Challenging Precarity:
A Global Network

Precarious Lives, Uncertain Futures

BOOK of ABSTRACTS

Going Places? Representing Precarity, Postcolonial Tourism and Environmentalism across Texts and Discourse

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This talk intends to critically read the interrelated notions of precarity, postcolonial tourism and environmentalism by examining some of its textual manifestations in both literary and non-literary forms (Burch 2012; Carrigan 2012). Today it is a kind of truism to affirm that India is experiencing a growing emergence of tourism, thanks to a number of recent successful campaigns of promotion, but its impact upon local communities and ecologies may sometimes coincide with processes of exoticization and marginalization, which impose, and perpetuate, a sense of (hidden) precarity, especially when the so-called "minority" groups are concerned. My focus will be on the geographical, cultural and social context of the Andaman Islands (Sen 2017) as a case study to discuss discourses of asymmetrical power relations and reconfigurations of indigenous identity. In particular, I aim to question the linguistic, narrative, and multimodal representation of Adivasi subjects, landscape and uncertainty by taking into account 1) the Indian English fictional domain, with examples from human rights literature (Garg 2016) as well as young adult fiction (Gangopadhyay 2010), and 2) the multimodal dimension, with materials such as the official Andaman and Nicobar Tourism website (https://www.andamantourism.gov.in/Default.html), with its multiple attention-getting strategies. My methodological background will benefit from the combination of postcolonial studies, stylistics and critical discourse analysis (Bandyopadhyay 2012; Diwedi and Rajan 2016; Gavins 2007; Jeffries 2010).

Imagining Precarity: The Language and Utility of Contemporary Homelessness Fiction

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This paper examines the function that fiction serves in representing experiences of homelessness as an extreme form of precarity. In an era when increasing ethical and market demands for 'authenticity' and 'lived experience' coincide with the slogan 'nothing about us without us', can fiction about homelessness really matter?
From 1998 onwards, it was apparent that the voices of homeless people were largely absent from previous sociological research on homelessness (Ravenhill 2008) and that they were rarely given the opportunity to frame their own experiences, relationships or public images (Hodgetts, et al. 2006). Over the last 20 years, however, people with experience of homelessness have increasingly documented it in their own words. Today, homelessness charity websites frequently include pages dedicated to brief first-hand accounts. In light of the valid turn to real, true or life stories, imaginary leaps and literary forays into the conditions and impacts of precarity can seem tangential or redundant. The French anthropologist Marc Augé thinks otherwise. Auge's *No Fixed Abode* is a novella about a working homeless man called Henri who sleeps in his car on the streets of Paris. Augé subtitles the book 'an ethnofiction', as a 'narrative that evokes a social fact through the subjectivity of a particular individual' and suggests that 'he is using the novelist's mode of exposition to suggest the fleshy totality of emotion, uncertainty or anxiety concealed within the

themes he has picked out' (Augé 2013). Henri is a fictional construct, but he raises a real problem, as a member of what Guy Standing labels 'the precariat' (Standing 2011), and crucially, he displays both 'victim' and 'liberating' sides of this subgroup. This paper takes Augé claims for this experimental form and tests them against several examples of contemporary British novels about homelessness to identify the effects of narrative form, the use of language and gauge the utility of homelessness fiction.

Terrorism, Precarity and the Idea of Hospitality

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In my paper, I intend to discuss ways in which modern terrorism and the culture of fear it has instilled in Western societies in the post-9/11 world have corroded the premise of hospitability towards the alien other—a premise (or myth) upon which the idea of Western cultural superiority was founded (one only has to think of Derrida's assumption that to be hospitable is to be in an already empowered position). The erosion of hospitality as a duty of the so-called civilized world was further accelerated by the refugee crisis in the second decade of the current century. Kant's idea that a stranger has a right not to be treated as an enemy when s/he arrives in the land of another is dramatically challenged on a daily basis in a terror-afflicted Europe, to the extent that the advent of the oriental, non-Christian other is frequently treated, on the one hand, as an opportunity to reaffirm or call into question the so-called European (or Western) identity, and on the other, as a phenomenon that plays into Westerners' unconscious fear of the alien other as a potential terrorist entity. Such a double bind is not unprecedented in history, of course. Almost a hundred years ago, specific immigration laws in Britain served to contain the fear of the alien as terrorist in the form of the Russian dissident defecting or emigrating to European territories—J. Conrad fictionalized that phenomenon successfully in *The Secret Agent*.

The massive immigration waves and the fear of terrorism seem to cast a long shadow upon the very concept of hospitality, a term that I want to problematize in the context of today's climate of psychological uncertainty, using, among other documents, literature (especially post-9/11 fiction) that, in my view, exemplifies not only the fear of the other but also the affinity between a blunted sense of hospitality and the rise of intolerance.

Benjamin Zephaniah's *Refugee Boy*: Representing Refugee 'Crisis' in Literature

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'Refugee literature' symbiotically responds to sociocultural and political circumstances at the present time and fictionalises current issues such as fundamentalism, transnational terrorism and internally and externally displaced asylum seekers. 'Refuge literature' provides a realistic snapshot of the nature of migration in the twenty-first century and thematises the traumatic realities, fear, danger, loneliness, victimisation and dehumanisation shared by forcibly displaced people fleeing the civil war in Syria or elsewhere in the Middle East or the Global South. This study, motivated by social and political events and the so-called refugee 'crisis', will, in this context, analyse *Refugee*

Boy (2001) by Benjamin Zephaniah in order to critically understand various forms of harassment, violence, assault and exploitation experienced by refugees and to criticise inhumane immigration policies mediated and reflected through the represented experiences of the refugee characters. This study will reveal the process of interpellation, as a result of which the refugee characters internalise the inaccurate representation of the 'self', perform the narratives of the dominant power structures in return for recognition and visibility and reproduce the social relations of power. This study will also focus on whether postcolonial theory can critically contribute to the study of refugee literature because the so-called refugee 'crisis' justifies the binary paradigms of the oriental mentality and leads the 'developed' nations to take their historical 'responsibility', export democracy and help those in desperate situations.

Civilization Configurations and Global Precariousness in Post-9/11 Fiction

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In recent decades, civilizational interactions have been the subject of intense scholarly debate, particularly in the disciplines of international relations and civilization studies. Exploring the ideology of neoliberalism and the processes of decolonization and mass migration, scholars have predicted major upheavals and global precariousness molded by violent conflicts and wars. According to Huntington's clash of civilizations hypothesis (1993), future battles will arise from the rifts between civilizations. In fiction, this thesis, criticized for being reductionist and directed against Islam, became particularly relevant after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

This paper focuses on the dual optics of the literary representation of the 9/11 tragedy, including the religious and ideological polarization of those who identify themselves as representatives of non-Western civilizations. At one extreme, writers such as Don DeLillo have discussed 9/11 as a national American trauma that left indelible marks on the European consciousness, along with the causes and consequences of the political and economic dominance of the West in globalization processes. At the other extreme, despite the loss of human lives, writers such as Moshin Hamid have focused on the perception in the Islamic world of 9/11 as an act of revenge on America by Middle Eastern nations. In this confrontation, as Judith Butler argues, there should be a place to foster understanding of the implicit relationship between the precariousness of others' lives and one's own precarious existence.

The paper concludes that post-9/11 fiction accentuates the responsibility of the West for military conflicts in the East and the East's responsibility for Islamic terrorism in the West and proves that there are no alternatives to their coexistence. To minimize ontological precarity, we must pursue what Martin Amis calls "species consciousness".

Inclusive, Exclusive and Exceptional: On the Aporia of Citizenship

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The paper discusses how social precarity, with its systemic drivers of poverty, inequality and precarious livelihoods has persisted in post-apartheid South Africa, albeit in different forms. The paper connects the issue of precarity with politics of racism and xenophobia that are applicable to migrants and natives alike. Zakes Mda's *Ways of Dying* and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to our Hillbrow* are two literary works that chronicle social structures of precarity, marked by various forms of exclusion and unpredictability. Although very different in tone and style, these works both trace the intricate, mundane and seemingly casual erosions of agency that shuffle individuals – natives and migrants alike – downward into positions of relative economic and personal disadvantage in a class-stratified social world. They hone in on the micro-mechanisms that generate and solidify broader patterns of precarity. Natives and migrants are equally caught up in webs of power involving control and subterfuge, appropriation and resistance, negotiation and learning that constitute biopolitical lessons of what becoming a citizen may entail.

The Precarious Body as Savior for the Professional Class in *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*

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The latest movie by director Quentin Tarantino has been hailed by critics as a "love letter to '60s L.A". However, the historical setting of the film also furnishes a socio-economic dynamic in which precarity is glamorized and presented as a stabilizing factor for established social power structures. This is primarily exemplified through the penniless stuntman Cliff Booth (Brad Pitt), who acts as a double, driver and personal assistant to the affluent actor Rick Dalton (Leonardo DiCaprio). Therefore, I seek to analyze Booth's performance as an embodiment of precarity. A central element of my inquiry is the blurred relationship between labor and capital, e.g. how the stuntman acts as a (visual) simulacrum to his employer and how work-life boundaries are dissipated in the hyperreal environment of Hollywood.
I argue that the film ultimately glamorizes precarity, as the body of the stuntman not only salvages his patron, but also reinstates a declining professional class into the upper echelons of a fast-moving creative industry. This is achieved through the elimination of the unglamorous precarious bodies of the Manson Family, who have declared war on all forms of capital in Hollywood.
My approach is informed by John and Barbara Ehrenreich's hypothesis on the professional managerial class and how the post-Fordist shift has produced a new class of non-proletarian employees. I also draw from Judith Butler's observations on performativity and precarity in relation to gendered bodies and how precarity is linked to an increased exposure to violence and death.
This paper offers multi-layered insights into the pop cultural genealogy of current forms of precarity and how Hollywood hyperreality appears as a precursor to the neoliberal work environment. Therefore, this analysis sharpens the contours of the discursive relationship between precarity, hyperreality and a late capitalist entertainment logic.

Precarity and Feminist Art Practices in Antarctica in the Age of Climate Change

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If we look to the polar regions, from which this paper takes its point of departure, the world is already unrecognizable, even alien as the elements which we associate with the polar are disappearing at accelerated rates. In my paper for Rome I explore what I call "polar aesthetics". It is an aesthetics of another kind of future in which the consequences of climate change, pollution and species loss that may yet seem distant to the average citizen of the global North is made already all too manifest in the Arctic and Antarctic regions.

Polar Aesthetics adopts strategies of speculative fiction to open readers' eyes to the futures they already inhabit; one which uses contemporary feminist art and visual culture to address new forms of thought, perception, and feeling that are coming into being in the age of the Anthropocene, a term enjoying favor today in academic discourse to designate our geological era in which human-induced climate change is transforming our world. In this paper I share my research on feminist artists Judit Hersko (US and Hungary), Anne Noble (New Zealand) and Connie Samaras (US) who in new and imaginative ways represent the effects of climate in the polar regions and give voice and form to unfolding climatic issues about the precarious world that we inhabit.

The paper addresses Antarctica exclusively and how in the absence of an indigenous human population and a human population that excluded all women until the 1960s, feminist artists make linkages between the region and issues of climate change to gender, the relation of the human to the non-human, questions of territory, knowledge production, and empire. The intersectional framework in this chapter goes beyond naming categories to an analysis of how to understand the powerful webs where cultural and natural aspects of nature are entangled in the context of a modern visual tradition dominated by masculinist imagery of Antarctic wilderness from the Heroic Age of Exploration (1897-1922).

"Britain Had Become a Country of Winners and Losers": John Lanchester's *Capital* or the Crippling Power of Neoliberalism

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In their dialogue *Dispossession: the Performative and the Political* (2013), Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou define precarity as the "vulnerability to injury and loss" (20) and contend that precarity can only happen since we are always already dispossessed because of the individual's necessary relationship with the other: "Our interdependency establishes our vulnerability to social forms of deprivation". (20) Dispossession and precarity are therefore consequently intertwined and even more so in a neoliberal context, where interdependency no longer only relies solely on human interactions but on economic ones as well. As Wendy Brown showed in *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (2015), the *homo oeconomicus* has supplanted the *homo politicus*, suggesting that "all conduct is economic conduct" (9). Neoliberalism constitutes a "normative order of reason" (9) that seems to intensify processes of dispossession and precarity. John Lanchester's *Capital* (2012) gives a deft portrayal of crumbling ethics under the hegemony of

markets and profit, as the inhabitants of the fictional Pepys Road, London deal with the 2008 financial crisis and its impact. From a banker to a political refugee, *Capital* brings to the fore the insidious process of dispossession and the descent into precarity of its most vulnerable characters. This paper will aim at showing how the dynamics of dispossession and precarity are engendered by the monopoly of "capital", turning an economic disaster into a political, social and psychological crisis the characters are unable to cope with.

Leaving without Arriving: Uncertain Presents, Obstructed Futures in Contemporary Refugee Literature

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The current refugee crisis with its dehumanization and deligitimazation of those who, as the Vietnamese Canadian writer Kim Thúy, describes, have been "ejected from their past" and "have no future", "whose present is totally empty of meaning", who "live outside of time" and also "outside of space" (2018), calls for a counter narrative, one where sweeping negative imagery is replaced by individual stories that reaffirm personhood and expose the unimaginable cruelty of the traps of borders, seas, walls, smugglers, bureaucratic categorizations that manage and mismanage the movement of desperate people. Contemporary refugee literature, invoking but also disrupting the discourses of the exile and immigration aesthetics, is a complex construct, open to as many visions and formats as the variety of the experiences it portrays, but, as Timothy K. August suggests, shares a strategy that aims to render knowable and intimate a presence that, having been "produced, detained and contained at a distance" is "visible without being knowable" (2016: 68). This paper discusses two very different literary texts to identity and discuss alternative protocols of revealing and knowing and to problematize the role that imaginary proximity plays in the production of recognition and empathy –the play *The Jungle* (2017), by Joe Murphy and Joe Robertson, two volunteers who worked in the migrant camp of Calais from 2015 until its destruction by the French authorities in 2016, and which, performed by refugees, brings to the stage a collective portrayal of a diverse set of characters from a variety of conflict zones, and the novel *Exit West* (2017) by Moshin Hamid, which translates the global experience into the story of two cosmopolitan, urban young refugees from an unnamed country, as they move through a hostile world made accessible but no less unwelcoming, by the introduction of a magical realism device that eliminates geographical boundaries but maintains and exacerbates cultural borders.

