



THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
AND COMPARATIVE LITERARY STUDIES

18th Annual Postgraduate Symposium

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: PROF. DANIEL KATZ

FRIDAY 27TH MAY 2022

9AM - 17.30PM

OC0.01

FOLLOWED BY A DRINKS RECEPTION IN FAB 5.49

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18th Annual Postgraduate Symposium

Friday 27th May 2022

9.00 am to 5.30 pm

OCS.01, University of Warwick

09:10	Prof. Emma Mason, Opening Remarks		
09:15	Panel 1: 'Crisis and Form: War, Economy and the Self' chaired by Dr Caitlin Vandertop		
	Jaewon Yoon Realism Against Neoliberal Fix	Adrien Chiroux I and the Other: André Baillon's <i>Un homme si simple</i> (1925), <i>A «Schéma La avant la lettre,</i>	Aiman Khattak Narrative Reproduction of the Russo-Ukrainian Conflict; <i>Grey Bees</i> by Andrey Yuryevich Kurkov
10:15	Panel 2: 'Narratives of the World-System: Race, Ecology and Human Rights' chaired by Prof. Pablo Mukherjee		
	Chris Griffin Lost Afroutures: Alien(n)ation, Aperture Fictions, and the Astro Caribbean	Charlotte Spear Where is the "post" in "postcolonial"? Human rights in the "Age of Crisis"	Hannah Gillman Reading hunger in Clarice Lispector's <i>Hour of the Star: The Metabolic Rift.</i>
11:15	Coffee, Drinks, and Snack Break		
11:35	Panel 3: 'Feminism' chaired by Dr Roxanne Douglas		
	Bushra Mahzabeen The Oil, the Witch, and the Killing: Petro-violence in Fernanda Melchor's <i>Hurricane Season</i>	Raad Khair Allah The Politics of War in Ghada Alsamn's <i>Beirut Nightmares</i> (1976)	Kiran-Sophie Ladva "Carry yourself with the confidence of a mediocre white man": The evolution of 21 st Century romantic relationships in women's writing
12:35	Prof. Dan Katz "Dada Prodigies of Black: Bob Kaufman's 'Abomunist Manifesto' and the San Francisco Renaissance."		
13:35	Lunch		
14:20	Selected Readings from Eco-poetry chaired by Dr Jonathan Skinner Molly Smith, Lizzie Smith, Nicola Hamer and Tom Crompton		
14:50	Panel 4: 'Eco-criticism' chaired by Dr Nick Lawrence		
	Lizzie Smith Disrupting the Multispecies Encounter in Contemporary Eco-poetry	Nicola Hamer Eco-poetic Mourning in the Wake of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill	
	Anne-Sophie Mortensen "A deeper nation, rising" The Eco-nation in Kamau Brathwaite and Anthony Kellman's Poetry	Thalia Cox Environmental Unconscious of Square Enix's <i>Final Fantasy XV</i>	
16:05	Coffee and Drinks Break		
16:20	Panel 5: '19 th Century Literature' chaired by Dr Jen Baker		
	Sofia Vandepitte Pristine or Primitive? Welsh Seaside Resorts as Liminal Spaces in <i>Punch</i> , or <i>The London Charivari</i>	Charles Gough Queer Mysticism in Marc-André Raffalovich's 'Cyril'	Anna Ferrandez Window Women: A Way into Nineteenth-Century English Literature
17:20	Dr Ross Forman, Closing Remarks		
17:30	Drinks Reception in FAB 5.49		

ABSTRACTS

Panel 1: Crisis and Form: War, Economy and the Self

Chair: Dr Caitlin Vandertop

Jaewon Yoon: Realism Against Neoliberalism Fix

Fictional works of realism produced in response to the recent decades' American financialisation and the 2007-8 financial crash are mostly framed as being 'inadequate' to represent finance-related matters due to its inept attempt of giving narrative shape to the complex, abstract and unreal dynamics of finance, with its emphasis on the material, tangible and real. Keeping in mind such prevailing criticism on literary realism on finance, this presentation hypothetically explores the relationship between 'the recent rise of realism' in so-called crunch literature, and the 2007-8 financial crisis, that is, 'class struggle' of a fictional form of realism as an emergent literary mode against the contemporary capitalism into financialisation and financial crisis. To explore this, the paper draws Stephen Shapiro's theoretical extension of Marx's distinction between fluid and fixed capital and his description on the centripetal (vertical) and centrifugal (horizontal) tension between the capital circuits, and, thus, his particular focus on the space in-between as a condition for class struggle.

