schools (Cinganotto, Wilson and Varriale 2020). These curricula, developed in the UK in the early 1970s (Clark 2014), consist of core and elective subjects that "provide a variety of pathways for learners with a wide range of abilities, including those whose first language is not English" (Cambridge International Education 2023). Despite the increasing spread of CLIL and IGCSE across the country, little research has examined how they have been brought together as a means of innovation in Italian schools (Cinganotto, Wilson and Varriale 2020). This study aims to shed light on the ways in which CLIL and IGCSE have paved the way for English as a medium of instruction in Italian schools. To this end, a document analysis was carried out to qualitatively investigate data from several sources such as academic publications, institutional reports, as well as educational websites.

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**Cristina Guccione** (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

*Eugenio Wenceslao Foulques and his Contribution to the Development of English Language Studies in Italy*

The polyglot Eugenio Wenceslao Foulques was certainly well-known in the cultural circles of Italy in the nineteenth century. Yet few scholars have examined his contribution to the development of foreign language studies in Italy (Gallo 1979; Nardella 1989, 1990, 1998; Guccione 2005). From 1870 onwards, Wenceslao Foulques settled with his family in Naples, where he worked for several publishing houses and provided Italians with various works that he edited or translated into Italian from several foreign languages (such as novels, poems, biographies, travel guides, grammar books, language and translation manuals and dictionaries). In fact, his private library still represents an important part of the National Library in Naples, as it is rich in valuable original editions of works by Dickens, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Byron and many others. The catalogue of the Italian National Library (OPAC) confirms that Foulques was one of the most prolific and active translators of foreign language works. He also authored several textbooks for the teaching of foreign languages aimed at Italian youth, adults, workers, and travellers. With regard to English, for example, E. Wenceslao Foulques was the author of the following publications reprinted between the 1870s and the first half of the twentieth century: *Chiave della grammatica inglese senza maestro*; *La lingua inglese senza maestro: grammatica popolare colla pronunzia figurata all'italiana: nuovissimo metodo pratico per imparare in breve tempo a parlare, leggere e scrivere*; *The English speaker: raccolta di aneddoti progressivi con note francesi ed italiane*; *Dialoghi di conversazione italiani-inglesi: con la pronuncia inglese figurata ad uso degli italiani*; *Manuale teorico-pratico di lingua inglese: compilato secondo il metodo di F. Ahn*; *Il tesoro della lingua inglese ad uso degli studiosi italiani e di tutti i docenti nelle lingue straniere, metodo Ahn-Robertson*; *Manuale di conversazione Italiana-Inglese con la pronuncia inglese figurata ad uso degli italiani, etc.*

The aims of this paper are two-fold: to introduce the figure and work of E. Wenceslao Foulques in the field of English learning in Italy and to analyse new items of one of his most comprehensive books, *Il Tesoro della Lingua Inglese, metodo Ahn-Robertson*, already examined in a previous study (Guccione 2005). Several new aspects of the above-mentioned textbook will be taken into consideration: the author’s contrastive approach to comparing English with Italian, some linguistic aspects such as the history of English, word formation processes and the use of verbs, and finally some specific topics included in the grammar textbook (e.g., precious metals and professions).

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**Silvia Pireddu** (Università degli Studi di Torino)

*"Broadcasting is the prerequisite of successful teaching": English on the Italian Radio (1930-1950)*

Radio broadcasting has been studied from various perspectives, including sociology, psychology, semiology, and political history. The radio has been evaluated as a form of entertainment, a source of information, propaganda, and a strategic tool to shape mass culture. From the start, the radio represented Modernity and seemed a promising tool to innovate communication, bring learning to remote places, improve and standardize teaching. In other words, the radio could innovate methodologies and enhance the role of English as a global language. Beginning with a review of previous research and examining archival documents, the paper will discuss broadcasting in language teaching from 1930 to 1950. The role of the BBC in spreading a standard, as well as the impact of the World Service, to support the Allied forces during WWII is common knowledge. On the other hand, the fact that EIAR pioneered the teaching of English as a foreign language on the Italian radio is less known. Although the available materials are often fragmentary and incomplete, Italian archival evidence (*Teche Rai; Discoteca di Stato*) allows us to reconstruct both the political and social context of the English language broadcast, as well as examine the technical and methodological aspects of foreign language teaching on air.

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**Eleonora Ravizza** (Università degli Studi di Catania)

*Learning English without a Teacher. A Pragmatic Study of Language Magazines in Italy from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present Day*

As testified by the publication of several influential coursebooks such as Millhouse (1851), de Roever Lysle (1894), and Reggiani (1907), the late nineteenth century/early twentieth century saw the emergence of a new public, wishing to learn English "senza maestro". In addition to traditional didactic materials such as grammars, reading books, etc., autodidacts could also rely on specialised

language magazines, a new type of didactic materials, which started to be published regularly, offering texts and exercises for self-study. By regularly practicing English on their own, learners, thanks to this new type of language learning material, became part of a new learning community (Sturiale 2020, Russo 2013). Though short lived, *Italian News* (1888), *The English in Italy* (1889-1892) and *Il poliglotta moderno* (1905-07) paved the way for the more recent experience of the multimedia magazine *Speak Up*” (1985-ongoing), which has been promoting the self-study of English in Italy for almost 40 years.

The aim of this paper is to investigate diachronically how the self-taught public has been interpellated (Lecercle 2019), i.e., addressed and involved in the learning activities presented in the multi-layered communicative acts found in language magazines. A pragmatic approach (Locher et al. 2023; Cummins 2019; Huang 2014) will allow me to analyse (1) the participation structure of the magazine articles and exercises; (2) the interactions between learners and the construction of learning communities; (3) the evolving attitudes toward foreign languages and foreign language learning.

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**Alessandra Vicentini** (Università degli Studi dell'Insubria)

*A New Start for English Language Teaching and Learning in 1950s Post-Fascist Italy: Exploring Textual Genres, Glottodidactic Methods, and Educational Policies*

In the aftermath of World War II and Fascism, Italy embarked on a journey of social and economic transformation, aiming to become a global industrial power. During this period of rebuilding, the study of foreign languages, including English, was reintroduced in schools and universities, signifying a fresh start for language education. However, this revitalization required the use and adaptation of existing didactic materials, which were repurposed to suit the new learning contexts by teachers who authored a variety of texts, with varying degrees of success.

By adopting the perspective of historical genre analysis (Berkenkotter 2007) and relying on recent studies on historical grammaticography (McLelland and Smith 2018; San Vicente 2019), this paper examines a corpus of English language teaching texts published in Italy during the 1950s, retrieved from the OPAC SBN National Catalogue (<https://opac.sbn.it/>) and consulted at the National Central Library of Florence and Bologna University Library.

A number of research questions are addressed: what textual genres were available for the teaching of English after the twenty-year-long Fascist autarchy? To what extent did the texts refer to glottodidactic methods and linguistic theories in their paratexts, and how did these elements manifest in their structure and content? Did they showcase any instances of innovation in this regard? Furthermore, the paper aims to identify the teachers involved in creating these materials and to explore whether the texts reflect the educational policies implemented by the Italian Ministry of Education during that time.

By shedding light on this hitherto under-researched period in EFL teaching and learning (see Vettorel and Lopriore 2014 and Nava 2019, 2021 for studies on 1950s textbooks), the paper aims to contribute to a broader research project focused on cataloguing all English teaching and learning texts published in Italy during the aforementioned time span (Vicentini 2023).

The findings hold potential to enhance our understanding of the ongoing discourse on the historical context of EFL teaching and sets the stage for further exploration in this area.

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## S10 – Identity, Community, Politics in Brexit Novels

**Convenors:** Lucia Esposito (Università degli Studi Roma Tre), Alessandra Ruggiero (Università degli Studi di Teramo)

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 15:30-17:30** (Filol 9, Cubo 28B, piano terra)

**Chair:** Lucia Esposito (Università degli Studi Roma Tre), Alessandra Ruggiero (Università degli Studi di Teramo)

**Chiara Sciarrino** (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

*“When Politics is built on fictions, it’s fiction that can help us get to truth”*: Ali Smith’s wordplay and the narrative trauma of contemporary times

**Alessandra Ruggiero** (Università degli Studi di Teramo)

*Antigone in the time of Brexit: Kamila Shamsie’s Home Fire between citizenship and unhomeliness*

**Claudia Cao** (Università degli Studi di Cagliari)

*Rewriting, reversing, resizing: on the targets of McEwan’s irony in The Cockroach*

**Lucia Esposito** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Jasper Fforde’s ‘Rabexit’: a tragicomic story of discrimination and empathic involvement*

### Panel description

In the late 1980s, Stuart Hall identified the success of Thatcherite conservatism in the way it addressed “the fears, the anxieties, the lost identities, of a people” underling how important it was to “think about politics in images” (Hall 1988: 167). Thatcherism was “addressed to our collective fantasies, to Britain as an imagined community, to the social imaginary [...] while the left forlornly trie[d] to drag the conversation round to ‘our policies’” (*ibidem*). The new “Great Moving Right Show” (Hall 1979) of the Brexit years seems to have been performed using the same patterns and cultural strategies of Thatcherism; its utopian or retrotopian (Bauman 2017) idea of ‘Making Britain Great Again’ has been constructed around new nostalgic myths of past imperial greatness and iconic images of a recovered splendid isolation that convey anti-European and anti-migrant sentiments.

Drawing on the shared idea that literature can not only encourage empathy and help create a sense of community (Nussbaum 2010) but also effectively “engage with emergent political realities” (Shaw 2018: 16), our panel intends to focus on novels dealing with the impact of Brexit on the life, thoughts and feelings of British society. Speakers are invited to pay particular attention to the political and cultural debates surrounding Brexit, with a focus on issues that can include migration and identity, nationalism, patriotism and cosmopolitanism, post-imperial nostalgia, Englishness or Anglo-centric Britishness, insularity, borders and borderlands.

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## Abstracts

**Claudia Cao** (Università degli Studi di Cagliari)

*Rewriting, reversing, resizing: on the targets of McEwan's irony in The Cockroach*

Parodic rewriting, scale representation of reality, and animal allegories are among the most widespread formal and hermeneutical strategies in satire. McEwan's *The Cockroach* (2019) – a parody of Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915) – refers to the old master of these tropes, Jonathan Swift, and it updates the satiric genre to address a contemporary target. *The Cockroach* can be defined as a “parodic satire which aims at something outside the text, but which employs parody as a vehicle to achieve its satiric or corrective end” (Hutcheon 1985: 62). The real targets of McEwan's novella are indeed the communication strategies of the Brexit Party and the inner contradictions of its propaganda. By placing the economic and political plan of ‘Reversalism’ at the centre of narration, McEwan suggests that his novel's protagonists are a personification of the contradictions of Brexiters' ideology. Since the Leave Party has based its propaganda on feelings such as the sense of community in contrast to the threat of otherness, and on emotions such as the fear of invaders' invisibility and omnipresence, the ‘cockroach men’ of McEwan's novel serve as the emblem of otherness *par excellence* and they embody the pervasive presence of foreigners starting from the human features that conceal their real identity. McEwan's irony alludes to Brexiters' cultural beliefs – sense of belonging and the memory of a glorious past (Eaglestone 2018) – only to overthrow them: the sense of ‘being one of us’ is here ironically overturned, and the cockroach has no memory of that collective past which it rather contributes to erase. This paper analyses the narrative and rhetorical strategies adopted by McEwan as he mocks and discredits the foundations of Brexiters' ideology and propaganda.

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**Lucia Esposito** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Jasper Fforde's 'Rabexit': a tragicomic story of discrimination and empathic involvement*

The paper analyses Jasper Fforde's dystopian allegory *The Constant Rabbit* (2020) as an effective example of counter-narrative aimed at unmasking the counterfeits of the Brexit spectacle of power. The novel uses tragicomic Orwellian satire to make sense of the unspeakable truth of the fracture occurred within the nation itself and to exorcise the trauma of the split. Focused on a ‘quintessentially’ English village in which a family of anthropomorphized rabbits suddenly becomes the object of ‘leporiphobic’ intolerance, the story is narrated from the point of view of “someone who is complicit within a discriminating society. [...] [F]rom the human side of the discriminators rather than the

discriminates” (Fforde-Harper 2020). In so doing, it forces readers to confront their own prejudices, feelings on complicity, and contradictions of conscience and to focus on the little changes that every individual could accomplish in order to really make a difference. In fact, the novel leverages the emphatic and cosmopolitan power of narrative (Nussbaum 2010) and the transformative potential of its ‘stirring words’ (Benedetti 2021: 53) to promote an altruistic ethical attitude that help literature “play a crucial role in our thought about how we live as individuals and as communities because of its deep involvement with personal and communal identity and because it broadens and reflects on our ability to think, feel and argue” (Eaglestone 2018: 2).

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**Alessandra Ruggiero** (Università degli Studi di Teramo)

*Antigone in the time of Brexit: Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire between citizenship and unhomeliness*

Since its inception on the stage in Classical Greece, Antigone has been a key figure whenever the role – and rules – of patriarchal states have been questioned, and the controversial late twentieth-century interpretations of Sophocles' drama by theorists such as Lacan, Irigaray, Žižek, and Butler have lately investigated the ethical and political issues raised by the tragedy. These issues, which are still pivotal in contemporary cultural discourse, have been explored in the manifold rewritings and adaptations of the play which have been written in the twentieth century and after. Drawing upon Bhabha's concept of the “unhomely” in literature (1992), this paper aims at discussing Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire* (2017), which adapts the Sophoclean contrast between natural laws and human laws to explore the clash between society, family and religion in twenty-first-century post-Brexit Britain (Eaglestone 2018, Shaw 2021). The novel, which focuses on two British Muslim families living in contemporary London, highlights how difficult it is to define national identity and belonging when minorities are concerned, particularly when citizenship has become contingent rather than assured, and is used by the State as a weapon, as it is the case with Britain in the last two decades. The novel is part of a wider reflection by Shamsie on the Brexit vote, that she considers to have been “about those on the margins standing up to those at the centre of power”, and the consequence of the hate and fear against “the idea of The Migrant [...] more than the reality of it” (Shamsie 2017b).

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**Chiara Sciarrino** (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

*“When Politics is built on fictions, it’s fiction that can help us get to truth”*: Ali Smith’s wordplay and the narrative trauma of contemporary times

Ali Smith’s “Not a Christmas Story” appeared in the *New Statesman* in December 2016, six months after the Brexit vote. While pointing to a brewing refugee crisis, Smith’s prose blooms into a kind of effortless punning and repetitive wordplay that she developed further in her subsequent fiction. Starting from this short story, the paper will try to show how the fictional method of Smith’s Seasonal Quartet and the most recent story “Wake” (2023) encapsulate the broad national mood of Britain in the aftermath of the 2016 EU referendum (Eaglestone 2018), by translating a chaotic, impoverished, and shrunken realistic image of the world into a series of incoherent concepts and descriptions of it. Besides, Smith’s focus on the borders of the imagined national community pushes the novel form to a political limit, demanding new ways of writing about collective identity. The border becomes the location for potential transgression, a “threshold to new places, possibilities, multiplicities” (Smith 2019), which inevitably lead to and are represented by new narrative forms which can be continually shaken-up, played with, and turned over and yet, as Alison Gibbons (2019) states, strongly remain anchored to “reality”. Smith’s artistic approach to politics and the way she intertwines political commentary with her unique narrative techniques will be analyzed. Following Lejla Mulalić’s (2020) point about the absence of an explicit political voice, a discussion of Smith’s portrayal of marginalized voices and of her exploration of the potential of art which can inspire social change in the face of political challenges will be also carried out.

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## **S11 – Imaginative Kin-Making: Narrating Alternative Forms of Kinship in Survival Literature and Fiction**

**Convenors:** Rossella Ciocca (Università di Napoli L'Orientale), Marta Cariello (Università degli Studi della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli)

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 15:30-17:30** (Aula Filol 2, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Rossella Ciocca (Università di Napoli L'Orientale)

**Safinaz Saad** (University of Bamberg)

*Friendship as Surrogate Kinship from a Feminine Narrative Perspective*

**Francesca Guidotti** (Università degli Studi di Bergamo)

*'A little less than kin, and more than kind': Kinship in Shakespeare's Henry V*

**Rossella Ciocca** (Università di Napoli L'Orientale)

*Queering Maternity. Narratives of Alter-Families in Feminist Fiction*

**Marta Cariello** (Università della Campania Campania Luigi Vanvitelli)

*Composting and Capsizing: Exploring the Implications of Becoming-With in Inequalities*

### **Panel description**

In *Making Kin in the Chthulucene: Reproducing Multispecies Justice* (2016), Donna Haraway engaged in the thorny question of survival for a planet already fast travelling towards its demographic and environmental collapse. She addressed the question from a critical post-human and post-anthropocentric stance, affirming the need to reintroduce the practice of caring for the earth at every scale, and to fight against the current mass extinction of species, from the complex perspective of both 'the Born and the Disappeared'. She meant, by this, not to disjoint the (apparently opposed) necessities of guaranteeing reproductive justice and safety for peoples subjected to genocides, forced sterilisations, missing generations, and at the same time of finding ways to reverse the general population growth. Since the intersection between reproduction justice and environmental concerns is intimately connected to the human capacity to reverse spoliative policies of natural resources and habitats, in a pro-active sense, the feminist philosopher posed the personal and theoretical question of how to lighten our species footprint by creating innovative and enduring relationships without necessarily 'making more babies'.

Taking the cue from this need to engage scary demographic perspectives, we'd like to explore narrations in which the idea of survival is connected to new forms of 'becoming-with', of 'symbiotic assemblages', or, also, of making kin, making new families as something other/more than entities tied by genealogy or biological bonds, together with the possibilities of lateral, transversal and exogenous adoption practices. We are especially interested in inviting submissions tackling the role of these alter-families and alter-communities in coping with forced migrancy, ethnic or racial cleansing and climate change induced crises. Proposals are welcome from a number of different *genre* languages which include, but are not limited to, novels, poetry, drama, personal essays, memoirs, film, tv series, and other storytelling practices.

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## Abstracts

**Marta Cariello** (Università degli Studi della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli)

*Composting and Capsizing: Exploring the Implications of Becoming-With in Inequalities*

Compost is one of the most “seductive” figures employed by Donna Haraway in *Staying with the Trouble. Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016), certainly for its powerful idea of ultimate entanglement, beyond death and therefore beyond the true limit and threat to “human life”, both on the personal level and on the eco-disastrous collective level. Compost also resonates, covertly or overtly, in our everyday dealings with waste and discard; a call into the possibility, here too, of overcoming the finitude implicit (necessary?) in objects and lives that contain their own end, their own “time”. But does the metaphor of compost contain an inherent violence and, as Dixia Ramírez-D’Oleo has recently proposed, a “need for death” in order to (re)generate that does not overcome relational (and racial) inequalities? Does it reaffirm violent asymmetries even more deeply? How does the unspeakable proximity of death in the waters of the Mediterranean relate to the politics (and poetics) of compost, especially in the way we, as scholars, address and interact with those deaths, those bodies, those lives and their time?

These are some of the questions I would like to pose and leave open to conversation, in what is an initial exploration of the critical seduction of compost, its premises, and its implications.

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**Rossella Ciocca** (Università di Napoli L’Orientale)

*Queering Maternity. Narratives of Alter-Families in Feminist Fiction*

“The task is to make kin in lines of inventive connection as a practice of learning to live and die well with each other in a thick present.” (Haraway 2016, 18) With these words Donna Haraway in 2016 started to reason on the role of new possible forms of ‘oddkin’ to contribute to the defense of our life on this planet.

Drawing examples from narratives as different as Margaret Atwood's speculative fictions (2003, 2009, 2013) and Arundhati Roy's latest social fable (2017), this contribution aims at inquiring into new practices of kin-making, in particular from the perspective of adoptive forms of maternity and inter-species conception assemblages. Conceived as an answer to survival in discomfort and devastation, these narratives on the one hand express the more recent urgency of resisting the progressive environmental collapse and on the other they address the older, but still strong, necessity of denouncing and contrasting atavistic forms of ethnic violence, and religious, castal and gender discrimination. In both cases, from nightmares of apocalyptic destruction and traumas, a possibility of survival emerges only in more inventive, less structured, ways of making family and building alternative communities: beyond singularities, looking for innovative relational ontologies (Braidotti 2013), making for a renewed sense of collectivity based on unexpected embodied combinations and collaborations.

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**Francesca Guidotti** (Università degli Studi di Bergamo)

*'A little less than kin, and more than kind': Kinship in Shakespeare's Henry V*

In her book *Staying with the Trouble* (2016), Donna Haraway admits having first thought of the incongruous intersections between the words "kin" and "kind" after reading Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Now, an idea inspired by Shakespeare may well be used to address Shakespeare in critically original ways. In biological terms, kinship pertains the nature of a human being in so far as it is determined by consanguinity: your next of kin starts with your parents, first and foremost with your mother, given the principle of "mater semper certa". In terms of culture, kinship also provides means for transmitting status and property, including noble titles and kingship, from generation to generation. Usually, in Shakespeare's plays these two versions of kinship have little if anything to do with the idea of kindness: both natural and cultural kinship often lead to tragic instances of prevarication, as is certainly the case of *Henry V*, whose eponymous hero is first and foremost described as "warlike", though worthy of assuming "the port of Mars". To the youthfully callow Henry and to his flimsily young nation fierce war, no matter how violently destructive, is a viaticum for survival and self-assertion. Yet, we would like to provide a different interpretation of the play whereby, much in line with Haraway, looming mother figures seem liable to instil in belligerent men alternate versions of survival, based on the deliberate promotion of a connectedness and wilful interaction with other fellow creatures deserving special care; this leads to the foreshadowing of alter-communities and alter-families, i.e. to "making kin".

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**Safinaz Saad** (University of Bamberg)

*Friendship as Surrogate Kinship from a Feminine Narrative Perspective*

In response to Nada's breaking news of the suicide of one of her colleagues, Nada's aunt advises her that in order to guarantee the survival of their non-blood kin who reject the traditional institution of family; they need to learn to assimilate forms of kinship that keep them connected and protected within the human warmth of the group. In *Blue Lorries*, a novel by Egyptian writer Radwa Ashour, Nada, born to a French mother and an Egyptian father belongs to the postcolonial generation of the post 1956 revolution in Egypt. Being a middle-class professional translator who deliberately eschews marriage and traditional motherhood, she portrays a substitute form of kinship based on the common foundation of disillusionment shared by her peers, such as Arwa, Siham, and her best friend Hazim. This paper offers an intersectional analysis (using gender, location, class) of the expression of Nada's subjectivity as a female representative of an individual, who survives using alternative forms of kinship to confront the despair of lost potential in the aftermath of a failed revolution. The analysis examines how the novel presents an unconventional mode of kinship through the friendship between Nada and Hazim on a small scale. Additionally, it aims at exhibiting how the novel emphasizes the importance of belonging to or forming alter-communities on a larger scale by highlighting the consequences of their absence on different characters. In addition to intersectionality as a methodology, this paper borrows Stuart Hall's concept of the necessity of constant 'production and reproduction' of the Self in transforming societies as a precondition for survival.

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## **S12 – “In the presence of English”: Informal English Language Learning in Italy**

**Convenors:** Maria Pavesi (Università degli Studi di Pavia), Francesca Bianchi (Università del Salento)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 15:00-17:00** (Aula Filol 3, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Francesca Bianchi (Università del Salento)

**Maria Pavesi** (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

*‘The Informalisation of English Language Learning through the Media’: A National Research Project on Italian Students’ Undetected L2 Experiences and Processes*

**Serena Ghiselli** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

*‘The World-Wide English’: The Internet as a Language Learning Tool*

**Elisa Ghia** (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

*What drives L2 Viewers’ Informal Access to English? A Case Study on Audiovisuals at the University of Pavia, Italy*

**Paola Leone** (Università del Salento), **Emanuela Paone** (Università del Salento)

*Exploring University Students’ Motivations and Beliefs in Informal English Exposure to Media: A Qualitative Study*

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 17:30-19:30** (Aula Filol 3, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Maria Pavesi (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

**Francesca Bianchi** (Università del Salento)

*Videogame Dialogue as Input for Language Learning: An Analysis of Lexical Coverage*

**Maicol Formentelli** (Università degli Studi di Pavia), **Raffaele Zago** (Università degli Studi di Catania)

*Complexity Matters in TV Dialogue as Input for Informal L2 English Learning: A Corpus-Based Description*

**Giuliana Regnoli** (Università degli Studi di Pisa), **Nicoletta Simi** (Università degli Studi di Pisa),

**Gianmarco Vignozzi** (Università degli Studi di Pisa)

*Informal Language Learning through Online Media. Some Methodological Considerations*

**Maria Grazia Sindoni** (Università degli Studi di Messina)

*Gains and Losses with ChatGPT in Informal English Language Learning Scenarios*

### **Panel description**

As we live in a ‘new linguistic dispensation’ (Aronin et al. 2013) centred around multilingualism and multiculturalism, technology galore and unprecedented mobility of people and linguistic artefacts (Benson 2021), L2 English is moving out of the language classroom while language learning is becoming increasingly informal, i.e., unguided, naturalistic, mainly incidental (Dressman and Sadler 2020). Individually, extensive contact with English language media is primarily driven by entertaining, professional, social and knowledge-seeking intents (Sockett 2014), while ‘communities of practice’ and ‘contact zones’ reflect L2 English participants’ engagement in joint activities online. These radical changes in linguistic ecology call for ‘a new model of what constitutes a linguistic environment for learning’, to account for the complexification of linguistic landscapes where second language acquisition (SLA) is dynamically embedded (Arnbjörnsdóttir and Ingvarsdóttir 2018).

Starting with Berns et al. (2007), informal learning of English has been investigated on a large scale in several European countries; yet, research data on the current changes in L2 users' behaviours and attitudes in Italy are still scarce (Pavesi and Ghia 2020). Furthermore, there is a need to examine English-language media as a source of informal language input. This panel will present the findings of the first stage of the PRIN project 'The informalisation of English language learning through the media' (Prot. 2020NNJTW3), while generally welcoming contributions on:

- Extent, types and modalities of access to English out-of-the-classroom through the media.
- Emically-oriented investigations of behavioural patterns, language beliefs and motivations in informal contact with English.
- SLA-oriented, corpus-based descriptions of English-language media input (e.g., audiovisual dialogue, web-based genres, videogames).
- English SLA development in informal settings.

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### Abstracts

**Francesca Bianchi** (Università del Salento)

*Videogame Dialogue as Input for Language Learning: An Analysis of Lexical Coverage*

The impact of extramural encounters with English in videogames on L2 English learning is high (Sundqvist and Wikström 2015). However, linguistic analysis of the language of videogame dialogue is scarce (Schmitt 2019). Rodgers and Heidt (2021) analysed lexical coverage – i.e., the vocabulary size needed for unassisted comprehension of texts (Nation 2006) – in a corpus of ten videogames. However, their corpus included "not only the scripted language used by characters in the game but also the language used for user interfaces, menus, in-game books, narration, tutorials, etc." (Rodgers and Heidt 2021: 219), which impedes direct comparison with previous literature on lexical coverage in written and spoken texts (e.g., Nation 2006; Webb and Rodgers 2009). The current study duplicates the analytical methods of Rodgers and Heidt (2021) and previous studies on lexical coverage on a corpus of nine videogames from three different genres. Our corpus however exclusively comprises the scripted language used by characters in the game. The lexical coverage of our corpus proved close to that of other types of scripted language such as films, dramas, sit-coms and sci-fi programmes (Webb and Rodgers 2009 a, b). Besides presenting the analytical method used to identify lexical coverage and our quantitative findings, the presentation will discuss the notion of lexical coverage with specific reference to Italian learner-users of English, and outline further steps for a more complete analysis of the lexical profile of the language of videogames.

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**Maicol Formentelli** (Università degli Studi di Pavia), **Raffaele Zago** (Università degli Studi di Catania)

*Complexity Matters in TV Dialogue as Input for Informal L2 English Learning: A Corpus-Based Description*

The spread of digital devices and new media has led to a gradual shift in L2 English learning which increasingly favours (extensive) informal contact with the language in leisure activities, potentially leading to incidental learning and language acquisition (Sockett 2014; Dressman and Sadler 2020). This calls for a description of English-language media, major sources of language input learner-users are exposed to (Pavesi and Ghia 2020). As part of the PRIN project 'The informalisation of English language learning through the media', the present study aims to assess grammatical complexity in audiovisual dialogue. Within recent research on audiovisual dialogue complexity (e.g., Perego, Del Missier, Stragà 2018; Zago 2019), this study adopts a register-functional approach (Biber, Gray, Staples, Egbert 2022) to measure clausal and phrasal complexity, with a view to comparing TV dialogue to spontaneous conversation. The following questions are addressed: 1) Which syntactic features contribute to the expression of grammatical complexity in TV dialogue? 2) To what extent does TV dialogue approximate spontaneous conversation in grammatical complexity? Moving from the Sydney Corpus of Television Dialogue (Bednarek 2018), major syntactic patterns of complexity, i.e. finite/non-finite dependent clauses and noun-phrase pre- and post-modification (Biber, Gray, Staples, Egbert 2022), are identified using POS-tag sequences. The normalized frequencies are then compared to corpus findings on English conversation. Initial results show that TV dialogue approximates spontaneous conversation for syntactic complexity, in line with recent findings on Anglophone films (Formentelli, Galiano, Pavesi 2023), which corroborates the hypothesis that audiovisual dialogue represents 'optimal input' (Long 2020) for L2 learner-viewers accessing English in the wild.

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**Elisa Ghia** (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

*What drives L2 Viewers' Informal Access to English? A Case Study on Audiovisuals at the University of Pavia, Italy*

Informal contact with foreign languages takes place through a variety of input types, including audiovisuals (AVs), with access to original-version AV contents having become the preferred setting of informal contact with English also in dubbing countries (Sockett 2014; Kusykh 2020; Muñoz 2020; Pavesi and Ghia 2020). Although much research to date has been devoted to informal L2 practices and the potential of AV input in language learning, only few studies have focused extensively on participants' underlying motivations (Sundqvist and Sylvén 2016; Trinder 2017; Kusykh 2020; Arndt 2023). To address this under-researched area, the present study explores AV genres and the main drives to access AVs in English extramurally. Data are part of a larger-scale investigation (PRIN project 'The informalisation of English language learning through the media') and were collected through a questionnaire administered to 1,091 students from several disciplines at a medium-sized Italian university. The main factors driving viewers towards AVs are explored from both an etic and an emic perspective through quantitative and qualitative-thematic analysis, and are accompanied by data on frequency and intensity of access, preferred genres, and viewing modalities. Findings show an orientation towards L2 learning and knowledge seeking, but also an appreciation for English, which contributes to viewers' engagement and enjoyment of AV products. The main factors at play suggest that informal L2 practices are driven not only by a desire to acquire familiarity with the L2, but also by an enjoyment of the language itself and an instrumental use of English-language media. Additionally, accessibility and sociability affect viewers' choices, which vary across different AV genres.

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**Serena Ghiselli** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)  
*'The World-Wide English': The Internet as a Language Learning Tool*

Nowadays access to the Internet both to study and for leisure activities is ubiquitous. The Web contains an extensive range of contents, of which about 55% is in English (W3Techs 2023). In Iceland a collective seven-year research project was carried out on English language exposure across the lifespan (Arnbjörnsdóttir and Ingvarsdóttir 2018). One of the findings was that students learn more English vocabulary through access to the media in their free time than through focused learning. Studies about the increased informal contact with English were carried out also in other European contexts (Berns *et al.* 2007; Kusyk 2019; Muñoz and Elke 2020) and Italy is seeing a similar trend, but research about naturalistic English learning in the country is still scarce (Pavesi and Ghia 2020). The ongoing PRIN project 'The informalisation of English language learning through the media' aims at filling this research gap. The goal of this presentation is to give a descriptive overview of a set of data collected in the framework of the PRIN project at the University of Salento, Lecce. A survey about English media access and usage was administered to 995 University students. This contribution focuses on the access to the Internet, in particular to YouTube, social media, blogs and forums, web pages, podcasts, radios, apps and e-commerce websites. Data about the frequency and the length of online activities carried out in English will be discussed in relation to students' self-assessed level of English, their attitude towards the language and their socio-cultural background.

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**Paola Leone** (Università del Salento), **Emanuela Paone** (Università del Salento)  
*Exploring University Students' Motivations and Beliefs in Informal English Exposure to Media: A Qualitative Study*

This study presents a qualitative research design aimed at exploring the driving motivations, behavioural patterns, and beliefs of university students regarding their informal exposure to English through various media sources. The preliminary research findings are also discussed. The study draws upon the complex dynamic system perspective (Larsen-Freeman 2017) and the L2 Motivational Self System theory (Ushioda 2001; Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011; Dörnyei, MacIntyre, Henry 2015) as theoretical frameworks, considering the three dimensions of the L2 Motivational Self System: Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and L2 learning experience. The sample for this study comprises 24 participants, purposefully selected from university students who took part in a previous quantitative study exploring informal exposure to English through media. Participants were chosen based on a) extreme cases, such as high/low exposure to English as a Foreign Language in informal contexts, b) degree course (i.e., humanities students versus STEM students). Data collection involves audio-recorded semi-structured interviews, which are transcribed and analysed using Transana. Content

analysis (Vaismoradi *et al.* 2016) is employed to describe and interpret individual and common traits among the informants. The study reveals the multifaceted nature of motivations, behavioural patterns, and beliefs in the context of informal English exposure through media, and underlines the blurred boundary between formal and informal language learning. Furthermore, the study offers valuable implications for language educators and policymakers.