Feeling Precarity: Cultivating Flexibility, Balance, and Openness at Tattva Yoga Amsterdam

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This paper interrogates the cultural aspects of precarity through the analysis of an Amsterdam yoga studio and its practices of feeling. Tattva Yoga (pseudonym) constitutes a localized instance of everyday life under conditions of precarity as it reaches the centers of the global north. It manifests an emergent structure of *feeling* (Williams) in which precarity has reached those previously

sheltered, such that "those who should be the white middle class *experience precarity as if it is new*" (Lorey in Puar 172, italics mine). Read through the lens of feeling, Tattva Yoga offers insight into the experiential dimension of precarity as a structure of feeling, and the concomitant mechanics of affective subject production facilitated within this structure.

Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork, this paper formulates Tattva Yoga's physical exercises and accompanying ethico-spiritual teachings as feeling practices particular to the present moment. While Lauren Berlant resists associating the precarious present with any single emotional experience, she tracks a structure of feeling characterized by "a desperation about losing traction" (Berlant in Puar 166), and proliferating depictions of subjectivity as "overwhelmed, forced to change, and yet also stuck" (Berlant 10). It is within this affective structure that Tattva Yoga's feeling practices instruct practitioners in cultivating flexibility, balance, and openness: feelings which respond to the conditions Berlant describes while simultaneously answering the affective demands of the neoliberal system. These feeling practices thus demonstrate a mechanics of affective subject production suited to precarity, in which feeling serves as both the means and the end of a performative practice. By identifying the character and mechanics of the structure of feeling in which Tattva Yoga participates, the observations specific to this case ramify towards theorizing the affective dimensions of subject production and everyday life under precarity.

Precarious Lives and the Refugee "Crisis" in Contemporary English Drama

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Contemporary English drama has increasingly engaged with issues of displacement and migration, dramatizing the plight of refugees attempting to enter 'Fortress Europe'. Works for the stage are part of a growing body of literary and artistic works cutting across various genres and art forms whose aim is to respond to global migrancy and humanitarian crises while countering stereotyped media representations that tend to construct refugees and forced migrants as markers of crisis. Drama becomes a powerful medium for the projection of images of Europe from the margins, as it attempts to restore humanity to refugees and "re-energize their position" (Woolley 2014: 9). As has been suggested, refugee plays function as "dramatic buffer zones […] re-inscribing alienation into the cultural and social make-up of British society" (Helff 2016:102).

This paper will discuss recent dramatic works that deal with the 'refugee crisis' with the aim to explore the complexities inherent to the representation on stage of the precarious lives of refugees. Furthermore, it will argue that since refugee plays invite audiences to reflect on issues such as "shelter, work, food, medical care, and legal status", they can tentatively offer a space for "a more inclusive and egalitarian way of recognizing precariousness". (Butler 2009: 13)

When Housing Insecurity Means "Stable Precarity": The Example of a Roman Squat

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The rise of neoliberalism into all the aspects of our lives, rather than a widespread well-being, has brought uncertainty about our individual and collective condition. This is especially true for the housing condition, which is increasingly perceived as an ultimate prize rather than a starting point for a stable and secure future.

The paper, in this regard, describes the relationships between migration and housing urban policies for low-income people in the city of Rome. It argues that the common point between the two issues is the chronicization of an emergency approach towards both of them, which has led as a consequence a paradoxical "stable housing precarity" for all those who are perceived as "Others".

From the moment public housing was born in Rome, it has been related also to migration and it has gradually developed a cultural configuration of housing as a "social award" for those who could demonstrate to be productive workers; for all the others economically and socially disadvantaged categories, policies have always been designed in the name of temporariness and with a little access to basic urban services.

Nonetheless, Rome has also a long counter-story of the struggles over housing that now are fighting both for non-European migrants' rights than against the current populist wave in the Local Government. They politically took charge of the housing for migrants' issue in response to exclusionary policies also through the practice of residential (and illegal) squats, which now are more and more characterized by the co-existence of migrants and Italian squatters.

This contribution will focus all these aspects through the analysis of a case study, a squat located in the Esquilino neighbourhood of Rome. It is based upon my ongoing PhD research with an anthropological perspective and the ethnographic methodology.

Talking about Utopia and Dystopia: The Fall of Ancient Carthage

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In 149 BC the Romans with a pretext declare war on Carthage. Before the siege begins, one of the two consuls of the year meets the Carthaginian ambassadors to set the conditions: the report that the Appian historian makes of the meeting between Censorinus and the Carthaginian representatives centered on the request to leave their businesses on seas and devote themselves to agriculture, otherwise they died together with the city. The Carthaginians have to leave the city and retreat to eighty stadiums from the coast; only the sanctuaries, the altars, the squares, the tombs would have been spared. But the strongest aspect is that the Roman consul presents a dystopia - the future of the Carthaginians without their city - as if it were a utopia - the beauty of life in the countryside. Says Cemsorinus:

> Believe me, Carthaginians, life inland, with the joys of agriculture and quiet, is much more equable. Although the gains of agriculture are, perhaps, smaller than those of mercantile life, they are surer and a great deal safer. In fact, a maritime city seems to me to be more like a ship than like solid ground, being so tossed about on the

waves of trouble and so much exposed to the vicissitudes of life, whereas an inland city enjoys all the security of the solid earth.

The dystopian perspective that the Carthaginians have before is then sharpened by the last sentence of the consul's speech: "In fact for you are Carthage, not the soil".
Rome's attempt is to separate people from the ground, from the territory, thus practically denying the possibility of a cultural identity in Carthage. In fact, in this way the Roman ideology, which sees the city, the civitas, as formed by the cives, is overturned on Carthage, unlike classical Greece, in which at the centre there is the πόλις, formed by πολῖται.

Vulnerable Refugees: Precarity and Resistance in Sharon Bala's *The Boat People*

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Our contemporary world is certainly characterized by a number of economic, political, cultural and social changes that have given rise to a general atmosphere of uncertainty and instabilities. In the Western world, the perception of global instabilities and injustices has perhaps grown more pronounced in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. As a result, Western societies advocated for their national security, thereby strengthening their security measures in order to guarantee the protection that their citizens deserved. This atmosphere of fear certainly expanded to encompass refugees and asylum seekers, who were suspiciously accused of having terrorist affiliations for the simple reason that they were fleeing from political persecution, conflicts or man- made disasters. Thus, refugees were no longer seen as victims, but rather as potential perpetrators of violence who "often do not count as rights-bearing subjects, nor even as recognizably human, like us" (Hyndman and Giles 1).
A number of novels published in contemporary Canadian literature deal with the precarious situation of refugees and the consequences of the new immigration laws in an age of neoliberal globalization. This paper will analyse Sharon Bala's *The Boat People*, a novel which portrays the lives of refugees, the so-called "boat people," who arrive in Canada after fleeing Sri Lanka's bloody civil war. By analyzing the figure of the main protagonist, Mahindan, it would be possible to bring to the fore the discrimination and abjection suffered by refugees due to their precarious existence. Moreover, one of the purposes of this paper will be to examine the strategies of resistance used by refugees to claim their human rights. In so doing, this paper will attempt to portray the agency of refugees who embrace their vulnerable condition as a means of surviving.

Broken Lives: Politics and Affect in the Semiotics of Untouchability

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In August 2019, on the occasion of Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, the end of "Clean India" campaign promoted by president Modi was celebrated. Over the last five years, millions of toilets have been built and sewerage networks have been expanded across the country not only to develop

sanitary awareness among Indians, but also to put an end to social inequalities linked to the practice of manual scavenging by Dalits. However, are changes in the infrastructural and institutional landscape viable solutions to dismantle the structure of untouchability? Can the precarity of the untouchables' lives, both in terms of individual safety and caste discrimination, be challenged once and for all?

In my paper, I will discuss the effects of the installation of advanced sanitation technology both on the untouchables' daily lives and the national imaginary of untouchability. Starting from a reading of Mulk Raj Anand's novel, *Untouchable* (1935), through the perspective of Affect Theory, I will compare the past and present conditions of Indian sanitation workers. I will think of the new infrastructure and technology of waste as semiotic structures which are unable to act on an affective level and, consequently, inapt to cure the "wound of the soul" (Anand 1981) of "broken subjects," the Dalits. Finally, I will argue that the irreducible otherness of the untouchables as well as the vulnerability of their condition can be revised only through a "political subjectivity" (Berlant 2011) inasmuch as the shame of discrimination is located corporeally and psychologically as much as socially.

In conclusion, "salvation by machinery" (Aguiar 2011) is a much too optimistic approach to make untouchability a thing of the past. The implementation of infrastructure can lay the groundwork for a shared and inclusive idea of society, but in order to put an end to the trauma of excrementalized subjectivities, a revision of what is meant by the political is necessary, thus engaging its notion with emotional, affective, and embodied experiences.

Ideological Borders and Insecurity: Transformation of Political Self in Vedat Turkali's *Kayıp Romanlar* (The Lost Novels)

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Vedat Turkali's *Kayıp Romanlar* (The Lost Novels), published in 2004, is the story of a Turkish doctor who returns to Istanbul after his long years as a political exile in Germany. Dr. Kotar, the protagonist in his seventies, is a former member of the underground Turkish Communist Party and holds a large amount of money that allegedly belongs to the party. The novel centres on his story in Istanbul where he tries to readapt himself to his hometown after so many years while he also tries to locate his political standpoint once again in Turkey's largely transformed ideological borders and cityscape.

"The Lost Novels" is a political book that recounts the story an exile's return to Turkey. While Dr. Kotar, the narrator/protagonist, a former member of Turkish Communist Party, seeks for a suitable political and social ground in Istanbul to settle himself; he meets a woman who is around forty years younger and finds himself in a passionate relationship. Dr. Kotar, at the same time, looks for an appropriate political party to transfer the money. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to analyse and question how Turkey's metamorphosed political atmosphere in 1990s created new ideological borders between individuals and how these new borders gave way to new ideological precarity. Through the concepts of political metaphors and ethnic identities, this paper will also analyse the political fragmentation of Turkey in the post-military coup era and question how that fragmentation created new class identities and contingencies.

Precarious Mechanisms in Ravi Subramanian's Novel *Don't Tell the Governor*

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The uncertainty of human existence caused by upheavals and radical transformations in recent politics and society has instigated numerous manifestations of precarity. The masses of dispossessed and deprived people have long been victims of political social and economic neglect. However, the plurality of the multifaceted deliberations about the precarity of life is yet to lead to possible solutions that can help to allay the uncertainties and persistent insecurities. Ravi Subramanian recent novel *Don't Tell the Governor* explores and questions the lofty ideals of resilience, security and autonomy that often conceals the gruesome reality of insecurities, exploitation and ostracizing within the labour force. Documenting some of the recent changes in the political and economic policies of India through controversies, scams, scandals and faulty decisions taken by the hegemony, the novel depicts issues that are realistic representations of the precarity of the present time. This is pertinent not only to India but the world over where life is dominated by the precarity of existence. The paper examines the veracity of Subramanian's perspectives about financial turmoil, urgent decision making and the fickleness of human nature, psyche and morality that makes way for such volatility and instability.

Neoliberal Discourse and Its Glamour "Trappings". On Revealed Precariousness

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English, like any other language, is an offspring of its age and consequently its use allows us to gain insight into systems of belief that have a bearing on the language itself. English is subject to the concept of performativity (Butler), which implies that English features identity as "malleable and contingently expressed through contextualized linguistic performance" (Pennycook, 2003). In this way, the language ideologies vary according to the kind of audience they are meant to be addressed to.

Speaking of neoliberalism, we define it as an economic and political current stating that the market sways over the ethics and actions of individuals. Neoliberalism needs a specific kind of audience as it sets up specific ideological requirements of the global labour force, urging "individuals to prove themselves as having the skills and qualities necessary to succeed in a competitive global economy" (Bacon, 2018), where flexibility, autonomy in the work place, freedom of life style choice prevail, and where inequality is touted as a glamourized virtue in the aftermath of competition and social mobility may not climb up the ladder, but may hinge on precarious situations. Our age is one ruled by the cynical kind of reason (Sloterdijk, 1987), being very different from the original thrust of the ancient Greek "kynikos". The other side of cynical discourse is its revealed precariousness.

The present study shows that English is an objectified form of capital that can be gained and used to advertise the idea according to which one can thereby achieve educational prestige and enjoy better career prospects. English is looked upon as an economic tool as it is the symbolic bearer of an imperial past. Its spread alongside globalization partially as an "invisible hand phenomenon"

(Ciutacu, 2006) has been accompanied by the unflinching stride of neoliberalism and English proficiency has been hailed as the gateway to a better life and connectedness.

The study discusses the meanings of Latin "precarius" and follows its evolution into English and links it into the contemporary weft of cynical reason meanings. It analyses stretches of neoliberal media discourse "trappings" and it shows forth the revealed precariousness of neoliberal discourse in English as "a commodified malleable and detachable resource or skill" (Park & Lo, 2012).

Sūardān (The Gift of the Pig) by Roopnarayan Sonkar: A Dalit Dream of Development against Precarity

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Sūardān (The Gift of the pig) is a provoking Hindi novel published at the beginning of the 21st century. The title deliberately echoes Premchand's iconic novel *Godan* (The Gift of the Cow) and it is a Dalit response to that narrative, in the form of a bold dream about destroying the plague of casteism and creating a new culture through development. The protagonists are three educated young Dalit men who return to their native village after getting their degrees. Instead of looking for a good and remunerative job abroad, they want to eradicate religious superstition and casteism, that have oppressed Indian society for ages. They set up a piggery farm, which turns them into millionaires and creates jobs for the local people, thus promoting a general upliftment of the economic conditions in the whole region. Their antagonists are the local upper caste politicians and priests, who cry scandal in the name of purity, but actually seek their interest by manipulating Dalit society. The story presents the development of Dalit *chetna* (consciousness) through the character of the corrupted Brahman Devishankar: he slowly realizes the unsustainability of caste-based discrimination, and his conversion to an egalitarian view of society is so radical that before dying he performs a 'gift of the pig' instead of the customary 'gift of a cow.' In my paper I will discuss issues of development and environmentalism in the framework of Dalit empowerment, as they are revealed in this metafictional narrative that creatively manipulates Premchand's intertext.