My hypothetical and theoretical argument concerns the ways in which realist mode of financial fiction counter-presents its resistant dissent from neoliberalism's and financialisation's horizontal fix of capital (expanded credit system erasing narratives) and its verticalization (increasingly unequal distribution in the hands of upper class brackets). In terms of form, the fiction contrives a way of re-narrativizing finance that is 'devoid of content' or narrative, and, at the same time, creates a different fiction from that of finance's fictional narrative. In terms of content and themes, it puts forward class discourse and social spheres such as family or corporation as a vertical referential structure – not reactionary to neoliberal verticalism but with the political focus on gravity-oriented terrain being exploited by neoliberal normal force, together of which constitutes centripetal force qua financial exploitation mechanism – against individualism or behaviouralism, i.e., a cultural fix of capital's horizontal fix. By doing so, this presentation theorises a cultural thread of class struggles conducted by realist fictional works on finance and financial crisis against the capitalist force of neoliberalism and financialisation.

Adrien Chiroux: I and the Other: André Baillon's *Un homme si simple* (1925), A « Schéma L » avant la lettre

André Baillon (1875-1932) is a modernist French-writing Belgian author. Voluntarily interned twice in the famous French psychiatric hospital of "La Salpêtrière" (where Charcot, Janet, and even the young Freud carried out some research), his stay there as well as his own psychic sufferings gave him the material for three of his major works: *Un homme si simple* (1925), *Chalet 1* (1926), and *Le Perce-Oreille du Luxembourg* (1928). However, far from being madman notebooks, these productions show an extreme awareness of his psychic conflicts.

In this communication, focusing on the *incipit* of the novel *Un homme si simple* in which the character of Jean Martin relates (the reasons of) his interment at the Salpêtrière to a psychiatrist, I will show that, half a century before Jacques Lacan's famous "Schéma L", André Baillon astonishingly already underlines the paradoxical consequences of alterity. Relying on Lacan's aforementioned model, Mikhail Bakhtin's "hidden dialogue", and Geneviève Hauzeur's major Freud-Lacanian reading of Baillon's work, I will demonstrate how the Belgian writer masterly plays on French *signifiers*, seemingly monological narration, and fusion of multiple narratees to powerfully depict the conflict of a subject in distress, seeking himself in and out of another who simultaneously makes him happen and locks him in. Finally, I will briefly explain how this conception of identity, although surprisingly visionary, is also a consequence of the various upheavals of the turning of the century.

Aiman Khattak: Narrative Reproduction of the Russo-Ukrainian Conflict; *Grey Bees* by Andrey Yuryevich Kurkov

The Russo-Ukrainian war which first began in 2014 after Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity has been an ongoing conflict between this former empire and its colony respectively. With a long history of imperial rule over states like Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, Belarussia, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Crimea, Kazakhstan, etc., until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia has later kept trying to regain the power and status it enjoyed when the former Soviet Union was intact. For this, it has kept devising and employing different policies to maintain its own control and hegemony over the former colonies, with Putin calling them as Russia's "family of fraternal peoples" (Kurkov 9). Ukraine, in particular, has mostly opposed Russia's hegemony and thus remained a subject of its imperial violence.

After the first Russian invasion of Ukraine when Russia annexed Crimea, the conflict remained ongoing to seize control over other parts of Ukraine. More recently, in Feb 2022 Russian troops encroached on Ukrainian territories including Kyiv and started a full-scale conflict. Since 24 Feb 2022, this conflict has caused chaos and destruction in Ukraine and forcefully displaced about 5 million people externally and around 7 million internally. At this time of crisis, Ukraine's popular modern novelist Andrey Kurkov's 2018 novel *Grey Bees* is a useful read to understand the Ukraine conflict, its historical context, and its adverse impact on ordinary Ukrainians. *Grey Bees* first appeared in Russian and was translated into English by Boris Dralyuk in 2020.

Grey Bees, with the help of political humor, satirically reproduces how modern conflict in Ukraine looks like. The central character, Sergey Sergeyich, takes pleasure and refuge from the surrounding conflict in his bees. He takes them far away from the Grey Zone between loyalists and separatists to collect their pollen. Yet his simplicity could be manipulated to cause further destruction to him and his country. This paper reads Kurkov's *Grey Bees* to pay homage to the millions of Ukrainians devastated in the escalating conflict and to see what literary forms and strategies fiction employs to register and/or resist this modern Ukrainian conflict.

