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FACULDADE DE LETRAS DA UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA
UNIVERSITY OF LISBON SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

PROGRAM

25th - Thursday / 25 - Quinta-Feira

Room 1 - 09.00-09.30 - OPENING SESSION / SESSÃO DE ABERTURA - Adelaide Serras – Director of ULICES; Mário Avelar – Director of the English Studies Department

Room 1 - 09.30-10.45 - PLENARY SESSION: “The Ethics and Aesthetics of *Black Panther* (2018): A Utopian Superhero Film in the Trump Era?” Terence McSweeney (Solent University) Chair/Moderador: Ana Daniela Coelho and José Duarte

10.45-11.00 BREAK

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Journeying through Dark Ecologies: H.P.Lovecraft’s “The Colour Out of Space” (1927) and Thomas Ligotti’s “The Shadow at the Bottom of the World” (1991) (Elisabete Lopes, IPS-ULICES)	Transhumanism and the Chthulucene in Becky Chambers’ <i>A Common and Closed Orbit</i> (Vanessa Roldán Romero, U. Santiago de Compostela)	The Encounter with Nature in the Development of Modern Fantasy Literature (Martin Simonson, U. País Basco-EHU)
<i>The Stranger</i> (1964-5): Environmental refugees of a poisoned world (Djoymi Baker, RMIT University)	Heterotopias of Deviation and Queer Resistance in <i>Bacurau</i> (Marcelo Fornari López, Independent researcher)	No Grass, No Life: Depiction of Ecological Disaster in John Christopher’s <i>The Death of Grass</i> (Fatma Gamze Erkan, Ege University)
“In the woods the Tox is still wild”: The EcoGothic in Rory Power’s <i>Wider Girls</i> (Tânia Cerqueira, U. Porto-CETAPS)	“Our destiny is to take root among the stars”: time traveling, spectres and ghosts, ruins, and the films of Jorge Jácome (Patrícia Azevedo da Silva, ICS-USP)	Morality and didactics in Kurt Vonnegut’s environmental writings (Luísa Feneja, CEAUL)

13.00 – 14.30 LUNCH BREAK/PAUSA PARA ALMOÇO

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Cryogenic Dystopias: Persistence Of Entangled Caste And Race In GR Indugopan’s “Ice -196°C” (Umar Nizarudeen, Government College Madapally)	“I won’t let another one die”: Cinematic Ecocriticism in <i>How to Train Your Dragon</i> (2010) and <i>Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them</i> (2016) (Alexandra Cheira, ULICES)	“Sometimes It’s Nice To Pretend”: <i>Watchmen</i> (2019) enquanto representação da sociedade americana contemporânea (André Francisco, CEAUL)

Surviving on Basic, Terraforming Mars, and Consuming Kibble: Failed Utopias in James S.A. Corey's <i>The Expanse</i> (Sean Rhoads, Queen's University at Kingston)	From Aliens to Mermaids: The (Super)Natural in Korean Drama (Priyanka Das, Presidency University)	<i>Neon Genesis Evangelion</i> e o Complexo da Lagosta: uma lógica de humanimaldade (Francisco Ricardo, FLUC-CLP)
"Are your eyes on the stars?": Space Colonisation in <i>Destinies</i> and <i>Far Frontiers</i> (Krushna Dande, Jawaharlal Nehru University)	<i>Groundhog Day</i> as an allegory of habituation to nature (João N. S. Almeida, FLUL)	A espécie que destrói: a humanidade como metáfora do desequilíbrio ecológico em <i>Les Centaures</i> , de André Lichtenberger (Bruno Matangrano, U. Pelotas)
	"Put on a happy face": Identity Crisis and the Shifting Coordinates of the Superhero Narrative (Rebecca Cohen, Solent University)	Género Feminino sob o Signo da Mulher-Máquina em <i>Metropolis</i> e <i>Ex Machina</i> (Tiago Ramos, CEAUL)
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Room 1 - 16.45 - 18.00 PLENARY / SESSÃO PLENÁRIA Conversation with the author João Nuno Azambuja Chair/Moderador: João Félix (Session in Portuguese)		

Room 1 - 09.30 - 10.45 PLENARY / SESSÃO PLENÁRIA Conversation with author Pedro Galvão
Chair/Moderador: Adelaide Serras e Angélica Varandas (Session in Portuguese)

10.45 - 11.00 BREAK

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Alien Otherness, Deterritorialized Futures, and Television during the Pandemic (The Case of <i>The Expanse</i>) (David Levente Palatinus, U. Ruzomberok)	(Post-)Pandemic Gender Politics: A World of Women (Aline Ferreira, U. Aveiro)	Painel Distopia e Transumanidade na série britânica <i>Years and Years</i> (Teresa de Ataíde Malafaia, FLUL-CEAUL; Nélia Cruz, CEAUL e Francisco Ferreira da Silva, CEAUL)
Herself A Multitude: The Rhizomic Quality of Nnedi Okorafor's <i>Binti</i> Trilogy (Gabriela Debita, U. Galați)	Of Cats and Crones: Hope and Eco-Feminist Utopianism in Leonora Carrington's <i>The Hearing Trumpet</i> (Mariana Cruz, NOVA/FCSH-CETAPS)	
Rising Mediocrity and Zombie Apocalypse: Creating a Select Minority in Jim Jarmusch's <i>The Dead Don't Die</i> (Abdullah Derin, Dokuz Eylül University)	Ecocritical Approach toward Utopias: Divergent Attitudes towards Scientific Advancement in Kazuo Ishiguro's <i>Klara and the Sun</i> and Emily Mandel's <i>Station Eleven</i> (Midia Mohammadi, U. Tehran)	
Nonhuman Others as a New Hope in Margaret Atwood's <i>MaddAddam Trilogy</i> (Sofia Duarte, U. Valencia)		

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"Comet as Author" (Elijah Sparkman, Northern Michigan University)	Nature, Lynch and the Ecocritical Art Film: Affective Representations of the Anthropocene (Kevin Henderson, Drury University)	Reações e intrusões de Gaia na ficção científica do Antropoceno (George do Amaral, U. São Paulo)
Olaf Stapledon: Delineating Forms of Human Evolution (Nicholas O. Pagan, U. Malaya)	Eating the Sun: Utopian Techno-futures and the End of Nature in Solarpunk Fiction (Teresa Botelho, NOVA/FCSH-CETAPS)	Visões sobre colonização e ecologia nas narrativas "Eles herdarão a Terra", de Dinah Silveira de Queiroz, e "The Word for World is Forest", de Ursula Le Guin (Ana Rüsche, FFLCH-USP)

The Idea of Magic in <i>Adventure Time</i> (José Vieira Leitão, U. Coimbra-CHSC)	"Cutting Down the Godswood": The Deletion of the Natural World in the Game of Thrones Series (Emily Diane Hickc, Indiana University of Pennsylvania)	O vestuário como resistência não verbal no romance <i>Viajantes do abismo</i> , de Nikelen Witter (Vera Maria Bulla & Viviane Klen-Alves, U. Georgia)
Re-Envisioning Nature as a Feminist Space in Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's Short Story "Sultana's Dream" (Indrani Das Gupta, U. Dheli)	Dark Lords and Nature: Destroying Landscapes in Robert Jordan's The Wheel of Time Series (Rui Mateus, NOVA/FCSH-CETAPS)	Da estátua ao ciborgue: A condição desumana em <i>Blade Runner 2049</i> (Teresa Nunes, (FLUC- CECH)
16.30 - 16.45 BREAK		
<u>Room 1</u> - 16.45 - 18.00 PLENARY / SESSÃO PLENÁRIA "You Be Good. I Love You': Messages from the Nonhuman" Gerry Canavan (Marquette University) Chair/Moderador: Igor Furão		

Please note that all sessions are on Lisbon time: GMT+1

Links

Room 1: <https://videoconf-colibri.zoom.us/j/87673420063?pwd=WkpCRmoybFczUURRaGoyNkV5dnJVUTo9>
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Room 2: <https://videoconf-colibri.zoom.us/j/88392789192?pwd=MIROCvFLUvo3WTlpVHU2eE5pb25ndzo9>
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Room 3: <https://videoconf-colibri.zoom.us/j/82598204543?pwd=RFJYWfHjTFBaeWE3b2hybmRSTVpOZz09>
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ABSTRACTS

Keynote Speakers

Gerry Canavan (Marquette University)

“You Be Good. I Love You”: Messages from the Nonhuman

Ted Chiang’s “The Great Silence” (2015) solves the famous Fermi paradox twice: first, by noting the likelihood that near-term ecological omnicrisis will end technological civilization before human beings are able to settle in outer space, and second by noting our inability to recognize and hear the nonhuman minds living on our own planet, even when they speak back to us in our own language. This talk explores how SF since the New Wave has encountered both real and imagined messages from nonhuman minds, with particular focus on Chiang’s “The Great Silence,” the work of Octavia E. Butler, and Kim Stanley Robinson’s *Aurora* (also 2015).

João Nuno Azambuja (Writer)

Pedro Falcão (Writer)

Terence McSweeney (Solent University)

The Ethics and Aesthetics of *Black Panther* (2018): A Utopian Superhero Film in the Trump Era?

The superhero film is without a doubt the most financially successful and most culturally impactful film genre around the world, yet it is one which remains at best critically marginalised and at worst excoriated by those who would call films from it “not cinema”. Martin Scorsese has been one of many in recent years to assert that the genre “isn’t the cinema of human beings trying to convey emotional, psychological experiences to another human being.” In his keynote address Terence McSweeney the author of *The Contemporary Superhero Film: Projections of Power and Identity* (2020) and *Avengers Assemble! Critical Perspectives on the Marvel Cinematic Universe* (2018) sets out challenge

this understanding of the genre suggesting that it is worthy of further examination for a diverse variety of reasons.