The Uses of Precarity: Figuring Self as Other in Hungarian Political Discourses Today

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Since the election of a rightwing government in Hungary in 2010, political and cultural discourses in the country have been increasingly dominated by attempts to cast Hungarian culture (and the putative Hungarian nation) as a cultural entity existing in a precarious state on the margins of other dominant cultures, in particular the culture of the so-called "West". Interestingly, this insistence on the otherness of Hungarian culture in the Western world, though it draws on elements of populism in Hungary from the interwar period, runs in stark contradiction to a long tradition of emphasizing Hungary's place in Western culture, whether political or religious. I consider the appeal of this rhetoric of precarity in the Hungarian context today from the perspective of Benjamin Barber's concepts of Jihad and McWorld (1995). My intention is to examine the ways in which precarity is

being used in the Hungarian context as a means with which to reinforce fundamentally conservative value systems. I will consider how insistences on the precarity of Hungarian culture function as a tool with which to denounce nonconformity and dismiss criticisms of Hungary originating outside the country. I will consider, furthermore, how the rhetoric of precarity in the Hungarian context is used as a justification for revisionist narratives of Hungary's history in the twentieth century. Finally, I will offer specific examples of the ways in which this rhetoric draws on and, in doing so, revives populist trends in Hungarian culture. My essential intention is to consider Hungarian example as a possible illustration of (mis)uses of the concept of precarity as a tool with which to construct images of consensus and enforce notions of normalcy.

Precarious Freedoms: The Artist's Challenges in Ben Okri's Writing

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My paper examines some fictional and non-fictional works by Ben Okri, all of which pivot around the idea of the artist's social commitment and responsibility. I will first focus on Okri's early celebration of the artist's ability to rethink reality and guide the masses, which are most powerfully expressed in his non-fictional collection *A Way of Being Free* (1997). As he claims in one of the essays: "It is precisely in a fractured broken age that we need mystery and a reawoken sense of wonder. We need them in order to begin to be whole again" ("The Joys of Storytelling I"). The question of freedom, in particular, is posed as a crucial issue at stake, as it is instrumental to creating better futures: "We are still learning how to be free. Freedom is the beginning of the greatest possibilities of the human genius. It is not the goal" ("Redreaming the World"). This early optimism is however replaced by deeper worries in his recent fiction *The Freedom Artist* (2019), a dystopian fable set in a post-truth reality where books are banned and people's freedom frightfully limited. By analysing this novel, I aim to reflect on the new challenges artists are invited to meet in a world strongly influenced by new instruments of social and political control, which are stifling the creativity and ethical impulse of the arts. What Okri invites us to reflect on are the dangerous effects of various forms of censorship and the possibilities of drawing new vital energy from the best products of human creativity in order to envisage better futures.

Responses to Planetary Precarity in Larissa Lai's *The Tiger Flu*

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Larissa Lai's speculative fiction novel *The Tiger Flu* (2018) presents a world where environmental decay coupled with advanced biotechnologies have resulted in sharp societal divisions on the basis of unequal access to resources and responses to the lack thereof. These responses hinge on a series of binaries; especially, the pairs male/female and human/posthuman are central to the novel and provide a standpoint from which to explore the different possibilities of reaction to the challenges of increasingly precarious futures. This paper analyses how the posthuman and human societies

represented in the novel cope with eco/technological precarity, including questions of food security and environmental breakdown. It aims to show how the situated forms of precarity in the novel produce similarly situated responses, and how different, layered forms of vulnerability are also essential in the production of these responses, which advocate, in turn, for radically different futures. For instance, under the human, male paradigms, reactions to planetary precarity turn towards a continuation of a patriarchal societal structure, a neoliberal capitalist superstructure and a perpetuation of authoritarian forms of violence, and instead point to a shift towards ecosophical modes of being under the female posthuman lens. Furthermore, this paper argues that, in *The Tiger Flu*, figurations of survival in increasingly precarious surroundings depend precisely on this turn towards ecosophy as a mode of resilience against the shared precariousness of post/human collectivity and as a way of resisting the particular forms of precarity that are currently being fostered by the products of our late capitalist technoscientific medium and our progressive immersion in the posthuman condition.

What Future for Social Rights under the Global Trade? Reflections and Scenarios

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We are experiencing a slowdown, if not a real crisis of the models of regional integration, caused by the resurgence of economic nationalisms. Even Countries that have traditionally championed an open global economy are now looking into ways to put a brake on imports, limit immigration and favour domestic production. These developments have all contributed to the recent marked slowdown in the growth of global trade, to the point that some experts have predicted a future characterized by processes of "de-globalization" and of upswing of national States' sovereignty on economic processes and on monetary and trade policies. In this scenario a solution could be the passage from free trade to fair trade, through a new sustainable legitimation of social clauses. In fact, in the perspective of strong re- launch of the linkage between international trade and promotion of core labour standards we have a fair trade complying with the rules, the principles of equality, solidarity and correctness within exchanges; a trade (and an economic development) that is not founded on competitive devaluation of social regimes, but, on the contrary, become an occasion to promote a sustainable development.

Temporary Occupancy as an Urban Indicator of Precariousness in Brussels. An Homological Comparison between Socio-Economic and Urban Fields

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For the last decade, «temporary occupancies» of vacant spaces have been considerably rising in Brussels. While this kind of urbanism is framed legally as «precarious occupancy» because of its short term and revocable nature, experts and stakeholders broadly avoid this terminology, favouring «transitory» or «temporary». This situation is due to the definition of «precarious», which is still

restricted to marginal situations in the urban field. Conversely, in sociology, «precariousness» is nowadays acknowledged as a general state of uncertainty that displays a broader spectrum and consequently reveals a range of plural forms in neoliberal societies.

The limited and often negative use of «precariousness» does not allow the phenomenon of temporary occupancies to be fully analysed and understood. Nevertheless, these urban forms could be one of the features of the contemporary precarious condition, just as labor forms are. To explore this gap, this paper draws an homological comparison between the socio-economic field, on the one hand, and the urban field, on the other hand, by paralleling precarious occupancy and precarious work. This homology enables a new definition and typology of «precarious» forms.

Generally, temporary occupancies can be considered as «precarious» urban structures in the city that are not only «transitory» but encompass other characteristics such as «unsafety», «insecurity», «uncertainty» and «deregulation». In Brussels, their forms are manifold according to a socio- liberal gradient. Analysing temporary occupancies through the prism of precariousness may help better defining the social issue at stake.

Speculative Friction, or, Neoliberalism Rhymes with Nothing: The Un-Poetic Turn of Resistance Writing and the Works of Derrick Jensen

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In *The Great Derangement*, Amitav Ghosh asserts that "what fiction…makes possible is to approach the world in a subjunctive mode, to conceive of it *as if* it were other than it is" (172), yet he suggests that literary fiction has failed to offer significant alternatives to the contemporary problems that contribute to climate change and environmental degradation. Despite Ghosh's identification of the subjunctive and often subjective mode of speculative fiction, this paper proposes the modified term "speculative friction" as a way to read our aesthetic discomfort with the potential didacticism of literary writing on the topic of climate change. Addressing the works of the American environmentalist writer Derrick Jensen, I will use his novel *Lives Less Valuable*—a story of social activists and dropouts murdering a corporate CEO—as one potential resolution to the contradiction of individual responsibilization faced by precarious subjects caught between neoliberal paralysis and the challenges of collective action. While Ghosh ends *The Great Derangement* with a hope that the into the future "will be born a generation that will be able to look upon the world with clearer eyes" (216-217), Jensen's novel and other writings refuse to defer the need for action and instead focus on immediate scenarios that unsettle the reader into recognizing the complex social and political histories embedded in the discourse of his novel's dime-store, crime-story aesthetic. Including a thinly-veiled metafictional rendering of the author himself in the novel, Jensen constructs his characters' dialogue partly from excerpts culled from historical texts of imperial conquest to illustrate that the ostensibly "uncertain futures" may be reasonably predicted through the Euro-American history of globalization. Read alongside Jensen's other environmental writings, the novel's aesthetic enacts the collective resistance of precarious subjects from disadvantaged economic, political, and environmental arenas.

Islands, Borders and the Architecture of Precarity in John Lanchester's *The Wall* (2019)

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Drawing on recent academic research on the re-emergence of the category of the border and its paradigmatic representation through the image of the 'Wall' in political practice and rhetoric as well as in philosophy, governmentality studies, literature, movies and art forms, this paper aims to analyze John Lanchester's acclaimed eponymous novel (2019) against the backdrop of the current geo-political conjuncture and its imaginative and discursive fallout in the UK.

Striking a balance between oppressive 'concrete/ness' and versatile tropology, the novel brings to life a dystopian representation of post climate-catastrophe Britain as a country whose beaches, as elsewhere in the world, have been submerged by sea level rise, while the extant coastal perimeter has been entirely surrounded by the "long low concrete monster" (Lanchester 2019: 4) of a giant wall. Every citizen must serve a few years as a "Defender", on duty on the wall in order to fight and block "the Others" ─ armed bands of displaced people, mostly from the Global South, trying to find a new homeland. Survivors are enslaved and turned into "Helpers". The Defenders who fail to stop the "enemies", in their turn, are put to sea to drift for unlikely safety, experiencing the life-changing shift from citizens to stateless persons and allowing for nuanced, unconventional representations of "Otherness" which upset more established 'us/them' dichotomies.

A challenging, polymorphic generic and thematic hybrid – spanning from 'instant' political satire and environmental dystopia to speculative fiction and from seaborne adventure story to post-apocalyptic parable in the wake of *Waterworld* (1995) – this novel has been variously approached as an indictment of the Global North's assault on the human right to social justice and mobility, an anti-xenophobic satire and, even, "a riff on Brexit and Trump" (Allardice 2019) steering between Kafka and Ballard, Buzzati and Coetzee (and, I would like to suggest, Defoe).

Relying, mainly, on a conjunctural cultural studies approach (Grossberg 2018; 2019, forthcoming), on critical border studies (Mezzadra and Neilson 2014; Casas-Cortez et al. 2015; Schimanski and Wolfe 2017) and migration studies (Anderson and Hughes 2015; Nail 2015, 2019; Horvath, Benta and Davison 2019, Baldwin and Bettini 2017), I aim to explore Lanchester's work, instead, in the light of Mezzadra and Neilson's notion of the border "as method", of its "strategic role […] in the fabrication of the world" through practices and discourses meant to shape "new forms of domination" (2014: vii) which thrive on precarity and contribute to reproducing it.

Precarity and Populism in the Brexit Debate in the British Press

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The sense of growing precarity haunting UK middle class in the face of globalisation has played a huge role in the referendum over Brexit. The positions of the two camps during the referendum campaign morphed largely along the divide between populists, promising to raise a fence against these external threatening forces, and mainstream politics that came through as defending the status quo. Interestingly enough, precarity seemed to inform the discourse about Brexit also conceptually.

If the vagueness inherent to the definition of people is what populism seems to thrive on, conversely, the lack of a unified definition of populism (Moffit 2016) is what allows its detractors to use it malleably against political opponents.

This paper addresses how precarity issues intersect the notion of populism in UK editorials on Brexit prior and immediately after the 2016 referendum, adopting a discourse-analytic perspective. Resting on previous work on the topic carried out by the author (Degano/Sicurella 2019), here the focus will be on definitions of populism that are explicitly given or assumed, and how these interact with the projected identity of the writers and other represented stakeholders. Identity is per se a precarious construct by virtue of its composite and stratified nature, as well as because of its being caught in the tension between self-perception and other perception. In times of crisis identity can become even more tenuous or conflicting and call for a renegotiation, which takes place first and foremost at the level of discourse.

The Case of the "Unaccompanied Alien Children": Precarity, Dehumanization and the Discourse of Immigration in the Age of Trump

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This paper is based on the analysis of a corpus of public statements made by current US President Donald Trump and his administrations regarding the so- called "Unaccompanied Alien Children" (sometimes also referred to as "Unaccompanied Minors"), i.e. the children separated from their migrant parents when crossing the US-Mexico borders. It will show how the discourse strategies used in public statements, speeches and interviews by Trump and other government officials are used to legitimise the progressive bureaucratization and dehumanization of children, with the effect of making their legal and human status precarious and under threat.

Family separation has become one of the trademarks of Trump's administration and specifically of his fight against illegal immigration. Under the new rules of the family separation policy, children travelling with adults and crossing the US-Mexico borders without authorization are taken away from their families and classified as "Unaccompanied Alien Children". An intense debate is currently raging between those who see the measure as a deterrent to stop the arrival of illegal immigrants and those who decry the dishumanity of a measure which could lead to traumatic psychological injury for the separated children (Hirschfeld Davis and Shear 2019).

On the basis of the analytical framework proposed by Critical Discourse Analysis (e.g. Reisigl & Wodak 2001, 2016), and of Halliday's transitivity system (Halliday and Matthiessen 2013), this paper analyses the grammatical and lexical strategies used to describe children separated from their parents. It will show how the definition of the minors as a group (or "nomination" strategy) and the action ascribed to them, or to which they are subjected (or "predication" strategy) may lead to their dehumanization, making repressive policies towards immigrants somehow more convincing to the general public. Ultimately the paper will show how discourses focussing on repressive policies against children are part of the more general anti-immigration discourse, which has been increasingly institutionalised both in the USA and in most of Europe (Wodak 2015).

Precariat, Precariousness, Precarity: A Lexicographic Analysis of the Multiple Facets of Employment Insecurity and Their Implications in the Translating Process

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In an influential work, the philosopher Judith Butler has tackled the issue of "linguistic survival" concerning individuals injured by speech, highlighting that the act of "surviving takes place in language" (Butler, 1997: 4). Moreover, in the interview by Eliza Kania, she has focused on gender disparity and on how this term effects vulnerability and social change: in particular, she has noted that "precariousness is a general feature of embodied life, a dimension of our corporeality and sociality. And precarity is a way that precariousness is amplified or made more acute under certain social policies. So precarity is induced" (Butler, 2013). As regards these terms, they both stem from the lexeme 'precariat', a concept according to the economist Guy Standing that is to be referred to as "a harbinger of the Good Society of the twenty-first century" (2011: vii). Precariat in his stance has in fact become "global" (2011: 1) and should be even defined a "*class-in-the-making*" (Standing, 2011: 7).