Christopher Griffin: Lost Afrofutures: Alien|nation, Aperture Fictions, and the Astro Caribbean.

The term ‘Afrofuturism’ is regarded as a coinage by cultural critic Mark Dery (Eshun 1996: 11; Womack 2013: 16; Gaskins 2016: 27; Jenkins 2021: 124; Aleem 2016: 11). In his essay ‘Black to the Future’, Dery (1994) defined Afrofuturism as ‘[s]peculative fiction that treats African American themes and addresses African American concerns in the context of twentieth century technoculture’ (180). During the twenty-first century, Afrofuturism remains concerned with science fiction, magical realist, and fantasy engagements with blackness across culture (Puba 2016; Akomfrah 1996; Eshun 1998; Gallagher 2006; Coogler 2018). Similarly, like Dery, contemporary critics have provided cultural histories explaining Afrofuturism’s genesis and properties. Yet, despite an increasing emphasis on Afrofuturism’s transnational purview, contemporary critical discourse overwhelmingly examines America and the experiences, concerns, and history of African-Americans; the election of Obama, the music of Sun Ra and George Clinton, Marvel’s Black Panther (2018), the Civil Rights movement, and the history of slavery in America and West Africa, have been considered Afrofuturism’s defining historical parameters (Aleem 2016: 32; Anderson and Jones 2016: ix; Jenkins 2021; Lindsay 2019: 2; Womack 2013).

My paper moves away from this specifically Americentric or Anglo-American critical discourse of Afrofuturism, in the belief that it is largely bound up with the loss of Afrofuturism’s radical and collective potential during the 1990s. To perform this manoeuvre, and evidence this radical potential during the 1990s, I turn to the Trinidadian writer Anthony Joseph, his novel *The African Origins of UFOs* (2006), and his history with the now lost and mysterious ‘poison engine press’. Poison engine press was a ‘black independent imprint’ that published a number of ‘experimental/neo-contemporary texts’ during the 1990s that, today, are incredibly difficult to obtain, if they indeed ever existed. Anthony Joseph appears to be the only writer published by this imprint whose work has at least partially survived and persisted. My paper argues that, by looking to Joseph, and the writing of Paul Gilroy (1993, 2000, 2001) and Kodwo Eshun (1996), we can glimpse a now lost, Afrofuture and begin an alternate history of Afrofuturism in Britain during the 21C.

Charlotte Spear: Where is the “post” in “postcolonial”? Human rights in the “Age of Crisis”

Over the past decade, a significant pattern has emerged in academic and popular discourse dubbing the twenty-first century the ‘age of crisis’, referring to economic, social and environmental breakdown across the world-system. And yet, if the twenty-first century can be defined as the Age of Crisis, ‘crisis’ in the peripheries of the modern world-system is in many ways a continuation of the state of emergency imposed by colonisation, whereby external powers install arbitrary dictatorial rule (Cesaire, 1955; Fanon, 1964). In this way, countries from across the periphery of the world-system are subjected to a unique form of crisis: one which not only traverses national borders but consolidates the displacement of the state of

emergency away from the capitalist core and into distant regions. In the twenty-first century, this imposed state of crisis comes through the instrumentalization of discourses surrounding human rights, enabling neo-imperial humanitarian interventions which fail to ‘solve’ ongoing crises in much of the world-system but succeed discursively in reinforcing the kinds of colonial cultural hierarchies identified by postcolonial theorists (Slaughter, 2007; Fanon, 1964). Employing a theoretical framework inspired by the works of Butler (2004), Slaughter (2007) and the WReC (2015), I aim to relocate Fanon’s and Césaire’s critical analyses of the colonial state of emergency into the twenty-first century. This will provide the basis for analysis of Bofane’s *Congo Inc.* (2018) as literary registrations of the ‘postcolonial state’ as the site of the externally enforced law of ‘arbitrary’ rule (Butler, 2004). I explore how Bofane registers the arbitrary rule of law through both form and content, linking this in a state of historical continuum from colonialism to the present. Departing from the onslaught of biopolitical explorations of the contemporary state of exception (Agamben, 2005; Foucault, 2004), this essay aims to explore the concept of the ‘Age of Human Rights’ as a discursive device enabling the neo-imperial situating of the state of emergency within the peripheral zones of the world.