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**Maria Pavesi** (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

*‘The Informalisation of English Language Learning through the Media’: A National Research Project on Italian Students’ Undetected L2 Experiences and Processes*

Due to contemporary globalisation, multilingualism and media saturation, the availability of English through traditional and new media has increased at an unprecedented rate. Concurrently, intense contact with the language outside educational settings is leading to a growing informalisation of L2 learning and use (Arnbjörnsdóttir and Ingvarsdóttir 2018; Reinhardt 2022). Yet, little is known of the acquisitional and sociolinguistic impact of media-induced contact with English in Italy. The national PRIN project presented in this panel aims to probe students’ private worlds and undetected English learning and appropriation processes in four territorially differentiated Italian universities. It is informed by theoretical premises integrated in a multidimensional research framework building on: (i) the spatial and temporal dimensions of the complex, self-directed contact with English in informal language learning environments (Sockett 2014; Dressman and Sadler 2020; Benson 2021), (ii) language input as a *sine qua non* in second language acquisition (VanPatten, Keating, Wulff 2020), (iii) the variability and fluidity of media affordances and registers (Berber Sardinha and Veirano Pinto 2021), (iv) the evolving attitudes and stance towards English as ENL/EFL/ESL/ELF in contemporary European societies (Linn, Bermel, Ferguson 2015; Aiello 2018). The presentation will outline the project research phases including: the construction of a fine-grained questionnaire on university students’ contact with English; ethnographic investigations on L2 media users’ behaviours, motivations and attitudes; longitudinal studies of untutored high-exposure respondents. A few selected results on the overall sample of ca. 4,000 collected questionnaires will be critically discussed to set the scene for the project-related contributions to the panel.

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**Giuliana Regnoli** (Università degli Studi di Pisa), **Nicoletta Simi** (Università degli Studi di Pisa), **Gianmarco Vignozzi** (Università degli Studi di Pisa)  
*Informal Language Learning through Online Media. Some Methodological Considerations*

English informal learning has been investigated in several European countries (e.g., Sockett 2014; Kusyk 2020; Montrul 2020). Yet, the Italian context is under-researched, with the work by Pavesi and Ghia (2020) being an exception. The Project ‘The informalisation of English language learning through the media’ aims at reducing this gap. This paper discusses the experimental design of the Pisa Research Unit’s empirical investigation of incidental vocabulary acquisition through exposure to YouTube and Instagram videos. More specifically, building on previous research (Perez 2020) and the results of a large-scale survey about university students’ extramural exposure to English, we intend to investigate whether exposure to salient lexical items in short online videos contributes to incidental vocabulary learning, both in terms of vocabulary breadth and depth. The paper exemplifies the multimodal input to be used in the study through the example of video recipes. This genre is characterised by simple syntax but includes low-frequency lexical items (e.g., phrasal verbs such as *boil over* and specialised terminology such as *broil*) which are, nevertheless, salient in this specific discursive domain and therefore noticeable. The contribution will also discuss the variables to be controlled in the empirical study, both in terms of the participants’ characteristics (e.g., language proficiency, vocabulary knowledge, habits) and of the input presented (e.g., lexical features, frequency of exposure, context variation), the rationale for the distribution of the participants into focus and control groups and the measures we intend to use to assess the effect of the individual variables on incidental vocabulary acquisition.

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**Maria Grazia Sindoni** (Università degli Studi di Messina)

*Gains and Losses with ChatGPT in Informal English Language Learning Scenarios*

A chatbot is an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered application that simulates human-like, natural, and spontaneous conversations with text and/or voice outputs (Fryer *et al.* 2020). These AI-powered chatbots learn how to reply to and otherwise interact with users by drawing on large human language datasets (Jiang *et al.* 2022). Hence, they can meaningfully engage users in interaction, consistently learn from previous exchanges, improve over time, and function as tireless language-learning tutors (Hockly 2023). One of the most advanced AI-powered chatbots is ChatGPT (*generative, pre-trained transformer*), which builds on automated speech recognition powered by Natural Language Processing (NLP). ChatGPT has been welcomed as a dramatic improvement for informal self- and peer learning in English language scenarios, as it can simulate authentic conversations, identify and capture nuances of meanings in context, translate and provide step-wise grammar guidance (Rettberg 2022). However, the ease and availability of the tool do not equate with quality and reliability vis-à-vis control of outputs (Kohnke, Moorhouse, Zou 2023). Paraphrasing Kress' sociosemiotic and multimodal notions of 'gains' and 'losses' in meaning making (2005), this presentation will illustrate some opportunities that ChatGPT offers in the context of informal English language learning in terms of authenticity and access to a wealth of contents and information, as well as challenges and risks, including plagiarism and perceived de-professionalization of English language teaching, with ensuing decrease in pragmatic and cultural understanding of how knowledge-making is processed by the human mind.

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## **S13 – Language Learning and Blindness: Inclusive Linguistic, Cognitive and Pedagogical Perspectives**

**Convenors:** Sergio Pizziconi (Università della Calabria), Emilia Petrocelli (Università per Stranieri di Siena)

**Saturday, September 16, 2023 – 9:30-12:00** (Aula Filol 3, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Sergio Pizziconi (Università della Calabria), Emilia Petrocelli (Università per Stranieri di Siena)

**Sergio Pizziconi** (Università della Calabria)

*Blind People Were not Made Equal: Off-campus Learners of English with Visual Impairments*

**Maria-Imperio Arenas González** (Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, Tunja, Colombia)

*Foreign Languages for Blind and Visually Impaired People*

**Eleonora Borromeo** (Independent scholar)

*Beyond Formal Accessibility: Exploring Good Practices to Foster Language Learning in Visually Impaired Students*

**Giulia Staggini** (Università degli Studi di Genova)

*An online EFL Course for University Students with Dyslexia: What Works for Blind and Low-vision Learners*

### **Panel description**

With a focus on English as an additional language, the panel aims to kickstart and develop an interdisciplinary reflection on how language sciences cope with the specific educational needs of blind learners of foreign languages. On the one hand, new technologies are instrumentally solving many concrete problems in developing in-class and extra-class activities for blind people. On the other hand, the reliance on technology tends to comfort teachers and educators that the sheer accessibility of written material meant by and for people who can see is the ultimate solution to all educational problems. However, the language and the textual devices used in those texts might be inefficient and ineffective to blind and other visually impaired learners, especially when blindness occurs at birth or at a very early age. Within the framework of the universal design of instruction, the panel's goal is to better understand linguistic, textual, multimodal and cognitive features to design learning objects that fit in with a variety of perceptual schemata in which the visual channel might also be partially or totally shut, with or without previous optical experience. Moreover, since many technologies devised for blind learners have also proved beneficial to students with other special educational needs, such as dyslexia, the panel welcomes the demonstration of new digital or analogical tools and best practices to improve teaching and learning activities in the inclusive classroom.

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## Abstracts

**Eleonora Borromeo** (Independent scholar)

*Beyond Formal Accessibility: Exploring Good Practices to Foster Language Learning in Visually Impaired Students*

Several elements are to be taken into consideration when visually impaired (VI) learners are involved in the language classroom, whether they are blind or with low vision. Each of these elements implies possible obstacles in the use of language learning materials and in the full participation of VI learners in the learning process that, if not properly addressed, risk to make the learning process itself ineffective. Adopting a perspective of inclusion and universal design for learning, some issues strictly connected with the peculiar learning needs of VI students, concerning oral and written texts, will be examined, exploring possible solutions and good practices. The examples will concern essential areas of language learning and teaching such as language skills (*Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening*), testing, interaction patterns, tasks and textbooks, among others.

Rejecting the common assumption that converting language materials into accessible materials is sufficient to make a learning context inclusive and suitable for VI learners, a focus on the meaning of *accessibility* will clarify how achieving formal access doesn't guarantee gaining content access. Starting from an analysis of existing accessible language learning materials for VI learners, the actual usability of these materials will be evaluated in order to understand if the mere readability of the text can be considered an effective inclusive learning tool, emphasising how the opportunity to use materials, which are accessible in terms of readability and usability with specific typhology instruments, is not a synonym for inclusion in the classroom unless appropriate teaching strategies and methodologies are applied.

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**Maria-Imperio Arenas González** (Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, Tunja, Colombia)

*Foreign Languages for Blind and Visually Impaired People*

This research experience began in a classroom, when a foreign language teacher felt herself "handicapped", as she had not been prepared for working with blind people. Through Braille, the teacher entered into her student's world, and tried to define methodologies in order to develop autonomy of blind and visually impaired people, to integrate them actively into society, and to make future teachers be aware of the implications when living in the same situation. This study is framed in pedagogical principles such as characteristics in the learning process, teachers' adaptation to their students' needs and conditions, equal opportunities of access to education, and blind and visually impaired people's rights to be treated as others are. We insist on the fact that the so-called inclusion

implies a process of exclusion. The idea that we defend is that for there to be true inclusion, those who do not have particular conditions are required to be part of the world of those who do, and vice versa. Otherwise, we will continue in a world of inequalities that are too evident and that do not seek an egalitarian society in terms of learning and living conditions.

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## Sergio Pizziconi (Università della Calabria)

### *Blind People Were not Made Equal: Off-campus Learners of English with Visual Impairments*

This introductory talk will sketch a few profiles of non-university students who joined courses of English for beginners in Siena and Rende, Cosenza. Learners were interviewed after collecting their informed consent. Not being enrolled in any university degree program The participants represent diverse ages, socio-economic conditions, sight conditions, and skills in using tools devised for blind and low-vision people.

Participants' life stories highlighted the interaction between three sets of variables:

- 1) demographic: especially age and working condition;
- 2) internal: level of acceptance of the sight condition and its development: social relation attitudes;
- 3) external: opportunities for training in the use of technologies for visual impairments; the ability to write and read in Braille, which translates into different sets of tools and practices for English language teaching.

Along with the diverse profiles of university students discussed in the presentations, this introduction aims at a reflection on the multi-dimensional nature of the learners beyond a pre-eminent common condition.

## Giulia Staggini (Università degli Studi di Genova)

### *An online EFL Course for University Students with Dyslexia: What Works for Blind and Low-vision Learners*

The answers to Special Educational Needs (SEN) of students living with dyslexia and those of blind and low-vision learners have often overlapped and fed each other on theoretical and practical aspects. The number of university students with SEN, dyslexic learners particularly, has been increasingly growing in the last decade in Italy (Cardinaletti, 2019), and data confirm lower scores on English tests than university students without SEN. Studies have proven that students with dyslexia have difficulty learning foreign languages due to little phonological and orthographical competence, scarce attention and motivation, and specific working memory processes (Daloiso, 2016).

In order to enhance this profile of learners with vocabulary skills and increase their motivation, an online course in English as a foreign language (EFL) was designed and particularly aimed at university students with dyslexia. The paper focuses on the designing process of this course and on the macro and micro aspects of this design that can migrate into the structuring of EFL courses for visually impaired and blind learners.

The course consists of 3 units with 10 e-tivities each, exploiting Immersive Educational Environments such as *ThingLink* and *Cospaces* (Staggini, Cersosimo 2021). The main reference framework was the

Online Education Design Theory developed by the ITD-CNR of Genoa. The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) was used since it has proven to be very effective with learners with dyslexia and/or other disabilities as it provides multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement (Rose, 2000).

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## **S14 – Language, Discourse, Translation and/in Video Games: Levelling Up Italian Research about Gaming**

**Convenors:** Pietro Luigi Iaia (Università del Salento), Silvia Pettini (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 15:30-17:30** (Aula Filol 5, Cubo 28B, II)

Chair: Silvia Pettini (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

**Federico Corradini** (Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia)

*Gamers' Jargon in Action: The Negotiation of Discursive Practices as a Resource for Cooperative Gameplay*

**Rossella Latorraca** (Università degli Studi di Salerno), **Jacqueline Aiello** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*"That face will ruin everything": A Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis of Gamers' Reactions to Horizon's Female Protagonist*

**Giuseppina Di Gregorio** (Università degli Studi di Catania)

*Playing with History: A Multimodal Analysis of The Invisible Hours*

**Pietro Luigi Iaia** (Università del Salento)

*Remastering Transcreative Strategies. A Diachronic Investigation of Approaches to the Transcreation of Humour in Role-Playing Video Games*

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 18:00-19:30** (Aula Filol 5, Cubo 28B, II)

Chair: Pietro Luigi Iaia (Università del Salento)

**Giovanni Raffa** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*Stuttering Humour in Portal 2: Subtitling Stand-up Inspired Jokes in Videogame Dialogue*

**Paolo D'Indinosante** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*Remediating Multilingualism in The Secret Games Company's Kim*

**Silvia Pettini** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Languaging and Translating Playable Museums for Game Tourists: The Case of Father and Son*

### **Panel description**

The study of video games has seen a surge of scholarly interest since the late 1990s. Nowadays, this multimedia interactive entertainment software and the related cultural, social, and economic phenomenon identified as gaming are self-sustained research topics in Game Studies. They are investigated through an interdisciplinary framework that encompasses “anthropology, sociology, psychology, narratology, semiotics, cultural studies, genre studies, media studies, and computer studies, to name but a few” (Mangiron 2017, 76). In addition, video games and gaming are also explored, although to a lesser extent, focusing on language uses and reformulation in disciplines like – among others – Education and Language Learning (see Gee 2003, 2004, 2007, Gee and Hayes 2011, Lombardi 2013, Peterson 2013, Prensky 2001, 2006, Reinders 2012, Thomas 2011), Linguistics and Discourse Analysis (see Ensslin 2012, 2014, Ensslin and Balteiro 2019, Iaia 2016), and Audiovisual Translation Studies (Bernal-Merino 2015, O'Hagan and Mangiron 2013, Pettini 2022). Against this background, the convenors welcome papers discussing theoretically and/or empirically the linguistic and/or translational dimension of video games and gaming. This panel aims to: (i) assess the state of the art of research in the fields of English Language and Translation Studies examining the

language(s) of video games; (ii) increase the number of studies illustrating to what extent video games give rise to new forms of communication, new vocabularies, meanings, textual genres, and discourse practices also from a cross-cultural viewpoint; and (iii) enhance Italian scholars' contribution to the academic debate on the topic.

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## Abstracts

**Federico Corradini** (Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia)

*Gamers' Jargon in Action: The Negotiation of Discursive Practices as a Resource for Cooperative Gameplay*

The investigation of gaming language from an interactional perspective can show how gamers engage in the co-construction of new meanings and expressions, which can include both game-specific terminology and general popular slang (Ensslin 2012) and how such new meanings are mobilized and negotiated as part of gamers' competence and expertise (Goodwin 1994). However, studies of how gamers' jargon is used in spoken interactions are still not many (e.g. Piirainen-Marsh 2010, Rusk and Ståhl 2022). By examining the interactional mobilization of jargon from a (multimodal) conversation analytic perspective, this presentation explores gamers' discursive practices in the context of Fortnite, a popular online battle royale video game. The study is based on a corpus of three hours of online interactions between three English-speaking gamers playing in a cooperative mode while at a

distance. It includes the recordings of the vocal chat and the participants' synchronized screens. The analysis focuses on the formation of gaming practices related to the naming of in-game locations and actions (e.g. the use of denominal verbs to create neologisms), and on how gamers rely on jargon as one of the resources that can be exploited to organize and coordinate cooperative gameplay. Overall, the study illustrates how the investigation of gameplay as interaction can shed light on the micro properties of gamers' jargon at the level of turn design and lexical choice, as well as how gamers' jargon is exploited as one of the resources contributing to accomplish gaming practices as a whole (Reeves, Greiffenhagen, Laurier 2017).

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**Paolo D'Indinosante** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*Remediating Multilingualism in The Secret Games Company's Kim*

Over the last two decades, the ever-expanding field of video game studies has been enriched by excellent work on the various linguistic dimensions of video games and gaming, as researchers have examined not only the language used in video games as texts and translation in game localisation, but also paratextual discourse about video games, language in gamers' interactions and the place of video games in language teaching and learning. However, the combination of the textual complexity of modern video games (Wolf 2001: 7; Pettini 2022: 402) with the multifocality of such commendable scholarly efforts appears to have resulted in a relative scarcity of detailed discussions of in-game language (Heritage 2021: 42). Taking its cue from other rare linguistic investigations of specific titles (see, e.g., Ensslin 2010; 2011; 2012: 60-63, 84-86, 137-41; Iaia 2016: 105-24; Goorimoorthee, Csipo, Carleton, Ensslin 2019; Heritage 2021: 111-218; Villanueva and Ensslin 2021; Pettini 2022), my paper aims to contribute to tackling this shortage through a close analysis of the overlooked politics of language within The Secret Games Company's *Kim* (2016), an interactive adaptation of Kipling's 1901 novel of the same name. This open-world top-down role-playing game has recently received some scholarly attention for its remediation of colonialist attitudes and practices (Meaning 2020). Yet, given the ideologically charged multilingualism of its main source (Montefiore 2007; Trivedi 2013; Eyre 2021), The Secret Games Company's *Kim* also offers itself as a useful case study to explore the underresearched process of adapting multilingual literary texts for an interactive medium. Triangulating multimodal discourse analysis (Ensslin 2012; 2015; Gee 2015; Hawreliak 2019) with insights from video game adaptation studies (Flanagan 2017; Elkington 2021; Thomas 2022) and postcolonial game studies (Mukherjee 2017; Mukherjee and Hammar 2018; van der Merwe 2021), this paper will focus on the linguistic representation of player and non-player characters in *Kim* the computer game with a view to highlighting significant similarities and differences with *Kim* the novel in terms of multilingual characterisation.

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**Giuseppina Di Gregorio** (Università degli Studi di Catania)

*Playing with History: A Multimodal Analysis of The Invisible Hours*

As argued by Gee (2005), videogames can be regarded as social semiotic spaces, for this reason, referring to Kress (2020), it is possible to analyse them in terms of affordances, in order to define the process of transposition and related representation strategies that are used to portray characters, paying specific attention to linguistic features. Moreover, according to Makai (2022), players have

the possibility to change how the semiotically encoded storyworld unfolds, thus creating a series of new products or different forms of appropriation.

Considering this premise, the present paper aims at performing a multimodal analysis of *The Invisible Hours*, from the point of view of both social semiotics and intermedial studies, since it can be seen as a paradigm to study the diverse modes of representation and “to address the full range of lexical and phraseological elements as well as con-, hyper-, sub-, inter-, and paratextual elements that constitute videogame discourse” (Ensslin and Balteiro 2019: 3). Released in 2017 by Game Trust, and designed by Tequila Works, it can be described as a complex murder mystery in VR, in which players freely explore an intricate web of interwoven stories within an ancient mansion. Promoted as a piece of immersive theatre with many tangled threads, the plot is based on a quest to solve the mysterious murder of Nikola Tesla, thus representing an opportunity to further problematise the concept of reference, as theorised by Hutcheon (1988; 1989; 2006) and Hadley (2010).

Focusing on the role played by historical characters and their multiple afterlives on screens, this paper seeks to explore the distinctive features of the transposition process that involves literary texts and videogames, in order to assess the peculiarities of videogames discourse and to shed some light on the nature of transfiction and transmedial storyworlds.

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**Pietro Luigi Iaia** (Università del Salento)

*Remastering Transcreative Strategies. A Diachronic Investigation of Approaches to the Transcreation of Humour in Role-Playing Video Games*

This paper enquires into the strategies for the transcreation of humour in video games (Bernal Merino 2015; Mangiron 2018) from a diachronic perspective. It focuses on the disparaging or exaggerated characterizations in fantasy role-playing video games (RPGs) addressing general audience (Pettini 2022). A number of postgraduate students of “Foreign Languages and Literatures” and “Translating and Interpreting” were commissioned the reformulation of a selected corpus of extracts from *Final Fantasy IX* and *Ni No Kuni*, specifically for the potential publication of their remastered versions. The official target texts of those RPGs resort to several diatopic and diastratic varieties, such as – among others – *Romanesco*, *Siciliano* and *Sardo*. The latter strategy received mixed reviews on the part of gamers, who claim that regionalisms do not match the counterfactual setting of the adventures and affect the overall readability of scripts, as well (Iaia 2015). Yet, the use of language varieties is one of the most common strategies for the localization of humour in Italy (Di Ferrante and Attardo 2022), which can persist despite the association between RPGs and counterfactual alternatives to reality (Sample 2020). The analysis of the participants’ versions will help to explore the strategies to localise humour from a diachronic viewpoint (since the remaster would appear at least thirteen years after the original release of *Ni No Kuni*). The results are expected to shed light on the influence of the

multimodal interpretation on retextualization, revealing whether alternative strategies are actually selected, or regionalisms are still considered the most appropriate solution.

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**Rossella Latorraca** (Università degli Studi di Salerno), **Jacqueline Aiello** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*"That face will ruin everything": A Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis of Gamers' Reactions to Horizon's Female Protagonist*

Female characters are greatly underrepresented in video games and they often exhibit markedly sexualized physical features (Beasley and Standley 2002; Downs and Smith 2010). More than once has the design of female characters bent to the male audience's preference for attractive characters, and strong female characters have frequently been received as lacking physical appeal and femininity (Herbst 2004; Labre and Duke 2004). Aloy is the female protagonist of the videogame *Horizon Zero Dawn*, a post-apocalyptic version of the United States dominated by AI, and its sequel *Forbidden West*. While Guerrilla Games intentionally decided to place a female leader at the core of the video game, her attributes have unleashed controversial reactions among gamers on social media, especially in light of the augmented realism of the character's appearance in the sequel and the reveal of her sexual orientation in the sequel's DLC. Informed by studies on the representations of female (Heritage 2021; Pettini 2020) and non-heteronormative (Harper *et al.* 2018) video game characters, the present paper applies a corpus-assisted discourse analytical approach to the analysis of user replies to selected viral Facebook, Twitter, and Steam posts about Aloy's appearance and sexual orientation. Specifically, it applies Wortham and Reyes' (2021) approach to discourse analysis of linked events to uncover the systematic organization of linguistic signs that users employ to voice narrated characters, to position participants and to make certain contextual aspects salient. In so doing, it aims to shed light on how users discursively construct and perpetuate attitudes, ideologies, and the positioning of self/other in online talk about video games.

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**Silvia Pettini** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Langaging and Translating Playable Museums for Game Tourists: The Case of Father and Son*

The role gamification plays in creating immersive experiences for museum visitors has attracted considerable scholarly attention (see, for example, Hammady, Ma, and Temple 2016; Solima 2017; Yannoutsou and Avouris 2012; Yannoutsou *et al.* 2009; Xu and Buhalis 2021). In Italy, several gamified experiences or ‘playable museums’ have been developed and, thus, investigated as manifestations of the emerging phenomenon of “game tourism”, a new form of media tourism based on virtual experiences aimed at encouraging players around the world to visit the real places where these educational and marketing tools are set (Di Raddo 2020; Solima 2018; 2021; Viola 2018). Since the linguistic and translational dimension of game tourism is a neglected research area, this paper aims to foster debate on the topic from the perspectives of Game Linguistics (Ensslin 2012; Ensslin and Balteiro 2019) and Game Localization (Bernal-Merino 2015; O’Hagan and Mangiron 2013; Pettini 2022). For this purpose, it presents a pilot corpus-driven case study which explores the original English version and the Italian translation of *Father and Son* (TuoMuseo 2017–), the first video game series designed for and published by an archaeological museum, namely the National Archeological Museum of Naples (MANN). This successful adventure game is a free downloadable app available in eight languages, and given its narrative-driven nature, it represents a new form of communication, storytelling, and learning in which players/visitors interactively explore the museum, its history, and collections and they immerse themselves in different historical eras and real settings of the Neapolitan city (Giulierini 2023).

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**Giovanni Raffa** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*Stuttering Humour in Portal 2: Subtitling Stand-up Inspired Jokes in Videogame Dialogue*

*Portal 2* (2011) was a success in the videogame world and turned into a critical darling across the years. The premise of a dystopian and tragic futuristic sci-fi setting was craftily paired with charismatic and humourous characters. Among those, Wheatley, the robotic sphere, stands out both as the only British-speaking character and the most consistently recurring comedic relief throughout the game. Considering the success of Wheatley’s voice actor, Stephen Merchant, as well as his past as stand-up comedian and his return to the stage after the game release, the links and influences between the stand-up comedy world and the humorous content in videogames are to be considered a relevant stage for the development of the field. By focusing on *Portal 2* as a case study, this study addresses the textual structure of humour delivery in the videogame through original theory on joke structure in stand-up comedy and relevant research on the polysemiotic nature of the videoludic text, following through with observations on videogame and humour translation. Merchant characterized Wheatley’s voice with erratic speech patterns and other features that are mostly exclusive to oral dialogue, therefore the analysis inquires on the way oral-specific features of the characters have been rendered in the Italian subtitling of the text, with particular attention to translation and subtitling choices that are non-compliant with the norms of subtitling practice in professional audiovisual translation. The study concludes with remarks on the strategies employed in translating the humorous utterances of the character throughout the first half of the videogame.

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## S15 – Names as a Gateway to Interdisciplinary Horizons

**Convenors:** Luisa Caiazzo (Università della Basilicata), Emilia Di Martino (Università degli Studi di Napoli Suor Orsola Benincasa)

**Saturday, September 16, 2023 – 9:30-12:00** (Aula Filol 5, Cubo 28B, II piano)

Chair: Luisa Caiazzo (Università della Basilicata), Emilia Di Martino (Università degli Studi di Napoli Suor Orsola Benincasa)

**Paola Attolino** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*Proper Names as Idiom Carriers in American Politics*

**Tehezeeb Moitra** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Suor Orsola Benincasa)

*Lost, Found and Imagined Identity-Spaces: Does a Rose by Any Other Name Really Still Smell as Sweet?*

**Alessia Battista** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Parthenope)

*“I wish we had our own words to describe ourselves”:* A Corpus Linguistics Analysis of the Anthroponym butch in Stone Butch Blues

### Panel description

Names are so inextricably woven into the fabric of everyday life that they often end up going unnoticed in their self-evidentness. Yet, they may take on multi-layered configurations of meanings depending on their contexts and co-texts of use, thus playing a crucial role in shaping both actual and imagined settings. In other words, even though, technically speaking, names have no content which contributes logically to the linguistic meaning of utterances containing them (Coates 2006; 2009; 2012), their meaning potential may turn them into effective vehicles of human goals and agendas (Azaryahu 1996; 2011; 2012; Berg and Vuolteenaho 2009). For this reason, introducing naming concerns into the study of language and identity offers a further lens to explore a broad range of interdisciplinary horizons. As outlined above, naming can ultimately be seen as the allocation of meaning resulting from the manipulative and/or creative use of names for ideological, economic, political or artistic purposes. For example, one of the basic features of tourism is the experience of “other” places, i.e. tourism is about exploring maps of meanings where several types of names contribute to directing and shaping tourists’ perception of the identity of the places that they visit (Caiazzo, Coates and Azaryahu 2020). As bynames, they may create affinity or raise social barriers; provide a sense of in-group solidarity, or enforce social control (Di Martino 2022). In (post)colonial settings, names are often controversial as they point to identities lost, imposed upon and/or regained (Casagrande 2018). In such contexts, renaming can be dissonant and open to multiple, sometimes competing interpretations, like the practice of naming itself. A further telling example is provided by artistic and literary names which, as part of the creative process, are resourceful tools for the analysis of works of art and literature (Fowler 2012). By drawing attention to the role that names may play in the multifaceted process of identity formation, the horizons we suggest to explore include, but are not limited to, possible interconnections between names and art and literature, branding, class, ethnicity, gender, heritage, history, politics, and tourism.

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## Abstracts

**Paola Attolino** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*Proper Names as Idiom Carriers in American Politics*

A famous Latin maxim quotes, “Nomina sunt consequentia rerum”, that is “names are the consequences of things”. Yet sometimes the essence of things may be vividly captured in a proper name encompassed in a certain expression or catchphrase (Lehrer 1994). Indeed, proper names are not mere linguistic signs (Coates 2006), but social constructs that may be often highly politicized, assuming connotational or metaphorical-metonymic meanings able to (re)construct social reality. In this respect, numerous examples of proper names used in specific co-texts and contexts are offered by American political language. Expressions like “full Ginsburg”, “Johnson treatment”, “Richards

effect”, “McConneling” or “Sister Souljah moment” (Goddard 2023) are worth investigating because of their intertextual character, since they allude to specific socio-cultural, historical and/or ideological (con)texts.

Working on a number of glossaries of American politics, political dictionaries and newspaper corpora, the present paper aims at offering an overview of those peculiar American political expressions that have in common the presence of a proper name (whether it is a given name, a family name or a nickname), in an attempt to explore both the origins and the fortune of such phraseological units, especially from a diachronic perspective, and to stimulate a reflection on the way attitudes, practices, power relations and value judgments may be rapidly and efficiently conveyed by the use of specific anthroponymic elements, which may become idiom carriers of a given group (Fairclough 1996; Pierini 2008), hence a tool to critically examine the interplay among language, society and culture in a particular context.

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**Alessia Battista** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Parthenope)

*“I wish we had our own words to describe ourselves”*: A Corpus Linguistics Analysis of the Anthroponym *butch* in *Stone Butch Blues*

The contribution will analyse one of the identities subverting heteronormative gender and sexual orientation systems, namely butch identity, which has conventionally been considered a gender expression. More specifically, the presentation will focus on the linguistic analysis of *Stone Butch Blues* (Feinberg 2014), a historical fiction novel set in 1960s-1970s United States and published in 1993 by Leslie Feinberg, an activist and journalist, as well as a butch, like the main character of the book, Jess. The study falls within the scope of anthroponomastics as it focuses on a name given to individuals or to groups of people (Hough 2016), and explores the notions of ‘byname’, an unofficial name added to someone’s first name to identify them, either to create affinity or raise social barriers (Brylla 2016), and ‘improper name’, which is a complex proper name consisting of both the first name and the byname (Van Langendonck 2007). Relying on corpus linguistics, the analysis will explore the language used by Jess and will consider the theoretical framework of the so-called grammar of names (Anderson 2008), while also bearing in mind the features of proper and prototypical names (Motschenbacher 2020). The aim of the investigation is to determine whether and how the anthroponym *butch* plays a major role in Jess’ identity formation process.

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**Tehezeeb Moitra** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Suor Orsola Benincasa)

*Lost, Found and Imagined Identity-Spaces: Does a Rose by Any Other Name Really Still Smell as Sweet?*

The primary focus of this paper lies in the investigation of the toponymical questions that surround the act of (re)naming, which does not just consider who and what is being named, and who and what (entity) is doing the naming but more significantly, what the ramifications of this process are on the post-colonial subject that “bears the imprints of the colonial legacy, not just in relation to a colonized past, but in the constitutive role of the past in shaping the present” (Jabri 2012: 7).

The renaming of a place from Bom Bhaia to Bombay to Mumbai is much more than a political act of shuffling around letters of the alphabet, it is a far more layered and nuanced gesture upon which the unstable plates of Indian identity precariously rest. Drawing upon a combination of reference materials, which focus on the articulation of space, the paper will examine how the continued inconsistency in the articulation of space unfailingly recalls the past in the present in a way that is palpable in the lived experience of the evermore fragmented subject. The (re)naming process is intrinsically bound to representations of identity and harken Stuart Hall’s (Hall 1990: 402) argument that:

Identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language, and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we represent ourselves.

Conducting empirical research through an interaction between the three dimensions of social reality—lived experience, discourses (literary sources, especially diasporic, and media texts) and the social context (Morley and Brunson 1999 [1980, 1987]), the paper draws upon a combination of methodologies creating dialogues between them (Saukko 2003) so that our multiple ways of knowing are all made evident and recognized, as if viewing our object of study through a crystal, which does not only reflect externalities but also refracts them within themselves (Richardson 2000: 934).

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## S16 – Narratives of Conflict

**Convenors:** Elisabetta Marino (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata), Saverio Tomaiuolo (Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale)

**Saturday, September 16, 2023 – 9:30-12:00** (Aula Filol 2, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

**Chair:** Elisabetta Marino (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata), Saverio Tomaiuolo (Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale)

**Roberta Cimarosti** (Università della Calabria)

*The Rise of African English in Wole Soyinka and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's Childhood Memoirs*

**Gaetano Falco** (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro), **Francesco Meledandri** (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro)

*Discourses of War: Conflicts of Words and World Perspectives*

**Carla Fusco** (Università degli Studi di Teramo)

*Who are we? Searching for Identity through War: Geoffrey Hill's Mercian Hymns*

**Elisabetta Marino** (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)

*Re-membering Partition: No Return Address: Partition and Stories of Displacement*

**Saverio Tomaiuolo** (Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale)

*Speak Languages or Die! Translation and Conflict in Quentin Tarantino's Inglorious Basterds*

### Panel description

As reported by Paul Lafargue in *Reminiscences of Marx* (1890), for Karl Marx “a foreign language is a weapon in the struggle of life”; moreover, in his 1997 groundbreaking article “The Role of Language in Human Conflict: Prolegomena to the Investigation of Language as a Factor in Conflicting Causation and Resolution” (*Current Issues in Language and Society*), Paul A. Chilton asserted that every declaration of war may be described and studied as “a linguistic act”. Given these premises, it is possible to reflect on the fact that, since the nineteenth century, conflicts and wars have shaped history and culture, not just in the form of physical confrontations and fights involving nations and people, but also as discourses that have pervaded journalism, literature, and the arts. The rhetoric of antagonism has been as influential and effective as the hostilities in what are now termed the Global North and the Global South, raising issues related to conquest, power, and hegemony, both in pre-colonial and in post-colonial societies.

In this panel a special emphasis will be placed on the ways marginal/marginalised subjects have been directly or indirectly affected by such “conflictual” discourses and challenges, and on the impact that wars (and their consequences) may have on human and natural landscapes. We welcome papers addressing these themes from a wide range of perspectives, and focusing on fictional and non-fictional texts, figurative and plastic arts, performances, cinema (to name a few of the possibilities).

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## Abstracts

**Roberta Cimarosti** (Università della Calabria)

*The Rise of African English in Wole Soyinka and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's Childhood Memoirs*

After over forty years of research and academic debates about English in African countries, two macro-data have emerged: 1) African English is a pan-African and globalized standard variety with its own rules, features, and sociolinguistics (Bamgbose 1981, Bokamba 1982, Kamwangamalu 2019, Higgins 2009); 2) Creativity has a functional role in further stabilizing its linguistic dynamics, from lexico-grammar through cultural discourse (Mazrui 2004, Bokamba 2015), as well as to implement favourable language policies especially in the education system.