What better example of a case study for this than Ryan Coogler's *Black Panther*? When it was released in 2018 it broke numerous records and resonated with audiences all around the world in ways that transcended the dimensions of the superhero film. Terence argues that *Black Panther* became more than just a movie and is, in fact, one of the defining American films of the last decade. Drawing on research undertaken for his new book *Black Panther: Interrogating a Cultural Phenomenon* (2021) Terence will explore how and why *Black Panther* became a cultural phenomenon and also a battleground on which a war of meaning was waged at a very particular time in American history.



Abdullah Derin (Dokuz Eylül University)

Rising Mediocrity and Zombie Apocalypse: Creating a Select Minority in Jim Jarmusch's *The Dead Don't Die*

Directed by Jim Jarmusch in 2019, *The Dead Don't Die* is a dark comedy movie that depicts a zombie apocalypse which takes place in a small and generic American town, Centerville. Through zombie metaphor, the movie mocks the culture of consumerism and conformism in American society. It presents zombies who are desperately clinging to their beloved material goods and places even after death. Interestingly, zombies do not enter the woods in the movie. Thus, the woods become a safe haven for those who live in there. In this film, there is a character named Hermit Bob (Tom Waits), who is a hobo that lives in the forest, and strikes us more than the others. In this paper, in order to elaborate on the rise of mediocrity in American society and its effects, Hermit Bob's social character and his relationship with society and nature will be analyzed by using "The Crowd Phenomenon" theory by the Spanish sociologist Ortega y Gasset. Bob stays away from society because ever-rising mediocrity invades every aspect of social life and makes America "zombified". Thus, the ones who would really enjoy certain spheres of social life cannot maintain their reign anymore with the rise of the "average men" and mediocre standards. It is clear that Bob is a "self-reliant" person who excluded himself from society and, with his exclusion, he becomes a "select minority", differentiating himself from the crowd. As such, it will be demonstrated that staying away from the average standards and creating minorities are necessary in a society for people to accomplish themselves, as Bob does.

Keywords: American Culture; Sociology; Transcendentalism; Hyper-Democracy; Fantasy Fiction

Alexandra Cheira (ULICES/ University of Lisbon)

“I won’t let another one die”: Cinematic Ecocriticism in *How to Train Your Dragon* (2010) and *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2016)

Ecocriticism, which is broadly theorised as the study of the interconnection between the literary text and the physical environment, emerged at the end of the twentieth century in response to a pervasive sense of pending environmental disaster brought about by the destructive power of human society on the environment. Since the body of ecocritical theory has consequently focused mainly on literature, film as a medium of study has not been so widely theorised. Hence, I will examine the way the representation of nature in the films *How to Train Your Dragon* (2010) and *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2016) is informed by ecocritical premises which also shape a reformed conceptualisation of both anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism.

Therefore, these films will be discussed in the optic of cinematic ecocriticism. In this light, I will investigate the way ecocritical concerns are tailored to the representation of the relationship between human beings and the natural world. The connection to fantasy, in the form of both legendary animals which appear in the folklore of many cultures such as the dragons, and invented animals within a specific literary/cinematic world such as Rowling’s “fantastic beasts”, introduces a twist to ecocriticism. In fact, I argue, the privileged connection of two unlikely heroes with animals which are mistakenly deemed dangerous ultimately prevents their complete extermination. Since young Viking Hiccup and the wizard Newt Scamander are able to prove these speculations wrong, they will change the entire course of human/animal relationships in both films.

Keywords: Cinematic Ecocriticism; Environment; Human/Animal relationships; *How to Train Your Dragon*; *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*

Aline Ferreira (University of Aveiro)

(Post-)Pandemic Gender Politics: A World of Women

Pandemics are inevitably and closely intertwined with the negotiations and interactions between people and the natural world, in particular non-human animals, and as such they highlight the terrible consequences of the human abuse and exploitation of the environment. Some recent pandemic and post-apocalyptic dystopias also dramatize another recurrent form of abuse, meted out by a patriarchal structure, often an extension of the more general manipulation and mishandling of the natural environment. These novels carry out a philosophical thought experiment by imagining a virus that selectively kills more men than women, which allows these speculative narratives to imagine what a world of mostly women would look like and how it would be organised. Lauren Beukes' *Afterland* (2020) and Christina Sweeney-Baird's *The End of Men* (2021), to be examined here, are only two of the most recent examples.

While these worlds can be inscribed in a long-standing tradition of women-only societies, such as Mary E. Bradley Lane's *Mizora* (1890) and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915), they can also be profitably contrasted with another recent fictional trend, that of post-apocalyptic dystopias where it is women that are the principal victims of a viral outbreak, leading to societies with a substantial gender imbalance. That is the case of Meg Elison's *The Book of the Unnamed Midwife* (2016) and Bina Shah's novel *Before She Sleeps* (2018), where men (pre)dominate. Beukes' *Afterland* and Sweeney-Baird's *The End of Men* consider the major implications of a world almost without men, some of whom may also have been instrumental in the unleashing of viral and environmental threats. The aspiration for a non-patriarchal world and related issues will be analysed through the lens of recent theoretical work on gender issues in contemporary ecodystopias, privileging Braidotti and Bignall's concept of "posthuman ecologies" (2019) and Zylinska's notion of a "feminist counterapocalypse" (2018), amongst others.

Keywords: Post-apocalyptic dystopias; Gender Imbalance; A world of women; posthuman ecologies; Feminist counterapocalypse

Ana Rüsche (FFLCH-USP)

Visões sobre colonização e ecologia nas narrativas "Eles herdarão a Terra", de Dinah Silveira de Queiroz, e "The Word for World is Forest", de Ursula Le Guin

A leitura das seguintes narrativas curtas de ficção científica produzidas por mulheres, o conto “Eles herdarão a Terra” (1960), da brasileira Dinah Silveira de Queiroz, e a novela “The Word for World is Forest” (1972), da estadunidense Ursula Le Guin, permite traçar considerações valiosas a respeito de visões sobre colonialismo e ecologia no âmbito literário. Na comunicação, pretende-se abordar essas visões por meio da análise (a) do tema da destruição de um mundo; (b) do ícone do alienígena, com tratamentos diferentes pelas autoras e (c) dos retratos do que seja o humano e a natureza. Ainda, procura-se comentar o panorama editorial das obras, pois o conto de Queiroz, narrativa representativa da Primeira Onda da Ficção Científica Brasileira, foi relançado recentemente, em um movimento de redescoberta da autora. A novela de Le Guin foi lançada no Brasil em 2020, em meio a uma crise ecológica que assola o país, cujas queimadas adicionam nova camada de significados à ficção. A respeito de referências bibliográficas, utilizaria obras clássicas sobre ficção científica brasileira de Elizabeth Ginway, David Dunbar e Roberto de Sousa Causo; sobre FC anglófona, de Darko Suvin, Fredric Jameson, Mark Bould e Sherryl Vint; além da contribuição de pensadores indígenas Ailton Krenak, Davi Kopenawa e Mario Rodríguez, e de ecologistas, como Alfred Crosby e Eileen Crist.

Palavras-chave: ficção científica; feminismo; ecologia; colonialismo; antropoceno

André Francisco (Universidade de Lisboa)

“Sometimes It’s Nice To Pretend”: *Watchmen* (2019) enquanto representação da sociedade americana contemporânea

Watchmen (2019) é uma minissérie criada por Damon Lindelof para a HBO baseada na novela gráfica com o mesmo nome, criada em 1987 por Alan Moore e Dave Gibbons. A acção da minissérie ocorre em 2019, 34 anos depois dos acontecimentos que marcam o final da novela gráfica, na cidade de Tulsa no Oklahoma, onde um grupo de supremacistas brancos, denominados de *Seventh Cavalry*, pratica actos de violência contra as minorias e a polícia. Tal como na novela gráfica, a minissérie, para além da ficção científica, é também influenciada pelo *film noir*.

Como refere James Naremore (1998), *noir* é mais fácil de reconhecer do que de definir. Contudo, Andrew Spicer nota que o termo *film noir* descreve filmes de detectives ou *thrillers* americanos do período de 1944 a 1958, influenciados pelo Expressionismo Alemão, que sublinham o lado mais negro da sociedade americana, questionando os alicerces do “sonho americano” (2002). Como tal, o *film noir*, desde a sua génese, sempre foi um género que procurou explorar as problemáticas sociais do seu tempo. Esse lado obscuro revela-se por via das personagens, mas também através das injustiças sociais enraizadas num mundo antagónico repleto de perturbações psicológicas, esquemas criminosos ou manobras políticas (Luhr, 2012).

Assim, o objectivo desta comunicação será analisar o modo como *Watchmen* (2019), dando continuidade à novela gráfica que o antecedeu, utiliza a temática dos super-heróis e a forte influência do *film noir* na sua narrativa para reflectir sobre os problemas sociais da sua época, apresentando-se como uma distopia que observa a complexa natureza humana e que reflecte a divisão social e os medos da sociedade contemporânea americana.