Hannah Gillman: Reading hunger in *Hour of the Star*: The Metabolic Rift.

First published in Karl Marx’s *Capital* (1867), the ‘metabolic rift’ or ‘ecological rift’ consists of nature’s exploitation under capitalist regimes and is figured as an ecologically unequal exchange, producing underdevelopment. In World-Literature, the Metabolic rift has been a useful tool in identifying irrealist modes of writing in peripheral regions. Michael Niblett’s essay “World-Economy, World-Ecology, World Literature” (2012), makes the convincing argument that “moments of the emergence or intensification of the metabolic rift will coincide with [an] eruption into a text – even if otherwise broadly realist – of irrealist elements” (21). Building on this connection between world-literature and the metabolic rift, this paper aims to demonstrate how an application of the metabolic rift can elucidate the treatment of bodies in peripheral areas as waste, and how the irrealist aesthetics they present in simultaneously engage with literary markets. Since meta-narrational characteristics in particular engage with authorial voice, I would argue the emphasis of labour in the metabolic rift adequately engages with literary production and ownership (Brouillette, 2014). By reading Clarice Lispector’s *Hour of the Star* (1977) alongside the theory of the metabolic rift, consumption of commodity products, cannibalism, and waste all become essential for understanding the physical peripheral body and literary body as they exist in peripheral extraction zones. The novella’s secondary layer of narration is able to translate the protagonist’s redundancy and lack of social reproductive value into an issue of truly peripheral literature in literary markets.

PANEL 3: FEMINISM

Chair: Dr Roxanne Douglas

Bushra Mahzabeen: The Oil, the Witch, and the Killing: Petro-violence in Fernanda Melchor's *Hurricane Season*

In commodity frontiers the extraction and proliferation of any resource arguably has multifarious effects on the socio-cultural and economic spheres. Fernanda Melchor's 2017 petro-modern novel *Hurricane Season*, translated in English in 2020, registers the rapid transformations of the Mexican oil frontier, where a town in the fictional La Matosa district shifts from sugar to petroleum as the primary economic resource. Oil ruptures the established dynamics within the local labour force, because as a capital-intensive production process, oil employs fewer people than other industries which results in a high rate of unemployment. The local men who fail to secure work in and outside of the oil industry, harbour resentments and feelings of emasculation and the only way they are able to express their frustrations is to demonstrate violence on women's bodies. Melchor's novel depicts the murder of an illegitimate child known as the Witch, who is the daughter of a Spanish sugar mill owner and a local witch. The Witch lives an independent life and earns her living from the sugar mills while the whole town around her changes into a petro-industrial economy. She later becomes a victim of the toxic masculinity and the violent petro-culture rife in the oil zone. This paper will explore how femicides have become a commonplace phenomenon in the fictional Mexican oil frontier, overlooked by the law enforcement agencies. The violence against women intensifies primarily because the men repeatedly fall victim to the elusive promise of oil that does not materialise, leaving them desperate for ways to assert their masculinity. In my work I will bring in critical works by scholars such as - Veronica Gago, Silvia Federici, Rita Segato, and Michael Niblett to explore the petro-violence depicted in Melchor's novel.

Raad Khair Allah: The Politics of War in Ghada Alsamman's *Beirut Nightmares* (1976)

The Lebanese Civil War was one of the most devastating conflicts of the late 20th century. However, the importance of this war particularly lies in raising the issues of womanhood and femininity within the context of women becoming active in conflict. Thus, poverty, the eruptions of ethnic and religious conflicts and then the outbreak of civil war ironically presaged and created new worlds of equality for Arab women, particularly in the literary field.

In this paper, I will explore the literary representations by Ghada Alsamman and her role in revolutionizing prevailing notions of gender and war in a patriarchal society. For Alsamman, true liberation lies in women's freedom not only in nation's freedom. So, she particularly strives to reclaim Arab women's sexual freedom since it has a liberating potential that may lead to transformation of society. The main question that my paper seeks to answer is: how do we explain the gap between literary images and Arab women's real social conditions?