The autobiographies by two renown founders of African-English writing, Wole Soyinka's *Aké. The Years of Childhood* (1981) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Dreams in a Time of War. A Childhood Memoir* (2010), exemplify how African English emerged through a *transcreative* process whereby African languages and cultures 'translated' into a new form of English, in years that saw African protests and uprisings against British colonial rule and Nazi-fascism invasion. As we follow the protagonists' school days, their discoveries of how their society and languages relate with English institutions and British high and popular culture, the way they unwittingly enjoy combining them, we also learn the story of African English formation across intellectual struggles and challenges that the long-lasting scrambles for African resources and the colonial system may have undermined.

Making use of textual and discourse analysis and a cognitive socio-cultural approach (Wolf and Polzenhagen 2009) my paper pursues a threefold purpose: A) to analyze passages where socio-political and linguistic frictions dissolve into Africanized English; B) to consider whether further linguistic and stylistic features could be added to the existing taxonomies composing the description of African English; C) to provide concrete elements that may contribute to counter persisting reductionist narratives about the history, structure, and usage of African English.

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**Gaetano Falco** (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro), **Francesco Meledandri** (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro)

*Discourses of War: Conflicts of Words and World Perspectives*

This paper is part of a larger study focusing on how conflict discourse is enacted in different genres, both old and modern forms of genres, such as memoirs, diaries, proclamations, novels, newspapers articles, tweets, Facebook posts. Specifically, the study aims at providing a discursal representation of *war* across different centuries (i.e., from the 18<sup>th</sup> century through contemporary times). Discourses

are “ways of representing aspects of the world” (Fairclough 2003: 124), therefore different discourses involve different perspectives on the world. World perspectives are realized by means of both verbal and non-verbal sign systems; these must not be considered as isolated, independent units but as networks of semantic relationships, e.g. collocations, metaphors and other tropes, speech acts and types of exchanges, within the same text or among more texts.

On these grounds, this paper provides the findings of two case studies: a) the representation of the Napoleonic war through different forms of discourses, i.e. *hortatory* and *epideictic* discourses; and b) the building of conflict discourse in the Russia-Ukraine war exploiting the semogenic potential of language, e.g. the formation of new word clusters. Methodologically, the paper adopts the tools of discourse analysis (Fairclough 2003; Knoblock 2020), corpus-assisted discourse studies (Gillings et al. 2023, Harmann et al. 2011) and language history (Halliday 2003). The study is carried out on four corpora of texts, each representative of different genres. Findings from the corpora demonstrate how orders of discourse that characterized war during the Napoleonic era and which characterize contemporary times are formed, thus providing different conflict narratives.

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**Carla Fusco** (Università degli Studi di Teramo)

*Who are we? Searching for Identity through War: Geoffrey Hill’s Mercian Hymns*

Despite war is not the central theme of *Mercian Hymns*, Hill’s poem collection published in 1971, it appears as one of the significant motifs within the work.

*Mercian Hymns* explores various aspects of English history, mythology, landscape, and identity, with a particular focus on the region of Mercia, an ancient kingdom in central England. The poems touch upon various wars and battles, both ancient and modern, that have occurred in Mercia and their impact on the land and its people.

One of the recurring motifs related to war in the collection is the idea of violence and its consequences. Hill portrays the destructive nature of war and the lasting scars it leaves on the landscape and the collective memory of a place. He delves into the notion of historical guilt and the burden of the past, examining how war shapes and haunts the present. Furthermore, Hill explores the concept of heroism and its complexities in the face of war. He delves into the lives of historical figures and examines their motivations, struggles, and legacies. The poems often challenge traditional notions of heroism, questioning the glorification of war and shedding light on the harsh realities and personal costs associated with conflict. The focus of my work is to find out how personal and national identity can be outlined through the analysis of Hill’s poetic narrative.

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**Elisabetta Marino** (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)

*Re-membling Partition: No Return Address: Partition and Stories of Displacement*

76 years have elapsed since the dramatic Partition of the Indian Subcontinent: yet, its spectre continues to loom large over the three countries that were established following the end of the *Raj* and the liberation war that led to the formation of Bangladesh, in 1971. What was meant to be a moment of deliverance and triumph over the British ruler, in fact, was paradoxically marred by fratricidal bloodshed and atrocities, soon after the beginning of the relocation process. Traumatic memories of the largest peacetime migration ever recorded in human history (with its corollaries chaos, brutality, and unbound hatred) have been passed from one generation to the next, and still contribute to affecting current-day intercultural, interreligious, and interethnic relationships.

In the subtitle of her 2008 seminal anthology, *Bengal Partition Stories*, Bashabi Fraser described the Partition of Bengal as an *Unclosed Chapter*, thus underlining its resonance nowadays. Following in her steps, in an effort to shed light on the controversial and still underexplored partition of Bengal, Manjira Majumdar has compiled and edited a collection of ten short stories and a longer fictional piece meaningfully entitled *No Return Address: Partition and Stories of Displacement*, released in 2022. This paper sets out to investigate the feelings of uprootedness, loss, and dehumanization experienced by the protagonists, longing for a place to belong, while struggling to re-member, to piece together the memories of their shattered subjectivities.

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**Saverio Tomaiuolo** (Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale)

*Speak Languages or Die! Translation and Conflict in Quentin Tarantino's Inglorious Basterds*

During international conflicts professional or amateur translators (including individuals who are fluent in a certain language) have become essential either in acquiring information – working as infiltrators, spies and informers – or in playing a specific role in negotiations and treaties. In this respect, the association between war, conflicts and languages constitutes a paradigm that is inherent within translation dynamics, and which has been treated recently in a series of studies devoted to the issue of translation and/as war.

By adopting as a textual model Quentin Tarantino's provocative war movie *Inglorious Basterds* (2009), based as it is on a clash between nations, cultures and languages (in which translators and mediating figures play a pivotal role), we will investigate the relationship between language, translation, fluency and conflicts. In our analysis we will focus on three specific episodes of the movie that highlight the terse relationship between national language, (mis)translation and war. These three examples are indicative of the themes that characterize *Inglorious Basterds*, and which are inherent in the activity of cultural mediators as well.

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## **S17 – New Beginnings in Inclusive Language Practices and Media Accessibility**

**Convenors:** Antonio Fruttaldo (Università di Macerata), Francesca Raffi (Università di Macerata), Anna Mongibello (Università di Napoli L’Orientale)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 11:00-13:00** (Aula Filol 5, Cubo 28B, II piano)

Chair: Antonio Fruttaldo (Università di Macerata), Francesca Raffi (Università di Macerata), Anna Mongibello (Università di Napoli L’Orientale)

**Giuseppe Balirano** (Università di Napoli L’Orientale)

*Revoicing Criminality in AVT: The Haptic Function in Translation*

**Elena Di Giovanni** (Università di Macerata)

*The Intersemiotic Journeys of Andrea Chénier by Umberto Giordano and Mario Martone: History, Music, Performance and Audio Description*

**Roberto Esposito** (Università di Napoli L’Orientale)

*“I Am Also a We”: Equality Discursive Practices in Sense8*

**Gian Maria Greco** (Università di Macerata)

*Audiodescribing Comics: Ontological and Narratological Aspects*

**Monica Randaccio** (Università degli Studi di Trieste)

*Audio Description (AD) for the Stage between Participatory Practices and Inclusion: A Case Study*

### **Panel description**

Media accessibility (MA) is the research area dealing with the theories and instruments that provide access to media texts, products, services, and environments, thus shedding light on inclusive and exclusive social, cultural, and discursive practices (Díaz Cintas, Orero and Remael 2007; Díaz Cintas, Matamala and Neves 2010; Remael, Carroll and Orero 2012). Originating in the early days of this century, research on MA has blossomed in the past years (Deckert and Bogucki 2020), reaching maturity and benefiting from ever-more diversified interdisciplinarity, bearing witness to the relevance and potential of such a new research avenue: from translation studies to accessibility studies, from discourse studies to multimodal analysis. As Williams (1977: 21) once put it, “a definition of language is always, implicitly or explicitly, a definition of human beings in the world”, and as such, the study of linguistic, social, and cultural (in)equalities – among languages and media and/or in the access to/of knowledge, services, and entertainment – becomes a tool to prevent violence and oppression, leading to empowerment and social equality (Boisvert and Thiede 2020; Tahmasebian and Gould 2020). With this Panel, we aim to gather theoretical, methodological and empirical reflections on inclusive linguistic practices and the impact of media accessibility, stimulating a needed debate on (1) how media exist in and interact with the physical world; (2) how media affect users’ experience of that world; and (3) how this complex system may sometimes enable the discursive (re)production of inequalities. Contributions bringing together different standpoints and competencies are encouraged. In particular, papers can cover the following topics:

- MA and participatory practices;
- MA within the framework of human rights;
- MA experimental research;
- Audiovisual Translation (AVT) and discursive inequalities;
- Social activism through discourse(s) and media;

- The role of language and media in promoting equality;
- The role of language and media in representing minorities;
- Translation and interpreting across media and cultures as acts of resistance and change;
- Inclusive language and design for accessible Social Media;
- Integration and social justice through MA;
- Diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility;
- AI-powered media accessibility and non-discriminatory practices;
- Natural Language Processing (NLP) for MA.

Submissions are welcomed from a number of different approaches which include, but are not limited to, (critical) discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, multimodal (critical) discourse analysis, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, translation studies, among others.

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## Abstracts

**Giuseppe Balirano** (Università di Napoli L'Orientale)

*Revoicing Criminality in AVT: The Haptic Function in Translation*

Audiovisual translation (AVT) plays a pivotal and challenging role in making crime-related content accessible to a global audience (Cavaliere 2010; Balirano 2017, 2019, 2020; De Meo 2019). In particular, a significant endeavour in adapting the complex and multifaceted language of Italian organised crime lies in bridging the gap between the source and target languages' culture-specific criminal references and subcultures (Balirano and Fruttaldo 2021). Indeed, the language of organised crime encompasses a diverse range of linguistic expressions, including slang, jargon, code words, and specific discourse patterns used by criminals, law enforcement agencies, and legal professionals. These linguistic features often serve as markers of identity and social belonging within criminal communities, adding depth and authenticity to crime-themed media productions (Culpeper 2001; Pennycook 2010; Bednarek 2011, 2018). Against this background, this paper intends to explore the unique challenges and strategies involved in translating the representation of Italian organised crime on the small screen by focusing on the complexities inherent in the transferring of the cultural, linguistic, and sociolinguistic aspects of the Italian criminal language into its English audiovisual translation. Since touch and tactile sensations can convey various meanings, emotions, and information in communication (Allwood 2022), I will analyse specific haptic functions and their semiotic prosody. Since the haptic function is just one aspect of the broader field of multimodal communication which needs to be considered when dealing with accessibility issues (Iwasaki *et al.* 2018), a multimodal corpus of five Italian TV series is investigated by means of ATLAS.ti (2022) in

order to grasp what is conveyed in its English translation and what is left outside. Through its interdisciplinary approach, combining translation studies, accessibility studies, and discourse analysis, this paper wants to stimulate a necessary debate on the complex relationship between media, accessibility, and the (re)production of inequalities, contributing to a better understanding of how AVT can either reinforce or challenge culture-specific discursive representations.

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## Elena Di Giovanni (Università di Macerata)

*The Intersemiotic Journeys of Andrea Chénier by Umberto Giordano and Mario Martone: History, Music, Performance and Audio Description*

The story of Andrea Chénier is real: a poet martyred during the French Reign of Terror. Even the way his story is conveyed in Umberto Giordano’s opera *Andrea Chénier* is realistic to such an extent that it is often classified as a masterpiece of Verism. As a matter of fact, it portrays the intense and violent passions of the humblest layers of the society that led to the French Revolution and its aftermath, and it offers an accurate reconstruction of the historical context of those years. Faithful both to the story of the poet and to Giordano’s portrayal of *Andrea Chénier* in his opera, first performed in 1896 at Teatro alla Scala, is Mario Martone’s reading of the opera for his 2017 production of *Andrea Chénier*, staged again at Teatro alla Scala in Milan for the season premiere. Many a symbolic intersection can be identified in the stories that are weaved into the journey of Andrea Chénier from history to the stage, from Giordano to Martone: to mention but one, as Martone recalls in his director’s notes, Umberto Giordano moved to Milan to urge Luigi Illica to write the libretto for *Chénier*, but he only found shelter near the monumental cemetery, in a room with dozens

of statues coming from, or destined for, the cemetery. The first act of Martone's *Andrea Chénier* is set in a palace full of highly symbolic statues.

The thread that runs through all these rewritings and retellings is strong, complex and rich: it is precisely this intersemiotic richness that is at the core of this presentation, with one additional journey under the spotlight. In 2023, Teatro alla Scala staged Mario Martone's production of *Andrea Chénier* and made it accessible for persons with visual disability through audio description. Moving through a long path made of different codes and signs, from text to music, from music to performance, from performance back to text, my presentation aims to focus on two of the many intersemiotic journeys made by Andrea Chénier, namely the reading and staging of the original opera by Mario Martone and the reading and writing of the audio description that accompanied this production at Teatro alla Scala in 2023.

Audio description is a mode of transfer, an intersemiotic translation that turns images and all other visual stimuli into words, giving a linguistic structure to non-linguistic signs. The audio description of Mario Martone's faithful reading of Umberto Giordano's faithful reproduction of the story of Andrea Chénier stands out as a unique experience: by reading the original libretto, studying the settings and costumes, and carefully considering Martone's notes, the audio description for Teatro alla Scala has strived to render into words all these layers and their complex and fascinating degrees of faithfulness to history and artistic creation.

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## Roberto Esposito (Università di Napoli L'Orientale)

### "I Am Also a We": Equality Discursive Practices in Sense8

The sci-fi drama *Sense8* (2015–2018), directed by Lana and Lilly Wachowski and Joseph Michael Straczynski, is a "proud and loud" manifesto of intersectionality and empathy (Shaw and Stone 2021: 1). The eight protagonists, presented in their respective national contexts, are oppressed by social, ethnic, gender, and sexual discrimination. As a matter of fact, the show succeeded both in sensitising people's perception of diversity and promoting the importance of being emotionally connected the same way we are digitally globalised (Mincheva 2018: 32).

The present study investigates how *Sense8* employs specific thematic and discursive patterns to build equality and inclusivity. The narration revolves around experiences and thoughts shared by the characters, and mutual participation in personal suffering as an intersectional trope for inclusivity. Hence, the analysis of how diverse characters represent themselves, are represented, and interact in the series, provides insights into the role of media accessibility in fostering inclusive linguistic practices and social equality. To this purpose, a selection of relevant dialogues and discourses from the series will undergo a multimodal study based on Critical Discourse Analysis (Wodak and Meyer 2016). Namely, the research adheres to Discourse-Historical Approach (Reisigl and Wodak 2016) as not only does it examine discursive strategies and fields of action, but it also takes into account cultural and political contexts. This goes with the narration of the series, as reciprocal sustain among the protagonists never occurs randomly but rather according to circumstances: when one is in trouble, help comes mainly from those who have experienced the same pain, even if from a different social perspective.

Findings emphasise the significance of identity performativity (Jones 2016) and mutual support in encouraging inclusivity in media discourse. Therefore, by exploring the thematic and discursive patterns in *Sense8*, this study sheds light on the role of language and media in representing minorities to enable social activism and heterogeneous communities in which diversity is positively enhanced and protected. Moreover, it enhances the potential of Multimodal Discourse Analysis as an effective tool to explore the language “above the sentence”: pragmatics and discourse (Hazen 2010).

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**Gian Maria Greco** (Università di Macerata)

*Audiodescribing Comics: Ontological and Narratological Aspects*

Over the past few decades, comics have gained significant scholarly attention (Heer and Worcester 2009), particularly within the field of translation studies (Kaindl 1999, 2004; Zanettin 2008; Borodo 2015, 2016; Reyns-Chikuma and Tarif 2016). However, they have been largely overlooked in the domain of media accessibility (MA), specifically in relation to audio description (AD). This presentation aims to fill this gap by examining the unique aspects of comics in the context of AD. By drawing on Kruger’s research on audio narration (Kruger 2010, 2012) and Gibson’s theory of affordances (Gibson 1986), this study analyses the translational challenges that arise when dealing with comics in the context of AD. It argues that the AD of (print) comics requires a process of radical re-ontologisation, which fundamentally transforms the original artwork. Consequently, this process favours audio narration as a means of effectively conveying the narrative of comics over traditional AD practices. To support this argument, the presentation will conclude by discussing some illustrative examples.

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**Monica Randaccio** (Università degli Studi di Trieste)

*Audio Description (AD) for the Stage between Participatory Practices and Inclusion: A Case Study*

Audio description (AD) for the theatre has become a field of growing interest, both abroad and in Italy, as numerous publications over the last two decades testify. What I will illustrate and comment upon here is how the participatory practices of this type of AD have changed over the years and how they have benefited from different methodological and disciplinary fields (Fryer 2018; Di Giovanni 2021; Di Giovanni and Raffi 2022). After briefly showing how these participatory practices follow a hypothetical trajectory which makes AD for the stage more and more suitable for inclusion, I will concentrate on a case study to see whether a specific audio description for the theatre can exemplify some of these practices. The audio-described performance in question is *The Playboy of the Western World* by the Irish dramatist John Millington Synge, a play staged at the Dublin Theatre Festival in co-production with the Lyric Theatre Belfast in 2019. The audio description was facilitated by Arts & Disability Ireland with funding from the Arts Council. The inclusive practices found in this audio description are generally linked to a high degree of adaptation and manipulation of the original text, which interestingly are typical of and play a crucial role in any translation of a source theatre text (Randaccio 2022). The adaptive and manipulative practices of this audio description, a classic in modern Irish drama, can be mostly seen in the process of language simplification. To quote two examples: this process may be seen in the audio introduction of the audio description, in which mainly paratactic clauses, informative and concise lexis, together with the peculiar use of spatial deixis (Randaccio 2018), are employed; the programme notes state that the audio description is in “audio and plain text format” – as written on Arts & Disability Ireland site – and this helps to prevent negative reaction from end users, thus avoiding the association between accessibility and potentially patronising attitudes.

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## **S18 – New Beginnings in Specialised Communication: Practices, Research, Teaching**

**Convenors:** Paola Catenaccio (Università degli Studi di Milano), Giuliana Garzone (Università IULM di Milano), Stefania Maci (Università degli Studi di Bergamo)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 15:00-17:00** (Aula Burgarella, Cubo 28C, piano terra)  
Chair: Giuliana Garzone (Università IULM di Milano)

**Paola Catenaccio** (Università degli Studi di Milano), **Chiara Degano** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Studying Online Debates: Polylogues as a Challenge to Argumentative Pattern Recognition*

**Letizia Paglialunga** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Social Media as Sites of Identity Negotiation: Methodological Approaches and Challenges in the Analysis of Non-binary Gender Self-representation*

**Giulia Adriana Pennisi** (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

*EuroScience: Innovation and Change in the Reshaping of Scientific Communication*

**Jekaterina Nikitina** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Evolving Patterns of Knowledge Dissemination and Digital Communication of Law: Institutional Press Releases at the European Court of Human Rights*

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 17:30-19:30** (Aula Burgarella, Cubo 28C, piano terra)  
Chair: Stefania Maci (Università degli Studi di Bergamo)

**Maria Cristina Paganoni** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Communication Gaps and Climate Action in Tourism Discourse*

**Walter Giordano** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)

*Despecialization of Discourse in CEO Letters to Shareholders*

**Roxanne H. Padley** (Università degli Studi di Bergamo; Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*Adapting Second Language Standards and Assessment: New Trends*

### **Panel description**

Over the last twenty years, technology-driven changes have brought about substantial transformations in communication practices across all areas of human activity, with far-reaching effects in a broad range of domains, from everyday social exchanges to institutional, organisational and professional interactions. This transformation has not occurred overnight, but the resulting changes are such as to fit the definition of a “new beginning” – though one which has been long in the making. From the very beginning of the rise in importance and popularity of what used to be called Computer Mediated Communication, there has been an exponential rise in the academic literature addressing such changes, with contributions from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Linguists have been at the forefront of this movement, with a solid research strand emerging in the two decades straddling the Millennium and immediately after. Over the years, the emergence of multimodal studies as a scientific approach in its own right has had the effect of adding a whole range of different semiotic modes to language, whose role in communication needs therefore to be reconceptualised.

The field of specialised communication is especially suited to the exploration of the implications and effects of these changes. As goal-oriented activities ever more increasingly embedded in socio-technical systems, communication practices in specialised fields offer plenty of opportunities to

explore the role of language in new forms of communication, including in a diachronic perspective, which is essential to understand how we got here, and where the new beginnings we are experiencing stem from.

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## Abstracts

**Paola Catenaccio** (Università degli Studi di Milano), **Chiara Degano** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Studying Online Debates: Polylogues as a Challenge to Argumentative Pattern Recognition*

The rise of the Internet, and of social media in particular, has brought about substantial changes in the way in which debates start and unfold. As Schoop et al. (2006) observed as early as 2006, the Internet has developed increasingly as a pragmatic web, or “web of opinion”, involving and engaging increasingly expanded ‘constituencies’ taking part in large-scale debates on societal issues. As a result, the potential for argumentation has grown exponentially. Argumentation in such contexts qualifies as an argumentative polylogue (Lewiński and Aakhus 2014, 2023; Aakhus & Lewiński, 2017), with several parties involved, each with their own positions, hierarchies of values, argumentative style, and repertoires of schemes. In such a scenario, the study of argumentation must take into account a huge number of variables and arguments which develop asynchronously and often somewhat independently of each other within and across multiple sites. This brings about a level of dispersion, in terms of arguments and positions, which challenges the notion – crucial in the study of institutionalised forms of argumentation – of “argumentative pattern”, understood as a constellation of argumentative moves empirically observable in relation to a particular type of difference of opinion typical of a given discursive environment within which such pattern pursues specific institutional aims (van Eemeren 2017: 159). When dealing with polylogues, is it still possible to identify prototypical patterns in relation to the unfolding of argumentation across the multiple sites and voices contributing to its progressive stratification? Even when a type of argumentative activity is recognizable (for instance, a policy debate involving promoters and detractors), is it still possible to associate it to a specific pattern? The presentation will discuss this topic with reference to a societal debate currently underway, i.e. the EU transition to electrical vehicles.

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**Walter Giordano** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)  
*Despecialization of Discourse in CEO Letters to Shareholders*

Specialized discourse, including financial reporting, exhibits distinct characteristics. Recent observations suggest that even in specialized documents, communicators aim for a broader readership. To test this hypothesis, two corpora were collected and compared for their degree of specialization and de-specialization. The first corpus consists of CEOs' letters from European soccer teams listed on stock exchanges, including Juventus, Borussia Dortmund, Tottenham Hotspur, and Manchester United. The second corpus comprises CEOs' letters from Adidas AG, Nike, Puma SE, and Under Armour, operating in the business-to-consumer sports apparel and textile products sector. Both corpora cover the period from 2018 to 2022. This paper extends previous studies on the hybridization of financial and promotional discourse (Giordano et al. 2018), on discourse communities" (Gotti 2015) and on the concept of specificity, pivotal in ESP (Hyland 2002), and explores the concept of de-specialization as a marketing strategy linked to brand identity. Soccer teams have long focused on building brand communities and a sense of belonging. The methodology employs corpus-based approaches, incorporating domain-specific lexicons (e.g. Loughran and McDonald 2016; Bos and FrasinCAR 2022) to measure the level of terminological specificity in each corpus. Preliminary findings indicate fewer domain-specific terms in the soccer teams' letters, while the B2C companies' letters exhibit a higher degree of finance-specific terminology. This research sets the stage for further investigation and the development of a theory on the intentional de-specialization of financial discourse.

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**Jekaterina Nikitina** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Evolving Patterns of Knowledge Dissemination and Digital Communication of Law: Institutional Press Releases at the European Court of Human Rights*

Over the last few decades, the domain of legal communication has undergone a number of changes, many of them under the twin pressures of, on the one hand, a growing awareness of the need that legal discourse be (made) comprehensible to laypeople, and, on the other, the digitalisation of public communication. This changing scenario calls for a review of the research questions, as well as of the methodological approaches, traditionally applied to the field of legal communication. To illustrate this point, this study overviews the role of digital communication in the dissemination of specialised

knowledge (Garzone 2020) and popularisation practices (Calsamiglia and van Dijk 2004; Garzone 2014) in the supranational context of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) through the genre of the web-based institutional press release. Despite serving multiple important functions, and notwithstanding their crucial role in empowering democratic participation of outsider stakeholders, press releases in supranational courts have been the object of limited investigation (Tessuto 2021: 221-222). This corpus-based study bridges the existing gap offering a description of press-release related professional and discursive practices from a diachronic perspective and with special regard for the impact of digital practices on institutional legal communication. The study materials comprise press releases issued by the ECtHR between 2002-2012 and 2013-2023. The methodology combines insights from Critical Genre Analysis (Bhatia 2017) – to outline typified patterns of knowledge dissemination at different levels of organisational structure – with the paradigm of specialised communication and popularisation (Garzone 2020). Preliminary results show the increasing attention of the ECtHR towards public communication via web-based press releases enabling democratic participation.

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**Roxanne H. Padley** (Università degli Studi di Bergamo; Università degli Studi di Salerno)  
*Adapting Second Language Standards and Assessment: New Trends*

The gradual increase in demand for linguistic communication skills alongside greater citizen mobility has led to a need to adapt and change university level language training. Therefore, there are a number of training programmes (Hughes, 2003) aimed at preparing students for international communication which also employ online tools that consider synchronous, asynchronous and hybrid methods of training (Padley, 2020). In line with the offer of online learning, which of course peaked in recent years due to the pandemic, changes to the assessment of linguistic skills gained have also arisen.

This study aims to investigate the evaluation tools available for online/hybrid language assessment (Ko & Rossen, 2017) at an undergraduate degree level and their efficiency in terms of meeting the needs of evolving communication skills required in today’s society.

As a part of an ongoing research project, this pilot study will investigate first year students enrolled in the undergraduate course of Communication Sciences at the Department of Letters Philosophy and Communication, University of Bergamo who will be recruited to answer an ethnographic evaluative questionnaire (Agar, 1999) which investigates: i) their experience with hybrid language assessment; ii) their performance in hybrid language assessment. Students will undergo a needs analysis at the beginning of the course, also including a language placement test, and statistical analysis will be carried out to compare their performances.

Results are expected to highlight the utility of hybrid language assessments as well as identifying areas for improvement in order to delineate training protocols for the pedagogical and technological application fields (Anesa & Deyrich, 2023).

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**Maria Cristina Paganoni** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Communication Gaps and Climate Action in Tourism Discourse*

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a global call for a decisive turn in tackling the climate crisis, also highlighted by the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action on Tourism (2021). However, while the agenda for sustainable tourism often reveals its limited scope, translating climate action into effective communication remains a challenge (Duedahl 2020; Yusuf and Burton 2021; Dancygier 2023). Currently observed in specialised tourism communication is the intensification of messages that prioritise behaviours and practices to reduce carbon footprint and strengthen adaptive capacity to climate-induced impacts (Tiago *et al.* 2021; Usher and Schroeder 2021). With this objective in mind, several destinations have been closely collaborating with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council to align with its criteria and receive the internationally recognised label of GSTC certification.

This paper selects the Dolomite Mountains in Italy as a case study, a long-time glamorous destination and a UNESCO World Heritage site since 2009, concentrating specifically on the recently GSTC-certified locations in the South Tyrol Dolomites – Alta Badia, Eggental, San Vigilio and Val Gardena. Assisted by the toolbox of Multimodal Discourse Analysis, the critical focus addresses the communication strategies of the official English-language tourism websites of these areas. It aims to identify the innovative messages related to climate action in the conventional multisemiotic repertoire of tourism promotion. The intent is to retrieve the most common linguistic and discursive features used by sustainability-driven tourist offices and assess their effectiveness in inducing appropriate behaviours and fostering net-zero best practices, extending beyond South Tyrol.

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**Letizia Paglialunga** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Social Media as Sites of Identity Negotiation: Methodological Approaches and Challenges in the Analysis of Non-binary Gender Self-representation*

Over the last few decades, social media have become significant spaces for identity construction and negotiation. Particularly for gender identities, social media platforms have played a central role enabling individuals to freely explore and express themselves while finding a sense of community. As social media, practices, and communities continue to evolve, a diverse range of strategies has emerged. Therefore, analyzing such discourse presents significant challenges: social media platforms are dynamic, and characterized by constantly evolving linguistic practices (Khosravnik, Unger, 2016); moreover, the concept of identity itself is called into question by the mediated nature of communication, especially in the context of non-binary discourse, thus necessitating a more nuanced methodological framework. In this context, various methodologies have been employed to investigate the linguistic features of identity performance. Corpus Linguistics, for instance, has been used to uncover the overarching patterns and themes within the discourse (McEnery et al., 2019). Multimodal Discourse Analysis has also been extensively resorted to, as it recognizes the visual and textual elements of social media platforms, and is especially suited to investigate how staged authenticity (Riboni, 2020) and community building practices are performed and represented through various communication modes, including images, videos, and text. On a more linguistic level, Systemic Functional Linguistics can provide a lens to explore discursive strategies used to negotiate identity, power dynamics, and foster community engagement within the discourse (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). This study aims to outline a comprehensive repertoire of methodological approaches that can be used for the analysis of identity negotiation on social media, with special regard for genderqueer identities. Through a literature review and comparison of relevant methodologies employed in various case studies, this research will identify the aspects of identity and/or identity performance and negotiation that each methodology is most suited to explain.

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**Giulia Adriana Pennisi** (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

*EuroScience: Innovation and Change in the Reshaping of Scientific Communication*

Over the last couple of decades, the institutional and professional demand to increase public understanding of scientific findings placed on scientific communities has brought about a significant change in communication practices across various disciplines and domains. Overall, the emerging developments in Open Science practices make the scientific process more democratic, not only encouraging open and rapid scientific communications between researchers and lay-people, but also creating unique spaces of interaction and discourses. More specifically, compared to traditional means of academic dissemination of specialist discourse, these developments have generated novel opportunities (as well as challenges) for the spreading of research outputs (Hyland 2010; Garzone *et al.* 2012). The EuroScience website (<https://www.euroscience.org/>) represents an interesting example of the increasing collaboration of science and society towards addressing real-world issues. Such collaboration involves recontextualising scientific research so that it can be understood by a diversified audience (Bathia *et al.* 2008; Kress 2009; Herring 2019; Garzone 2020; Fähnrich 2021). The analysis attempts to demonstrate how the interplay of lexicon and phraseology in EuroScientist Articles/Research Digests crosses the boundary between scientific discourse and popularisation, providing a multifaceted discourse system through multimodal resources (EuroScience hyperlinks, images, webinars, etc.), resetting the nature of professional roles/identities, expertise, and practises, and constructing a ‘transition discourse’ between the more traditional scientific communication and fully popularised texts typical of other online platforms (i.e. social media) (Lorés 2022). More specifically, this research aims to show how, and to which extent, the EuroScience website addresses the task of reporting on scientific research findings as collaborative communication, bridges the existing knowledge asymmetries between the academic community and laypeople, and aligns professionals with a multifaceted audience (Lorés/Diani 2021).

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## S19 – New Developments in ESP Lexicography

**Convenors:** Daniele Franceschi (Università degli Studi Roma Tre), Laura Pinnavaia (Università degli Studi di Milano)

**Saturday, September 16, 2023 – 9:30-12:00** (Aula Burgarella, Cubo 28C, piano terra)

Chair: Daniele Franceschi (Università degli Studi Roma Tre), Laura Pinnavaia (Università degli Studi di Milano)

**Lorenzo Buonvivere** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Lexical Innovation in Ecotourism Discourse: The Case of eco(-)lodge*

**Tatiana Canziani** (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

*“The doctor will FaceTime you now”*: Online Doctors Meet Telepatients in a Virtual Hospital

**Sara Gesuato** (Università degli Studi di Padova), **Erik Castello** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

*Styling your Specialised Lexis – Designing Lexicographic Entries for Various Types of Users*

### Panel description

The aim of this panel is to explore the state of the art in lexicography for special purposes and to bring together contributions that present and discuss innovative work on ‘micro-languages’ that have not yet been sufficiently represented in dictionaries, lexicons and other lexicographic resources, especially online. It is an undeniable fact that the future of lexicography is digital (Jackson 2018; Dziemanko 2018). Several dictionaries are now available in electronic form and easily accessible also for the mobile user. In many cases, however, they are mere replicas of their paper versions and still need to be made multimodal, i.e. enriched with illustrations, videoclips and hyperlinks to external pages, in order to better satisfy the modern user’s needs. At the same time, there are a number of specialised (sub)domains that have not received appropriate lexicographic treatment so far. Recent years have seen the emergence of new discourses in different fields, as the result of changing habits and behaviours. Some cases in point are ‘ecotourism talk’, which has been accelerated by recent greater awareness of the impact of human activities on the environment (Penz and Fill 2022); ‘digital technology talk’, now that technologies and societies have become inseparable (Würschinger 2021); certain ‘medical talk’, as a consequence of COVID-19 pandemic (Salazar and Wild 2022), to mention just a few areas of lexical innovation. New words and expressions have thus emerged (e.g. plasticarian, ocean warrior, moblogging, twinterview, eco-anxiety, laptop thigh) which due to their frequency and distribution need to find their way into dictionaries.

We will welcome papers addressing new lexical items from various domains and illustrating the creation of both monolingual and bilingual resources.

