

Humanities Research Centre  
Annual Report  
2024/25



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## Message from the Director

I can hardly believe that my three years as HRC Director has whizzed past so quickly. Looking back, I'm delighted to see that during this time the HRC has supported so many exciting research initiatives, enabling a diverse range of individuals and projects to be supported within the Faculty of Arts and beyond. I would highlight in particular the emergence of new structures for supporting postgraduates and early-stage researchers in navigating their way towards their first book publication. Thanks to two UKRI Enhancing Research Culture Fund grants, the HRC has been able to demonstrate the value of regular workshops on Working with Publishers and of the mentoring system piloted this year whereby post-viva PhD candidates are encouraged and supported to convert their thesis into book proposal for submission by a publisher. It has been very satisfying to see the appearance of new volumes in Warwick Series in the Humanities, and a strong pipeline of future books is in progress. The HRC not only supports the funding of new interdisciplinary research projects, but also supports them right through to publication. The HRC is also uniquely placed to foster new research collaborations that begin at Warwick but spread internationally, contributing to the University's Research and International Strategies. I am very grateful to the HRC Administrator Sue Rae for her enthusiastic assistance over the years, as well as members of the HRC Committee and anyone who has assisted the work of the HRC (you know who you are!). I would like to end by passing on warm wishes to the new Director, William Rupp (Liberal Arts). Being HRC Director has to be one of the most rewarding posts in the Faculty.

## An A-Z Guide to a Year in the HRC

After Postcolonialism

Bodies

Conferences

Decay

Ecologies

Fellowships

Grants

**Humanities**

Individualism

Johns Hopkins

Keynotes

Landscapes

Migration

Narratives

Oceanic crossings

Power

Questions

**Research**

Society

Technologies

Ukraine

Venice

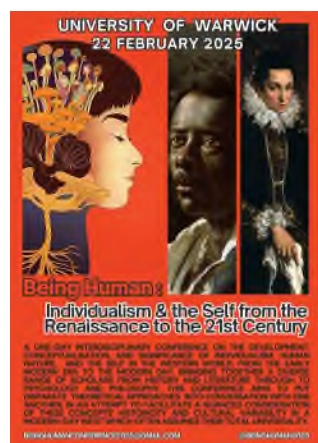
**Warwick**

X-disciplinarity

Yale

*Zuleikha Opens her Eyes*

Alison Cooley, 4 July 2025



### Being Human: Individualism & the Self from the Renaissance to the 21st Century

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2025

Venue: University of Warwick

Report by Anna Pravdica, Himesh Mehta & Mia Edwards (History)

Firstly, we would like to thank the Humanities Research Centre at the University of Warwick for their gracious funding of our conference, *Being Human: Individualism and the Self from the Renaissance to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* which took place on 22 February 2025. It was a fruitful day, which wouldn't have taken place without their generous support.

### What was the aim of this conference?

What does it mean to be human? Our one-day interdisciplinary conference aimed to both define the parameters of this question, and to suggest some potential answers. The definitions and meanings assigned to the conception of the self, or being human more generally, are numerous and contentious depending upon discipline, time, and place. Moreover, the contingency of such definitions often remains unaddressed. Therefore, this conference acted as a way to bring together a range of scholars, who worked across time, geography, and academic discipline, to suggest different ways in which their research might bring us closer to understanding some of the multitudinous ways in which human nature and ideas of the self have been understood throughout history.

In particular, this conference focused upon ideas regarding what it means to be human, and the self, from the Early Modern period to the present day. This felt like a good level of historical scope, which would allow for us to discuss continuities and changes over time, while also allowing for the approaches provided by disciplines and scholars outside of history. In the end, the conference drew participants from disciplines including economics and philosophy, thus allowing Q&As to explore often-unaddressed disciplinary and methodological collisions.

Some of the initial suggested topics for conference participants to consider included:

- Religion, human nature, and the self
- Self-control and the law
- Capitalism and the rise of individualism
- Collectivism within individualistic societies
- The role of philosophy in shaping conceptions of the self
- The role of emotion in identity formation
- Historical perceptions of autonomy, self-determinism, and control

However, we also had a range of discussions and presentations which broadened this scope, such as considering anthropomorphism in relation to artificial intelligence, and the influence of the individualism and choice upon the economic outcomes of a person's life.

### Outline of the Conference

The conference included two keynote addresses, and we finished with a fascinating roundtable discussion which summed up the main themes of the day while also bringing the two speakers into discussion with each other. The first keynote was given by Roger Smith, entitled 'Ensoulment in a Time of Embodiment', which focused on the importance of the soul as a historical and personal category of analysis. While modern scholarship, and the more general cultural lexicon, perhaps prioritises ideas of selfhood, Smith's keynote made a case for considering the soul as a distinct, historicised and connected notion that can act as both a personal and political instrument. The second keynote was delivered by Roger Cooter, entitled 'Eating Cats and Finding Rats: A Singular Search for "Identity"', which charted the experiences of an eighteenth-century

French man, as he worked through a range of job titles, familial relations, and geographical locations. This keynote critically contrasted a unique and isolated example of eighteenth-century identity formation with the role of identity in contemporary Western culture. Together, the keynotes defended the value of history to critical engagement with the present.

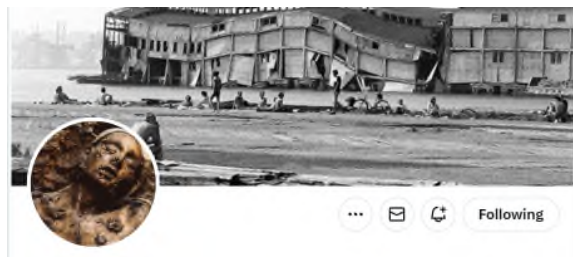
The conference was split into three panels, which explored a range of themes such as the methodological and historiographical approaches that we use to explore these questions and notions of human nature, philosophical meaning, technology, the body, race, and colonialism. The papers presented during these panels included a range of topics and methodological approaches to our overall theme. There were a range of topics, such as the consideration of humanism as a decolonial construct, the sexual self within the context of Postwar British Universities, and understanding the birth of modern individualism within Renaissance historiography. The range of topics and methodological approaches presented allowed for wide-ranging discussions, in which both speakers and audience members could learn from those far outside their personal topic area. This open, collective, and inclusive discussion was a main aim for the conference, and we are happy that it appeared to be achieved through the papers given, Q&As, and in more informal discussions.

### **Outcomes**

We are very thankful to all presenters and attendees for their excellent work, presentations, and general enthusiasm throughout the day. We felt that many generative discussions were had, and we hope that attendees continue to think about the themes discussed within their own work going forward.

We hope that the conference will lead to an edited collection in the Warwick Series in the Humanities, published by Routledge. We will release a call for papers, contacting presenters to ask about their interest in turning their presentations into a larger, article length piece. Any continued support from the HRC towards this end would be greatly appreciated.

### **Irresistible Decay: Aestheticization of death and life imbrications from the 18th Century to today**



Date: 7 March 2025

Venue: University of Warwick

Report by Airelle Amédéo (SMLC) & Enrica Leydi (SMLC)

Decay, according to Julia Kristeva is a 'privileged site of mingling, of the contamination of life by death, of begetting and ending' (1982). As a natural process where life and death inevitably meet, decay is an irresistible metaphor for social, artistic, medical, and political

investigations of life and death cross-contamination, states of the not-yet-dead, and continuations of life in death. As a dangerously malleable concept, decay's imagery has thus lent itself to both the most emancipatory and the most oppressive ideas.

Since the 18th century, morbid aestheticizations of decay have prevailed over other explorations of the matter's potential to figure the intertwining of destruction and regeneration. Giovanni Battista Piranesi's etchings evidenced an epochal lust for ruins, while Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's scientific studies conveyed a novel interest in organic matter. This fascination with degeneration soon infiltrated political discourses, participating in the proliferation of an 'undifferentiated image of "rotteness"' which became a shorthand for the 'corruption of morals as much as the decomposition of flesh' (Foucault, 1963). In the following centuries, the aestheticization of decay became a frequent means of expressing fears around atavism and eugenics, slowly instrumentalising it as a biopolitical rhetorical tool. This long association of decay and anxieties persists in the political discourse of the current moment. In our contemporary world, metaphors of decay have become a signifier of neoliberal forms of deadliness. According to Achille Mbembe (2003), our society organises itself into death-worlds where the governing logic of capitalism turns humanity into 'an extravagant carcass' that is 'struggl[ing] to escape the dust' and where our relationship to the organic world is 'ecocidal.' Departing from the irresistibility of decay, this conference explored how life and death imbrications have been aestheticised across time.

The **Irresistible Decay** conference, held at the University of Warwick, brought together scholars from many different disciplines to explore the themes of extinction, ruin, resistance, and regeneration. Organised by **Airelle Amédéo** and **Enrica Leydi**, the conference aimed to interrogate the multifaceted dimensions of decay—be it political, social, material, or cultural—and how such processes shape contemporary discourses and practices. Inspired by Julia Kristeva's assertion that decay is a 'privileged site of mingling, of the contamination of life by death, of begetting and ending', the event examined decay both as a destructive force and a catalyst for renewal.

The conference attracted international attention, with participants traveling from the United States, Australia, and across Europe to attend. The diversity of the speakers' academic backgrounds fostered a truly interdisciplinary exchange, enriching the dialogue throughout the sessions. Attendees remarked on the dynamic atmosphere and the depth of discussion, and the organisers were contacted by scholars from various institutions who congratulated them on the success of the event.

### Conference Structure and Key Themes

The conference featured six themed sessions, two keynote addresses, and a closing discussion. Sessions examined decaying policies, material decomposition, urban decay, abject narratives, technological transformations, and the documentation of death. Each panel sought to address how decay functions as both a destructive and generative force within global contexts.

#### Session 1: Decaying Policies and Discourses

Chaired by **Cian Bear** (University of Warwick), this session explored political and ideological decay. **Arnaud Miranda** (Sciences Po) examined the metaphorology of decadence in political thought, challenging reactionary narratives and proposing a non-reactionary engagement with decay. **Ash Stokoe** (University of Birmingham) traced the decline of trans rights in the UK, analysing policy shifts from inclusion to exclusion. **Romain Chenet** (University of Warwick) critiqued the decaying discourse of global development, arguing that outdated frameworks hinder meaningful progress. **Seth Compaoré** (Austin College) discussed zombies and possessed bodies in *Atlantics* as forms of resistance against neocolonialism.

#### Session 2: Material Decomposition

This session, chaired by **Laëtitia Nebot-Deneuve** (Dublin City University), focused on the physical manifestations of decay. **Emma Dove** (University of Victoria) analysed Edward Burtynsky's concrete ruin photography and its engagement with anthropogenic decay. **Rachel Macfarlane** (University of Warwick) questioned the preservation of heritage at risk, particularly examining derelict structures and the politics of managed decay. **Gavin Davies** (Independent Researcher) explored fungal horror in video games such as *The Last of Us*, *Resident Evil 7*, and *Elden Ring*, discussing fungi as symbols of both decay and horror.

#### Keynote 1: Sarah Lambie – “A Queer Society is a Ruined Society”

In this provocative address, **Sarah Lambie** (Birkbeck, University of London) examined how carceral logics frame contemporary anti-gender culture wars, analysing the rhetoric of moral and political ruin. Lambie called for alternative, anti-carceral solidarities that challenge mainstream narratives of decay.

#### Session 3: Urban Decay and Resistance

Chaired by **Nick Lawrence** (University of Warwick), this session examined how cities navigate decay. **Aidan Diable** (University of Warwick) argued that urban decay is not merely a byproduct but an integral aspect of urban systems. **David Houston Jones** (University of Exeter) analysed climate change aesthetics in Julian Charrière's *Future Fossil Spaces* and John Gerrard's *Bone Work*. **Pascal Gin** (Carleton University) explored nuclear landscapes in literary reportage, while **Nan Song** (Lancaster University) discussed decay as energy transformation in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy.

#### Session 4: Narrating the Abject

Chaired by **Rossana Galimi** (University of Milan/University of Warwick), this session explored narratives of bodily and textual decay. **Martina Saric** (University of Glasgow) analysed sculptural metaphors in Thomas Hardy's *The Well-Beloved*. **Emma Pavey** (University of Roehampton) examined (peri)menopause narratives through the lens of abjection and decay.

**Hye Hyon Kim** (Illinois State University) discussed the transformation of women's bodies in *Fantomina*, and **Samia Majid** (University of Northampton) examined the fragmented, decaying body in *Frankenstein in Baghdad* as a critique of war violence.

#### **Keynote 2: Corinna Wagner – *Photographing Things in Ruins***

**Corinna Wagner** (University of Exeter) explored the ethics and aesthetics of ruin photography, questioning how decay is visually documented and interpreted. She emphasized that ruins serve as archives of history and markers of uncertain futures.

#### **Session 5: New and Old Technologies**

Chaired by **Polina Zelmanova** (University of Warwick), this session examined technological decay. **Emma Crossey** and **Rachata Sasnanand** (King's College London) investigated the ontological implications of X-ray imagery. **Vladimir Rosas-Salazar** (Queen Mary University of London) discussed videotape deterioration as a metaphor for human impermanence. **Oriane Guiziou-Lamour** and **Jeremy Boggs** (both University of Virginia) explored link rot and digital ephemerality. **Christopher O'Neill** (Deakin University) analysed biometric decay in relation to child and corpse facial recognition.

#### **Session 6: Documenting Death**

Chaired by **Lucy Rebecca Cannon Mooring** (University of Warwick), this session addressed the intersection of decay and mortality. **Meng Yi** (University of Cologne) examined bodily harm in Chinese performance art as resistance. **Velebita Koričančić** (Anahuac Mexico University) analysed skull motifs in Mexico City's graffiti as critiques of socio-political decay. **Nikita Pinto** (St Joseph's University) explored transhuman bioethics and bodily obsolescence in *Pantheon*. **Benoît Loiseau** (New York University) discussed the spectacle of bodily decline in Hervé Guibert's *La Pudeur ou l'Impudeur*.

#### **Closing Remarks**

The conference concluded with reflections on the interplay between decay and transformation. The organisers expressed their gratitude to the contributors and attendees, emphasizing the significance of interdisciplinary dialogues on ruin, resistance, and regeneration. Discussions throughout the day highlighted how decay serves as both a challenge and a possibility—a moment of crisis and a site for potential renewal.

The **Irresistible Decay** conference underscored the necessity of rethinking decay not just as an endpoint but as a dynamic process. The organisers are currently exploring the possibility of publishing a collection of selected papers to further extend the insights generated at this event.

#### **After Postcolonialism: Global Theory, Local Transformations**

Date: 26 March 2025

Venue: University of Warwick

Report by Lu Feng (English) & Chun-Wai (Wayne) Kwong (English)



#### **Overview**

The one-day conference 'After Postcolonialism: Global Theory, Local Transformations' was held on Wednesday, 26 March, 2025, at the Wolfson Research Exchange, University of Warwick. The event successfully created a space for



interdisciplinary dialogue on reconceptualizing postcolonial studies, with a turnout of more than twenty people from not only other UK universities but also from countries such as Singapore and Thailand. By bringing together diverse, global voices across disciplines, the conference examined the multifaceted aftermath of postcolonial studies over recent decades. It critically assessed the impact of postcolonial studies on our understanding of different postcolonial realities and explored how current scholarship might contribute to forging alternative worlds for the future.

### **Conference Framework, Vision and Structure**

Structured as a full-day event, the conference began with an introduction by Wayne Kwong, followed by a keynote address by Professor Lindiwe Dovey that set the intellectual foundation for the day's discussions.

Throughout the day's sessions, organised as parallel panels across three time slots, participants interrogated whose voices have been marginalized within canonical postcolonial contexts. The panels paid particular attention to the multiple manifestations of imperialistic oppressions within regions where Western power represents only one force among many, often clashing or collaborating with other imperial entities. This focus was evident in papers like Mridula Sharma's 'Settler Colonialism after Postcolonialism: Kashmir, Palestine, and Futurity' and Ding-Liang Chen's 'Beyond Empire and Revolution: Decolonial Ecologies of Postwar Vietnam.'