Palavras-chave: *Watchmen*; natureza; FC; film noir; sociedade

Bruno Anselmi Matangrano (Universidade Federal de Pelotas, Brasil)
A espécie que destrói: a humanidade como metáfora do desequilíbrio ecológico em *Les Centaures*, de André Lichtenberger

Publicado em 1904, quando o gênero que hoje conhecemos como alto fantasia apenas começava a se estruturar, *Les Centaures*, de André Lichtenberger (1870-1940) mostra-se inovador por diversos aspectos, pois, para além de seu pioneirismo em relação à fantasia, recupera também características das poéticas simbolista e decadentista, na “subcriação” – para usarmos o termo de J. R. R. Tolkien – de um mundo secundário autêntico e autossuficiente. O enredo apresenta um cenário utópico onde centauros, faunos e tritões governam as demais criaturas com justiça e equilíbrio. Em meio a essa sociedade simples, mas harmônica, os animais carnívoros só podem se alimentar daqueles que pereceram de causas naturais. Contudo, essa estrutura altera-se quando os seres humanos chegam caçando e devastando tudo por onde passam, perturbando o equilíbrio ecológico defendido e propagado pelos antigos senhores do lugar. Diante desse contexto sumário, o presente estudo analisa essa fantasia francesa pioneira à luz dos pressupostos ecocríticos enquanto metáfora da corrupção humana, ou antes, da humanidade como corrupção, bem como de suas consequências: a destruição ambiental, a transformação de ecossistemas e a extinção de espécies. Para tanto, dialogaremos com teóricos dos estudos ecocríticos, como Greg Garrard, de especialistas sobre a fantasia, como Anne Besson e William Blanc, mas igualmente com trabalhos dedicados aos campos da zoopoética e da animalidade, como os de Maria Esther Maciel e Anne Simon.

Palavras-chave: André Lichtenberger; Fantasia francesa; Ecocrítica; Animalidades; Zoopoética

David Levente Palatinus (University of Ruzomberok / Technical University of Liberec)

Alien Otherness, Deterritorialized Futures, and Television during the Pandemic (The Case of *The Expanse*)

This paper will attempt to re-think the role of television in the Anthropocene. This epoch presents us with anxieties and challenges the cultural representations of which specific serial narrative modes (sci-fi and post-apocalyptic fiction for instance) are particularly conducive to by way of their interest in the human and its relation to the non-human. These arguments are based on the understanding that the Anthropocene over the past decade has grown beyond the initial scope of a concept denoting an epoch characterized by the 'human dominance of biological, chemical and geological processes on Earth' (Crutzen and Schwagerl, 2011). Expanding the critical stance that human presence has become a force shaping both organic and inorganic matter – from species to the transformation of eco-systems – this talk will consider Anthropocene to be paramount in critical thinking, with implications for ecology, politics, technology, history, and identity.

In recent literature, conceptualizations of the Anthropocene (cf. Zylinksa 2011, Sloterdijk 2012, Briadotti 2013, Parikka 2014, Bonneuil and Fressoz 2016) have been frequently aligned with ideas of a post-human future. The underlying human experience (human condition – Heidegger) of the sense of an ending, or as Zizek puts it, the anxiety of living in the end-times (2011) is prompting us to reconsider what human is, and what perspectives deterritorialized futures (Colebrook, 2020) may have for us.

In line with the centrality of narratives of crisis, in recent years post-apocalyptic scenarios have become a central theme to various forms of television drama. This talk will look at *The Expanse* (Syfy/Amazon Prime, 2015-) as an example of practice that mobilizes classic tropes of post-colonial discourses, social polarization, bio-power, genetic engineering, in the context of perpetual war and a culture of paranoia. The series' emblematic rendition of the Protomolecule, as 'enemy' and as 'wholly other' par excellence imprinted on irrevocably Earth-bound (Latour) humans, and always-already in the process of becoming, can be seen on the one hand as a 'structural virus' that

de-centers the human, rendering it alien within familiar structures. This talk will examine the ways this show reflects cultural anxieties and ethical dilemmas about the future – especially from the perspective of our present historical time of the Pandemic when our sense of security has become eroded in relation to our own identity.

To that end, this talk will comment on the role televisual mediation plays in the circulation of ideas about human and non-human futures. It will ask what we make of our sense of (post-pandemic) crises in relation to our collective futures:

- 1) What is the relation between practices of mediation, the Anthropocene, and the pervasiveness of political, economic and environmental anxieties (and the related ethical dilemmas) of our present historic time?
- 2) Do conceptualizations of the future have a history of their own - a 'history of futures past'?
- 3) And what does this history reveal about the futures of the human-to-come?

Investigating the television of the Anthropocene entails highlighting the broader political and popular cultural contexts in which these narratives unfold, as well as identifying the complex ethical dilemmas they unmask.

Keywords: Anthropocene; mediation; narratives of crisis; post-human; future

Djoyi Baker (RMIT University, Australia)

***The Stranger* (1964-5): Environmental refugees of a poisoned world**

The Stranger, an ABC television production from 1964-5, was the first science fiction drama program to be made locally in Australia. It was also one of the first Australian television programs of any genre to be sold overseas when it was picked up by the BBC. It features a mysterious stranger (Ron Haddrick) who is soon revealed to be an alien refugee from a “poisoned” planet he is too young to have seen himself. The few remaining descendants seek a new home – on Earth.

In contrast to most other science fiction television of the era, the show is not studio-bound. Rather, its outdoor settings of bushland and garden-filled

suburbs are reframed as world not yet poisoned, the sights and sounds of nature provoking both joy and fear in its new visitors. These settings also serve to assert a local Australian iconographic identity onto science fiction television for the first time, in the broader context of an industry seeking to compete in the international market.

Through its science fiction premise, *The Stranger* asks how humanity might respond to environmental refugees, while its background story of a contaminated planet registers fleetingly on the screen through its survivors' "estranged" relationship with nature, to use Darko Suvin's term. Scott MacDonald (2004) argues that ecomedia should ideally involve "a retraining of perception." In *The Stranger*, the audience is encouraged to take up the perspective of aliens for whom the Australian bush is newly strange, both wondrous and unsettling.

Keywords: Children's television; refugees; estrangement; ecocide; Australia

Elijah Sparkman (Northern Michigan University)

"Comet as Author"

Traditionally, narratives are about singular human beings: their interiorities, their actions, their fates, their triumphs, their relationships with one another.

My presentation will take up an alternative: What would narratives look like if they were instead centered around celestial bodies? How might the story of a sibling relationship be told, say if, from the point of view of a comet, or a star, or the sun? How might this shift in temporal scope, of vast space, of sublime scale inflect the representations of humans in the fictive work? We might call this phenomenon "Comet as Author," or even, celestial body as organizing principle.

To further my exploration, I will conduct a close analysis of Lindsay Drager's sci-fi novel *The Archive of Alternate Endings*. The structure of the novel is composed of 14 installments, all 75-years apart, indeed, each narrative instance accords to the appearance of Haley's comet itself, as it plows through space. The novel hops and hovers along these intervals and the characters they contain, providing bits and pieces of lives, as if at the whim of the comet itself.

The book is an extraordinary representation of my essay's main point: the result is that the traditional human narrative is utterly tinged with the cosmic, utterly de-centered and understood anew.

My presentation will end with a meditation on how this specific narrative phenomenon interacts with the current climate crisis/ breakdown. My final question: How might narratives which center around celestial bodies represent an ethos that can meet our collective moment, that can match the scale of the issue?

Keywords: Planetary Perspective; Deep Time Ethics; Cosmic-Collage; The Archival Theory of Fiction; Queer Ontology

Emily Diane Hicks (Indiana University of Pennsylvania)

Cutting Down the Godswood: The Deletion of the Natural World in the *Game of Thrones* Series

The epic fantasy *Game of Thrones* by George R.R. Martin is riddled with political drama. While the novel series forcefully portrays philosophical conflict, the influence of the natural realm is quite evident in the various religious sects represented. Belief in the older religion, referred to as the “old gods” is typically associated with characters or families who value honor and integrity and have an almost uncanny relationship with nature. However, much as the older religions are struggling to maintain a following, coupled with the loss of the natural realm in which these gods roam, these individuals or families tend to struggle for literal survival. Families or individuals who associate with the “new gods” seem to be driven by financial interests and personal gain, and the element of nature is lacking in their lives. These characters almost always work against the natural world or characters associated with nature.

Martin also depicts a religion that is centered in darkness. The Lord of Light serves as an ominous, almost devilish deity. The priests and priestesses sacrifice the innocent by fire in order to heighten their dark powers while reciting their dread driven incantations: “the night is dark and full of terrors.” This mix of religion and nature portrays the natural world as something to be feared and appears as a foil to the “old gods”. The use of fire as cleanser utilizes

the dark power of nature which the priests/priestesses harness in order to strengthen their political leader of choice. Misuse of nature is detrimental to the political realm, especially toward those devoted to the “old gods”, and in turn deleterious to the natural world.

In this talk I will argue that Martin evaluates humankind’s detrimental influence on the Earth. He establishes an ancient religious connection to Earth that is challenged by a sect that has been appropriated by the leaders of King’s Landing for political gain. I believe Martin has been influenced by contemporary environmental issues, such as climate change, and uses religion to create a critical narrative.

Keywords: theology; natural world; George R.R. Martin; *Game of Thrones*; climate change

Elisabete Lopes (IPS/ ULICES)

Journeying through Dark Ecologies: H.P.Lovecraft’s “The Colour Out of Space” (1927) and Thomas Ligotti’s “The Shadow at the Bottom of the World” (1991)

This paper intends to examine how H.P. Lovecraft’s “The Colour Out of Space” (1927) and Thomas Ligotti’s “The Shadow at the Bottom of the World” (1991) address environmental issues within the frame of the so-called weird fiction. Both tales encapsulate cautionary messages that dwell upon the imbalance of nature which appears in the tales connected with the emergence of strange unexplainable occurrences that ultimately affect the configuration of the rural landscape.