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## Abstracts

**Lorenzo Buonvivere** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Lexical Innovation in Ecotourism Discourse: The Case of eco(-)lodge*

As repositories of the cultures whose language they describe (Łozowski 2017), lexicographical resources inevitably partake in the (re)production of certain dominant ideologies. This is especially relevant with regard to the current ecological crisis. For example, dictionary entries have been found to display an anthropocentric bias in the description of animals that supports their treatment as mere tools for the benefit of humans (Heuberger 2003). With this in mind, the present paper contributes to research within the field of ecolexicography (Liu et al. 2021). Combining critical lexicography (Chen 2019) with ecolinguistics (Stibbe 2021), ecolexicography strives to acknowledge the role of lexicographical resources in shaping the users' awareness of environmental protection. In particular, this study investigates lexical innovation within ecotourism discourse in order to understand whether 'ecotourism talk' responds to the sustainable objectives of the activity itself. The research focusses on one specific instance, the noun *eco(-)lodge*, which is examined by searching both dictionaries (*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, *Collins English Dictionary*, *Oxford English Dictionary*) and some of the main English corpora. Results highlight a partial clash between the two types of resources. While examples of usage mostly connote ecolodges as a type of luxury and exclusive accommodation placed in natural, i.e. non-urban contexts, learner's dictionaries define them solely with reference to their supposed minimal environmental impact. Outcomes suggest that ecotourism discourse exploits lexical creativity inspired by ecological concerns to advertise a form of niche tourism that does not necessarily align with ecological ends. Hence, dictionary entries should address such a failure and provide definitions that point out the 'luxury' aspect emphasised in common usage.

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**Tatiana Canziani** (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

*"The doctor will FaceTime you now": Online Doctors Meet Telepatients in a Virtual Hospital*

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has led health professionals to introduce and embrace telemedicine or telehealth, a subfield of digital health that provides health services at a distance using telecommunication technologies. Although remote healthcare services may seem like a new trend, the practice of telemedicine goes back to the 1970s and its history closely follows the evolution of communication and information technologies (Maheu, Whitten, Allen 2001; Scott, Mars 2016). Prior to March 2020, the use of telemedicine was limited to a few medical specialties (e.g. radiology, neurology and surgery) that integrated telemedicine technologies into their clinical practice (e.g. telestroke). The rapid spread of SARS-Cov2, which limited face-to-face contact, has given a strong boost to the use of these technologies by physicians who have been forced to adopt telehealth platforms (Kichloo et al. 2020). This proposal aims to provide a qualitative and quantitative analysis

of the main telemedicine neologisms - not included in the Oxford English Dictionary - that have emerged in this subfield to define *online doctoring* (Schneider 2018). Neologisms will be retrieved from the websites of the top 20 hospitals in the US, UK, Australia and analysed in terms of frequency, morphological productivity and semantic extension (Mattiello 2022; Cabré Castellví, Estopa, Vargas-Sierra, 2012; Plag 2003). Among these new words, there are, indeed, various semantic neologisms (e.g. e-patient), combining forms or existing words modified by affixes to redefine doctors (e.g. virtual doctor), patients (e.g. telepatient), clinical services (e.g. e-check-in), medical specialties (e.g. teleophthalmology), health services (e.g. urgent care televisit), clinical examinations (e.g. virtual musculoskeletal physical examination), patient management (e.g. remote patient monitoring) and generic or specific treatments (e.g. virtual care, telehealth medication abortion). These new terms have become part of the common vocabulary of physicians and patients opting for *telecare*, as most healthcare providers in the US and UK are using telemedicine either partially or fully even though the pandemic is over, or rather endemic.

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**Sara Gesuato** (Università degli Studi di Padova), **Erik Castello** (Università degli Studi di Padova)  
*Styling your Specialised Lexis – Designing Lexicographic Entries for Various Types of Users*

Vocabulary specific to a given domain of experience is relevant to different groups of people (e.g., experts, trainees, laypeople, teachers, students; Mikkelsen 1991) in different ways (e.g., for unambiguous communication among professionals; for the correct identification of products and services by customers). In this paper, we present a proposal for the identification and design of terminological entries in a multimodal glossary, which should be comprehensive in content and adaptable to the needs of native and non-native speakers, professionals and laypeople.

To this end, we illustrate a bilingual corpus-based term extraction and description procedure (Bowker and Pearson 2002) in the popular field (Gasiglia 2012) of hairdressing. We present examples of term entries (e.g., *hairdo/hairstyle* vs *pettinatura/acconciatura*) derived from ad hoc corpora compiled on the SketchEngine platform (about 200,000 words total), focusing on translation equivalents (e.g., *parting* vs *riga/scriminatura*), phraseologies (e.g. *loose bun – chignon morbido; soften the cheekbone – attenuare gli zigomi; spraying the spray – mettere la lacca*), and foreignisms (e.g., *balayage – chignon*; Scarpa 2015). We also discuss the usefulness of various types of definitions (Humbley 2018) and exemplifications (at the phrase and sentence level), and the benefits provided by audio and/or visual aids (Marshman 2014).

Finally, we suggest that this approach can be adopted for the exploration of other LSPs and that language learners can be engaged in corpus-driven compilation of glossary entries for specialised lexis, using lexico-grammatical patterns as the main source of information.

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## **S20 – New Discourses and Re-conceptualisations of Profession and (Social) Position in the Face of Personal Well-Being**

**Convenors:** Marianna Lya Zummo (Università degli Studi di Palermo), Laura Tommaso (Università del Piemonte Orientale)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 17:30-19:30** (Aula Alcaro, Cubo 28B, piano terra)

Chair: Marianna Lya Zummo (Università degli Studi di Palermo), Laura Tommaso (Università del Piemonte Orientale)

**Kim Grego** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*The Discourses of the “Great Resignation”. Introducing the Research Project*

**Laura Tommaso** (Università del Piemonte Orientale), **Laura Di Ferrante** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Exploring the Representation of the Great Resignation in the UK and US Press: A Corpus-Assisted Discourse Study*

**Silvia Cavalieri** (Università degli Studi di Verona), **Sara Corrizato** (Università degli Studi di Verona)

*“Isolation is here I feel most comfortable, but it’s also where I most regress”: A Linguistic Analysis of the Hikikomori Phenomenon in the Contemporary Society*

### **Panel description**

In times of social crises, new definitions of “desirability” in the professional domains have arisen and have been attributed to an economic, social and cultural phenomenon consisting in unusually high numbers of people voluntarily leaving their jobs (i.e. the “great resignees”; Klotz, quoted in Cohen 2021) or starting new (and less burdening) ones (i.e. “new beginners”).

While many studies in the economic and social fields have proved that the study of such phenomenon is a legitimate pursuit, critical (socio)linguistic studies concerning the ideological, identitarian, and cultural side have not been led yet. These latter orientations may contribute to further understand the complexities of contemporary frameworks of values (Zammitti, Magnano and Santisi 2021), as well as (new) discourses of/around (social)position, profession and occupation (Goffman 1984, Flowerdew and Richardson 2018), and “burnout society” (Han 2015). By analysing the (digital) narratives and language used by the “new beginners” in (non-)professional domains, the panel is expected to employ (socio)linguistic approaches to understand the dimension of affect (e.g., anger, frustration, fear, delusion), and the (negative) evaluation of (perceived) social enemies that form the new conceptualisations surrounding the topic of job satisfaction, questioning what it is now to be considered “a new normal”.

As part of an ongoing project conducted by the DIGRESS (Discourses of Individuals from the Great Resignation: Exploring Social Sustainability) research group, this panel invites innovative perspectives, case studies and papers that shed light on the debate in the wake of the Great Resignation in contemporary society. Theoretical and methodological approaches may include, but are not limited to: Corpus Linguistics, Text and Genre Analysis, Narrative Studies, Conversation Analysis, (Digital) Interaction Analysis, (Social Media) Critical Discourse Analysis, Multimodality, Framing, Argumentation Analysis.

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## Abstracts

**Silvia Cavalieri** (Università degli Studi di Verona), **Sara Corrizzato** (Università degli Studi di Verona)

*“Isolation is here I feel most comfortable, but it’s also where I most regress”*: A Linguistic Analysis of the Hikikomori Phenomenon in the Contemporary Society

Theorised at the end of the ‘90s, the Hikikomori phenomenon has described a specific form of social withdrawal in which young adults decide to isolate themselves for long periods of time. Unknown to non-experts before the pandemic, this behaviour has received more attention in recent times, when the number of young people identified as hikis (modern-day hermits) has grown dramatically especially in the form of “resigned withdrawal” (Majumder 2022). Hikikomori has thus become “a way to escape strong social pressure and great social competition” (Hikikomoriitalia n.d) that is seen as a source of resignation for young people who are supposed to be the “new beginners” after the pandemic. (Yung, Wong, Ho and Molassiotis 2021; Pereira-Sanchez, *et. al.* 2022).

This paper aims to investigate the online discourse on the Hikikomori phenomenon by analysing how this experience of social isolation is talked about, considering the challenges of living, and working in an ever-evolving globalised world (Fox 2019). Investigating the phenomenon through the lens of job satisfaction, special attention will be paid to ex-hikikomori, who go through a process of self-discovery reaffirming themselves in the world of work.

From a linguistic perspective, the analysis focuses on two different genres: the Hikis’ personal comments in which discussion about the activity of former social withdrawing and latter social reaffirmation is directly shared by the members of the Reddit community (Panek 2022), and more public, monologic spaces, i.e. newspapers, where longer texts are produced with a more descriptive purpose. More specifically, a comparative analysis of keywords (Kilgariff 2009) and selected key terms was carried out on two ad-hoc corpora, i.e. the Hikikomori Reddit Corpus (HRC) and the Newspaper Corpus (NPC).

Preliminary results highlight that the linguistic choices of Hiki redditors show the presence of a distinctive form of language, used to illustrate their feelings and to seek support by sharing personal experience. Conversely, language in newspaper articles describes the new uncontrollable phenomenon as well as denounces the dissatisfaction of young people entering contemporary society.

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**Kim Grego** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*The Discourses of the "Great Resignation". Introducing the Research Project*

**Background.** The 'Great Resignation' is a phenomenon where many people voluntarily leave their jobs, which has been occurring for a few years and peaked in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, resignees are leaving long-term, stable jobs driven by factors beyond economics, such as work-life balance and quality of life.

**Aims.** The economic aspects of the Great Resignation have been extensively studied, but there are limitations to these studies as the phenomenon is ongoing and the focus has been primarily on economic and financial aspects. This presentation aims to provide an overview of a project that proposes looking at the phenomenon from a different perspective, by examining the narratives of the individuals involved in the phenomenon.

**Methods.** The project employs a pluralistic approach, utilizing corpus-driven linguistics, narrative studies, and other research tools. It integrates methods from applied linguistics, statistics, anthropology, sociology, and socioeconomics for data collection and analysis.

**Expected results.** The research project aims to understand the values behind job resignations, offering an academic and social understanding of the phenomenon. The collected interviews will contribute to further investigations and interdisciplinary research. The project also seeks to propose theoretical models for interpreting social phenomena based on self-constructed identities. Outputs include a corpus of interviews, a web platform, and analysis of existing and emerging discourses, which can serve as a connecting tool for the social actors involved.

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**Laura Tommaso** (Università del Piemonte Orientale), **Laura Di Ferrante** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Exploring the Representation of the Great Resignation in the UK and US Press: A Corpus-Assisted Discourse Study*

The Great Resignation phenomenon has captivated widespread attention, becoming a focal point of news coverage in recent years. By adopting a corpus-assisted discourse study approach (e.g. Baker 2006; Partington et al. 2013; McEnery and Brezina 2022), the present study explores how this workplace trend is talked about in the US and UK press. Its primary objective is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the framing, discursive patterns, and underlying narratives surrounding this phenomenon from 2021 to the present time. The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of how the Great Resignation is constructed and perceived in the public sphere. By revealing how power dynamics, class divisions, gender roles, and employment practices are portrayed and reinforced through media representations, this research also has implications for understanding the influence of media discourse on public opinion, policy debates, and the experiences of individuals navigating the changing landscape of work. Furthermore, by examining prominent UK and US publications, comparative insights are gained, highlighting potential variations in the representation of this phenomenon across different cultural and socio-economic contexts.

Overall, this corpus-assisted discourse study sheds light on the complex interplay between language, media, and social phenomena (e.g. Richardson 2007), offering valuable insights into the discursive construction of the Great Resignation in the UK and US press. The research advances our understanding of the broader societal implications of this trend and provides a foundation for further investigations into the role of media in shaping public narratives about work and employment.

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## **S21 – New English Literacies in Italian Higher Education: Classroom Practices and Employability Outcomes**

Convenors: Cristina Pennarola (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II), Stefania D'Avanzo (Università degli Studi della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 11:00-13:00** (Aula Filol 3, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Cristina Pennarola (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)

**Viviana Gaballo** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*The Digital Turn of Language Teaching and Learning: A Multimodal Perspective*

**Sole Alba Zollo** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)

*Multimodal Literacies: Students' Reinterpreting Analytical Tools through Social Media*

**Pasquale Pagano** (Università degli Studi della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli)

*Learning Languages through Personal Devices: The Case of Cambridge Test&Train*

**Stefania D'Avanzo** (Università degli Studi della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli)

*Digital Literacies in Higher Education: ChatGPT-Resources and Challenges*

### **Panel description**

To respond to innovative forms of communication enabled by highly sophisticated technological devices and social media, new approaches to teaching are required, which take into account the social nature of multiple literacies in different contexts (Jewitt 2016; Kinzer 2010; Walsh 2010) and an inclusive learning paradigm combining cognitive, emotional, affective and sensory functions (Kress 2003; Sindoni and Moschini 2021). Knowing how to use technologies in educational contexts also entails an awareness of their affordances, visual interfaces, and layers of meanings in order to enhance the students' learning experience and critical thinking (Rowse and Pahl 2020). Different multimodal approaches to literacy have shown slightly different emphases: "multiliteracies" (Cope and Kalantzis 2000), "multimodal pedagogies" (Archer 2017), "multimodal literacies" (Bowen and Whithaus 2012). These pedagogical trends can benefit from a focus on employment issues and the wide range of competences required at the workplace in the digital age: for example, decision-making and new media literacy, i.e. the combination of verbal and visual content through an online medium (Collard et al. 2017; van Dijk and van Deursen 2014).

An overview of the most recent approaches to new literacies in Italian universities can offer valuable insights into the development of students' criticality, agency and employability (Garzone et al. 2016; Lamarra et al. 2010). Our aim is to explore the interplay between students'/teachers' general competences and the functions enabled by new media and technologies, also taking into consideration the way in which classroom practices can be stretched and adapted to fit critical digital literacies. We particularly welcome contributions that address aspects of English literacies within academic, professional or specialised domains (business, law, politics, tourism, etc.) and try to bridge the teacher/student divide thanks to mutually self-empowering activities and project work carried out in the classroom.

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## Abstracts

**Stefania D’Avanzo** (Università degli Studi della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli)  
*Digital Literacies in Higher Education: ChatGPT-Resources and Challenges*

Artificial intelligence (AI) has developed rapidly in recent years, leading to various applications in different disciplines, such as healthcare and education. AI systems can be trained to simulate the human brain and carry out routine work using large amounts of data. In particular, the introduction of artificial intelligence in the field of education has resulted from the use of information and communication technologies as a tool for improving teaching and learning (Opara, Adalikwu, Torolunleke 2023). Jain and Jain (2019) investigated how the notion of artificial intelligence may be implemented in teaching and learning, while focusing on the controversial issue of adopting AI in higher education. ChatGPT - a recently developed conversational chatbot created by OpenAI - may make it easier for instructors to apply AI in teaching and learning as it uses natural language processing to generate human-like responses to user input. It has gained attention worldwide for its impressive performance in generating coherent, systematic, and informative responses. On the other hand, ChatGPT has introduced new challenges and threats to education (Mhlanga 2023). With its ability to provide specific answers to user questions, it can be used to complete written assignments and examinations on behalf of students, leading to concerns about AI-assisted cheating. In response, some schools have banned access to ChatGPT on campus. Starting from these assumptions, this paper reviews literature on opportunities and limitations concerning the use of ChatGPT in higher education while providing examples of its possible use with undergraduate and postgraduate students attending Business English courses.

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**Viviana Gaballo** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*The Digital Turn of Language Teaching and Learning: A Multimodal Perspective*

In the real world, language is rarely limited to a single mode of communication. People communicate using verbal and non-verbal cues, written texts, images, and audiovisual materials. By exposing students to multimodal resources and encouraging them to engage with different modes of communication, higher education language programs can better prepare students for real-world language use (Laurillard 2002). By integrating multimedia technologies, students also gain experience in using digital resources effectively and responsibly, preparing them for the demands of the 21st-century workforce (Sindoni and Moschini 2022). This paper provides an in-depth analysis of multimodal-pedagogy-based courses given in the past three years to Communication Studies students at the University of Macerata (153 students in 2020-21, 122 students in 2021-22), and to Management and Business Law students at the Sapienza University of Rome (286 students in 2022-23) (Gaballo 2019). The conclusion that can be drawn is that multimodal pedagogies in higher education contexts offer numerous benefits, including enhanced comprehension, catering to diverse learning styles, fostering engagement and motivation, developing multiple skills, preparing for real-world language use, and promoting digital literacy (Gaballo 2017).

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**Pasquale Pagano** (Università degli Studi della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli)

*Learning Languages through Personal Devices: The Case of Cambridge Test&Train*

The main aim of the present paper is to consider how the presence of personal devices has been affected learning processes at various levels. Portable, electronic gadgets have made courses, classes, as well as materials and practice, available and easily accessible anywhere and anytime, to the extent that “mobile or ubiquitous learning” (Gillies 2016) seems to have deconstructed the common idea of a lesson as a fixed, spatially-determined, and interpersonal experience.

As a consequence of such fluidity, the learning environment has become multimodal in the sense that not only are learners engaged with a variety of activities, but, more interestingly, the educational process has come to include and involve diverse learning styles within an “individualized environment” (García-Peñalvo 2013, 132).

More than other fields of knowledge, learning languages seems to profit from such a variety of sources, as students are expected to come into contact with real-life linguistic experiences, which diverse communicative media easily provide.

The releasing of the brand new platform *Test&Train* by Cambridge English Language and Assessment is intended to boost world-wide candidates access to the preparation for the well-known language certifications offered by the British organization, since the tool is presented as “On-the-go and intuitive – the perfect training tool for Cambridge English Qualifications” (<https://www.cambridge.org/us/cambridgeenglish/catalog/cambridge-english-exams-ielts/product/test-train>).

Therefore, a comparative analysis of this digital support with the more traditional paper-based sample tests will be carried out, in order to verify its being user-friendly as well as its precision; the

study will also consider the differences between the two approaches in relation to the teaching of linguistic skills.

Although the tool is available for levels that span from A2 to C1 of the Common European Framework of References for Languages, the present analysis will focus on the stages of 'independence' and 'proficiency', which characterize academic education.

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**Sole Alba Zollo** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)

*Multimodal Literacies: Students' Reinterpreting Analytical Tools through Social Media*

Social media have become part of our daily routines, bringing a lot of changes in our lives and suggesting new and stimulating views of the world. Most students have mobile phones with different functions, and using them for educational purposes can be attractive, given that it is becoming more and more difficult to engage new generations with traditional teaching techniques and methodologies. In the last few years, using mobile devices in class as a new approach has been widely recognized by language learning scholars (Ducate and Lomicka 2013; Wang and Smith 2013; Chen et al. 2020).

Based on social semiotic studies of social media (Adami 2014; Zappavigna 2013, 2016; Poulsen et al. 2018; Zhao and Zappavigna 2018), the present research aims at exploring how university students can improve their critical visual thinking on specialized knowledge via social media, in particular Instagram and TikTok.

Following a recent empirical work on the use of Instagram in class (Zollo 2019), this study tries to implement the investigation by designing a TikTok-based class experiment and answering the following research questions: How does the use of Instagram and Tiktok affect students' learning process and improve their critiques of specialized discourses? What are students' attitudes towards Instagram and TikTok as a pedagogical tool? Can Instagram and Tiktok be used as academic tools to apply the theoretical concepts discussed in class?

Since semiotic technologies are not neutral technical devices, but social and cultural products that significantly contribute to changing and creating new social practices, the pedagogical implications of including Instagram and TikTok in undergraduate English language curricula are explored, particularly their potential as didactic instruments to enhance critical visual literacy skills among university students.

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## **S22 – Power Relations in Digitally-Mediated Communication: Exploring Inequalities, Discrimination, and New Forms of Injustice**

**Convenors:** Marina Niceforo (Università di Napoli L'Orientale), Francesco Nacchia (Università di Napoli L'Orientale), Sole Alba Zollo (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 15:00-17:00** (Aula Filol 5, Cubo 28B, II piano)

Chair: Sole Alba Zollo (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)

**Serena Santonocito** (Università degli Studi di Messina)

*Exploring Discrimination in Google Images. A Cross-Linguistic Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis*

**Maria Ivana Lorenzetti** (Università degli Studi di Verona)

*Politicising the Debate on Women's Reproductive Rights and Lgbtq+ Equality on Social Media: a Contrastive Analysis*

**Annalisa Raffone** (Università di Napoli L'Orientale)

*"Tired of Being Treated Like Broken Glass to Tip Toe Around": Configurations of Ableism in Social Media Spaces*

**Giuseppina Scotto di Carlo** (Università di Napoli L'Orientale)

*Deconstructing Men's Rights Activism: A Discourse Analysis of D.A.R.V.O. in MRA Discourse on Rape Culture*

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 17:30-19:30** (Aula Filol 5, Cubo 28B, II piano)

Chair: Marina Niceforo (Università di Napoli L'Orientale), Francesco Nacchia (Università di Napoli L'Orientale)

**Chiara Polli** (Università degli Studi di Messina)

*A Multimodal Critical Perspective on the Challenges of Automatic Detection of Hate Speech in Internet Memes*

**Ilaria Iori** (Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia)

*Deliberate Incitement to Hatred or Conventional Discriminatory Biases? Exploring Pragmatic Functions of Metaphors in Reader Comments*

**Michaela Quadraro** (Università della Calabria)

*Exploring Discrimination Online: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of New Forms of Hate Speech Against Minorities*

**Virginia Zorzi** (Università degli Studi di Bergamo)

*Do Online Migrant Narratives Reproduce Positive Migrant Stereotypes Reinforced within Host Societies?*

### **Panel description**

The plastic and highly pervasive nature of digitally-mediated communication has been shaping and affecting interpersonal communication at all levels and in all contexts of human interaction (Herring 2004). In the last few decades, the construction of power relations in digital media has shifted from traditional configurations observable, for instance, on television, radio, and newspapers, making asymmetries and imbalances in the relation between dominant and dominated groups subtler and less visible (KhosraviNik 2017). As a consequence, new modes of perpetrating social injustice, as well as discrimination and hate speech have emerged (Balirano and Hughes 2020), also informed by the

controversial assumption “that cyberspaces are intrinsically different from real interactions” (KhosraviNik and Esposito 2018: 47).

The proposed panel aims to gather papers dealing with theoretical, methodological, and experimental aspects in the analysis of new power relations and dominance frameworks in digital narration and communication. In line with critical approaches (Wodak and Meyer 2016; Page et al. 2022), papers in this panel should engage in harmonious discussion about present realities and future perspectives, ideally providing original contribution to existing interdisciplinary literature on the subject. Suggested research questions reflect on (1) how power relations are reconfigured in online contexts; (2) how new forms and/or modalities of injustice and discrimination take place in cyberspaces; (3) the consequences of power imbalance, and possible resistance strategies.

Among others, topics for contributions focus on:

- Configurations of power relations in digital narratives and discourses
- New framings of dominance and discrimination
- New forms of discrimination, impoliteness, and hate speech against minority groups
- Identity and in-group/ out-group constructions (of dominant/dominated individuals and groups)
- Imbalance in top-down communication (corporate, political, institutional, etc.)
- Intersectionality
- Digital literature and narratives
- Social media as a space for counternarratives
- Digital spaces and strategies for dominance resistance

Theoretical and methodological approaches include, but are not limited to, digital humanities, (critical) discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, multimodal (critical) discourse analysis, ethnolinguistics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, comparative studies, translation studies, communication studies, and literary studies, among others.

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## Abstracts

**Ilaria Iori** (Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia)

*Deliberate Incitement to Hatred or Conventional Discriminatory Biases? Exploring Pragmatic Functions of Metaphors in Reader Comments*

The interactive nature of online news platforms and the social connectivity of their comment sections have raised interest in the argumentative strategies employed in reader comments discussions, uncovering the use of metaphors to convey discriminatory messages (Catalano and Fielder 2018).

During the COVID-19 pandemic hate incidents against people with East-Asian appearance in Australia have peaked, and studies on Australian news media have highlighted the presence of discriminatory discourses (Sun 2021). In this context, the significance of metaphors lies in their potential to uncover both unconscious discriminatory biases and deliberate incitement to hatred. Highly conventionalised metaphors can reveal hidden discriminatory biases occurring unconsciously (Goatly 2007), while deliberate uses of metaphor (Steen 2017) can expose specific communicative purposes which may incite to hatred. Accordingly, the study investigates the range of metaphors used in reader comments to frame China. The corpus includes reader comments attached to editorials published in the first six months of 2020 in one of the most read Australian newspapers (*Daily Telegraph*). More specifically, the analysis examines metaphors focusing on their potential deliberate use by referring to an adapted version of the Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure (DMIP) (Reijnierse *et al.* 2018) combined with an analysis of pragmatic markers potentially signalling deliberate use. Results will shed light on deliberate metaphor use by highlighting specific pragmatic functions that metaphors can perform in reader comments to downplay specific social actors.

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**Maria Ivana Lorenzetti** (Università degli Studi di Verona)

*Politicising the Debate on Women's Reproductive Rights and Lgbtq+ Equality on Social Media: a Contrastive Analysis*

The rising success of right-wing populism in many Western democracies has been recently accompanied by political campaigning increasingly challenging women's rights and LGBTQ+ equality (Mudde 2019). In 2022 the US Supreme Court's overturn of *Roe vs Wade*, the landmark 1973 decision which had granted US women the constitutional right to terminate a pregnancy, was immediately followed by multiple states banning or heavily restricting access to legal abortion. At the same time, the debate on surrogacy has flared up in Italy as the ruling right-wing unanimously condemned gender ideology and the 'LGBTQ+ lobby' backed extensively by right-wing Catholic organisations.

Despite considerable differences in their political, cultural and religious backgrounds, not only do "Anti-gender" and "anti-LGBTQ+" movements concur that moral traditionalism is under attack and that "gender" is a dangerous ideology threatening the traditional heteronormative family (Reingold *et al.* 2021), but they also draw upon shared strategic communicative resources, exploiting the online affordances of social media to spread their message (KhosraviNik and Unger 2016).

Starting from a critical discourse studies perspective and relying on Van Dijk's sociocognitive framework (Van Dijk 2013), this paper presents the results of an analysis of the framing of women's reproductive rights and the so-called gender ideology in social media posts by right-wing politicians in Italy and the USA, highlighting similarities and differences.

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**Chiara Polli** (Università degli Studi di Messina)

*A Multimodal Critical Perspective on the Challenges of Automatic Detection of Hate Speech in Internet Memes*

In the digital ecosystem, memes arguably represent one of the most popular means of communication for Internet users worldwide (Davison 2012). While most memes convey harmless humour, others have become powerful means to disseminate hate messages against vulnerable categories and individuals, travelling across social media at unprecedented levels of speed and pervasiveness (Lankshear and Knoble 2019). The ubiquity of the Internet and the potential for virality of malicious contents call for the improvement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to support humans in the prevention of online discrimination and cyberbullying phenomena. Research on AI-driven hate speech detection (Kiela et al. 2021; Muti et al. 2022) is currently making great strides, but still proves problematic in several areas, including the automatic interpretation of text-image clusters (TICs in Sindoni and Polli 2022) like memes. Based on the qualitative analysis of two different corpora of memes (the Hateful Meme Challenge corpus, purposefully created by the Facebook AI group to train machines, and the TIC corpus, including user-generated memes manually collected by the researcher), this presentation investigates memes’ multifarious meaning-making processes, whose interpretation requires pragmatic, intercultural, inferential skills as well as the ability to detect the interplay between visual/verbal elements. The discussion of the corpora will rely on a multimodal critical discourse approach (Ledin and Machin 2017; Machin and Mayr 2012) applied to the analysis of hate speech (Sindoni 2020) and will ultimately provide empirical indications about how multimodal-informed research can be helpful to machine learning studies in the development of AI systems for the creation of inclusive digital spaces.

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**Michaela Quadraro** (Università della Calabria)

*Exploring Discrimination Online: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of New Forms of Hate Speech Against Minorities*

In the last few decades, we have witnessed a proliferation of hate speech, discrimination and violence in the digital ecosphere (Balirano and Hughes 2020, KhosraviNik 2017, Sindoni 2017). The communicative resources of digital media have opened up new channels for the perpetration of social injustice. Indeed, social media has not simply enabled discriminatory practices to move into the digital ecosphere, but it has promoted specific forms of violent and offensive speech online. According to the report of the Special Rapporteur on Minorities Issues 70 per cent or more of those who are a recurring target of online hate speech are ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities. Among many others, the Gypsy, Roma and Travellers (GRT) communities, the Igbo people in northern Nigeria, or people of African descent, are the victims of various forms of discrimination that take place in cyberspace. The aim of this paper is to analyse the way online contexts re-articulate power relations and produce new forms of injustice. Drawing on multimodal critical discourse analysis (Machin and Mayr 2023), this investigation aims at exploring the way language and other semiotic resources are orchestrated to reframe new forms of dominance and discrimination. At the same time, the paper will try to investigate alternative forms of solidarity and counter-narratives that promote solidarity and possible resistance strategies.

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**Annalisa Raffone** (Università di Napoli L’Orientale)

*“Tired of Being Treated Like Broken Glass to Tip Toe Around” : Configurations of Ableism in Social Media Spaces*

Regardless of numerous equality policies that have been published over time (European Commission 2021; Council of Europe 2017) and the funding granted to several EU-devoted organisations, the living conditions of persons with impairments are still an issue of major concern. Indeed, although the aim of a ‘barrier-free Europe’ in which disabled people can freely participate in their community’s social life is being poignantly carried out through detailed *ad hoc* strategies, discriminatory attitudes

and behaviours are constantly perpetuated, contributing to enhancing a metanarrative of *disability* based on prejudices and enduring stereotypes.

Social Media Sites (SMSs) often are places where hate speech online (HSO) is spread and actualised (Balirano and Hughes 2020; Hughes and Nisco 2022); however, due to their increasing interactivity, dynamicity, and accessibility features, they have also become aggregating spaces where people sharing similar experiences can exchange opinions, feelings, and emotions (Raffone 2022b).

Starting from the premise that (digital) disability discourse is still under-represented in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) (Grue 2011; Raffone 2022a) and that digital spaces have turned into areas where “discursive power is exploited to (re)construct and (re)define social realities” (KhosraviNik and Esposito 2018: 54), this paper will address a SM-CDA (KhosraviNik 2017) of people with impairments’ digitally-mediated discourse to provide insights into how ableism continues to be pursued and how disabled people discursively attempt to resist and challenge hateful and discriminatory attitudes.

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**Serena Santonocito** (Università degli Studi di Messina)

*Exploring Discrimination in Google Images. A Cross-Linguistic Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis*

While it is undeniable that over reliance on AI-powered digital media has created a shift in epistemological processes and power relations, it is equally true that the latest technologies function as multimodal resources for meaning making (Sindoni and Moschini 2021) with the danger to offer a fertile ground for new forms of discrimination (Noble 2018).

Drawing on existing social semiotic research on digital technologies (Poulsen 2021; Kvåle 2016), the present study argues that AI-coded search engines, such as Google Images, function as semiotic resources where the interaction of the verbal and the visual modes communicates corporate interests and human bias that ultimately lead to unbalanced representations of reality and distorted social configurations.

This cross-linguistic and cross-geographic analysis considers the British and the Italian cyberspheres, both examined via a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis paradigm (Djonov and van Leeuwen 2018). Due to the technological affordances of Google Images, the investigation is set in incognito mode and with UK- and Italy-based IP addresses. The aim is to uncover how search terms to refer to same-sex couples (Santonocito 2022) and captioned images colonize power relations and discrimination. The multimodal output, i.e., Google Images result page, delivers what the algorithm computes as most relevant to depict this traditionally stigmatized group. Since the results of the queries are highly context-dependent, the comparison of the Italian and the British cyber landscapes encodes different discriminatory frameworks that should incite broader consciousness on the perils of heteronormative bias and unfairness in AI-based search engines.

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## Giuseppina Scotto di Carlo (Università di Napoli L'Orientale)

### *Deconstructing Men's Rights Activism: A Discourse Analysis of D.A.R.V.O. in MRA Discourse on Rape Culture*

This work examines the attitudes of Men's Rights Activists (MRAs) towards Rape Culture, a term describing a social environment in which sexual misconduct is trivialised, normalised, and justified. By performing a discourse and thematic analysis of a corpus of threads from MRA forums, the study aims to determine whether their representation of rape culture amounts to a form of collective D.A.R.V.O., a tactic used to delegitimise a phenomenon by denying its existence, attacking its advocates, and reversing the roles of victims and perpetrators. The analysis reveals that MRAs' representation of rape culture arises from a reductionist definition of the term, which limits its interpretation to actual rapes and denies it as a socio-culturally ingrained phenomenon. This narrow definition hinders progress in addressing all forms of gender-based violence, harming men and women alike. The study concludes that a broader understanding of rape culture is necessary to combat its effects and improve gender relations.

