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Abstracts

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Imagine: Alexandru Pecican

Abstracts

1.   **Borja Pardo Alós**, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
Title: Viaticum of the posthuman soul: provisions for a transition from the Placebo to a being's restoration

Abstract: Our time understands itself as a dystopia, tested by a conflict of semiotic belligerence that has accelerated during the last decades. This dispute is causing a population that explains itself as two sides, swinging between victimhood or aversion: this is one of the keys to the error of its polarization. How is it possible to live in the most advanced technological society, yet the less critical, with a depleted imagination, and devoid of purpose to a greater extent? Several hypotheses point to humans behaving like contagious artificial intelligences, which is the final product of the neoliberalism project: limiting the subject's intelligence to a simple and reduced processing capacity. This is the hidden and planned meaning of the existence of AI, which leads the human species to an unprecedented state. The outcome causes an adulterated ontology, and consequently unnatural, to establish a state of mind that neoliberalism makes pathological. Through the transdisciplinary model, we will analyse a bibliographic selection to try to establish an introspective search process that could change the meaning of our being; a path we call the *Viaticum of the posthuman soul*, whose main obstacle is a rapidly spreading *Placebo Culture*.

2.   **Javier Álvarez,** University of Salamanca, Spain
Title: Redefining the "Green Utopia". The Influence of European Eco-anarquism in the Search for the Paradise in Atwood's *MaddAddam* Trilogy.

Abstract: Capitalism and climate change are inextricably linked. While Margaret Atwood's trilogy *MaddAddam* delves into issues such as genetic engineering or violence through a post-apocalyptic narrative, a more nuanced approach portrays a world in which in which the deterioration of the environment caused by capitalism has been taken to the extreme. Specifically, the novels go in depth into a redefinition of the concept of a Green Utopia", firstly promoted by European authors as Piotr Kropotkin, going in depth into the field of ecocritics regarding its eco-anarquist approach. Ecocritics aim to raise awareness to the environmental issues of current society and establishes a link between the evolution of modern society and its unavoidable development towards that world the novel envisions, where humankind has exploited the environment to its own advantage beyond the point of no return. Eco-anarquism aims to find a solution for this dystopic situation in which a conceited capitalist society lives happily while destroying the habitat they need to guarantee their survival. This paper aims to prove the influence the European ecological movements have in Atwood's trilogy, explaining how the eco-anarquist school of thought has shaped the novels and how the concept of a Green Utopia in Europe is portrayed, redefined, and adapted by the Canadian author, analyzing both European and Canadian representations on how a dreamworld is conceived by their creators and the sacrifices to be made in order to achieve "perfection".

3.   **Sorin Antohi,** Orbis Tertius Association, Bucharest, Romania
Title: Social Imaginaries Without Utopia. A Romanian Cautionary Tale and Its Theoretical Implications

Abstract: There is a very short list of Utopian texts, or rather of texts with significant Utopian elements (however difficult to disentangle from other forms of discourse, from myth, fairy tale, and fantastic literature to political pamphlet and uchronia), written in Romanian. The list includes (mostly minor) works in prose (mostly novels) and in verse, and grows more substantial over time, as the increasing Western cultural influence in the second half of the 19th century leads to the creation of modern utopias (mostly in the subgenres of proto-science fiction and dystopia). One major common feature (with a few notable exceptions) is their meta-

dimension, i.e., their authors' detachment from, and frequently the critique and/or parody/satire of the Utopian tradition.

This minor Utopian corpus is otherwise a great example of how some national societies/cultures do not embrace Utopianism unless forced by external factors. In contrast to Western Europe, but also to Russia (and her strong peasant Utopianism), the Romanians had no special interest in debates over good rule (which was usually foreign or foreign-controlled anyway), the perfect city (towns were founded, and/or mostly inhabited by foreigners, and were perceived as alien), the ideal person (this was taken care of by the Church) or citizen (the passage from subject to citizen was slow and belated). Not surprisingly, the idealized, ethnically and religiously pure, village became the paradigm of the interwar Romanian right-wing Utopia (theoretical, fictional, practical), while the left-wing Utopia was concerned with the city.

More interestingly, with only some exceptions, this process does not apply to culture (ideas, theories, ideologies, discourses, tropes etc.) only. Utopian projects have also entered Romanian history from the outside (the Phanariot Princes, the Habsburgs, the Russians from 1812 on, and into the 1830s, the Soviets from 1944, etc.), and were both ambivalent and received with mixed feelings. On the one hand, those projects were bringing ideas, (usually failed) reforms, and other (usually forced) transformations that served the interest of the foreigners. On the other hand, many unintended consequences (and the rare well-intended ones, which were sometimes appreciated by the locals) could not be overlooked, and usually backfired.

Finally, Utopianism became an object of scholarly interest only in interwar Romania, with the first doctoral dissertation to be defended and published (133pp.) in 1936 by Emil I. Diaconu. By that time, the topic, Utopia in English literature was almost eccentric. Comparative literature scholars, from Alexandre Cioranescu (in exile) to Corin Braga in recent years, have continued to study Utopianism, but Cioran had put in many ways an end to such ruminations in his radical rejection of Utopia (realized) and passionate plea for a Utopian horizon, *Histoire et Utopie*. But his lucid assessment of the matter only came in 1960, more than two decades after his juvenile enthusiasm for right-wing dystopia.

Thus, on the European map of Utopianism, Romania can serve as a central cautionary tale with major theoretical and comparative implications, not just as a peripheral case study. A social imaginary without Utopia.

4.   **Emrah Atasoy,** University of Warwick, UK
Title: Utopian Impulse in the Turkish Critical Dystopian TV Series *Hot Skull*
Abstract: *Hot Skull* (*Sıcak Kafa*, 2022) directed by Mert Baykal and Umur Turagay may be labelled as the first critical dystopian TV series in Türkiye. The screen adaptation of Afşin Kum's novel *Sıcak Kafa* (2016) attracted public attention and directed more global attention towards Turkish TV/narrative forms. Although speculative fiction in Türkiye has thrived through narratives and alternative world scenarios in literature—especially in the last fifty years—it has not progressed at the same level on the screen. However, *Hot Skull* has strong potential to change the current approach and be a pioneering example of critical dystopia on the screen, inspiring other dystopian TV and film projects in the future. Baykal's series illustrates a dystopian world in which all people, except for the protagonist Murat Siyavuş, a former linguist, are susceptible to contracting the ARDS virus, a fictional illness caught through verbal communication, which results in jabbering—that is, talking gibberish. As the narrative unfolds, the yearning of the Anti-Epidemic Institution for absolute power is exposed. It is juxtaposed with the objectives of the Plus 1 movement that challenge the suppressive practices of this governing institution. This presentation will discuss Mert Baykal's critical dystopia *Hot Skull* in terms of the portrayal of pandemic control, power practice, and hope through an

analysis of the intricate relationship between the Anti-Epidemic Institution and the protagonist who ultimately becomes a strong herald of hope.

5. **Tifaine Bachet**, Université Lyon 2, France
Title: Ithell Colquhoun's phantasmagorical utopia
Abstract: The focus of this paper will be placed on Ithell Colquhoun (1906-1988), a British surrealist artist and practising occultist who worked on three novels, namely *Goose of Hermogenes* (1961), *I Saw Water* (2014) and *Destination Limbo* (2021). As the years of publication show, her novels (and generally her contribution to well-known artistic movements and systems of thought) have recently started to receive attention. It seems therefore timely to delve into them and examine how Colquhoun worked towards freeing the imagination and reconciling the conscious and the unconscious or the visible and the invisible – that is to say how she engaged in the surrealist and esoteric revolutionising of human experience. It will be argued that her three novels evoke the imagining function of the psyche. Indeed, by means of a phantasmagorical projection mechanism reminiscent of Leibniz's baroque apparatus or magiclantern1, Colquhoun gives us to read images from her psyche. It is then up to the readers to interpret these images and understand the way in which Colquhoun redraws the contours, transforms and plays with the reality of the outside world. It will further be propounded that Colquhoun offers a new creative version of reality that verges on eco-spiritualism. She not only depicts nature as a living entity animated by a feminine force, but also sets up a new social model, a new form of existing and thinking about the world that rests on the sacralization of the natural world.

6. **Cătălin Badea-Gheracostea,** editor of 'Gazeta SF', Romania
Title: The DELAY: Romanian Recent Utopia through Literature, Film, TV and Social Media
Abstract: The history of Romanian Utopia accepts its beginnings linked with the development and appropriation of the Enlightenment ideas, at the end of the 18th century. The literary expression of the political propositions lacks precision and is happening after, not before like in the West, revolutionary movements and or organized enclaves on the territories of Romanian provinces during the 19th century. Therefore, it was easier for Romanian Utopia to be seen by the historians of non-mainstream literature as rather a species than a genre, and this was the case till the end of the Communist regime. Everything written under this time frame can be called `Old Utopia` and its direction continues today with the conservative writers of varied affiliations. `New Utopia` started in the last decade of the 20th century and bore fruits which synchronized its products with the world utopica. In the last decade, under the advent of ideological multiple choices, `New Utopia` in Romania struggled to achieve originality between presentism and The Delay, which resembles a *forma mentis* similar to the one existing in the 19th century. However, the predominance of non-literary means of artistic expression (Film, TV) and the advent of social media gave birth to interesting hybrids which we name functional or dysfunctional according to the viability of their utopian projects. We exemplify all of these directions with an inventory and some case studies (e.g. radical feminist utopia of the 2020s).

7. **Maria Barbu,** Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Title: Anarchetypal journeys in post-apocalyptic narratives. The implacable darkness of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*
Abstract: Cormac McCarthy is well-known within the literary world for his rather bleak writing, and *The Road* (2006) is without doubt one of the novels that exemplifies this characteristic the most. Set in an uncertain post-apocalyptic future where almost everything

has been destroyed by an unmentioned cataclysm, the plot follows the journey of a father and his son along the remaining interstate highways of a North-American continent covered in ash. In an attempt to join the already extensive critical literature on McCarthy from an original perspective, the purpose of this paper is to examine *The Road* by combining the analysis of the post-apocalyptic narrative's elements with a focus on the characters' journey itself. To this end, my approach would bring into discussion Corin Braga's concept of the "anarchetype", the opposite term for the archetype understood in a cultural sense, namely as a recurring model or an artistic constant. I argue that this concept, representative for the vision of the decentred postmodern subject, structures McCarthy's novel through the way in which it builds the plot out of episodes that succeed one another in an unpredictable way, as their order doesn't necessarily depend on some revelatory meaning that should be discovered at the end. The journey taken by the protagonists towards southern, warmer lands thus unfolds on an anarchetypal pattern, positioning *The Road* among many other literary voyages that follow a similar configuration.

8.   **Jorge Bastos da Silva**, Universidade do Porto, Potugal
Title: Speculative Fiction and Cultural Memory: A Reading of Arthur C. Clarke's *Rendezvous with Rama*
Abstract: In a short article for *Utopian Studies* ("Utopia and Cultural Memory: A Survey of Themes and Critical Problems", Vol. 31, 2020), I discussed five topics of relevance for the intersection between speculative fiction and the problematics of cultural memory: (a) the political origins of imagined societies; (b) the postulated origins of humankind; (c) sites and objects of memory; (d) false memories and the erasure of memory; and (e) frameworks for the interpretation of history. While the range of relevant issues may be broadened, one fundamental point that was made in that article – and that will feed into the present paper – is the acknowledgment of an important correspondence between the fields of Utopian Studies and Cultural Memory Studies, namely insofar as (1) their objects and their practices share a denaturalizing effect as they expose the constructedness of perceived reality, and (2) both involve an appraisal of the connection between the imagining of concrete experience in alternative realities and the analysis of concrete experience in the world we actually live in. Moving on from a synthetic to a more analytical approach, this paper intends to focus on Arthur C. Clarke's novel *Rendezvous with Rama* (1973) in order to highlight such and connected topics in depth.

9.   **Natalya Bekhta,** Tampere Institute for Advanced Studies, Finland
Title: After Utopia: Futural Imagination in Contemporary Fiction of Central Eastern Europe
Abstract: Utopia in all its forms is intrinsic to how our age thinks about the present and beyond. At the same time, the habitual framework of contemporary futural debates — the pressing need and simultaneous inability to imagine alternative futures – is becoming an intellectual cliché. In this talk I suggest taking a new perspective and offer an investigation of how contemporary literatures of Central-Eastern Europe register current utopian concerns. I put forward a hypothesis that the structure of futural imagination in this region can be read as coming "after utopia". "After utopia" refers here to the transition from "(un)real socialism" (André Gorz) to the dysfunctional hyper-capitalism. This particular historical situation complicates the two chief forms of "real utopia" (egalitarian socialism or 'sustainable capitalism') that inform existing debates elsewhere. My central question, then, is how society imagines its future existence in the complex situation where the lived experience of achieving an 'alternative future' combines with a distrust towards future projects and with a (symbolic) destruction of future by war. By relying on one particular understanding of Utopia as a process of working

through the lived contradictions of the present towards a new, unimaginable configuration (Jameson 2005; Levitas 2013), I examine the work of Utopia in the narrative structure of the literary texts written after 1990s.