The second keynote address by Professor Ayesha Siddiqi in the afternoon supplied the conference with first-hand experience of post-disaster community (re)building. The conference culminated in the roundtable, titled 'Double Vision: A Dialogue on Creative Practice and Academic Research,' which brought together Professor Dovey with practitioners Natalie Lo Lai Lai and Alejandro Casales N., with Wayne Kwong moderating. This structure embodied the conference's commitment to bridging theory and practice, bringing together varied perspectives to explore what comes *after* postcolonialism.

The conference welcomed exploration of broader global historical landscapes, including pre-Westphalian interstate systems where the West played no role, revealing different international systems and orders as articulated in recent scholarship. This vision was reinforced through dedicated Q&A sessions after each panel and facilitated networking during coffee breaks and lunch, allowing participants to deepen connections and continue conversations begun in formal sessions.

### **Thematic Focus Areas**

#### **Panel 1A: Decolonial Ecologies: Grassroots Resistance and Agricultural Futures**

Chaired by Ambika Raja, this panel examined grassroots resistance and environmental consciousness across postcolonial landscapes with a specific focus on agricultural futures. Lo Lai Lai Natalie presented on 'From Fields to Futures: Rethinking Farming Heritage and Urbanization in New Territories,' exploring the perspective of artist-farmers in Hong Kong over the past decade. Irene Martí Gil discussed 'Reclamation, Resilience, and Resistance: Safeguarding Guatemala Cultural and Natural Landscapes,' while Cleo Jay analysed 'Redesigning Agricultural Policies in Postcolonial North Africa: Between Grassroots Movements and the Agribusiness Empire.' Together, these presentations highlighted the interconnections between environmental justice and decolonisation, pointing to ways that exploitative resource extraction continues colonial patterns of domination in new forms.

#### **Panel 1B: Empire's Reflections: Power, Subjectivity, and Anti-colonial Imagination**

Chaired by Lu Feng, this panel examined how colonial legacies continue to shape contemporary cultural expression and anti-colonial imagination. Theodor Stefanatos presented 'The Inner Self as an Imperial Frontier: Orthodox Mysticism and Modern Psychiatry in the British Ionian Islands Protectorate 1809-1864,' exploring imperialism's impact on subjectivity. Mridula Sharma's paper on 'Settler Colonialism after Postcolonialism: Kashmir, Palestine, and Futurity' drew important connections between ongoing settler colonial projects.

#### **Panel 2B: Art-Making as Creative Resistance**

Chaired by Wayne Kwong, this panel showcased various creative practices as forms of decolonial resistance. Saayan Chattopadhyay presented 'Decolonial aestheSis of Ramkinkar Baij: Environmental consciousness, the rhetoric of



modernity and sculptural practices,’ exploring the intersection of art and ecological awareness. Alejandro Casales N. discussed ‘Artistic creation in dehumanized environments,’ addressing a topic he noted as being under-reviewed in contemporary art. Francesca Maria Villani’s ‘Hearing Beyond Exclusion: Power, Identity, and Resistance in Black Classical composers’ demonstrated how classical music creates spaces for articulating experiences that academic discourse often struggles to capture. Collectively, these presentations illustrated how aesthetic practices can embody theoretical concepts while reaching audiences beyond academic contexts.

### **Panel 2A: Mobile Bodies, Contested Spaces: Identity Reformation in Global Asia**

Chaired by Nadia Hajal-Beckleh, this panel addressed how bodies navigate contested spaces, migration, and surveillance in Global Asia. Pancharle Thongpanich presented ‘Creative Chiang Saen Project: Decolonising and Reconstructing Chiang Saen Identity through Decoding Local Narratives and Cultural Spaces,’ focusing on place-based identity reformation in the context of local communities in the borderland of northern Thailand. Wenfu Zhang’s ‘Chinese Übermensch: Mobility Capital and the Entrepreneurial Experiences of Young Privileged Chinese Migrants’ examined the complexities of migration and privilege among British Chinese immigrants. Hasina Wahida’s ‘Vulnerable Bodies and the Theft of Identities: Negotiating the concept of Home in perspective of the Rohingya Crisis in an Age of Surveillance’ highlighted how bodily experience serves as both a site of oppression and resistance in the contested spaces in Myanmar, with particular attention to borders, movement restrictions, and technologies of control.

### **Panel 3B: Silenced Voices, Living Worlds: Gender Politics in Postcolonial Literature**

Chaired by Lu Feng, this panel centred silenced voices in postcolonial literature and social contexts. Hesna laboudi presented ‘Enunciating the Environment in the Postcolonial Narrative: An Earth-Centred Approach to Ibrahim Al Koni’s *The Bleeding of the Stone*,’ integrating ecological and gender perspectives. Pelin Gölcük’s ‘Writing Back through Reincarnation: Revocalization of the Muted Female Voice in Buchi Emechata’s *The Joys of Motherhood*’ explored feminist perspectives on decolonisation that address the double marginalisation experienced by women in colonised regions. Manal Shalaby discussed ‘Bees and Bread: On the Relational Dynamics of Contemporary Middle Eastern Masculinity,’ while Shankara Angadi gave a presentation on his ongoing PhD project in history, entitled ‘The girl’s life was an unhappy one, shunned by family and society: how Mary Munro escaped the historian’s curse.’ Together, these presentations emphasised the importance of intersectional approaches that recognize how gender, class, race, and other factors interact within postcolonial power structures.

### **Panel 3A: Cold War Ecologies in Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe**

Chaired by Wayne Kwong, this panel examined the environmental and social impacts of Cold War politics in Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe. Augustine Chay presented ‘The Cold War in the Deep Jungle: Locating Malay(sia)’s Environmental Fracture in its Trajectory of Anti-communist Decolonisation,’ revealing how Cold War interventions created enduring ecological damage in Southeast Asia. Inna Häkkinen’s ‘Fictionalizing Nuclear Legacy of Postcolonial Lithuania: Ursula Wong’s *Amber Widow*’ explored the environmental consequences of nuclear development in Eastern Europe. Ding-Liang Chen’s ‘Beyond Empire and Revolution: Decolonial Ecologies of Postwar Vietnam’ highlighted often-overlooked connections between Cold War competition and colonial continuities, demonstrating how superpower rivalries often reinforced rather than dismantled colonial structures.

### **Roundtable: Double Vision: A Dialogue on Creative Practice and Academic Research**

The culminating roundtable brought together Professor Lindiwe Dovey, Natalie Lo Lai Lai, and Alejandro Casales N., with Wayne Kwong serving as moderator. This session explicitly addressed the relationship between theory and practice, bringing together academic researchers and creative practitioners to explore productive tensions and collaborations between scholarly work and applied approaches. Drawing from the perspectives of a scholar (Dovey), an artist-farmer (Lo), and an artist (Casales), the roundtable demonstrated the importance of academic accountability to affected communities and explored methodologies that bridge disciplinary boundaries. This conversation exemplified the conference’s commitment to bringing together diverse voices and fostering dialogue across traditional divides.

## Keynote Addresses

The conference featured two distinguished keynote speakers who provided valuable framing for the day's discussions. Professor Lindiwe Dovey, who works in film and screen studies at the University of London, SOAS, delivered the morning keynote, in which she generously shared her personal experience with regards to the discourse and practice of decolonisation. Her presentation set the intellectual tone for the day's explorations. In the afternoon, Professor Ayesha Siddiqi's address further deepened the conversations regarding the interplay between theory and practice. As a human geographer who currently works at the University of Cambridge, Professor Siddiqi shared her first-hand experience on post-disaster community (re)building in multiple so-called Third-World countries. Both speakers brought significant expertise and perspective to the theme of 'After Postcolonialism,' helping to bridge the various strands of discussion that emerged throughout the parallel panels.

## Conclusion and Future Directions

The 'After Postcolonialism: Global Theory, Local Transformations' conference successfully established that much-needed discussions in postcolonial studies should be place-focused, future-oriented, and action-driven. Throughout the day's proceedings, participants cultivated visions of plurality, sustainability, and dignity for the epoch after postcolonialism. The interdisciplinary nature of the gathering generated rich dialogues across traditional boundaries, suggesting promising directions for future research and collaboration.

The conference demonstrated that moving beyond postcolonialism does not mean abandoning its critical insights but rather expanding and transforming them to address contemporary challenges. By centring marginalised voices and emphasising practical action alongside theoretical innovation, the event modelled an approach to academic discourse that itself embodies decolonial principles. The conference structure—with its parallel panels focused on ecologies, power dynamics, creative resistance, embodied experiences, gender politics, and Cold War legacies—reflected the multifaceted nature of postcolonial studies while pointing toward new horizons of inquiry.

The closing roundtable, bringing together academic and creative practitioners, exemplified the conference's commitment to bridging theory and practice. The organisers of this event, namely Lu Feng and Wayne Kwong, believe that the conversations begun during this one-day gathering laid groundwork for ongoing networks and collaborations that will continue to shape the field in the years to come.

## Uses and Abuses of the Decolonial

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Venue: University of Warwick

Report by Julián Harruch-Morales (SMLC)

This in-person conference provided a forum to critically engage with the concept of the decolonial, examining both its potential to address contemporary social, political, and cultural challenges, and the ways in which it has been misused, trivialised, or appropriated in reactionary forms across public discourse, policy, cultural practices, and theory. Thirty delegates registered, though actual attendance was slightly higher.



The keynote address, titled "*Critiques of the Decolonial: Between Polemics and Scholarly Debate*", was delivered by Professor David Lehmann. In addition, the conference featured eight papers presented by nine speakers (two papers were co-authored and one co-presented), representing institutions from across the UK and Europe, including speakers from Vrije Universiteit Brussels and the Autonomous University of Barcelona. The papers covered diverse disciplines, including political science and theory, entrepreneurship, international relations, museum studies and cultural heritage, digital art and visual anthropology, literary studies, and pedagogy.

These papers were organized into three sessions:

- Interrogating Decolonial Theory, chaired by the conference organiser Julián Harruch

- Confronting Imperial Legacies, chaired by SMLC PhD student Malvika Nair
- Decolonial Pedagogies and Research Methodologies, chaired by Dr Esteban Catalán, STP at the SMLC

Nine of the ten speakers selected through the call for papers were women, and all speakers came from different national backgrounds.

Throughout the day, the conference showcased a diversity of perspectives on decolonial thought. It successfully fostered a dynamic of respectful yet rigorous debate, with speakers holding differing—and at times opposing—views on the strengths and limitations of decolonial discourse. While all agreed on the importance of confronting ethnocentrism and enduring colonial legacies, some warned of the ethnonationalist appropriation of decolonial rhetoric and critiqued its susceptibility to simplistic civilisational binaries between "the West" and other sociopolitical formations.

Although no general conclusion was reached, the discussions underscored a shared recognition of the need to critically examine all theoretical frameworks—regardless of the political appeal of their stated objectives. The keynote address was key in emphasising that researchers' political commitments, while often well-intentioned, can cloud scholarly judgment and thus require rigorous epistemological scrutiny.

The event ran smoothly with no logistical issues. One speaker cancelled at the last minute, but this had no negative impact. In fact, it allowed for greater flexibility in the schedule, especially for the keynote address, which ran slightly longer than planned. Feedback from both speakers and attendees was encouragingly positive. I believe the conference laid the groundwork for continued dialogue among participants and may evolve into a future edited volume. I intend to approach several of the speakers and work with them on a proposal for Routledge's Warwick Series in the Humanities in the coming months.

I would like to thank the Humanities Research Centre for its generous sponsorship and support in making this event possible.

## Other Conferences

### In Search of Lost Futures: Visual Narrative of Economic Migration

The Humanities Research Centre supported the conference "In Search of Lost Futures. Visual Narrative of Economic Migration" that was held at the University of Warwick on the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2024. The event was co-organised by Jacopo Francesco Mascoli (PhD Candidate, School of Modern Languages and Cultures) and Silvia Vari (PhD Candidate, School of Modern Languages and Cultures) and funded by the Humanities Research Centre, the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, the Journal of European Studies and the British Association for Film, Television and Screen Studies. The two-day event drew delegates from across the UK, Canada, India, Morocco, South Africa and the rest of Europe, with contributions from colleagues at all career stages. Moreover, the two-day event consisted of two keynote lectures, given by Dr Kay Dickinson (University of Glasgow) and Dr Barbara Spadaro (University of Liverpool), and a series of four panels that bridged a range of visual narratives (films, comics, pictures, social media) and a range of issues related to the migration in the Mediterranean and beyond (borders, violence, labour, documents).

On Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September at 10.00 (Zeeman Building, MS.05), the conference began with a first panel entitled "Reframing the Cinematic Gaze in European Borderlands" (chaired by Molly Harrabin, University of Warwick), with two speakers Bengisu Kepsutlu (University of Leeds) and Dr Matthias Kispert (University of Westminster). Bengisu's paper, entitled "The Perfect Refugee Doesn't Exit...": Migrant Girlhood, Neoliberal Feminism and Sports Labour in Sally El Hosaini's *The Swimmers* (2022)", problematised the relationship between girls' empowerment and migration through a film that tells stories of refugee swimmers in Europe. Kispert's paper, entitled "Europe beyond itself: colonial temporalities, border struggles and media representation in *No More Beyond*", included a discussion on European borders and African migration.

This first panel was followed by Dr Kay's Dickinson keynote lecture "The Dirty Work of Decolonization: Refugee-Migrant Labour for the Film Sector". The keynote presented interesting and innovative reflections on the labour status of migrant refugee and migrant workers in the film industry. At 1.30 pm, after a lunch break, the second conference panel entitled "Alternative (hi)Stories of Migration in Sea and Oceanic Crossings" (chaired by Dr Vladimir Rosas-Salazar, University of Warwick) presented a different conceptual perspective focused on the aquatic dimension of migration. Fatma Ozen's (York University, Canada) paper "Alternative Voices of Migration: Deconstructing Representations in Diverse Visual Narratives" and Zach Meltzer's (University of Cape Town) "Water, Wounds, and Wraiths: Rethinking Trauma and Migration in Transnational African Cinema" shared insights on the relationship between migration and its more dynamic and fluid dimension, with a particular interest in the Africa context.

The first day ended with the panel "Cinematic Portrayals of Displacement and Transformation in the Middle East" (chaired by Raghad Melfi, University of Warwick). Dr Oguzhan Dursun (George Mason University) opened the session with a presentation entitled "Exploring Societal Change through Migrant Portrayals in Late 20th Century Turkish Cinema". Finally, Hera Lorandos (King's College, London) with a paper entitled "Unveiling the Political Economy of Migration in Jumana Manna's *Wild Relatives* (2018): A Border Abolitionist and Decolonial Perspective", offered a decolonial approach on some film festivals such as the London Migration Film Festival.

On Friday 20 September at 9.30 a.m, the conference continued with the second keynote speaker Dr Barbara Spadaro (University of Liverpool). Her talk, entitled "Transnational Comics: Breaking the Frame of Memory" opened the second day fully dedicated to comics studies and digital narratives. The lecture offered interesting inputs on the relationship between comics, memory and migration experiences. After a coffee break, the conference ended with a final panel "Comics, Picturebooks, and Digital Resistance in Mediterranean Migration" (chaired by Dr James Taylor, University of Warwick), which addressed issues related to the migration in the Mediterranean Sea with a focus on comics and digital narratives. The panel started with Yu Feng (Shanghai Normal University/University of Arts London), whose paper "Crossing the Mediterranean: Balancing Reality and Comfort through Metaphors in Migration Graphic Novels and Picturebooks" further elaborated on some aspects of the previous keynote lecture. Similarly, Dr Mokshda Manchanda (BITS Law School, India), with the paper "Archiving the Crisis of Displacement: Comics and Migration" offered a fruitful discussion on the role that comics play in contemporary crises of displacements. Then, Dr Federica Mazzara (University of Westminster), with the paper "Mocking the Border: Strategies of Visual Resistance in the Mediterranean" brilliantly gave us interesting inputs to elaborate strategies of visual resistance to the hegemonic narratives of migration. Finally, Dr Driss Faddouli's (Chouaib Doukkali University) paper 'Investigating Migratory Aesthetics of Crossing the Sea in Moroccan Networked Visual Narratives: Perspectives on Undocumented Migrants' showed how tropes of crossings have influenced the migratory imaginary in different media narratives in Morocco.