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**Virginia Zorzi** (Università degli Studi di Bergamo)

*Do Online Migrant Narratives Reproduce Positive Migrant Stereotypes Reinforced within Host Societies?*

Migration is predominantly represented negatively within host societies' public discourses, which frame it in terms of threat and crisis. However, positive (stereotypical) images of migrants are also produced, resulting in what may be considered powerful, socially sanctioned constructions of 'good migrants.' Discourse studies have detected positive evaluations in media discourse when positive economic effects brought about by migrant workers – especially highly skilled ones – are mentioned (Isentyeva 2020). More broadly, social science research has identified cultural/geographical closeness, working skill level, suffering and victimhood and, partly, refugee or legal immigrant status as elements associated with more positive attitudes towards migrants (Esses 2021; Sánchez-Junquera et al. 2021; Wyszynski et al. 2020).

Stories of migrant experiences potentially provide counter-narratives to dominant representations; at the same time, however, they may reproduce some aspects of those representations for self-legitimation reasons (Cederberg 2014). Using the features associated to positive evaluations and attitudes as a proxy for the construction of 'good migrants', this contribution draws on a small dataset of online English-language first-person migrant narratives (written or in video transcript form), to compare the discursive constructions of migrants they offer with positive (stereotypical) images held by host societies. A qualitative analysis is performed to assess emphasis on geographical and cultural references, Attitude (as part of the Appraisal framework), and frames used to represent people's motivation to migrate and their conditions in host societies, in order to provide a description of how narratives construct migrant identities and what relation (if any) they bear to positive stereotypes produced in host societies' public discourses.

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## S23 – Spatialising Marginal Voices/Voicing Marginal Spaces

**Convenors:** Carla Tempestoso (Università della Calabria), Giuseppe Capalbo (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 17:30-19:30** (Aula Filol 4, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Carla Tempestoso (Università della Calabria), Giuseppe Capalbo (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)

**Rocco De Leo** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*Speaking the Margins: Neverwhere and the Voices from London Below*

**Fabiana Errico** (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)

*Katherine Mansfield and Her Female Translators in Fascist Italy: A Marginal Status*

**Andrea Lupi** (Università degli Studi di Pisa)

*Voicing the Social Outcast? Space, Mobility and Authorship in George Orwell's Down and Out in Paris and London (1933) and The Road to Wigan Pier (1937)*

**Debora Sarnelli** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*Moving Between Thresholds: Geographies of Alienation in Wilkie Collins's Armadale*

### Panel description

Being on the margins or outside the norm implies the existence of a (hegemonic) centre, which often seeks to conceal – or absorb – the ‘other’ via forces of homogenisation (Lefebvre 1991, 373). In this light, the rediscovery of marginalised authors and/or literary works is to be seen as both a process of recognition and questioning of the norm itself (Bennett and Royle 2016). Accordingly, marginality has been considered as an “oppositional discursive strategy” (Huggan 2001, 20) and is variously described as a nexus, a compound, a palimpsest, and a structural – rather than accidental – state of affairs in many disciplines (Trudeau and McMorrin 2011; von Braun and Gatzwiler 2014; Jussila, Leimgruber, and Majoral 2018). If exploring the margins fosters counter-hegemonic cultural practices, then scholars can suggest new ways of thinking about the margin itself: it could be a place of resistance (hooks 1989, 21) and a “challenge to the essence of national images” (Rorato and Saunders 2009, 12).

We would like to solicit papers which delve into the broad idea of voicing – and providing a new space for – the marginal: as such, this panel welcomes proposals dealing with all periods and genres, through a variety of theoretical frameworks.

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## Abstracts

**Rocco De Leo** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*Speaking the Margins: Neverwhere and the Voices from London Below*

The paper will consider the (fantastic) space(s) of *Neverwhere*, an urban fantasy novel written by the English polyhedral author Neil Gaiman. The book tells the story of Richard Mayhew, a normal guy with a normal life who saves Door, a young girl bleeding in the street, and is suddenly “commuted” out of his safe, everyday life of London Above into another world called London Below – a fantastical city with a Byzantine setting in which London’s dispossessed wander among famous landmarks and legends such as the Black Friars. London Below is “a place of resistance” (hooks 1989), located down in the sewers of London. A dangerous, marginal as well as magical place inhabited by monsters and saints, murderers and angels, knights in armour and pale girls in black velvet.

The contribution will also look at how Gaiman transforms London’s districts and areas into weird, sinister characters or morph: Knightsbridge, for instance, becomes Night’s Bridge, a darkness-shrouded crossing that takes a terrible toll on those who pass. London Below is both a scary space not terribly clean and sanitary, but also a place of wonders that uncannily parallels the London Above. In finding courage through the hardest way, Richard becomes a hero who has faced pain, loss, and uncertainty, but who has gained a lot more in return. Over time, helping those marginalized people/creatures, Richard literally maps the meaning of his life so that when he goes back to London he realizes it is not where he belongs to anymore.

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**Fabiana Errico** (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)

*Katherine Mansfield and Her Female Translators in Fascist Italy: A Marginal Status*

Katherine Mansfield’s childhood spent far away in New Zealand, her nomadic existence and her literary production (five collections of short stories, four published during her lifetime and one posthumously) contributed to put Mansfield simultaneously at the centre and at the margins of the modernist canon. Although she might stake a claim to being one of the most distinctive literary voices of her age, her position remains in shadow. Her marginal status in life, in fiction and during her career did not prevent her from giving a significant contribution to literature transforming the English short story and bringing it a new breath and a new shape. Mansfield’s early reception and translation in Italy were influenced by her husband John Middleton Murry. Murry’s manipulation and publication of Mansfield’s biographical material after her death promoted a saint-like personality very well welcomed by catholic circles and relegated the interest for the artist to a specific literary critic

sphere. A selection of Katherine Mansfield's short stories was translated for the first time in Italy by Nina Ruffini in the '30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and, shortly after, other translations followed (one of them was edited and translated by Cristina Campo). I would like to offer a perspective on the marginal condition of Katherine Mansfield as a writer and on her female translators, focusing my attention on the steps they undertook to deal with margins starting from their (almost) invisible position in comparison to their male translator colleagues.

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**Andrea Lupi** (Università degli Studi di Pisa)

*Voicing the Social Outcast? Space, Mobility and Authorship in George Orwell's Down and Out in Paris and London (1933) and The Road to Wigan Pier (1937)*

Raymond Williams's claim that George Orwell was "a believer in equality, and a critic of class" (Williams 1960: 305) has been revisited in the recent reception of his works, with special regard to the 1930s non-fiction to which both *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) and *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) belong. Scholars have indeed directed their attention to the role of Orwell's empathy in the observation and autobiographical narration of the conditions of the lower classes (Amundsen 2016; Pearce 1997; Sabin 2008), questioning whether his political positioning contains elements of ambiguity or not. As a "paradoxical observer of the English scene" (Rose 2007: 29) and author of autoethnographies (Amundsen 2016), middle-class Orwell voices the social outcast and the subterranean world of the hospitality workforce in Paris, the London tramps and the miners in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Scattered between England and France, the spatial horizon of Orwell's experiences is instrumental to establish the author's positioning as a mediator of social otherness (Sabin 2008) through geographical mobility and spatial construction. In line with the notion of literature as constitutive of social action and as a site of space-making (van den Heever 2017), this paper aims to explore three spatial axes of reference, i.e. verticality/horizontality, centre/periphery, proximity/distance, to shed light on Orwell's ambiguous authorship and in-between political positioning towards the lower classes in the two accounts of the Great Slump of the 1930s.

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**Debora Sarnelli** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*Moving Between Thresholds: Geographies of Alienation in Wilkie Collins's Armadale*

The concept of margin can be regarded as a hallmark of sensation fiction, both for the genre's hybrid nature – it is neither high cultural nor clearly low as it takes inspiration from melodrama, gothic fiction, realism and popular culture – and for its often-marginal position compared to canonical texts.

The aim of my paper is to analyse Ozias Midwinter, one of the main characters of Wilkie Collins's third sensation novel *Armadale* (1866), in terms of marginalisation. Collins uses the threshold symbolism to convey the sense of displacement his character experiences. Inhabiting the margins of Victorian society, Ozias is an outsider in every sense of the word: as a colonial other, as a representative of an inferior social class and as the son of a murderer. These three levels of alienation converge into a fourth degree of exclusion that is conveyed through an evident spatial marginalisation. Accordingly, Ozias' precarious status is associated with transitional spaces within and outside the house where he lives, such as hallways, windows and the garden. His "in-betweenness" will be analysed in relation to the racialized body, gender ambiguity and class boundaries.

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## **S24 – Speaking of Margins: New Bodies, Languages and Landscapes**

**Convenor:** Nicoletta Vallorani (Università degli Studi di Milano), C. Bruna Mancini (Università della Calabria)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 11:00-13:00** (Aula Filol 4, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Nicoletta Vallorani (Università degli Studi di Milano)

**Kamelia Talebian Sedehi** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*Subjectivity Formation in the Light of Individual and Collective Memory in The Marrow Thieves*

**Anna Pasolini** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Voicing the Body of the Slave between Monstrosity and Vulnerability: Storytelling in Bernardine Evaristo's Blonde Roots*

**C. Maria Laudando** (Università di Napoli L'Orientale), **Maddalena Carfora** (Università di Napoli L'Orientale)

*The 'Alien Territory' of Margaret Atwood's Shorter Fiction*

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 15:00-17:00** (Aula Filol 4, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: C. Bruna Mancini (Università della Calabria)

**Serena Guarracino** (Università degli Studi dell'Aquila)

*Reclaiming the Apocalypse: Feminism, the Body and Gendered Identities in Nnedi Okorafor's The Book of the Phoenix (2015) and Naomi Adelman's The Power (2016)*

**Serena Ammendola** (Università della Calabria)

*"The Shape of Power": Gender, Power and Societal Paradigm Shifts in Naomi Alderman's The Power*

**Ester Gendusa** (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

*Defiant Bodies in Fiction Films: The Case of Avatar*

### **Panel description**

Speaking of margins. New bodies, languages and landscapes in the imaginations of the future. Traditionally seen as “minor” narratives and seldom investigated in academic research and included in the educational pathways, science fiction and fantasy have been recently experiencing a new vitality and they currently seem to prove able to provide a new gaze and different inflections to the most urgent and complex issues emerging in some artistic/activist practices that poetically articulate reflections on complex contexts and identity-markers. The body, language and landscape are all issues necessarily rearticulated in connection with two different discourses: race – and the anxiety of white, male and Western cultures – and the loss of stability of the biological body – faced with the apparently infinite possibility to modify it (Haraway 1991). Our position is that some recent narratives, located in the field of fantasy and utopian and dystopian fiction can successfully explore the possibilities implied in the debate on post-Anthropocene and post-imperialist world, suggesting ways to relocate the human and re-semantise the notion of the body as traditionally intended (Brooks 1993). Shape-shifting aliens, technologically enhanced creatures, various kinds of monstrified strangers, visions of new organisms, contaminations between organic and inorganic beings seem to suggest several ways of reshaping the paradigmatic “model” identity of the patriarchal and anthropocentric thought, that is white, male and Western.

The panel, therefore, wants to investigate how this identity is to be reframed and reshaped in the light of a totally new epistemological condition that is stubbornly, though inane, resisted by the Westerners. This resistance is now proving untenable. Drawing on the postcolonial critical toolbox, from Said (2003) and Bhabha (1983) to Mignolo (2009) and Gilroy (2005), we start on the assumption that the very notion of a well-bounded, civilised and homogeneous human identity is to be discarded to give space to the multiple and diversified bodies that proudly diverge from our familiar “we”. Not only the aliens, but also the (assertive) women, the non-white persons, the disabled persons, the queers and the poor, and, in short, any marginal and diverging identity require a resolutely colour-blind and gender-neutral new narrative of the future, rejecting the imagination of a world where race, gender, poverty, nationality and belonging are key factors in discriminating who gets to be saved and who is left behind (Giuliani 2021).

Possible topics may be:

- Unusual bodies and future imagination
- Aliens and monsters as refigurations of marginalised identities
- New languages for new societies
- The new landscape of fantasy/new weird
- Post-anthropocene imaginations of the Earth
- Postcolonial and decolonial fantasy & science fiction

We are interested in proposals exploring these topics (and other related issues) from the point of view of literary studies, cultural studies and linguistic studies: quite obviously, the change that is taking shape currently – both in the academic research and in cultural and political life – requires the ability to combine different tools and to exploit them against a crossdisciplinary horizon.

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## Abstracts

**Serena Ammendola** (Università della Calabria)

“*The Shape of Power*”: Gender, Power and Societal Paradigm Shifts in Naomi Alderman’s *The Power*

Virginia Woolf explored the complexities of power in different spheres of society, highlighting the inequalities and restrictions imposed on women, as well as the institutional barriers that limited their

opportunities and power of agency. In *The Power*, Naomi Alderman (2017) imagines a world in which this power is dangerous and explosive, literally concentrated in the hands of women in the form of an electric charge that transforms them into a force that overturns traditional gender roles. The female body becomes the vessel for immense power capable of bringing about revolutionary change in the gender and power structures of society. If Haraway (1991) states that women's bodies (cyborgs, hybrids of biology and technology) become instruments of challenge to existing power structures, Butler (2006) emphasises that the body is a site of performance through which gender and power are negotiated. In Alderman's novel – through an imperceptible change in the bodies of all women – marginalised individuals find speech, break the imposed silence (Spivak 2010) and fight their oppressors. But the acquisition of power can be used to create inequality and domination and to construct the discourse of control over the "Other" (Said 2003). Moreover, the overturning of power generates an upheaval in the way power is gendered so that old tropes are disrupted, boundaries are redrawn and established narratives are challenged. Alderman's portrait of a powerful new matriarchal society and dangerous femaleness generates questions about the metaphysics of power and the possibility of change.

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**Ester Gendusa** (Università degli Studi di Palermo)

*Defiant Bodies in Fiction Films: The Case of Avatar*

When the first episode was released in 2009, the epic science fiction film *Avatar*, written and directed by James Cameron, proved to be a technological marvel due to its innovative visual effects and the recourse to a highly sophisticated 3D technology. Indeed, the film achieved universal acclaim, although the pioneering technological aspect might have overshadowed the plot itself and its multi-layered linguistic level, which, instead, lend themselves to be productively read in oppositional terms through the lenses of Post-colonial and Gender theory.

*Avatar* and its 2022 sequel, *Avatar: The Way of Water*, epitomise a dystopian/utopian world in which post-human bodies act as the real protagonists of the age-long conflict between the humans and the Na'vi people, the oppressors and the oppressed, the illegitimate occupants and the displaced, the destroyers and the preservers. As my paper intends to demonstrate, if *Avatar*'s post-human corporality helps envision the overcoming of the Anthropocenic aesthetics, the bodies of Pandora's inhabitants – both humanoid natives and former human beings – further resist normative binary dichotomies. It thus happens that the body of Pandora's warrior women in particular plays a distinctive role as it explicitly defies notions of inferiorizing fixity, of female weakness and frailty. More specifically, in *The Way of Water* Ronal's pregnant body is associated not only with moral integrity, but also with physical strength, thus subverting traditional patriarchal visions of pregnancy as synonym with vulnerability.

Finally, against this backdrop, the incorporation of the Na'vi language – created by Professor Paul Frommer – in determining the polyvocality of the series further renders its textual fabric an arena of cultural resistance.

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- MIGNOLO, WALTER D., 2009, "Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and De-Colonial Freedom", *Theory, Culture & Society* 26 (7-8), pp. 1-23.

**Serena Guarracino** (Università degli Studi dell'Aquila)

*Reclaiming the Apocalypse: Feminism, the Body and Gendered Identities in Nnedi Okorafor's The Book of the Phoenix (2015) and Naomi Adelman's The Power (2016)*

Recent work on feminist science fiction has praised how this genre, starting at least from Ursula LeGuin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969) and Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis trilogy* (1987-89) has imagined new forms of gendered embodiments and in some way prefigured the undoing of the gender binary offered by recent queer theory. However, this contribution intends to focus on two sci-fi novels, Nnedi Okorafor's *The Book of the Phoenix* (2015) and Naomi Adelman's *The Power* (2016), which apparently work against the grain by exploring the connection between power and the female body, defined in what may seem a rather essentialist way. The loss of stability of the biological body and the consequent resemantization of the human brought forth by theories on the Anthropocene are here ostensibly problematized by looking back at second-wave feminism's thematization of the specificity of women's experience grounded in the body. However, this does not lead to a nostalgic representation of the political potentiality inscribed in gender difference; on the contrary, the two novels specifically address one of the crucial points that have been left open by that phase of feminist thought, namely the utopian idea of the biologically female body as an indisputable source of political progress. By exploring the apocalyptic consequences of unproblematically relocating power in female bodies, these novels both interrogate contemporary queer theory on dismissing biological definitions of gender and shed light on the still controversial relationship between feminism, the body, and power.

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**C. Maria Laudando** (Università di Napoli L'Orientale), **Maddalena Carfora** (Università di Napoli L'Orientale)

*The 'Alien Territory' of Margaret Atwood's Shorter Fiction*

The paper focuses on Margaret Atwood's collection of short pieces, *Good Bones* (1992), which makes the most of the fluidity and open-endedness distinctive of postmodern genre hybridization in-between fiction and essay to decline an impressive range of marginality types: in terms of characters (like 'unpopular gals' or 'stupid women' or dancing lepers), in terms of bodies, not only human – playing

with gender stereotypes and prejudices (*The Female Body* and *Making a Man*) – but also privileging the perspective of insects or liminal states just preceding birth or death or reincarnation (*My Life as a Bat*), and in terms of landscapes (*Homelanding*, *Cold-Blooded*) where the ‘human’ planet of earth is dissected and estranged as the amazing field of survey from non human beings.

The structural and technical variety at work in this collection, ranging from the rewriting of dramatic pieces or poems (in terms of gender revisionism) to the magazine article or the science-fiction report, correspondingly privileges a strategic poetics of inversion through the use of colloquial idioms, humor, bathos and the collision of the ordinary and the extravagant that aims above all to launch a provocative campaign against all forms of waste, inequality and discrimination.

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**Anna Pasolini** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Voicing the Body of the Slave between Monstrosity and Vulnerability: Storytelling in Bernardine Evaristo's Blonde Roots*

The body, language and landscape are strictly and meaningfully intertwined in *Blonde Roots* by Bernardine Evaristo (2008), a novel which defies easy classifications and articulates provocative intersectional reflections on gender, race, power and past and present imperial relations. This paper aims to explore the ways in which Evaristo's narrative strategies manage to connect (female) identity, the (black and white) body, history and storytelling and to articulate new perspectives and stances on the experience of slavery.

*Blonde Roots* is speculative fiction (a “what if”, but also a “this is what was” novel, Collins 2008: 1209), which retells the painful story of the transatlantic slave trade by reversing the roles of black and white actors as well as remapping the world, so that the racial inversion coincides with the geographical displacement of the powerful imperial “West”.

Evaristo's novel exploits and merges a number of literary and narrative conventions in subversive and unpredictable ways to scrutinise the authority of those in charge of telling the “official” version of the story and expose and move to the fore voices and perspectives which have traditionally been marginalized or unaccounted for, if not deemed unspeakable. Besides blending different recognizable tropes and features of and allusions to conventional narrative forms ranging from science fiction, adventure books and travelogues to slave narratives, Evaristo problematizes them by forcing the reader to look at the story from a situated perspective. A notable example is the undeniable dystopian character of the novel, which, however, can be considered as such only from a white point of view, as what the narrator describes coincides with actual experience for black slaves. More to the point, Evaristo's protagonist and main narrator, Doris Scagglethorpe, accounts for and thus materializes an intersectional embodied dimension, in which race, gender and class are inextricably tangled and bound to an estranged, vulnerable body that is paradoxically construed as monstrous and thus dangerous.

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**Kamelia Talebian Sedehi** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*Subjectivity Formation in the Light of Individual and Collective Memory in The Marrow Thieves*

Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* (2017) is set in 2050 and imagines a land in which people lost their ability to dream and the only people who can still dream are Indigenous people. Similar to other dystopian narratives such as Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1921), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), Dimaline criticizes the society. In this postapocalyptic narrative, Dimaline envisions the future in order to focus on settler colonialism; mainly the effect of residential schools. The main protagonist of the novel, Frenchie, has no memory of his Indigenous roots; therefore, he needs to create his identity based on the collective memory of his ancestors. Some of the elders were witnesses of various incidents that deracinated Aboriginals from their culture, language, and their roots. Laub and Felman believe that the first-hand witness has a "topographical position"; i.e., his position is irreplaceable and he is the only one who can narrate what happened in the past and transmit it to the following people who would in return be the second-hand witnesses of the incidents by gaining knowledge (1991: 207). Halbwachs developed theories of collective and social memories. One obtains cultural memories through various social practices (Halbwachs 1985: 10). Jan Assmann mentions that "cultural memory preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity" (1995: 130). In order to reflect on the process of identity and subjectivity formation, I will apply Dori Laub and Shoshana Felman's concept of witnessing and testimony and Jan Assmann's concept of individual and collective memory to Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves*.

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## S25 – Staging Dissent: Theatre and New Beginnings

**Convenors:** Rossana Maria Sebellin (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata), Maria Elisa Montironi (Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 11:00-13:00** (Aula Iris, Cubo 29C, ponte pedonale)

Chair: Maria Elisa Montironi (Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo)

**Daniela Guardamagna** (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)

*Censorship and the Shakespearean Stage*

**Rossana Maria Sebellin** (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)

*Political Criticism in Three Early Modern History Plays*

**Silvia Silvestri** (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro)

*Negotiating Propriety in Drama Translation: George Gascoigne's Supposes*

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 15:00-17:00** (Aula Alcaro, Cubo 28B, piano terra)

Chair: Rossana Maria Sebellin (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)

**Valentina Rossi** (Università eCampus di Novedrate)

*The Inglorious Revolution: How Collier's Dissent Transformed Late Restoration Drama*

**Antonella Pulice** (Independent Scholar)

*Elizabeth I: Dissenting from the Patriarchy*

**Maria Elisa Montironi** (Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo)

*Dissenting from the 'Top Girl' Legacy and the Male Canon: Lucy Prebble's Enron and Penelope Skinner's Linda*

### Panel description

Although vital for democracy and social improvement, dissent from – and resulting opposition to – orthodoxy has often been criminalised and repressed because of the challenges to the overall outlook. This is particularly true of English theatre, which since its medieval origins has provided a site for negotiating, resisting and rethinking normative ideas and for bringing about change. “Dissent is any practice – often verbal, but sometimes performative – that challenges the status quo (the existing structure of norms, values, customs, traditions and especially authorities that underwrite the present ways of doing things)” (Martin, *Government by Dissent*, 2013: 3). The etymology of the lexeme (Latin ‘dis-sentio’) suggests that interaction between individuals is based on a constant tension between self-expression and mutual recognition, between speaking for or against the other. The tension between self-expression and the voicing of dissent and censorship is particularly relevant in the history of dramatic performance, where from Tudor times up to the 1960s censorship, represented by the Master of the Revels before, the Lord Chancellor later, has been a looming presence in the lives of authors and performers alike. This panel aims at exploring different instances and forms of dissent, non-conformity and resistance, mapping the ways English theatre has paved to new beginnings.

We welcome proposals on the multiple modes unorthodox opinions are expressed and/or forms of oppression are exercised, particularly in relation to, but not limited to:

- political dissent;
- religious dissent;

- sexual dissent;
- aesthetic dissent.

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## Abstracts

**Daniela Guardamagna** (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)  
*Censorship and the Shakespearean Stage*

In 1606, the Puritan influence on performances made a further step: the Act to Restrain Abuses was issued, forbidding profanity on stage. Analysing Shakespearean texts before and after that date, it is apparent that many oaths and expletives had to be cancelled. One wonders whether the setting in non-Christian countries (viz. ancient Rome, pre-Christian Britain, or Egypt) was also chosen to avoid difficulties in this field.

My paper will deal with censorship and its interiorizing as a kind of new taboo for playwrights.

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**Maria Elisa Montironi** (Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo)

*Dissenting from the 'Top Girl' Legacy and the Male Canon: Lucy Prebble's Enron and Penelope Skinner's Linda*

Lucy Prebble's *Enron* (2009) and Penelope Skinner's *Linda* (2015) can be located in the context of an ongoing renewed "feminist-theatre resistance" (Aston 2018: 293). *Enron* forewarns it through a highly gendered dramatization of the epic rise and fall of the eponymous Texan corporation; *Linda* mirrors its peak through the story of the downfall of a have-it-all businesswoman echoing Shakespeare's *King Lear*, which is used as a symbolic touchstone to defy the male-dominated theatrical canon.

This contribution aims to analyze how both works offer female counterparts to the memorable Shakespearean or, more generally, canonical tragic heroes and unmask the fallacy of the 'top girl' ideals of self-empowerment and freedom of choice without a collective point of view and a communal feeling. As different as they are, *Enron* and *Linda* belong to the same genealogy of feminist theatre, which draws on de-familiarizing strategies and unorthodox revisions of conventional forms to show change as urgent and new visions as possible. Aware of their feminist ancestors, who resound in their plays, they invest in the transformative potentials of theatre and urge us to look at "the still-not-yet horizon of emancipation" (Aston 2018: 309).

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**Antonella Pulice** (Independent Scholar)

*Elizabeth I: Dissenting from the Patriarchy*

Elizabeth I is known as the queen who reigned in England for forty-four years, the monarch who defeated the invincible Spanish fleet, and the woman who decided to dedicate her whole life to the wealth of her country. However, Elizabeth I, apart from being a significant political figure, was a woman who contributed to the cultural and social development of her country by starting to shape a new idea of the role of woman inside a male and sexist society.

In *Swive*, the play held for the first time at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse in London in 2019, a more private sphere of Elizabeth I is presented to the audience. The playwright, Ella Hickson, depicts a woman in power who makes efforts to constantly negotiate with the sedimented patriarchal pressure she receives from the people around her in order to find a way to affirm herself.

Even if, as Carole Levin writes in her book *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, “it was a time of great cultural development”, the play remarks the many difficulties the queen encounters during her reign. Elizabeth I is aware that clashing against a deeply-rooted male culture is not easy, because even if you are the queen you are considered as just a woman.

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**Valentina Rossi** (Università eCampus di Novedrate)

*The Inglorious Revolution: How Collier's Dissent Transformed Late Restoration Drama*

Two major events impinged on the asset of late Restoration England: the Glorious Revolution (1688) and the rise of a new social class composed of merchants and traders. This latter had a solid Puritan background and found the most eloquent spokesman in Jeremy Collier, the author of *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698): a pamphlet that denounced coeval drama as immoral and responsible for the degradation of society.

The present paper aims to determine how the Reverend's public expression of dissent affected both the themes and the structure of late seventeenth-century theatre. By analyzing a selection of plays staged from 1698 onwards, I intend to shed light on the new function of the prologues/epilogues – as well as the paratexts of the printed versions – of the scripts employed by the playwrights in response to Collier's attack. Furthermore, my contribution will try to demonstrate that the developments mentioned above had a significant impact on the shaping and the reception of the rake: the milestone of the London comedies. Indeed, while the previous libertines staged during the early Restoration were mainly focused on *libido*, the ones staged from the '90s onwards experienced a process of self-censorship: they abandoned desire, renounced individuality and embraced a new kind of sensibility, finally presenting themselves as ‘tender’ husbands/fathers, a stereotyped character later epitomized by Steele, whose repertoire stood in sharp contrast with the previous productions.

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**Rossana Maria Sebellin** (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)

*Political Criticism in Three Early Modern History Plays*

The reign of King Richard II and its crises has been portrayed at least three times between 1593 and the early 17<sup>th</sup> century: the anonymous *The Life and Death of Jack Straw* (1593), *Thomas of Woodstock* (16??), and Shakespeare's *Richard II* (1595). The three plays deal with rebellion and political dissent in very different ways, testifying, in my opinion, to the evolving political vision of monarchy and power which culminated with the Puritan uprising and Cromwell Civil War. I will focus in particular on the Jacobean text, whose compositional date in the last two decades has been moved well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century: the late compositional period may explain the more radical political stance, especially in comparison with the two Elizabethan tragedies. Although all plays must necessarily voice political complaints in a devious, indirect way, this paper aims at exploring how the lower classes can voice discontent or political unrest in an acceptable balance between insubordination and formal respect of authority.

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**Silvia Silvestri** (Univeristà degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro)

*Negotiating Propriety in Drama Translation: George Gascoigne’s Supposes*

First performed at Gray’s Inn in 1566, presumably as a part of the holiday revels’ extravaganza, George Gascoigne’s *Supposes* stands out as «the first really well-constructed vernacular comedy that appeared on the English stage» (Prouty 1942: 171). A «treasonably faithful» translation (Beecher 1999: 66) of Ludovico Ariosto’s *Suppositi* (prose 1509; verses 1532 ca.), the play appeared in a 1573 anthology marked by «wanton speeches and lascivious phrases» (Gascoigne 1575, f. ¶<sup>2</sup>r) and was then reprinted in a 1575 collection «gelded from all filthies phrases» (*ibid.*), and yet suppressed in 1576. As *Supposes* suggests, Gascoigne’s moralization of the volume was rather questionable. While keeping close to Ariosto for both characterization and plotting, the translated play entails a number of linguistic and structural variations that alter *Suppositi*’s moral framework, amounting to a conspicuous set of sexually charged lines that remain unamended in the 1575 reprint. Paying close attention to the “Englished” references to the homosexual and heterosexual relationships enmeshed in the source texts, as well as to the ambiguous moral portrait drawn for the main female character, the paper examines the ways in which Gascoigne negotiates the moral-ethical boundaries set by Ariosto while challenging Elizabethan views of sexual propriety. His rehandling of the Italian sources is thus shown to bring *Supposes* into dialogue with contemporary English debates on homosexuality, (extra)marital relationships, and the regimentation of unmarried women, skilfully swinging the playtext between conformity and resistance to Elizabethan sexual *mores*.

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## **S26 – Telling Stories at the End: Interdisciplinary Narratives of End of Life and Mourning**

**Convenors:** Paolo Caponi (Università degli Studi di Milano), Maria Micaela Coppola (Università degli Studi di Trento)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 15:00-17:00** (Aula Filol 2, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

**Chair:** Paolo Caponi (Università degli Studi di Milano), Maria Micaela Coppola (Università degli Studi di Trento)

**Valentina Vetri** (Università degli Studi di Siena)

*The Importance of Being Impolite: The Verbalization of Grief and Mourning as Subversion of Social Norms in Ricky Gervais' After Life (2019)*

**Alessia Guidi** (Università degli Studi di Pisa)

*Envisaging Eternity, or the Overturning of Cupio Dissolvi in Science-Fiction Literature*

**Francesca Cappellini** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Stored in Ice: Challenging the notion of Death and Access to Cryonics as an Alternative Corpse Disposal Methods*

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 17:30-19:30** (Aula Filol 2, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

**Chair:** Paolo Caponi (Università degli Studi di Milano), Maria Micaela Coppola (Università degli Studi di Trento)

**Francesca Di Blasio** (Università degli Studi di Trento)

*The Space between Mourning and Healing: Affect, Memory and Storytelling in Kim Scott's Taboo*

**Elena Ogliari** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Sick Body, Sick Ireland: Autopathographies and Social Critique in Dorothy Molloy's Poetry*

**Anna Caterino** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Between Medicine and Bawdiness: All's Well that Ends Well and the Early Modern Doctor-Patient Relationship*

### **Panel description**

According to recent interdisciplinary research in the medical humanities and narrative medicine (Bleakley 2015; Charon 2017) and on the relevance of narration in the protocols of care, the use of storytelling (visual and in words), imagination, and creativity has been proved to be extremely effective when healing is possible as well as in case of terminal illnesses and in the process of mourning (Ferrari et al. 2017; Marini 2015; Murphy et al. 2017).

In this panel we will focus on interdisciplinary narratives of life-threatening illnesses and grief, in order to analyse narrative forms and cultural strategies through which, over the centuries, vulnerable subjects have borne witness to suffering and have coped with dramatic events and disruptive challenges (Couser 2004; Felman et al., 1992). We also seek to investigate ways to exploit the humanistic resources of storytelling so as to support and develop new perspectives on care protocols in clinical and healthcare settings, and in professional, training, and educational contexts.

Prospective contributors may consider, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- evidence-based and/or narrative-based approaches to end of life and mourning (for ex., from the point of view of literary, linguistic, feminist or cultural studies, and/or of bio- medical, psychological or cognitive sciences);
- the potentialities in fictional, non-fictional, clinical, and/or bio-medical narratives of end of life and mourning (for ex., novels, poems, photography, drama, and films, social media interactions, self-reports, or patient-therapist communications);
- end-of life and mourning narratives in specific historical and sociocultural contexts;
- the role of storytelling and narrative competence in case of terminal illnesses and in the process of mourning;
- the transformative power of end-of life and mourning narratives in educational, training, and professional healthcare settings;
- narratives that challenge mainstream notions of health, well-being, and death.

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## Abstracts

### **Francesca Cappellini** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Stored in Ice: Challenging the notion of Death and Access to Cryonics as an Alternative Corpse Disposal Methods*

Ever since Ettinger's first speculations on cryonics (1972), this practice has been defined as the freezing, immediately upon death, of people who have suffered from rare or incurable diseases. The purpose of the process is to store the body and prevent decomposition until a cure for the cause of death can be found (Gordon 1975: 132). This practice might be considered as a temporary Corpse Disposal Method (CDM), in which a frozen body will stay in more or less one geographic location while time marches onwards (Yorke and Rowe 2006: 75).

The existence of class distinction after death is not new (Kephart 1950). We can assess that social status impacts the number and ways in which a person can be buried (especially being able to sustain higher expenses and even the ability to move a body from one place to the other). Cryonics falls under this category, as it needs large sums of money to be sustained and for the body to be transported to the institute in question.

The aim of this study is thus to assess the narrative attributed to cryonics as a CDM and how it relates to other burial methods usually reserved to a rich clientele. At the same time, it would be interesting to explore how less affluent people are prevented from certain types of corpse disposal practices.

To do so, an analysis of newspaper articles containing narratives of cryonics as a burial method (also related to other burial systems) will be carried out, in order to find more insight on the narrative related to cryonics as a burial system that challenges the mainstream notion of death.