10.   **Paolo Bellini,** Università degli Studi dell'Insubria, Varese – Como, Italy
Title: Utopian models, power and new technologies
Abstract: In common speak, the concept of utopia is often associated with an idea of substantial unfeasibility, setting up a model, though plausible, that is completely impractical and destined to remain a pure theoretical game between fiction, imagination and daring plans. Utopia is ranked as a purely unworkable representation of a daydream by which the utopian delights, escaping the real life's harsh heaviness and banality. However, on closer investigation, it seems that utopia (a term invented by More in his most famous work) conceals, beyond its etymological meaning (from the Greek *ou* - not and *tópos* - place that is, a place that does not exist), the concept of virtuality that leads it. Actually, under this form of thought lies the idea of the virtual determining reality and investigating its possibilities.

11.   **Vera Benczik,** Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
Title: Thriving after the end: post-apocalyptic landscapes as posthuman utopias
Abstract: Ecocatastrophes have abounded in post-apocalyptic literature and film for the last decades, and the post-apocalypse has become one of the primary modes to reflect on and react to the human-induced transformation of the ecosystem in the Anthropocene. Whether it is a new Ice Age, cataclysmic tectonic shifts, or eco-catastrophes caused by pollution, most of these narratives chronicle the catastrophe and the aftermath from a human point of view, and chiefly focus on the possibility of survival in a monsterized environment.
The present paper seeks to explore alternative visions of the post-Anthropocene future and seeks to visit cataclysmic terrains which have been transformed into nightmarish landscapes unsuitable for human habitation but allow a posthuman population to navigate it safely. Three excellent examples are M. R. Carey's *The Girl with All the Gifts*, Paolo Bacigalupi's "The People of Sand and Slag" and Sara Genge's "Shoes-to-Run." All explore the transformation of normativity in a post-apocalyptic setting and allow for the reconfiguration of the monstrous topographies into nurturing, even utopian environments. These posthuman settings become the sites of identity formation, as the stories' characters investigate their own "humanity" in relationship to both homo sapiens atavism and the post-cataclysmic indigeneity afforded to them through their adapted posthuman biologies. The paper will investigate the clash between the pre- and post-cataclysmic, the human and the posthuman, and how a selectively forbidding environment informs notions of utopian/dystopian simultaneity.

12.   **Liam Benison**, University of Porto, Portugal
Title: Geographic Imaginaries of Early Modern Privacy in Utopian Literature
Abstract: Privacy is not something one expects to find in a utopia. For example, in Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), houses have doors which 'open easily with a push of the hand and … let anyone come in—so there is nothing private anywhere'. It is therefore a paradox that utopia itself is a private place: a realm of ideal sociability for the exclusive few, almost inaccessible to outsiders. An absence of privacy is also what we might expect of the crowded houses of sixteenth-century England, but More's imagination of its abolition might rather suggest that it was an existing problem to be resolved in an enhanced society. How was privacy understood in early modern Europe and what can utopian texts tell us about ideals of privacy in the period? I will explore this question by examining geographical imaginaries of private space in a small selection of utopias published in Europe between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. I will pay attention to representations of utopian doors, gateways and windows, asking what does the

transparency or opacity of these thresholds and the narrative of characters' passage between them reveal about ideal notions of privacy and how it could be enjoyed. This paper will contribute to the understanding of early modern utopianism as well as to efforts to understand the ways in which access to privacy in early modern Europe was negotiated at social and architectural thresholds.

13. **Claudia Sofia Benito Temprano,** Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain
Title: Conceptual blending and the reading of dystopia
Abstract: Since the popularization of the concept dystopia during the last decades of the 20thcentury, utopian studies have had to mingle with its reference and ulterior meaning. Such enterprise has led to complex attempts to tell dystopian imaginaries apart from utopian ones, or at least to differentiate them from anti-utopias. The question implies understated implications: is it possible to talk about such a thing as a dystopianism that goes beyond the traditional fictional realm? Has this dystopianism the same faces utopianism has been posited to perform? Can dystopia be planned or historically studied? Can an intentional community be called a dystopia? Conceptual blending, as it is explained by Turner, allows us to understand how the concept of dystopia can be helpful to face different realities, both fictional, historical and "imaginaire". It can also serve the purpose of providing an account of dystopia which settles the basis of future dystopian studies without being excessively restrictive. Because dystopia as a concept is a useful schema, a conceptual frame that informs us of the purpose of a text, situating us in a certain structure of feeling (post-pessimistic, perhaps), and not a closed set of features to be found in a text. By formulating a "blended" reading of different dystopias, we will try to provide a pragmatic account of a concept that —we believe— can be formulated multi-dimensionally.

14. **Artur Blaim,** University of Gdańsk, Poland
Title: From "Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer" to "Brexit". The Use of Catchwords and Slogans in Constructing Imaginary Utopian/Dystopian Communities
Abstract: The paper analyses numerous examples of the uses of catchwords and slogans as one of the ways of constructing imaginary communities predominately utopian in the intentions of their authors although often producing dystopian results. In the course of the twentieth century, their extensive use, originally limited mainly to totalitarian states and war propaganda, has spread to other domains of social life, including politics, advertising, sports, corporations, interest groups, etc. The effect of such rhetorical devices depends mainly on reducing a complex set of phenomena to a simple, easily remembered concept or phrase, often, as in the case of slogans, assuming the proverb-like structure suggesting its links with unquestionable traditional wisdom, co-defining the identity of a particular group or community (e.g., "Better red than dead") or making an appeal to establish an ideal community in the near future (e.g., "Make America great again"). Alternatively, they may be employed to construct a utopian or at least neutral self-description concealing a dystopian reality behind it (e.g., "Arbeit mach frei", "re-education camps").

15. **Carmen Borbély**, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Title: Ecotopian Sensibilities in Robert Paltock's *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins*
Abstract: Conventionally seen as a multigeneric text that supplements mid-eighteenth century Robinsonades and Swiftian imaginary voyages through its projection of a domestic and political utopia, Robert Paltock's *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins* (1751) deploys the idealistic lens of wonder in outlining Graundevolet, the island the protagonist claims sovereignty over, and Sass Doorpt Swangeanti, the cornucopian realm he subjects to technoscientific transformations, as ecotopian sites capable of triggering a re-enchantment with

nature. Harnessing a Baconian understanding of nature's harmonious balance as contingent upon human intervention, Paltock's narrative summons modes of reassessing man's hegemonic engagement with the pristine ecologies Wilkins professes not to disturb, but to preserve and protect. At the same time, in familiarising the reader with the complex environmental interdependencies that sustain human habitation in the adverse climatic conditions of the fabulous antipodal subterranean and aerial worlds envisioned by the narrator's nested memoir, Paltock's novel foregrounds a pre-Romantic attunement to the indomitable and unsubduable force of elemental nature. Mapping these different responses to imagined natural worlds that are perceived through what might be seen as the divergent frames of the picturesque and the sublime, this paper examines the ecotopian sensibilities of Paltock's idealised rendition of polar wilderness as both amenable and averse to human master.

16.   **Iren Boyarkina,** University of Tuscia, Italy
Title: Utopia in the Works of Olaf Stapledon
Abstract: In *Last and First Men* Stapledon described the evolution of different human species from *Homo sapiens* (First Men) to the Eighteenth Men (the Last Men). The present paper is going to explore why Stapledon holds that at least eighteen human species are necessary to eliminate all the negative characteristics of human nature to construct utopia. The paper analyses the utopia of the Fourth Men and its relevance to our society. The paper is going to demonstrate how the parable of the Fourth Men incorporates Stapledon's idea about enhanced intelligence and self-realization of the human species. The paper is also going to analyse the utopia of the Fifth Men, its true nature, as well as to study its similarities and differences from anarchia. The authour also aims at exploring the role of telepathy for the creation of the utopian society in the works of Olaf Stapledon. Also, the aim is to confront the utopias of the Fifth Men and of the Last Men through the prism of the non-fictional works of Olaf Stapledon.

17.   **Svetozara Ognianova Bozhilova,** Utrecht University, Germany
Title: Morality in Dystopian Literature: *Tender is the Flesh* by Agustina Bazterrica
Abstract: Agustina Bazterrica's 2017 *Tender is the Flesh* presents a post-animal world where cannibalism is legalized and humans are separated into two groups: citizens and livestock. Marcos, the protagonist of the novel and the right hand to a slaughterhouse owner, finds himself at the crossroads between adopting this revived practice or denouncing the world entirely. This paper explores how morality and free will question the boundaries of the dystopian genre and allow for setting the trend of exploring broader, universal philosophical concepts within the dystopian tradition. *Tender is the Flesh* represents a unique dystopia on multiple layers and puts the genre's criteria in perspective. Violence becomes a futile manner of creating and sustaining the new order, as the consensus of the majority who embrace the cannibalistic new lifestyle prevails. (In)action becomes a threshold of morality and quality of life. The dystopian society does not attempt to achieve an economic or social eutopia through reconstructing the meat market, but merely to return to a lost 'normal' state. As the novel allegedly projects our own present into the future, we cannot claim the fictional world is in any way a utopia either, and it thus both inherently retains and produces meaninglessness. In placing forward the question of choosing one's moral values, the world order, which annihilates the possibility for happiness, is replaced from its central position by the dystopian protagonist who not merely navigates but utilizes their surroundings, not as a perpetrator but as an active and independent link of society. Dystopia's practical question of existence within a human-made world is opted out for the existential questions of human nature and significance of life.

18.   **Corin Braga,** Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Title: Structural Schema of the Utopian Genre

Abstract: The term "utopia" is a semantic hybrid that encompasses several fields and disciplines and comprises a large series of texts. In this paper, I want to highlight a *pattern*, an image-schema in cognitive terminology, which constitutes the structural core of the utopian genre. Starting from the distinction between the "real historical world" (which I call *mundus*) and the fictional secondary worlds created by utopian / dystopian works, I analyse the main world-making procedures wielded by utopian writers: separation of the positive and negative elements, utopian extrapolation, inversion, proof by contradiction, etc. The emerging *pattern* is a double scheme, in which "our" world (situated in the here and / or now) is contrasted to "another" world (situated in another geographical space and / or another time). The distribution of values (moral, social, aesthetic, etc.) between the two "worlds" accounts for the distinction between utopias (which propose good places) and dystopias (which expose bad places).

19.   **Andrew Bridges**, California State University, Fullerton, USA
Title: Utopian Freedom and Value portrayed in Hegel's Comic Consciousness and Fictional Behaviorism

Abstract: In this paper I explore the extent to which Hegel's description of the Comic Consciousness found in the chapter on "Religion" in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* is relatable to Skinner's portrayal of a behavioral scientist being tantamount to God—particularly in the fictional behavioral scientist's ability to create freedom and value in the utopian/dystopian novel *Walden Two*. I examine how the self-consciousness of the fictional behavioral scientist and the self-consciousness of the Comic Consciousness appear to embody a form of freedom that is able to transcend and create the values of their respective communities (as described by their authors). Although I agree with the insight by Hegel scholar Verene that had Hegel lived during the time of behaviorism he would have attacked the thesis as thoroughly and relentlessly as he did the pseudosciences of phrenology and physiognomy, I consider whether the freedom described in Skinner's fictional behavioral scientist resembles the freedom expressed in the Comic Consciousness, upon its realization that it has created its own Gods through its expression of freedom, art, and self-consciousness. I suggest that the similarities between these two shapes of self-consciousness and forms of freedom, as well as the disparities between the two forms, express difficulties for understanding freedom and value in the conceptual context of the idea of utopia.

20.   **Vesselin M. Budakov,** St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, Bulgaria
Title: From Settlers to Techno-Utopians: The Scientific and Political Imaginary in Lost-Race Utopias

Abstract: The paper focuses on two late nineteenth-century literary utopias, previously termed lost-race fiction (Thomas D. Clareson, "Lost Lands, Lost Races," 1975; Allienne Becker, *The Lost Worlds Romance*, 1992; John Rieder, *Colonialism*, 2008), to examine the growth of a utopian community in them from a settlement to a highly developed society. Whether possible or unfeasible, hidden but revealed to just a few, existing nowhere or somewhere still undiscovered, utopia, in general, has been germane to the imaginary in envisioning a novel, parallel world estranged, though extrapolated, from the ontological and pragmatic environment of its readers, aptly defined in the seventeenth century as "the pattern of a well govern'd Common-wealth" and the "Metaphor for any imaginary, or feigned place" (Edward Phillips, *New World of English Words*, 1658). From the early moderns until the late nineteenth century, narratives of fantastic voyages typically depicted imaginary societies as allegorical visions or inversions of Western epistemology and politics. I want to suggest that late nineteenth-century techno-utopias which exploit the lost-world/lost-race motif may be nestled in what Northrop

Frye explored in the two opposing modes of fiction – the romantic and realist: the former benefitting from "myth and metaphor," the latter viewed as "realistic displacement" (*The Secular Scripture*, 1976, p. 37). To develop my argument, I draw examples from Andrew Acworth's *New Eden* (1896) and Alexander Craig's *Ionia* (1898). The scientific bent in these secluded, technologized societies rationalizes the improbable and romantic ploy in the fiction of extraordinary voyages. Leaningon Darko Suvin and Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, I contend that contemporary social and technical sciences served as inspiration for a *scientific imaginary* in these two utopias to endorse an imagined political ideology, intended to profess that social reform and the fear of it were contingent upon evolutionary theory and technological progress.