“The Colour Out of Space” takes place in a rural community in New England. An unnamed narrator goes to there to survey the place due to the future construction of a reservoir. Once arrived there, he becomes acquainted with unusual stories that revolve around the “strange days” (170) and the “blasted heath” (171). An old local, who has experienced the strange events that affected the community back then, Ammi Pierce tells the narrator that it all began with a meteor that fell from the sky. This occurrence triggered strange phenomena all over that place. The locals became fearful because the landscape

began to change, thus becoming overwhelmed with strange hues and monstrous shapes.

A similar phenomenon takes place in “The Shadow at the Bottom of the World”, as it tells the story of strange events that haunt the community and appear to be somehow connected to a scarecrow that belongs to a nearby farm. Unexpectedly, nature begins to be affected by a strange disease that changes both its colours and behaviours. These occurrences seem to tie in with the prophecies announced by Mr. Marble, a man that had long been studying the subtle signs emitted by the natural world.

In both tales it is implied that the resolution of the problems that arise in the sequence of these abnormal events, and that are at the origin of the mysterious illness that pervades the natural environment, will ultimately require a collective response from the locals, an aspect that implies that somehow human nature lies at the heart of the sudden phenomena that strike the rural community.

Keywords: H.P. Lovecraft; “The Colour out of Space”; Thomas Ligotti; “The Shadow at the Bottom of the World”; horror/weird fiction; strange phenomena; nature; environmental humanities

Fatma Gamze Erkan (Ege University)

No Grass, No Life: Depiction of Ecological Disaster in John Christopher’s *The Death of Grass*

Environmental destruction is one of the biggest problems of the modern age. After the environmental pollution and the damage it caused started to increase, the works based on environmental issues also began to rise. In science fiction works, which offer predictions about the future and warn in order to prevent possible disasters, it has been impressively shown that the ecological balance, which is disrupted by unconscious human behaviour, causes serious damage, diseases and deaths on nature and its inhabitants. The British science fiction writer John Christopher depicts such a post-apocalyptic world in his novel *The Death of Grass* (1956). The main theme of the novel is on ecological disaster. The novel mainly focuses on a virus attacking rice plants in East Asia, causing a

massive famine. The main plot describes a family's attempts to travel across UK in search of a safe haven on their relatives' farm. The family's travel coincides with the rapid development of barbarism and violence among the British people. In the novel, Christopher warns of the fragility of the ecosystem and of modern civilization, as well as the dangers of overpopulation and relying too optimistically on science to solve all these problems. Based on all this, in this paper, I will examine how Christopher depicts in *The Death of Grass* that even the smallest human intervention in nature negatively affects them with other living beings and the ecosystem they need to live.

Keywords: human-nature relationship; environmental destruction; ecological disaster; post-apocalyptic fiction; *The Death of Grass*

Fernanda Luísa da Silva Feneja (ULICES)

Morality and didactics in Kurt Vonnegut's environmental writings

Although Kurt Vonnegut has been considered as a mainstream writer, many of his fictional works draw on typical elements of science fiction fantasy, namely space, technology and automation, and their impact on human condition as well as on the world around us. Hence, a significant body of science fiction and fantasy criticism has highlighted his contribution to the field and studied his thematic concerns from a Sci-Fi genre perspective. Overpopulation, environmental threats, sustainability and even pandemic disease are explored within the framework of Sci-Fi conventions, including his first book, *Player Piano* (1952) and iconic short stories published mainly in the 1960s and 1970s.

This paper relies on such examples to discuss Vonnegut's environmental disquiet and literary expression. Considering the persistence, in contemporary world, of the problems he exposed, I intend to analyse, in particular, the moral and didactic possibilities of his fiction; in addition, I shall discuss how his specific style may challenge the limits of science fiction/fantasy and also open new paths, apt to observe our current fragility.

Keywords: environment; overpopulation; morality; didactics; Sci-Fi genre

Francisco Ricardo Silveira (FLUC – CLP)

***Neon Genesis Evangelion* e o Complexo da Lagosta: uma lógica de
humanimaldade**

Em 1989, a psicanalista Françoise Dolto definiu o “complexo da lagosta” enquanto metáfora que aproxima o período de retraimento introspectivo na adolescência humana aos crustáceos necessitados de abandonar o velho exosqueleto para formar um conforme o seu corpo crescido. Ora, a série televisiva pós-apocalíptica *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (Hideaki Anno; 1995-1996) centra-se precisamente num grupo de adolescentes encarregados de incorporar os EVAs – robôs antropomórficos gigantes de combate cuja compatibilidade biomecânica está restrita a uns poucos escolhidos – para derrotar os Anjos – seres igualmente gigantes com variadas formas/poderes que parecem invadir a Terra. Tal plano de salvação da humanidade revela-se uma fachada conspirativa do chamado Projecto de Instrumentalidade Humana, elaborado pela organização paramilitar NERV que os pilotos adolescentes servem. Este fundamenta-se na ideia megalómana de absorver todas as pessoas num óvulo colectivista/mar amniótico, condenando-as a uma indefinível e líquida parte de um todo (aparentemente) sem sofrimento nem solidão, mas carente de carácter e vontade. Considerando tais contornos diegéticos, o objectivo deste trabalho passa por redefinir e aumentar o “complexo da lagosta” de Dolto enquanto conceito operativo humanimal capaz de iluminar a lógica institucional humana presente na série *Evangelion* através de características e representações bioculturais da lagosta – das quais se salientam a violência, a auto-preservação, o crescimento perpétuo, a aporia ou uma tensão de visibilidade/invisibilidade. Trata-se de analisar uma lógica de humanimaldade (i.e., a retórica da civilidade progressista e salvacionista mascarando o mal, a verdadeira selvajaria), uma materialidade biopolítica melhor corporizada pela silhueta híbrida e metafórica de um “homem-lagosta”.

Palavras-chave: *Evangelion*; Complexo Lagosta; Humanimaldade; Biopolítica

Gabriela Debita (University of Galați, Romania)

Herself A Multitude: The Rhizomic Quality of Nnedi Okorafor's Binti Trilogy

Nnedi Okorafor's award-winning and genre-altering Binti trilogy, set in a post-climate change future, traces the "rhizomic" evolution and metamorphosis of a young Himba woman, whose native culture is closely based on the Himba people of Namibia. Over the course of the series, Binti, a talented mathematical "harmonizer," acquires alien Meduse DNA, unlocks the ancient Enyi Zinariya technology inside herself, and becomes joined with the organic spaceship New Fish. Using Deleuze and Guattari's theory of the rhizome (1987) as a starting point, this paper seeks to analyze and map Binti's evolving identity and constant metamorphosis by exploring the application of some the principles of the rhizome in the trilogy: connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity, asignifying rupture, and cartography. Binti's connections are not a matter of order or logic: like a rhizome's points, which "can be connected to anything other, and must be" (7), she, herself an Other, connects to several others, who are also Other to her. There is both heterogeneity and multiplicity in her connections and in her evolving states of being, which I argue are maintained in a state of equilibrium by her role as a harmonizer. Despite the rootedness of her native culture, she evades unity and fixity; she cannot be pinned to a genetic axis or a single cultural identity. Very importantly, she cannot be reduced to a series of dualisms: child-woman, Himba-Enyi Zinariya, Terran-alien, human-animal, alive-dead, rooted-uprooted, etc. Through her rhizomic characters, of which Binti is just an example, Okorafor disrupts the Western-ness of speculative fiction by shattering the tree principle and branching into countless diverse, connecting, and intersecting directions.

Keywords: Binti; Nnedi Okorafor; speculative fiction; rhizome; multiplicity

George Augusto do Amaral (Universidade de São Paulo)

Reações e intrusões de Gaia na ficção científica do Antropoceno

A hipótese Gaia, desenvolvida por James Lovelock e Lynn Margulis nos anos 1970, foi pioneira na proposição de que os seres vivos, especialmente os

microrganismos, tiveram papel decisivo na formação do conjunto de sistemas biogeoquímicos que compõem a biosfera. Vista como um sistema planetário ou mesmo como um superorganismo unificador, Gaia coloca em destaque a preponderância da coexistência, coevolução e da simbiose entre seres orgânicos e inorgânicos como essenciais para a manutenção da vida no planeta. Trata-se de um equilíbrio que, recentemente, descobriu-se frágil, com a intensificação da queima de combustíveis fósseis e das demais atividades derivadas da expansão do capitalismo tardio, especialmente nos últimos 70 anos, que definem o Antropoceno. Nesse contexto, o pavor diante de uma possível catástrofe ambiental coloca em xeque a acolhedora mãe natureza do Holoceno, que se sujeita a ser protegida ou explorada, dando lugar à terrível Gaia feral (TSING, 2019) e vingativa (LOVELOCK, 2010), que age por meio de uma intrusão (STENGERS, 2015), deixando marcas definitivas no percurso histórico da sociedade moderna. À luz dessa reflexão sobre Gaia em suas diversas manifestações, proponho uma leitura do romance *Solaris* (1961), de Stanislaw Lem, e da trilogia *Comando Sul* (2014), de Jeff VanderMeer. Defendo que representações das reações ferais dessa Gaia intrusiva aparecem nas duas narrativas, tanto na figura do oceano plasmático incompreensível que envolve o planeta Solaris, quanto na Área X de VanderMeer, um local cercado por uma redoma invisível que age estranhamente a cada tentativa de exploração.