Beirut Nightmares (1976) is a horror fantasy that tells the story of a woman who is trapped in her house at the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975. The novel, through the nightmarish episodes, does not only offer a powerful portrayal of the infernal horror that was in Beirut in the grip of a mindless war, but also shows Arab women's struggle under siege and

their reactions in this crucial time. This helps create a new reality regarding gender relations and war.

**Kiran-Sophie Ladva: “Carry yourself with the confidence of a mediocre white man”:
The evolution of women’s writing towards female character’s romantic relationships in
the twenty-first century.**

Contemporary western romance literature often challenges gender stereotypes since feminism holds a broad and ever-changing nature. Women’s writing has been a contested topic since the nineteenth century, only growing in popularity as time has continued. In particular, Ali Hazelwood’s *The Love Hypothesis* (2021), Beth O’Leary’s *The Flatshare* (2019), and Sally Rooney’s *Normal People* (2018) illustrates how women writers have transformed female characters, modifying both their reliance and gender dynamics in romantic relationships. These stories narrate the tensions experienced by protagonists, occupying peripheral spaces within popular topics in the twenty-first century, including: domestic abuse, fornication, and sexuality.

This paper argues that twenty-first century female writers have not only shifted the distinguishable features of nineteenth and twentieth century women’s literature, but also, modified women’s social and family roles, altering the subjects of writing. While contemplating the study of women’s literature, the most significant features that came under the spotlight include the discovery of women’s self-identity, women coming out from the male-defined precincts to achieve independence and the authors’ expedition towards autonomy and self-assertion through their writing. This is prevalent through the texts analysed in this paper. However, in order to trace the growth of twenty-first century women’s literature, a comparative investigation of Victorian and twentieth-century women’s literature will be utilised throughout. Key authors used for this comparison include: Jane Austen, Charlotte and Emily Brontë, Edith Warton, Sylvia Plath and Virginia Woolf. In response to the external limitations often placed on women, contemporary literature seeks to amplify female experiences. With the focus being evenly split between the male and female perspectives, Hazelwood, O’Leary and Rooney challenges the reader to confront the perspectives of both genders, heightening the overall importance of gender equality.

PANEL 4: Ecocriticism

Chair: Dr Nick Lawrence

Lizzie Smith: Disrupting the Multispecies Encounter in Contemporary Ecopoetry

In the words of Amitav Ghosh, climate change represents a “crisis of culture, and thus of the imagination” (Ghosh 9). With the increasing awareness that current forms are failing to confront this crisis, the urgency for alternative narratives has never seemed clearer. One facet of mainstream conservation narratives is an emphasis on “charismatic” organisms at the expense of “uncharismatic” others, like insects or bacteria, despite their ecological value. These organisms often have a disruptive effect, provoking feelings of disgust, even as they generate a strange fascination. Where dark ecology theorises the dark side of ecological interconnections (see Timothy Morton and Donna Haraway), and theorists like Thom van Dooren and Deborah Bird Rose have recognised the need to direct attention toward “unloved others,” this paper will blend the two areas, exploring the dark-ecological potentialities of disruptively uncharismatic organisms. Additionally, little thought is given to *why* this bias against uncharismatic organisms exists. In response, this paper will turn towards, rather than away from, the disruptions of uncharismatic organisms, taking the insect poetry of Elizabeth-Jane Burnett, Linda Hogan, and Ed Roberson as a starting point for exploring poetic encounters with disruptive and uncharismatic organisms. Disruption will be approached from several different methodological angles, starting by addressing the disruptiveness of the organisms themselves, considering the “why” of our affective responses. My analysis will then turn to how contemporary poetry both heightens and harnesses the disruption of encounters with uncanny environmental others. Finally, I will ask how we can use disruptive reading strategies to approach uncanny others, in poetry and beyond. It is vital to consider what value this disruption might have for recalibrating our engagements with environmental others. In an era where our narratives are failing to address the uneven, capital-driven depredations of climate change, such disruptions might offer alternative paths.

Nicola Hamer: Ecopoetic Mourning in the Wake of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

On April 20th, 2010, an oil rig named Deepwater Horizon exploded in the gulf of Mexico, allowing over 4 million barrels of oil to flow unhindered through the turquoise waters (EPA 2022). Eleven people burnt to death in the resultant fire, alongside uncountable numbers of animals and plants.