21.	**Dragoş Bucur,** Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Title: Revolution, Messianism and Utopia in Jewish-Romanian Interwar Literature From Avant-garde to the Literature of the Ghetto
Abstract: Conceived as an analysis of the ways in which radical utopian thought transpires from the writing of several representative figures form Jewish-Romanian Interwar literature the present project pays regards to and stems from Michael Löwy's study from 1988, *Redemption and Utopia Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe*.
Even if it already became a classic in the field of Jewish Studies, Löwy's volume was rarely exploited in the terms of its theoretical axiom. While being considered a courageous attempt of synthesis, the study in *elective affinities* (as it is subtitled) was probably avoided by the researches that followed it, as the association between Judaism and radical utopian thought may have been perceived as problematic or, perhaps, even undesirable. Contrary to such a perspective, I will depart from the premise that the adherence of the Jewish writers of the time to different radical ideologies, from anarchism to socialism and communism, or to the different articulations of Zionism on the political spectrum, was not a simple choice, but rather a form of resistance, representing an entire network of tensions which often generated the writing. Through this theoretical framework I will attempt to analyse the literary projects of several Jewish-Romanian writers from the avant-garde movement, mainly Ilarie Voronca and Sașa Pană, as well as that of two representative authors for the literature of the ghetto, Ury Benador and Ion Călugăru.

22.	**Anna Bugajska,** Jesuit University Ignatianum, Krakow, Poland
Title: Becoming Porcupine: Migratory Identities in Digital Utopia
Abstract: In his 2022 book, *Porcospini digitali*, Davide Sisto refers to Schopenhauer's porcupine dilemma to signal the uneasy relation between the proximity and simultaneous distancing that online lives brought to people, affecting their identities. This observation is related to the general phenomenon of the fragmentation of the individual identities in the transition to the promised land of the digital space, which has been claimed to be the next step in American utopianism seeking a new, digital frontier (*Digital Sensations*, Hillis 1999). This connection of migrations to digital spaces is also explored in dystopian literature, e.g., in *More Than This* (2013) by Patrick Ness.
In the proposed paper I would like to focus on the questions related to the bodily utopia in the era of digital bodies and identities in relation to the movement from place to body in certain forms of utopianism (evantropia), and the resultant complex bodily geographies (departing from the conceptual metaphor BODY IS AN ISLAND). Of special interest will be the experience of pain and trauma related to the expansion and fragmentation of identities on entering the new, better world. To enrich the discussion about the dispersed, "porcupine" identities of the digital states of being, I would like to reach to the migration studies, which offer the notions of immigration trauma, alterity, horizontal comradeship and transnationality,

which can be helpful in theorizing new approaches to the intersections of body, technology and utopia.

23. **Malgorzata Bujak,** University of St. Thomas, Houston, USA
Title: Heritage, Homeland and Utopia as Past and Future imaginaries in the Narratives of Texas Poles
Abstract: Any story of long-term migration is a story of adaptation, acculturation, and transformation of an individual and the commune. It is a process that spans generations and creates conditions for utopia (Levitas 1990). We explore the interconnectedness of cultural heritage, ethnic identity and homeland imagery in the context of personal narratives of ethnic Texas Poles. Following Morawska's (2011) factors affecting diasporic imaginations of homeland, we will introduce the Texas Brazos Valley immigration (Mazurkiewicz 2021, Olson 1987) that is exceedingly time and space-bound. (the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and east Texas, respectively) Against that socio-historical context, we will analyze the accounts of contemporaries - members of at least three generations - to explore cultural connections embedded in shared traditions, personal portrayals of the "old country", a childhood home, and reminiscences of the past experiences of displacement, hardship and hope. From there, we will proceed to show that this fabricated communal identity shaped on the universal sense of belonging, a quest for origin, and collective memory, generates fictional imagery of a fabled, illusionary space that transcends national and cultural boundaries. This transnational, trans-cultural dimension of self allows ethnics to construct an alternative way of life subject to transformation, negotiation and re-invention in relation to the dominant host culture and present day socio-political domestic and international realities. Ultimately, one becomes a member of an imagined community raised on the transgenerational legacy of dreaming of a better future and realizing aspirations for new horizons in the New World.

24. **Ionel Buşe**, University of Craiova, Romania
Title : Du mythe de l'immortalité à l'utopie médicale transhumaniste
Abstract : Dans notre essai sur le problème de la mort et de l'immortalité nous voulons mettre en évidence les différences significatives entre deux visions sur l'être humain : une vision transcendentaliste mythologique-religieuse créée par un long processus d'auto-poiesis de l'histoire et de la culture et une vision utopique scientiste représentée d'abord par l'humanisme de l'époque moderne et surtout par l'illuminisme et continué aujourd'hui en postmodernité avec la vision utopique/distopique de la « révolution transhumaniste ».
Au-delà du succès des sciences biomédicales, qui doivent être correctement appréciées pour leur capacité d'améliorer et prolonger la vie humaine, nous essaierons d'argumenter aussi que la nouvelle vision transhumaniste révolutionnaire est une utopie/dystopie biotechnologique et médicale issue des mythes idéologique du progrès qui appartiennent à une intellectualité hétéroclite formée par certains scientistes radicaux qui proclame une rupture définitive avec la tradition, la culture et en dernière instance avec l'homme même.

25. **Joana Caetano**, Universidade do Porto, Portugal
Title: Ursula K. Le Guin's Hainish Hospitalities: A New Era for a Utopian Care Ethics?
Abstract: Drawing on feminist theory, the ethics of care emphasizes the need to acknowledge the interdependent dimensions in which human beings are inscribed: a complex and holistic chain of relations among human beings, and between humans and the other-than-human world. If the recent years have proved anything to us, it is the fact that well-being, security, and peace depend directly on the healthy balance between the various links within this chain of relationships. They depend on –what should become – a constellation of utopian care.

As a cornerstone of the relationship with *the Other*, hospitality is at the centre of this constellation and must increasingly be a key concept in utopian thinking and practice. Hospitality is ubiquitous in Ursula K. Le Guin's Hainish Universe and yet its charm resides in its subtlety. This paper aims to explore Le Guin's utopian care ethics built upon hospitable ideals, which, like an undercurrent gently palpitating through the Ekumen stories, unites all the different human subspecies as one People born out of, and gathered around, the same Hainish Hearth.

26.　　**Adela Livia Catană,** Ferdinand I Military Technical Academy, Bucharest
Title: The Just War Theory in Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* Book Series
Abstract: This article questions when, why, and how it is just for people to go to war, or to refrain from warring. It gradually analyses the criteria which concerns the morality of going to war (*jus ad bellum*), the right conduct within war (*jus in bello*) and the responsibility of post-war settlement and reconstruction (*jus post bellum*), by evoking the theories developed by illustrious thinkers such as Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Alberico Gentili, Hugo Grotius, among many others. This theoretical framework is further enforced by consistent examples selected from Suzanne Collins's dystopian series known as The Hunger Games, in an attempt to show the persistence in time of certain ideas concerning the waging of war. The American author is particularly interested in educating her readers in the causes and side effects of war and particularly, its necessity or lack of necessity. Her critically acclaimed volumes, *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009), and *Mockingjay* (2010), follow the story of Katniss Everdeen, a modern Joan of Arc, and depict the outbreak and development of a civil war, that completely reforms a futuristic American society called Panem. By combining just-war ethics and an in-depth exploration of Suzanne Collin's texts, this study offers a clear reflection on how the just war theory (*bellum iustum*) and fiction can inform one another in a way that produces many useful results.

27.　　**Ruxandra Cesereanu,** Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Title: Dystopias and Allegories about Communist Romania
Abstract: This study embarks on a typology of dystopias and narrative allegories about Communist Romania. In this regard, the study discusses three famous novels: *The Black Church* by A. E. Baconsky, *The Second Messenger* by Bujor Nedelcovici and *Farewell, Europe!* by Ion D. Sîrbu. The three novels were prohibited from being published during the Communist regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu and became drawer manuscripts, seeing the light of print only after the fall of Communism, in 1990 (*The Black Church*), 1991 (*The Second Messenger*) and 1992-1993 (*Farewell, Europe*). The novel of Baconsky circulated in samizdat (between 1976-1977) and was made into a series by the Munich-based Radio Free Europe, which broadcast clandestinely inside Romania. The novel of Nedelcovici was translated into French in 1985, with great success. In the Romanian literature, the novel of Ion D. Sîrbu is considered the most important drawer work. Al three novels, as dystopias, allegories and parables, focus on three recurrent topics: the world of masters (the oppressors), the world of victims and the method of brainwashing. Al three novels are masterpieces not only because of their rich structure and style, but also because of their ideatic, anthropological and philosophical speculations. All three books analyse in an allegorical way the image of the department of state security (Securitate – as it was called since its origin in 1948 until the fall of Communism in Romania, in 1989): the secret police as occult, almighty ensemble, manipulating the collective and the individual mentality.

28. **Wojtek Chojna,** Pasco-Hernando State College, Florida, USA
Title: Eating Our Way to Catastrophe

Abstract: In this paper I will talk about dystopian aspects of meat production, all widely known, and yet ignored to our own peril: global warming, the devastation of forests and contamination of fresh water, the suffering of farm animals, poverty, hunger, disease, and habitat loss, for both humans and wild animals. All these have been well documented in both scientific articles, books, as well as in the popular media, for example, numerous documentaries, such as *Cowspiracy, Eating Animals*, *Dominion, Eating Our Way to Extinction*, and so on, and yet the meat consumption is on the rise. Veganism is on the rise too but constitute just 0.1% of the human population. Meat consumption is the elephant in the room, dining, climate conference halls, and any legislative assemblies. Psychologists call this elephant by willful ignorance. We know and yet we behave as if we did not know, we take the appearance for reality, although deep down we know what the real is, what lies behind the taste and the appetizing look of the meat dishes. We have to ignore the reality because the psychological disconnect between our reverence for the animals, whom we find cute and adoring, and have a deep spiritual connection with, and the brutal, merciless slaughter of them would damage us psychologically. We also need to ignore the reality of the effects of our appetite for meat on the global warming because of the documented eco-anxiety, now treated by APA as a disorder. And then, there is politics.

29.   **Carolina Crijns,** Independent scholar, Berlin, Germany
Title: Everyday Utopianisms of Care: Radical Imaginaries beyond Representation
Abstract: That space exists not only as a physical entity, but is socially and culturally constructed and therefore imagined, is not an entirely new concept within the social sciences. Yet how exactly spatial imaginaries can act transformative is still an under-researched area. This is especially surprising within architecture, which as the spatial, social, and political project at once contains an inherent utopian dimension and therefore offers great potential for the transformation of material realities. However, solution-oriented thinking and the structural decline of utopian thought has largely limited imagination – even in a discipline which decisively relies on it. As such, imagination in architecture is predominantly restricted to objects, form, and representation. However, especially in times of crises, a new radical imaginary going beyond representation alone becomes imperative. Thorough analysis of socio-spatial imbalances therefore needs to be supplemented with hope-filled narratives, desire, affect, and creative insights into alternative ways of living. Following this endeavour, this paper introduces one possible method: an *everyday utopianism of care* which combines utopian speculation (*as method/ form*) with the concept of care (*as content*). Based on processual and non-idealised accounts of utopianism, and care as a multidimensional analytical as well as normative concept, this method explores how imaginative thought can overcome the dualism between the realistic-material and constructivist-cultural. It hence aims at reimagining not only what the future might look like, but what the future might feel like. Asa method which conceptualises the imaginary as performed, this method is desirous of social change through bodily utopian practices.