Palavras-Chave: Ficção científica; Antropoceno; Gaia; Jeff VanderMeer; Stanislaw Lem

Indrani Das Gupta (Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi, India)

Re-Envisioning Nature as a Feminist Space in Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's

Short Story "Sultana's Dream"

The representation of nature in literature has been understood as a metaphoric feminine space exploited and mutilated at will by masculine forces. Even though science fiction narratives have emerged as a site to critique, subvert the existing hierarchies and meanings of history and politics, many SF narratives have perpetuated the representation of nature as either passive or feminized and hence disposed to violent manipulation. However, with the rise in

ecofeminist and ecocritical studies in general, the need to invest nature with flesh and blood and reimagine feminized nature as a utopian space of possibility. Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's short story "Sultana's Dream," published in 1905, is one of the earliest SF narratives written in India that introduces this theme of reconstructing a utopian feminine space of nature. Published at a time when colonial forces were at their peak, "Sultana's Dream," in the representation of *Ladyland*, reimagines gender relations by embodying the natural world as a deconstruction of the patriarchal understanding of nature/female as weak and prone to domination and conquest. "Sultana's Dream" is a story that which to adapt Annette Kolodny's phrase from *The Land Before Her* (1984), refuses to be "captive, as it were, in the garden of someone else's imagination." *Ladyland* in Hossain's "Sultana's Dream" is examined in its interaction of colonial modernity, environment, and gender relations and paves the way toward multiple collaborative and synergistic networks.

Keywords: colonial modernity, utopian forms of possibility; Indian science fiction; feminine space of nature; *zenana*

João N.S. Almeida (FLUL)

***Groundhog Day* as an allegory of habituation to nature**

Groundhog Day (Harold Ramis, 1993), starring Bill Murray, one of the highest valued Hollywood comedy of ideas from the last 30 years, is typically seen as a parable of moral improvement. This reading is not disputable but does not explain the strong appeal of the movie: numerous works of fiction feature story arcs involve betterment of character, but this entry seems to be a special case within the genre. The present paper argues for a denser allegorical reading: Murray's journey seems to be less an achievement of a moral ideal, such as the Aristotelian good life, and suggests instead that it is representing habituation to life itself, thus resonating more universally with the audience. In this interpretation, the apparent time loop in which the protagonist is stuck does not differ in itself from the rest of the normal timeframe: it is Murray who breaks the loop when he learns to tolerate the repetition of life, sacrificing part of his ego and thus accepting the world as cyclical boredom. This reading

suggests a stronger allegorical mechanism here in use, one than mainstream interpretations rarely seem to concede; and thus, the tellurian topos of moral betterment has a secondary function as a plot device and does not in fact represent its main theme. Secondary literature such as scriptwriter Danny Rubin's book on the movie, Angus Fletcher work on allegory, and Ryan Gilbey's essay is used to illustrate the point.

Keywords: Time Travel; Bill Murray; Allegory; Comedy; Script

José Vieira Leitão (University of Coimbra, Faculty of Humanities, Center for the History of Society and Culture)

The Idea of Magic in *Adventure Time*

The post-apocalyptic narrative of the fantasy animation series *Adventure Time* takes place in a newly re-born world, where the remnants of contemporary industrial society have come to compose new natural forms and societies. The new world and new nature of *Adventure Time* function through an overlap of nuclear mutations and the release of pent-up magical power resulting from the explosion of the apocalyptic “mushroom bomb”. This event, not only created a new high-magic world, explicitly contrasted to our contemporary low-magic reality, but equally released ‘The Lich’, the personification of Universal extinction; an agent of change, focused on destruction, but ultimately capable of promoting new life by being the usher of magic into the new world. While explicit references to concrete esoteric and magical ideas from the 19th and 20th centuries, such as Thelema, Solomonic magic and the Tarot, are easily identifiable in *Adventure Time*, underlining all of these lay more classical notions of humoral theory, astrology, and human temperament. By exploring these notions, as well as early modern Galenic Medicine and the relationships between the human mind, body and immaterial/supernatural agencies admitted in this medical paradigm, this presentation aims at exploring the idea of magic in *Adventure Time* and how these are used to inform not only the concept of magical power in this series, but also the nature and character of ‘The Lich’.

Keywords: Magic; Galenic medicine; Tarot; Occultism; Melancholy

Kevin Henderson (Drury University)
Nature, Lynch and the Ecocritical Art Film:
Affective Representations of the Anthropocene

David Lynch's *Twin Peaks—The Return* (2017) departs from the series' origins as a pastiche of detective thrillers and primetime soaps to emerge (in part) as an ecocritical creature feature. In *The Return*'s most celebrated episode ("Part Eight: "Gotta Light?"), Lynch ventures deeper into experimental science fiction and fantasy filmmaking through a black-and-white recreation of the July 16, 1945 atomic test at Alamogordo, now commonly cited as the Anthropocene's origin date. Following the blast, Lynch introduces a fantasy backstory for the entire series via three creatures: the human-hybrid Woodsmen, the winged frogs that enter the mouths of their sleeping prey, and BOB, the series' original villain, who is now revealed to be an interdimensional creature awakened by nuclear testing. My presentation examines how *Twin Peaks* has transitioned from being a show about a forest that needs protecting to a sci-fi art film about a universe reeling in the aftermath of manmade ecological imbalance—a surreal narrative of the consequences of our former and current actions towards nature. I also analyze how this shift to disruptive avant-garde fantasy has created a mode of ecocriticism that resists didacticism in favor of providing affective—and purposefully ambiguous—ways to represent humankind's mutually destructive relationship with the natural world.

Keywords: Ecocriticism; David Lynch; Art Film; Anthropocene; Affect

Krushna Dande (Jawaharlal Nehru University)
"Are your eyes on the stars?": Space Colonisation in *Destinies* and *Far Frontiers*

Destinies (ed. Jim Baen, 1978-81) and its successor *Far Frontiers* (eds. Jim Baen & Jerry Pournelle, 1985-86) were paperback magazines of "science fiction and speculative fact", full of speculative engineering projects, geostrategic

doomsaying, and boosting for space colonisation. The third issue of *Destinies* opens with the tongue-in-cheek admission that it is “... a tool of the Space Industrialisation Conspiracy, a self-appointed organ for agitprop for high technology and space exploitation.” This is not far from the truth. In the techno-libertarian worldview of the magazine, all problems from societal malaise to environmental exhaustion could be solved through venturing into space. These magazines situated themselves as political agents in the Cold War, aligned explicitly with the expansionist free-market technocracy that they identified in the American empire. Many of the writers for the magazines had careers in aerospace and military industries, and were part of the advocacy of the Strategic Defence Initiative. Science-fictional speculation was presented as essential for planetary hegemony, and American capitalism and military interest were marshalled as both motive and means of building an ever-larger overnatural system.

This paper proposes to read the magazines’ projection of space as an ecological niche to be filled by technological civilisation, whether for economic, strategic, or teleological reasons. Also of interest is the vitriol reserved for the environmental movement of the 1970s and 80s, and the racist anxieties of writers who feared the dwindling of Anglo-American hegemony if space were to be ceded to adversaries. Attention will be paid to the political positions of the magazines in their differing modes of addressing a readership of would-be spacefarers through almost religious evocations of destiny and patriotism, and of policy planners through technophilic paranoia.

Keywords: science fiction; magazines; space colonisation; ecology; speculative fact

Marcelo Fornari López (Independent)

Não Identificado: Heterotopias of Deviation and Queer Resistance in *Bacurau*

This article investigates the relationship between utopia, resistance and queerness in *Bacurau* (2019), Kleber Mendonça Filho and Juliano Dornelles’ film about a fictional town of the same name that fights for survival against a foreign threat. Building on the work of Michel Foucault (2008) and queer

theorists such as José Esteban Muñoz (2009), Lee Edelman (2004) and Carla Freccero (2005), this text proposes that the film radically reflects on the political landscape of contemporary Brazil by its rendering of the town of Bacurau as a “heterotopia of deviation”, a space of resistance that emphasizes the possibilities of a queer futurity and radical ways of being. By examining the hybrid genres of the film and focusing on its utilization of science fiction’s tropes and language to stylistically emphasize the attack of far-right movements to marginalized communities, it hopes to better understand how the film can function as a complex allegory of Brazil that resists its political present and points towards a utopian future based on queer kinship and community.

Keywords: Utopia; Bacurau; Queerness; Heterotopia, Film

Mariana Batista da Cruz (NOVA/FCSH – CETAPS)

Of Cats and Crones: Hope and Eco-Feminist Utopianism in Leonora Carrington’s *The Hearing Trumpet*

Both in her visual and written productions, surrealist artist Leonora Carrington engages with the depiction of mythological interspecies communities, where hybrid creatures embody the hope of a peaceful and non-exploratory relationship between humans and animals. In her novella *The Hearing Trumpet*, published in 1974, Carrington employs the literary devices of surrealist aesthetics to envision the creation of a geriatric and ecofeminist utopia in the wake of environmental catastrophe. This paper draws on the concept of overhumanization as well as on Ernst Bloch’s notions of “revolutionary interest” and the “Not-Yet-Conscious” in order to understand the transformative impulse that inspires the elderly characters at the helm of the story to overthrow the patriarchal system that oppresses them within the walls of the nursing home and to establish an ecological community in a world entering a new Ice Age. It argues that, by projecting a post-apocalyptic vision of the planet and by raising concerns regarding social marginalization and intersectionality, *The Hearing Trumpet* at once shows an early form of ecological

awareness that resonates with Arne Næss' notion of deep ecology and introduces an early approach to the issue of environmental justice.