The event successfully achieved its aims of bringing together a diverse (both in terms of career level and academic background) community of scholars on the Warwick campus and showcasing cutting-edge research in migration, comics and film studies. The conference hosted 12 delegates plus 10 attendants (both online and on campus). Plans for publication were also made. A special issue on the *Journal of European Studies* will be published in December 2025 with a selection of 7 papers from the conference. The issue will be co-edited by the two conference's organisers.

Jacopo Francesco Mascoli (PGR, SMLC) and Silvia Vari (PGR, SMLC)

### **Speaking with the Dead: Italy and the Legacy of the Past in the Revolving Century (1750-1850)**

The conference Speaking with the Dead: Italy and the Legacy of the Past in the Revolving Century (1750-1850), held at the University of Warwick on September 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> 2024, brought together scholars to explore how Italian literature and culture engaged with the legacy of the past, particularly through themes of death and memory. The discussions centred on the ways in which Italy's cultural and literary heritage from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries dealt with the metaphorical and literal dead, highlighting the enduring influence of the past on modern identities.

## Day 1 - September 26<sup>th</sup>

The first day opened with a paper by Gennaro Ambrosino (Warwick), titled *In Dialogue with Tradition: Dante, Pliny and the Reconstruction of a Buried Past in the Vesuvian Literature during the Revolving Century*. Ambrosino explored how authors of the time invoked figures like Dante and Pliny in their attempts to reconstruct the buried past of cities such as Pompeii and Herculaneum. His analysis showed how these literary engagements with Italy's ancient past, both literally and metaphorically, helped shape contemporary cultural identity, as writers drew on this heritage to navigate their own turbulent historical context.

Next, Morena Corradi (CUNY) presented *Dead who are not really Dead: a Rereading of the Classicist/Romantic Debate*. Corradi reconsidered the traditional opposition between Classicism and Romanticism, revealing the continued presence of Classical ideas in the Romantic era. Through an analysis of the short-lived periodical *Il Conciliatore*, she demonstrated how, even as Romanticism sought to break away from the past, it was still haunted by it. The metaphors of awakening and revival during the *Risorgimento*, for instance, showed how Italy's past was continually being reinterpreted in the service of modern political and cultural goals.

After a coffee break, Sabrina Ferri presented her paper *Death Becomes Her: Representation, Symbolism, and Function of the Dead Woman*. Ferri explored representations of dead women in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Italian literature, situating her analysis within Italy's specific cultural context. She examined elegiac texts in which male authors engaged in both figurative and literal dialogues with dead female figures. Her analysis extended to the "anatomical Venus", wax models of women used for anatomical study, showing how these representations fetishized and commodified the female corpse. Authors such as Ugo Foscolo and Giacomo Leopardi were key to Ferri's exploration of how male subjectivity was constructed through mourning and death.

In the afternoon session, Arianna De Gasperis (La Sapienza, Rome) presented "*Il violino spezzato*": *Soul, Body, and (Im)Mortality in Carlo Bini's Writings*, focusing on Carlo Bini's exploration of death and immortality. Through an analysis of texts like *Manoscritto d'un prigioniero* and *Un sogno*, De Gasperis showed how Bini engaged with the dead through altered states of consciousness, dreams, and mystical prayer. She also addressed Bini's materialist distinction between body and soul, linking it to broader discussions on morality and the political implications of the soul's immortality in the context of nation-building.

Enrica Leydi (Warwick) presented a paper on Monti, *I poeti dei primi secoli della lingua italiana* (1824), and the "*Vocabolario dei Morti*". Leydi examined how Vincenzo Monti used Dante's literary legacy as a symbol of national identity, transforming him from a mere historical figure into a living, influential presence. Leydi argued that Monti's critical dialogue *I poeti dei primi secoli* dramatized his broader project of linguistic and literary reform, reviving Dante to challenge purist approaches to Italian language and culture.

The final individual paper of the day, Martina Piperno (La Sapienza, Rome), presented "*E chiamavate barbare le altre genti*": *Gender-based Violence and the Spectre of Genocide in Alessandro Verri's Le notti romane* (1804). Piperno analysed Verri's *Le notti romane*, which portrays dialogues between the shades of ancient Romans and a modern narrator. She focused on the representation of gender-based violence in the text, showing how Verri gave voice to female victims of Roman brutality, such as Flordia and Lucrezia, as symbols of the broader violence that marked Roman history. Piperno further discussed Verri's engagement with the theme of genocide, particularly in relation to the Roman subjugation of the Etruscans, situating the work within the wider context of anti-Roman sentiment in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Italy.

The day concluded with a conversation titled *The Haunting Canon: Dante, the Renaissance, and Other Revenants* between Fabio Camilletti and Alessandro Giammei, who discussed how figures from Italy's literary past continued to "haunt" modern Italian literature and culture. This dialogue encapsulated the conference's focus on how the dead and the past remained active presences in shaping contemporary thought.



Day 2 - September 27<sup>th</sup>

The second day of the conference began with Alessandro Giammei (Yale), who presented *Philology Fiction (Phi-Fi): Speculative Animal Cultures in Leopardi's Paralipomeni and Casti's Animali Parlanti* and explored how Giovan Battista Casti and Giacomo Leopardi used speculative fiction to imagine pre-human animal societies. Giammei argued that their zoepic poems, *Gli animali parlanti* and *Paralipomeni della Batracomiomachia*, challenged humanist traditions from within, using the genre of epic verse to speculate on distant, pre-human histories and create a "philology fiction" that imagined the textual transmission of these fictional animal cultures.

The conference closed with Fabio Camilletti's paper *Foscolo, Leopardi, Manzoni, and the Past as Phantasmagoria*, which analysed how key Italian authors used the past as a kind of "phantasmagoria", invoking tombs, manuscripts, and palimpsests as sites where the voices of the dead could still resonate. Camilletti's discussion centred on how figures like Foscolo, Leopardi, and Manzoni grappled with the material traces of history, attempting to reactivate the past through their literary works.

The two-day conference concluded with a roundtable discussion, bringing together the various themes of death, memory, and the legacy of the past in Italian culture. The presentations demonstrated how Italy's literary and cultural history from 1750 to 1850 was continuously revisited, interpreted, and transformed, showing the lasting impact of the dead on the living and the evolving role of the past in shaping Italy's future. In addition to the conference's intellectual richness, scholars from institutions such as La Sapienza University, Yale University, and CUNY offered a unique opportunity to foster dialogue on potential future collaborations. The convergence of perspectives from these leading academic institutions not only deepened the discussions around the central themes but also opened the door for new projects and research initiatives stemming from the conversations and ideas generated during the conference. Plans for cross-institutional partnerships, joint research efforts, and further scholarly exchanges were discussed, promising to extend the impact of the event well beyond its conclusion.

Enrica Leydi (PGR, SMLC)

### **The Radical Traditions:**

#### **The Role of Contemporary Arab Women in Revolutionising Arab Patriarchal Society**

The Radical Traditions: The Role of Contemporary Arab Women in Revolutionising Arab Patriarchal Society interdisciplinary international conference held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2024, was a basis for an edited collection to be published in the Warwick Humanities Series with Routledge. It explored literary, visual, artistic, political, social, online, translational, and Sufi responses of contemporary Arab women to multiple forms of patriarchy and oppression within Arab societies. It examined how forms of violence and discrimination intersect and reinforce each other. It brought together scholars, writers, artists, filmmakers, translators, and activists who reflected upon, analysed, and celebrated the diverse works of contemporary Arab women revolutionaries, who have played immense roles in challenging prevailing patriarchal notions of gender, sexuality, identity, colonisation, war, translation, and Sufism from the 1970s onwards. By offering nuanced, culturally grounded insights into the radical traditions and feminist thought of contemporary Arab women from multiple angles, this interdisciplinary event made a valuable contribution to expanding understandings, challenging stereotypes, and inspiring meaningful dialogue and social change in Arab society and beyond.

The conference extended from 10 Am to 6 pm with 66 attendees both online and in person. Raad Khair opened the conference and gave an overview about the aims of the conference and the edited collection and told the audience about the schedule of the conference. There were two keynote speakers:

Opening Keynote Speaker Dr Ebtihal Mahadeen, Edinburgh University

Ending Keynote Speaker Prof. Rebecca Ruth Gould, SOAS, University of London

Dr Mahadeen's speech was about Arab Feminist Cyber Activism: Theorising Indigenous Knowledge Production and Decolonising Feminism, while the title of Prof. Gould's speech was A Woman's Revolution: Palestinian Female Filmmakers and the Cinema of Liberation.

There were four main panels as the detailed schedule below shows:

### **Schedule**

10-10.30 am Arriving, coffee, and tea

10.30-10.45 am Opening: Raad Khair Allah, University of Warwick

10.45-11.30 pm Opening keynote speaker: Dr Ebtihal Mahadeen, Edinburgh University

### **Panels:**

11.30-1.00 pm. **Challenging Norms of War, Colonialism, and Orientalist Stereotypes**

**Panel Lead: Prof. Nicola Pratt, University of Warwick.**

### **Panellists:**

- Alessandro Columbu, University of Westminster

**Ghada al-Samman's *Other* Tetralogy: Abortion and Exile as Self-Criticism after the Defeat**

- Angela Kahil, Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK)

**Transforming Patriarchy: The Role of Contemporary Arab Women in Lebanon's Post-Colonial Struggles and Civil War**

- Caterina Maggi, Università degli Studi di Genova

**The Women Republic, How a War Can Change Social Balance in the Desert: the Saharawi Case**

- Nadia Hajal – Backleh, University of Warwick

**The Socialism of the Anti-Colonial Feminist Narrations of Sahar Khalifeh: The Pre-Oslo Novels**

- Erin Brady, King's College London

**We Will Not Be Another Algeria: Pushing for an Understanding of the Multifaceted Nature of Gender in Times of Conflict**

1.00-2.00 pm Lunch

2.00- 2.45 pm **Resistance through Memories and Archives**

**Panel Lead: Dr Elena Violaris, Oxford University**

### **Panellists:**

- Rawan Al-Thunayan, Durham University

**Radical Resistance in Badriah Albeshr's novels *Hend and the Soldiers* (2005) and *Thursday's Visitors* (2016)**

- Mahasen Nasser-Eldin, De Montfort University

**Writing Displaced Historical Narratives of Palestinian Women pre-Nakba Palestine through Filmic Fabulation**

2.45- 3.30 pm. **Reconstructing Identity in Diaspora**

**Panel Lead: Nadia Hajal – Backleh, University of Warwick**

### **Panellists:**

**The Socialism of the Anti-Colonial Feminist Narrations of Sahar Khalifeh: The Pre-Oslo Novels**

- Mohammed Baker Mohammed Al-Abbas, University of Jordan

**Identifying Arab Women from the Less-Human to the Post-Feminist: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis in Art and Creative Media**

- Elena Violaris, Oxford University

**Performing Identity in Isabella Hammad's *Enter Ghost* (2023)**

3.30-3.45 pm. Coffee and tea break

3.45- 5.00 pm. **The Fight for Liberation and Human Rights**

**Panel Lead: Dr Alessandro Columbu, University of Westminster**

### **Panellists:**

- Areej Abuqudairi, King's College London

**Post- Arab Spring Feminist Activism: A Shift in the Paradigm**

- Ivana Cosmano, University of Leeds

**Co-opting Meanings of Gendered Expectations: How Young Jordanian Women Disrupt the Country's Gendered Status Quo from Within**

- Ibrahim Alfraih, King Saud University



## **Challenging Gender Norms: Fluid Identities in Rajaa Alem's *Khatam* (2007) and Maram Makawi's *Qab Qawsayn* (2014)**

- Jo Angouri, University of Warwick and Zeena Faulk, Oregon State University

## **A New Reading of Women's Activism in Iraq's October 2019 Uprising: A Discourse Analysis of Baghdad's Street Murals**

5.00-5.45 pm. Ending Keynote Speaker Prof. Rebecca Ruth Gould, SOAS, University of London

### **Outcomes**

*Radical Traditions: Contemporary Arab Women Revolutionaries* is a direct outcome of the conference. The main distinctive aim of this edited collection is to shine a light on perspectives, narratives, and creative expressions that have historically been marginalised or overshadowed by not only patriarchal structures, but also by dominant Western cultural discourses. This edited collection helps to challenge and complicate reductive portrayals of Arab women by exploring the nuanced, multifaceted, and often subversive ways that contemporary Arab women use to assert their agency and identity through creative mediums. The volume explores diverse manifestations of Arab feminist praxis, shaped by the unique histories and struggles of the region. This exploration falls under six major themes: The first theme includes war, colonialism, and orientalism. The second one revolves around memories and archives. Then it touches upon feminist transmissions through online activism and translation. Liberation and human rights will be the fourth theme in this collection, while identity in diaspora will be the fifth theme. Finally, the collection will examine the theme of reshaping social and gender Norms. The contributions cover a wide array of geographical locations and temporal periods, beginning with the late 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present in the Levant, Saudi Arabia, and Arab Maghreb. The focus on these interdisciplinary themes and methodologies therefore allows the collection to make a substantial contribution through introducing new perspectives on feminism, gender, sexuality, translation, Sufism, and post-colonial and cultural studies.

My objectives were met especially after I got very good feedback about the conference and the project from experts such as Prof. Nicola Pratt, who said that it is one of the most important conferences she has attended in the last few years.

Dr Ebtihal Mahadeen (Edinburgh University) said: "I wanted to drop you a quick line to say it was really great meeting you all (in person or virtually) over the weekend and I'd love to stay in touch. Special thanks of course to Raad for organising and bringing us together and to all who supported this effort. It's been wonderful!"

Dr Elena Violaris (Oxford University) said: "Thank you Raad for organising such a stimulating event! I really enjoyed exchanging ideas and meeting everyone"

Nadia Backleh (PGR at ECLS, University of Warwick) said "Yesterday was really special. Thanks, Raad and thanks to you all. The wide range of topics presented and the discussions, and on top of that the lovely group dynamic and the friendship we made. Thank you all."

I would like to thank the HRC for such a great help and support.

Raad Khair Allah (PGR, ECLS)

### **The Cultural Legacies of Corruption, 1500-today**

27th/28th March 2025 (Warwick in Venice)

The conference was a very interesting exploration of the cultural legacies of corrupt activity, from the early modern to the modern era. The conference addressed the material, literary and visual culture associated with 'corruption' (broadly conceived). Relatively little attention has been paid to these dimensions of corrupt practices: to the actual gifts given as bribes, to the various material, artistic and cultural forms of public displays of corrupt wealth, and to the literary and visual representations of corruption. Nor has there been much debate about how to curate material bought or created with 'corrupt' money and how explain it to modern audiences. The conference, jointly organised with an early career fellow at Barcelona, brought together a wide range of scholars to answer such questions as

- To what extent did a material culture of corruption (broadly conceived) exist?
- Were there objects, outputs, sites or spaces usually identified – or more prone to be identified– with corrupt practices?
- Did those change over time?
- Did gifting practices trigger unethical behaviour and what gifts counted as bribes?
- How were ‘corrupt’ objects and sites concealed and disguised as ‘legitimate’?
- What was the material legacy of corrupt money, in houses, estates, monuments etc?
- How should such objects and spaces be represented now to the public by heritage organisations?
- How was corruption represented in art and literature?
- What artistic genres and literary forms were deployed?
- What emotions or responses were aroused by them?
- And how did all these cultural objects, sites and legacies differ in imperial as opposed to domestic settings?
- What power did such cultural manifestations have on reform movements?

We had an intense period of discussion, spread over two days (27th-28th March), with six panels consisting of twenty speakers drawn from the UK, Spain, Canada, the USA, Malta, Turkey, Poland and Croatia. Many of the speakers were new to the conference organisers, so this was a valuable opportunity to extend our network. The papers ranged widely over time (from the sixteenth century to the present day), over space (Europe but also colonial dimensions in the Caribbean and India), and over topic (the panel sessions considered gifts and bribes, the media, literary culture, visual culture, records as artefacts and heritage).