In this paper, I will contend that this oil spill left an indelible mark upon the field of ecopoetics. Though it is not unique as an example of ecological disaster in the first years of the twenty-first century, it remains the largest oil spill ever recorded (Meiners 2020). Moreover, due to the cultural hegemony of the United States, international media coverage of the event was particularly rapacious. Images of billowing clouds of waterborne oil were transmitted across the globe, resulting in a tangible increase in ‘ecological grief’, that grief which is ‘felt in relation to experienced or anticipated ecological losses’ (Consulo and Ellis 2018).

In this paper, I will demonstrate that the oil spill triggered something akin to a crisis of faith in the field of ecopoetics, leading critics and poets to question the role that their work could play in the processing of ecological grief. It was becoming clear that established forms such as the elegy were not capable of providing solace from the horrors of environmental degradation, a

realisation that caused considerable anxiety. But as is often the case in times of tumult, a window of opportunity was opening within that anxiety; poets were asking how they might conceive of a work that might succeed where elegy was floundering. They were reaching towards something which has until now remained at the outer peripheries of the literary establishment, plumbed only by those communities who have, due to natural disaster or colonialism, experienced sustained ecological grief: an *ecopoetics of mourning*.

Anne-Sophie Bogetoft Mortensen: “A deeper nation, rising”: The eco-nation in Kamau Brathwaite and Anthony Kellman’s poetry

What is the relation between nation and environment in the Caribbean archipelago? How are alienation and environmental depravation connected in the former British colony Barbados? And what eco-poetic strategies might be put in place to overcome the narrative of Barbados as ‘little England’?

In this paper presentation I will be exploring how Barbados’ geological constitution have formed the poetic expressions emerging from the island and how these in turn are bringing about a new understanding of Barbados as an eco-nation. I will do so by presenting and analyzing Barbadian poet, historian and literary scholar, Kamau Brathwaite’s poetic-theoretic notions on nation language, submarine unity and submerged community, in his two major poem-lecture *Barabajan Poems (1994)* as well as selected essays, and discussing these in relation to fellow Barbadian, Anthony Kellman’s, portrayal of this porous island in his epic long-poem *Limestone (2004)*.

Much like how Brathwaite in 1994 described Caribbean culture as that which “filters & fuses in / to you from yr landscape people happenings mysteries fossils histories time” (Brathwaite, 1994, 83), so is Kellman’s work exemplary of a porous Barbadian poetics, in which geology, archeology, poetry and the “piled up voices” (Kellman, 2004) tell the (hi)stories of an island of an in which materiality and metaphor merges into one “matterphor” (Cohen & Duckert, 2015).

PANEL 5: 19th Century Literature

Chair: Dr Jen Baker

Sofie Vandepitte: Pristine or Primitive? Welsh Seaside Resorts as Liminal Spaces in *Punch*, or *The London Charivari*

In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, leisure emerged as a distinct concept in Victorian Britain. As one of the most popular manifestations of this new leisure industry, seaside resorts appeared alongside the British coast. Driven by rapid developments in public transport, these resorts were not only built in the major English seaside towns of Brighton, Margate, and Scarborough, but also emerged in more peripheral areas such as Wales. The flourishing Victorian periodical press played an instrumental role in popularising the seaside resort through advertising, yet it also poked fun at some of the prejudices associated with these liminal spaces, situated between land and sea, culture and nature.

While scholars have predominantly focused on the representation of well-known English seaside resorts, my proposed paper will present a case study of Victorian seaside tourism in Wales. More specifically, I will examine how *Punch*, or *The London Charivari* – as a quintessentially English, metropolitan, middle-class product – depicted seaside tourism in Aberystwyth, Llandudno, Rhyl, and Tenby. I will argue that *Punch* portrayed the Welsh seaside resorts as pristine yet primitive sites in comparison to the major English seaside resorts, positioning Wales as a peripheral ‘other’ to an imaginary England. For this purpose, I will analyse both fiction and cartoons in *Punch* and draw on theories of national and regional Victorian identities, as well as of linguistic and graphic humour and satire. In doing so, my paper will uncover the ways in which the satirical press contributed to the notion of the Welsh seaside resort as a peripheral space in the Victorian middle-class imagination.