Keywords: Leonora Carrington; Ecofeminism; Hope; Deep Ecology; Utopia

Martin Simonson (Universidad del País Vasco UPV/EHU)

The Encounter with Nature in the Development of Modern Fantasy Literature

The Victorian *fin de siècle* and early years of the twentieth century were crucial periods for the development of a complex marriage between the celebration of the natural world and literary versions of fairy stories that would shape so much of the later fantasy literature written in the twentieth century. In Britain, the emphasis falls on an Englishness with roots that lie in the country, not the city, and a desire to rekindle wonder and explore Otherness in a familiar setting just around the corner — which, after a deeper scrutiny, turns out to be awe-inspiring and hold the essential and primal stuff of which myths are made. By taking a look at various literary expressions from the period, ranging from Arthur Machen to Rudyard Kipling and Lord Dunsany, I aim to show how the Romantic impulse, which had been present in earlier Victorian literature through original fairy tales and pseudo-medieval prose romances, merged and warped into the type of literature that readers would now recognize as modern fantasy. Nature here acted as a transcendental, liminal space that offered imaginative possibilities and served as a counter-narrative that engaged obliquely with a disenchanting contemporary reality.

Keywords; Nature Writing; Fantasy Literature; British Twentieth-Century Literature; Kenneth Grahame; Lord Dunsany

Midia Mohammadi (University of Tehran, Iran)

Ecocritical Approach toward Ustopias: Divergent Attitudes towards Scientific Advancement in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* and Emily Mandel's *Station Eleven*

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021) shows the world from a high-tech Artificial Friend's perspective who discovers the miraculous nature of the Sun and fights the pollution caused by the technological advancements. In a contrasting manner, Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* (2014) is set in twenty years after the post-breakout of the lethal Georgia flu and narrates the miseries of humankind in a clean world where the sun and stars can be seen more vividly than ever, but technological advancement and medicine have become elements of the past. While both novels are set in dystopian futures where humanity is threatened, their depicted dystopias are radically different. Their approaches towards technological advancements radically differ; however, the premonition they carry, which is losing humanity or damaging our environment irreversibly in the future, is the same. Both works belonging to the genre of "ustopia," a word coined by Margaret Atwood, express anxiety and hope in their subtle idiosyncratic ways despite their divergent attitudes towards science and technology. This study aims to read these two novels comparatively from an ecocritical perspective and draw on psychoanalysis to illuminate the root of the expressed anxiety in these works and the resilience methods they offer. Moreover, the article shows how modern ustopias embrace the cruciality of hope for humankind's survival in the time of crisis and delineate how it could be preserved by drawing on these two novels. In the end, the paper points out the ostensibly different ways of damage control proposed by ustopias that would keep humankind and humanity alive even in the post-apocalyptic world.

Keywords: Ustopia; pandemic literature; technology; social engineering; science fiction

Nicholas O. Pagan (University of Malaya)

Olaf Stapledon: Delineating Forms of Human Evolution

This paper will explore the ideas about human evolution that are expressed in Stapledon's science fiction – especially in his novel *Last and First Men: A Story of the Near and Far Future* (1930) – and endeavor to draw attention to their contemporary relevance. Sometimes deliberately poking fun at the Christian worldview, the narrator of *Last and First Men* seems to embrace a Darwinian model of human evolution – involving “descent with modification through natural selection” – in which there is no clearly defined goal. In *Last and First Men* the randomness inherent in this Darwinian model, however, is counterbalanced by striking examples of “creaturely design,” as, for instance, the Third Men endeavor to create bigger brains; the Ninth Men alter the physiology of the brain in the expectation that physical improvements will be accompanied by improvements in human consciousness; and the Sixteenth Men manipulate the brain in order to bring about a fusion of a diverse range of human minds. The narrator from a perspective of two billion years in the future sees some generations of men as making progress toward what he calls “spiritual maturity,” but any progress based on physical attempts to manipulate the evolutionary process is short-lived. Creating a fusion of minds between diverse individuals, for instance, may appear to bring about more harmony but may be at the expense of human individuality. The paper concludes by examining how Stapledon points to the dangers of over-emphasizing biological forms of human evolution which may displace the human need for the spiritual and aesthetic.

Keywords: Stapledon; Evolution; Creaturely Design; Spiritual; Aesthetic

Patrícia Azevedo da Silva (ICS-USP)

“Our destiny is to take root among the stars”: time traveling, spectres and ghosts, ruins, and the films of Jorge Jácome

‘What good is science fiction’s thinking about the present, the future, and the past? What good is its tendency to warn us to consider alternative ways of

thinking and doing?', wrote Octavia Butler, the first sci-fi female Black author, in her text *Positive Obsession*. Starting with this premise, as well as the debate proposed by Ayesha Hameed and Henriette Gunkel on visual cultures as time-traveling, I would like to consider Jorge Jácome's cinematography, in particular *Past Perfect*, *Flores*, *Fiesta Forever*, to try and discuss these and other issues. Jácome's cinematography is rich in an exploration of images and sound evoking an anachronism of sorts, his films seeming, in my opinion, 'objects that through their own charge and materiality make transversal cuts through time and destabilize the chronotypes to which they belong. Such objects can act as portals to collapse two temporal moments together'. (Gunkel, Hameed, O'Sullivan, 2017). Drawing from the analysis of the concept of *hauntology* reviewed by Mark Fisher, in turn recuperating the concept early proposed by Derrida, and crossing this analysis with Benjamin's idea of 'angel of history', I would like to propose an analysis that plays with the idea of ruins and spectres, reconfiguring the limits of what is natural and built ('artificial'), from both the standpoint of landscape and environment, and the human. The body will play a central role both as a vehicle/portal (Butler) and because of its often absence (Jácome).

Keywords: Jácome; Time; Spectres; Ruins; Body

Priyanka Das (Presidency University, Kolkata, India)

From Aliens to Mermaids: The (Super)Natural in Korean Drama

The phenomenal growth of Hallyu, the Korean wave, has lately drew academic attention. As a nation profoundly aware of both its sublime history and technological advancements, Korea has meticulously ensured that its entertainment industry has a global outreach exhibiting just the right amount of Korean-ness. Most of the Korean dramas share a proclivity to depict an existence of two parallel worlds – a primitive and a futuristic. The attempt to depict both simultaneously is often materialized through Fantasy. Goblins, mermaids, grim-reapers, vampires, fabled foxes, aliens – K-Dramas offer a plethora of mythical creatures. This paper will take two such K-Dramas, *My*

Love from the Stars (2013) and *Legend of the Blue Sea* (2016) to understand the natural-supernatural debate as presented through fantasy discourse.

My Love from the Stars is about an alien who landed in Earth in 1609 during the Joseon Dynasty and having failed to return, he lived for 400 years witnessing the evolution of South Korea from its inception. Apart from a profound lamentation of rapid industrialization and perils of the culture industry, the show also highlights the disintegration of human magnanimity with the atrophy of Nature. The other show, *Legend of the Blue Sea* has a mermaid as its protagonist. Full of frequent references to the extinction of mermaids along with other sea-creatures, the show addresses the threats of climate change. Global warming, naval operations, sea-sports, fishing expedition and other elements of Oceanic concerns take the centre stage as the mermaid assumes the role of a mouthpiece for the marine communities. Drawn to humanity, both the protagonists emerge from Nature, feel suffocated in the 'over-natural' world of skyscrapers, expose its emptiness, eventually triggering a return to Nature.

Recent advances in Xenoarchaeology and Oceanic Studies offer new epistemologies to rethink extra-terrestrial dimensions of planetary relations. Using insights from these fields, this paper explores the human/ non-human binary in SF and Fantasy K-Dramas and investigates the possibility of a transcultural understanding of the (super)natural.

Keywords: K-Drama; Fantasy; Aliens; Mermaids; Oceanic Studies; Supernatural; Asian Popular Culture

Rebecca Cohen (Solent University)

“Put on a happy face”: Identity Crisis and the Shifting Coordinates of the Superhero Narrative

While allegory provides the necessary distance to allow superheroes to engage in a period of collective introspection about what it means to be a hero in the 21st century, evolving portrayals of supervillains simultaneously allow for formerly disparate elements of heroism to herald an even more nuanced examination of the contemporary social and political landscape. I interrogate

the tension and continuously eroding boundaries between the hero and the villain; and specifically how post-9/11 iterations of the character of Joker can be understood within a framework of masculinity that is intricately connected to their production contexts. I am interested in the way Joker's most recent incarnation connects so profoundly with the turbulent and complex chasm of post 9/11 America; and simultaneously provides a quiet examination of the latent anxieties that dominate the period.

Keywords: 9/11; Identity; Masculinity; Heroism; Violence

Rui Miguel Martins Mateus (CETAPS/FCSH-UNL)

Dark Lords and Nature: Destroying Landscapes in Robert Jordan's *The Wheel of Time Series*

In epic fantasies where the confrontation between good and evil is the main theme of the story, nature often takes the role of victim. It is usually affected by the presence and actions of Dark Lords who take control of certain regions of the world map. In the places where the Dark Lords' influence is strongest, nature suffers most. Nature, closely associated with landscape, takes up the role of character. Thus, with the thinning of the land, the goal of the story becomes one of healing and regeneration, a reestablishment of nature's former self. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how nature is the first casualty of the Dark Lord, as if their presence is antagonistic to the very places they occupy. The analysis will focus primarily on Robert Jordan's *The Wheel of Time series*, whose Dark One's effects over nature are drastic and unforgiving. It will also be interesting to provide examples from other epic fantasies to understand how the motif of a thinned landscape/nature forms a pattern across the genre. The negative effects of Dark Lords over landscape symbolize the perverse nature of Dark Lords themselves, but they also validate the struggle to help restore and revitalize lost natural landscapes. That reflects, not only the importance of fantasy as a means of conveying certain messages, but also the necessity for climate awareness that has become so important nowadays.