30.   **Zsolt Czigányik**, ELTE BTK, Budapest, Hungary
Roundtable discussion**: Utopianism for a Dying Planet: History, Politics and Fiction**
– speakers: Zsolt Czigányik, Gerda Henkel fellow – chair and commentator
        Gregory Claeys, Royal Holloway University – speaker
        Mathias Thaler, University of Edinburgh – speaker
Abstract: Few can have missed the fact that humanity is facing, to varying degrees, the greatest crisis in Earth's history. With global warming currently at 1.25°C, but headed towards 3°C or more, the threat of cataclysm is more real than ever. Notional targets of 1.5°C-2°C are clearly

inadequate, and warming must be kept below 1°C. In order to achieve this, a variety of measures, commencing with the immediate renunciation of carbon fuels, but extending to a severe dampening of consumer demand and consumerism as such, must be implemented. The utopian tradition fruitfully provides a range of suggestions as to how to achieve this goal. In this workshop, we will discuss two recently published books that explore the potential of utopian thinking to inform our understanding of the climate emergency: Gregory Claeys's *Utopianism for a Dying Planet* (2022) and Mathias Thaler's *No Other Planet* (2022). *Utopianism for a Dying Planet* examines the ways the expansive history of utopian thought, from its origins in ancient Sparta and ideas of the Golden Age through to today's thinkers, can offer moral and imaginative guidance in the face of catastrophe. *No Other Planet* investigates the role of hope and fear in our climate-changed world, by focusing on different expressions of the utopian imagination in both contemporary political theory and speculative fiction. While both books speak to the broad topic of the planetary crisis, they approach it from very different angles, which we nevertheless plan to bring into a fruitful conversation with one another.

31.   **Zsolt Czigányik**, ELTE BTK, Budapest, Hungary
Title: Dystopia in Interwar Hungary: *Pilot Elza* by Mihály Babits
Abstract: Mihály Babits (1883–1941) was one of the leading Hungarian intellectuals of the first half of the twentieth century, a respected authority not only in literature but in many other areas of culture. Today he is considered as one of the most important poets in Hungary, but besides poetry he also wrote a number of novels. The last one was published in 1933, titled *Elza pilóta vagy a tökéletes társadalom* [*Pilot Elza or the Perfect Society*], which is a bitter, dystopian satire of a society doomed to eternal warfare. Dystopian attitudes were already present in 19th century Hungarian literature, and the early decades of the 20th century brought the birth of the dystopian novel. While Hungarian literature and culture is often claimed to be lagging behind and following Western patterns, Babits's book is synchronous with the beginnings of the genre of dystopia elsewhere in Europe (written the same time as Huxley's *Brave New World*). The paper, besides introducing the novel and assessing its importance, gives an analysis of the social structure the book describes of a fictive future Hungary, concentrating on the role of individuals and individualism. It will also be discussed how seemingly democratic political structures conceal a dictatorial regime where the real sources of power are hidden and therefore operate without constraints. The analysis will reflect on some important similarities with George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the classic dystopia written fifteen years after *Pilot Elza* was published. One such shared feature of the two books is the eternal or global war, another one is that the protagonists of both books are considered the last men (women) in Europe.

32.   **Iva Dimovska,** Democracy Institute, Budapest, Hungary
Title: The Barbarian and The Genius: National(ist) and Utopian Imaginaries
Abstract: The proposed paper traces the connections between utopian and national(ist) imaginaries in the political, cultural, and artistic life of the former Yugoslavia, focusing on the first decades following its formation, i.e., the interwar period. One of the earliest artistic and political movements based on the concept of utopia in Yugoslavia was Zenitism (Zenithism), formed with the launching of the international magazine *Zenit* (Zenith, 1921-1926), by its progenitor Ljubomir Micić. The main personification of Micić's utopian ideas is the revolutionary-anarchistic figure of Barbaro-Genij (Barbaro-Genius), imagined as a modern, forceful, and authentic man who in the new machine age would "Balkanize" Europe, bringing about new art and culture, and a total re-evaluation of traditional values and political ideals. A very specific mixture of utopian and national(ist) sentiments marks the aesthetic and political ideology of Zenitism. The figure of a national Genius as a trope in examining the

utopian/dystopian imaginary appears in the works of another Yugoslav writer from the same period - Miroslav Krleža. His dramatized prose work from 1917, "Hvratska Rapsodija" ("Croatian Rhapsody") – an example of his early expressionist phase – is constructed around two main figures: the Croatian Genius, a sarcastic embodiment of the national ideal and the so called Kozmopolis (Cosmopolis), his utopian, turned dystopian destination. In this paper, I will examine Micić's Zenitism and Krleža's Kozmopolis as prominent representations of utopia in Yugoslav thought in the early decades of the 20th century, while focusing on the role of the national imaginary as an essential element of their world-building

33. **Mircea Dumitru,** University of Bucharest, Romanian Academy, Romania
Title: Frames of Utopias. From Nozick to Us and Beyond
Abstract: Building upon some of Nozick's views on the role of utopias in setting up a political theory and philosophy, the paper explores the concept of the frames of utopias. I assess the methodological virtues of this concept pointing out inapparent but fertile analogies between the work of the concept of frames in the philosophy of utopias and the corresponding work of the very same concept in the contemporary metaphysics of modality and especially in the metalogic of modal logic. The talk is philosophical and keeps the more technical discussion about the concept of frames in modal logic at an acceptable semi-formal level. The upshot is to show how concepts and methods from metaphysics of modality and modal logic can do some important work in political philosophy, especially in the utopian studies.

34. **Teppo Eskelinen,** University of Eastern Finland
Title: Urgency and utopia: imagining in/as a movement
Abstract: The presentation discusses political imagination from two particular perspectives. First, how is political imagination affected by the interpretation of the existing social condition as being a crisis situation. Second, how is political imagination within a social movement a collective skill rather than an individual skill. Both points are discussed in the context of the contemporary climate movement. It is often noted in utopian studies that utopias always mirror the existing society, but this point says little about how the existing social condition affects imagination itself. The climate movement provides an illustrative case. The key aim of the movement is to frame the current political moment as a moment of crisis, requiring rapid policy turns to cut emissions. But crisis implies urgency, and an urgent situation is typically not the best-suited moment to reflect on the long-term future. Yet on the other hand, the environmental movement, like all social movements, does try to conceive of an alternative society. In fact, many activists within the movement see it as absolutely necessary to bring about broad social change, rather than only emission cuts. Spaces for reflecting on utopias are also actively created within the movement. These spaces allow the movement to reflect on its utopias, being something more than just individuals communicating their hopes. Various questions follow. How are a sense of crisis and urgency compatible with political imagination? When are movements subjects of imagination and when are they spaces of imagination? In the presentation, some preliminary answers to these questions are given by making some theoretical points and by analysing reflections of utopias within the climate movement.

35. **Linda De Feo,** Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, Italy
Title: For a sociology of literature. Dystopia and utopia in Philip K. Dick
Abstract: The reflection will focus on an examination of the utopian dimension present in the works of the American science fiction writer Philip Kindred Dick. It is intended to demonstrate how the eschatological significance of the author's novels is articulated in a worldview which in terms of imaginative production anticipates current sociological theories. The methodology used will be historiographical-epistemological and the analysis will be focused on two

significant works, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, published in 1965, and *Valis*, published in 1981, the year before the writer's death. The dysphoric idea of progress born from its own negation and the prediction of a probable apocalypse without palingenesis, which mark the first stretch of Dick's creative parable, weaken in the last phase of the author's production. With the description of an extensive living system of artificial intelligence, defined by the acronym VALIS, Vast Active Intelligence System, the writer elaborates an original interpretation of the evolution of planetary technology. Through the dissolution of mechanical hardness into electronic fluidity, the technique, which, in works such as *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, is judged treacherous acquires an extropic and an amnestic role in *Valis*. Thanks to a mythical narration, Dick elaborates a conception of technique as a complex of human faculties embodied in the technosphere. The prophetic literary representation of a mathematizing cosmology conjugates the transcendence of divinity with the immanence of cyberspatial knowledge. The concept of absolute good therefore becomes perfectly congruent with the image of the God-computer, Valis, an evocative anticipation of the World Wide Web and its promise to defeat finitude.

36. **Jose Carlos Ferrera Cuesta,** Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain
Title: Utopian imaginaries of Spanish migrants to Latin America
Abstract: This paper deals with the utopian imaginaries of Spanish migrants to Latin America. This continent was the core of utopian dreams from the 16th to the 20th Century. On the whole, it was understood as a place of possibility, due to a lavish environment and its newness that allowed to envision social projects. In addition, it had a similar meaning from an individual point of view. Many people travelled to America, running away misery or persecutions. They looked for a better world where thriving and living freely. This research has resorted to letters sent by migrants to their families, although it has not neglected other sources, such as memories. Through them, I try to show how the utopian imaginaries that appeared in fictional works or social and political treatises spread over normal people, who incorporated those ideas, adapting them to their own circumstances. This paper focuses on the 19th and the beginning of the 20th Centuries, but it borrows references from previous periods of time.

37. **Vita Fortunati,** University of Bologna, Italy
Title: Literary Utopias: My Personal Journey
Abstract: In my presentation I would like to point out that the study of literary utopias has been and still is a constant focus of my research. It has accompanied me in different historical and political contexts, helping me in analysing and interpreting their complexity.
The metaphor I want to use is that of *Utopia as a tree* with deep roots from which many branches spread out. In my first book on this topic, I suggested that Utopia could be considered on the whole as a literary genre, characterized by a continuous metamorphosis over time and space. The main structural characteristics of such a genre were identified and discussed. Then, within such a theoretical framework, I addressed how a variety of utopian main themes, i.e., the journey, the island, and the dream, have been treated by pillars of utopian English literature, such as Thomas More, Francis Bacon, Jonathan Swift, William Morris and Aldous Huxley. This perspective allowed me to identify and stress the deep symbolic meanings of such Utopias. Eventually, what fascinated me is that Utopia allowed and still allows me to look at major problems and questions of my contemporary time taking a "lateral" perspective and envisaging new, usually unexpected, political horizons. Moreover, literary Utopia, as a polysemantic object, requires a methodological "transdisciplinary gym". Accordingly, in my studies I have used not only tools from post-structuralism, but also from cultural studies, as exemplified by my essays on Utopia and *ageing*, the *role of women*, as well as *ecology* and *pacifism*.

38. **Elisa Fortunato**, University of Bari, Italy
Title: Plotting the Debt. Margaret Atwood's *The Heart Goes Last*

Abstract: The power of imagination is the fil rouge that Atwood follows in the analysis of the economic crisis she carried out both in her collection of lectures *Payback*: *Debt and the Shadow Side of Wealth* (2009) and in *The Heart Goes Last* (2015). In particular, Atwood seems inspired by the aftermath of the series of economic and social changes triggered by the 2008 financial crisis and economic meltdown. In her words, the debt that caused the crisis is a "collective delusion" and it exists because we imagine it, and she declares: "it is the forms this imagining has taken – and their impact on living reality – that I would like to explore" (Atwood, 2009, p. 23). But imagination by itself is not enough, because "without memory, there is no debt", or in other words, "without story, there is no debt" (p. 142). The mental faculty of imagination becomes fiction thanks to 'language' – our unique mark– and fiction has enabled human beings not only to imagine things but to do it collectively, as a consequence, myths, legends (in one word: fiction) have become 'real' (Harari, 2014). This 'magical' power of human language has a long history, from Descartes (*Discours de la méthode*, 1637) to Aldous Huxley's essays on language6 to Chomsky's Cartesian's Linguistics (1966), which sowed the seeds of cognitive linguistics. It is from this tradition that Atwood draws her definition of debt as a by-product of fiction. *The Heart Goes Last* is the story of how Stan and Charmaine got into debt and how they got overwhelmed by it. The place, Consilence-Positron, where the two protagonists bravely and interestingly choose to follow their tragic destiny is a perfect example of a heterotopia of deviation a counter-site that purifies and promises a regeneration (Foucault,1966, p. 5). Consilence-Positron a sort of socio-economic experiment based upon the voluntary sacrifice of freedom and free will in exchange for a house, a fridge, a mobile phone and every other commodity seen as 'essential' in a world ruled by a neoliberal economy. Stan and Chairmaine, the two young protagonists of Atwood's novel, will trade their free but miserable lives with the commodities advertised by the Consilence-Positron Project in the hope that the possession of property and the consumption of goods would bring to welfare and wellbeing (Mazzanti, Spinozzi, 2019). Through her distinctive style in which she interweaves irony and satire, and through the open ending of *The Heart Goes Last* she finds a way to engage the reader in a fertile dialogue between literature and society and to trace a path to explore the possibilities of utopian thinking that does not preclude hope for the future of humankind (Baccolini, Moylan, 2003).

39. **Justyna Galant,** Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland
Title: Estrangement as a Utopian Tool in Stefan Themerson's Works.

Abstract: The prime interest of the paper is the utopian current in the fiction of Stefan Themerson (1910-1988)—a Polish-Jewish multilingual avant-garde novelist, poet, essayist, filmmaker, composer, and philosopher, who constituted half of a creative duo with his painter, filmmaker, publisher, academic wife, Franciszka Themerson (1907-1988). Of particular interest is the author's employment of estrangement accomplished through the devices of "semantic poetry," where words are replaced by their dictionary definitions, and through radical re-perspectivisation, as exemplified by the adoption of the entomological vantage point in place of human frame of reference in *Professor Mama's Lecture* (1943). The two methods of estrangement—paradigmatic restatement and xenofiction—are read as expressive of the essentially utopian qualities of language as a readily-available, originative and expository tool.