Expected results: The study is expected to highlight whether and, if so, why less affluent people are prevented from using cryonics and other alternative methods, and what impact such methods have on society, in particular regarding how they are perceived by mainstream society.

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**Anna Caterino** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Between Medicine and Bawdiness: All's Well that Ends Well and the Early Modern Doctor-Patient Relationship*

In act II.i of *All's Well that Ends Well*, Shakespeare's most unfortunate comedy (Price 1968), the languishing King of France grants Helen de Narbonne, daughter of the noteworthy physician, a meeting. Even though Helen's primary motive is to marry Bertram, she nevertheless takes on "the name of practitioner" (Markham 1631, p. 5) and manages not only to persuade the King but also to heal him. Throughout the first acts of the play, Helen is described as "a poor physician's daughter" (II.iii.115) without any kind of education and yet, this "doctor she" (II.i.77) will prove herself superior to the "learned authentic fellows" (II.iii.12) at court. However, the defence of unorthodox practices at a time when the Royal College of Physicians was trying to create a medical autocracy (Cook 1986) is not the only element that Shakespeare borrows from the realm of the early modern medical marketplace. While the diatribes and the opposition between Galen and Paracelsus play an important role within *All's Well that Ends Well*, the play also relies on the relationship between physician and patient. It follows, that the aim of this paper is to analyse *All's Well that Ends Well* using an interdisciplinary approach. It will focus especially on how patients were seldomly forced to consult licensed practitioners exclusively and how the availability of multiple classes of practitioners marks Helen's words as true: even in near-death situations, "art is not past power nor you past cure" (II.i.156).

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**Francesca Di Blasio** (Università degli Studi di Trento)

*The Space between Mourning and Healing: Affect, Memory and Storytelling in Kim Scott's Taboo*

Set in modern-day Australia, Kim Scott's novel *Taboo* (2017) is a story of mourning and recovery. These features both coalesce in the momentous episode at the centre of the novel, *i.e.*, the collective, and even official event of the opening of a Peace Park on the site of a massacre of Indigenous people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This occasion, that gathers people from different pasts and parts of official history, weaves together their personal stories, and results in an emotional, as much as collective outcome. The role of storytelling is of paramount importance in this process of grieving and healing. Even what we already know, takes on a different nuance when it is 'emplotted', *i.e.*, when it becomes part of a narrative. Emotional responses to narrative promote and cultivate the dynamics of an empathic response, as opposed to what happens with the "economic mind", which is blind "to the fact that human life is something mysterious and not altogether fathomable" (Nussbaum 2001, 433). Different ways of articulating a story, its "subtleties" (Hogan 2011, 20), provoke different emotional responses. Brian Massumi proposes a model of emotional interaction in which "affect" is opposed to "emotion", the latter being consistent with individual interiority. Affect, on the other hand, locates itself in the physical space of interaction, and can be considered a "zone of indistinction" between thought and action (Massumi 2015). Drawing on Brian Massumi's Affect Theory, my analysis emphasises physicality, focusing on the centrality of space/place, and of certain material objects, in the way the story told in *Taboo* articulates the dynamics of emotional response to memory, trauma, and restoration.

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**Alessia Guidi** (Università degli Studi di Pisa)

*Envisaging Eternity, or the Overturning of Cupio Dissolvi in Science-Fiction Literature*

The term "immortality" has always dealt with endless and deathless forms of existence. The question of the desire to go on living forever, or lasting as long as the universe, has repeatedly emerged in philosophy, theology, mythology and literature. The immortality of the soul is an idea which informs many of the world's myths and religions, although there are some relevant differences concerning its relationship with the body. From this point of view, the strengthening of longevity and ways of eradicating involuntary suffering have aroused the interest of scientists, alchemists, physicians and literary critics. In particular, the theme of immortality and life extension is addressed by science fiction and fantasy writers who have continued to recontextualize new scientific advancements in futuristic scenarios. In this respect, my contribution attempts to explore the occurrences of 'death's death' in sci-fi from a speculative perspective based on biotechnology and medical innovations. To this end, it will be pointed out how genetic engineering, cloning, transplantation and other

bioscientific procedures are also called upon as literary motifs envisaging the extension of human life on a textual level. Subsequently, this paper will shed light on the tensions between physical and spiritual immortality according to the life-extension techniques which come into play. However, most contemporary science-fiction stories link deathlessness with cyberspace, providing food for thought among scholars theoretically interested in simulacra and ontological hybridism. Within the techno- and neuroscience framework and its salient insights, this study will finally investigate the syncretic contact emerging between experimental approaches in sci-fi and the myth of the Faustian bargain along with the privilege of immortality.

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**Elena Ogliari** (Università degli Studi di Milano)

*Sick Body, Sick Ireland: Autopathographies and Social Critique in Dorothy Molloy's Poetry*

This paper examines how Dorothy Molloy's (1942-2004) poetry challenges the twentieth-century Irish poetic tradition and sheds light on the inequities of Celtic Tiger Ireland by inscribing the subjective experience of illness, pain, and female sexuality in seemingly traditional lyrical forms. The poetic medium is ideally suited to express the painful caesura represented by the onset of infirmity – in Molloy's case, fatal liver cancer – and to denounce the persistence of a highly conservative and macho legacy in Ireland at the turn of the twenty-first century, when Ireland used to present itself as the poster child for modernisation. In the collection *The Poems of Dorothy Molloy*, published posthumously, the author discusses with great frankness the changes in her ailing body and the treatment she and other women cancer patients received in the oncology wards of Irish hospitals. She infused her poems with religious imagery to overtly criticise the sexual and gendered fear instilled by nationalist and Catholic education as well as argue for change in the treatment of cancer in Ireland. Moreover, a reflection on Molloy's poetry allows for a discussion of the often political-social character, albeit with different orientations, of illness narratives in contemporary Irish poetry (consider Eavan Boland, Stephanie Conn, Kevin Higgins, and Seán Ó Ríordáin) and the limitations and potential of poetic narrative. The denunciatory and therapeutic purposes of Molloy's poems benefit from the empathic and performative dimensions of poetry; at the same time, the case of Molloy, a journalist as well as a poet, illustrates how pathographic writings, in the age of transmedia convergence, infiltrate online newspapers and blogs, attesting to the porosity of (auto)pathographic discourse.

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**Valentina Vetri** (Università degli Studi di Siena)

*The Importance of Being Impolite: The Verbalization of Grief and Mourning as Subversion of Social Norms in Ricky Gervais’ After Life (2019)*

Dealing with death and mourning is a very complex process. It is a personal, individual experience, but it is also collectively governed and framed by social practices that vary from culture to culture. In the British context, and particularly in the English one, discourse on death and mourning is generally characterised by a normative absence of narrative: a recent survey (YouGov 2018) has demonstrated that the verbalisation of negative thoughts/emotions associated with grief in the English context is still taboo, as the bereaved frequently fear appearing impolite or embarrassing others by expressing their emotions. The role of impoliteness, examined here from a sociocultural perspective (Mills 2017), plays a major role in controlling and suppressing grief-related conversation: regarding bereavement, the English setting is still marked by “a pervasive culture of avoidance” (Jalland 2013).

In this context, the 2019 Ricky Gervais television series *After Life* appears particularly subversive. In the series, Tony – the protagonist, portrayed by Gervais himself – deals with the abrupt loss of his wife in an unusual manner: by saying and doing whatever he wants, he disregards and violates all possible forms of politeness. Tony openly communicates his suicidal ideas, rage, and resentment, causing his loved ones’ embarrassment and concern, but also giving voice to the unspoken and frequently unpleasant language of loss. Using Discourse Analysis and (Im)politeness Theory, the purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how impoliteness can function as a subversive force to break linguistic and behavioural rules that limit the expression of grief and often cause further harm to the bereaved by fostering a sense of solitude and isolation.

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## S27 – The Legacy of Oscar Wilde: Rewritings, Adaptations, and Reception

**Convenors:** Laura Giovannelli (Università degli Studi di Pisa), Pierpaolo Martino (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro)

**Saturday, September 16, 2023 – 9:30-12:00** (Aula Filol 9, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Laura Giovannelli (Università degli Studi di Pisa)

### Introduction to the panel

*Wilde Then and Now: Pierpaolo Martino in Conversation with Laura Giovannelli*

**Camilla Del Grazia** (Università degli Studi di Pisa)

*Normalising Wilde? Interpreting Reimaginings of Oscar Wilde as a Detective through the Conventions of Detective Fiction*

**Paolo Bugliani** (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)

*Uncovering Wilde's Contribution to the Development of Biographical (Short) Fiction*

**Gerardo Salvati** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)

*Dorian Will Live Forever. Satire, Misrepresentation, and Bluntness in Will Self's Dorian, an Imitation*

**Simona Laghi** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*Dress, Law, and Discontent: Oscar Wilde and his Twenty-First Century Followers*

**Angel Antonio De Oliveira Amata** (Università degli Studi di Pisa)

*Graphic Wilde: The Picture of Dorian Gray and The Importance of Being Earnest in Comics*

### Panel description

This panel looks at an enthralling and internationally expanding horizon in English Studies. Our goal is to continue to throw light on Oscar Wilde's authorial personality, multifaceted oeuvre as well as historical and contextual connections, including the diversified field of his reception in both high and popular culture throughout the decades. Besides an unrelenting interest in his life and dandiacal wit, Wilde has recently been analysed through serious philological reassessment and under an impressive variety of theoretically-inflected lenses, ranging from Postmodernism and Postcolonialism to the spheres of Cultural, Media, Queer and Performance Studies, to mention only a few. As Joseph Bristow observes in *Oscar Wilde and Modern Culture: The Making of a Legend* (2008), the author's achievements were "sources of inspiration for such diverse developments as a franker depiction of marital discord on the English stage, campaigns for homosexual rights, the emergence of the culture of celebrity, critical methodologies that champion 'the birth of the reader', and modern obsessions with the figure of the beautiful, though fatal young man". In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Wilde's self-conscious construction of his identity and ironic performance of gender have been paradigmatic for multifarious artists like Andy Warhol, Stephen Fry, Rupert Everett, David Bowie and Morrissey, showing how the Irish dandy's life and work can be tantalisingly translated into non-literary modes too. We invite submissions dealing with this prismatic profile and far-reaching influence, from Wilde's writings and poetics to the mythography of his (after)life, along with his reinvention in literature, on stage and screen, in music and pop culture.

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- WOOD, JULIA, 2007, *The Resurrection of Oscar Wilde: A Cultural Afterlife*, James Clarke & Co., Cambridge.

## Abstracts

### Introduction to the panel

*Wilde Then and Now: Pierpaolo Martino in Conversation with Laura Giovannelli*

This paper reads Oscar Wilde through our *now*, through a contemporary sensibility (and approach) in which literature and popular culture interrogate and are interrogated by critical concepts and categories such as performance, celebrity, intermediality, and consumerism. We think that it is important to approach Wilde *then* – that is, the man and the artist in his own time – through contemporary rewritings and performances of ‘Oscar Wilde’ in the fields of cinema, music and literature by such artists as Al Pacino, Rupert Everett, Stephen Fry, Gyles Brandreth, David Hare, David Bowie, Morrissey, Nick Cave, Neil Tennant, and Gavin Friday. These artists – through their awareness of the importance of being/playing Oscar in their specific worlds and cultural contexts – show us that Wilde can be conceived as a subversive, critical role one might successfully perform and appropriate, now more than ever.

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**Paolo Bugliani** (Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata)

*Uncovering Wilde’s Contribution to the Development of Biographical (Short) Fiction*

Fictionalised accounts of the lives of artists have been very frequent since the Romantic Age. This specific subgenre pertains to the lively genealogy of biographical life-writing, which in English literature has provided a very remarkable output. As a matter of fact, although critical surveys tend to overshadow England’s import in the process of the fictionalisation of modern biographical writing – prioritising more experimental examples within nineteenth-century Europe, such as Marcel Schwob’s *Vies imaginaires* – such a phenomenon has a very interesting English tradition, dating back to at least John Aubrey’s seventeenth-century *Brief Lives*. My paper will focus on Oscar Wilde’s *The Portrait of Mr W.H.*, which represents a capital case study not only because the very concept of portraiture is key to his whole aesthetic production, but also because his appropriation of a short narrative centred around the fictionalised reconstruction of a writer’s career is a crucial milestone in the modern evolution of biographical writing. By inserting Wilde’s text into a wider aesthetical panorama, I aim to highlight the author’s ability to hone a hybrid genre – hanging between the critical

effort of the biographer and the creative whim of the artist – and turn it into a model for future experimentations.

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**Angel Antonio De Oliveira Amata** (Università degli Studi di Pisa)

*Graphic Wilde: The Picture of Dorian Gray and The Importance of Being Earnest in Comics*

When compared to other famous nineteenth-century novels such as *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* or *Dracula*, Oscar Wilde’s production has appeared considerably late in the field of comic books. This is mainly due to the themes dealt with by the author, which were deemed unsuitable for a medium wrongly seen as exclusively addressed to children and, therefore, penalised by laws like the American Comics Code Authority. In our contemporary world, characterised by a growing interest in Neo-Victorianism and a blooming phase for comics in the academic sphere as well as pop culture, Wilde has been rediscovered and, along with him, a series of issues considered as taboos until a few decades ago. Consequently, many graphic novels have appeared, translating Wilde’s words into panels and balloons. Not surprisingly, the most frequently adapted text in the last twenty years has been *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, probably in the wake of the cinematographic debut of the character in *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (2003). As far as drama is concerned, *Salomé* stands out (there are currently two Italian adaptations), while the renowned *The Importance of Being Earnest* was recently adapted in England by the Classical Comics publishing house. In this analysis, I will take into account the Marvel adaptation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and the aforementioned version of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, highlighting similarities and variations between Wilde’s original works and their graphic counterparts. I want to show how Wilde can provide inspiration to comic-book authors thanks to the strong aesthetic connotations of his works, which leave room for scriptwriters and artists to freely interpret his words. I intend to focus especially on the graphic adaptation of the play, approaching the comic book as a sort of *mise en scène*.

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**Camilla Del Grazia** (Università degli Studi di Pisa)

*Normalising Wilde? Interpreting Reimaginings of Oscar Wilde as a Detective through the Conventions of Detective Fiction*

Oscar Wilde's status as a cultural icon has sparked a diversified range of scholarly evaluations, including examinations of his various portrayals as a fictional character (see Seeney 1996; Dickinson 2005; Kingston 2007; Bristow 2008; Martino 2013; 2015; 2021; Mendelssohn 2018; Evangelista *et al.* 2022). Throughout the years, these portrayals have often depicted Wilde as immersed in detective plots or even assuming the role of a detective himself, from E.W. Hornung's gentleman-thief Raffles (1898-1909) to recent Holmesian pastiches and investigations related to Jack the Ripper's murders (Kingston 2007) as well as Gyles Brandreth's ongoing series of novels, *The Oscar Wilde Murder Mysteries* (starting in 2007). The number of Wildean adaptations of this type raises the question of why the figure of Wilde turns out to be so inspiring within this particular genre. One plausible explanation could lie in Wilde's popularity and the appeal of detective fiction, which, when combined, would guarantee commercial success. However, the present paper considers an additional factor that emerges when examining the characteristics of classic detective fiction, and of the detective in particular. A gentleman by birth and upbringing, the traditional detective enjoys an astonishing degree of freedom, navigating different social classes, disguising himself and occasionally breaking rules. Paradoxically, this antinormative behaviour culminates in his relentless pursuit of the truth (Klapcsik 2012). Applying this model to Wilde could allow detective fiction to explore the various aspects of his public and private persona, capturing the complexity of his character. Simultaneously, classic detective fiction is often viewed as an endeavour (whose degree of success is still under debate) committed to normalising uncontrollable, uncanny or liminal elements of late Victorian and Edwardian society (see Kissane and Kissane 1963; Clausen 1984; Ascari 2007; Pittard 2011; Tambling 2019). The aim of this paper is to probe how the genre's conventions might be relied upon in an attempt to 'normalise' Wilde, while operating within the secure confines of a medium capable of coping with his multifaceted persona.

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**Simona Laghi** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*Dress, Law, and Discontent: Oscar Wilde and his Twenty-First Century Followers*

At a time when respectability was a crucial value in circumscribing human identity and outward appearance mirrored morality and social status, Oscar Wilde challenged not only the rules in the field of dress, but also the rules of law. If, since then, the dandy had been associated with the 'new urban man' and elegant masculinity, Wilde re-fashioned this concept according to his views on art and beauty, blurring the gender-binarism threshold by means of dress. Interestingly, even his outward appearance turned into proof against him in the trial in which he was involved. Given that dress and law are closely interwoven – indeed, they share the same root *\*reg*, together with words in the field of legal order such as rule, right, and regulation – it is clear that Wilde's image issued a challenge against societal rules and the laws that aimed to strictly circumscribe male and female identities and rights. Yet, although his popularity had much to do with apparel, Wilde's writings devoted to dress and fashion seem to have been relatively overlooked. Hence, departing from his reflections on Shakespeare's theatricalisation of 'the character of a person' through dress and cross-dressing in "The Truth of Masks", this paper will draw attention to Wilde's essay "The Philosophy of Dress" (1885) and his experience as editor of *The Woman's World*. The aim is to highlight how his views on art, beauty, dress, and fashion have been developed since then, and up to contemporary expressions of discontent about gender stereotypes, which are especially emphasised via outward appearance by pop music icons endorsing queer and camp style.

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**Gerardo Salvati** (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)

*Dorian Will Live Forever. Satire, Misrepresentation, and Bluntness in Will Self's Dorian, an Imitation*

Will Self's *Dorian, an Imitation* has been a controversial text ever since it was published in 2002. Considered as a Victorian exercise in style or as a postmodernist tribute to Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Self's narrative seems to go further than a mere adaptation of Wilde's novel. Indeed, Self manages to put forward the notions of hedonism, aestheticism, individualism and libertinism present in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* thanks to his own frankness and bluntness. In addition, Self tries to recover the late Victorian past, establishing significant relationships between the nineteenth-century *fin de siècle* and the end of the twentieth century. In this article I will endeavour to demonstrate that Self's *Dorian* can be considered as an outrageous rewriting of a most significant myth of shamelessness that aims at standardising gay culture. Both these novels pivot on a celebration of individualism. In *Dorian, an Imitation*, Self insists on the importance of discovering oneself and writes that "through constant change, and through constant change only, man will find his true unity". Similarly, the character of Henry Wotton preaches this notion of individualism to Dorian and initiates him to self-discovery. In conclusion, in a constant motion between going forward and looking backward, Self's novel is the proof that the notions of tradition and innovation, imitation and revision go hand in hand, reflecting each other in a mirror of excess and in a portrait of frenetic amplification.

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## S28 – The Linguistic Representation of Food: From Production to Consumption

**Convenors:** Marco Bagli (Università degli Studi di Genova), Sara Corrizzato (Università degli Studi di Verona)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 11:00-13:00** (Aula Filol 2, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Marco Bagli (Università degli Studi di Genova)

**Fabio Ciambella** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*“Ando vai s’aa cipolla nun ce ll’hai?”: Translating Food-Related Romanesco Items in Chef Max Mariola’s IG and FB Subtitles*

**Valeria Franceschi** (Università degli Studi di Verona)

*“That was really yummy”:* Talking about Food in Tourist Vlogs on China

**Silvia Monti** (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

*“You just healed my hand with an arepa con queso”.* Minority Cultures and Ethnic Food Names Shaping Identity in American Multilingual Animated Films and their Italian Dubbed Version

### Panel description

Food and nutrition have gained momentum in contemporary linguistic discussions. Scholarship on the relationship between language and food has concentrated on the various aspects of this productive dialogue: from historical linguistics (Buccini 2013) to phonology (Serwe et al. 2013), from cognitive accounts of tasting events (Caballero et al. 2019) to the genre of recipes and dish names (Floyd and Forster 2003, Graziano and Mocini 2015, Jurafsky 2015), from digital food discourse (Gordon and Tovares 2020) to food sustainability and the media (Antonelli and Isernia 2023).

Indeed, the agrifood sector has gained increasing importance in academia, as the topic can offer insights into different and interdisciplinary approaches which see the role of language of paramount importance. The narrative construction of food discourse also intertwines with the country-of-origin effect as well as the countless ways in which people, whether experts or amateurs, deal with food, considering both the influence derived from cultural backgrounds and the new horizons offered by the recent processes of globalisation (Fellner 2013, Riley and Paugh 2018).

The aim of this panel is to explore the different ways in which language shapes our understanding of food, from its preparation to its consumption, bearing in mind that language also ties in with the concept of identity, culturally-bound traits, as well as the spread of fake products and the customers’ perception.

Submissions are welcomed from a number of different perspectives which include, but are not limited to, (critical) discourse analysis, multimodal analysis, cognitive linguistics, corpus linguistics, appraisal theory and lexical semantics.

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## Abstracts

**Fabio Ciambella** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*“Ando vai s’aa cipolla nun ce ll’hai?”: Translating Food-Related Romanesco Items in Chef Max Mariola’s IG and FB Subtitles*

This paper aims at examining AVT strategies adopted by one of the most famous Roman cooks, Massimiliano Mariola (aka Max Mariola), who is very active on social media and always give English subtitles for his video recipes on Instagram and Facebook. Sagaciously positioned in the middle of the screen, so that they are perfectly between the cook’s face and the dish he is preparing, Eng subs are created to help foreigners to deal with Roman cuisine and allow them to reproduce Mariola’s recipes. Nevertheless, when coming to Romanesco items – since the cook explains his recipes with a strong Romanesco accent and dialectal words– or culture-bound expressions – as the one mentioned in the title of this paper – subtitles, as translation in general, show their limits. This paper wants to understand whether and to what extent the English AVT prevents – or facilitates – successful communication, and hence both the correct execution of a dish and the understanding of the speaker’s abundant use of boosting devices aimed at intensifying his message and catching the viewer’s attention. Some of his most viewed IG and FB video recipes of 2023 will be analysed as case studies, and both a lexicosemantic and pragmatic approach will be used as methodological framework.

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**Valeria Franceschi** (Università degli Studi di Verona)

*“That was really yummy”*: Talking about Food in Tourist Vlogs on China

Food is one of the many aspects of tourism that contributes to the construction of a destination's identity and attractiveness (Afaq, Gaur and Singh. 2022), to the point that food tourism has been recognized and researched as a popular sub-genre of tourism. Certain foods, including street foods, symbolize and represent the local culture and are a “must experience” as much as a destination's iconic views (Anton Martin, Camarero Izquierdo, and Laguna-Garcia 2021). The experience of food at a destination creates lasting memories (Stone et al. 2019) that can impact destination perception of travelers and future travel intentions. Through Word of Mouth, which has become a research-worthy factor in the hospitality industry due to user-generated content (blogs, vlogs, written and audiovisual reviews), travelers may also influence prospective traveler behavior (Chang and Wang 2019) and destination choice.

Bearing this in mind, this study aims at investigating the perception and description of local food at Chinese destinations in a corpus of tourist vlogs created as a part of the TaLitE project. The corpus includes 125 transcripts of English-language travel accounts and travel guides to China uploaded on YouTube by Western travelers, for a total of around 145.000 words. The corpus analysis software SketchEngine (Kilgarrif et al. 2014) will be used to extract terms pertaining to food and cuisine via manual filtering of a wordlist, and the qualitative analysis of the resulting concordances will highlight which aspects are evaluated and contribute to the enjoyment – or lack thereof – of local food at tourist destinations.

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**Silvia Monti** (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

*“You just healed my hand with an arepa con queso”*. *Minority Cultures and Ethnic Food Names Shaping Identity in American Multilingual Animated Films and their Italian Dubbed Version*

In the last decades, ethnolinguistic Otherness has assumed an increasingly prominent position in many multilingual animated films focusing on non-dominant cultures whose sociocultural richness is conveyed by filmic dialogues interspersed with the characters' native languages/L3s (cf. Corrius, Zabalbeascoa 2019). In particular, traditional ethnic food, drinks and local products are assigned a distinctively crucial function as markers of the characters' ethnically-diverse identity as L3 ethnic food terms are recurrently quoted in the films' dialogues, mainly in instances of intrasentential code-switching (cf. Meyers-Scotton 1993), and act as ‘linguistic spells’ attracting the audiences with their original appealing names and making them taste the authentic flavours of the non-mainstream linguacultures the films portray.

Starting from these observations and considering the interlinking concepts of food, culture, identity and language on the screen, this study sets out to investigate the main sociolinguistic functions L3

ethnic food terms serve as symbolic actors in defining the characters' Otherness in both the original version and in the Italian dubbed version of thirty American multilingual/multicultural animated films, released between 1991 and 2022. More specifically, the films' post-production scripts will be analyzed, contrastively and diachronically: to illustrate how the presence of L3 food names in the original versions highlights the characters' self and ethnocultural dimension; to verify to what extent the L3 food terms are either retained or manipulated in dubbing in the films' Italian dubbed version, thus pointing out what can be achieved by audiovisual translation in terms of intercultural/interlingual transmission when autochthonous cultures and their culinary traditions are represented in a cinematographic genre rich with linguistic, semiotic, pragmatic and didactic specificities as that of animated films.

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## S30 – The Voices of Water: Blue Eco-Stories and What They Do for Us

**Convenors:** Maddalena Pennacchia (Università degli Studi Roma Tre), Gilberta Golinelli (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 11:00-13:00** (Aula Filol 9, Cubo 28B, II piano)

Chair: Maddalena Pennacchia (Università degli Studi Roma Tre), Gilberta Golinelli (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

**Valeria Ferrà** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Alanna Mitchell's Sea Sick: The Terminal Illness of Mother Ocean*

**Francesca Forlini** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*"And then the sea came back and told its own story": Water and the Archival Multiverse*

**Carolina Pisapia** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

*"Water taught modesty of the soul": From the Little Mermaid's Desire for Humanness to the Human Longing for the Wordlessness of a Watery Other-Than-Humanity in What the Conch Shell Sings When the Body is Gone by Katherine Vaz*

**Andrea Raso** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*From Score to Poetry: Water Metaphors as the Paralinguistic Ec(h)o of Voice into Writing in Florence Welch's Useless Magic: Lyrics, Poetry and Sermons*

### Panel description

What does water tell us of its story? How many stories are there in the voices of water? And how can we learn to listen to its many languages? There have been in the past artists and writers who have tried to listen to the voices of the rain, the sea, rivers and lakes. But was it really the voices of water they were listening to? Or was it just their own? "The nymphs are departed" wrote T.S. Eliot in *The Waste Land* (1922) with a nostalgic take on the polluted Thames, as if centuries, and not just one, had passed from Wordsworth's sublime exaltation of "the roar of waters, torrents, streams / Innumerable, roaring with one voice" (*Prelude*, 1805). And that was before any discussion concerning climate changes and unprecedented droughts, before we knew of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, before the Dutch Nobel Prize in Chemistry, Paul Crutzen, gave a name and a visibility to the concept of Anthropocene (2000), before we ever heard the word Solastalgia (G. Albrecht, 2005), before the sustainable development goals were even conceived. What of artists and writers trying to listen to the voices of water today? How do they cope with this new awareness? How do they interact, if they do, with science reports and evidences? How do they move between media and genres to be more effective? Can their work facilitate the process of societal changes so necessary to the survival of future generations? Some, like Carla Benedetti (2022), think so. With the help of an incredibly powerful leverage: empathy. This panel invites papers dealing with old and new eco-stories of water between genres and media and what they can do for us.

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## Abstracts

**Valeria Ferrà** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Alanna Mitchell's Sea Sick: The Terminal Illness of Mother Ocean*

For more than two years, Canadian journalist Alanna Mitchell travelled all over the world to join several scientific expeditions aimed at understanding the condition of our seas, measuring the levels of pollution, and diagnosing any potential illness. The results of these expeditions showed that, although human existence has so far been virtually inconsequential to the health of the planet's waters, human influence – and the comforting stories we tell ourselves concerning our role in climate change – have finally started to irreparably affect the chemical and biological composition of the ocean. From these travels a book was born; first published in 2009, *Sea Sick: The Global Ocean in Crisis* is simultaneously a science report, an adventure tale, and a travel journal. The incredible success of this work is imputable to Mitchell's ability to achieve the terribly difficult task of explaining the complex science used to track climate change's effects to the everyday reader, successfully conveying the urgency of what she refers to as the era of 'marine climate change'. In 2014, *Sea Sick* was turned into a play, a monologue starring Mitchell herself. What happens when a journalistic writing that is also a novel and a diary becomes a theatre play that is also a science lecture, acted by an author that is neither an actor nor a teacher? The result is a non-fiction work functioning as a call to action in which the story of water, this "grand mother of life" (Mitchell 2009: 20), intertwines with the personal story of the author and of every single being on the planet, whose existence relies on our waters' well-being.

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**Francesca Forlini** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*"And then the sea came back and told its own story": Water and the Archival Multiverse*

Water is an essential part our lives: it covers 71 per cent of the planet's surface and makes up over 60 per cent of the human body. That makes water also fundamentally political. In June 2017, a BBC report dubbed water "the next oil", voicing the concerns of activists and political analysts about the possibility that future wars will be fought over access to this resource (Lufkin). This presentation explores how water performs on the contemporary stage. Drawing on theorists such as Rosi Braidotti, Joanna Zylińska and Hal Foster, this presentation investigates water in its various functions as matter, medium, and metaphor, highlighting its capacity to combine a multiplicity of perspectives and issues related to human and non-human oppression, anthropological de-centeredness and post-colonial in-betweenness. The sonic dimension of water, in particular, turns into a productive site for bringing together art and archival practice. Exploring the radiophonic narrative by sound artist and geographer Am Kanngieser *And then the sea came back*, and comparing it with the two video installations, *Vertigo Sea* (2015) by British artist and filmmaker John Akomfrah and *The Ocean Between* (2019) by Irish artist Marianne Keating, this presentation shows how water features as a natural force and a

de-territorializing current, but also as a poetic motif and a contact zone that challenge the categorisation and the hierarchies underlying the construction of knowledge in western culture.

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**Carolina Pisapia** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

*"Water taught modesty of the soul": From the Little Mermaid's Desire for Humanness to the Human Longing for the Wordlessness of a Watery Other-Than-Humanity in What the Conch Shell Sings When the Body is Gone by Katherine Vaz*

In the depths of the ocean, the tails of whales and mermaids get lost in the unknow. As in Joseph's short film *Fox and the Whale*, the attraction is always for the distant, the mysterious, the unreachable, and dwells in us as a melancholia. What if it was not the mermaid who desired to become human, as in Andersen's fairytale, but the human who longed for this alien life? "The passion for whales", Grebowicz writes, "had everything to do with how people imagined life on Earth and a future of different, better social relations." Thereby, the passion for watery creatures captures Meredith – protagonist of Katherine Vaz's retelling of *The Little Mermaid* – and, through their breathless language, she finds a way to communicate to her beloved but soon ex-husband. What can the otherness and wordlessness of watery languages teach us about how we connect with each other? In *Autobiographie d'un poulpe*, Despret imagines a future transspecies community where children are symbiotically raised with octopuses: they learn to think and communicate decentralising the traditional humanistic view of a mind-driven body to the intelligence of tentacles. Whale songs, sea depths and all the creatures living in it, stands there as horizons of a better "more-than-human, other-than-human" (Haraway) life to come. "Water taught modesty of the soul", said Annette Kellerman – the million-dollar mermaid and Meredith's heroin. Thus, there in the sea, a chthulucenic way out of the selfish patterns of an anthropocentric humanism may be found, keeping "one foot in this world and one in another", as in the extreme freediving that Meredith pushes herself to experience, or as mermaids in between species.

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**Andrea Raso** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*From Score to Poetry: Water Metaphors as the Paralinguistic Ec(h)o of Voice into Writing in Florence Welch's Useless Magic: Lyrics, Poetry and Sermons*

Published in 2018, *Useless Magic* is the first printed work by Florence Welch, the voice of baroque indie pop band Florence + The Machine. The book features her lyrics and poems, many of which share the recurrent theme of water, as do visual projects such as the one fittingly titled *Odyssey*. In Welch, water becomes the metaphor for her ecological awareness in addressing humanity's reluctance to engage in a non-verbal dialogue with nature. However, her interest in water is perhaps more evident in her obsession with drowning as a search for the eloquent depth of voice. Being underwater entails the lack of oxygen and linguistic inarticulability, yet paradoxically provides Welch with a new vision of singing and breathing, allowing for a paralinguistic turn to occur through the experimental use of voice. In songs like "Big God", for instance, she makes an extensive use of vocal fry, stripping from the weight of semantic expression. A similar quest is soon reflected in her writings, too. Indeed, by embracing the loquacity of silence, Welch lets the echo of her vocalicity shapeshift into poems about the failed attempt of writing to reach that recess where tone, rhythm, and vocal inflections better convey the complexity of the human experience. With the methodological support of studies within the fields of the blue ecocritical (post)humanities (Alaimo 2010; Haraway 2016; Dobbin 2021) and of difference and hydro-feminism (Cavarero 2005, Neimanis 2012), I will thus attempt to show how Welch succeeds in reinstating the anti-essentialist materiality of voice and its discursive potential through the assimilation of water's paralinguism, in what comes through as a sympoietic form of "becoming-with" nature (Haraway: 11).