In the first session we considered the objects given as gifts and bribes, from those that were part of electioneering in Spain, Britain and France, to those that became part of disputes between governors and intendants on the French Antilles, to the objects collected by Robert Clive from India and now on display at the National Trust-curated family home. We were particularly interested in the way in which colonial corruption generated objects that were controversial in their day but also continue to be so.

In the second session we discussed how reports of corruption, and visual satires of it, appeared in European newspapers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These were particularly important for reaching wide audiences and creating scandals that had political effects.

In the third session we examined a variety of ways in which corruption figured in, and often became the focus of, literary works. We heard about verse in seventeenth-century Ottoman Turkey which satirised corruption; Polish literary works that satirised the corruption involved in divorce proceedings; nineteenth-century British novels, particularly historical novels, that discussed standards in public life; and hard-hitting pamphlets produced in early 20th-century Spain that had a transnational impact. We were particularly interested in the different genres used to attack corruption.

In the fourth session, discussion revolved around the depiction of corruption in visual culture. We heard about early 20th-century films in Spain that evaded censorship and used historical frameworks in order to comment on the present; about the graphic satires associated with a royal mistress in early nineteenth-century Britain; and about the work of an East India Company official who oversaw the opium trade and used an artistic club as a way of creating a depoliticised cultural network.

The fifth session was interested in the forms in which corruption was represented. We heard about the records of a seventeenth-century government commission which attacked the way in which scribes produced ‘wasteful writing’, artificially extending transcripts, because that allowed them to over-charge their clients; and about how religious corruption occurred in both pre-Reformation printed indulgences and in modern-day TV evangelism.

The final session took heritage as its theme, exploring how philanthropic institutions and buildings were often sites of, or the outcomes of, corruption. We heard about the legacy of a late nineteenth-century Cuban philanthropist whose liberality

masked his activities from public scrutiny; about the disputed contracts for a Renaissance palace used by the Catalanian government; and about a variety of British early modern buildings and estates that are managed by heritage organisations that are extremely coy about explaining where the money came from to build and buy such extensive properties.

A number of themes recurred throughout our discussion: a) how a focus on the cultural legacies also helped to explore what contemporaries in any period and context understood corruption to mean b) the process of anti-corruption, which used a variety of genres and modes to attack corruption, particularly in visual and literary works c) the global nature of the problem of corruption, with cultural interactions between metropolises and colonies d) the recurrence of similar tropes and forms over time and across space – anti-corruption often showed striking similarities despite obvious differences of context e) the contested nature of corruption – the cultural legacies reflected the different ways of seeing what constituted corrupt behaviour f) the relationship between cultural legacies and scandal, and hence also the role of engaging the public through cultural modes and forms g) the way in which emotions often featured in cultural products, indicating how affect was part of their impact h) the way in which changing technologies, such as print, film and TV, shaped how corruption was critiqued i) that the ethics of power was something that was discussed through cultural production.

Some papers addressed our themes more fully than others, so the organisers have decided to hold publication plans for now. We think there is plenty of mileage in pursuing the three strands of literary, visual and material culture in relation to corruption but think we may need either a follow-on online conference to achieve a coherence across diverse papers or to invite other scholars, who were unable to attend but who expressed interest in the project, to add their perspectives. We are particularly interested in hearing more from those who work on colonial dimensions and in the heritage sector (we had invited a number of the latter but in the end none was able to attend, which meant that whilst we were critical of the sector's activities we were unable to hear an alternative perspective.

Mark Knights (History)

### **British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies Annual Conference** 26th/28th March 2025

The application for funding was in support of a bid to host the 2025 iteration of the annual conference of the British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies (BAFTSS). BAFTSS is the largest subject organisation for the discipline in the UK and the annual conference moves between institutions each year. Given the significance of Warwick to the academic study of film and television (Warwick launched the first degree in Film and Literature in 1979) it was natural that we should eventually host the conference.

The theme of the conference was Global Aesthetics, which reflected both the wider priorities of BAFTSS as an organisation and of the specificities of the hosting institution. Film and Television Studies at Warwick has a long history of placing the aesthetic appreciation of film and television at the forefront of its concerns. The partnership with the School of Modern Languages and Cultures and Culture and Media Policy Studies (like Film and Television Studies located within the School of Creative Arts, Performance and Visual Cultures) made it natural for there to be a strongly international outlook. Responses to the call for papers were strong and varied and attracted an international community of scholars and practitioners.

The conference took place over three days, from 26-28<sup>th</sup> March 2025, with over 260 speakers presenting across 74 panels (30 of which were hybrid) – see programme. The keynote speech – ‘Human, Humane, Nonhuman: An evolving realist trend in world cinema’ – was delivered by Lúcia Nagib a leading scholar on global cinema. Although the scope and scale of the conference makes it difficult to address every aspect, some sustained themes and discussion points are worthy of note.

There was an impressive range of presentations and panels on environmental media studies, including material addressing the ways such concerns are expressed in different geocultural contexts and from diverse angles including integrating advances from ecophilosophy to material media studies. The global scale of the cultural industries and modes

of mediamaking were also evident in a number of panels on genre-based screen media which drew attention to a range of topics from the political economy of the screen industries to the ways technological innovations are integrated in all aspects of the field. Such contributions testify to the thriving academic community attending BAFTSS and its inclusive and international reach.

Other panels engendered productive reflections on the destiny of national identities within a global aesthetics. Particular approaches included the role of national identities on transnational streaming services, the attachment to or detachment from national identities for auteur directors working in transnational co-production contexts; and papers about the cross-cultural import/export of genres and styles. Many panels acted as a useful reminder of how all identity categories also intersect with geo-cultural specificities across media. It was thus generative to consider how global aesthetics bear on concepts from stardom to sexuality, and even less obvious ideas such as authenticity (which came up in several panels and often acted as a bridge between them).

The wide range of themes was reflected by the diverse and impressive range of methodologies and approaches used by panellists throughout the conference. These were mobilised to re-examine and reframe industrial histories while also situating new technological developments (particularly emerging uses of AI) within these histories.

BAFTSS has always been an organisation that champions Post-graduate and Early-career researchers, and it was once again pleasing to see the large amount of PGR and ECRs presenting their research (around 60% of attendees). Often sharing panels with established academics, this provided plenty of opportunities for networking, something that was deliberately built into the schedule, with each panel incorporating ample time for questions and discussion, enabling many fruitful links between the papers (and the panels) to be explored.

Alongside the panel presentations the conference also hosted an exhibition – ‘The Transnational Aesthetics of Arab Stardom. Street Art and Digital Design’ – that showcased the transnational aesthetics of the Cairo-based artist Bahia Shehab. Through a series of three different installations, the exhibition explored the themes of identity, women’s rights and political revolution, and the ways in which art may be employed for the purposes of social change. This work sat comfortably alongside the work of Outstanding Achievement Award winner Azza El-Hassan, a Palestinian documentary maker, whose work was exhibited as part of a screening programme encompassing the work of all of the nominees for BAFTSS’s annual practice awards. The exhibition and screenings were also a real highlight for those needing a break from panels, with El-Hassan’s films especially being all the more resonant for being, sadly, all too timely.

The conference was undoubtedly a success. The wide range of papers and perspectives made for a vibrant atmosphere and the location of the conference in Oculus meant that there was plenty of space for conversation (and lunch!). The conference was expertly supported by the team from Warwick Conferences and by PGT, PGR and ECR colleagues from FTV, CMPS and SMLC who offered expert guidance, trouble-shooting and technical support.

This was arguably the largest BAFTSS conference to date, and whilst that may have some downsides – largely the sense that we weren’t all sharing precisely the same conference experience – it did demonstrate the vibrance of the discipline and the organisation, and we look forward to next year’s event in Bournemouth.

Richard Wallace (SCAPVC)

### **Emotions and Labour in the Early Modern World**

Tuesday 8th April 2025 (Keynote Speaker Prof Katie Barclay (Macquarie))

Over the last fifty years, the history of the emotions has developed into a productive and well-established field. Curiosity about how people felt in the past and the intersection between experiences, identities and emotions has generated a rich seam of scholarship across time and place. Meanwhile, histories of work have also flourished, with ever-expanding sub-fields from labour history and occupational structure to women’s work and enforced labour attracting considerable attention in recent years. But despite rich scholarship in both fields, studies of the two rarely intersect.

On 8 April 2025, Naomi Pullin (University of Warwick) and Charmian Mansell (University of Sheffield) organised a one-day workshop: 'Emotions and Labour in the Early Modern World', which set out to explore new methodologies and approaches to studying emotions in histories of early modern work. Generously supported by the Humanities Research Centre Conference Fund and Humanities Research Centre Visiting Speaker Fund, the Early Modern and Eighteenth-Century Centre and the Institute of Advanced Studies, the event was fully international, with keynote presentations and a series of events involving two leading scholars in this field: Professor Katie Barclay (University of Macquarie, Sydney) and Professor Sasha Turner (Johns Hopkins, Baltimore).

The event opened with a welcome from Naomi Pullin and Charmian Mansell, who set out some of the core questions and ideas underpinning this event: how can we use the history of emotions as a framework or category of analysis in the study of work? How can we access how people felt about work in the past? What methodologies can we use? From what sources can we unpick emotional labour as well as emotions *about* labour? And what does a focus on the emotional work connected to marginalised types of labouring identity contribute to histories of work and occupational identity more broadly? This set the agenda for the day, as each of the speakers responded to these prompts.

Panel 1 explored different emotional perspectives on the labour of travel. Eva Johanna Holmberg (University of Helsinki) examined how archaeological evidence might be used to access how labouring people in colonial Jamestown experienced both physical suffering and pain from starvation. Richard Ansell (Birkbeck, University of London) examined the labour of eighteenth-century servants through a study of their travel journals. In his talk, he questioned how far these travelling servants expressed their own views in their writings and how genuine emotional expression was mediated by a performance of loyalty to their masters.

Panel 2 moved from the labour of service to other forms of forced and unfree labour, in a colonial context. David Lambert (University of Warwick) examined the emotional labour of counter-insurgency in the revolutionary Caribbean through an assessment of the military governor John Moore. Sasha Turner (Johns Hopkins), provided a methodologically innovative approach to the topic of grief and grievance and ways of accessing and approaching enslaved people's emotions (and the emotions of their masters).

*Professor David Lambert: 'Against the Spirit and Enterprise of the Republic We Have No Chance': The Emotional Labour of Counter-Insurgency in the Revolutionary Caribbean'*

After lunch, Panel 3 considered another form of unpaid labour – the labour of care in early modern Britain. Jasmine Kilburn-Toppin (University of Cardiff) offered a paper on the emotions of surgeons on board ships, using their writings to understand how they navigated and negotiated a difficult working environment. Emma Marshall (a postdoctoral researcher at the University of York) delivered another important paper on the ways in which different forms of care were documented and discussed in the letters of gentry households, distinguishing between emotional labour and labour that produces emotions.





The final panel of the day considered the emotions attached to occupational identity. Robert Stearn (Birkbeck, University of London) offered an insightful paper on sincerity and deceit in master/servant relations through the concept of 'eye service', as discussed in handbooks, diaries and prose fiction of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Anna Pravdica (a PhD student in the History Department) and Katie Barclay (Macquarie University), offered interesting papers on labouring identity through an examination of labouring class poets and eighteenth-century bankers respectively.

The event concluded with a roundtable and concluding discussion on future directions that we might be able to extend this collaboration, especially as we will plan a follow-up event at the University of Sheffield in 2026. In particular, we questioned the ways in which a history of emotions might enhance/challenge older studies of pre-modern labour, and how this work challenges and expands prevailing definitions on the historical meaning of 'work'. Moreover, as the papers all collectively evidenced, there are important and fruitful ways in which scholars can show how emotions shaped constructions of labouring and occupational identity.



*Professor Katie Barclay: 'The Emotion of an Eighteenth-Century Banker'*

The event was well attended and fully interdisciplinary involving an audience of thirty early career researchers, PhD students, Taught MA students, and established staff from across the Faculty of Arts (especially History, English, School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Film & Television Studies), as well as some external participants.

The funding from the Humanities Research Centre enabled us to cover Katie Barclay's expenses from Australia and to invite a diverse range of speakers at the cutting edge of early modern emotions and labour history. Katie Barclay is a leading scholar in the field of emotions history, and we were privileged to have benefited not only from her paper at this workshop, but her engagement in a wider programme of events centred on teaching the history of emotions (on 6 April) and a masterclass with Professor Sasha Turner on researching emotions history (8 April), in conjunction with the Yesu Persaud Centre for Caribbean Studies.

The feedback received on the day of the workshop and subsequently has underscored how timely and stimulating these events were for a range of members of the academic community at Warwick, and beyond. Aside from developing new networks and conversations, these events have enhanced both the national and international profile of early modern and eighteenth-century studies at Warwick, and we hope will lead to further collaboration and an academic publication on this timely and important topic.

Naomi Pullin (History)

### **'Burning Cities' Critical Theory Network IV Venice Seminar with Keynote Speaker Prof Shaul Bassi (Ca' Foscari, Venice)**

The Critical Theory Seminar was held in Venice on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025 with the support of the Humanities Research Centre as well as the Dept. of English & Comparative Literary Studies and the respective departments at the Sorbonne and the Catholic University of Portugal in Lisbon.

This year's seminar was the first time that we resumed the activities of the Warwick Critical Theory Seminar in full after the pandemic. Last year we held a short one (Prof Tadié - Sorbonne) and I presented in collaboration with the Summer School of the Lisbon Consortium at the end of June in Lisbon. Before Covid we had held the seminar three times in Venice with success, and I am glad to report that this year's event was equally

successful and that all involved expressed a desire to continue the Seminar in Venice and to seek external funding for PhD bursaries.

The topic this year, keeping in line with previous seminars and the topics of the Lisbon Summer School in both 2024 and 2025 as well as the Architecture Biennale in Venice was 'Burning Cities: Culture, War, Excess'. The actual programme can be viewed here: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/research/criticaltheoryseminar/2025seminar>

There were 18 participants.

From Warwick: Prof. Paulo de Medeiros, Prof. Liz Barry, Dr Emily McGiffin, Dr Mae Losasso, Dr Nick Lawrence, Tingxuan Liu, Michael Morgan, Louisa Toxvaerd-Munch, and Charlotte Spear (9)

From Paris Sorbonne: Prof. Alexis Tadié, Dr Juliana Loupoukhine, Martina Balassonne, Louise Delumaeau, Valentine Lerouge (5)

From Universidade Católica, Lisbon: Dr Diana Gonçalves, Thales Reis Alecrim, Zohar Iancu (3)

From Ca' Foscari: Prof. Shaul Bassi

At the end of Thursday, we had a common dinner at a local restaurant which was an important means to continue discussions and for the PhD candidates to get to know each other a bit better. The dinner as well as all the logistics were most competently organised by Chiara Croff, whose expertise, patience, and generosity were indispensable. Locally, Dee Parker in ECLS also was instrumental in making sure all would be handled properly.

Everyone agreed to have the next Seminar in Venice in 2026 (exact date to be confirmed but preference for low season to minimise expenses). Also, Dr Diana Gonçalves agreed to explore the possibilities of applying for Marie Curie Funding for a PhD network comprising the three institutions. This will be followed up later this summer once the details of the next round will be made known.

All three academic leads have agreed that the quality of the papers justifies exploring the possibilities of publishing an edited volume and work on that will commence in June so as to have a proposal ready for submission by September.

Paulo de Medeiros (English & Comparative Literary Studies)

### **Cultures of Trauma in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe - 8th/9th May 2025**

This 2-day international workshop was held at the University of Warwick on the 8-9th of May 2025. The event brought together 30 delegates to explore scientific, medical and cultural approaches to psychological trauma in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The workshop began with a thought-provoking keynote lecture by Prof. Polly Jones of Oxford University, 'Terror and Gulag as Cultural Trauma: Constructions, contestation and concealment of Stalinist trauma in Soviet and post-Soviet culture(s)'. The lecture addressed the question of why Stalinist terror and the Gulag have never been framed in Soviet and post-Soviet Russian culture as a 'cultural trauma' or 'trauma drama' (drawing on sociologist Jeffrey Alexander's influential terms). The lecture examined the ways that trauma has been obfuscated in Soviet and Putin-era memory politics, contrasting these narratives to traumatic framings of Stalinist terror elsewhere, including in Ukraine and Kazakhstan. The keynote sparked discussions around the notion of 'objective trauma' and 'cultural trauma', as well as the translation of medical concepts into popular culture.