40.   **Mark Gatto,** Northumbria University, UK
Title: Parents at Work: A dystopian fictocriticism

Abstract: Parents at work is an abstract description that can provoke contradictory perceptions of what it means to 'work', this paper uses dystopian fiction and fictocriticism to challenge

patriarchal assumptions and offer caring possible futures. This ***dystopian fictocriticism*** offers a speculative, critical narrative of parents at work drawing upon the field of organisation and gender studies to integrate gender theories of masculinities, and socialist and poststructuralist feminisms alongside genre bending as a form of 'writing differently'. Drawing on empirical findings from interviews with 19 expectant or experienced parents linked to one organisation, this 'dystopian fictocriticism' disrupts masculinised academic and workplace 'norms' associated with parents at work. The main contribution is to extend the writing differently agenda (Gilmore, Harding, Helin, & Pullen, 2019) into this prescient fiction genre, which is uniquely suited to critical analysis and social justice oriented research. Additionally, this paper extends theorising of hegemonic (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) and caring (Elliott, 2016) masculinities in relation to parents at work, building on previous foundational work by Hochschild and Machung (2012). The extracts of a long-form dystopian fictocriticism (Gatto, 2021) are presented to illustrate aspects of this unconventional approach to writing differently and to promote a community of care to subvert patriarchy.

41.   **Konstantin Georgiev,** Rice University, Houston, USA
Title: Teaching Utopia: A Report on An Experiment
Abstract: This paper reports on an experimental elective course I co-taught with a colleague, Dr. Alexander Popov, at Sofia University. Under the title of "Utopian Studies: social, technoscientific, and ecological imaginaries", the course took as its cornerstone Carl Freedman's assertion of the isomorphism of science fiction (from hereon: sf) and critical theory. Based on this, we taught side-by-side four sf novels and a number of texts from anthropology, history, philosophy, and sociology. In the seminars, we discussed the relation between fictional ideas and real-world ideas and politics. Doing so, we introduced two theoretical tools: Aldirgas Greimas's semiotic square and Samuel Delany's notion of the trivalent discourse of sf. The latter posits important relations between existing imaginaries, sf texts, and sf world building. This paper elaborates on these relations and, on another level, on the relations between critical theory and sf. In the proposed paper, I describe the structure of the class and its driving principles. I also offer acritical evaluation not only of the success of the course, but also of its shortcomings. The evaluation is based on the instructors' observations as well as feedback from the students. Besides providing an outline of a pedagogical practice and experiment, this paper offers a sketch toward a theoretical framework of utopia and social change, weaving together works from the fields of science fiction studies, anthropology, and philosophy among others.

42.   **Katarzyna Hanik,** University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland
Title: Farewell to Utopia. Strategies of Reckoning with Her (A)political Past in the Autobiographical Prose of Agnieszka Osiecka
Abstract: The aim of my presentation is to analyze the narrative strategies used by Agnieszka Osiecka in her autobiographical prose when addressing her fascination with utopian socialism and her subsequent lack of political involvement. In her autobiography Osiecka admitted that once asked about her views, she answered: "I am a utopian socialist". Years later, she regretted her youthful choices but never again made such a strong political declaration. Osiecka's strategy of depicting that time bears the hallmarks of tabooing strategies. Among the tabooing methods noticed at the preparatory stage, there is a specific portrayal of that period of her life as a juvenile utopia. In her narrative, she relies on the *topoi* functioning in the Polish collective consciousness. She uses universal phrases that activate the national imaginary and allow her to create the image of the person "tossed about" by the wind of history. Interestingly, despite the use of the phrase "utopian socialism", Osiecka does not present the principles of this ideology that could have convinced her. She prefers to show her choices of political preferences as a

consequence of a certain mentality instilled in her, which the author has alternately fought against and succumbed to throughout her life. On order to verify my thesis I will conduct a close reading method-based analysis of Osiecka's various political comments. Agnieszka Osiecka's example will allow to explore and describe a new strategy of political tabooisation based on relying on the (deliberately altered using numerous narrative strategies) collective imaginary of the past.

43.   **Kenneth Hanshew**, University of Regensburg, Germany
Title: Perfect (Im)-Perfection: Calculated Happiness
Abstract: The advent of convincing AI, ChatGPT, ever better algorithms and advanced robotics promise to revolutionize society in ways only anticipated in social science fiction. This paper strives to illuminate the forebodings of these innovations' impact on society in two neglected Czech treasures unavailable in English, Čestmír Vejdělek's *Návrat z ráje* [Return from Paradise] (1960) and Jiří Marek's *Blažený Věk* [The Blessed Age] (1967). The former, in which literary craftsmanship meets an unusually detailed description of an alien civilization, is considered to be one of the best works of Czech science fiction and thought of more highly than Karel Čapek's R.U.R. (Adamovič 1995: 236, 327), while the latter dystopia of an automated future of incessant media bombardment earns praise for holding on to hope despite the darkness of its society. The study aims to illustrate science fiction's prescience and part of Czech sf's path after Čapek, but, more importantly, also challenges the notion that "the utopian society is a subject, perhaps even the only subject that is inaccessible to literature" (Enzenberger 1982: 77). For these dystopian texts engage readers to imagine the positive alternative to the portrayed societies, implicitly, rather than explicitly evoking a eutopia found in perfect imperfection.

44. **Dirk Hoyer,** Baltic Film Media and Arts School, Tallinn University, Estonia
Title: The Epiphany in the Periphery: Retopian Imaginaries as Revitalization Strategies for Ruined Places
Abstract: Underdeveloped regions in Europe such as Liepaja (Latvia), Pleven (Bulgaria) or Sicily (Italy) are caught in a downward spiral of demographic decline, aging populations and lack of economic development. Can a narrative reshaping of the declining periphery lead to a revitalization of "ruined places"? The example of Detroit is an illustration how the aesthetic revalidation process of a shrinking city in a state of social degradation can lead to a resurgence and attract new inhabitants. But the partial revival of Detroit was animated by capitalist imaginaries and resulted in the gentrification of selected areas without solving the severe social problems of the majority of the citizens. Depopulating regions in Europe can learn from the Detroit case that Ruinenlust can be a positive factor in generating interest. But without a new imaginary the social inequalities will be replicated and possibly aggravated. In the context of possible functional unemployment, the rise of what Harari called the "useless class" and a crisis in the social welfare system novel strategies are required. The uninhabited spaces of Pleven, Liepaja and Sicily could be used for fundamentally new imaginaries: social start-ups in the framework of a retopian development scheme. As opposed to providing universal basic income or universal basic services, the structurally underdeveloped regions could provide free spaces for groups that wish to establish social start-ups in which they experiment with community land trusts, common pool resources and develop practical schemes of what Ruth Levitas calls the "Imaginary Reconstitution of Society".

45.   **Monika Humeniuk,** University of Wroclav, Poland
Title: Utopias of shared hope - hybridizations of the language of knowledge and faith in the discourse of the climate crisis

Abstract: The crisis of planetary climatic instability has effectively captured the Western imagination, the agitation over the state of the world is lending itself unexpectedly widely not only in the sciences, but also inside Western religious systems, where nature and its problems could not count on special attention until now. Perhaps in the face of the marasm of the Anthropocene and the numerous ecological crises, science and religion, having agreed on an irremovable incompatibility and non-consensuality, could think and act for the utopia of the common good despite all mutual prejudices? It seems that the interpenetration of the two separate imaginaries of "knowledge" and "faith" is a symptom of this type of shift, and may be expressed in the hybridization of the two types of language. The presentation will briefly evoke the case where the discourse of science draws from religious language and vice versa. This will be exemplified by Bruno Latour's ecotheological argument and the theme of radical ecological biblical hermeneutics.

46.   **Barbara Klonowska,** John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland
Title: New World, Better Worlds: Utopian Imaginaries in Golden Door
Abstract: *Golden Door* (*Nuovomondo*), a 2006 film by Emanuele Crialese, tells the story of Europeans immigrating to America at the turn of the 20th century. Representing various characters travelling there driven by diverse motivations, the film showcases different versions of a utopian imaginary vision of America. The proposed presentation aims to analyse the various ways in which the American 'promised land' is conceptualized in the film and how all of the mare contrasted with and checked by the realities of the voyage and the Ellis Island. Referring to the concept of the imaginary, the analysis will try to establish mechanisms and functions of their production and their subsequent verification and maintenance or abandonment.

47.   **Daniel Koechlin**, Le Mans Université, France
Title: Dystopian Images and Social Imaginaries in Occupy-era cinema
Abstract: In the wake of the Occupy movement, a group of dystopian films were released that, despite many differences, share a unique series of characteristics. In the *Hunger Games* trilogy, *Elysium* and *Snowpiercer*, class war emerges as the main theme. The 99% are physically shut out from the world of the 1% by impressive barriers. The main characters are from the ranks of the dispossessed and must make their bloody way through a series of obstacles until they reach the world of the elite, and in that world a nodal point that controls the entire system. Refusing to be coopted as in previous rebellions, they bring about the total collapse of the regime of exploitation. The aftermath of the revolution is not explored, it is enough to have opened up new horizons, utopian or otherwise. The paper will use a critical approach, mainly Jamesonian, to examine historical, political, psychological and interpretative issues in this constellation of occupy-era films, and how they testify to the huge impact on the American psyche of the 2007 financial crisis and ensuing long depression, and the feeling of frustration that fostered Occupy. These are critical dystopian narratives as defined by Sargent and Moylan, for hopes and doubts beset the revolutionaries. The main "ideological containment strategy" as Jameson calls the accusation of "*Ressentiment" that* the elite in a class-ridden society always levels at discontents - that they only want to be the new masters - is powerfully articulated by the likes of President Snow or Mr. Wilford. But the likes of Katniss Everdeen grimly persevere. This "keeping faith", as Jameson puts it, with the revolutionary impulse of the masses and the final downfall of the haughty elite is what sets apart this group of critical dystopias, for which we tentatively suggest the term of "eripsipylaic" dystopias – "gate-toppling" dystopias.

48.   **Marta Komsta**, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland

Title: Dystopian materiality and utopian imaginary: Maureen F. McHugh's "Useless Things" and Diane Cook's "The Way the End of Days Should Be"

Abstract: The paper explores the representations of materiality in Maureen F. McHugh's "Useless Things" (2011) and Diane Cook's "The Way the End of Days Should Be" (2014). I seek to discuss the short stories in question as examples of narratives that foreground the relationship between humans and artefacts/objects, which intimates the need to reappropriate utopian thinking through the lens of intentional vulnerability as opposed to the hegemonic practice of socio-political, cultural, and ecological dominance. While in Cook's story artefacts function predominantly as semiotic equivalents of the anthropocentric supremacy, McHugh's narrative adumbrates a more ambiguous conclusion by implicitly recognizing materiality as a potential element of semiotic resistance in the increasingly dystopian environment of deprivation. I argue thus that the material relics in these stories come to signify the dystopian reality of the Anthropocene catastrophe as well as the utopian imaginary of reconciliation and renewal.

49.   **Marta Korbel**, University of Salamanca, Spain
Title: The Fairy-Tale in the Soviet Russian Utopian Imaginary
Abstract: As noted by Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., the "paradigmatic" fairy tale, characterised by "[t]he inevitability of the happy ending," the presence of "magical-supernatural beings," and "[a] three-phase story" has been an important model both in the formation of numerous science fiction narratives and in the Soviet utopian discourse (232, 234, 236). Though this narrative form was suppressed under the Stalinist regime as "an escape from reality, a sinful play of imagination" (Yershov 35), the fairytale paradigm re-emerged in Soviet Russia's sci-fi production from the 1950s onwards, most notably in the works of the Strugatsky brothers. This paper examines its function in the two writers' satirical novel Monday Begins on Saturday (1965), and in two short stories from Kir Bulychev's *Great Guslar* cycle (1967-2002), *Goldfish for Sale* (1969) and *The Martian Concoction* (1971). Building on Csicsery-Ronay Jr.'s examination of the paradigm in "the Strugatskys' dark masterpiece" *Roadside Picnic* (232), and supplying the analysis with the findings on the subject of folk tradition in Soviet sci-fi by Darko Suvin and Peter Yershov, the paper aims to draw attention to the primary texts largely overlooked in the Western academia and highlight the distinctiveness of the Russian utopian imaginary. Moreover, by focusing on works written in a comical style, it will demonstrate the relevance and importance of humour and satire in the production of the Soviet period, customarily associated with solemn subject matter and state censorship interference.