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## **S31 – Transition, Tension, Twisting: Theoretical and Methodological Disruptions as New Beginnings in Translation Studies**

**Convenors:** Silvia Bernardini (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna), Federico Gaspari (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 15:00-17:00** (Aula Filol 1, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Federico Gaspari (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II)

**Elena Manca** (Università del Salento)

*Social Media, Promotion and Translation: Advertising Destinations on Facebook*

**Adriano Ferraresi** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

*Translation Is in the News: Towards Automatic Identification of Translated Text in News Dispatches*

**Carla Quinci** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

*“Something new, something old, something borrowed”*: Old Practices in New Training Scenarios

**Thursday, September 14, 2023 – 17:30-19:30** (Aula Filol 1, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Silvia Bernardini (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

**Maristella Gatto** (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro)

*Collaborative Translation and the Dynamics of Knowledge Dissemination on the Web*

**Francesca Vigo** (Università degli Studi di Catania), **Mariavita Cambria** (Università degli Studi di Messina)

*Twisting AVT: Exploiting Interactive Communities in Translation Practices*

**Giuseppe Palumbo** (Università degli Studi di Trieste)

*Reframing Translation (Studies) – A Look beyond Established Paradigms*

### **Panel description**

Translation is facing unprecedented transformation and uncertainty: the demise of the printed artefact paradigm (Gambier, 2022) and dramatic progress in artificial intelligence (Koehn, 2020) mean that prototypical professional translation, or translation as we knew it, is becoming increasingly marginal to society (Moorkens, 2017). It is gradually being supplemented by a range of activities characterised by variable degrees of professionalism, flexible multilingualism (Bowker and Buitrago-Ciro, 2019), and computer-driven language generation and text processing (Wang and Sawyer, 2023) that will eventually make translation broadly conceived, particularly from and into English, more – rather than less – central to our lives. This opens up exciting new perspectives for empirical translation research, but arguably calls for reflection on the established theoretical frameworks and methodological paradigms, from the very basic issue of defining and delimiting the object of study, through to the range of tools and constructs that we use for research and teaching. In the quest for ways to address these theoretical and methodological disruptions (Kenny, 2018), the panel will bring together English language and translation scholars interested in investigating new forms of translation as (often unacknowledged) mechanisms for discourse production in cross-lingual digital communication settings. These include for example news reporting, journalism, social media, the full range of transmedial products, as well as fake news propagation and fact-checking across languages. The panel particularly welcomes contributions that include a significant forward-looking didactic dimension,

addressing pedagogic translation (Bowker, 2023; Kenny, 2022) and/or translation pedagogy (Laviosa, 2014) concerns in the light of the unfolding disruptions.

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### Abstracts

**Adriano Ferraresi** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

*Translation Is in the News: Towards Automatic Identification of Translated Text in News Dispatches*

Within Translation Studies, the subfield of ‘journalistic translation’ (Valdeón, 2015) or ‘news translation’ (Holland, 2013), has grown in the last two decades. Yet, the role of translation as it is traditionally conceived is largely unacknowledged in news settings, as text producers do not consider themselves as translators, and their texts are characterised ‘by a high degree of transformation and rewriting’ (Bielsa, 2010: 48). Studies about translational phenomena in these settings thus pose theoretical and methodological challenges of general import, such as identifying source and target texts (Caimotto & Gaspari, 2018) and defining equivalence, translation units and even authorship (Gambier, 2022).

Against this backdrop, this study focuses on multilingual journalistic output by one of the most influential global news agencies, *Agence France-Press*. The question that we address is whether we can reliably identify translated segments within multilingual news dispatches relying on automatic methods. Specifically, we selected one news dispatch in three versions (Spanish, French and English) that we identified – based on paratextual and ethnographic information (Rodríguez-Blanco, forthcoming) – as likely to have been, at least partly, translated. We relied on machine translation and semantic similarity scores to determine what text units carry traces of translation, and compared the output against manually evaluated benchmark data. Preliminary results show that these similarity scores are in line with those obtained through manual evaluation, which itself proved to be a non-trivial task. We conclude by discussing the implications of the problem at hand on the blurring separations between translation studies and neighbouring disciplines, and ultimately on the status of translation as a socially relevant discourse production practice.

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**Maristella Gatto** (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro)

*Collaborative Translation and the Dynamics of Knowledge Dissemination on the Web*

In the volume *Digital Humanities Pedagogy*, Melanie Kill stresses the importance for students in the humanities to appreciate their active role in the complex dynamics of knowledge dissemination (Kill, 2012: 389) and trainee translators are no exception. They also can profit much from experiences that help them develop a deeper understanding of the collaborative nature of knowledge creation, and of the special role of translation in the process, along with opportunities to acquire specific digital skills for collaborative translation (Jiménez-Crespo, 2017).

In this context, the nature of Wikipedia as a complex multilingual ecosystem based on interaction and cooperation for the production and dissemination of knowledge certainly provides a fertile ground for innovative translation training based on authentic project work (Calzada Pérez, 2019; Kiraly, 2019). Evidence of this is found in projects that exploit Wikipedia as a working environment for real-life collaborative translation tasks (McDonough Dolmaya, 2015; Al-Shehari, 2017; Shuttleworth, 2017; Martínez-Carrasco, 2018; Musacchio, 2020). What these projects have in common is the involvement of groups of students in Wikipedia-based collaborative projects which turn trainee translators from passive users into active *prosumers* (Toffler, 1981) – producers and consumers - of knowledge content on the web, while facing the challenges of Machine-Aided Human Translation and Human-Aided Machine-Translation (Meledandri, 2023).

Against this background this paper reports on the collaborative translation project *Translatathon@Uniba* (2018-2023). Initially aimed at the development of a comprehensive translation competence and of a number of transversal soft skills, the project eventually proved to be an invaluable opportunity for trainee translators to take part *via translation* in the global dynamics of knowledge dissemination.

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**Elena Manca** (Università del Salento)

*Social Media, Promotion and Translation: Advertising Destinations on Facebook*

The translation of promotional texts can be considered as a covert consumer-oriented translation in which the source text needs to be adapted to the linguistic and sociocultural features of the target audience (Torresi, 2020: 2; Manca, 2016a, 2016b). This adaptation goes beyond the translation process as we know it, and implies the recreation of a text in another language, that is to say a 'transcreation' (Katan, 2016: 377). When promotion is carried out on digital media, such as social media, a set of specific features characterizing this genre (higher interactivity, use of pronouns, requests and surveys, and so on) should also be considered in the translation/transcreation process (see Bianchi, 2017a, 2017b; Manca, 2021; Bianchi and Manca, forthcoming). However, the recent Italian Ministry of Tourism campaign, 'Open to Meraviglia', has clearly shown that linguistic and cultural adaptations are not considered as relevant in the promotion of Italy to the world. For this reason, this paper analyses the Italian and English posts available on the official Facebook page of the Italian National Agency for Tourism (ENIT), *italia.it*, by comparing and contrasting them with the English posts on the official Facebook pages of the tourist boards of Great Britain, *Love GREAT Britain*, and the USA, *Visit the USA*.

Results guide us towards a reflection on the strategic mechanisms for discourse production in cross-lingual digital promotional settings, and on the relationship between promotion, digital media and translation. Implications on the role of translators will also be discussed.

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**Giuseppe Palumbo** (Università degli Studi di Trieste)

*Reframing Translation (Studies) – A Look beyond Established Paradigms*

The successful history of Translation Studies (TS) as an academic discipline was founded on its ability to combine methods and insights from neighbouring disciplines and on its ongoing dialogue with the translation profession. Along the way, TS developed and refined a series of paradigms and tenets accepted by the majority of scholars. These include dichotomic distinctions such as ‘source vs target’, an emphasis on translations as “facts of the target culture” (Toury, 1995) and a marginalization of controversial notions such as “equivalence”. In today’s post-globalized world, the international language regime is still largely the same as that described by Pym (2006: 749), with English as the global lingua franca and translation as “a tool of distribution” which operates on the basis of a one-to-many geometry pivoting around the lingua franca. However, new socio-cultural and technical factors have emerged that have a direct impact on the practice of cross-language communication: 1) superdiversity and cosmopolitanism (Bielsa, 2016) are features of most societies and communities, even in the West; 2) technology has revolutionized access to information from the point of view of both producers and receivers, with content now available in new, mostly “disembodied” (Littau, 2016), formats; 3) language-wise, English is playing an increasingly significant role of as a *target* language, not only in international communication but also in English-speaking countries (Palumbo, 2021). In this paper, I propose a revision of notions such as “locale” and “target-pole expectations” by looking at strategies and solutions in texts translated for international audiences, where the motivation for translation often originates at the *source* pole.

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**Carla Quinci** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

*“Something new, something old, something borrowed”*: *Old Practices in New Training Scenarios*

The increasingly faster developments in computing and artificial intelligence (Briva-Iglesias, 2023) pose major challenges not only in traditional translator education but even in translation programmes that include advanced training in the use of computer technologies for translation purposes. Computer-assisted translation has relieved translators of part of the burden of dealing with repetitive or highly similar texts; today, computer-assisted revision (CAR) can do the same for translator trainers while offering a valuable tool for translation education. This paper offers a reflection on methodology, didactics, and implications for research by exploring the way old practices, i.e. error correction, labelling and grading, can be supported by new CAR technology to speed up and increase the efficiency of the trainer’s revision process while favouring the acquisition of metalanguage (Vottonen and Kujamäki, 2021) and a reflexion upon info-mining, translation and revision practices in trainees. After an overview of translationQ (van Egdom et al., 2018; van Egdom, 2021), its functioning and potential drawbacks, the focus shifts to its application in the contemporary training scenario by analysing the datasets produced between 2021 and 2023 by revising approximately 200 translations by second-year MA trainees at the end of a course in legal translation at the University of Padova. The study adopts a quantitative approach considering the number and types of errors found

in the revision memories, and a qualitative perspective investigating the possible reasons behind those errors. Finally, the teaching and research applications of such analysis will be outlined together with further suggestions for exploiting the full potential of CAR in the translation and/or revision class.

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**Francesca Vigo** (Università degli Studi di Catania), **Mariavita Cambria** (Università degli Studi di Messina)

*Twisting AVT: Exploiting Interactive Communities in Translation Practices*

As argued by Wang and Sawyer (2023), humans and machines approach the problem of translation in their own particular ways, in terms of word embeddings, chunking of larger meaning units, and prediction in translation based upon the broader context irrespective of text types or modes. Since translators are increasingly asked to deal with multimodal texts, multimodal textual competencies in terms of cohesion and coherence and digital literacy prove for computer-driven language generation and text processing.

Providing an exploration of the common ground between human and machine learning and of the nature of translation that leverages this new dimension, the paper reports on the progress made by second-year language degree university students as regards their competence in translation after having been involved in using online corpus construction, annotation and search tools when exploring and translating multimodal texts (Baldry and Thibault, 2010, 2020; Jablonkai and Csomay, 2022) in comparison to other students not involved in the abovementioned activities.

The activities the students were engaged in are part of a project, which includes the use of the OpenMWS platform (Taibi, 2020; <http://mws.pa.itd.cnr.it/>) and the creation of new interactive communities within the activities of the Messina OVP (Online Video Project). The latter proved educationally beneficial for the students, with regard to their acquisition of textual and translation competencies and, above all, their preparation for more intensive AVT studies in their third and final year.

As such, the paper is meant to be the first step of an investigation aiming at verifying whether and to what extent online audiovisual translation manages to enhance translation work through the analysis of the specific multi-layered textual features of these videos. It thus outlines new knowledge and skills that need to be incorporated into traditional translation education in the machine learning era.

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## **S32 – Translation and the Ecological Turn: Rethinking Theories and Practices of Translation**

**Convenors:** Laura Diamanti (Università degli Studi di Enna Kore), Eleonora Natalia Ravizza (Università degli Studi di Catania), Eleonora Gallitelli (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

**Saturday, September 16, 2023 – 9:30-12:00** (Aula Filol 1, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

**Chair:** Laura Diamanti (Università degli Studi di Enna Kore), Eleonora Natalia Ravizza (Università degli Studi di Catania), Eleonora Gallitelli (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

**Douglas Mark Ponton** (Università degli Studi di Catania), **Anna Raimo** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

*Representations of Mediterranean Tourism in Italian and English Travel Blogs: An Ecolinguistic Analysis*

**Laura Diamanti** (Università degli Studi di Enna Kore)

*Ecological Translation and Culinary Identity: Semiosis of the Language of Food in English Recipes*

**Raffaella Leproni** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Storytelling and Self-translation: Eco-linguistic Perspectives in Language Teaching for Inclusion in the L2/SL Classroom*

**Maria Cristina Seccia** (Università degli Studi Gabriele D'Annunzio di Chieti-Pescara)

*Code-switching in Italian-Canadian Literature in Translation: Bridging Theory and Practice*

**Vivian M. De La Cruz** (Università degli Studi di Enna Kore)

*From Moving Translingual Sources to Moving Monolingual Targets: The case of Giannina Braschi's Yo-Yo Boing!*

### **Panel description**

Following up the recent debate on ecology, ethics and translation, this panel intends to explore innovative approaches to translation. The pedagogical and institutional practices of translation do not always reflect the plurality of languages spoken or developed in contemporary cities. As a matter of fact, some questions naturally arise: is it possible to preserve multilingualism, dialect, regionalism and, in general, nonstandard language in translation? What strategies have been deployed over time to deal with the work of immigrant writers who use the language of their adopted country in an unusual way? How can we rethink the conventional pedagogy of translation to preserve the diversity of cultures? In short, can the translator play the role of mediator between languages, effectively contributing to “genuine biocultural diversity on the planet” (Cronin 2003: 167)?

Starting from these questions, the panel aims to reflect on how a multicultural translation, generated in different ecosystems, could or would represent an effective means to preserve diversity in a variety of literary or non-literary texts.

Papers investigating these issues from a theoretical or empirical perspective are welcome. Suitable topics include but are not limited to:

- Translation and minor(ity) languages;
- Translation loss in interlingual communication;
- English as a bridge language: controversies and opportunities;
- Translating nonstandard English/Italian;
- Contemporary translation teaching and practice;
- Translation as cultural mediation;

- Translation and migration;
- Language contact and translation;
- Ecotranslation, ecocriticism, ecolinguistics and environmental studies;
- Translation of travel literature.

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## Abstracts

**Vivian M. De La Cruz** (Università degli Studi di Enna Kore)

*From Moving Translingual Sources to Moving Monolingual Targets: The case of Giannina Braschi’s Yo-Yo Boing!*

[...] the future is not monolingualism; the linguistic ecology here, and in the major cities and suburban outskirts of the global world, is bilingual and multilingual.  
 Sánchez (2019)

Can a non-standard language be translated into a standard language, without losing that which makes it a unique expression of a particular author, identity, culture, place or moment in time? Or in other words, could its diversity be preserved outside of its original linguistic ecosystem? And what if this original linguistic ecosystem is one of cultural and linguistic “hybridity” found in cultural-linguistic borderlands? This paper will reflect on these questions, starting from a discussion of Giannina Braschi’s *Yo-Yo Boing!* (1998), hailed as one of the first published works originally written in *Spanglish*, (a “so-called “hybrid” language variety resulting from a constant renegotiation of the linguistic borders between English and Spanish” (Attig, 2019), and later translated into English by Tess O’Dwyer (2011). A brief analysis of the challenges involved, and how they have been dealt with by O’Dwyer in her version of Braschi’s novel (2011), and how other literary translingual translations have been approached by translators using intersemiotic translation (Jakobson, 1959/2000, pp. 113-18) as well as intralingual translation strategies (Jakobson, 1959/2000, p. 114), will also be discussed. We will also briefly reflect on questions regarding translations of multilingual-multicultural literary works, in general, and of Latino (or Latinx) literature in the United States in particular, and on the

possibilities of their entering a wider English-speaking mainstream (Sánchez, 2019) and not only, while preserving and “signaling” linguistic and cultural diversities (Venuti, 2008).

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**Laura Diamanti** (Università degli Studi di Enna Kore)

*Ecological Translation and Culinary Identity: Semiosis of the Language of Food in English Recipes*

The issues concerning ‘translation ecology’ (Cronin 2003), ethics and evolution of translation (Venuti 2021; Baker & Saldanha 2020) raise crucial questions about the translation paradigm that involves the translator’s interpretation of the text and the context of the source language in relation to the target language. How should the translator perform the task properly? How would the shift in the translator’s thinking account for the ecological perspective? How would linguistic and cultural identity of the source context be ecologically translated? With a holistic approach to the interpretation interface of the context dependence, where semantic meaning and pragmatic inferencing meet (Bublitz, Norrick 2011: 31), the aim of the paper is to probe into social and cultural identity as part of a linguistic ecosystem resulting natural, although cultural, as humanly shaped (Wehi, Whaanga, Roa 2009: 202). The representation of the British culinary identity (Warde 2009: 154) is thus analysed in recipes as a textual genre (Norrick 1983: 174) in Nigella Lawson’s cookbooks which aim at the reader’s “understanding of food” (Lawson 2014: Preface) through cooking. The representativeness of the British cultural identity is observed in propositions as “I think of seed-cake as quintessentially English” (Lawson 2015: 469) along with specialised indexes that encourage remembrance across time and space (Brulotte, Di Giovine 2014: 1-2), where the culinary identity is constructed by the language oriented to the recipient (Enkvist 1981: 101-102) and offered as iconic experience.

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**Raffaella Leproni** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*Storytelling and Self-translation: Eco-linguistic Perspectives in Language Teaching for Inclusion in the L2/SL Classroom*

The narrative device, because of its pliability, breadth of content and forms, and ability to accommodate different cultural and individual instances, lends itself to fostering processes of intercultural communicative language teaching and learning (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, Kohler 2003:43, and Newton, Yates, Shearn, Nowitzki 2010:8), amplifying exchange through the use of creative strategies; this allows for the transformation of the intercultural perspective, very often stopped at a theoretical stage, by implementing it in inclusive processes aiming at participatory citizenship.

In the eco-perspective of critically (re)thinking the “stories that we live by” (Stibbe, 2015), and increasing the quality of the stories we can live on, a series of guided classroom activities allow students to learn through an experiential process of shared creative practice, involving all receptive and productive language skills. The creation of a target-language story (task), based on a strategic-methodological introduction providing the main lines and the branching out of the alternatives guiding the process (language, plot and structure), is accompanied with the (self)translation of the story. At both stages, students must consider certain cultural, social, environmental and gender-respect specifics (setting, nomenclature of places and characters, historicization of the story, interdisciplinary intersections, ...), motivating their choices on the sidelines of the creative process.

Analyzing and promoting storytelling techniques for the conscious use of narration and translation in the reflection on experiences makes it possible to construct shared meanings while improving learning processes, fostering the creation of a combined eco-system of language and thinking where the word and the world are reassembled to promote respect and participation (Canals Botines & Leproni, 2022).

The combination of storytelling and (self-)translation in this eco-linguistic perspective also opens spaces to develop education therapy for SENs, disadvantage and marginality, to deepen go-telling to foster and promote knowledge of cultural and environmental heritage, helping to “change our experience of time” (Cronin, 2017).

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**Douglas Mark Ponton** (Università degli Studi di Catania), **Anna Raimo** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

*Representations of Mediterranean Tourism in Italian and English Travel Blogs: An Ecolinguistic Analysis*

The language and photographs used in travel and tourism blogs represent an innovative and relevant research topic for ecolinguistic studies, as they provide insight into how individuals construct their online identities and shape representations of environmental sustainability. From an ecolinguistic perspective (Fill and Penz 2018, Stibbe 2015), this research examines a corpus of Italian and English blog posts discussing tourism in the Mediterranean region, as well as images shared by tourists and those used in publicity material (Garlick 2002, Salazar 2012, Cetin & Bilgihan 2016). Using a corpus-based linguistic methodology (Baker 2009), the study compares the patterns employed in the two languages and analyzes their impact on the representation of Mediterranean tourism, supported by analysis of the photographs. The data enables us to observe similarities and differences between Anglo and Italian conceptualisations of environmental topics (Kefala 2021).

The study highlights the need for more critical awareness of the language used in tourism discourse and its role in shaping attitudes and behaviors towards the environment (Ponton 2023). It also suggests the potential for ecolinguistic research to contribute to more sustainable tourism practices by promoting greater awareness of the environmental impacts of tourism and hence underlines the importance of more responsible tourism discourse.

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**Maria Cristina Seccia** (Università degli Studi Gabriele D’Annunzio di Chieti-Pescara)

*Code-switching in Italian-Canadian Literature in Translation: Bridging Theory and Practice*

In this paper I will discuss the main challenges raised by the translation of Canadian literary texts representing the narrators’ experience of migration from Italy, into Italian, namely the narrators’ language of origin. As noted by several scholars of Italian-Canadian literature, code-switching – created by the authors’ switch from English into Italian – significantly reveals the migrant narrators’ process of “translation” and reflects their transcultural identity as well as their belonging to Italy (Pivato 1987; Verdicchio 1997; Canton 2004; Casagrande 2010). However, code-switching has been partly erased in the existing Italian translations of Italian-Canadian literary works (Baldo 2019; see also Nannavecchia 2017; Seccia 2018). As pointed out by Rainier Grutman outside the Italian-Canadian literary context, translators dealing with multilingual texts are understandably faced with a unique challenge when the target language happens to be the code-switched language of the source

text (2006: 19). In light of this, in this paper I will analyse some passages from my research- led translation of Caterina Edwards' *The Lion's Mouth* (1982), which has been recently published under the title *La bocca di leone* (2023). In doing so, I will illustrate how I have treated code- switching and I will highlight how – in an attempt to bridge the existing gap between translation theory and practice – my translation choices have been informed by Translation Studies scholars' reflections on the importance of retaining the multilingual nature of migrant literary texts (Tymoczko 2000; Wolf 2000; Grutman 2006, 2019; Simon 2011; Meylaerts 2006, 2013; Jones 2022).

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## **S33 – Translations as New Beginnings, New Beginnings in Translation**

**Convenors:** Giuliana Garzone (Università IULM di Milano), Kim Grego (Università degli Studi di Milano), Anna Re (Università IULM di Milano)

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 15:30-17:30** (Aula Filol 1, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Giuliana Garzone (Università IULM di Milano)

**Mara Logaldo** (Università IULM di Milano)

*Reboots and the Politics of Audiovisual Translation. True Lies: From James Cameron's Film (1994) to the Disney+ TV series (2023)*

**Mariagrazia De Meo** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*"I just don't like you no more": Audiovisual Translation and Language Variation in The Banshees of Inisherin*

**Maria Teresa Musacchio** (Università degli Studi di Trieste)

*Ecology and Sustainability in Mediating Emergencies: A New Role for Indirect Translation?*

**Anna Re** (Università IULM di Milano)

*Translation & Ecology in the Anthropocene*

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 18:00-19:30** (Aula Filol 1, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Giuliana Garzone (Università IULM di Milano)

**Eleonora Gallitelli** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*A Didactic Experiment Involving Translation into English as a Lingua Franca*

**Daniel Russo** (Università degli Studi dell'Insubria)

*Is Concurrent Translation a New Beginning in Collaborative Translation? Historical, Social, and Ethical Aspects*

**Rossana Spadaro** (Independent Scholar)

*Web Translation as SEO Transcreation: Definition, Methods, Implications. A Proposal for Alternative University Training*

### **Panel description**

For any text, translation is by definition a new beginning: new (language) versions bestow new lives on texts. This is true for inter-linguistic, intra-linguistic and inter-semiotic translations, as well as re-writings and re-makings (Gentzler 2017; Jiménez-Crespo 2017; Lefevre 2017; Díaz-Cintas / Remael 2021; Di Giovanni / Raffi 2022).

Over twenty years into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this replication and revitalisation of texts across languages, cultures, semiotic systems, media and modes (e.g. audiovisual translation, localisation, transcreation) has become a pervasive phenomenon – in literature, in the media and in specialised domains, being driven by the ubiquity of new media, new technologies and their convergence, as well as by increasing international and intercultural contacts, etc. Parallel to the growing complexity of the set of variables involved in translation tasks, radical transformations have also occurred in the way in which translation is performed, with new technologies – from electronic terminological repertoires to translation memories, from AI to online translation services – having not only changed the way translations are produced, but also opened up the possibility of involving the general public (fansubbing and crowdsourcing are cases in point) (Cronin 2012; Jiménez-Crespo 2017; Chan 2023). Keeping up with these radical and pervasive evolutions has been a challenge for research. In terms of

description, traditional conceptualisations of translation have had to be left behind, to produce new categorisations and delve deeper into the most innovative aspects (Hu 2020; Vidal Claramonte 2022).

In theoretical terms, it has been necessary to fine-tune analytical tools, or renew them altogether (Venuti 2019; De Sutter and Lefer 2020; Jiménez-Crespo 2020; Muñoz Martín et al. 2021). At the same time, the need to tackle these evolutions has provided an opportunity to gain theoretical insights into the way translation, in all of its forms, works.

This panel would like to investigate the state-of-the-art of contemporary translation and translation research and welcomes proposals exploring literary and non-literary translation in a variety of domains, covering – but not limited to – the following:

- technologies in translation as a process,
- translation and new media,
- translation and media convergence,
- computer-assisted translation and interpreting,
- audiovisual translation,
- subtitling, subtitling, fansubbing,
- re-writing and re-making,
- trans-creating, localising,
- pre-editing and post-editing.

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## Abstracts

**Mariagrazia De Meo** (Università degli Studi di Salerno)

*“I just don’t like you no more”*: Audiovisual Translation and Language Variation in *The Banshees of Inisherin*

The use of language variation, accents, sociolects and dialects to portray characters’ identities and communicate a more realistic perception of place is a very common aspect in an increasing number of audiovisual products. Audience’s attitudes and perceptions towards a specific dialect or language variation influences their response and appreciation of the story and characters. The aim of the present research is to investigate the role played by the Southern Irish Accent in characters’ portrayal in the film *The Banshees of Inisherin* (2022), stressing ‘the link between language and social identity and the notion of language attitudes as reflections of social mores’ (Kircher and Zipp, 2022). The ironic and dark-comic tone, engraved into Southern Irish identity provides texture to the tragic unfolding of events and seems to lose consistence in Italian dubbing and subtitling, making characters toneless throughout the linear and rather eventless plot. Moreover, the praise and appreciation built by film reviewers around its tragicomic language and brilliantly portrayed characters may have created fake expectations in the Italian audience, deprived of the possibility to appreciate the linguistic nuances and therefore only exposed to dullness turning into tragedy. With the aid of a collection of online film reviews, the research will compare the English and Italian audience response in relation to the changed perceptions of language and identity in translation. Can the ‘technological turn’ (Jiménez-Crespo, 2020), collaborative translation and crowdsourcing contribute to work towards new solutions when dealing with language variation and to make foreign audiences aware of its unquestionable contribution to plot development?

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**Eleonora Gallitelli** (Università degli Studi Roma Tre)

*A Didactic Experiment Involving Translation into English as a Lingua Franca*

This paper will outline a multilingual didactic experiment, now in its early stage, designed by a research unit led by Barbara Antonucci, Lorenzo Cantatore and Camilla Cattarulla at Roma Tre University as part of the Spoke 9 “CREST - Cultural Resources for Sustainable Tourism” of the PNRR research project CHANGES.

The project will focus on innovative forms and tools of storytelling to promote both tangible and intangible cultural heritage among younger generations (Gen Z and Gen Alpha) with the aim of expanding and varying the current relation between centre and periphery, residents and tourists, thus enhancing domestic, short-haul tourism. The project deliverables will be the development of collaborative multilingual writing labs and the creation of collaborative multilingual and learn-by-doing toolkits for universities, schools and local communities.

The paper will demonstrate how translating into English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in a web-mediated learning environment becomes an effective tool for bridging the gap between the scholastic dimension of English Language Teaching (ELT) and the reality of authentic communication situated in multilingual and multicultural contexts (Grazzi 2014). Translating self-produced videos, reels, interactive guides and maps of Rome into ELF will empower students and offer them the chance to reach out to a real community of practice (Wenger 1998). At the same time they will become more aware of the interplay of texts and images in multimodal communication, and learn to adapt their original Italian texts and relevant translations to make use of the different semiotic affordances of contemporary media communication (Kress 2010).

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**Mara Logaldo** (Università IULM di Milano)

*Reboots and the Politics of Audiovisual Translation. True Lies: From James Cameron's Film (1994) to the Disney+ TV series (2023)*

Reboots have been defined as a post-millennial, contingent locus of multiple discourses and textual proliferation (Herbert & Verevis, 2020: 8). Especially associated with the action genre, this kind of franchising tends to expunge the films it is based on, "playing multiple sides of a political struggle by introducing change." (ibid.:138). Unlike other forms of remaking (Canepari et al, 2016), "a reboot 're-starts' a series of films that seek to disavow and render inert its predecessor's validity", thus redefining the relationship between the media industry and the values of social justice (Herbert & Verevis 2020: 111). The film *True Lies* (James Cameron, 1994), inspired by the French comedy *La totale!* (Claude Zidi, 1991), was labelled in a review in *The Guardian* as "more horrible to women than Lars von Trier's *Antichrist*" (Hann, 2009). Along with intertextual references in the action to *007* and *Psycho* (Verevis, 2006), the dialogues are imbued with misogyny, racism, and the identification of national values with traditional moral values. In 2023, Disney+ has repropounded the story of Harry Tasker's double life between devoted husband and spy and that of his wife Helen (now, significantly, a linguistics professor) in a TV series with a totally different slant. The aim of my paper is to analyse the dialogues in the film and in the series to see how language elaborates different ideas on national security, gender (Lavigne 2014), politics, and technological terrorism. At the same time, it will investigate verbal and visual choices in the dubbing and subtitling into Italian of the reboot, critically discussing the politics of audiovisual translation when shifts occur between different media (cinema to OTT platform), formats (feature film to TV series), and audiences.

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**Maria Teresa Musacchio** (Università degli Studi di Trieste)

*Ecology and Sustainability in Mediating Emergencies: A New Role for Indirect Translation?*

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that in a globalized and interconnected world, crises or emergencies as consequences of natural disasters associated with climate change require translations (Federici 2016) to inform and assist citizens of various backgrounds and abilities, including foreigners, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants with poor knowledge of the national language(s) and special needs groups such as people with disabilities or children, who can more easily understand texts written specifically to meet their needs and/or written in simplified language (Hansen-Schirra & Maaß 2020). The need to wisely allocate scarce resources prompts the identification of 'expendable' areas of intervention, which often includes translation, inevitably affecting access to information for the most vulnerable groups, leading to isolation and discrimination (Federici & O'Brien 2020, 2022).

In an ecological perspective of sustainability (Cronin 2017; Hu & Tao (2016), this paper seeks to investigate the new role that indirect translation takes on (Bowker & Ciro 2019; Torres Simón et al. 2021), i.e., translation that, in the transition from the original text to the final translation, uses an "intermediate" language of wider diffusion – in this case, English – by exploiting its vast amount of corpora, documentation, and materials to provide timely, neural machine translation (Chan 2018; Koehn 2020), translation services that ensure access to essential information for both preventive and emergency purposes, with the aim of eliminating disparities in access and ensuring effective and targeted communication to each population group (Bowker 2019), while reducing environmental impacts and protecting the human rights of all.

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**Anna Re** (Università IULM di Milano)  
*Translation & Ecology in the Anthropocene*

Ecology has become a core issue governing the survival and sustainability of human societies, cultures and languages. As for languages, the idea of eco-translation as the study of translation from an ecological perspective is now emerging, highlighting that translators and translations are part of a larger system of interdependencies that can be investigated in terms of an eco-system. The entire translation chain as well as its interaction with its environment is studied, raising questions about ecology, ethics and evolution.

Eco-translation, as defined by Cronin (2017) and Weil (2017), foregrounds the importance of the more-than-human world, not as a mere background or context for human stories, but as a co-constitutive presence that interconnects with human culture and society. Translation, which “appears to be a pre-eminently human activity” (Cronin 2017, 13), comes to express extended forms of ecological kinship.

The presentation will investigate how the perspective of the Anthropocene (Crutzen & Stoermer 2000) – the fact that human beings are not simply biological agents, but have become geological ones that perform a severe impact on the earth balance – has deep implications on translation theory and technique (Cronin 2018). From inter-species translation to green translation technology and more, eco-translation as a relatively new area of enquiry in translation studies is in need of further elaboration (Diamanti 2022). Still, the potential for research is enormous in terms of developing new, ecologically sensitive methodologies and in exploring the more radical propositions around transversal subjectivity and translation relationships between different signifying systems. Moreover, eco-translation offers an inspiring and hopeful perspective on how translation may play a crucial role in future survival of the planet.

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**Daniel Russo** (Università degli Studi dell’Insubria)  
*Is Concurrent Translation a New Beginning in Collaborative Translation? Historical, Social, and Ethical Aspects*

Collaborative translation has been a prominent practice throughout history, fostering knowledge dissemination and cultural exchange (Trzeciak-Huss 2018). In ancient civilisations, groups of scholars collaborated to translate religious, legal, and historical texts. The Septuagint, a notable example, brought Jewish thought to a wider audience and influenced subsequent translations. In ancient China, collaborative translation enriched the exchange of knowledge, rendering foreign texts like Buddhist scriptures into Chinese and contributing to literature, philosophy, and art. During the

Renaissance, scholars like Erasmus and the Aldine Press led collaborative translation efforts, reviving and translating classical works. These translations played a pivotal role in disseminating classical knowledge, fuelling intellectual and cultural growth. Overall, collaborative translation has connected cultures, enabling the spread of ideas and contributing to the development of literature, philosophy, and art across civilisations.

In more recent times, collaborative translation has been facilitated by technological advancements (Jiménez-Crespo 2020). Online platforms and digital tools have enabled individuals from different locations and backgrounds to collaborate on translation projects, transcending geographical boundaries. This has led to the creation of vast multilingual resources, such as collaborative translation websites and crowdsourcing initiatives, which have democratised the translation process and made it more inclusive. In the realm of Translation Studies, this new turn of collaborative translation is often referred to as Concurrent Translation (CT) (Gough *et al.* 2023). CT technologies have revolutionised the translation industry by enabling efficient and collaborative workflows. Online platforms and tools facilitate seamless collaboration among translators, editors, and project managers, regardless of their geographical locations. Features like real-time editing, shared glossaries, and commenting systems streamline the translation process, ensuring consistency and accuracy. Additionally, machine translation combined with human expertise has become a powerful tool, allowing translators to leverage the benefits of artificial intelligence for faster and more accurate translations. These technologies have not only increased productivity but have also created a global community of translators, fostering knowledge exchange and professional development in the field of translation.