The first panel discussed the impacts of trauma on vulnerable populations: children, women and older people. Thomas Stevens (Oxford), presented on narratives of suffering in early Soviet Moscow's institutions for homeless children. Daria Starikashkina (Justus Liebig University, Giessen) presented a paper on the psychological suffering of women in besieged Leningrad. Prof. Susan Grant (Liverpool John Moores) presented on the diagnoses of trauma in Soviet homes for older people. The discussion, chaired by Prof. Mathew Thomson (Warwick) focused on the evolution of Soviet theories of environmental and social adaptation, discussing the extent to which 'traumatisation' was seen as a problem of individual personality.

The second panel of the day focused on psychiatric framings of trauma in Eastern Europe. Ana Cergol Paradiz from the Centre for Culture and the Mind (Copenhagen) presented on psychiatric understandings of juvenile delinquency in Socialist Slovenia. Sarah Marks from Birkbeck presented on the use of experimental psychedelic therapies to combat trauma in Czechoslovakia. Hannah Proctor (Strathclyde) gave a paper on the distinctive conception of trauma in Alexander Luria's 1947 book *Traumatic Aphasia*. Reflecting on the seeming lack of personal narratives of psychological trauma in Luria's work, Dr Proctor interrogated Western assumptions about East European approaches to trauma, focusing on the work of Catherine Merridale and Anna Krylova. These reflections led to a lively discussion about the extent to which trauma is culturally and socially constructed.

The final panel of the day addressed the poetics of trauma, bringing history and cultural studies into dialogue. James Ryan from the University of Cardiff presented on the poetics of violence and madness in Vladimir Zazubrin's unpublished 1923 novella *Chip*. Natalya Rulyova (Birmingham), presented on articulations of trauma in Guzel' Yakhina's *Zuleikha Opens her Eyes* and Hamid Ismailov's *Mbobo*. Anna Toropova (Warwick) presented on attempts to translate the 'affect aesthetic' of traumatic phenomena in Soviet films of the 1920s and 1940s. The panel discussion focused on the lines of exchange between medicine and cultural production, and the different languages through which trauma is expressed and made meaningful. The day concluded with a conference dinner for presenters at Radcliffe House.

The second day began with a panel on 'Trauma Culture'. Victoria Musvik, a D.Phil. candidate from the University of Oxford, presented on the politicisation of affect in late Soviet nonconformist photography. Ruslan Mitrofanov (LMU, Munich) discussed the representation of psychiatric institutions and the Soviet collapse in Azerbaijani cinema. Karina Belik, a master's student at Humboldt University, gave a paper on the 'Өмө' exhibition in Berlin and its attempt to construct a post-Soviet community of sense for Russia's subalterns. The discussion focused on the question of decolonisation, and approaches to researching trauma in the periphery of the Soviet empire.

The final panel of the workshop addressed medical languages and personal narratives of trauma. Rob Dale from the University of Newcastle presented a paper on the treatment of trauma in the Ukrainian Republican Neurosurgical and Neuropsychiatric Hospital for invalids of the Great Patriotic War. Simon Pawley (BMU, Tashkent) presented on approaches to shell shock and traumatic neurosis in early Soviet medicine. Viktoria Vorobeva, an independent scholar based in Georgia, gave a paper on the personal engagements with psychoanalytic ideas about trauma that were expressed in early Soviet diaries. The discussion focused on the significance of place in the conceptualisation of trauma, and the ways in which the distinctive research culture of Ukraine was reflected in practice.

Over two days, the delegates discussed the multifaceted explorations and representations of trauma that operated in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

### **Objectives and Outcomes**

The event aimed to put interdisciplinarity at its heart, bringing together social historians and historians of science and medicine with film studies scholars, and experts from literary and cultural studies. It also aimed to foster collaborative research networks between Warwick and some of the leading centres for medical humanities research in the UK (Centre for the History of Healthcare, Strathclyde; Birkbeck Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Mental Health) and in Europe (Centre for Culture and the Mind, Copenhagen and the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich). These objectives were fully met—the interchange between medicine and culture was a recurring topic of panel discussion. The workshop also fostered the creation of new research networks. Ana Cretu, Ana Cergol Paradiz (who is partly based at the University of Ljubljana) and I (Anna Toropova) are currently preparing a bid for the next Eutopia funding call. I have also been invited to

present on my 'Traumatised Minds' project at Newcastle. In addition, I have been in discussion with Viktoria Vorobeve about collaborating to develop our shared research interest in studies of trauma in Soviet Georgia. The research networks fostered at the workshop will be further strengthened through the collaborative publication of a special journal issue stemming from the workshop.

Anna Toropova (History)

**Parish Communication (Twenty-Third Warwick Symposium on Parish Research) - Saturday 17th May 2025**

Co-organized by Beat Kümin with Angus Crawford and Kristi Flake (Warwick History / My-Parish)

This annual day conference, first held in 2003, took place in hybrid format at the Institute of Advanced Studies on Saturday 17 May 2025 with delegates attending from New Zealand, Poland, Hungary and Italy as well as from all over the UK. Proceedings were divided into three parts with eleven speakers, all addressing different forms and media of the umbrella theme of 'Parish Communication' with 15-minute contributions.

The first session of four papers used as its rubric the title 'Directing' (for speakers and titles, please see 'programme details' below). We were taken on a tour from the medieval period to almost the present day focussing on how the church authorities used different forms of communication in order to ensure compliance and obedience. Research encompassed the use of fourteenth-century church court cases, the effects of the 1604 Canons Ecclesiastical, the use of the Book of Homilies in the early modern period and the rise and contribution to political culture of parish magazines printed by the Church of England around 1900.

The second panel consisted of four papers under the title 'Liaising'. These presentations demonstrated the effective communication channels that existed between Papacy, monarchy, clergy, churchwardens and laity not just in England but also in Poland and Syno-Palestine. Each presenter emphasized and demonstrated how intrinsic this two-way communication network was for the authority and the credibility of the Church in both urban and rural settings, as well as how the laity also used the same channels with which to bring their own petitions and requests with the expectation that they would be heard.

Discussion under the title of 'Signalling' constituted the final session of the day, with three papers on different regional contexts. In-depth analysis of churchwardens' records emerged as a way to understand the confessional leanings in seventeenth-century East Anglia. In Latvia, by contrast, in spite of homogenizing pressures, communities were able to keep alive their own multilingual and multicultural identity to the present day. To complete the day's proceedings, inter-faith communication in Hungary underlined once more how important communication was to all members of society, whatever their religious identities.



*Emanuel de Witte, 'Interior of a Protestant, Gothic Church during a Service' (oil on panel, 1669). Extract from the painting in the [Online Collection](#) of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.*

The day ended with a lively general discussion on the overarching themes that had emerged from the day. It was agreed that the process of communication within parishes had evolved over time, from relying primarily on oral and performative media to written and then printed documentation, but always in coexistence with other forms. Papers had highlighted a myriad of aspects and topics, including the ringing of church bells, rituals of punishment, the drawing up of petitions / questionnaires, direct action such as iconoclasm and the migration/exchange of ideas between centres and localities. By using qualitative case studies, quantitative approaches, geographical information systems, visual analysis as well as close reading of texts, the papers provided participants with an impression of available methodological instruments and ultimately conveyed a picture of parishes being hubs of interaction between local communities and church authorities. Whilst that communication did not need to be classed as successful in order for it to appear worthy of investigation, it became clear that all parties were aware of a wide range of options. Speakers often highlighted clergymen and churchwardens as lynchpins within their parishes, ensuring the communication from the church hierarchy was translated to the parishioners in a language that could be understood and acted upon. Ultimately, the day highlighted the interplay of deliberate and incidental communication and how both hidden and open agendas could be disseminated widely.

The organisers gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Humanities Research Centre, My-Parish Network and Warwick's History Department; the help from Sue Rae; as well as the contributions of all session chairs and online/in-person delegates.

Symposium homepage:

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/my-parish/parishsymposia/communication/>

#### **Programme details:**

##### **Welcome and Session 1 – Directing - Chair: Beat Kümin (Warwick)**

*Nicholas Ringwood (Auckland), 'Incorrigibly Scandalous: Combatting Recidivist Sexual Misbehaviour in Late Medieval English Parishes'*

*Ashley Armstrong (University of East Anglia), 'England's Canons and their Place in the Church: A Typographical Study of the Seventeenth Century'*

*Kristi Flake (Warwick), 'Preaching the Homilies ... or not? Evaluating the Reception of the Homilies, 1547-c1860'*

*George Palmer (Cambridge), 'Parish Magazines and Political Communication in England, 1885-1914'*

##### **Session 2 – Liaising - Chair: Kristi Flake (Warwick)**

*Robert Swanson (Shaanxi), 'Parishes and Communication in the Bureaucratic and Disciplinary Structures of the Pre-Reformation English Church'*

*Marion Hardy (Independent), 'Demands, Duties, Rates, Taxes, Tithings ... Who Would be an Unpaid Parish Official in Early Modern England?'*

*Marek Słoń (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin), 'The Role of the Parish in Urban-Rural Communication'*

*Felicita Tramontana (Roma Tre), 'Communicating the Parish: Information Flows between Syno-Palestinian Parishes and Rome in the 17th Century'*

##### **Session 3 – Signalling - Chair: Andrew Foster (Independent)**

*Christian Owen (Cambridge), 'The Parish as a Battleground: Contested Visions of the English Reformation in East Anglia'*

*Melchior Jakubowski (Warsaw), 'Multilingualism of Parishes in Latgale (Eastern Latvia) from the 1670s to the 1930s'*

*Béla Mihalik (Budapest), 'The Jews of the Parish: Communicating the Otherness'*

Lynn Marriott (PGR History)

#### **Doctoral Fellowship Competition Launch Event**

This event, held in October 2024, attracted 16 PGRs from every department in the faculty. Professor Alison Cooley outlined the aims of the scheme, the application process and the benefits to PGRs.



This was followed by a Q&A session with Alessandra Tafaro, a previous competition winner who offered some useful advice and shared her thoughts and experiences of going through the process from the submission of an application to actual conference day. Sue Rae then gave a brief 'top tips' and 'key points' talk. Everyone then had time to enjoy a good lunch and network with everybody else there. We are pleased to say that this resulted in 6 strong applications – please read on to discover who won and what their conferences will be addressing.

## Doctoral Fellowships

This year the Centre was able to sponsor three (internal) Doctoral Fellowships. The Fellows contribute to the life of the HRC by organising a one-day postgraduate interdisciplinary conference and are given financial support for their PhD dissertation research.

This year's winners (and the conferences they will organise next year) are as follows:

**Eloisa Ocando Thomas / Jingyang Xu** (both History)

EDIBLE BOUNDARIES: Food, Identity, and the Material Culture of Eating and Drinking

**Xiaoyan Tan** (SMLC) / **Gustavo Ruiz da Silva** (Philosophy)

(Neo)Colonial Images and Literature: The Construction of the Other

**Archana Vinod** (English) / **Malvika Nair** (SMLC)

Is a Better World Possible? - Solidarity as a Conversation across Temporalities

## Director's Special Event

HRC 30th Anniversary Event: Monday 3rd March 2025

The HRC was delighted to host Professor Carlos Noreña (Goldman Distinguished Chair of Social Sciences and Professor of History, UC Berkeley) for a public lecture to celebrate both the HRC's thirtieth anniversary and the University's sixtieth. The lecture 'The Roman Atlantic: Ecology and Empire on an Ocean Frontier' offered insights into the interrelationship of the natural landscape and regional economic activities in the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula during antiquity. We were able to enjoy a preview of the forthcoming volume, *The Roman Atlantic: Dynamics of an Ocean Frontier*, the result of an interdisciplinary international collaborative project. The lecture explored the Atlantic façade of the Roman empire, stretching from the British Isles to the northwest coast of Africa, surveying the peculiar ecologies of this seascape and its various interfaces with the coast. It examined the making of a distinctly 'Roman' Atlantic, which combined Phoenician





*An aerial view of the coastline of Galicia*

and Greek geographical knowledge with Roman infrastructural development and traced the changing commercial and cultural connectivities that tethered this peripheral region to a Mediterranean empire. The lecture surveyed a vast array of types of evidence – archaeological, textual, numismatic, and epigraphic – and opened up new approaches to ancient economic and industrial activity, notably the production of the fish-sauce (*garum*) that was so ubiquitous in Roman cuisine. After the lecture, staff, students, and visitors enjoyed the opportunity to chat informally with Prof. Noreña over some refreshments – happily, without Roman fish-sauce!

### Publishing opportunities

The HRC has secured two book series showcasing the best current work in the Arts faculty.

#### Warwick Series in the Humanities (with Routledge)

This series publishes the varied and multidisciplinary outcomes of projects funded by the HRC. By definition, all conferences and seminars sponsored by the HRC are interdisciplinary, and by design such events draw from the full gamut of the Faculty's strengths: literary, historical, linguistic, visual, philosophical; ancient and modern; British, European, and global. Events typically highlight the work of scholars established, new, and in training; the work itself is inflected by modes and models of thinking that show the humanities as alive, well, and intimately and intricately embedded in the wider culture.



We hope those receiving funding from the HRC (including doctoral fellowship conferences) will seriously consider publication in this series. In addition, the Series will accept proposals from the faculty community in general, with the proviso that any such proposals are interdisciplinary.

<https://www.routledge.com/series/WSH>



This is a series that partners the HRC with Anthem Press, a small independent publisher offering a high-quality list aimed at the academic community. Unlike the Warwick Series in the Humanities which is explicitly inter-disciplinary, the Warwick Studies has more of a discipline-specific focus, and thus will be marketed as Warwick Studies in Literature, Warwick Studies in History etc.  
<http://www.anthempress.com/>

### Warwick Series in the Humanities – Recent Publications

- **New Interdisciplinary Perspectives On and Beyond Autonomy (17)** Edited by Christopher Watkin and Oliver Davis (Warwick) December 2022  
What does ‘autonomy’ mean today? Is the Enlightenment understanding of autonomy still relevant for contemporary challenges? How have the limits and possibilities of autonomy been transformed by recent developments in artificial intelligence and big data, political pressures, intersecting oppressions and the climate emergency? The challenges to autonomy today reach across society with unprecedented complexity, and in this book leading scholars from philosophy, economics, linguistics, literature and politics examine the role of autonomy in key areas of contemporary life, forcefully defending a range of different views about the nature and extent of resistance to autonomy today. These essays are essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the predicament and prospects of one of modernity’s foundational concepts and one of our most widely cherished values.
- **Crisis and Body Politics in Twenty-First Century Cultural Production Territorial Bodies (18)** Edited by Charlotte Spear and Madeleine Sinclair (Warwick) January 2025  
The twenty-first century has been deemed the “Age of Crisis”. We are witnessing the catastrophic unfolding of environmental crisis, financial crisis, pandemic and conflict. But are we to understand these crises as new phenomena? Is their seemingly simultaneous existence purely coincidental? Or rather do they instead form part of a singular, historically produced, unfolding crisis, which only today has reached a generalised consciousness? And perhaps most urgently, how far can we separate the crises of human experience from those exacted upon the land?  
The chapters collected in *Crisis and Body Politics in Twenty-First Century Cultural Production: Territorial Bodies* deploy the framework of “Territorial Bodies” to address urgent social, ecological and political challenges. Examining themes such as (inter)national bodily governance, racialised bodies, eco-feminist movements, spatial justice and bodily displacement, this collection provides a deeper analysis of the interconnected forms of violence perpetrated against marginalised human and non-human bodies, taking this combined violence as the defining feature of contemporary crisis.
- **Homecoming Veterans in Literature and Culture: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Perspective (19)** Edited by Niels Boender (Warwick) March 2025  
From Homer’s *Odyssey* itself, the return of the veteran to his or her home has been a central trope of the literary canon. Huge bureaucracies and a panoply of global organisations are deeply concerned with facilitating a painless return to stable homes. This book presents ‘homecoming’ as an analytical lens to better understand veterans’ return and reintegration after conflict. Home is held to be multidimensional, a concept encapsulating the physical and the social, particularly disrupted by experiences of violence. Homecoming is, therefore, not a mere moment but a process that can unfold over years and decades as old and new bonds of familiarity are forged. Struggles over the home and homecoming are, moreover, endlessly political, bound up in questions of identity and the nation. Looking across times, places, and disciplines, the collection centres both historical and representational approaches to veterancy.