From a linguistic approach the term precariat appears to cover a broad category of meanings: it was coined in mid seventeen century, originated from the Latin 'prĕcārĭus', and is linked to 'precārī', in English to 'pray', as obtained from 'prex' that is 'entreaty, prayer' (Online Etymology Dictionary; English-word Information). Whereas 'precarity' is mostly utilised in sociology, 'precariat' and its related forms 'precariously' and 'precariousness' are generally used in legal, political, economic, and other contexts. The lexical features of the aforementioned terms are thus analysed, on the one hand by looking up their meaning in the standard English language dictionaries such as Collins Dictionary, Oxford Reference, Lexico.com. On the other hand, a selection of the occurrences retrieved from two language corpora, namely the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) are examined, along with some language variation occurrences from CORE: Corpus of Online Registers of English, aiming to discuss the implications of their linguistic use (and usage) when dealing with the process of translating from the English into Italian language texts.

"Great Things Are Done when Men and Mountains Meet". Taking on Precariousness in the Literature Classroom: The Case of William Blake

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According to CISL annual report, in the academic year 2019/2020 20% of the teachers in the Italian school system will hold a precarious position.

Recent studies have widely shown that precariousness affects the education systems in all of its aspects: teachers and students' lives, motivation, didactic contract and continuity of teaching and learning. Diffused precariousness in the school system doesn't allow teacher policies (OECD: 2005; 2018) to be developed. Consequently, students, above all disadvanteged students, are to be affected

by the lack of permanent, trained teachers and they develop a peculiar distrust of education and future work possibilities (OECD: 2018). What my study sets out to explore is how essential it is for the students to know what precariousness means, how important it is to talk about it, to discuss what their future might look like. This can be attained in class through the analysis of literary texts. This paper intends to demonstrate that it is possible to cope with precariousness using literature to explore social issues (Sills- Briegel/Camp: 2001). In particular, I chose Blake as a model to our students. The English poet lived with precariousness and instability all of his life and managed to face it, to be creative and committed despite the encountered difficulties. By working on his biography and texts, using new didactic methods to develop key competences, as well as encouraging discussions about contemporary issues, the goal of planned teaching units, and of this very paper, will be that of demonstrating how precariousness can be tackled in class. Furthermore, I will show how students can think of their own strategies to deal with it in their future experiences and optimistically see instability and uncertainties as a challenge with which it is possible to come to terms.

Precarity and the Ethics of Love in the Canadian City

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The global cities of the twenty-first century appear as both thriving cosmopolitan centers offering the opportunity of individual and social growth and improvement, and as crucial sites for the proliferation and testing of all sorts of vulnerability and precarity. Taking on Judith Butler's notion of precarity as differential precariousness, i.e., a condition of vulnerability that is *politically* induced against certain populations, this paper proposes to look at the ethics of love in Dionne Brand's novel *Love Enough* (2014) as an antidote against the differential exposure to violence and even death. Built as a collage of intertwined vignettes, the novel presents a myriad character who grapple through love to overcome and come to terms with their deracination and alienation in a city that is praised as the embodiment of the success of Canadian multiculturalism. I will explore the way in which various forms of love—*agape, eros, philia, and storge*—compete in this novel to counteract precarity and create the city of Toronto as the site of human sociability, cooperation and self-fulfillment.
My analysis draws on the theories of a variety of critics who have pondered the ethics of love in the context of affect and postcolonial theories, namely Terry Eagleton, Sara Ahmed, Lauren Berlant, Slavoj Žižek, Michael Hardt, Rosi Braidotti, Frantz Fanon, George Elliott Clarke, and bell hooks.

"When It Rains, It Pours Down". Migrant Workers and Precarious Lives in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*

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The paper analyzes the precarious lives of the travelling and migrant workers as they are described and narrated in Steinbeck's writings, focusing mainly on the characters of the two protagonists of the most famous *Of Mice and Men* (1937). His works are often set during the Great Depression of 1929, when the economy began to decline rapidly and the stock market continued to deteriorate up

until the dramatic crash in October of the same year. People lost their jobs and homes, while the profits of a great number of businesses fell dramatically, so determining the impossibility for most workers to find a job if not just moving North or West in the country, accepting temporary and precarious conditions of life. Often focused on the figure of the "migrant worker", both *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) and *Of Mice and Men* are set during this highly stressful period in American history, to which the terrible drought experienced by the Midwest made things much worse as the decade progressed. By focusing on migrant workers, Steinbeck presented an exhaustive analysis of what people did in order to survive. Most of them, having lost their houses and their jobs, felt they had no reason to stay where they were and left in search of greener pastures, heading mostly North or West towards California. Besides analyzing the main threads of the plot narrated *in Of Mice and Men*, the paper takes also into consideration the reasons why the book ended up on the banned book list put out by the American Library Association, because of vulgarity, racism, and its treatment of women.

Settling in Precarity: Paradoxicality in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*

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Reading Canadian novelist Yann Martel's work *Life of Pi* (2001), this paper employs precarity as a trope for paradoxicality and as a reading strategy to understand Canadian sensibility and psyche where many paradoxes derive from the haunting (un)national consciousness through two discursive modes: deterritorialization as territory and globality as locality. The protagonist Pi embarks on a sea voyage with his family from Pondicherry, India, to Canada, but a shipwreck leaves him alone in a lifeboat with a Bengali tiger and other three animals. Set in the terraqueous immensity, Pi is faced with poignant interrogations with survival, belief, and relationship. *Life of Pi* reiterates paradoxicality in its deterritorialization and globality. The deterritorialization in this novel is symbolized by the un-territorial waters and the fluidity of personal identity and physical sovereignty by the seawater. The precariousness of the seawater obfuscates visible national boundaries, allowing Pi to claim no fixed identity, and the religious syncretism – Pi's subscription to Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity – also deterritorializes and breaks down rigid religious doctrines. The narrative also renders precarious more philosophically taxonomical boundaries between humans and non-human animals, thus participating in the discourse of globality to paradoxically create a textual locality. In Canadian literature, the insistence on "locality" or "precarity" has been perplexed by Northrop Frye's "garrison mentality", and Martel's narrative dwelling in globality to eschew the dire locality makes him a "Canadian" and global writer. The narrative also settles in a precarious setting to expose the paradoxes of life and of a nation. Reading from a panoramic perspective, this paper rethinks, in the terms of precarity and precariousness, the parameters of globality in today's literary production and dissemination and redefines the globularity and planetarity from other spectacles.

The Elusive Sense of National Affiliation: Mohsin Hamid's Precarious Characters

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It is well-known how our time is dominated by the phenomenon of globalization which has been assuming the important role of destroying local cultures considering them as categories of diminishing significance. The objective is not only to foster economic business, but also to create a cosmopolitan society in which people could idealistically overcome national boundaries. However, the attempt to standardize culture, believing that what is ethnic had to be necessarily inferior, doesn't take into account the so-called "structures of feeling" according to Raymond Williams. Big cities especially in the Western world have been more and more characterised by a melting-pot of different people, ethnicities, cultures, religions. Newcomers are not only people in search of better life conditions, but also high educated people from the middle class. They all struggle between the desire to maintain their identity and the necessity to be assimilated in society. "Just what kind of assimilation is taking place today?" Tamar Jacoby asks. I would like to answer this question assuming the perspectives of two Mohsin Hamid's novels: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Exit West*. Borrowing Rebecca Walkowitz's definition, Hamid's novels are 'born translated' as he is a Pakistani raised in the USA where he lately becomes a writer. Like his characters, Hamid thinks that the process of assimilation suddenly fails when the terroristic attack at the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York occurs. The September 11th attack indelibly marks the international scene and leads to formulate new questions. Are postmodern fragmented identities the result of some external impositions or the result of an inescapable human condition? Does the sense of national belonging arise through the clash with other cultures? Through a close reading of Hamid's novels, my analysis will investigate on the sense of precariousness and alterity expressed by his characters.

'Passing' and Caste Precarity

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This paper considers the logic of "passing" as a subaltern strategy of social life, by which the subject wears the veneer of a caste-other. How does the everyday violence of a stratified society produce new social forms and ways of being? The title of Yashica Dutt's memoir, *Coming Out Dalit* [2019], gestures to precisely that phenomenon. Dutt's story, beginning with the birth certificate that attests to her Scheduled Caste [SC] status, and the Dalit caste name 'Nidaniya' that her grandfather abandoned, details decades of dissimulation, and the legitimate privileges it ensures. It also charts Dutt's "coming out," after a lifetime of swallowed insults-- thin gold earrings and plaited hair, English classes and birthday cake-- the labor of which forms the compelling narrative of the memoir. Costuming, cross- dressing, masquerade and mimicry: as Dutt says, "Artifice is not easy". The lineage of caste- passing could begin with B.R. Ambedkar's own poignant reflections in his autobiographical writings ("Waiting for a Visa"); passing requires both material and metphysical transformation, and is inevitably a failure. Thrown out of a Parsee hostel, a Brahmin home, and a Muslim village, momentary passing yields to revelation. The failure of "passing" might also be said to generate, dialectically the need for self-recognition. For while passing as a

phenomenon is prompted by the existential and material conditions of caste existence, passing also reads as the 'bad faith' of caste inauthenticity. In this paper, I study passing as a way to consider the precarity of Dalit life—temporary, in between, uncertain-- as well as a way to consider the demands for Dalit self-recognition. I will gesture to the history of both "passing" and "coming out", drawing on seminal Dalit texts like Baburao Bagul's *When I Hid my Caste* [1963] as well as the African-American experience and the logic of "double consciousness" to which many Dalit writers refer. I also mention the contemporary work of two visual artists who address "passing" and the caste question in recent exhibitions: Rajyshri Goody ("Body Building", Ishara Gallery, 2019) and Shilpa Gupta ("Altered Inheritances, Ishara Gallery, 2019).

Globalisation and Eradication of Human Values: A Study of Manjula Padmanabhan's Play *Harvest*

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Harvest by Manjula Padmanabhan is a futuristic play, extends the vision of an early decades of the 21 st century. This dystopian play dramatically narrates the tragic story of a middle class family from the Third World. Poverty and unemployment force them to sell their body to a buyer from the First World i.e. the United States. It exposes evils of globalization may likely befall on the people from poor or developing Third world countries. It also focuses on the issue of fear and reservation, which have witnessed an extreme advancement in wealth, technology and fundamentalism and social insecurities. In such a chaotic situation human beings, their culture or more seriously their existence is in danger. It losses the humanistic approach.

Globalisation has changed the socio-political, economical and cultural realities of the world. The use of technology has accelerated this process. Moreover, it has diminished the geographical and cultural boundaries. Globalization has brought people together, simultaneously, brought uneven development around the world along with an inequality. This is not only an economic dominance of the prominent countries but also the subjugation or distortion of the life and culture of the economically weaker nations. The play *Harvest* has rightly caught this exploitation and also marginalization from the major players of the developed countries. This modern colonialism has made the poor or developing world unease. In words of Obidah Yamma Soloman the interplay between nations offers an apparent state of disequilibrium (12).

The paper aims to focus on this panoptic vision of the power relation between the two worlds. It also intends to bring out the sadistic truth about the commoditization of human body and life which eventually leads to an eradication or annihilation of human values. It is "a dark, bitter and savagely funny vision of the cannibalistic future that awaits the human race" as described on the cover blurb of the play.

The power game is a form of domination or the modern form of colonialism where the power is obtained through control over mind, similar to Michael Foucault's notion of creating ultimate surveillance that renders an invisible power at the centre. In terms of Jeremy Bentham it is "a new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind" (Prabhakaran 2). This is in tune with Gramsci's notion of 'cultural hegemony' where control is obtained through consensus. Foucault argues in his *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* (1975) living human being with consciousness can be turned into a tool of power through systematic sophisticated mechanism.

The socio-political study reveals various ill effects of globalization on the Third World countries. It has dehumanized and exploited people through trade of everything including human organs. However, the paper will also shed light on globalization and its impact on human lives. It has made

the lives of poor more adverse. Commoditization of human life becomes more evident. People have turned into a commodity as the subject of global market. Simultaneously, it has created multiple power centers. The play raises this issue of globalization and focuses on the power structures and more significantly the relationship between the First and the Third worlds.

Freedom Lost or Found? Neoliberal Expulsions and City Transformations in Aman Sethi's *A Free Man*

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The aim of this proposal is to read Aman Sethi's *A Free Man* (2011), a non-fiction piece of literary journalism, employing Judith Butler's notion of *precarity* as developed in *Precarious Life. The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2004), Amartya Sen and Martha C. Nussbaum's concept of *human capabilities approach* (Sen 1992; Nussbaum 2011), Saskia Saseen's "Urban Capabilities" (2012) and *Expulsions* (2014), and Mike Davis's *Planet of Slums* as a key theoretical resources about poverty, precarity and freedom.

Sethi's literary reportage reflects the impact of globalization and poverty in the life of Mohammed Ashraf who, despite being educated in biology, a succession of menial and low-qualification jobs such as a butcher, a tailor or an electrician's apprentice finally took him to homelessness in Delhi. Specifically, this paper will look into such (hi)story precisely to point towards the neoliberal mechanisms operating behind and will open up a theoretical space to consider the nature of freedom amidst such maelstrom. Sassen states that "urban spaces possess the capacity to make new subjects and identities that would not be possible in, for example, rural areas or countries at large, which are dominated by different norms" (2012: 86) and adds that "joint responses required to solve urban problems place emphasis on an urban subject or identity, rather than on an individual or group identity, like one's religious creed or ethnic background" (Sassen, 2012: 87). This line of enquiry finds a unique response in Sethi's piece. Thus, the contention in this paper is that the city also brings about particular identities and subjectivities, driving together various adverse attributes, such as endemic mental pathologies and addiction on one hand, and synergies such as affective bonding, community organization, and individual freedom on the other.

Boundaries & Belonging, a View from Athens

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Independent scholar

The main idea behind precarity's 'rise' is that the broadening of deregulation in (economic and geographic) space has brought transformations that blur the boundaries of established social representations.

Here, I suggest broadening our optic towards their invisible aspects is tied to understanding their specific, local contexts. I present a view from Athens that highlights from an 'other' angle the space where the 'blurring of boundaries' and fragility of belonging can be better discussed.

Athens' crisis landscape (2014-2018), was a challenging context where I examined precarity and deregulation's dialectic. I used the concepts to articulate hypothesis that focus, between current

phenomena and an already complex socio-economic background, into aspects of daily life experience where critical issues co-evolve (housing, youth, immigration).