Charles Gough: Queer Mysticism in Marc-André Raffalovich’s ‘Cyril’

Marc-André Raffalovich was a figure who contributed considerably to the rapidly expanding cultural dialogue about queer identities and relationships at the turn of the nineteenth century. Although his written works and their influence have largely been overlooked in literary scholarship since their publication over a century ago, in both his collections of poetry and his sexological treatises he presented original and radical ideas of the queer male self that fused ideas primarily extracted from mysticism and sexology. The sparse critical attention that Raffalovich has received has focused almost entirely on his sexological monograph, *Uranisme et Unisexualité: Étude sur différentes manifestations de l’instinct sexuel (Uranism and Unisexuality: A Study of Different Manifestations of the Sexual Instinct)*. Published in 1896, this text is infused with mystical concepts and allusions, effectively demonstrating the intersection of religious and sexological thought in Raffalovich’s conception of queerness.

Yet, this concentrated interest in Raffalovich’s sexology has resulted in a significant neglect of his earlier works, namely his poetry, which even in his own time attracted little notice. Seeking to amend this neglect, this paper will consider how Raffalovich’s inaugural volume of verse, *Cyril and Lionel* – published in 1884, over a decade before the publication of *Uranisme* – demonstrates the formation of what I term a ‘queer mysticism’. Specifically, I direct my

attention to the ‘Cyril’ sequence, Raffalovich’s earliest published work in verse and his most extended treatment of the queer soul. Expanding on existing critical commentaries such as those put forth by Frederick S. Roden and Ellis Hanson, I will gesture to the development of Raffalovich’s notions of sexuality, religion, and the queer soul across his broader oeuvre, foregrounding the importance of poetry within this conceptual trajectory.

Anna Ferràndez López: Window Women in the Novels of Gaskell, Eliot, and the Brontë Sisters

The topic of the ‘woman at the window’ has never been thoroughly studied in late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries English literature despite the attention paid to related issues of the separation between the public and private spheres and the gendered usages of space during this period. In order to present how the window may constitute a space of its ‘own’, i.e. neither belonging to public nor private spaces, this project will approach the signification of windows in literary texts produced by women throughout these centuries. Addressing the recurrent presence of windows in woman-authored writings, on the one hand, and the way that middle- and upper-class female characters are depicted in relation to windows, on the other, might shed new light on English modern women writers’ conception of space as well as of their place in society. This implies to question what is unique and distinctive about the ‘woman at the window’ in the English modern literature and whether it presents any differences from the other ‘window women’ from the past. Following the approach to the window motif by art historians Eitner (1955), Shefer (1983) and Bastida de la Calle (1996), it will be seen how the ‘woman at the window’ to be found in these novels differs from the deep-rooted ideas associated with this figure. Indeed, a comparative analysis of the selected novels will attest that the space produced by windows is not physical. Rather, windows are employed as a mental, reflective retreat where female characters go to when they feel desolation, disappointment, restlessness, but also when they daydream about a different life to the one they have, a life beyond the confines of their home.

SPEAKERS

Jaewon Yoon

Jaewon Yoon received PhD certificate from Sookmyung Women's University in Korea and is now a final-year PhD student under the supervision of Stephen Shapiro and Mark Storey. Her research titled 'Post-Millennial American and British Finance-Crisis Fiction' examines the contemporary realist fiction on finance, financial capitalism and financial crisis, and presents a theoretical framework for cultural economic criticism with Marxian theoretics based on *Capital*. Her research interests focus on economic criticism, cultural studies, Marxism, world systems analyses, and comparative study on contemporary writing and culture on finance and economics of the core and the semiperiphery.

Adrien Chiroux

Adrien Chiroux is a PhD student in Comparative Literature at the Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium) invited as "Visiting Research Student" at the University of Warwick. His thesis is currently entitled "Poetics of the 'Self-reflections': questions of identity in the European novel from 1925 to 1935 (Baillon, Hesse, Woolf, Pessoa)".

Aiman Khattak

Aiman has studied for her PhD in English and Comparative Literary Studies at the University of Warwick, UK. She has worked on Afghan, Iraqi and Pakistani literatures to understand the past few decades of conflict in these regions. Her doctoral project also explores how literature registers, shapes, and is shaped by, such circumstances. Her research interests broadly lie in postcolonial/decolonial approaches to literary-critical studies.