## Publications in Progress

- ***Spiritualism and Italian Culture XVIII-XX Centuries***; Fabio Camilletti, Bart Van den Bossche and Gennaro Ambrosino
- ***Theory, Politics, and the Present: Troubled Encounters***, Paulo de Medeiros
- ***Love, Desire, and Stanley Cavell***, Michelle Devereaux and Dominic Lash
- ***The Politics of Sedition in Long Nineteenth-Century Britain – Gender, Activism, Spatial Politics and Legality***, Dave Steele
- ***Voices of Change: Contemporary Arab Women Revolutionaries***, Raad Khair Allah
- ***Archaeology, Psychoanalysis and Colonialism: The Return of the Repressed in the Modern Age***, Kerry Gibbons and Gennaro Ambrosino

## Working with Publishers Workshop

The Humanities Research Centre organized two *Working with Publishers Workshops* this year on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at Scarman House, University of Warwick. The day-long events sponsored by the Enhancing Research Culture Fund (ECRF) aimed at familiarizing doctoral and post-doctoral researchers with the various stages of academic publishing and provided an opportunity to enter into dialogue with reputed publishing houses.

Report by Shekinah Vera-Cruz and Julián Morales

The second edition of the Working with Publishers Workshop was held at Scarman House, University of Warwick, on 15 January 2025. Eighteen PhD students and Early Career Researchers from a range of departments in the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Arts attended this one-day, face-to-face event to learn about the different stages of the publishing process and the resources available at Warwick to help them through, in particular those offered by the Humanities Research Centre.

The event was led by Professor Alison Cooley, Director of the HRC and Sue Rae, the Centre's Administrator. The event began with an initial presentation of the aims of the HRC and some of the programmes it runs, such as the Doctoral Fellowship Competition and the Warwick Series in the Humanities (with Routledge). This was followed by a presentation of the aims of the workshop and a round of introductions, in which participants shared their expectations for the day. Next, there was a discussion of the prospects, challenges and difficulties faced by first-time authors. This took place in two parts, the first devoted to turning a dissertation into a monograph and the second to coordinating an edited volume. How to contact publishers, the stages and timeframes of the whole process, contracts and royalties, copyright and use of images, differences between commercial and university presses, writing tips and management skills (edited volumes) were all issues that came up in the discussion.

In the afternoon, after lunch, the day resumed with a discussion of some pre-circulated examples of book proposals from various disciplines in the humanities, both monographs and edited collections. In groups the participants discussed which of the book proposals they thought were the most effective and why, with reference to the discussions earlier in the day and some additional materials shared with advice on how to write a book proposal. The groups then shared their impressions with the wider cohort, noting especially the diversity of the examples which had been provided. Issues such as originality, persuasiveness, academic relevance, jargon-free language and marketability were highlighted. This reinforced the takeaway from earlier in the day that successful book proposals could be very different since there is no single 'correct' way, but a range of best practices that should be adapted to each project. Something that is inappropriate in one book, such as a literature review, might be absolutely essential in another. Finally, participants learned about the new mentorship scheme that the HRC will be launching this year to help ECRs and PhD students put together a good proposal after successfully defending their thesis.



This exercise was followed by a brief discussion of publishing contracts. The participants explored the different timelines at which contracts were offered from different publishers and how this might be integrated into career planning as Early Career Researchers for whom the upcoming REF (Research Excellence Framework) is an important consideration. Prof. Alison Cooley also suggested a number of important details it was worth clarifying with the publisher, such as book discounts on the publisher's other academic publications; negotiating physical copies of the book, especially for contributors to edited collections; and deciding whether to give them the first right of refusal on the next book. The final elements of the day were Q&A sessions with the editors Carly Silver, from Palgrave Macmillan, and Jen Abbott, from Routledge. Carly and Jen described some of their work as editors to us, explaining parts of the editing process and offering advice on how best to approach editors. Carly also signposted the participants to the Palgrave MacMillan Early Career Researcher Hub, which provides useful information on transforming a thesis into a monograph. These sessions also gave the attendees the opportunity to ask specific questions about issues they expect to encounter, like republishing articles as chapters in a monograph and integrating multimedia into published works. Speaking to these editors directly helped further demystify the publishing process and put a human face to an often intimidating and opaque-seeming industry. The workshop ended with the participants providing feedback on the day and expressing how useful they had found the different exercises and discussions.

### PhD Mentorship Scheme

The HRC has a strong tradition of supporting researchers at all stages of their careers in producing edited volumes of interdisciplinary research, often based on workshops and conferences funded by the HRC. Since 2013, nineteen edited volumes have been published in the Warwick Series in the Humanities, with six more planned for publication in the next couple of years. Over the last two years, the HRC has set up new support mechanisms to help researchers see their work published.

During this academic year, the HRC expanded its programme of workshops for PGRs and ESRs on Working with Publishers. Following participants' positive evaluation of the workshop held in June 2024, the HRC organised two more workshops in January and June 2025, in collaboration with different publishers: Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge, Legenda, and the IAS *Exchanges* journal. For reports on these workshops, please see \*\*\*.

With the support of an Enhancing Research Culture grant for a project 'Enhancing support structures for PGRs and ESRs in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences: from thesis to monograph, from conference to edited volume', a pilot mentoring scheme was also introduced this year.

When early-stage researchers apply for academic jobs, one of the increasingly competitive areas is an assessment of their publication record. Employers are looking for individuals who have a track-record in publication commensurate with their career stage. A job application is most likely to be successful if an applicant has at least a book contract with a publisher for the thesis-monograph. For post-PhD students who are applying for jobs outside academia, it is equally helpful to be able to demonstrate skills in getting research published. But at the moment, the amount of support which early-stage researchers receive in this process is uneven, often depending upon the time and enthusiasm of their supervisor. This project sought to create a more inclusive research environment whereby all early-stage researchers could access the support they needed to revise their thesis for publication. The project did not replace or supplant the support currently on offer from some supervisors but ensured that individuals whose work merited publication did not fall through the gaps. It thus addressed fundamental questions of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

A new box has now been added to the Joint Examiners' Report form following the PhD viva, inviting examiners to comment on the thesis' potential for publication. This has allowed the Faculty Deputy Chair for Education to identify potential mentees, whose examiners have supported the potential publication of their PhD thesis. These potential mentees were contacted by the HRC and offered support, being given a choice of mentor from a cross-faculty group of mentors set up for this pilot project. Mentors set up meetings and support of up to three hours per mentee. The HRC is

very grateful to the following members of the mentor group for their involvement in the scheme: Andrew Cooper (Philosophy); Anne Gerritsen (History); David James (Philosophy); Mark Knights (History); Alison Ribeiro de Menezes (SMLC); Bobby Smith (SCAPVC). Thirteen mentees were invited to be involved in the pilot scheme, of whom eight accepted the opportunity from the following departments/schools: English & Comparative Literature; SCAPVC; Classics & Ancient History; SMLC; History. As a result of the mentoring scheme, three book proposals have now been submitted to publishers, with five of the mentees still working on the task. An initial 1-hour meeting of mentors was useful to set out expectations (above all, that the mentor was to give guidance on drawing up a book proposal, not to be advising on the content of a revised thesis). Non-specialist advice on book proposals emerged as a distinctive feature of the mentoring: the choice of mentor did not always align with the mentor's expertise: indeed, the opportunity to engage with someone from outside the field was noted by one of the mentees as an advantage of the scheme. The scheme complemented the two workshops run by the HRC on Working with Publishers.

The HRC is grateful to the Research England Enhancing Research Culture Fund for granting us an award that made all of this work possible, which has benefited PGRs and ESRs from across the Faculty of Arts (incl. Cross-Faculty Studies) and Department of Philosophy.

### Book Launch Event

This was held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025. There were 13 presentations from all departments within the faculty.

Programme

11.00 **Alison Cooley** (Classics and Ancient History) *Pompeii: An Archaeological Site History* (2nd edition, Bloomsbury, October 2023)

11.15 **Victoria Rimell** (Classics and Ancient History) *A Commentary on Ovid, Remedia Amoris* (Oxford, 2024)

11.30 **Curie Virág** (Philosophy) and Douglas Cairns (eds) *In the Mind, in the Body, in the World. Emotions in Early China and Ancient Greece* (Oxford, 2024)

11.45 **Maddie Sinclair** (IATL) and **Charlotte Spear** (ECLS) *Crisis and Body Politics in Twenty-First Century Cultural Production. Territorial Bodies*

Warwick Series in the Humanities, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2025) (as editors)

12.00 **Roxanne Douglas** (IAS) *Feminist Gothic, Critical Irrealism and Arab Women's World-Literature: 'Living with Ghosts'* 'New Comparisons in World Literature' series (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025)

12.15 **Jo Hofer-Robinson** (ECLS) *The Plays of Charles Dickens* (Edinburgh University Press, 2025) Edited by Joanna Hofer-Robinson, Pete Orford

12.30 LUNCH BREAK

13.00 **Beth Sharrock** (ECLS) *Shakespeare Broadcasts and the Question of Value* (Cambridge University Press, 2025)

13.15 **Niels Boender** (University of Edinburgh) *Homecoming Veterans in Literature and Culture: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* Warwick Series in the Humanities, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2025) (as editor)

13.30 **David Lambert** (History) *Soldiers of Uncertain Rank* (CUP, 2024): <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009464406>

13.45 **Myka Tucker-Abramson** (ECLS) *Cartographies of Empire: The Road Novel and American Hegemony* (Stanford University Press, March 2025); <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-64912-7>

14.00 **Anna Lanfranchi** (SMLC) *Translations and Copyright in the Italian Book Trade: Publishers, Agents, and the State (1900-1947)* (Palgrave September 2024): <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-64912-7>



Comparative Literature, is renowned for his innovative research on cultural memory, literary canons, and spectrality in Renaissance and modern literature. His most recent monographs, *Ariosto in the Machine Age* (Toronto UP, 2023) and most of all *Gioventù degli antenati. Il Rinascimento è uno zombie* (Einaudi, 2024), intersect emerging research interests within the SMLC and, more broadly, with the faculty, making his visit an exceptional opportunity for interdisciplinary academic engagement.

Primarily, Dr Giammei engaged in a public conversation with Prof. Fabio Camilletti, focused on the themes explored in Giammei's *Gioventù degli antenati* and in Camilletti's ongoing project *Dante and the Ouija Board*. This event, moderated by Dr Bryan Brazeau from the Renaissance Centre at Warwick, served also as the inaugural event of the Italian Studies Research Seminar Series 2024-25. The conversation drew an interdisciplinary audience, reflecting the wide-ranging appeal of the topics discussed, which included:

- The Mutability of Literary Canons
- Spectrality in Cultural History
- Inclusivity and Outreach in Academia

The event was highly successful, fostering rich dialogue across different fields, including Italian Studies, Comparative Literature, and Renaissance Studies.

On the following day, Dr Giammei joined a roundtable for PhD students from the SMLC, discussing their works in progress and providing valuable advice in terms of career and opportunities, also thanks to his relatively young academic age and his fresh knowledge of the job market's mechanisms. In the course of the roundtable, plans were made to explore possibilities for a Warwick-Yale joint summer school in Italy – whether in the Warwick Venice Centre or in the Yale hub in Siena – with the active involvement of PhD students from both institutions. The summer school's theme should be 'Philology Past and Future'.

Thanks to funding generously provided by the Renaissance Centre, Dr Giammei could also take part in the PG-led conference *Speaking with the Dead*, where he presented a paper on 'Philology Fiction', a genre that, unlike science fiction and its focus on the future, speculates on ancient societies through erudite games played with the reader. Alongside presenting his paper, Dr Giammei acted as a veritable respondent for the whole of the conference, providing PhD students with further opportunities for intellectual growth.

In conclusion, Dr Giammei's visit perfectly fulfilled its aims: it fostered interdisciplinary dialogue within the Faculty, bringing together the SMLC, the Renaissance Centre, and the HRC; it contributed to the inter-institutional dialogue between Warwick and Northern American universities, in this case Yale; it greatly helped PhD students, who were able to engage with Dr Giammei in both formal and informal settings; and set the ground for further action, including publications (e.g. an already commissioned special issue of journal *The Italianist* on the dialogue with the dead topic) and the aforementioned summer school.

Prof. Fabio Camilletti (SMLC)

### **Dr Martina Piperno (University of Rome "La Sapienza")**

With the support of the HRC Visiting Speakers Fund, the University of Warwick had the privilege of hosting Dr Martina Piperno from the University of Rome "La Sapienza" from September 26th to 28th, 2024. Dr Piperno is a renowned scholar in Italian Studies, known for her groundbreaking research in 19th- and 20th-century Italian literature, especially in relation to the works of Giacomo Leopardi and the portrayal of ancient Italic populations in modern Italian literature. Her visit to Warwick facilitated a valuable exchange of ideas, furthering collaboration between our institutions and enhancing academic networking opportunities.

### **Conference Participation:**

During her visit, Dr Piperno played a central role in the interdisciplinary conference *Speaking with the Dead: Italy and the Legacy of the Past in the Revolving Century (1750-1850)*, held on September 26th and 27th. The conference explored the

theme of the “dialogue with the dead” in Italian literature and culture during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, focusing on both literal and figurative engagements with the past.

Dr Piperno presented her paper titled “E chiamavate barbare le altre genti”: Gender-based Violence and the Spectre of Genocide in Alessandro Verri’s *Le notti romane* (1804). In her presentation, she analysed how Alessandro Verri’s *Le notti romane* constructs a contrapuntal narrative of Roman history by addressing the themes of gender-based violence and genocide. Through a careful reading of Verri’s dramatic dialogues, particularly his portrayal of female figures like Floronia and Lucrezia, Piperno demonstrated how Verri uses these characters as symbolic victims of Rome’s imperialist and patriarchal violence. Moreover, she explored how the text critiques Roman imperialism by highlighting the destruction of pre-Roman cultures, such as the Etruscans, and placing Roman history under moral scrutiny. This paper contributed to the broader themes of the conference by investigating the violent legacies of the past and how they continue to shape modern interpretations of history.

#### Round Table Participation

In addition to delivering her insightful paper, Dr Piperno served as the chair for the second day of the conference on September 27th, guiding discussions and facilitating dialogues among scholars from various disciplines. Her leadership helped ensure a productive exchange of ideas and kept the sessions on track, enriching the intellectual atmosphere of the event. Dr Piperno also participated in the conference’s concluding round table discussion, where scholars reflected on the broader implications of the themes explored throughout the event. Her contributions during the round table were instrumental in synthesizing the ideas presented by various speakers and in proposing future directions for research on the “dialogue with the dead” in Italian literature. Dr Piperno emphasised the importance of continued interdisciplinary collaboration and the need to consider both the historical and literary dimensions of such dialogues, reinforcing the significance of studying how the past interacts with the present in shaping cultural identity.

#### Academic Networking and Collaboration

Dr Piperno’s visit to Warwick, supported by the Visiting Speakers Fund, facilitated numerous opportunities for academic collaboration. As a founding member of Ottocentismi. International Network for 19th-century Italian Studies and a member of the Laboratorio Leopardi at “La Sapienza”, her presence fostered discussions about long-term partnerships, joint research initiatives, and potential future events. Both the University of Warwick and “La Sapienza” stand to benefit from this collaboration, which will help expand the scope of research in Italian Studies and promote scholarly exchange between the institutions.

#### Conclusion

Dr Martina Piperno’s visit to the University of Warwick was a resounding success. Her contributions to the Speaking with the Dead conference, her leadership as chair, and her insights during the final round table greatly enriched the academic discourse surrounding 19th-century Italian literature and culture. Dr Piperno’s visit has laid the groundwork for future collaborations between Warwick and “La Sapienza”, furthering academic exchange and fostering new research.