50.   **Daryna Koryagina,** Central European University, Department of Comparative History, Budapest, Hungary
Title: The tensions between utopian aspirations and dystopian politics in the early Soviet period
Abstract: For a scholar of utopianism, the early Soviet period presents a curious case, beginning with the idealistic nature of October revolution itself. Utopian ideas permeated early Soviet society in many spheres, starting from actual literally utopias and various artistic endeavors, like a powerful futurist movement, to architecture and even, arguably, science with the ideas of the New Soviet man. Moreover, the rhetoric of the "brighter tomorrow" was widely used by the emerging Soviet state. Since utopias traditionally deal with "ideal" societies, often without explaining how a given society would achieve that stage, early Soviet propaganda was peculiar as it attempted to provide an actual roadmap of how the regime was aiming to reach its stated goal in creating a truly communist society. That illustrates the impact of these essentially utopian notions from a socio-political perspective. And yet, the Bolsheviks, following the Marxist tradition, would protest the very notion of utopia as anti-scientific. The

tensions between Leninand Lunacharsky alongside with the ban on literary utopian works, whose authors would later be forced out of their respective Soviet Republics, are amongst the many indicators of this divide between attempting to build what is essentially a utopia, while rebuking the utopian nature of Bolshevik's communist project. All of this posits the questions – how can we discuss utopianism present in early Soviet cultural and social life?

51.   Boris Lanin, **Institute for East Slavic Philology, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland**
Title of Presentation: States of Exception in Dystopian Fiction

Abstract: I would like to examine a case in which literary imagination anticipated a "real world" state of exception. Vassily Aksyonov's 1980 dystopia *The Island of Crimea* and Andrei Stoliarov's 1999 dystopia *The Skylark* imagined Russian military occupation of the Crimean Peninsula, anticipating Russia's actual invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014. These two dystopias predicted further events, and served as a "provocative prognosis." Russia's use of military force against Ukraine and its annexation of Crimea upended the rules of the post-World War II European order, yet were supported by the majority in the Russian Federation and in Crimea. Top Russian officials openly lied that there were no Russian soldiers. This case enforced the state of exception in present-day Russia. Dystopian literature holds a mirror that limits these states of exception place on access to information. For example, in Tatiana Tolstaya's *The Slynx* and Vladimir Sorokin's *The Day of Oprichnik*, the central conflict of Bradbury's classic *Fahrenheit 451* becomes digital: the authorities in these fictive states of exception—like those in today's Russia and Belarus— "burn" and close digital media that oppose the state's pro-regime federal TV channels.

52.   **Hubert Łaszkiewicz**, University of Warsaw, Poland
Title: New Jerusalem – A Trap for the Savior. A Place of Worship and Redemption as Seen Through the Images of Ivan the Terrible Religious Imagination

Abstract: Ivan the Terrible, a first Russian Tsar, is an iconic figure of Russian history. His life and deeds are an object o many historical research. At the same time he is also a key figure in Russian literature and art whilst the images of power and religious mind are discussed. The aim of the paper is to describe and analyze three levels of Ivan the Terrible personality interpretations:
-       A historical one – the changing story about Ivan personal piety resulting in his deeds and creation (reaffirmation) of Russian political theology;
-       An artistic approach: literature – when, how and why Russian literature start to create an image of Ivan as a "holly man" or as an "angel" transform into the "Devil" and how the "New Jerusalem" was represented (for instance in Vladimir Sorokin novel "Day of the Oprichnik";
-       Ivan and his "New Jerusalem", far beyond any historical references, was a theme in the movies. The two are worth of mention: S. Eisenstein "Ivan the Terrible" and P. Lungin "The Tsar". Both shape a visual representation of the "New Jerusalem".
The study of "New Jerusalem" image is going through the primary sources to historiography, literature and, finally cinema.

53.   **Jane Levi,** King's College London, UK
Title: Charles Fourier's Sensory *Imaginaire*

Abstract: The definition of 'utopie' in a French dictionary of 1798 concludes with a short sentence: "Each dreamer imagines their [own] utopia." Quoting this, Albert Soubul suggests that to the men [sic] of the late eighteenth century utopia was "more of a mode of thought than a particular form of expression"; already an *imaginaire* in the twentieth-century sense. This

paper looks at the "social imaginary" of Charles Fourier (1772-1837), in particular the combinations of fantasy and reality at play within his descriptions of the "social realities" of his world, *Harmonie*-designed as a call to the senses as much as the logical mind.

Taking the human senses (smell and taste in particular) and the concept of neurogastronomy (Shepherd, 2013) as a means of exploring the connections between the conscious and unconscious, the paper examines Fourier's approach to the sensual aspects of *Harmonie*, in particular its food. Reviewing his work as a series of sensory prompts that help each dreamer to imagine their own utopia, it argues that Fourier's focus on food, an aspect of life at once so mundane and such a site for the imagination, makes *Harmonie* a prime example of the *imaginaire*; one that opens new paths towards realising alternative social existences.

54.   **Nina Liebhaber**, Universität Innsbruck, Austria
Title: Hope for climate action: A storied understanding of young people's hopeful imaginaries in changing climates
Abstract: Hope plays an ambivalent role for young people growing up in a world increasingly shaped by changing climates, intensifying climate extremes and associated socio-economic consequences. Being hopeful can result in taking decisive action against climate change but it can also lead to not taking the impacts of climate change seriously, or shifting responsibility to others. Hopeful imaginaries can therefore reveal how adolescents deal with climate change and how they act or could act against it. In the context of the research project k.i.d.Z.21_aCtiOn2, around 400 young people in Austria and Germany were asked at two different points in time (via online questionnaires) what gives them hope that they can do something about climate change. The experimental group (around 200) participated in a series of action-oriented, climate-friendly workshops in between. Results ranged from no hope at all about the possibility of doing something about climate change to detailed accounts of the things and actions that gave them hope. A narrative analysis of these results assesses the young people's hopeful imaginaries of (1) the world they want to live in and things that would happen in this world, and (2) their lives and actions in this world. From the individual perspectives, commonalities are synthesized into a storied understanding that reflects manifestations of hope and agency in changing climates. Aiming at a better understanding of pathways towards a climate-friendly way of living, a concrete yet complex picture of young people's ambivalent, hopeful imaginaries is presented.

55.   **Cara Linley**, University of Canberra, Australia
Title: Is What's Mine Really Mine?: Re-imagining resource distribution through post-apocalyptic fiction
Abstract: Post-apocalyptic fiction, taking place in worlds where formal institutions such as government, courts and police disappear, allows survivors the opportunity to rebuild communities on a tabula rasa. Protagonists are forced to make difficult decisions about the "rightful" distribution of resources, cognizant of the fact that these decisions can literally be a matter of life and death because resources are scarce. Works like Emily St John Mandel's *Station Eleven* (2014), Frank Tayell's *Surviving the Evacuation* series (2011-2020) and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006) point to some of the tensions scholars have identified in notions of ownership and control over resources in our contemporary world. In examining the extreme wealth inequality crisis, Thomas Piketty (2020) has challenged conceptions of unrestricted ownership by advocating for increased temporary ownership through reinstating wealth and inheritance taxes. In the context of global inequality, Reece Jones (2017) has argued that continued maintenance of territorial control through heavily defended national borders is a key cause. However, it is difficult to point to objective foundations for private land claims or

national borders (Rose 1999). In following the stories of survivors in post-apocalyptic worlds, it is possible to explore limits and potentials for how we imagine property rights.

56.   **Alexandra Lițu,** University of Bucharest, Romania
Title: The Material Cultures of Imagined Non-Human Worlds in Homer
Abstract: In Homer's epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (8th/7th BC), we see desirable or frightening non-human worlds imagined in great detail, not only at the level of their social functioning, but with respect to their material settings as well. This is particularly true of the world of the gods, but also of other non-human beings like the Phaeacians (as the utopian society par excellence in the epics), the monstrous Cyclopes, the sorceress Circe or the nymph Calypso in the Odyssey. From their abodes to the objects populating their dwellings, great care was taken by Homer in detailing the material background of these beings or societies seemingly perceived through various shades of Otherness. In general, scholars commented on the hyperbolic descriptions and on the abundance of precious metals in these material settings while also stressing that objects made of these metals appear (much) later in the archaeological record. These descriptions would be, in their opinion, exacerbated projections of luxurious settings in real life. However, this suggests a particular effort was done to create telling material settings for these beings in correlation on the one hand, to their status and behaviours, and on the other hand, to the narrative imperatives. We would like to explore in depth how the particular material cultures created in the epics participated in the construction of the non-humanness of the characters and in the narrative progression, while also highlighting broader issues like Otherness, nature/culture, gender or insularity relevant to these literary constructions of materiality.

57.   **Yi-Chun Liu,** Feng Chia University, Taiwan
Title: A PARALLEL UNIVERSE OF THE URCHINS: The Prophetic Imaginaries in Kao Yi-Feng's *War of the Bubbles*
Abstract: Being acclaimed as the Taiwanese version of *Lord of the Flies*, Kao Yi-Feng's *War of the Bubbles* (2014) portrays—with a mixture of absurdity and realism—a dystopian community governed by aspirational children. Prompted by the long-standing water shortage, the disgruntled children of the New City took over the management committee, effectively forming their own utopian district cut off from society. In this un-chaptered narrative, Kao mobilized all animated and unanimated things, including plants, animals, people, and ghosts, to create a radically re-imagined universe parallel in time. It is a fiction deep-rooted in the social realities of Taiwan, superimposed with fantastical elements inspired by Taiwanese folklore and myths. That the story is set in an isolated mountain lack of water supply mirrors the islandic anxieties common to Taiwanese people, that of the energy crisis. The year of its publication further coincided with the Sunflower Movement, the largest student movement since 1990 that Kao himself had not foreseen at the time of his composition. An allegory turned a prophecy, *War of the Bubbles* is replete with daunting warnings disguised in serio-jocularity. With textual and paratextual analysis, this paper aims to explore Kao's utopian vision as presented in these imaginaries as well as to investigate the narrative strategies building up to the final dissolution of the bubbles, a metaphorical loss of the parallel universe.

58.   **Michel Macedo Marques,** FLUP/CETAPS, Brazil
Title: Intentional Communities: The Utopia in Northeast of Brazil
Abstract: With the proclamation of the Republic in Brazil, in 1889, came a new awareness of modernization ideas and incentives for the arrival of immigrants with new knowledge for settlement. The Northeast region, the first to be colonized, found itself forgotten and labeled poor and backward. A semi-feudal system prevailed, where the landowners, called "Colonels",

on account of army titles obtained during the Monarchy, only generated semi-slavery jobs and even controlled the electoral system in the region. For the poor population, there were only the options of accepting and fitting into the system, submitting to work without rights, or rebelling and joining the marginality of gangs, called "Cangaceiros", who invaded and looted cities. In the midst of this scenario, intentional communities founded by "Beatos" (a title alien to the official denomination of the Catholic Church for a person in the process of sanctification, and yes, just a religious person who opted for a chaste life and receiving alms for their religious work) have become an alternative for a dignified life. We analyzed the example of the community of Caldeirão da Santa Cruz do Deserto, founded by Beato José Lourenço, which followed the model of the Jesuit Missions, and sheltered about 5thousand people, during the years 1926 to 1936, who shared all their agricultural production, they made their own clothes and tools and didn't even use money, but because they were considered communists, they had the community destroyed by the army, in a massacre with hundreds of victims.

59. **Csaba Maczelka,** Institute of English Studies at the University of Pécs, Hungary
Title: Reception of Utopianism in the Early Modern Transylvanian Hungarian Milieu
Abstract: The paper offers a broad overview of the reception of different aspects of utopianism in 16th-17th century Transylvania. The first part of the paper discusses the presence of Thomas More's *Utopia* in Transylvanian collections, followed by the active reception of the work among the Antitrinitarians of Cluj in the late sixteenth century. The most subtle adaptation of *Utopia* and the writing style represented by Erasmus and More will be identified in the works of the Greek exile philosopher Jacobus Palaeologus (active in Transylvania in the 1570s), which will be investigated in detail with special emphasis on some of the remarkable changes to the application of the concept of utopia. The paper argues that on Palaeologus' pen, utopia transforms from an imaginary faraway land to an ideal/ideal local community characterized above all by religious toleration. The second part of the paper will cite other examples where either the reception of utopian texts in Transylvania or some association between Transylvania and utopia can be traced.

60. **Annette Magid**, State University of New York: Erie Community College, USA
Title: Cultural, Literary and Artistic Representations in Harlan Ellison's Sci-Fi
Abstract: A close study of even one of the sci-fi stories from the prolific 1960s American writer would offer extensive insight into present-day investigations of cultural, literary and artistic representations. Harlan Ellison in his "Repent Harlequin, Said the Ticktock Man" covers a plethora of societal dilemmas which not only concerned those of the 60s, they also presciently reflect several of today's post-pandemic issues. How can the evident resolutions described by Ellison be reflected in today's society? How does Ellison's focus on Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* offer insight into modern society? The focus of my paper is to delineate the concerns in some of Ellison's sci-fi stories and offer parallelisms with situations in today's society.