The research advanced with an in-depth examination of empirical evidence and their capacity to highlight precarity as a combined experience of multiple dynamics in specific places. I focused in qualitative data with interpretative rather than statistic power: on self-precarization practices observed among asylum seekers in Athens, and the local conditions that place them around immigrant districts, in and out of endangerment trajectories.

This minimum empirical understanding allowed the restructuring of (available) information into a spatial representation: Within the dense nexus of daily relationships precarity's dynamics multiply, combine, reproduce. Into the 'details' where big issues are embedded (place, neighbourhood, time, individual stance) scale, borders, geographies blur and precarity runs deeper.

To the degree those spatial qualities are not Athens' idiom, but an idiomatic expression of characteristics that encompass established spatial representations, we may, at place, need to re-examine their validity as a hyper-context within which we research precarity 'everywhere' today.

Uncertain Futures: The Case of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors

Giovanna Giurlanda
Università degli Studi di Roma "Tor Vergata"

Sudden changes in social, cultural, political, technological and economic context, that follow each other in the era of globalization, carry within them a plurality of interdependent crises, such as the crisis of world economic, of politics, of traditional societies, of values and ideologies, the ecological crisis, the crisis of humanity. Faced with this planetary crisis, man is seized by a persistent feeling of uncertainty and insecurity that generates in him a sense of anguish, precariousness and loss. The speech will highlight the effects of the crisis on young people and, in particular, it will deepen concerns, fears and the difficulties encountered by those children who, motivated by different factors, (wars, persecutions, poverty, discrimination, study), come to Italy alone. Unaccompanied foreign minors constitute, indeed, one of the most vulnerable categories and they are at risk for Trafficking in Human Beings, exploitation, violence and abuse. This contribution will intend to address the theme of growing and living in precarious conditions, with the aim of analysing, on one side, the possible risks to which migrant children left to themselves might be exposed and, on the other side, their ambitions, dreams, opportunities and future expectations.

Educational reflections must provide urgent, concrete and long-term to the new educational challenges, in order to improve person's condition, to prevent and counter juvenile distress and delinquency. Therefore, the intervention will be aimed to design educational actions of care to help young people accomplish an integrated policy, intended to meet their needs; develop and enhance their abilities to become active members of society; to acquire those skills necessary for their development and to achieve autonomy. The results and the patch of this qualitative research will be presented and discussed at the Conference.

The Role of Education and Migration in Evolution of Romanian Society. 30 years after 1989 Revolution

Mihaela Gligor
The Romanian Academy, Cluj-Napoca

30 years passed already since the Romanian Revolution from 1989. And the Romanian society still feels and struggle with the gap between socialism and capitalism. Poverty, migration, education and social challenges are more and more affiliated with the political evolution of the contemporary Romanian society. There is a massive migration of a large part of the active population, especially in Europe. In a free open Europe this is normal, but in Romanian case there are two distinct conditions: on one hand, some very talented and educated people leave Romania and establish in other countries, like Germany, Italy or Spain. They pursue a career and Romanian society is proud of them. On the other hand, parents who choose to work in Europe, for the sake of their families, leave their children behind in the care of relatives, usually grandparents, and those children have limited access to education and in many cases they leave the school. This is the Romanian paradox. There are many NGOs who are trying to do something in this matter and there also are many programs founded by the EU, but still there is a long way to go to solve these issues. My presentation aims to show some concrete examples, some successful stories, but also the sad part of a system who failed.

Populism and Planetary Precarity in Contemporary Indian Dystopian Fiction: The Case of Nayantara Sahgal's *When the Moon Shines* by Day (2017) and Prayaag Akbar's *Leila* (2018)

Dolores Herrero
University of Zaragoza

Although dystopia has always been a long-lasting trope in human culture, it is particularly now that dystopian and apocalyptic fiction has become especially popular all over the world. This has led many critics to conclude that we are living in a dystopian/post-apocalyptic Golden Age. In this respect, Indian fiction in English is no exception, as many well-known Indian writers are nowadays delving into worrying global issues, such as the precarious working and living conditions resulting from the rise of exclusionary nationalisms, right-wing populisms, ecological disasters of unprecedented dimensions that can make life on the planet eventually impossible and, last but not least, the global refugee crisis and its concomitant undeterred flows of people forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of the consequences of climate change, persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations of all sorts. The main aim of this presentation will be to discuss how contemporary Indian fiction denounces the barbarity of contemporary Indian nationalism, in particular the policies enforced by a repressive Indian state where tradition and purity are valued above multiculturality, dialogue and equality. In order to do that, I will focus on two internationally-acclaimed novels, namely, Nayantara Sahgal's *When the Moon Shines by Day* (2017) and Prayaag Akbar's *Leila* (2018). In different ways, both dystopias draw a telling portrait of India's contemporary precarious times. Whereas the former is a dystopian political satire that warns against the dangers of Indian fundamental Hindu nationalism and cultural censorship, the latter brings to

our attention the irreversible environmental damage, heat, dust and grime of a world on the verge of a terrifying tipping point, in which the ones who dare to defy the established power are condemned to live outside the city walls, and thus forced to live in filth and oppressive heat, as if they were less than nothing.

Precarity – The Great Unresolved Issue of Our Time

Sanchita Islam
Artist

The world has never seen such an abundance of wealth yet the divide between the haves and have nots grows wider. Nothing is certain, a whole life can be incinerated in minutes - what is left to rebuild out of the ash? As people struggle to hold onto jobs, buy a home, build a meaningful career, manage their mental health, navigate through stormy relationships and face a planet that is facing unprecedented climate change how does anyone find a way to carry on in the face of such uncertainty?

If the world chooses to remain in a bubble, in which Netflix continues to churn out content; the Kardashian's try and sell another useless product; and art and culture seem to be a rarefied pleasure that is redundant - how do you stay motivated to carry on? Some might say stay connected to nature, be in the present, put all the thoughts of doom and gloom to one side - the actions of one person can make a difference in a world that seems to have lost its way. Yes, these are precarious times that we are living in, which makes it more important than ever to stick your head above the parapet and scream your truth for everyone to hear.

Unsettling Precarity: The Representation of Migrants and Xenophobia in Contemporary South African Writing

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University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban

The renewed eruption of xenophobic violence in South Africa in September 2019, which has left 12 people dead and many foreign-owned shops looted and burnt down by marauding mobs, recalls the widespread xenophobic outbreaks of 2008 and 2015, in which scores of foreign nationals – mainly Africans – were killed and tens of thousands displaced across the country. In the aftermath of this latest outbreak, Zambia and Madagascar cancelled sports fixtures, retaliatory attacks were made on South African businesses in Nigeria, and the Nigerian government sent planes to repatriate 600 of its nationals. A shamed President Ramaphosa hurriedly sent a delegation under the Minister for International Relations and Co- operation to the opening of the UN General Assembly in New York to persuade the gathering of world leaders that South Africans are not xenophobic; and he also dispatched a team of special envoys to various African countries to reassure their heads of state about the safety of their nationals in South Africa as well as the country's commitment to the ideals of pan- Africanism. In 2018, Loren B Landau, from the African Centre for Migration and Society at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, called for a recalibration of how stories are told about migrants by civil society and academics: the binary narrative of victimhood needs to be unsettled by recognising the complex interrelationship of agency and precarity between migrant

victims and their victimisers. This paper will examine how the nexus of precarity and xenophobia is represented in contemporary writing about African migrants caught up in the upheavals in South Africa, with reference to works of fiction (Nadine Gordimer's novel *No Time Like the Present* and Novuyo Rosa Tshuma's short stories in *Shadows*), refugee memoirs (Aher Arap Bol's *The Lost Boy* and Jonny Steinberg's *A Man of Good Hope*), as well as Loren B Landau and Tanya Pampalone's collection of stories, *I Want to Go Home Forever*). These works suggest that the economic and social precarity of the majority of South Africans, despite 25 years of democracy, as manifest in the ongoing civil unrest and daily violent service delivery demonstrations, must be factored into an understanding of South African xenophobia.

Community Resurgence: Challenging Indigenous Precarity Through Lee Maracle's Fictions

Lucía López Serrano
University of Salamanca

> "Our stories are about our recovery, not our demise"
> —Lee Maracle, "Understanding Raven"

In her body of writing, Salish author and critic Lee Maracle has focused on advocating the incorporation and validation of Indigenous systems of knowledge to the process of decolonization, taking a stance for the cultural resurgence of Native communities based on self-reliance and self-determination. As part of her proposed model, she theorizes and illustrates the role of storytelling in the Indigenous renaissance, focusing on the Salish people, who not only understand it as a pedagogical tool for the transmission of science, but also for model of learning that encourages delineating conflicts in order to imagine possible solutions. In this line, her novels *Ravensong* and *Celia's Song* challenge the precarious position suffered by the Indigenous populations in Canada by illustrating the complex systems of oppressions that have and still work to the detriment of their well-being and ability to heal by their own means. Although her works are aware of the long history of assimilating policies by the Canadian government upon the Indigenous communities that share the territory, Maracle takes a contemporary view to address the root of stereotypes of welfare dependence, alcoholism and violence that surround the Indigenous community. Moreover, she examines the ongoing impact of colonization on their creation, highlighting the intergenerational transmission of cultural trauma: what Duran and Duran have named the "soul wound" of colonialism (45) and aligns with Marianne Hirsch's studies on postmemory; an added contribution to the precarity of Native communities that, Maracle argues, can only be remedied through the resurgence of Indigenous systems of knowledge. In this paper I argue that Maracle's fiction effectively shifts the emphasis from victimhood to resilience through her focus on Indigenous precarity by imagining a possibility of overcoming it through community resurgence.

Women, University and Academic Research. A Gender Sensitive Analysis on Research Products

Elvira Lozupone
Università degli Studi di Roma "Tor Vergata"

As Judith Butler in 2015 pointed out, in modern societies "precarity is not a passing and episodic condition, but a new form of regulation that distinguishes this historical time" (2015, vii).

Instead of being regarded as a social liability, inequalities caused by neoliberal forces are, thus, often enhanced and glamorized: but behind the appealing labels of flexibility, freedom, and autonomy in the workplace and in life style choice, lurk the specters of isolation, insecurity, and subservience to hegemonic forces. This represents an issue concerning feminism and gender equality also among academics, so that in the contemporaneity a real appreciation of femininity at any level of education, is far from being recognized.

The relationship between education and the construction of the subject's personality assumes an even greater weight in constructing a correct relationship with the feminine universe and the knowledge that emanates from it.

All interpersonal dynamics, moreover, do not take place in a vacuum of culture traditions and mentality, but are affected and accomplished through education and training practices that express pedagogical and existential anthropological conceptions.

This work presents itself as a research line, through the collection of data on male and female presence in the degrees of academic teaching in the university of Tor Vergata starting from the results of the first and second National Scientific Qualification (2014 - 2018) and by a qualitative (content) analysis of research products that are supposed to be influenced by gender.

This research is part of a broader reflective pedagogical issue concerning the possibility of a cultural transformation in which it is possible to appreciate women's contribution to society and the possibility for effective equality for the person who should be understood as an uniduality female/male.

The persistence of difficulties in fully understanding the resources that women can provide for human growth and progress, creates even more dismay when the recognition of the value of difference with respect to diversity is firmly recognized in the intercultural dialogue, in the integration of disabilities and recently in the field of sexual orientation as well, despite the fact that this issue, from a historical-cultural perspective, accompanies or even precedes all those just mentioned.

"But, My God! It Was My Material, and It Was All I Had to Deal with". The Precarity of Writing a Text: The Case of *Tender Is the Night*

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This paper will explore the precarity of writing a text. It will be about how stories come to be ordered in significant form, what shapes a story and gives it a certain direction or intent of meaning. According to Peter Brooks: "Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories that we tell and hear told, those we dream or imagine or would like to tell".

Moreover, Roland Barthes believed: "If I read this sentence, this story, or this word with pleasure, it is because they were written in pleasure […] But the opposite? Does writing in pleasure guarantee-guarantee me, the writer-my reader's pleasure? Not at all".

According to Sieglinde Lemke the three main characteristics of a precarious text relate to its content, its form, and its intent. I will explore this precarity examining the tortuous and painful process in Fitzgerald's writing of *Tender Is the Night*.

Tender Is the Night is known to have had the most intricate history of all of Fitzgerald's novel. The author struggled with it for ten years. The most common notions are that Fitzgerald worked on *Tender* so long that he rewrote it to death. He changed his plot three times and he introduced a basic confusion into the book. Moreover, he wrote *Tender* drunk.

In the summer of 1925 Fitzgerald began write the first version of *Tender, The Melarky Case*. It was to deal with matricide. In 1939, Fitzgerald discarded the matricide plot for a new plot, the Kelly version. In 1930, Fitzgerald returned to the matricide idea. In 1932, the author changed again the plot. The novel will be published only in 1934. The experience of Fitzgerald shows that the status of the novel's project in development is precarious for a large amount of time. What is happened in these nine years?

Frames "Trump" Facts: An Analysis of Donald Trump's Use of Language

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Università degli Studi di Roma "Tor Vergata"

Donald Trump is clearly one of the most interesting participants in the international political scenario, not only due to his unexpected victory in the 2016 presidential election, but also for his use of the English language. Over the last two years, the President has become a permanent fixture in the news. The media have analysed not only his political agenda, but also his appearance and his language. His unconventional use of language is detected both in formal speeches, and on Twitter, a social media he frequently uses. For the purpose of this paper, I will draw from the work of Lakoff (2011) that is necessary to investigate the role of frames and metaphors, both in general and in politics.

Moreover, drawing upon the work of Luntz (2002), Heath & Heath (2010), Berger (2003), and Cialdini (2009), I will focus on the main recurring features that make a speech persuasive. These features will be divided into two groups: those related to the message itself, and those affecting the speaker and his role.

I will show an analysis of various communicative events involving Trump, using the features of persuasiveness as lenses through which I look at Trump's language. Two joint press conferences (one with the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and one with the German Chancellor Angela Merkel), two formal speeches (the Inauguration Speech and the Speech before the 72nd United Nations General Assembly), and several tweets related to these four communicative events will be investigated and discussed.