Keywords: Dark Lords; Wheel of Time; Landscapes; Nature as Victim; Fantasy

Sean Rhoads (Queen's University at Kingston)

**Surviving on Basic, Terraforming Mars, and Consuming Kibble: Failed
Utopias in James S.A. Corey's *The Expanse***

This paper offers an ecocritical and utopian analysis of James S.A. Corey's speculative fiction series of novels, novellas, short stories, and television show known collectively as *The Expanse*. I examine the settings of Earth, Mars, and the Belt and consider how the series' locales and plot—specifically natural and artificial ecosystems and unexpected, high-impact environmental events—affect these disparate settings and the humans living on or in them. I argue that Corey's texts offer extrapolative critiques of present-day concerns under the guise of failed utopias teeming with human and environmental issues, ranging from the governmental and political to the economic, social, and technological. I examine three recurring elements: Earth's social support system known as "basic"; the Martian terraforming project; and the ubiquitous Belter food known as "kibble," to serve as exemplars of this troubled utopian impulse. The texts utilize several recurring topics tied to notions of space and place: food and food production, the effect of gravity and environment on the human body, and the impact of technological accidents and highly improbable events, among others, to comment on contemporary human and environmental concerns. I argue that focusing on Corey's use of place reveals not only *The Expanse's* critical approach to utopia, but also an environmental and sociopolitical vision with implications for a variety of issues today. These issues include multiculturalism and diversity, social welfare programs and the centralization of authority, and the current infatuation with cosmic escapism as a response to Earth's anthropogenic ecological calamities and the crisis of climate change.

Keywords: James S.A. Corey; *The Expanse*; Utopia; Ecocriticism; Place

Sofia Duarte (University of Valencia)

Nonhuman Others as a New Hope in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* Trilogy

Almost two decades after the publication of *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), Margaret Atwood once again contemplates an utopian future through the *MaddAddam* Trilogy, containing *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013). In the books, readers discover an eco-dystopian narrative in which civilization has collapsed worldwide and humans are on the verge of extinction due to a widespread virus, the consequences of mass consumption and a society that is no longer sustainable. However, new species, especially those genetically modified, are rapidly adapting to this new world without technology and humans along with their impurity and excesses. I argue that the trilogy serves as a cautionary tale of the importance of embracing a multiplicity of voices when contemplating the future as well as the dangers of continuing down humanity's current path. Contrary to what readers find in most narratives, it is necessary to go beyond the archetype of the white male saviour by creating characters who manifest diversity in gender, race, class, and species by giving voice to those who are nonhuman and decentring the anthropocentric view of the world. Moreover, I suggest that when we acknowledge the nonhuman others in the novels as the human characters in it do, the trilogy can serve as a way of giving hope to readers that life will continue to exist on Earth even if the human species does not. In the novels, Atwood illustrates a post-human world and examines a narrative that goes beyond humans by giving voice to the Crakers, human-like animals whose destructive features have been removed and are better adapted to living in the wild, as well as Pigoons, pigs who have been genetically modified to have a human brain tissue, while describing an alternative way of civilization in which human dominion over nature no longer exists.

Keywords: Margaret Atwood; Animal Studies; animal representation; sentience; animal subjectivity

Tânia Cerqueira (University of Porto/CETAPS)

“In the woods the Tox is still wild”: The EcoGothic in Rory Power’s *Wilder Girls*

In Rory Power’s young adult standalone novel *Wilder Girls* (2019), a highly contagious disease, referred to as Tox, has been contained in Raxter, an isolated island. Once a private school for girls, Raxter is now a quarantine area where the former students struggle to survive. In an inhospitable island where the Tox touched everything, most girls end up dead from the sickness or the deadly violence that prompts them to kill each other provoked by the pandemic. Those who survive the flare-ups develop bodily mutations, such as gills, a taloned hand, or a second closed eyelid. The Tox models the girls after the natural environment that surrounds them. At the end of the novel, the origins of the Tox are revealed: a prehistoric parasite that, due to the temperatures rising, was no longer trapped in its icy home and took hold of every living thing in Raxter. Anthropogenic climate change has compromised the environment, creating a dystopian vision of nature. By critically engaging with the ecoGothic, this paper examines the intersections between the Gothic imagination and the natural world in *Wilder Girls* and how the Gothic imagery intertwines with environmental awareness. Moreover, this paper also analyses the relationship between the human being and nature since the novel questions this binary by breaking the boundaries and blurring the borders of what it means to be human and non-human. This problematisation converges with posthumanism, which will be explored in light of Pramod K. Nayar’s seminal work (2013).

Keywords: EcoGothic; pandemic; young adult fiction; dystopia; posthumanism

Teresa Botelho (Nova University of Lisbon, Portugal)

Eating the Sun: Utopian Techno-futures and the End of Nature in Solarpunk Fiction

Most narratives of utopian techno-futures emerging after cyberpunk offer visions of post-singularity futures where humans are liberated from the

natural world and its limitations, through an imaginative investment in science induced scenarios of abundance, frequently proposing alternative protocols of food production and consumption that carry no connections with agriculture as we understand it, as signifiers of these new possibilities.

In contrast with these techno-utopian futurities, contemporary science fiction concerned with environmental sustainability and with the impending climate crisis, have paid particular attention to the threats of access to food and to its manipulation as signs and metaphors of impending loss that highlight the precariousness of humanity's relation with an exhausted and depleted Earth.

In the last decade, a new imagination of possible futurities self-described as Solarpunk, has been questioning both models of thought, asking readers to go beyond dichotomies between the dreams of improbable techno-utopias where human needs are independent from any relation with the natural environment, and the dystopian visions of scarcity and impending break-down of the balanced ecosystems upon which the sustainability of Earth, humans and the biosphere are dependent, asking instead how to take back optimism, how to counter the scenarios of a dying earth, using science wisely in the service of sustainability and social justice and investing in the tropes of science fiction as a form of activism (A Solarpunk Manifesto, 2019).

This presentation will discuss the critical positioning and aesthetics of Solarpunk, analyzing how life-dependent foodways are reinvented, remembered or replaced in a corpus of short stories from the four main published collections of the genre: *Solarpunk: Ecological and Fantastical Stories of a Sustainable World*, Ed. Gerson Lodi-Ribeiro (2017), *Sunvault: Stories of Solarpunk and Eco-Speculation*, Ed. Phoebe Wagner and Brontë Christopher Wieland (2017), *EcoPunk!*, Ed. Liz Grzyb and Cat Sparks (2017) and *Multispecies Cities: Solarpunk Urban Futures*, Ed. Christopher Rupprecht et al. (2021), focusing on the ambiguities of the optimism projected in the imaginaries of the selected texts, constructed as narratives of the good life after nature.

Keywords: Tecnotopias; Climate Fiction; Foodways; Solarpunk

**Teresa de Ataíde Malafaia; Maria Isabel Barbudo; Nélia Cruz; Francisco
Ferreira da Silva (University of Lisbon)**

Panel: Distopia e Transumanidade na série britânica *Years and Years*

This was back in the day when we still had butterflies, when did you last see
one of them?

Years and Years, Episódio 1

O nosso painel pretende discutir o modo como olhamos o mundo e como este devolve esse olhar, simultaneamente singular e colectivo, na forma de uma série televisiva. Para isso utilizaremos como corpus de trabalho a série britânica *Years and Years* (2019). Esta narrativa sobre um futuro próximo especula sobre algumas das grandes preocupações do nosso tempo: a democracia, o populismo, a transumanidade e a família. A partir de uma micro-estrutura, núcleo dramático da acção, a família Lyons, chegamos à macro-estrutura: a memória de um país vs um mundo por vir. O futuro apresentado é simultaneamente assustador e plausível.

Por um lado, o declínio da sociedade e a decorrente disfunção política, social e comunicacional são representados em múltiplas manifestações, nomeadamente pelos campos de refugiados/desaparecidos; numa narrativa de cariz distópico sabe-se que o poder os confinou num espaço cercado e vigiado (Erstwhile), impossibilitando qualquer forma de comunicação e visibilidade social. Por outro lado, a série denuncia a perversidade do populismo, mostrando a facilidade com que ataca os políticos, anula a comunicação social e manipula a democracia para se promover.

Além disso, assistimos ao gradual processo de transformação de duas personagens jovens que visam corporizar uma transumanidade ligada à inteligência artificial, misturando a mente humana com a tecnologia. O resultado de tais experiências, que parecem todavia ignorar dimensões humanas conotadas com o sentimento, a sensibilidade e a própria noção do Belo, acaba por ser uma incógnita, deixando no ar várias interrogações que, em última instância, questionam o sentido da própria vida.

Palavras-chave: Distopia; transumanidade; memória; comunicação; populismo; marginalidades.

Teresa Nunes (FLUC/ CECH)

Da estátua ao ciborgue: A condição desumana em *Blade Runner 2049*

Entre os muitos mitos narrados nas *Metamorfoses* de Ovídio encontra-se a história de Pigmalião, um escultor que cinzelou uma estátua com tamanho realismo e paixão que o marfim se transformou em carne e a obra de arte numa mulher. A narrativa tornou-se motivo estético recorrente no cinema de ficção científica que a reescreveu, adaptou e/ou apropriou para tratar temas como a relação humano-máquina, o vanguardismo tecnológico e a inteligência artificial. A curtíssima metragem de George Méliès, *Pygmalion et Galathée* (1898), iniciou o percurso ainda nos primórdios do cinema. Seguiu-se *Metropolis* (1927) de Fritz Lang. Na contemporaneidade verifica-se uma acentuada omnipresença da diegese clássica reconfigurada, visível na quantidade e incidência temporal de filmes como *Ruby Sparks* (2012, Jonathan Dayton e Valerie Faris), *Her* (2013, Spike Jonze), *Ex Machina* (2014, Alex Garland), entre outros. Propõe-se aqui analisar um dos filmes desse largo conjunto – *Blade Runner 2049* (2017, Denis Villeneuve) –, refletindo sobre um dos tópicos do mito ovidiano, a agalmatofilia. O objetivo será explorar em que medida o desejo patológico por objetos antropomórficos assume a forma de uma especista, narcísica e misógina “Ars Cibernetica” 2.0 na tentativa humana de ultrapassar os limites da sua própria natureza através da criação de uma outra para dominar e explorar – os Replicants. Dar-se-á particular destaque aos elementos femininos deste povo sintético, porquanto este processo de desumanização (literal e ética) de homens vertidos em deuses ocorre por intermédio de um sexismo que é garante primeiro e último deste sádico projeto de transcendência.