61. **Zoran Markovic,** ARCHI - Research and Design Institute**,** Gaborone, Botswana
Title: THEATRICAL PLAY AS A FORM OF THE UTOPIAN LITERATURE
Abstract: Theatre play as a work of art is as old as literature itself. It is the same with utopian ideas, literature and communities. Utopian literature did not begin with Thomas More during the Renaissance, but has a long and rich history before his book that gave the genre its name. Ever since ancient Greece, since the time of Aristophanes and his comedies (Eklesiazousai - The rule of women; Lysistrates - Lysistrata; Thesmophoriazousai - Thesmophoriasuze, Ornithes - Birds), the theatre play has been an important form of presenting utopian ideas.

As the utopian idea is only a reaction to the social, economic and political situation at that moment and in that place, its literary representation varies and depends on the level of social development of the society. The paper presents the results of research based on the typological bibliography of utopian literature by the same author (Marković Z. Typology of alternative and utopian ideas, literature, communities and movements), across time and space. The comparison is not only made between different types of utopian dramas. The emphasis is on the relationship between the utopian work and its special space and time. Analyzing in this way, the study shows that the development of the utopian form (drama) is directly related to the development of society and follows it.

62. **Kevin Martens Wong**, Merlionsman of the Republic of Singapore, Director at Kodrah Kristang
Title: Istoria Krismatra: Toward a provisional reclamation of our shared human history through the revitalisation of the critically endangered Kristang language and culture of archipelagic Southeast Asia
Abstract: Kristang (iso 639-3: mcm) is a critically endangered creole language spoken by around 1,000people primarily in Melaka and Singapore, including the author; both the language and its community, the Kristang or Portuguese-Eurasians, trace their origins to coercive intermarriages between arriving Portuguese colonisers and local Malay residents following the conquest of Melaka in 1511 by the former. This deep-seated intergenerational shame and trauma, coupled with further marginalisation under later empires and governments, meant that Kristang was almost moribund by 2015; however, since 2016, an internationally-recognised revitalisation effort led by the author known as Kodrah Kristang has dramatically invigorated Kristang language, culture and identity in both locations, permitting further exploration of Kristang thought and ways of being.

This paper examines one facet of these explorations employing the Kristang social imagining method known as Sunyeskah / Dreamfishing as a vehicle for uncovering more of our universal past as a human species; it also explores how Kristang social imagining is arguably uniquely suited for this due to our creole community's inherent openness to drawing on sources of all kinds and noticing "what is not said", having lived at the periphery of history for generations. Through analysis of common elements of myth, legend and contemporary science fiction and fantasy taken as fragmentary, unconscious reflections of our shared past, therefore, a provisional assemblage of that past is excavated also as a means of finally understanding the roots of many still-extant forms of intergenerational trauma, and hopefully as a way of moving past or embracing them.

63. **Regina Martin,** Denison University, UK
Title: State and Corporate Imaginaries in Orwell's *1984* and Edgars's *The Circle*
Abstract: Dave Eggers's *The Circle* can be read as an update of Orwell's novel for the post-Cold War digital age. *The Circle* is set on the campus of a massive internet company called "The Circle" which usurps the powers of the state, creating a corporate-techno-dystopia masquerading as a democratic and consumer paradise. Reading *Nineteen Eighty-Four* along with *The Circle* is a bit like viewing an animatronic amusement park ride through Google Glass. The dystopia of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a desiccated world of scarcity and deprivation, while *The Circle* presents us with a dystopia of abundance, novelty, and constant stimulation. Whereas the totalitarian state of Orwell's novel maintains power by annihilating all desires—sexual desire, consumer desire, aesthetic desire—except desire for "Big Brother," the corporate-techno-regime of Eggers's novel comes to power by stimulating and proliferating desire—desire for new technology, desire for new consumer goods, desire for sex and love. This paper will argue, counterintuitively, that *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s dystopian annihilation

of desire gestures toward utopian desire—the desire for yet-unimagined forms of human freedom—by envisioning, via Winston's opposition to state control, a definition of self-heterogenous to the totalitarian state. *The Circle* by contrast annihilates utopian desire even as it depicts a world saturated with desire: *The Circle*'s promotion of individual democratic and consumer choices channels desire not toward a totalitarian regime but toward totalitarianism itself.

64.   **Mariano Martín Rodríguez,** Independent scholar, Brussels, Belgium
Title: When (Lesbian) Women Will Rule Over Men: Visions of Future Gynecocracy in Utopian Fiction from Interwar Romania
Abstract: The growing assertiveness and public agency of the 'New Woman' from the age of the suffragettes onwards inspired a number of European and American speculative fictions on how our future would look like if women were to rule over men. This prospect seems positive in several eutopias, whereas other narratives portray that role reversal in comic or ironic terms, or even depict women's rule as totalitarian. Future gynecocracy was also imagined in Romania in the interwar years. For example, Alice Gabrielescu showed in her short story from 1928 titled "O descoperire antifeministă" (An Anti-Feminist Invention) a plot by men to subvert women's rule taking advantage of feminine vanity. Gabrielescu's ironic feminism targets both genders in her tragicomic future history. Mythography replaces historiography in a later Romanian masculinist vision of future gynecocracy. Ion Talpă rewrites in his novel from 1937 *Prin rotogoalele de fum* (Through Smoke Rings) the Hebrew story of humankind's fall in order to explain through myth how women will prevail over brutish men. The resulting order is based on all-female sociality, including in sexual matters. Women oppress degraded men under an anti-family totalitarian regime in Talpă's ambiguously dystopian narrative, which features lesbian sexuality as a matter of course. This work is innovative for its use of modernist metafictional devices in order to suggest how subjectivity underpins ideological stances in utopian literature, as well as to show how these stances determine the alternate eutopian or dystopian possible endings of the novel, thus undermining its apparently conservative message.

65.   **Francisco José Martínez Mesa**, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain
Title: The role of mythical dystopias in the age of fear
Abstract: Despite the extraordinary success of dystopia nowadays, most of the studies dedicated to the phenomenon tend to focus on the identification of the problems or the evils addressed in the works or on the reasons that led their authors to carry them out, but very few address the perspective of dystopia's reception and impact on the public. The existence of this important gap in the analysis led us to suggest a proposal that materialize a new system for categorizing dystopia based on a classification articulated around the reception and the significance of the dystopian, always from criteria of insertion and formulation at the level of the social process (Martínez Mesa, 2021).
The general state of anxiety and anguish currently prevailing in contemporary societies constitutes a breeding ground for all kinds of proposals that seek to unravel, question, or simply make sense of the increasingly incomprehensible and indecipherable world in which humanity feels confined. Of all of them, probably the ones that contribute the most to reappropriating and assuming their fears, are those that, like the ancient myths of antiquity, use novels and stories where they can exorcise and conjure their ghosts, reflecting on and symbolically expressing everything that shakes and frightens as an individual and as a member of a society. The paper proposes a compelling analysis of a type of dystopia that could be called mythical and whose presence in the contemporary political and cultural landscape, extremely overwhelming, is clearly indicative of the climate of prevailing fear and mistrust in our

societies. For this purpose, the presentation will make use of some of the most representative works of the present-day genre.

66.   **Toni Massinen,** University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, Finland
Title: Making antimilitarist places
Abstract: This paper looks at antimilitarist activism in Finland from a utopian perspective. While the institutionalized cultural memory of war occupies the nation's collective imagination, conscientious objection and organized grassroots anti-militarism have a long, albeit marginal, history in the country. Theirs is vision of a society radically different to the one we live in. Inspired by David M. Bell's conceptualisation of utopia as a place and Henri Lefebvre's theory of social space, the paper examines the ways antimilitarism "makes place by taking place", to adopt a Bellian vocabulary.

For Bell, rather than being a good place that is no place, utopia constitutes a no-good-place, "with the dashes signifying an ambiguous and productive consistency between the three constituent terms"; they intra-act. Bell rethinks utopia as a dynamic place "(re)produced by and which (re)produces particular understandings of the "good" and "no.""

Working with Finnish antimilitarists, I map out the particular understandings of the "good" and "no" the activists share and how these conceptions intra-act to (re)produce antimilitarism as a utopian place. This involves a discussion about the relations and tensions between "space" and "place" from utopian perspective. The concepts of militarism and antimilitarism are also discussed. The paper concludes with a discussion of antimilitarism as a utopian counter-place that is simultaneously within, against and beyond the belligerent and increasingly militarized present.

67.   **Ljubica Matek,** University of Osijek, Croatia
Title: Imagining Urban Entropy in J. G. Ballard's *The Drowned World*
Abstract: Both the reality and the imagined concept of a drowned or submerged city have been explored from various points of view – historical, archaeological, and literary. A drowned city is represented either as a key to understanding human behaviour, culture, and history, like in the case of Pavlopetri in Greece, or as a symbol of mystery, like Plato's Atlantis or Poe's "The City in the Sea." J. G. Ballard's visionary 1962 novel *The Drowned World* seems to embody both as it represents the consequences of global warming on both the urban spaces/places and on people. The novel represents the drowned city as the symbol of decaying human civilization marked by violence and greed. The merciless sun and the advancing ocean engulf the urban space, turning it into lagoons and recreating a prehistoric environment in a process of urban entropy, which not only transforms people but also destroys them. In this, Ballard confirms Lehan's dual notion of the city, a product of Enlightenment, as a place of (political)order and (social) chaos (3) as well as the fact that the city as "the culmination of Western history, embodies a state of individual consciousness and reflects a complex plane of existence" (Lehan 128). By relying on the analysis of the novel, the paper argues that despite its evident human-made order and complexity, urban space inevitably collapses under the pressures of nature as well as that the literary imaginary of climate change entails the ideas of both moral and material disintegration.

68.   **Laura Mattioli**, Durham University, UK
Title: Utopian urbanism and the male body: gendered space in Doni's *Mondo Savio e Pazzo*
Abstract: To both Italian early modern urbanists and utopists, the Protagorean maxim that 'man is the measure of all things' became an underlying metaphor for the construction of their imaginary ideal worlds. The human body, a microcosm reflecting the perfection of the cosmos, was considered the epitome of harmony and proportionality. Utopian city form — with its

straight lines, squared and circular shapes and harmonious architecture — replicates this relationship between man and the cosmos, thus bestowing symbolic meaning on the imaginary world as it connects it to the sphere of divinity. The body on which this correspondence is drawn, however, is always a masculine one: only that can provide the measurements of perfection, while the female body is seen merely as its defective counterpart. This paper ventures into philosophical inquiry to question what it means for an imaginary society to be constructed on a model of male corporal perfection. It studies the case of Anton Francesco Doni's 'Mondo Savio e Pazzo', a pessimistic utopia in which the harmonic form of the male body provides the basis for the creation of the rational city. By looking at a series of engravings included in various early modern editions of the text, the study reflects on the relationship between text and image and investigates how the urban construction of the ideal city impacts the presence of women within it. Drawing on Akkerman's theories of philosophical urbanism, this paper attempts an innovative approach to the study of utopias by taking gender as a criterion to read space.

69.   **Karim Medjad**, Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (Cnam), Paris, France
Title: Utopia and dystopia as a scientific tool: the narrative method revisited
Abstract: Narrative methods are increasingly used in social sciences to describe experiments and offer interpretations. Whether in social sciences or in areas such as medicine, these methods allow an exploration of personal experiences beyond the boundaries of traditional research methods, notably by leaving room to formulate intuitions that cannot be scientifically verified. Also, narrative methods are a convenient bridge between research and teaching, as they convey research results in a more accessible - and appealing - form. The purpose of this presentation is to discuss the potential benefits, notably from a pedagogical perspective, of adding a utopian / dystopian perspective to these methods. It describes an experiment that was initiated three years ago at Cnam's Interdisciplinary research center in action-oriented sciences (Lirsa), where a layer of dystopia was gradually introduced to strengthen standard scientific reasoning. Thanks to use of narrative forms that made it possible, this combination has proven to be particularly compelling - and engaging. This experiment is a work in progress. In addition to giving an account and discussing this new way of conducting academic research, this presentation also aims at exploring the possibility to create a narrative-based scientific review with like-minded researchers.

70.   **Petrișor Militaru & Ilona Duță,** University of Craiova, Romania
Title: *The Way of the Searpent* - between poetry and utopia. On the "lateral possibilities" of surrealism
Abstract: For Gellu Naum, *The Way of the Searpent* represents, in the plane of the poetical ego, for the Naumian poetic imaginary a utopia of surrealist knowledge by successively renouncing skins or, in the plane of interaction with otherness, the peeling of the real from the waste of the conscious and the alienating social mechanisms. Naum's deep vision is also his poetic utopia that defines his vision of the world: by discovering the path of the Serpent he steps into that inner-outer space (which Sanda Roșescu talks about in the book-interview with the same title), where the reconciliation of opposites is achieved archetypal masculine feminine (in the microcosm) and solar-lunar, at the level of the macrocosm. In the terms of Raymond Ruyer, the volume is "the ultimate reflection of a unifying thought thanks to which the synthesis of the criteria that inspires the description of an extraordinary world" is achieved, generated by those "lateral possibilities" that generate a surreality, which is in analogy with our world, being lived but at another level of poetic intensity and thus fundamentally different from our everyday world, by the deviation in a surrealist spirit of the basic principles that ensure its apparent stability.