Enrica Leydi (PGR, SMLC)

#### **Dr Federica Perazzini (Sapienza University of Rome)**

The Humanities Research Centre supported the visit of Dr Federica Perazzini, Assistant Professor in English Literature at Sapienza University of Rome, for a two-day academic event focused on the Gothic in contemporary film and television. The visit, held on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024, was organised by Rossana Galimi (PhD Candidate, Department of Film and Television Studies; in cotutelle with the Department of Philosophy of the University of Milan). The event was funded by the HRC Visiting Speakers’ Fund, complemented by a 10% contribution from the Department of Film and Television Studies. The visiting speaker held a seminar on the 19<sup>th</sup> November and led a postgraduate methodological workshop on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

On Tuesday 19 November in the Faculty of Arts Building, Dr Federica Perazzini held a seminar titled “Rebirth, Revival, and Afterlives: The Gothic in Contemporary Film and Television”, chaired by Arianna De Gasperis (visiting PhD Candidate, School of Modern Languages and Cultures). Federica Perazzini gave a 50-minute lecture on the Gothic novel and the

resurgence of Gothic themes in the recent tv series *Penny Dreadful* (2014–2016) and *The Frankenstein Chronicles* (2015–2017), presenting her current research, on which she has been working for the last five years. The lecture examined how these narratives reimagine Gothic conventions to address anxieties surrounding gender, identity, and otherness. In particular, she focused on the remediations of the figure of the Bride of Frankenstein, a short-lived character in Mary Shelley's original novel, that nonetheless has been the subject of several film and television adaptations, recently with feminist undertones. The lecture was followed by a 20-minute discussion led by Rossana Galimi, who gave a response that delved into the philosophical and feminist implications of this Gothic revival, focusing on the multiple cultural associations between the Gothic and the feminine, on the Foucauldian framework through which these Gothic remediations can be interpreted, and on the feminist strategies that may be employed to reimagine female identity in the horror genre. Finally, a conclusive Q&A session allowed the participants to ask questions, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue between film and literature scholars, as well as between undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The event was attended both in person and on Microsoft Teams by undergraduate and postgraduate students, academic staff, and researchers from multiple departments (Film and Television Studies, School of Modern Languages and Cultures, The Revolving Century Network).

On Wednesday 20 November in the Avon Building, Dr Perazzini led a methodological workshop for postgraduate students. The workshop explored how Gothic conventions are reinterpreted in contemporary screen adaptations, with a focus on methodological approaches to studying these transformations (e.g. distant reading, adaptation studies). The workshop provided participants with new methodological tools to analyse the Gothic genre's transmedia evolutions, encouraging critical reflection on adaptation practices and their cultural implications, especially from a postcolonial and feminist perspective.

The event was advertised on the internal mailing lists of the School of Creative Arts, Performance and Visual Cultures and the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, to colleagues of the English Department, to students of the module "European Gothic", and on social media (Facebook and Instagram). The event successfully achieved its aims of fostering interdisciplinary dialogue on the contemporary remediations of Gothic tropes and narrative conventions, intertwining feminist and transmedia perspectives. Moreover, it also fulfilled didactic purposes, offering an overview of the Gothic novel and its serial adaptations especially to the undergraduate students who attended the seminar.

Rossana Galimi (PGR, SCAPVC)

### **Dr Alessandro Metlica (University of Padua)**

A generous grant from the HRC allowed History of Art to welcome Dr Alessandro Metlica (University of Padua) for three days from 4-6 February 2025. Michael Hatt and Giorgio Tagliaferro invited Dr Metlica to Warwick as part of a year-long series of research activity about the question of sovereignty. While there is a huge bibliography in other fields, and not least political science, only in recent years have art historians started to engage with the concept, and Dr Metlica was the ideal scholar to help us think through the significance and use of the concept for cultural history.

Dr Metlica is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature in the Department of Linguistic and Literary Studies at the University of Padua. His research focuses on the representation of power in early modern Europe, in terms of both subversion (libertinism, free thinking) and containment (eulogy, propaganda), and his current concern is civic ritual in early modern Venice. Metlica holds an ERC Starting Grant of 1.5m Euros for the project *RISK, Republics on the Stage of Kings: Representing Republican State Power in the Europe of Absolute Monarchies*, which addresses Republican displays of state power in the Europe of absolute monarchies from the late-sixteenth to early-eighteenth centuries. Examining a multidisciplinary corpus of sources, including both texts and images (praising poems, civic orations, paintings and engravings, as well as the written accounts of public festivities and civic rituals), RISK evaluates how and to what extent the absolutist framework influenced the representation of ideals such as freedom, equality, and the common good. The interdisciplinary nature and geographical breadth of Metlica's work is evident in his publications, which include a monograph on the role played by poetry in the staging of power for Louis XIII of France and Marie de Medici; critical



editions of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italian libertine poets; edited volumes on lyric poetry in Paris and Vienna; and studies on the political ritualization of power during the *ancien régime* on a European scale. During his visit, Metlica led three interdisciplinary research events for staff and students from the Faculty of Arts. The first event was a research seminar, at which he delivered a paper titled 'A Republic in Print: Festival Books in Seventeenth-Century Venice and Monarchical Europe'. This fascinating paper presented the objects themselves, the civic rituals they purported to describe, their role in political formation, and the complications of using these books as primary sources for more ambitious historical arguments. The audience included members of the departments of History of Art and History and from the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance; the group included post-doctoral fellows, PhD students and some undergraduates. As we had hoped, the lively discussion afterwards not only engaged with early modern history but also allowed us to consider differences in approach between literary and visual scholars and the interdisciplinary manoeuvres that might synthesise and transform disciplinary orthodoxies.

The second event was a reading group, which discussed two essays:

Metlica's 'Reshaping the Republican Ritual: The Entry of the Procurators of St Mark in Early Modern Venice', in Joris Oddens, Mart Rutjes, and Arthur Weststeijn (eds), *Discourses of Decline: Essay on Republicanism in Honor of Wyger R.E. Velema* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2022) and Tagliaferro's 'The Meeting of Sebastiano Ziani and Alexander III in the Great Council Hall: Staging, Viewing, and Understanding the Body Politic in Late Sixteenth-Century Venice', in Giovanni Florio and Alessandro Metlica (eds), *Contending Representations II: Entangled Republican Spaces in Early Modern Venice* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024).

This involved staff and post-docs from HoA, Italian Studies, the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance, and History. Both essays discuss questions of space, ritual and sovereignty in early modern Venice, but from very different theoretical perspectives. Central discussion points were the relationship of the visual and the textual; the nature of ritual and its complications in temporal terms (contemporary or historical) and in representation (real or fictional); theoretical frameworks for the politics of ritual, including from other fields such as political science and anthropology; and how we use primary sources. As with the research seminar, the conversation attended both to the historical detail of early modern Europe and to the broader understanding of civic ritual and its significance for sovereignty and Republicanism.

The final event was a PGR workshop 'Political Ideas and Cultural Production'. This involved students from History of Art, History, and Theatre and Performance Studies, who are working on a wonderful range of projects from early modern medals to blockchain art and from eighteenth-century British aristocratic women to Indian dance. Together, we explored ways of conceiving the relationship between the cultural and the political. In a wide-ranging and wonderfully rich discussion, we talked about such matters as Metlica's choice of the term 'cultural production' (a reminder of the emergence of cultural studies in the 1980s and the model proposed there) and the ways in which our own political commitments determine our understanding of historical material. Interestingly, the question of space emerged strongly, whether eighteenth-century opera boxes, public parks in South Africa, housing estates in 1970s Britain, or digital spaces, and the ways in which an object or practice is both determined by and produces a spatial context. This was a wonderfully rich discussion and History of Art was delighted to be able to welcome PhD students from other departments; we all benefited from the cross-disciplinary nature of the event.

The objectives of Metlica's visit were certainly met. It extended our discussion of sovereignty, widening the scope and complexity of our thinking. This was already an interdisciplinary programme in terms of the subject matter, but it also proved a great mechanism for drawing together scholars from different departments and allowing us to consider our differences in terms of working with the visual, the textual and the performative. We were able to involve colleagues at all levels including UG students, doctoral and post-doctoral scholars, and faculty at all career stages. Lastly, this was beneficial for History of Art's research strategy for REF2029, helping us to realise some of our key objectives and to think about ways of developing this in the coming years.

We are very grateful to the HRC for making this possible, both for enabling Dr Metlica to come to Warwick and for providing a springboard for further collaboration in the Faculty of Arts and beyond.

Michael Hatt and Giorgio Tagliaferro (SCAPVC)

**Annual Edward Said Memorial Lecture** - 30th April 2025 - Palestinian writer Adania Shibli. Acclaimed author of the novel *Minor Detail*, longlisted for the Booker International Prize in 2021 and winner of numerous other international awards, including the Young Writer's Award–Palestine by the A.M. Qattan Foundation for her novel *Touch* in 2001 and *We are all equally far from love* in 2003. She was named as one of the Beirut39, a group of 39 Arab writers under the age of 40 chosen through a contest organized by Banipal magazine at the Hay Literary Festival. She has also published a collection of essays called *A Journey of Ideas Across: In Dialogue with Edward Said* (Berlin: HKW).

### Warwick PhD and Early Career Research Fellowships

Warwick has long-standing links with many North American universities, and to strengthen and deepen those ties the HRC instituted a Research Fellowship programme in 2013. With financial support from the CRS the HRC awarded 4 fellowships for Warwick PhD students and early career scholars to spend a short period conducting research at a variety of high-profile North American or European universities and colleges including the Newberry Library and Johns Hopkins University. The 4 students who made their trips in 24/25 were:

#### Esteban Catalan - Newberry Library

My project *Molhuia Mababa* (Náhuatl for 'they are called maps') took place in the Newberry Library, Chicago, between August 27<sup>th</sup> and September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Designed as a maps redux scheme, it is part of an effort to position the University of Warwick at the forefront of current research on the potentialities of non-Anglophone, non-European languages and representations of territory.

At the reading rooms of the Newberry library, I analysed six resources unique to this collection that were quintessential to the construction of the Americas, and Latin America in particular, from a European perspective. I started with Cortés' 1524 'Map of Tenochtitlan', in *Praeclara Ferdina[n]di Cortesii de Nova maris Oceani Hyspania* (1524), *Livro que dá razão do Estado do Brasil* (1612), 'Carte du Detroit de Magellan et des nouvells decouverttes dans la Mer du Sud' (ca. 1708), 'A New and accurate map of Chili' in *Terra Magellanica* (co. 1747), Bernardino de Sahagún's Nahuatl-Spanish-Latin dictionary, and James Pilling's collection of Indigenous linguistics (1903).

As well as digitising this collection to collaborate with colleagues in Warwick such as Elizabeth Chant following copyright law and creating a back-up of items that have not been digitized yet, I analyse these resources under the extraordinarily detailed guidance of University of Chicago's Associate Professor Dr Edgar García. A leading scholar in how non-Anglophone, non-European cultures represent turbulent times within the *longue durée*, Professor García and I dialogued and exchanged observations on two main topics. First, how traditions such as the Náhuatl and the K'ché depicted transitional historic times as opportunities and beginnings of new possible worlds instead of what ecopsychologist Joanna Macy defines as the dilemma of denial or 'business as usual' and resignation or 'the great derangement' (*The Work that Reconnects*, 2014) in the Anglophone canon. As a second main topic, my attention, as well as Professor García's, was to dissect the occasional but consistent commentary in these texts that showed the extraordinary exchange and reflections that happened when Europeans encounter these cultures, beyond cosmologic clashes, preconceptions and projections. The purpose of this exploration was to bring these perspectives to think our current time —when modern nations' disputes over territory are once again taking centre stage in the midst of our climate and economic crisis— to look for productive answers to questions about extinction anxiety.

Finally, following Professor García's advice, I focused on the original *The Popol Vuh* (1515) itself which, despite not being in a literal sense a map, acts as a mappa mundi in its own way, reckoning with its place in a new colonial world while also trying to situate that world in a larger and encompassing Maya cosmos. Given the short time of my stay in Chicago, this work could not have been done without the daily help of Alexis Flaherty, library assistant, in the American Indian and Indigenous Studies collection. I want to thank especially the generous guidance of Dr Christopher Fletcher, assistant director of the Center for Renaissance Studies (CRS). As Dr Fletcher's research focuses on premodern public

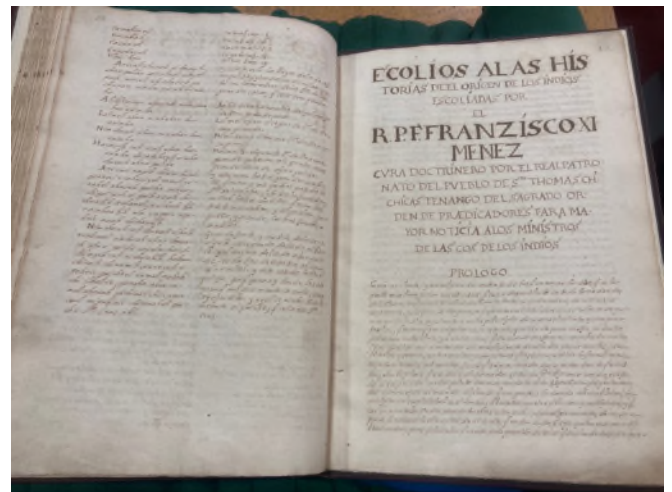
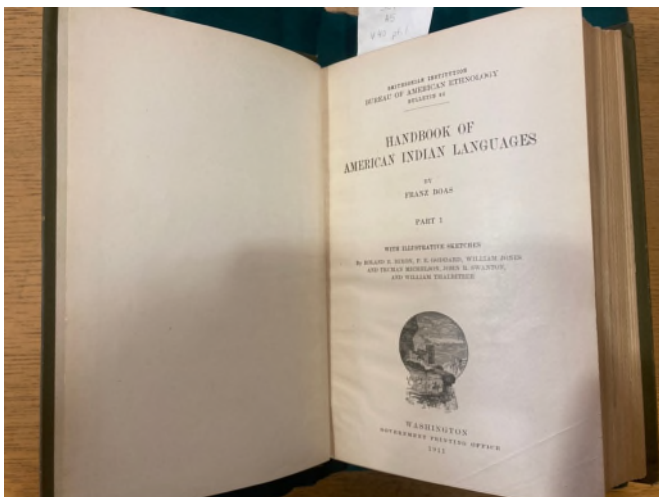


engagement and its lessons for contemporary society, I have agreed with him on future collaborations to help to expand this project as an interdisciplinary dialogue born out of a shared love of maps.

Beyond my future collaborations with both Dr García and Dr Fletcher, during my stay in Chicago I had productive meetings with Dr Paulina León, Visiting Assistant Professor at New York University (whose research explores the cultural dimensions of disease in colonial Latin America), and Dr Luis Madrigal, Teaching Fellow at University of Chicago (with a focus on spatial criticism in Latin America). Besides an invitation to give a conference in February to talk about the Molhuia Mababa project at the University of Chicago, León and Madrigal offered a collaboration with Warwick scholars from now on expanding this line of research with their respective departments.

As I said in my proposal, the results of this research, which emphasizes the interrelationship between storytelling, philosophy and coexistence of language and cultures in our time of crisis, will be used in two projects, with both academic and public engagement focuses. Firstly, an academic article will be published simultaneously in Spanish in Chile (following an invitation to showcase my work to the Universidad Diego Portales of Santiago de Chile next March), and in English in the University of Warwick's Institute of Advanced Study (IAS) journal *Exchanges*. Secondly, the documented historical graphic materials will be presented together in a website under this project's title. This collection of early maps and their commentary showing the frictions and intersections between cultures will be the starting point of a website which will work as an archive of maps and commentary about them from non-European sources to point out the veiled potentialities of points of view often missed in global debates – and their possible implications in thinking about shared futures.