Christopher Griffin

Christopher Griffin (he/they) (@CJGriffin) is an AHRC-funded researcher of Late 20C and 21C Anglophone Literature and Culture at the University of Warwick. His doctoral research centres on the C21 Anglophone novel in Britain, neoliberalism, and the aesthetics of 'the secret'. As a Cambridge Trust Scholar, Christopher holds an MPhil in Modern and Contemporary Literature from Pembroke College, Cambridge (Distinction), where he worked on the aesthetics of the secret, aleatory poetics, and the intersection of affect theory and autism. His work has been published in *Alluvium* and *Postcolonial Writer's Make Worlds* and he is an affiliate of Pandemic Perspectives. As a Graduate Teaching Assistant and first-generation, ADHD-autistic, Christopher has an abiding interest in developing an ethical, accessible, and compassionate pedagogy throughout Higher Education.

Charlotte Spear

Charlotte Spear is a PhD candidate in the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies at the University of Warwick. Her thesis is entitled *Locating the Human: World-Literature and the Concept of Rights*, focusing on contemporary world-literary registrations of

human rights in humanitarian intervention zones. More widely, she explores questions of World-Literature, Critical Theory, Environmental Humanities and Disaster Studies. She has a publication forthcoming in *Modern Language Review*.

Hannah Gillman

Hannah Gillman is a current Postgraduate student at the University of Warwick, studying for a World Literature MA from the English and Comparative Literary Studies Department. Her current research interests include the peripheral registration of literary markets, with a focus on Post-independence Sub-Saharan African Literature, Post-Boom Latin American Literature, and European Autofiction.

Bushra Mahzabeen

Bushra Mahzabeen is a second year PhD student in the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies at the University of Warwick, UK. Her research is broadly focused on the geopolitical implications of oil as a commodity and the petro-capitalist exploitation of labour.

Raad Khair Allah

Her PhD thesis title is ‘Contemporary Arab Women Writers, Filmmakers and Artists in an International Frame’. Her research interests are sexuality, gender, feminism, and war. She has published two literary papers on female issues in *Bridges Journal* at Leicester University. They are comparative literary studies on women’s suffering and struggle to achieve freedom in three different centuries.

Kiran-Sophie Ladva

I am currently on the English Literature MA programme, having completed a BSc (Hons) in Politics and English Literature at Aston University. My current research builds upon my undergraduate dissertation on J.K. Rowling’s *Wizarding World*, exploring whether characters can be branded as intrinsically good or evil. More broadly though, after undertaking modules at Warwick, I have gained an interest in feminist literary theory, particularly weaving in political elements. I am applying to do a PhD in this field, discussing how female characters have been shown to shift their approaches to romantic relationships, from the “original” female writers to the contemporary work we see today.

Lizzie Smith

As a PhD researcher, I will be investigating the disruptive potential of uncharismatic creatures in contemporary ecopoetics. Having completed an MSc at Edinburgh and a BA at Oxford, I have cultivated an interest in ecocriticism throughout my studies. My research interests also include decolonial ecologies, interdisciplinary perspectives, and feminist theory.

Nicola Hamer

Nicola is a PhD student at the University of Warwick, funded by Midlands4Cities (AHRC). Her research explores the ways in which ecological grief – grief felt in response to environmental losses such as extinction or deforestation, often wrought by colonialism – is confronted in contemporary poetry from North America and the Caribbean.

Anne-Sophie Bogetoft Mortensen

Anne-Sophie Bogetoft Mortensen, PhD-fellow at Roskilde University, Department of Communication and Arts, Denmark. Visiting researcher at Warwick University, Department of English and Comparative Literature Studies.

Sofie Vandepitte

Sofie Vandepitte is a pedagogical assistant at Vrije Universiteit Brussel. She is currently developing a PhD project on the representation of the British seaside resort in the Victorian satirical press, under the supervision of Prof. Birgit Van Puymbroeck and Prof. Marianne Van Remoortel.

Charles Gough

I am an AHRC Midlands4Cities-funded doctoral researcher at the University of Birmingham, researching the 'queer soul' in Victorian poetry. Prior to commencing my PhD, I completed the MSt in English (1830-1914) course at the University of Oxford, graduating with Distinction. I received my first-class undergraduate degree in English Literature from the University of Birmingham in 2019, awarded *cum laude*.

Anna Ferràndez López

Anna Ferràndez López is a PhD student at Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona. Her current research explores the topic of the 'woman at the window' in nineteenth-century English literature and the nuances attached to the motif during this period. Anna's previous research has dealt with British women writers from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women's education, and the connection between Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and Jane Austen's novels.

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The organising committee,

Hannah Gillman, Tabina Iqbal and Thalia Cox