Palavras-chave: Pigmalião; agalmatofilia; *Blade-Runner-2049*; ciborgue; Ars-Cibernetica-2.0

Tiago Ramos (CEAUL)

Género Feminino sob o Signo da Mulher-Máquina em *Metropolis* e *Ex Machina*

Metropolis (1927), de Fritz Lang, e *Ex Machina* (2015), de Alex Garland, são protagonizados por personagens que se enquadram no modelo do cientista soberbo (um arquétipo masculino) que emprega instrumentos de natureza científico-tecnológica com o intuito de criar humanóides, com inteligência artificial, cujo género é feminino. Esta comunicação tem como objetivo apurar a forma como, através da criação de uma mulher-máquina, os cientistas que protagonizam ambos os filmes tentam compreender os engenhos do género e sexualidade feminina tendo em vista dominá-la e torná-la uma mera extensão de si próprios. De igual modo, a perspetiva das mulheres-máquina, no esquema narrativo de ambos os filmes, será tida em conta, ao analisar-se a maneira como tanto a andróide Maria como a ginóide Ava reclamam independência ontológica ao insurgirem-se contra os seus Criadores.

Palavras-Chave: Ciborgue; Ciência; Cinema; Género; Ginóide

Umar Nizarudeen (Government College Madapally)

Cryogenic Dystopias: Persistence Of Entangled Caste And Race In GR Indugopan's "Ice -196°C"

GR Indugopan is one of the authors of science fiction and weird fiction genres in Malayalam, a language spoken predominantly in the Southern Indian state of Kerala. In his work *Ice -196 °C* (2012), he explores the entangled temporalities of cryogenic preservation, and regeneration of human bodies. *Ice -196 °C* is one of the pioneering science fiction works in Malayalam that pushed the boundaries of articulatory horizons in Malayalam, building on the spiritual and organic shamanic systems of the traditional communities belonging to Travancore, which is located in Kerala, India, extrapolating them to a post-human future. The ethical conundrums of cryogenic sleep and intergenerational revenge are contrasted with the primordial 'dharmic' ethics of Indo-Vedic culture. The science fiction universe that Indugopan charts out is a post-national one with spatial intensities that make it relatable to a

globalized readership, via translation. This technique renders the particular as universal, so everyone can relate to it. Conversely, particularism in this sci-fi novel is taken to the extreme as a hyper-futurism, with caste, which is a unique ancient mode of social stratification in India that got hypostasized later beyond its original vocational valences, reaching racial dimensions. Caste hierarchy itself turns post-human in the novel. The lead characters belong to the 'subaltern' sections of southern Indian society (here a digital elitist futurism meets an analogue subaltern materiality). An inertia pertains to caste in the narrative, since the more things change, the more they remain the same. The temporal leap as well as technological saturation achieved in this subaltern futurist narrative cannot function outside of the structural realm of 'caste' as a core principle. Here one is reminded of the quip attributed to Fredric Jameson that "it is possible to envisage the end of the world, but not that of capitalism." Similarly, the fantastic leaps of scientific progress attained in this book by the "local populace," (which is a neologism for the anthropological category of the 'primitive') cannot yet transcend the primordial discriminatory nexus of caste bodies, which flits in and out of the race matrix throughout the novel, as an invisible remainder. This paper purports to delve into this persistence of caste in subaltern sci-fi, where humans are aliens unto themselves.

Keywords: caste; entangled; race; universal

Vanesa Roldán Romero (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela)

Transhumanism and the Chthulucene in Becky Chambers' *A Common and Closed Orbit*

Transhumanism has been rising in both popularity and influence on western societies and philosophical thought. Dreams of mind transfer, immortality, or cloning as well as the fear of sentient and intelligent artificial intelligence (AI) can be traced in some of Netflix's most popular series such as *Altered Carbon* (2018), from the novel by Richard K. Morgan, or *Orphan Black* (2013), to mention just a few. Similarly, transhumanism has permeated Becky Chambers' fiction. The novel analysed in this paper, *A Closed and Common Orbit* (2016), a sequel in the author's Wayfarers series, explores the possibility of cloning human

bodies, the production of sentient AI, and the subsequent ethical implications of both science fiction tropes. Far from showing transhumanism as a miracle solution to limitations in human bodies and capacity to avoid climate change, the text presents the suspicions and fears of western societies towards transhumanism. This article aims to find evidence of how transhumanism operates in Becky Chambers' novel, its ethical effects concerning intrinsic and extrinsic values as well as its possible subversion through a posthumanist alliance in what Donna Haraway calls the Chthulucene.

Keywords: American Fiction; Transhumanism; Becky Chambers; Science Fiction; Intrinsic Value; Chthulucene

Vera Maria Bulla & Viviane Klen-Alves (Universidade da Geórgia)

O vestuário como resistência não verbal no romance *Viajantes do abismo*, de Nikelen Witter

Ao analisar a moda do século XIX na Europa e nos Estados Unidos, Crane (2000) identifica, através das vestimentas, traços identitários da sociedade e argumenta que as roupas funcionam como forma de comunicação simbólica transmitindo informações sobre o papel social, a posição social e o caráter de seus usuários. Contemplando o estudo de Crane acerca da simbologia de comunicação não verbal como um instrumento de resistência e expressão, e os estudos do que é ser mulher de De Beauvoir (1967), Butler (1999), e Heinämaa (1997), as autoras analisam o romance “Viajantes do abismo” (2019), da escritora brasileira Nikelen Witter. A obra, uma ficção científica distópica, com uma estética steampunk, faz uma releitura da sociedade do século XIX e narra a trajetória de Elissa Faina Till em sua busca por uma solução para salvar o planeta de uma tempestade de areia, consequência das mudanças climáticas. Adentrando o universo que é o vestuário de Elissa, interpretamos as relações simbólicas entre as vestimentas e a resistência da protagonista frente à sociedade e às mudanças climáticas em três diferentes momentos. Através de uma análise multimodal das roupas e cores utilizadas demonstramos como ocorre uma resistência não-verbal e discutimos a ligação das vestimentas à luta de vida de Elissa que tenta, acima de tudo, evitar a morte do planeta. As roupas e cores que outrora retratavam submissão passam a demonstrar transformação

e transgressão na identidade da personagem antes contida, liberta e, por fim, independente refletindo um novo entendimento do que seria feminino.

Keywords: Literatura Steampunk; ecocritical; resistência; meio ambiente; vestuário; mulher; feminino



BIONOTES

Abdullah Derin received his BA degree from Ege University, English Language and Literature Department in 2013. In 2014, he started to work as a Research Assistant at the Department of American Culture and Literature at Dokuz Eylül University. Since then, he has been working in that department. He received his MA degree in 2019 with a thesis on the transformative effect of “smart power” against hegemony in science fiction. In addition, he has Associate Degrees in “Photography and Camera Operation” and “Radio and Television Program Production”. He is currently working on his PhD thesis. His primary fields of study are science fiction, fantasy fiction, popular culture, cinema and graphic novels.

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Aline Ferreira is an Associate Professor at the University of Aveiro in Portugal where she teaches English Literature and Cultural Studies. Her main interests comprise the intersections between literature and science, bioethics, feminist utopias and women's studies. Publications include *I Am the Other: Literary Negotiations of Human Cloning* (Greenwood Press, 2005) as well as numerous articles in international journals. She is now working on a book provisionally entitled: *The Sexual Politics of the Artificial Womb: Fictional and Visual Representations*.

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Perspectives in the Anthropocene: Beyond Nature and Culture (Mimesis Edizioni, 2020, with Stefania Achella).

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Gerry Canavan teaches courses in contemporary American literature and popular culture, exploring the ways that authors, filmmakers, and other artists have explored and critiqued the conditions of contemporary life through their creative work. He has recently published an article on the apocalyptic imaginary in Margaret Atwood's environmental disaster novel *Oryx and Crake*, a chapter on Huntington's disease for *Disability in Science Fiction: Representations of Technology as Cure*, and an article on superhero fantasy in Butler's Patternist series in *Paradoxa's* special issue on *African SF*. He is the co-editor of special issues of *American Literature* and *Polygraph* on "speculative fiction" and "ecology and ideology," respectively. His edited critical anthology, *Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction* (co-edited with Kim Stanley Robinson) was published in spring 2014 by Wesleyan University Press and *The Cambridge Companion to American Science Fiction* which he co-edited with Eric Carl Link was just recently published in 2015 by Cambridge University Press.

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Priyanka Das is an Assistant Professor of English at the Department of English, Presidency University, Kolkata, India. She is a scholar of popular culture and teaches science fiction, fantasy and critical theory. Her M. Phil dissertation was on objectification of Male Body in Bollywood Movies and Advertisements. Her PhD is on *Game of Thrones*. She has presented and published on Robert Zemeckis’ *Back to the Future*, Hayao Miyazaki’s anime, *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*. She is currently working on Kaiju Monsters in Science fiction movies, and co-editing a book on Holocaust vs Popular Culture.

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