Daoud's *Picasso* in 'Time of Cholera': Between "Cultural Genocide" & (Im)Possibilities in the Arab World

Bootheina Majoul
ISLT, University of Carthage – Tunisia

> Le preneur d'otage, le loup solitaire ainsi nommé par la littérature du fait divers et du djihadisme, le radicalisé est porteur d'une colère, d'une irréalité qui frappe le monde autour de lui, d'un absurde qu'il veut confronter avec sa croyance, d'une délinquance intime qu'il veut convertir en épopée.
> -*Le peintre dévorant la femme*, 101

> Fundamentalists do not just ban texts that fail to fit their world-views; they also reduce the texts they privilege to singular interpretations. They offer one answer, one moral.
> -Tabish Khair in *Terrorism in Literature*, 6

When precarity touches the cultural terrain, our future becomes uncertain. The Algerian writer Kamel Daoud invites readers into a journey inside Picasso's exposition in Paris entitled *Picasso 1932, année érotique* [*Picasso 1932, Erotic Years*]; he thus takes them into the cobweb of paintings by *Le peintre dévorant les femmes* [*The Painter Devouring the Woman*]. He spends a night at the museum and imagines how would an extremist react to Picasso's painted bodies and shapes. His main protagonist, he calls Abdallah, embodies radicalism with all its excesses. Daoud excavates through Abdallah's experience all his pain and anger against the "cultural genocide" committed and witnessed in the Arab world in the name of religion. Daoud's text sways between resistance & resilience, between denunciation and renunciation. It is an invitation to rethink art in the Arab world.

Socio-political insecurities, inherited conservatism, narrow mindedness, intolerance, extremism, religious misinterpretation or over interpretation are exposed and denounced, and the text becomes a canvas full of allegories, metaphors, insinuations, loaded with hidden/ revealed messages to the Arab reader and to the world. East/West dichotomy takes then a different trajectory. Daoud penetrates an extremist's mind in order to shock and shed light on the precarious socio-cultural situation in Algeria and elsewhere in the Arab world; he at the same time tries to understand how art and artists are still being condemned, persecuted and even executed in the name of religion.

Migrations, Re-locations, Border Crossings

C. Bruna Mancini
Università della Calabria

Starting from "Precarious Lives, Uncertain Futures" by Judith Butler, but also Salmon Rushdie's "Step Across This line" and other famous essays that analyse the vexed and sadly famous question of migration, re-location, and border crossing, I will focus on Caryl Phillips's works; in particular, his essays and novels centered on transnationality, multiple identities, and the liquid space of ocean and sea. Phillips's writings go straight to the heart of the matter, giving voice to the dis- and/or re-located selves in search of their mythical homeland, always fighting for an uncertain future. Reading them can be useful to put oneself in someone else's shoes and to assume a different perspective, opening oneself to whom was once considered as 'alterity' and 'otherness'.

Beyond Invisibility and Isolation: *Asylum and Exile: The Hidden Voices of London* by Bidisha

Elisabetta Marino
Università degli Studi di Roma "Tor Vergata"

A film-maker, a broadcaster, a writer, and a newspaper journalist (*The Independent*, *The Daily Telegraph*), Bidisha (born Bidisha Bandyopadhyay) had devoted much of her young life exploring the margins, and casting light on what is normally concealed or overlooked. Against the background of a global north where walls (both physical and psychological) are being increasingly built, through her multi-faceted activities, Bidisha has constantly strived to investigate what lies behind stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalizations.

This paper sets out to explore her latest volume entitled *Asylum and Exile: The Hidden Voices of London* (2015), the outcome of her outreach work −in the East End of London− with refugees and asylum seekers from different countries (Syria, Cameroon, Iran, to name a few) and diverse experiences. As will be shown, a sense of precarity is what binds their lives together, coupled with the frustration of belonging to the *precariat*, the new and unacknowledged "dangerous class", in the words of Guy Standing (2011). Drawing from Judith Butler's notion of ungrievability (*Frames of War*, 2009) and Hannah Arendt's politics of pity (*On Revolution*, 1963), this paper will focus on the strategies employed by Bidisha, a socially responsible artist, to contribute to the creation of a wider and more inclusive community beyond borders.

Uncertain Future of the Humanities. The Case of Poland

Halina Marlewicz
Jagiellonian University

In October 2019, a new law on Higher Education and Science has been introduced in Poland. Its foremost aim is "catching up" of Polish universities with the West. The catching up, also described as "aiming at perfection" of the given university is to be reflected by its higher classification on the globalised University ranking lists, such as Academic Ranking of World Universities (the Shanghai ranking). The official propaganda of the Polish Ministry of Higher Education also boasts that the law will limit the "publish or perish" trend, and the qualitative evaluation of the academics will replace the quantitative one. The quality of the academic achievement will be guided by means of bibliometric measures, as well as by in which publishing house or journal the research output is published. The best proof of the high quality of an article or a book will be publishing it in English with the high-rank English-language publisher. What more, the quality of the research will be evaluated according to an authoritatively pronounced number of disciplines, which was limited to 47. It forced some academics to determine their research profile according to a ministerial list and not according to their actual scientific profile.

In my talk, I shall focus on the conceivable long-term harmful effects of the new law on the future of the humanities in Poland. On chosen examples from particular disciplines such as philology, or Oriental Studies, I shall discuss the already noticeable vulnerability of the humanities in Poland, which may not survive the disastrously uncritical neoliberal, as well as neo-colonial − in its overall nature − reforming of the Polish academia.

Precarity, Marginality and Dispossession: Crossing Borders in *Babel* (Inarritu, 2006) and *Frozen River* (Courtney Hunt, 2008)

Gilles Menegaldo
University of Poitiers

Babel, Inarritu's third feature film, interweaves four different stories taking place in three continents over a five-day span. An incident (an American woman shot in Morocco on a tourist bus) triggers a series of events and affects the fate of several people. The events of the film are shown from various perspectives. The film stages characters having different social positions, from the rich American couple to the Moroccan goatherd or the undocumented Mexican nanny. We shall focus in particular on that character Amelia (Adriana Barazza) who undergoes a series of ordeals as she transgresses the orders of her employer and crosses the Mexican border, with dramatic consequences. She is marginalized, criminalized and finally expelled. Inarritu uses several narrative and formal devices (quick editing, colour schemes) in order to emphasize her predicament. He especially frames Amelia in close-up (fragmented body), in restricted spaces and uses a variety of camera angles (high-angle shots in the Sonora desert sequence).

Frozen River, set in and around the Mohawk reservation on either side of the US- Canadian border offers another approach of precarity and marginality also using the border motif. The film brings together two marginalized women, one white, Ray Eddy (Melissa Leo) the other, Lila Littlewolf (Misty Upham), a young Mohawk Indian. Both are mothers, deserted by their husbands, struggling hard to make a living. They team as immigrant- smugglers, driving Asian aliens hidden in the car-boot across the frozen river (St Lawrence) into the USA. The film deals with several issues (money, race, gender), as things start to go wrong while a sort of friendship develops between the two women. The film convincingly portrays the economic, emotional and social effects of poverty, destitution and alienation. It also emphasizes some deep-rooted prejudices. Again the use of close-ups is quite noticeable in order to favour idenfication with the characters.

Scopic Economy and the Spectacle of Labor

Minoo Moallem
University of California, Berkeley

In this paper, I interrogate the relationship between capital, labor, and systems of representation through commodity fetishism and what I call the "spectacle of labor". I argue that it would be impossible to understand questions of exploitation without examining the politics of vision and practices of mediation and mediatization. I explain that while the spectacle of the commodity has been crucial in commodity fetishism and concealment of the labor, we still need to understand how particular display of laboring bodies complement the ways in which power makes itself permanent. Through an analysis of the representation of the carpet weavers, I show how the spectacle of labor has been crucial in the transnationalization of exploitative labor since colonial modernity.

Most literature on the international division of labor dismisses questions of representations. The specific history of the intersection between capital, labor, and systems of representation in each locality is unique and would require careful genealogical and historical work. However, representational practices, I argue, have made it possible for distant and historically complex locations to come together without any contradiction, enabling feminization of some of the most precarious segments of the market within a global context.

Precarious Lives, Challenging Futures: Reviewing the Rights of Nachni in West Bengal

Monami Nag
Principal, Tarakeswar Girls High School

The folk culture of a land is not always a healthy preserve of its long forgotten tradition and heritage, it can also showcase the age-old manipulations of the society.Strangely enough different forms of art are born from such neglected corners of the society. When one takes a panoramic view of the folk art of Bengal one is struck by the myriad forms of oral art given birth by precarious conditions. This paper will concentrate on the travesties of the art form called Nachni. Nachnis are a group of female dancers who perform different episodes of myth like Mahabharata, Ramayana and Puranas etc. lf such oral renditions of these artists are enjoyed on one hand then these woman performers on the other hand are dishonoured and ostracised socially. These woman do not enjoy the basic rights of being a woman. Being born to poor families the precarity of their condition is such that most of these performers are sold by their parents to the highest bidder so that they can earn the bread for the family. Ironically Urmimala Sarkar Munshi in her article *Century of Negotiations the Changing Sphere of the Woman Dancer* points that the world appreciates a woman confined to the walls of domesticity but fails to accept a woman who is a nachni. She points out how the family which is being reared by such a woman forbids her as a part of the family. The Nachni goes through unfortunate folds of life – from being sold to the highest bidder to being sexually exploited by her rasik who happens to be the saviour and the trader of her calibre. A veteran 90-year old Sindhu Baladebi rues in *Ganashakti Daily* that "Our art is dying". The Nachnis are not only refused to enter the domestic threshold they are also denied from decent cremation after their death. Nachnis are unfortunately forgotten after they leave the stage. They can never enjoy the rights of being a woman, a wife, a mother. Yet they survive these social deprivations and keep the oral traditions of Bengal alive to contribute to the future of the folk forms.

Dystopian Settings and Climate Change on Stage: Images of Twentieth Century Theatre

Susana Nicolás Román
University of Almeria

The uncertainty and vulnerability of our collective condition as human beings has been enhanced by a progressive deterioration of freedom and autonomy by placing precarity as a permanent condition in our globalized era. Interdisciplinary scholarship on precarity also debates whether this phenomenon may include political ecologies as catalyst for a new politics of everyday life (Malone, 2017; Lorey, 2010). Over the last couple of decades, the menace of climate change has turned into more real. Teenager activists have become habitual in news' headlines whereas political actions seem to be silenced. Children and adolescents firmly hold a valuable understanding of the risks implied in the present model of aggressiveness towards nature. Thus, our argument focuses on the role of learning and education for successfully debating development issues in a changing climate. Playwrights are not blind to the urgency of raising awareness among people to fight against the degradation of the planet. This paper presents an overview of different plays focused on social justice, dystopia and environmental concerns by offering a panorama from the English playwright

Edward Bond, who insisted on the importance of drama as the most important weapon to denounce the problems of the real world, to the association *Climate Change Theatre Action* (CCTA). In 2015, fifty playwrights of this interesting group, representing every continent as well as several indigenous nations, were commissioned to write five-minute plays about an aspect of climate change. This collection of plays serves as an example of the empowering function of theatre as vivid communicator of the potential dangers of climate disasters.

New Generations Conquering a Voice.
Italian and German "Second Generations" Organize Themselves

Veronica Pastorino
Sachverständigenrat Deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration

The intervention will focus on two networks of new-generations' associations, NDO (*Neue Deutsche Organisationen* – New German Organisations) and CoNNGI (*Coordinamento Nazionale Nuove Generazioni Italiane* – National Coordination of New Generations of Italians), established respectively in Germany and Italy. Starting from the analysis of the reason why these similar networks are born in two European countries during the same period, I will argue that their birth was strictly correlated to the rising of the Right-populistic discourse against migrants, in general, and the non-acknowledgment of 'second/third generations' as people part of the society, in particular. One of the main goals of the people acting in NDO and CoNNGI is hence demonstrating their belonging to the reality in which they are born. In order to illustrate the dynamics that made the establishment of NDO and CoNNGI possible, I will recall the interpellation theory of Louis Althusser together with the frame of the subjection theory given by Judith Butler. In the end, I will analyse the power of speech act (Butler 1997b), which will help to identify the processes that led the actors in responding (and counter-speak) actively against the offensive speeches of which they were victims.

In particular, I will answer the following questions:

Would these groups of people – that are highly diverse on religious, sociological and cultural bases – have been reunited under the definition of "new generations" if they had not been negatively addressed by the European racist public discourse?

What strategies are used by CoNNGI and NDO in order to challenge the situation of discrimination experienced by the people with a migratory background?

Are These Lives Real? Precarious Migrants' Existences and Relationality in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006)

Alessia Polatti
Università di Verona

The aim of the paper is to investigate the involvement of concepts such as precariousness and precarity, global citizenship, home, class and belonging in the migrant existences of precariat described in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). As Mari Ruti posits, when they are not treated badly, subalterns are treated unilaterally, which means that they are completely at the mercy

of others. And "our masochism is inevitable in the sense that we are forced to cathect to those who harm us; our very survival depends on such wounded attachments" (Ruti, 2017). In a context of alienation – also according to Judith Butler's theorization of precarity – relationality acquires indeed a fundamental role. According to her "My relation with the others is what I am". Precariousness, by contrast, "has to be grasped not simply as a feature of *this* or *that* life, but as a generalized condition" (Butler, 2010).

Kiran Desai's novel deals with these paradigms. She describes agglomerates of migrant identities who struggle to survive to their own sense of loss and to react to their personal precarity and global precariousness. In a world of exploited labour force, relationality acquires a significant meaning: the suffering relationships between western employers and migrant workers contribute to the creation of both migrants' identities and that sense of precarity which destroys them. In order to resist, the protagonist Biju constructs a solid community in New York, but a community of migrants and outcasts. By acquiring the standpoint of the Indian migrant Desai tries to reverse the "them/us" dichotomy. As a result, the "other" is the western man, the American citizen who should empathise with poor foreigner workers. Thus, the novel is also raising an ontological question to its readers: are these precarious lives real? Through this query, Desai seems interested also in investigating the social impact of literature by exploring whether the act of reading can actually create - or not - a sense of empathy and agency.

On the Frictions of the Virtual Frontier: Labor in Cyberpunk

Salvatore Proietti
Università della Calabria

In years when a pervasive rhetoric was deterministically hailing the advent of "friction-free capitalism" thanks to computer technology, by definition associated with notions of complete malleability, and updating to Post-Fordist times the traditional imagery of the Frontier, in North America some crucial cyberpunk science fiction went against the grain.