While CT technologies offer numerous benefits, they also present certain issues (Firat 2021, Zwischenberger 2021). One concern is the potential for loss of quality control. With multiple contributors working simultaneously, maintaining consistency and ensuring accuracy becomes challenging. Miscommunication, conflicting interpretations, and differing writing styles may result in inconsistencies within the translated text. Additionally, issues of privacy and confidentiality arise when sensitive or confidential information is shared among collaborators. There is also a risk of overreliance on machine translation, which can lead to inaccuracies or loss of nuanced meaning. Lastly, the absence of proper management and coordination can result in project delays, misaligned expectations, and difficulty in tracking changes.

This paper delves into the historical interconnection between collaborative translation and CT, examines the profound impact of CT on the translation industry and its practices, and explores the social and ethical dimensions that influence translators engaged in CT.

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**Rossana Spadaro** (Independent Scholar)

*Web Translation as SEO Transcreation: Definition, Methods, Implications. A Proposal for Alternative University Training*

The aim of this paper is to discuss ‘SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) transcreation’ as a web translation practice used for university undergraduate training. The phrase ‘SEO transcreation’ was coined within this study to describe a service that meets the needs of companies to refine web content directed at foreign users and to optimize it for some particular keywords. The investigation lies within the framework of applied localisation studies taking as a reference what Garzone calls bipartite classifications (2015: 31), i.e. dichotomies through which two different translation procedures are contrasted. Moreover, it is also based on the map of Localisation Studies proposed by Jiménez-Crespo (2013), which in turn is an adaptation of the Translation Studies map first proposed by Holmes (1988) and Toury (1995: 10). Specifically, it was intended to assess whether this process, aimed at effectively reinterpreting web content in a particular target language, can be done with the aid of user-generated tools such as Wordreference, Context Reverso, Linguee and the ProZ forum. The data presented for discussion are those resulting from an internship project held at the University of Catania that involved twelve undergraduate students and four corporate websites. The project also readapted the concept of translation competence proposed by Gaballo (2009: 55) in order to define a training modality that allows university students to acquire skills such as analysing data in relation to SEO, employing keyword research tools and transcreating web content. The outcomes highlighted an improvement in the website performance after the SEO transcreation implemented by participants.

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## **S34 – Undoing the Frontier(s): Women’s and Queer Perspectives across Anglophone Literatures**

**Convenors:** Mara Mattoscio (Università di Macerata), Serena I. Volpi (Università degli Studi di Roma Tre)

**Saturday, September 16, 2023 – 9:30-12:00** (Aula Filol 4, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

**Chair:** Mara Mattoscio (Università di Macerata), Serena I. Volpi (Università degli Studi di Roma Tre)

**Aminat Emma Badmus** (Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia)

*Queering Nigerian Literature. Blurring Gender Lines in Akwaeke Emezi’s The Death of Vivek Oji*

**Alessandra Di Pietro** (Independent Researcher)

*Deconstructing Frontier(s): A Comparative Reading of Queer African Narratives*

**David George Lyons** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

*“Betrayed into Authorship”. Travelling Across the Literary Frontier in Anna Jameson’s Diary of an Ennuyée (1826)*

**Mara Mattoscio** (Università di Macerata)

*At the Borders of Gender and Coloniality. Queering Identity and Belonging in South African Women Poets*

**Serena I. Volpi** (Università degli Studi di Roma Tre)

*Across the Black Queer Atlantic: Paul Mendez’s Rainbow Milk, or A Love Letter to James Baldwin*

### **Panel description**

The proposed panel offers a transnational perspective on women’s and queer people’s contribution to critical discourses around frontiers across the Anglophone world. From the violent patterns of territorial, military, and ideological borders of colonial spacetime to the ambiguous shifting of socio-cultural, geopolitical, and identitarian boundaries in the contemporary world, women and queer people in literature (both authoring and inhabiting literary spaces) have often questioned, turned around or taken to the task the idea of partitioning lived experience and being forced to live on either side of any border. Gloria Anzaldúa’s reconceptualisation of borderlands/fronteras as spaces of theoretical and poetic renegotiations of the self (1987), bell hooks’s gesturing towards “choosing the margins as a space of radical openness” (1989) or Toni Morrison’s recentring of border-crossing narratives (1987) are only a few XX-century examples of the rich and multifarious work women and queer people produced, both in literature and in critical theory, in order to push the limits of current cultural horizons. This panel aims to interrogate the role and transformative potential of such literary and theoretical reflections for the current and future imagination of the world.

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## Abstracts

**Aminat Emma Badmus** (Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia)

*Queering Nigerian Literature. Blurring Gender Lines in Akwaeke Emezi's The Death of Vivek Oji*

Beginning between the late 1950s and the 1960s, West African nationalist ideology has promoted a heteronormative-reproductive ideal which is binarily opposed to homoerotic unproductive relations. Within this context, consensual sexual activity among persons of the same sex is generally perceived as un-natural, immoral and a decadent import of the 'modern' West threatening to erase traditional African socio-cultural practices. Nigeria, like the majority of African countries, does not consider sexual minority rights as human rights. It is thus not surprising that in 2014, rather than complying with advocacy groups' request for the decriminalization of same-sex relationships, the former Nigerian President, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, passed the Same-sex Prohibition Act, consequently remarking the borderline between what is viewed as African and what is perceived as un-African. However, as a reaction to the discriminatory and homophobic political and religious narratives set against same-sex conduct in Nigeria, in the last decade a growing number of scholarly and literary publications are contributing to incrementing the visibility of non-conforming gender and sexual identities. If the early generation of Nigerian, and more generally, West African writers tentatively and timidly treated homoerotic desires by monolithically stigmatizing it as a practice alien to African culture, contemporary members of Nigerian and African literary communities are daring to expressively question and blur the contours of sexual and cultural identities. Exemplary of such restorative project for long-silenced realities, is Akwaeke Emezi's *The Death of Vivek Oji* (2020). Featuring the coming-of-age of the young protagonist Vivek Oji in a heteronormative Nigerian setting, Emezi challenges the conception of queerness as foreign to African culture by portraying the journey towards self-discovery and the symbolical gender transition from being born as a male – under the name of Vivek – to the self-identification as a female – Nnemdi.

**Alessandra Di Pietro** (Independent Researcher)

*Deconstructing Frontier(s): A Comparative Reading of Queer African Narratives*

Contemporary African literatures have been rewriting queer experiences across the socio-cultural, political, geographical and ideological borders of today's globalised societies. Such boundaries are often configured as (post)colonial legacies of violence that entrap queer people into forced processes of othering. There is a new generation of African authors, however, that has been deconstructing the gendered dichotomies imposed by a westernised cultural framework. Through their narratives, these writers open up spaces to affirm queer identities within (post)colonial societies. This presentation offers a comparative reading of *Under the Udala Trees* (2015) by Chinelo Okparanta, *La Bastarda* (2016) by Trifonia Melibea Obono and *The Death of Vivek Oji* (2020) by Akwaeke Emezi. In particular, the presentation focuses on how these narratives deconstruct the boundaries of current cultural horizons, redefining the idea of a queer safe space (whether an abstract or a physical space) embedded in liminality. It is in and from such marginal locations that the queer characters represented in the novels can overcome socio-cultural, religious, political and gendered boundaries, creating new worlds in which they can affirm their chosen identities.

**David George Lyons** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

*“Betrayed into Authorship”. Travelling Across the Literary Frontier in Anna Jameson’s Diary of an Ennuyée (1826)*

Anna Jameson’s *Diary of an Ennuyée* represents an unusual and understudied example of late-Grand Tour travel writing that inhabits several converging literary genres, and displays Jameson’s ambivalent and boundary-crossing exploration of form, as well as her liminal manner of passing through the border of authorhood. In this paper, the uniqueness of the *Diary*’s form is examined, with particular attention paid to the early confusion surrounding its anonymous publication, and the subsequent reluctant claim of authorship by Jameson herself. Using two literary reviews of the period as case studies, namely from *The Monthly Review* and *The Westminster Review*, this paper analyses the semantic treatment of Jameson’s publication by the reviewers, in order to contextualise the contemporary reception of her work, and engage with what Mills terms “the politics of production” (Mills 1991: 35) that operate on the *Diary*. Additionally, the paper highlights the notion of travel literature as a discursive space for feminist expression that aims to both escape from and deconstruct masculine ideologies (Gilroy 1996: 29). Moreover, the wider “constraints [...] of gender” (Johnson 1997: 45) placed on female writers in a male-dominated genre is framed within Jameson’s own reflexive self-consciousness when crossing the literary frontier into authorship and thus becoming a Woman of Letters. The paper concludes that, while Jameson’s initial desire for anonymity demonstrated her reluctance to publish at all, the resulting ‘fictional’ diary possesses an inherent liminality that wilfully traverses borders of genre, much like the geographical frontiers Jameson travelled through on her own Tour.

**Mara Mattoscio** (Università di Macerata)

*At the Borders of Gender and Coloniality. Queering Identity and Belonging in South African Women Poets*

As a space historically marked by a violent politics of segregation, South Africa has lived the experience of spatial, social, and temporal partition at every level of public and private life. From the thorough dissecting of the urban and rural spaces imposed by the Group Areas Act to the dismembering of the social body induced by the laws prohibiting all intimate interracial contact, the country has been shaped by the painful intersections of physical and virtual barriers of several kinds. The confines established among the different languages of the nation, endowed with varying degrees of legitimacy based on their standing in the colonial hierarchy, has further partitioned the everyday experiences of South Africans for a long time, leaving behind steep discursive edges and scars that often bleed, in plain sight or in the shadows. Critical of the violence of this regime of in/visibility and inspired by bell hooks’ claim that “language is also a place of struggle” (1989, p. 146), a new generation of women poets has recently accelerated the re-shaping of the public discourse over subjectivity and the body – both collective and individual – in South Africa. This paper will focus, in particular, on Koleka Putuma’s *Collective Amnesia* (2017) and Gabeba Baderoon’s *The History of Intimacy* (2018) as works that helped to impose a political and poetical turn in the country’s consciousness. Various dealing with bodily, discursive, and social intimacies, as well as with history, identity, and the nation, these collections of poems interrogate old and new boundaries, place themselves at the frontiers, and explore life in margins, on edges, and in borderlands.

**Serena I. Volpi** (Università degli Studi di Roma Tre)

*Across the Black Queer Atlantic: Paul Mendez's Rainbow Milk, or A Love Letter to James Baldwin*

This paper draws connections between Paul Mendez's *Rainbow Milk* (2020) and James Baldwin's novels *Another Country* (1962) and *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* (1968). Mendez's debut novel is a coming-of-age, semi-autobiographical story whose protagonist, Jesse McCarthy, is on a quest to discover his identity and sexuality in the passage from his native Black Country to London. Baldwin and his books constitute a guiding light for Jesse while being a first source of inspiration for Mendez himself, "*Train* alone would not teach me, but it started me off on a journey, and the destination was a place where I no longer had to apologize for my intersectional – Black, male, working-class, agnostic – identities." (Mendez 2021: 492). Mendez's approach to blackness, class, and sexuality through Baldwin's narratives implies a crossing of literary and geographical borders via the Black Atlantic to develop a transnational, intersectional, and queer identity marked by what Gilroy defined as "a more complex genealogy" where texts of the (African) American literary canon become foundational for the contemporary Black British identity.

## S35 – Voices and Silence(s) in Adult and Children’s Literature

**Convenors:** Marilena Parlati (Università degli Studi di Padova), Laura Tosi (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 15:30-17:30** (Aula Filol 4, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Laura Tosi (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

**Daniele Corradi** (Università degli Studi di Parma)

*Conversation and Sous-conversation, Expressed and Unexpressed, in Ann Quin’s Three*

**Lucio De Capitani** (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

*The Ambivalent Politics of Non-communication: Silence and Solitude in Ursula K. Le Guin and Anita Desai*

**Marilena Parlati** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

*Silenced Corporeal Archives: Transnational Atomic Bodies in Works by Joy Kogawa and Kamila Shamsie*

**Chiara Xausa** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

*Children’s Voices and Intergenerational Struggle in Postcolonial Climate Fiction: A Reading of Imbolo Mbue’s How Beautiful We Were*

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 18:00-19:30** (Aula Filol 4, Cubo 27B, piano terra)

Chair: Marilena Parlati (Università degli Studi di Padova)

**Manuela D’Amore** (Università degli Studi di Catania)

*To Write of Silence: Suffering, Marginalisation and Empowerment in the Victorian Prose of Harriet Martineau and John Kitto*

**Laura Tosi** (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

*Mermaids, Witches and Dolls: Silenced Voices in Fairy Tale and Fantasy*

**Antonio Arnieri** (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

*“Be merely a Singer: a Sexless Creature”*. *Breaking Silence through Vernon Lee’s Ariadne in Mantua*

### Panel description

Disseminating ways of reading literature, especially after the year(s) of the pandemic, can be seen as a liberating and creative force in our lives. We want to have our voices heard and we want to study and teach the voices of authors and texts. At the same time, however, literature can often be seen as implicated in the widespread and deeply-rooted silencing of ‘alterity’, as testified to by the many discourses and practices of Orientalisation, patriarchalism, heteronormativity and ablebodiedness which have ousted and impeded non-normative, non-white, non-Western (just to mention a few) perspectives, which have disempowered and silenced women, children, disabled and other-than-normative voices and bodies. But we think that literature is also a tool for empowerment, a site for conversation rather than mere inclusion that counts and needs the voices of others to be heard.

We are interested in the forms and tones of the representation of voices in fiction, poetry and other arts, but we are equally interested in the import of the unsaid and the figurations of the unsayable, in the erasures and fractures opened up by silence as a tool of powerful resistance and a means for infiltrating monolingualism with the vocal and auditory sphere of the other.

Topics may include:

- Silence and silencing as a theme
- Silent characters in fiction and poetry
- Adult and children's voices
- Power and agency
- Censorship and practices of resistance
- Narratorial voices
- The audible, the sayable, the unsayable

We are open to discuss other suggested topics.

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### Abstracts

**Antonio Arnieri** (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

*"Be merely a Singer: a Sexless Creature"*. *Breaking Silence through Vernon Lee's Ariadne in Mantua*

Whether spoken or written, voice has been often judged in relation to one's gender, body, identity, and their attendant social expectations. In several occasions, literature has been challenging such correlations resonating with authors and characters using deceptive, ambiguous, or even silencing/silenced voices. British writer Vernon Lee (aka Violet Paget) represents a paramount example of a queer, non-normative voice in the context of the expatriate intellectual community living in Florence at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Her *Ariadne in Mantua* is a play about hopeless love, sexual mutability, and social limitations expressed through the sound of a unique voice, that of Diego/Magdalen, modulated in order to seem different from what it was, but destined to be suffocated and silenced forever. The text uncannily works as an echo of the literature of the past, particularly Shakespeare's plays, but it is also imbued with autobiographical nuances. By discussing concepts such as Adriana Cavarero's "uniqueness of voice" and availing myself with notions from sound studies, cultural studies, and gender studies, my paper shows how Vernon Lee's *Ariadne in Mantua* invites us to metaphorically break silence on gender identity, focusing on the sound of voice as refracting non-normative bodies.

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**Daniele Corradi** (Università degli Studi di Parma)

*Conversation and Sous-conversation, Expressed and Unexpressed, in Ann Quin's Three*

Partly inspired by the writings of Nathalie Sarraute, the English neo-Modernist author Ann Quin (1936-1973) adopts in her novels a sort of *nouveau roman* technique, in which the authorial voice is eclipsed and the reader is immersed in a continuum of dialogue, objectively-presented actions and variously expressed inner voices, without the aid of analyses or guided interpretations imposed from above. Specifically, in the novel *Three* (1966) Quin creates a polyphonic, multimedia text in which a triangle of characters entertains banal everyday dialogues juxtaposed to more intimist forms of expressions, such as journals, diaries, or tape recordings. This juxtaposition, along with some half-controlled violent motions and passive-aggressive outbursts, suggests the existence of a huge gap separating the articulated inner world of the characters and the flatness of their everyday speech. The truth, apparently, is that many frustrated feelings, dark secrets and psychological depths are actually kept silent and unexpressed in their everyday dealings. Much of the novel is composed of dialogue and repetitive gestures; however, in piecing together the information which crops up intermittently, the reader realises that the most genuine truths about each character are entrusted not so much to the actual words they address to each other, as to indirect, involuntary or strictly personal forms of communication that are not intended for other interlocutors. The aim of this paper will be to explore the relationship, in *Three*, between what is expressed in dialogue and what remains unexpressed, or is expressed in an obscure or indirect form, with particular attention to the distance between acts of communication and the psychological universe from which a character's speech originates.

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**Manuela D'Amore** (Università degli Studi di Catania)

*To Write of Silence: Suffering, Marginalisation and Empowerment in the Victorian Prose of Harriet Martineau and John Kitto*

Centred on the deaf writers Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) and John Kitto (1804-1854), this paper aims to show “the surprising potentialities of silence to generate meaning from absence” and the way they “tap[ped] into these potentialities to navigate hostile spaces and build community” (Logan Smilges, 2022: 5). Most of their works, *Letter to the Deaf* (1834), *The Lost Senses: Deafness and Blindness* (1854) and *Autobiography* (1877), represent clear evidence not only of their desire to re-discuss the basis of the Victorian cult of invalidism, but also to play an active role in the public sphere. For this reason, it is important to begin from their autobiographical writings: although Martineau and Kitto had different social and cultural backgrounds, they both recounted their passage to the world of silence and detailed the painful treatments that they received before they decided to accept their condition. From this point of view, their narratives combine past memories with lucid reflections on Victorian medical culture. Yet, there is more about these two unique figures: Martineau in particular conceived her *Letter to the Deaf* and *Life in the Sick-Room* as manifestos of individual liberty and social inclusiveness. As concerns Kitto, his *Uncle Oliver's Travels in Persia* (1838) expresses his great joy of life while practically demonstrating how it was possible to go beyond disability and live a fully satisfying life. Divided into three parts and following a rich intertextual path, this paper will finally focus on their way of challenging norm – even the very idea of scientific authority – as well as on their capacity to cause change in Victorian England.

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**Lucio De Capitani** (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

*The Ambivalent Politics of Non-communication: Silence and Solitude in Ursula K. Le Guin and Anita Desai*

“The ant without ants dies, but being without ants is as sweet as honeydew”: such is the proclamation of a revolutionary insect in Ursula K. Le Guin’s 1974 short story “The Author of the Acacia Seeds”. This ambivalent longing for loneliness and non-communication epitomizes Le Guin’s recurring concern with both the risks and liberating potential of solitude and silence. This emerges most prominently in the 1994 short story “Solitude”, a science fiction tale envisioning a culture in which non-communication is a moral imperative to avoid exercising domination over others. In a complementary investigation, also the fiction of Anita Desai is concerned with the virtues and dangers

of solitude and silence, most notably in the 1977 novel *Fire on the Mountain*. Its protagonist, Nanda Kaul, a windowed upper-class Indian woman, embraces isolation and silence after a lifetime dedicated to her husband and children. Her solitude, however, is interrupted by the arrival of her young great-granddaughter and of a reckless activist friend, forcing her to reconsider whether a different form of relationality represents the liberation she should look for. In this paper, I juxtapose Le Guin's and Desai's work to discuss their shared exploration of the ambivalent politics of non-communication, including how their understanding of solitude and silence intersects with their analysis of gender. I also discuss, however, some crucial differences: in particular, how Le Guin presents solitude and silence as legitimate, even radical, choices, while Desai condemns the freedom they offer as an illusion to be (metaphorically and concretely) set aflame.

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**Marilena Parlati** (Università degli Studi di Padova)

*Silenced Corporeal Archives: Transnational Atomic Bodies in Works by Joy Kogawa and Kamila Shamsie*

In this paper, I focus on the connections between the global traces of the 1945 atomic bombs on Japan and the internment of citizens of Japanese descent in Canada. More specifically, I use novels by writers as different as Joy Kogawa and Kamila Shamsie. In *Burnt Shadows* (2009), Shamsie follows her main protagonist, Hiroko, from Nagasaki's "unspeakable day" to other global sites of violence, carrying on and in her body the sears of the atomic script. Yet, Hiroko carves for herself a role which exceeds that of the hibakusha, stereotypically marked by silence and the unspeakability of the atomic legacy. Silence features very prominently in *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa (1981), a famous novel which deals with personal and collective historical traumas and which investigates silence as a main mode of discourse, though not necessarily as a sign of passive victimization. At the very core of a narrative on the shocking treatment of its own citizens on the part of the Canadian wartime government, Kogawa encapsulates various layers of atrocity and intergenerational memories. The most intense and rending silence is that which still nowadays surrounds the events of the bombing of Nagasaki: that unexplainable second bombing is recorded in both novels, but in Kogawa's it is both very central and extremely marginal, hidden from view and from open consciousness, yet very intensely inscribed on the scarified and silenced bodies of Naomi's (the protagonist and narrator) mother and grandmother.

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**Laura Tosi** (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia)

*Mermaids, Witches and Dolls: Silenced Voices in Fairy Tale and Fantasy*

My paper will consider (generally female) loss of voice as a theme in fairy tales and fantasy, genres still very much associated with children or YA, which often reveal disempowered and silenced women, with non-normative bodies that recall the non normative bodies of children (conceptualized as temporary bodies, bodies that have to grow up). In her study of speech in the Grimms' tales as "an index of social values and distribution of power within a society" (Bottigheimer 1987: 51), Ruth Bottigheimer concludes that "fairy tales offered an apparently innocent and peculiarly suitable medium for both transmitting and enforcing the norm of the silent woman" (Bottigheimer 1986: 130). I shall discuss a few tales of silenced female characters, such as dolls, mermaids and witches, the last category (witches) normally not associated with silencing. In these tales silence can be a means to power, or a means to satisfy desire; it can be redemptive but can cause characters to be burned as witches, and mermaids, metamorphosed into decorative silent humans, can be compared to dolls. I shall move between several cultural areas: The Grimms, Andersen's tales, Victorian tales, contemporary retold fairy tales and Italian fantasy – as Marina Warner has written, "Fairy tales [...] have no more sense of nation or native tongue than swifts or butterflies, and have proven stubborn and repeating emigrants, always slipping across the borders (and Back again)" (Warner 2018: 49). My final argument is that even if these characters are silenced by their stories, it is the strength of their desire and their sheer will power that speaks volumes about their determination to be free and to free others.

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**Chiara Xausa** (Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna)

*Children's Voices and Intergenerational Struggle in Postcolonial Climate Fiction: A Reading of Imbolo Mbue's How Beautiful We Were*

This presentation uses postcolonial and feminist perspectives to analyse the representation of children's voices in the novel *How Beautiful We Were*, published in 2021 by Cameroonian-American author Imbolo Mbue. The first part of the presentation will introduce the field of postcolonial

ecocriticism, drawing on Crosby (1973, 1886), Huggan and Tiffin (2010), DeLoughrey and Handley (2011), and Ghosh (2021); an overview of postcolonial climate fiction will also be provided through references to Poray-Wybranowska (2021) and McDougall *et al.* (2022). The presentation will then move to propose a reading of Mbue's most recent novel that particularly emphasizes the representation of environmental injustices and of the disastrous consequences of neocolonial forces and oil corporations. Being the story mostly told from the viewpoint of the children of the fictional African village of Kosawa, my analysis will emphasize their voices of resistance and activism and their coming-of-age as postcolonial eco-citizens. The aim of this presentation is to underscore that Mbue's novel gives voice to different viewpoints that are often silenced in mainstream climate fiction: children's perspectives, women's perspectives (as the story is mostly told from the perspective of Thula, a young female revolutionary born in Kosawa), and, finally, to the "slow violence" (Nixon 2011) of climate change.

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## Posters

**Friday, September 15, 2023 – 15:30-17:30** (Aula Storia 7, Cubo 28D, piano terra)

**Simone Abbiati** (Università degli Studi di Bergamo & Stanford CESTA), **Luca Pinelli** (Università degli Studi di Bergamo & Université Sorbonne Nouvelle), **Stefano Rozzoni** (Università degli Studi di Bergamo & Justus Liebig Universität Gießen)

*Othering Intelligence, Othering Literary Texts*

**Alessandro Aru** (Università degli Studi di Pisa)

*Compound Figures of Speech: A Cognitive Pragmatic Approach*

**Ottavia Carlino** (Università del Salento)

*Bridging Communication Gaps in Healthcare: The ABC Stereo Project*

**Alberto Dall'Olio** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*The Representation of the WWI's British Soldier in Audiovisuals*

**Camilla De Riso** (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

*A Longitudinal Perspective on Informal Language Learning: Observing Complexity, Accuracy and Fluency Trajectories in Fur Case Studies*

**Dario Del Fante** (Università degli Studi di Ferrara)

*Building a Bilingual Corpus for Metaphor Detection and Classification Using Manual Annotation and Multilingual Transformer-based Models. An Ongoing Digital Humanities Project*

## Abstracts

**Simone Abbiati** (Università degli Studi di Bergamo & Stanford CESTA), **Luca Pinelli** (Università degli Studi di Bergamo & Université Sorbonne Nouvelle), **Stefano Rozzoni** (Università degli Studi di Bergamo & Justus Liebig Universität Gießen)

*Othering Intelligence, Othering Literary Texts*

Alongside the fast developments of computational technologies, in the past few years, new understandings of the concept of intelligence associated with other-than-human domains have been inspiring literary critics to investigate original challenges, questions, and methodologies in the study of present and past texts. The framework of the present discourse is grounded on the idea of literature as an archive to be reread and reevaluated (Zapf 2021), and of literary texts as repositories of sedimented knowledge and long-lasting anxieties concerning the definition of what it is to be human. Building upon the discussions initiated during the May 2023 AIA Seminar, this poster proposal focuses on the concept of 'othering intelligence': by highlighting the fact that all forms of identity are contingent upon the separation from an 'Other,' we seek to critically examine the capacities of ontologically marginalized and other-than-human entities within our prevailing liberal, humanist understanding of culture (Bhabha, Braidotti, Haraway, Hayles). Specifically, this proposal applies this line of inquiry to a) bio-organic and b) artificial intelligence, exploring their roles in disclosing latent narratives in light of urgent issues prompted by bioethics and digital culture.

A paramount example and particularly effective case study for this Investigation will be Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*; or, *The Modern Prometheus* (1818), which brings forth the challenge of the grafted creature. One compound poster will explore through interconnected trajectories how the novel becomes a valuable tool for negotiating the anthropocentric and dualistic perspectives entrenched in Western traditional thought, expressed in dichotomies such as nature/culture, human/nonhuman, man/woman.

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**Alessandro Aru** (Università degli Studi di Pisa)

*Compound Figures of Speech: A Cognitive Pragmatic Approach*

This research project aims at analysing the cognitive complexity of compound figures of speech, that is, complex non-literal expressions which serve more than one purpose. Specifically, my research will concentrate on the interaction between metaphor, irony and hyperbole (i.e. ironic metaphor, hyperbolic metaphor or hyperbolic irony). The research questions concern the type of meanings conveyed and the logical, psychological and temporal order of interpretation: is an ironic metaphor first interpreted as a metaphor and then as irony, for instance, or is one interpretation conditioned on the other, and if so, how? The hypothesis is that the actual interpretation of these multiple figure uses is context-dependent, both in terms of contextual attractors and contextual salience. The theoretical claim, however, is that individual tropes are not represented in the mind as rigid categories but rather as multidimensional spaces including flexible sets of factors that may group together differently on different occasions to let one or the other interpretation emerge. The complexity of compound figures is analysed empirically in a Paraphrase Test. A total of 155 participants took part in the experiment. Results showed that stimuli containing simple figures of speech recorded higher accuracy scores and lower response times than short texts with compounds. There were, however, some exceptions, as some compound stimuli recorded better results than simple ones with an equal complexity score. This led to the conclusion that several other factors, which will likely be analysed in future studies, can influence participants' interpretation of compounds and figurative language in general.

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**Ottavia Carlino** (Università del Salento)

*Bridging Communication Gaps in Healthcare: The ABC Stereo Project*

Accessibility is increasingly at the centre of the international debate, especially in view of the ongoing efforts to achieve the digital transformation in all fields. A field where accessibility is fundamental is certainly healthcare in which placing the person at the centre of the caring process is the key to facilitating access to and use of health care services, improving the person's experience and achieving more satisfactory results. Communication between healthcare professionals and patients takes place in different contexts and with a wide range of purposes. In all cases, it is crucial that communication be effective and timely. However, it becomes particularly challenging when healthcare professionals attend foreign patients, hearing-impaired patients, or in the presence of physical barriers that hinder listening.

The ABC Stereo project aims to find a common solution for three different groups of patients: foreign patients (whenever an interpreter is not available), patients with chronic hearing loss (the elderly) or temporary hearing loss (those who have suffered an injury to the auditory system), and patients who are required to communicate through physical barriers (as they are either contagious or septic). Although these patients are widely different, we believe that a common solution to their problems can be found: using automatic voice recognition to create real-time subtitles could represent a step forward towards the establishment of a truly symmetrical relationship between healthcare professionals and patients. In addition, the use of voice recognition combined with voice-to-text technology would enable the whole conversation to be transcribed for possible future use.

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**Alberto Dall'Olio** (Sapienza Università di Roma)

*The Representation of the WWI's British Soldier in Audiovisuals*

The present project seeks to analyse the audiovisual (AV) representation of the World War One (WWI) British soldier. Since the origins of sound cinema, directors took pains to characterise soldiers and their language, to convey a sense of realism. The existence of a specific set of lexical elements, called Trench Talk or Trench Slang, was emphasised by studies on the language used by British soldiers during WWI (Doyle and Walker, 2021; Walker, 2017; Winkowski, 2017). This slang covered a wide range of semantic fields and was widely used by soldiers in their daily life in the trenches. In

this study, Trench Talk is taken as a fully developed register, in accordance with works by Agha (2003) on the notion of enregisterment. Its presence and function in films and series set during the conflict is analysed using studies on AV fiction dialogue (such as Kozloff, 2000). The corpus of AV material taken into consideration is divided into two time periods: the first part includes films produced from the 1930s to 1960, when a direct experience of the conflict was still present; the second part is composed of films from 1960 up to the present and is more related to a post-memorial form of representation. Both parts are composed of 10-12 titles each.

This work aims at pinpointing how Trench Talk is used to fictionally represent soldiers in the material taken into consideration, and if its use is consistent through the decades or, if it varies, to what degree both in qualitative and quantitative terms. Expected results are that the use of trench language will not be entirely consistent, as social conventions, as well as cultural representation of WWI, changed through the time, thus influencing the choice of the features represented.

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### Camilla De Riso (Università degli Studi di Pavia)

*A Longitudinal Perspective on Informal Language Learning: Observing Complexity, Accuracy and Fluency Trajectories in Four Case Studies*

With English increasingly moving out of the classroom and into informal settings, studies on informal second language learning (ISLL) have supplied evidence on how prolonged exposure to informal English input can enhance advanced receptive and productive skills in L2 learners (Sockett 2014; Sundqvist and Sylvén 2016; Arnbjörnsdóttir and Ingvarsdóttir 2018; Dressman 2020; Pavesi and Ghia 2020 among others). However, only recently has research addressed longitudinal development within ISLL. In this respect, the three dimensions of complexity, accuracy and fluency (CAF) have provided a comprehensive framework for evaluating L2 learners' acquisitional paths longitudinally (Polat and Kim 2014; Kusyk 2020). CAF standard measurements can assess richness, correctness and naturalness of learners' L2 production and use. Furthermore, the interplay between these three dimensions across time appears to echo the non-linearity of L2 development (Ferrari, 2012; Lambert and Kormos 2014; Michel 2017; Vercellotti 2017; Pallotti 2021). Starting from these premises, a one-year longitudinal study was carried out at the University of Pavia with the aim of monitoring the evolution of four participants' L2 spoken production over time. CAF trajectories were observed through monologic storytelling tasks, concurrently investigating any relationship between L2 development and frequency, intensity and type of exposure to informal English input. The analysis of participants' CAF trajectories has relayed distinctively different profiles which appear to be affected by type and intensity of media input. It has further shown that L2 development is multifaceted, multi-layered and multidimensional in nature, as several individual factors such as learners' identity and beliefs also play a key role in language development.

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**Dario Del Fante** (Università degli Studi di Ferrara)

*Building a Bilingual Corpus for Metaphor Detection and Classification Using Manual Annotation and Multilingual Transformer-based Models. An Ongoing Digital Humanities Project*

Within metaphor research, much space has been devoted to discussing the process of metaphor identification and interpretation (as in Nacey et al. 2016; Veale et al. 2016). As a creative aspect of language, metaphors can be interpreted differently by different speakers (Semino 2008). Thus, a qualitative approach may be the safest method, although it is time consuming and requires more than two human coders to be effectively reliable. However, despite many structural issues that make it difficult to automatically identify metaphors (Tong et al. 2021), many works in the field of digital humanities have explored the idea of constructing a numerical representation of documents that retains some of their semantic features, allowing a computer to work with them as a human does (Devlin et al. 2018; Mikolov et al. 2013). We therefore decided to build a bilingual corpus to evaluate the ability of well-performing language models to predict the correct classification of metaphors in the two languages.

First, an Italian-English annotated corpus of 10,000 words and 345 sentences containing articles related to COVID-19 and migration has been compiled and manually annotated by an annotator using three labels - none, covid and migration. The corpus was used to fine-tune several BERT-based multilingual language models, achieving the best model accuracy result of 0.81: given a sentence, the model is expected to predict the presence/absence of a metaphor and determine the type of metaphor with an accuracy of 80%. Given these encouraging initial results, we have decided to further expand the corpus and increase the number of annotators to 25 in order to improve the reliability of the models. The aim of the project is to provide a bilingual linguistic resource from which research in metaphor and contrastive linguistics could benefit.

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