This effort will be aided by other IAS fellows including Aravinthen Rajkumar (Sri Lanka), Noorin Rodenhurst (India, Gujarati speaker), Erika Herrera (Mexico) and Emmanuel Effiong (Nigeria), and it has been conceived as an ongoing project to be enriched in coming years by the next IAS cohorts, enhancing the institute's position as a central hub in the UK for international researchers' exchanges. In particular, this part of the project aims to strengthen something that in my opinion Warwick lacks such as a sophisticated, visually attractive web design that highlights the unique work that is done by its researchers from perspectives of non-performative, truly diverse points of view that are, as a result, uniquely rich. I am currently applying for funding to make this project a reality through schemes such as the BA Small Research Grant and others.



Two images of my visit: *The Handbook of American Indian Languages* by Franz Boas and *The Popol Vuh* itself, only available in periods of thirty minutes to preserve it for a future in which could still be useful.

## Gustavo Da Silva – Johns Hopkins University

### RESEARCH TRIP REPORT: ACTIVITIES, IMPACT, AND FUTURE COLLABORATIONS

#### 1. Introduction

This report outlines the key activities undertaken during my research visit to Johns Hopkins University (JHU), detailing my academic engagements, institutional networking, and potential benefits to the University of Warwick. The trip significantly contributed to my doctoral research and fostered valuable academic connections that may lead to future collaborations between Warwick and JHU.

#### 2. Research Activities

One of the primary objectives of my visit was to conduct in-depth research on crucial historical texts. I closely examined two significant works:

- *Elegiae, sive Carmina*, edited by Bernardinus Cyllenius (1491), which provided invaluable insights into early elegiac poetry.
  - *De civitate Dei* by Augustine (1475), an essential text for understanding theological and political thought in the medieval period.
- Additionally, I acquired specialized books that contributed directly to the writing of one of my thesis chapters. My engagement with archival material and rare manuscripts was further enhanced through workshops on archive research and the handling of old and fragile texts. These experiences sharpened my methodological approach and expanded my expertise in working with primary sources.

#### 3. Academic Engagements

During my stay, I attended several PhD vivas and seminars, gaining exposure to diverse research methodologies and critical discussions within my field. These sessions allowed me to refine my own analytical approach and stay updated on current scholarly debates.

Moreover, I attended two international conferences, including one organized by Yale University, where I presented a chapter from my thesis. This platform enabled me to receive valuable feedback on my work and engage with leading scholars from various institutions. It also facilitated discussions on potential interdisciplinary collaborations.



*My talk at Mutamenti, the JHU – Yale Graduate Conference*

#### 4. Institutional and Professional Networking

My visit to JHU proved instrumental in expanding my academic network. I engaged with my temporary supervisor at JHU, who not only provided valuable academic guidance but also wrote me a reference letter for a funding scheme. This collaboration reflects the strong academic rapport established during my stay.

I also met several PhD candidates, which allowed me to strengthen my personal and institutional connections. These interactions may lead to joint research projects, conference panels, or academic exchanges in the future. Additionally, I reconnected with Brazilian researchers at JHU, reinforcing my ties with the broader academic community beyond the UK and the US.



## 5. Institutional Collaboration and Future Prospects

My discussions about the Warwick-Johns Hopkins funding scheme, established by The Singleton Center for the Study of Premodern Europe at JHU and Warwick's Centre for the Study of the Renaissance, underscored the importance of continued collaboration between the two institutions. By raising awareness of this scheme among researchers at JHU, I contributed to strengthening Warwick's presence in transatlantic academic partnerships.

I also visited key historical sites affiliated with JHU, such as the Peabody Library, which houses extensive special archives. This visit allowed me to understand conservation techniques and archival management, which could inform future research methodologies at Warwick.

## 6. Social and Cultural Engagements

Beyond academic activities, I participated in various departmental social events at JHU, which facilitated informal yet productive discussions with scholars across disciplines. These events fostered a sense of academic community and strengthened professional relationships in a relaxed setting.

## *Johns Hopkins University*

### 7. Personal report

My journey to Johns Hopkins University began with a flight departing from London, with a layover in Iceland before landing in Washington, D.C. From there, I made my way to Baltimore, a city that would soon become my home for the duration of my stay. To ensure a comfortable and convenient living situation, I rented a fully furnished apartment within walking distance of the Johns Hopkins campus. This allowed me to easily integrate into the university's environment and fully immerse myself in my academic pursuits.

One of the most remarkable aspects of my time at Johns Hopkins was the unparalleled access I was granted to the university's facilities. The library system, with its extensive collections and resources, proved to be an invaluable asset to my research. Beyond academics, I was able to take advantage of the graduate lounge, the gym, and sports facilities, all of which contributed to a balanced and fulfilling daily routine. Johns Hopkins also provides excellent transportation options, including shuttles throughout the city and personalized night rides. This thoughtful system not only made getting around convenient but also ensured a strong sense of safety, allowing me to fully enjoy my time in Baltimore without concerns about late-night commutes.

The people at the Department of Classics were incredibly welcoming and accepting. From the very beginning, I was met with a sense of collegiality and warmth that made the transition into my new academic environment seamless. Engaging with faculty, fellow researchers, and graduate students allowed me to form meaningful connections, both professionally and personally. The department's support greatly enhanced my research experience and reinforced my enthusiasm for my work.

Baltimore is a city of contrasts—intense, diverse, and full of cultural and historical layers. As a newcomer, I found its vibrancy and complexity intriguing. The city's energy, combined with its proximity to Washington, D.C., opened up countless opportunities for exploration. Only an hour away by train—at a cost of about \$9—Washington, D.C. quickly became a frequent destination for me. One of the greatest advantages of this proximity was the opportunity to visit the Smithsonian system of museums, all of which offer free entry.

Johns Hopkins University stands out as an incredibly dynamic and creative institution. Throughout my stay, the campus was buzzing with events that fostered a strong sense of community. From the festive winter ice-skating rink to the distribution of small but thoughtful souvenirs like mugs and power banks, the university made every effort to create a welcoming and engaging atmosphere.

Beyond campus life, the JHU campus in Washington, D.C. regularly hosted high-profile institutional and governmental events. During my stay, for instance, I had the unique opportunity to witness the visit of the President of Kosovo. Such



experiences underscored the university's global presence and its commitment to fostering dialogue on pressing international issues.

As my time in Baltimore and at Johns Hopkins came to an end, I was filled with a profound sense of gratitude and happiness. This experience was truly transformative, both academically and personally. The friendships and professional relationships I built during my stay will remain invaluable, and I will always cherish the time I spent in such a stimulating and supportive environment.

#### 8. Conclusion

Leaving Johns Hopkins was very melancholic, as I knew I would deeply miss the friends, colleagues, and experiences that made my time there so special. This journey has left an indelible mark on my academic and personal growth, and I look forward to future collaborations and opportunities that may arise from this incredible chapter of my life. My research visit to Johns Hopkins University was a highly productive and enriching experience, yielding significant academic progress and valuable institutional connections. The trip directly contributed to my PhD research through archival studies, conference presentations, and access to specialized literature. Additionally, it expanded Warwick's academic outreach by fostering collaborations and reinforcing its relationship with JHU. Future research exchanges, joint events, and potential funding applications may arise from these engagements, further benefiting both institutions.



*Baltimore City Centre*

#### **Wanxin Du – Florence, Italy**

Thanks to the generous support from the HRC, I conducted my research as a visiting PhD student in the Department of History and Civilisation at the European University Institute (Florence, Italy) between 7 January and 15 March 2025.

This experience allowed me to engage closely with scholars in the EUI's History Department. First, I enrolled in a weekly PhD seminar taught by Prof. Giancarlo Casale on early modern history. It offered me the opportunity not only to learn about the projects of other early modernists at the EUI, but also to present my own research on violent crime and criminal justice in the state of Siena between 1590 and 1650.

Secondly, I took part in the activities of the Methods in Early Modern History Working Group, where I presented a paper on arms control legislation in grand-ducal Tuscany from the late sixteenth to the late seventeenth century. These seminars proved very beneficial, as I received valuable and thought-provoking feedback from scholars with a wide range of research expertise.

Thirdly, throughout my stay in Italy, I had regular in-person meetings—weekly or biweekly—with my EUI mentor, Prof. Giorgio Riello, as well as monthly online meetings with my Warwick supervisor to report on the progress of my research.

In addition, I actively engaged with the EUI's academic network, including professors, postdoctoral fellows, and fellow PhD students, and formed many meaningful academic and personal connections. I introduced Warwick's Centre for the Study of the Renaissance, the History Department, and the Venetian Centre to early modernists at the EUI, encouraging them to consider applying for a post-doc position or a visiting student programme at Warwick. I hope this may help strengthen the existing ties between Warwick and the EUI and perhaps lead to a future joint initiative between the two institutions.

Beyond my work at the EUI, I made the most of my time in Italy by gathering essential archival materials for my thesis in both Florence and Siena. I received generous assistance from the archivists at the State Archives of Florence and Siena, and the Archbishop's Archive of Siena, as well as from scholars at the Medici Archive Project, which I had visited in a previous year.

Access to local libraries—such as the Berenson Library at Harvard's Villa I Tatti and the Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati in Siena—enabled me to consult Italian monographs and journals that are difficult to obtain in the UK. Thanks

to these resources, I was able to complete a paper during my stay in Italy, which I presented at the Renaissance Society of America Annual Meeting at the end of March.

Overall, my research trip to Italy this spring has been highly productive, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the HRC. Without its support, this opportunity would not have been possible.

### **Shekinah Vera-Cruz – Yale University**

With the generous support of the Humanities Research Centre (HRC), in March and April of 2025, I was able to visit Yale University for a two-week research trip. Over the course of these two weeks, I was able to attend events and discuss my research with scholars at all three Yale institutions: Yale University, Yale Law School, and Yale Divinity School. I was incredibly warmly received by members of the university, especially the academic staff and postgraduate community of the Department of Classics, with particular thanks to the Chair of Classics, Professor Noel Lenski; Dr John Dillon, lecturer of Classics and at the Divinity School, and Linda Dickey-Saucier, the Senior Administrative Assistant of the Department of Classics—all of whom went above and beyond to support me during my stay in New Haven. In conjunction with the funding supplied by the HRC, this personal support allowed me to achieve my key aims for the trip. First, to build interdisciplinary connections by attending events and academic workshops at various departments and institutions throughout Yale University, especially at the Law School. Second, to make use of the available library and museum resources to make progress with my doctoral research. Finally, to make productive personal connections with established academics, early career researchers, and postgraduate students at a world-class educational institution to enrich my future academic career.



*Yale University campus*

### Interdisciplinary activities

Throughout my stay in New Haven, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend and participate in events, workshops, and seminars hosted by Yale Law School, the Department of Classics, the Divinity School, and the Medieval Studies programme. This included a lunchtime seminar by Prof. Vicki Schulz on Feminist Legal Theory, an evening lecture by Prof. Ilaria Ramelli on 'Social Justice and Slavery in Antiquity', and a talk by Profs John Gibert and Yvona Trnka-Amrhein on 'Reading and Performing "The New Euripides"'. Even where these engagements were not directly related to my research, I found the opportunity to engage with new ideas invaluable and enjoyed discussing emerging trends in



legal and historical scholarship with members of the university, from undergraduates to professors. I especially enjoyed the paper by Prof. Jaś Elsner on ‘Cover and Curtain in European Medieval Art’, which was very interdisciplinary in focus and thus extremely well-attended by people from different institutions and departments. Over lunch, after the paper, I then had the opportunity to discuss Prof. Elsner’s paper with art historians, theologians, and medieval historians. Additionally, since events at the Law School are so often restricted to members of the Yale Law community, I appreciated the opportunity to participate as an Ancient Historian and Classicist, beyond traditional disciplinary silos.

#### Library and museum resources

Yale University is home to a number of prestigious libraries and museums. Alongside the Lillian Goldman Law Library which was the focus of my initial application, I also had the opportunity to visit the Sterling Memorial Library, the Department of Classics Library, the Yale University Art Gallery and the recently re-opened Yale Center for British Art. Additionally, on the first day of my visit, Prof. Noel Lenski took me on a tour of the campus which included a tour of some of the materials held at The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, one of the largest rare book libraries in the world. In conjunction with the Yale Law Library, the Beinecke is home to a number of exciting papyri, including a grant of citizenship to a Roman soldier from the early third century CE (*P.CtYBR* inv. 5069) and a fragmentary edict concerning the imperial cult from the same period (*P.CtYBR* inv. DP 2 qua). The library staff were very friendly and helpful, especially in providing guidance on gaining access to the collection. I also discussed the collection with some of the postgraduate researchers at the Department of Classics, who were happy to discuss with me some of the ways they used these materials and visits to the Beinecke in their undergraduate teaching. The library within the Department of Classics was also very well-appointed, with an extensive section on Greek and Roman law—many books of which are rarely found in the same collection. I was given unrestricted access to this library, both to consult reference materials and as a study space. This allowed me to make significant progress in researching and writing for my doctoral project. Access to this space also allowed me to regularly meet and become familiar with the PhD candidates in Classics, Ancient History, and Philosophy.



*Yale University Art Gallery*

#### Networking and personal connections

I felt very welcome and included at Yale University during my visit, especially among the postgraduate students at the Department of Classics. I attended two graduate workshops with them. The first was about thesis writing and various approaches to making progress with doctoral research, led by a member of the graduate community who had recently returned from a writing retreat. The second workshop, held in the second week of my visit, was an abstract-writing

event, hosted by academics in the department who worked with us in small groups to develop and improve our abstracts for conferences, such as the annual Society of Classical Studies conference. I also attended social events with the other PGRs, including going for pizza and a quiz night at the graduate union, Gryphon's Pub. Everyone was incredibly friendly, and I will hopefully have the opportunity to further these connections when some of the PhD Candidates are visiting London for research later this year. Prof. Lenski, the Chair of the Department of Classics, also invited me back to visit the university and the department. I believe that the connections I had the opportunity to build over these two weeks will be invaluable for my research career going forward, and in expanding my academic networks.

I am incredibly grateful to the Humanities Research Centre for funding this opportunity. I found my stay in New Haven incredibly enriching both personally and professionally, and I believe that the people and resources I engage with during this period will be invaluable going forward, both for my doctoral research and more broadly for my personal development.

### Future Events, Plans and Funding Programmes

**Conferences** including the Doctoral Fellowship winners:

- EDIBLE BOUNDARIES: Food, Identity, and the Material Culture of Eating and Drinking
- (Neo)Colonial Images and Literature: The Construction of the Other
- Is a Better World Possible? - Solidarity as a Conversation across Temporalities – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2025
- Corpo a corpo: transhistorical and transmedial perspectives on the body of Italian culture – 16<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> September 2025 (Venice)
- Visiting Speaker – Marco Libardi (Cultural Association 'Hamelin') - 16<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> September 2025
- Enchanted Reading across Languages, Cultures and Times - 19th September 2025
- Dante Futures 2025: New Voices in the UK and Ireland – 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> November 2025
- MindGrad 2026 – 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- Visiting Speaker – Dr Peter Snowdon – filmmaker, scholar and research associate at MAD-PXL School of Arts– May 2026 tbc

### Workshops

- Doctoral Fellowship Competition Launch Event – November 2025 tbc
- Publishing workshop 2026 – tbc

### The Newberry Library

The HRC remains committed to Warwick's continued involvement with the Newberry Library via the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance. Each year the HRC shoulders £2,000 as part of the annual financial commitment that Warwick makes to be part of the Newberry consortium. In addition, we reserve one of the Warwick PhD and Early Career Research Fellowships to be held at the Newberry Library.

### Johns Hopkins University Fellowship

The HRC will continue to partner with the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance to offer a fellowship linked to Johns Hopkins University, along similar lines to the one already offered at the Newberry Library in Chicago. The fellow will be working on an early modern topic and make use of the facilities and expertise at JHU.

### Warwick PhD and Early Career Research Fellowships

Next year we will be able to fund one USA/Europe Fellowships as well as the usual Newberry Library and John Hopkins Fellowships.

### Faculty Seminars – continued sponsorship to:

- Caribbean Studies Seminar
- Early Modern and Eighteenth-Century Centre Seminar
- Italian Research Seminar

- Parish Research Symposium [History]
- STVDIO Seminar [Renaissance]
- Translation and Transcultural Studies Seminar
- Warwick Workshop for Interdisciplinary German Studies

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