In William Gibson's Sprawl trilogy, beginning with the ground-breaking *Neuromancer* (1984), a main focus is on the characters' role as labor-force, and on their strategies for gaining a degree of autonomy and self-determination against the forces of alienation. Connected by Gibson (an author whose Appalachian origins should not be downplayed) with earlier generations of workers and of working-class cultures, their strategies are about survival and endurance. At the same time, in their struggle as subaltern subjects, they often appear endowed with a standpoint conducive to a better understanding of the power roles at play in the new dispensation.

In later years, in dialogue with Donna Haraway's cyborg theory, women's and feminist cyberpunk will further elaborate on the centrality of labor in cyberspace, from Pat Cadigan's Synners (1991) to works by Laura J. Mixon, Melissa Scott, and others.

In their attempt to reclaim a place for embodiment as a site of resistance, these works (associated by Tom Moylan and other critics with a "critical" renewal of dystopian fiction) open up spaces of utopian hope.

Precarity and Neoliberal Self

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Precarity discourse is crucial in contemporary time. It exhibits accentuations of the precariousness of both the vulnerable and relational effectivity. Neoliberalism, in the case of former, withdraws not only the political assurance of protection of vulnerable citizens but also commodities the existence of being. Being is unprotected (even with the theoretical assurance per se, leave alone in the substantive sense) and reduced to exchange value. In the case of relational effectivity, one's vulnerability is not isolated from persistent vulnerability of others. These two aspects have invited succinct and sufficient attention in the precarity discourse. The present paper focuses on the relationship of precarity and self in neoliberalism era. This aspect needs attention on the following grounds: what has changed in the locations of 'self' in earlier capitalism (Capitalism One) and neoliberalism (Capitalism Two)? What are the changes in 'bourgeois values' from Capitalism one to Capitalism Two and their relationship with 'self'? The paper introduces the concept of 'neoliberal self' to denote a significant change concerning self and its relationship with inalienable bourgeois values.

The Geography of Uncertainty: A Model to Interpret the Globalization

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Università degli Studi di Roma "Tor Vergata"

Is it possible to associate the concept of uncertainty to the geographical field? At a first sight, it could seem an oxymoron, because geography is first of all about the study of the certain elements that compose the world reality and historically is the science useful to put order in the world. The main question of this contribution is: how can we define a situation of chaos, where a geopolitical centre misses, establishing a situation of global disorder, as we are living in the present times?
The Geography of Uncertainty can be a model to interpret the actual globalization, starting from the study of the early modern age, in which the uncertainty paradoxically emerged in the first steps of the globalization and in the acquisition of the scientific methods to represent the world.

A Tragedy of Precarity: *The Mourning Bride* by William Congreve

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Although *The Mourning Bride* (1697) was one of the most successful – if not the most successful – works by William Congreve, it did not obtain the attention of contemporary scholars (Potter, 1943; Avery, 1951). Nonetheless, it is clear that the peculiar structure of the tragedy, as well as the main theme, are deeply rooted in the phenomenon of precarity. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the

manifestations of precarity which are contained both in the main structure and in the main themes and characters of this tragedy.

As a matter of fact, *The Mourning Bride* distances itself from the Restoration tragedies that were typically performed at the end of the XVIII century: that is, the epic drama. The precarious adhesion to the conventions of the tragic *genre* will be discussed in this paper, as well as how precarity influences revenge: the central theme of the play which is denied due to the lack of courage and conviction of the revengers (Thomas, 1992). Finally, I will focus on the female protagonist, Zara: an ambitious queen whose precarious choices will menace her options and will lead her to failure and death.

Gun Island: Amitav Ghosh's Literary Challenge to the Eurocentric Anthropocene

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University of Zaragoza

This paper will focus on the analysis and discussion of Amitav Ghosh's recently published novel, *Gun Island* (2019). It will look at the novel's representation of the present climate and forced human mobility crises. As Amitav Ghosh's novel makes it clear, the reasons and effects of both crises are inherently connected with Europe's long history of empire. The major economic progress that European states enjoyed during the Enlightenment period would not have been possible without their capitalist exploitation of their colonies' natural and human labour sources. According to Braidotti (2006; 2013), such exploitation was carried out on the premise of the European Anthropocene's assumed superiority. Western imperialist discourses have generally justified their legitimacy to freely exploit their colonies' sources by establishing a competing relationship between the two halves that constitute the human self, namely, their socio-political discursive nature (*bios*) and their biological one (*zoe*). While westerners presented themselves as those closer to bios, and thus the most intelligent ones, they associated their colonised lands and peoples with *zoe*, which, due to its irrational inferior nature, they felt entitled to exploit. However, the catastrophic effects that the acceleration of global warming is having on both the environment and human beings worldwide have brought to light the unsustainability of such Euro- and anthropocentric capitalist system.

In *Gun Island*, Ghosh relies on the human faculty of storytelling as a strategy to decentre the privileged position that the capitalist Anthropocene has generally occupied. For this purpose, the novel intertwines a series of plotline connections between the characters and settings of the 17 th century Bengal legend, titled "The Gun Merchant", and the experiences undergone by the 21 st century environmental refugee characters that Ghosh includes in his novel. The main aim of my paper will be to demonstrate how, through those connections, the novel creates a transnational and trans-species community that effectively challenges the bios/ zoe dichotomy on which the expansion of capitalism has always depended.

Towards Dalit Aesthetics

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Recent years have witnessed the rise of writings by dalits from another cultural position in India. Translation from regional languages to English plays an important role in transferring power dynamics in a stratified caste pyramid in Indian society. This 'cultural rigging' endorses the fact of 'cultural silence'. We may use an Anglo-Bengali expression to explain it and that is what we call the 'Nirbakaization'(silencing) of dalit culture. The most common feature found in case of Dalit literature irrespective of whichever Indian regional language it is written exhibits the application of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's thought and philosophy. The aim is to build the society in new form in this postcolonial phase. Dalits are seen to raise voices of protest against torture unleashed upon them in each of the states. Women who lack consciousness, knowledge and power to change their condition in life are not represented in the mainstream feminist discourse. This is evident in the case of Dalit women in India whose voice has completely been excluded from the Dalit Movement and the Women's Movement. A call for Dalit Feminist Standpoint is necessitated which privileges the day-to-day lived experiences of Dalit women in India. Most of these novels are written in regional languages, except a few in English. This marks how the literary medium and the power of word helped marginalized women not only to articulate but also demand redress for their grievances.
Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* is a narrative account of her lived experiences and the experiences of other dalit women who bear the burden of multiple oppressions and are dehumanized, reduced to the category of beasts of burden and face culture of sexual exploitation, humiliation, violence, silence and impunity. This corpus further strengthens the call for Dalit Feminist Standpoint. Jaydeep Sarangi (2018) says, "Conceiving the ideology of Dr B.R. Ambedkar: 'Educate, agitate, organize' dalit women write back". This engaging body of discourse by dalit novelists glitters with militant use of metaphors, words, phrases and punctuations and achieves laurels in the reading world with a semiotic tag, 'writing as resistance'.

To Resist Means (not) to Survive. Challenging a Butlerian Critique of Minoritarian Violence on the Case of Marielle Franco

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University of Oldenburg

The Brazilian political activist Marielle Franco – a black, gay single mother – was a fearless fighter in a country dominated by inequality, police violence and racism. On 12th of March the Rio de Janeiro city councilor was assassinated in her car, only 18 months after her election. She had been characterized as a politician with social integrity challenging a country which president Michel Temer described as „all-male, almost exclusively white cabinet, in which more than half the population is black, mixed race or female". Franco coming from the endemic inequality of the favelas, challenged a critical approach to topics such as abortion, police crimes and gender equality. Just a few hours after the attack, ten thousands turned out across Brazil to protest about the murder of Franco. Hundreds of thousands have pledged their refusal to forget in more than 30 languages using the hashtag #MarielleFrancoPresente. The presentation aims at challenging a Butlerian

approach to Franco's case: How does vulnerability becomes a highlighted spectrum in Franc's marginalization as a black, gay, single mother and politician? How does the international protests interplay with Butler's concept of grievability? And how can political activism and theory evoke a critique from thinking to acting against violence?

Hilary Mantel's Trilogy. A Literary and Historical Vision of Unstable Human Lives

Rossana Sebellin
Università degli Studi di Roma "Tor Vergata"

Precariousness and uncertainty about the future is a paramount, paradigmatic problem in contemporary global society, bearing on the lives of millions of people in several ways and in multiple aspects of life: social, political, financial, economical and personal. This same sense of uncertainty, though, is far from new and has been experienced at various degrees in human history across the globe, particularly at times of political upheaval or authoritarian power. In my paper I would like to analyse how such sense of precariousness of personal life, faced with tyrannical political power, surfaces in the work of a contemporary writer: Hilary Mantel. In her Wolf Hall Trilogy, of which so far only the first two volumes have been issued (Wolf Hall, 2009; Bringing up the Bodies, 2012; the third novel, The Mirror and the Light, is due for March 2020), the author deals with the life of Thomas Cromwell, a blacksmith's son who climbs the social ladder up to the King's (Henry VIII) inner circle, where he is established as the King's Master Secretary. I wish to explore a contemporary vision of the past, through the lens of our current feeling of uncertainty, keeping in mind that any historical novel is bound to explain more of the times the author witnessed than give an accurate account of the past, even though Mantel's extensive historical research reached astonishing exactness. The political instability of the life at the Court of King Henry VIII, where human life is subjected to the whims of an unpredictable monarch and to the violence of a cruel, unforgiving social environment, becomes the lens through which the author describes our own unstable social and personal relations.

Precarity and Its Socio-Political Trends

Vijaya Sethi
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The term 'Precarity' refers to the condition of human existence despite of security, affecting material and psychological welfare. In context to the ongoing economic 'crisis' several scholars of Europe and America discuss the concept and politics of precarity. It is inextricable from our ever-shifting understanding of bodies, labour politics, the public sphere, space, life, the human and what it means to live with others. Judith Butler and Lauren Berlant were the most prominent US- based thinkers on precarity taken up from the European context, particularly in Germany. It has become a byword for life in late and later capitalism. Beyond the effects of specific global events and macroscale structures precarity inhabits the microspaces of everyday life. However, people attempt to disengage the stress of precarious life by constructing the illusion of uncertainty, Reaction to 9/11 by the Bush administration represents a case in point of reflexive denial of precarity through strategies that created illusions of certainty with deleterious results. In the developing country like India, the growing incidence of precarious employment across many sectors has a serious challenge.

The Neo-liberal arguments justify precarity as mandatory for the development of the free market economy. The precarious employment is also most pronounced in states where labour intensive industries are exposed to global import competition and where labour laws are rigid. In literary approach, Judith Butler's writing is a cornerstone for the growing body of precarity. He says that precarity is experienced by marginalised, poor and disenfranchised people who are exposed to economic insecurity, injury, violence, and forced migration. Even the cultural enthropologists are particularly attuned to the structure of feeling associated with precarious life worlds. They focus on emotion and subjectivity, uncertainty and displacement.

Thus the purpose of the present paper is to frame the ontological condition of people and their social marginality and vulnerable lines through the affect of precarity and precariousness.

Ecological Crises and Sociological Gesellschaft/Gemeinschaft in the Literary Representations of Migrant Pastoralist Community of the Indian Western Frontier

Yamini Shah
Ramnarain Ruia Autonomous College

Community is maintained by the sociological notions of cohesion and embeddedness. Ecological communities rejecting utilitarian contractual foundations and thriving on the Gesellschaft of having social relations based on impersonal ties as duty to a society or organisation. Socially, economically, linguistically backward Rabaris and Maaldharis occupational castes from Kachchh in Gujarat, India are pastoral migrant communities that continually relocate for their cattle so that the grazed land gets enough time to regrow. The lands assigned to them by royal decree are under threat owing to the usurpation by forest and tax department. At a time of climate crisis, depleting natural reserves, species going rapidly extinct, dying dialects, ethnicities and sub-castes, need for collective will to be proactive is essential. A socio-literary and ecocritical analysis of willingly migrant communities based on selected regional and anglophone literary works, folklore, local activism, political and legal issues faced that map the constantly shifting social reality shall be attempted.

Precarious Translators, Uncertain Translations: From Invisible to Automated Translators

Angela Sileo
Università degli Studi di Roma "Tor Vergata"

Debates concerning the role of translators have been going on for decades: from the translator's invisibility theorized by Lawrence Venuti (*The Translator's Invisibility*, 1995) through the unsuccessful experiment involving machine translations proposed by Umberto Eco in his *Dire quasi la stessa cosa* (2003), translators have been facing challenges to their status and role. On the one hand, their efforts have been aimed at acquiring and maintaining visibility on their produce: some publishers do give emphasis to translators' names on their translated book covers (some of them, namely Einaudi Editore, even devote space to translators' bionotes on back covers, as communicated by Strade – Sezione Traduttori Editoriali). On the other hand, however, they have been facing the 'menace' of automatic translations: Google Translate, iTranslate, Speak &

Translate, and Microsoft Translator seem to be increasingly used and replacing human translators when money saving turns out to be imperative.

This presentation is aimed at providing an overall perspective on the precarity and uncertainty of the future of translation and translators due to the lack of universally acknowledged agreements to regulate the transaction between the contracting parties (where such agreements do exist, they are not necessarily and mandatorily complied with). The paper shall be focused on both contemporary socio-economic conditions of translators (copyright, visibility, and so on) and future perspectives for the profession in terms of automated challengers. Practical examples shall be provided in order to highlight whether and how a human translator is more efficient than an automated one.

Suspended Life in The Wait of Citizenship: *L'Afrance* or the Story Of Non-Belonging

Adriana Simoncelli
Jagiellonian University

The history of the planet has always been characterized by migrations and population movements. This has led to constant contact and interaction between cultures, but today more than ever, people are closely connected by interdependence due to migration on unprecedented scale. And yet, the history of humanity is a history of migration.

Italian geneticist Luca Luigi Cavalli-Sforza was one of the first to prove that we all are the result of the infinite series of migrations originated in Africa tens of thousands of years ago, because our genes still contain a trace of the history of humanity left by this great migratory movement. The revolutionary discovery not only refutes the controversial concept of race but also reveals the relationship between genes and cultures and their multiple interactions in the name of *Liberté, égalité, fraternité.*

Despite that scientifically proven fact about the common origin of the entire human population and of largely proclaimed brotherhood, the attitude of xenophobia does not decrease. The migrants, the refugees, the others are still perceived as a potential danger, as barbarians, savages or anyhow they are treated as inferior and unwanted. The narratives about cultural collision, shattered dreams, alienation, sense of non-belonging, guilt about abandoning one's own homeland, sense of rejection, are numerous. The aim of this paper is an insightful confrontation of expectations with harsh reality on the example of El Hadj, a Senegalese student, protagonist of the Alain Gomis' film "L'Afrance", came to France with a hope to become someone he will never become. Divided between the desire of returning home and being the man he used to be and the desire of staying in a new country and of creating a future which turns out to be precarious if not unreachable.

Narratives of Displacement: Precarious Citizenship in Aruni Kashyap's Creative Imaginary

Rimika Singhvi
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The Paper seeks to conceptualize citizenship as a narrative construct. Focussing on a few selected works, it will problematize the juridical, political, and cultural ideal of universal citizenship. The

attempt will be to envision the nation-state as a product of constant tension between the coercive practices of exclusion and assimilation, as seen in the works of Aruni Kashyap. A writer, translator, and editor, Kashyap is one of the brightest literary sparks from northeast India and one of Assam's most original and compelling voices. A self-confessed political writer, he is interested in the many ways in which human rights intersect with literature. His fiction is shaped by Assamese politics, aesthetics and literary traditions - both oral and textual - and he uses those to write about the fundamental aspects of contemporary Indian reality. Writers have often meditated on questions concerning the nation, identity, exile, im/migration, assimilation, and acculturation, as they reconcile what it means to be "othered" while seeking to simultaneously juxtapose the loss of home with the search for belonging. In fact, both fictional and non-fictional works can take on a sense of urgency as they attempt to reconcile the writer's relationship with the nation. In this vein, the Paper seeks to explore narratives that pay particular attention to form as they ruminate on themes of identity and belonging. Such narratives challenge our conception of the world literary space by interrogating how these texts of and about movement travel themselves. In more recent years, as "diaspora" is replaced by "migration" in providing an ontological framework for understanding displacement, do we still find examples of literary transnationalism that reject the assimilationist drive of border politics in today's precarious times and uncertain futures?

Global Population Ageing: Triumph or Disaster?

Laura Tommaso
Università degli Studi del Molise

For some years now, 'a silver tsunami'; in western societies has been forecast and its impact on business, healthcare and public policy is constantly interpreted and reinterpreted. Population ageing is generally regarded by economists and commentators as an unmitigated disaster, a burden or drain on resources. The inverse of this argument is that the addition of 25 years to life expectancy represents one of humanity's greatest triumphs. The aim of this article is to examine the news-press representations of population ageing and the visions of the future they offer. In particular, a qualitative analysis will be conducted on a selection of news stories as reported by prominent U.S. and U.K. newspapers.

"The Burning City": The Memory of the Fall of Saigon in the Works of Diasporic Vietnamese Authors

Giacomo Traina
Sapienza Università di Roma

Treated as a troublesome legacy both by former war supporters and former war protesters, the South Vietnamese have been sidelined in all the major historical and fictional retellings of the Vietnam War. It is only recently that a new generation of Overseas Vietnamese scholars and artists has finally emerged, giving voice to the South Vietnamese refugees who fled their homeland after 1975, settling in the United States or in Europe. Authors like Viet Thanh Nguyen, Thi Bui, Ocean Vuong, Marcelino Truong and many others are conveying the South Vietnamese perspective through their literary works, telling the story of a lost nation that is no more, but has become a flourishing 'counter-nation' dotted around the world. The triggering event of their war narratives is April 30,

1975, the day in which Saigon fell under the siege of the North Vietnamese and NLF troops, provoking the final collapse of South Vietnam, which was soon to be followed by the dramatic 'boat people' refugee crisis that took place in the second half of the decade. This symbolic date is still an highly divisive anniversary: if the winning side regarded April 30 as the rewarding culmination of three decades of unending military struggle, the losing side deemed this same recurrence as the undisputed darkest day of the twentieth century. Thus, the importance of April 30 in the Diasporic Vietnamese narratives (novels, poems, graphic memoirs) is paramount. The Fall/Liberation of Saigon is truly the foundational event of the Diasporic Vietnamese imaginary as much as is the foundational event of the modern Vietnamese national myth, and its resonance is shown in pivotal scenes of critically acclaimed contemporary works such as The Sympathizer or The Best We Could Do.

Transnational and Intergenerational Uncertain Legacies in Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*

Sabrina Vellucci
Università degli Studi di Roma Tre

Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* (2005) has been one of the first novels tackling the issue of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This paper will look at the novel within the framework of criticism related to the notion of precarity focusing on the issues of trauma and postmemory. It will stress the problematic lack of temporal distance from the traumatic event that is at the core of the narrative, while also emphasizing aspects such as the novel's dialogic imagination, plurivocality, and intermediality. Questioning the possibility of the transgenerational communication of memory, the heteroglossia of the text does not produce a real dialogue among the characters. Yet, decentering the unilateral narration of the 9/11 attack – connecting it with other national tragedies such as the 1945's bombings of Dresden and Hiroshima – and shifting points of views (from the victims' to the persecutors'), Foer's novel contributes to expanding the framework of interpretation for such collective traumas. A descendant of victims of the Nazi genocide, the author succeeds – at least partially – in fostering empathy for what is perceived as utterly "Other," articulating a version of that ethics of vulnerability and precariousness (Butler) that seems to have been too quickly buried under the rubble of the Twin Towers' collapse.

Fatherhood, Education and Cosmopolitanism. The Bangladeshi Diaspora between Rome and London

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Usually associated with extreme poverty, overpopulation and environmental instability, the Bangladeshi diaspora demonstrates, however, its being rooted in the capacity to aspire and on the concept of future built on the basis of multiple stimuli, in the form of media images and ideas of a desirable life that circulates in our hyper-connected world.
Reversing the old idea of migrants as agentless individuals, moved by the forces of macrostructural powers, they seem to be able to imagine and position themselves in the present, using their agency

to take advantage of the possibilities the globalised world offers, in order to complete the life project they designed for their future.

In the specific case-study, the internationalisation of education system, and the importance of English as the key language for education, fundamental to accessing the global labour market, strongly influenced both the trajectory of their migratory path, and the collective narration over the historical significance this specific language have had in a country that emerged as a nation-state out of a strong linguistic identity. A three-years ethnographic research project, carried out on the Bangladeshi community of Rome, made it possible to overcome the dominant perspective of a periphery attracted by the centre, and demonstrated to what extent the centre itself, in a world where local imaginaries are heavily affected by the global circulation of dominant models, indirectly contributes in reshaping regional collective identities and activate mobility strategies.

Andamans and Nicobar: An Indian Colony

Alessandro Vescovi
Università di Milano

My talk will discuss Pankaj Sekhsaria's work on the Andaman Islands. Sekhsaria is a biologist and nature conservationist based at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay. Beside his more technical papers, he stands out as the author of pamphlets on the history and the present state of the Andaman Islands (recently collected in the volume *Islands in Flux: The Andaman and Nicobar Story*, 2017), where he criticizes the governmental policy in protecting encroachments on both the fragile natural environment and the native population of the Andamans. Sekhsaria also wrote an island novel that introduces the bio- and cultural diversity of the Andamans through the eyes of a young metropolitan Indian anthropologist (*The Last Wave*, 2014). Sekhsaria presents the Andamans as a territory colonized by metropolitan Indians that endanger the ecosystem and the native population with the modality that Rob Nixon has called "slow violence". I will next argue that his novel and papers are in line with what Ursula Heise calls environmental world literature, thus joining romantic sublime, political justice and scientific data.

A Feminist Analysis of the Effects of Climate Change on Precarious Lives: Jesmyn Ward's *Salvage the Bones* and C. Morgan Babst's *The Floating World*

Chiara Xausa
Università di Bologna

This presentation will approach the effects of climate change on women whose lives are already precarious though a close reading of Jesmyn Ward's *Salvage the bones* (2011) and C. Morgan Babst's *The floating world* (2017). Both novels deal with the effects of hurricane Katrina on New Orleans's most vulnerable citizens, the African-American working class, with a focus on women.

Women bear the brunt of climate change and are more severely affected than men by eco-catastrophes; the most harsh effects are felt by women from the Global South and the poorest areas of the North. Traditional gender roles impose duties associated with food and water collection and caregiving and set limits on women's mobility. The result is that women and children are fourteen

times more likely to die in eco-catastrophes than men, while women who survive eco-catastrophes face the likelihood of gender-based violence. International discussions recognize that women are disproportionately affected by climate change, but tend to focus on women as individuals rather than gender as a social structure causing inequalities.

Similarly, apocalyptic climate change fiction lacks a situated and intersectional perspective: humanity is most of the times saved by a white male scientist-hero, while women are a silent backdrop and a site of innate vulnerability. My close reading of Jesmyn Ward' and C. Morgan Babst's novels will highlight how these authors are responding to the apocalyptic discourse of climate change. Their novels are narrated form a situated perspectives, and represent the violence of climate crises as a culmination of historical tendencies that render some bodies more vulnerable than others. I will connect these novels with the concept of "everyday Anthorpocene" proposed by Stephanie LeMenager (2017): living day by day through climate crises, and through the interconnectedness of environmental degradation, racial oppression and sexism.

Sharing Suffering: The Photograph of Jakelin Caal Maquin as an Unstable Personal, Political, and Ethical Witness

Diane Zeeuw
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This paper will analyze multiple iterations of a widely disseminated photograph of Jakelin Caal Maquin, the 7-year-old girl from Guatemala who died while in U.S. Border Patrol custody, as filtered through philosopher Kelly Oliver's notion of the "witness". I assert that this humble snapshot demonstrates the precarious and shifting function of the photograph as "witness". My analysis will follow the many permutations of this image as it moves from its initial life as an underexposed personal cellphone picture to its redeployment as meta-pictorial political iconography, to the image's ultimate apotheosis connoting sacrifice, healing, and renewal.

Oliver insists that we need to consider something beyond the "mere" recognition of others, or the demand to be seen, hence suggesting a mode of approach that bears "witness to a pathos beyond recognition and to something other than the horror of [...] objectification". However, Oliver goes on to suggest that this need to demand recognition from dominant culture may also be understood as symptomatic of a "deeper pathology of oppression", noting ironically, that subjugation is the very condition giving rise in the first place to "the need for the oppressed *to be recognized* by their oppressors". Such a demand for recognition, Oliver suggests, further supports and even underscores the assumption that something is lacking on the part of the subjugated—something only the oppressor may supply. Thus theories espousing such notions may inadvertently perpetuate and reinforce the value system they are ostensibly seeking to challenge. Given Oliver's complex understanding regarding the function of the witness, my question is this: "How has the posthumous recycling of a very specific photograph of a migrant child impacted the unstable personal, political, and ethical narratives surrounding immigration?"

The 'Precarious' Situation of Language Policy in Higher Education: Recent Trends and Controversies

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Higher Education (HE) is currently undergoing changes that may have significant effects on its conceptualization as an institution. It has been argued that, in the context of the spread of contemporary neoliberalist ideologies, universities have embraced what has been called the "global knowledge economy construct" (Bull 2012:65), resulting in a recontextualization of knowledge as a commodity. Mobility and internationalization are playing an important role in this process, and English seems to come hand in hand with them. Therefore, in recent years, more and more questions have been raised regarding the role of language in HE and how to properly express and regulate it in Language Policy (LP). Indeed, if, on the one hand, internationalization is generally seen as desirable, universities can also be perceived as the treasurers of the national culture, including the local language (e.g. Cots, Lasagabaster, and Garrett 2012). Additionally, the systematic use of English in HE has been argued to be counter-productive to the very idea of multiculturalism that the 'international university' promotes (e.g. Fabricius, Mortensen, and Haberland 2017; Mortensen 2014). This existing tension has resulted in an ever-evolving landscape of different LPs that can vary significantly from context to context. Previous research about Europe has identified common trends, such as "soft multilingualism" (Harder 2012), "invisibility of English" (Saarinen 2012) and the dichotomy "international/global English" (Bull 2012), which have been interpreted as tell-tale signs of ideology at work. With this in mind, I will discuss the fragmented picture of current LP in European HE, providing examples of different stances: from the 'parallel language use' (Saarinen 2012; Kuteeva 2014; Soler-Carbonell, Saarinen, and Kibbermann 2017; Soler, Björkman, and Kuteeva 2018) popularized in Northern European countries such as Sweden, to the controversies related to language regulation in HE in a Southern European country like Italy (Pulcini and Campagna 2015, Santulli 2015).

Brexit and Uncertainty for a Group of Expats in Malta

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Università di Palermo

Digital interaction in Social networks is known as forming polarized niches with minimal argumentation or negotiations. However, the possibilities of creating (closed) groups allows the construction of a forum-like environment, where participants negotiate, find and seek information and/or support, in particular when dealing with unknown subjects or event. Brexit (i.e. one of the greatest political crisis in the European Union) has shaped uncertainty both as an abstract argument and as about real-life consequences. Among the many implications at stake (of economic, social and political nature), a significant number of British people residing outside the island (i.e. expats) has been left with questions about Future (as an abstract concept), and questions about *their* future (as the real life issues to face, in particular in relation to their "guest" position in a host country). Uncertainty is a range of epistemic qualities related to not knowing (Simmerling and Janich, 2016) and conveyed by sentences as factual predictions, where different shades of modality (i.e. modal verbs, main verbs, adjectives, tense or negations) express possibilities and necessities about the non-

assumption of truth values. In addition, other than reflected at linguistic level, it has various rhetorical functions (Simmerling and Janich, 2016).

This paper analyses the expression of uncertainty in textual (i.e. digital) data, considering different aspects, e.g. referential ambiguity, expression of certainty/uncertainty (e.g. Nuyts, 2001, Van der Auweraand Plungian,1998) as conveyed through linguistic markers (e.g. pronoun subjects, markers of the source) and as emerging as responses to ambiguity. Three SN groups have been investigated to acknowledge the referencial source of uncertainty (what is talked about) and how they formulate their uncertainty quests: source, epistemicity, subjectivity, prediction, confidence in assertions. Starting from digital conversation analysis (Herring, 2004, 2013; Giles et al., 2015), original posts, comments and replies are studied focussing on uncertainty markers studied both quantitatively (by means of corpus analysis) and qualitatively (in a critical discourse analysis perspective, Reisigl and Wodak, 2009; Cap, 2013, 2017).

Examining digital exchanges as informal coverage of Brexit discourse effects, the study offers insights on the dimension of uncertainty and its implications for decision-making.