71.   **Elisabetta Di Minico**, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain
Title: Utopian and Dystopian Otherness in Comics: Can Superheroes Help Us Promote "Good Places"?
Abstract: In the utopian worlds, otherness usually finds a space for empathy, connection and support. In dystopian realities, the "others" are normally treated as elements of trauma and crisis, ending up shattered by hate and fear. How 21st century comics are embodying utopia, dystopia and otherness? After/in parallel with the Dark Age of Comics (80s-current), in which the expression of ethnic, cultural, sexual, physical, and economic otherness is often subject to violence and depreciation to underline and expose the real dystopian racist, misogynist, and homophobic tendencies in our societies, we are witnessing an always more positive and utopian characterization of diversity, a tendency also supported by new feminist waves and socio-political movements. Characters as Kamala Khan (Muslim teenage Pakistani-American), Echo (deaf Native American), and America Chavez (first lesbian Latin-American heroine to star in a comic book series as the eponymous character) promote an inclusive and intersectional vision of others and, as Cocca underlines, a "decrease in the underrepresentation, sexualization, and objectification of female" and LGBTQ+ characters. Through the analysis of selected titles (*The Boys, X-Men Red, Ms Marvel, America Chavez, Phoenix Song: Echo*, etc.), the article aims to reflect on the utopian and dystopian representation of otherness and the socio-political implications and inspirations of these stories (America Chavez can be related to the Chicano movement, Echo with the Standing Rock, etc.), useful also for educational approaches.

72.   **András Molnár**, University of Szeged, Hungary
Title: Ian McDonald's *Luna* Trilogy as a Dystopian Critique of the Adversarial Trial System
Abstract: The crux of law is reasoned debate. This statement is a commonplace, nevertheless it's true: one of the fundamental purposes of any legal system is to offer a regulated—often rule-based—way of dispute resolution to avoid violence within a community. Such ways of dispute resolution require parties to produce reasons and evidence to further their claims. They are expected to use rational or rhetorical devices to convince the judge (jury) to decide in their favor. The American legal procedural system is commonly associated with the use of rhetorical devices and procedural "tricks," sometimes to the detriment of rational argumentation. This association can be illustrated with extraordinary cases which are deeply embedded in popular culture. This feature has been discussed in American jurisprudence, too: 20th century legal scholar Jerome Frank characterized the U. S. procedural system with what he called "fight theory," a trial systemin which the opposing parties (and their legal counsels) are pitted against each other to struggle for victory, not unlike a sports match.
Contemporary British science fiction author Ian McDonald's *Luna* trilogy takes place on an imaginary Moon about a century after our present. It depicts a social order in which social life is not governed be legal rules the way we know it today. Instead, people who go to court may utilize various methods of persuasion, and even feud is permitted, provided that the opposing party and the court agree. McDonald's representation of the trial system can be seen as a critique of a type of legal procedure in which the often unequal bargaining and manipulative power of the parties is given too much role, and thus the trilogy becomes a kind of social commentary that points out real problems in an imaginary world.

73.   **Federica Moscatelli**, Alma Mater Studiorum, Università di Bologna, Italy
Title: Reconstructing alterNative futures in Hispano-American literatures
Abstract: This presentation will be centered on the themes of my PhD research project. The aim of my study is to explore in Hispano-American literature the imaginary created after the

apocalypse and its relationship with the pre-colonial cosmogony. The purpose is to open to alternative imaginaries of reconstruction in apocalyptic, post-apocalyptic and dystopian narratives. With our work we will try to demonstrate that, even though it could be quite a paradox to find possibilities of hope in dystopian narratives, it is still possible in some Hispano-American narratives. In fact, the power of memory and the pre-colonial imaginary function as a bridge in creating a new world for the future. The corpus of this research will be made of different narratives from Mexico, Nicaragua, and Argentina. Nevertheless, we might mention other narratives across America such as Canada and the USA. The core of our research could be condensed in three essential questions: How dystopic and post-apocalyptic narratives are related with pre-colonial cosmogony in Hispano-America? How can this relation inspire Hispano-American authors (and not only) to rethink and reconstruct the world in the Anthropocene? How can these imaginary futures based on the past be relevant in the present? To conclude, we will investigate how the catastrophe is depicted in Hispano-American narratives as well as the relationship between Nature, Humanity and Technology in Native communities in order to understand how it can be influential in the depiction of a post-human future that features a new idea of community, the only hope of salvation.

74.   **Hasan Nassour**, Shoolini University, Himachal Pradesh, India
Title: Political Anxieties in Leni Zumas' *Red Clocks* and Colonizing the Female Body
Abstract: Feminist dystopian fiction is quickly becoming one of the most popular genres for research in literary studies. Political anxieties in our modern world motivate female writers to write and respond to male discourse. In this genre, politics plays a major role as women negotiate their rights and advocate the same for other women. This paper deals with Leni Zumas' dystopian novel *Red Clocks* and investigates how political anxieties are manifested in the text by examining the indirect interior monologues of four main female characters. The paper demonstrates how the female body is colonized as women grapple with unwanted pregnancies and resort to illegal means to obtain abortions. Furthermore, it contends that feminist dystopian fiction can take on prophetic qualities as the book anticipates restrictions on women's abortion rights in the United States of America four years before the US Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade. Dystopian fiction, thus, becomes a tool for female writers to raise awareness among women and help them better understand their situation in a world where men get to decide how women should treat their bodies. The paper also shed slight on the antagonistic relationships between female characters in the book, arguing that this resentment is motivated by a patriarchal society in which women feel trapped and, as a result, begin to feel envious of each other's life choices.

75.   **Mauro Pala**, Università degli Studi di Cagliari, Italy
Title: Dystopia revisited: Biopolitics as remedy and response to Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*
Abstract: Notwithstanding the impressive critical bibliography on Philip Dick's masterpiece *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* no science fiction scholar has yet resorted to biopolitics to scrutinize this pivotal Twentieth century dystopia. In fact, most of the existing studies on the novel focus on the humans' lack of emotion from a traditional anthropocentric perspective, but scant attention has been paid to the androids' longing for recognition so that will permit them to join the human league. This contribution claims that in Dick's fiction, as well as in contemporary societies, biopolitics is central in defining a new form of community in which survival is ensured by immunization, in physiological but also in legal terms. Rick Deckard is the guardian and immunizer in charge of protecting a devastated San Francisco from the incursions of runaway androids and other threats. The conceptual core of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is therefore the idea of community as territory to be defended, which is

infringed upon either by the androids' humanoid technology or by Deckard's empathy for the android he has been sent to destroy. Relying on Roberto Esposito's biopolitical idea of *communitas*, we can read Dick's novel as a dialectic between personalization and depersonalization, parallel to the Christian distinction between body and soul, or, in modern terms, as substance (*rex cogitans*) versus extended substance (*rex extensa*). In all these cases, as in Deckard's split personality, the *bios* is variously sectioned into two areas, one of which is clearly subaltern to the other.

76. **Taisia S. Paniotova & Maxim A. Romanenko,** Southern Federal University, Rostov on Don, Russia
Title: The Past and the Future in Utopia of Soviet Revolutionary Festivities
Abstract: The paper deals with the Soviet revolutionary festivities of the 1917-1920s – the time of the boom of utopian ideas. New interpretations of time and space, as well as explanatory metaphors of social and political transformations with their images of overcoming, became the loci where utopia emerged as an immanent attribute of the festivities. Elements of the utopian dream were latently present and manifest themselves through the symbols and practices of mass processions and fests. In such a way they were involving their participants in a "concrete utopia", although there was almost no detailed and alluring picture of the future in the plots of mass actions. However, the use of a certain methodology allowed us to talk about the image of the future not as a given but as a skill to imagine this future. Thus, the theoretical tools of the method of Imaginary Reconstruction of Society by Ruth Levitas and the models of the revolutionary festivals by Mona Ozuf made it possible to reconstruct the utopian dimension of the Soviet festivities. As a result, it becomes clear why these festivities in the absence of completed pictures of the future nevertheless involved participants in imagining and "making" the future. And developing the skill of imagining the future was impossible without the past.

77.   **Dr. Marie-Lise Paoli**, Université Bordeaux Montaigne, France
Title: The Handmaid's Tale TV show: A Serial Twister of Margaret Atwood's 'Ustopian' Imaginary?
Abstract: This paper will use a specific generic approach to examine whether the Hulu series that started as an adaptation of Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* performs a fatal twist of the imaginary the original literary work stems from. The TV show will be analyzed in terms of 'Ustopia,' a word coined by Atwood in her collection of critical essays on speculative fiction that provides insights into the history and evolution of utopian imaginaries: "Ustopia is a world I made up by combining utopia and dystopia – the imagined perfect society and its opposite – because, in my view, each contains a latent version of the other" (Atwood, 2011, 66). Using this as a conceptual tool to compare and contrast the novel and the series may reveal how the professed anti-manichean stance of the novelist makes its way to the screen. Admittedly, the narrative and cinematic devices both fabricate a polarized diegesis in which the country beyond the border typifies Foucault's heterotopia as a place of otherness set against the backdrop of hegemonic Gilead. If "the TV series Escher-twists across related binaries" (Gerrits 2022, 209) does it transcend the utopia vs dystopia polarity? To answer that, the notion of a utopian-feminist haven as a refuge from a dystopian-patriarchal totalitarian State will have to be addressed from a chronotopic perspective. Moreover, a closer theoretical scrutiny in relation to the existing typology (Braga 2018) will be needed to try and assess the academic relevance of the term 'Ustopia' to the field of utopian studies.

78.   **Jelena Pataki Šumiga**, J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia
Title: YA Dystopia's Influence on the Female Heroine in the TV Series *The Handmaid's Tale*

Abstract: In Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred is a heroine only in the sense of being the main character of the story. Although she is the only female protagonist among dystopias that have established the genre (*We*, *Brave New World*, and *1984*), Offred is relegated to passive survival in the patriarchal theocracy of Gilead, which negates her mind and body in all aspects except for proxy childbearing. By contrast, the novel's TV adaptation by Hulu (2017–) shows an altered female protagonist, who is no longer simply "Of Fred." Overcoming her original helplessness, the Offred played by Elizabeth Moss exhibits much more resistance and action. Consequently, the purpose of this paper is to show that, in becoming a rebel, the series' Offred assumes the features of contemporary YA dystopian heroines, unavailable to canonical dystopian hero(in)es. Relegated to the bottom half of the Literature/popular fiction dichotomy, provided by Gelder (2004), YA dystopia is seen as highly derivative from canonical dystopias and lacking in terms of their acute socio-political criticism. Considering YA dystopia as a predominantly female genre conducive to feminist discussions, one can argue that successful (film adaptations of) YA dystopias, such as *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*, have influenced Atwood's Offred in the TV series, which in turn incited Atwood to write stronger female narrators in *The Testaments* (2019), testifying to the ongoing interplay between Literature and popular fiction.

79.   **Teuvo Peltoniemi,** Helsinki, Finland
Title: NORDIC UTOPIAN COMMUNITIES SINCE 1700'S
Abstract: The main wave of Utopian emigration was already over when the Finns established two Utopian communities: Eriksson' Sailing Sect (1734), and antislavery "New Jerusalem" in Sierra Leone (1792). These had members both from Finland and Sweden. The mass migration from Finland to America was least of all Nordic countries, but still the Finnish Utopian communes were considerably much more numerous (20), and ideologically and geographically broader than the Scandinavian Utopian communities (5). There have been about 20 Finnish communities around the world; in Australia, USA, Canada, Soviet Russia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil and Israel. They represented nationalism, socialism, cooperatives, "tropic fever" and religious ideas. Nearly all Scandinavian Utopian communities were situated in the USA, and escaping the religious and political persecution in their native countries. The Norwegian communes were at Fox River, IL and Kettle Creek, PA. The largest Swedish community was in Bishop Hill, IL. Another Swedish community in Chicago moved later to Jerusalem and became American-Swedish Colony. The Danish socialists were in Hayes, KS. Nordic Utopian Communities can be partly linked to the great ideologies of the traditional American Utopian communities, even with some time delay. Some can also be viewed from the colonizing perspective, but especially the Finnish communities represented a wide background of other ideologies. Finally the recent Eco communities are briefly discussed as the possible continuation for old Utopian Settlements.

80.   **Károly Pintér**, Pázmány Péter Catholic University Budapest, Hungary
Title: Family in the woods: countercultural utopia in *Captain Fantastic* (2016)
Abstract: *Captain Fantastic,* an independent drama written and directed by Matt Ross in 2016, and starring Viggo Mortensen, addresses several themes that are central to utopian studies: the viability of an intentional community removed from mainstream civilization, the possibility of living in harmony with nature, as well as the ambition to inculcate alternative cultural values by a radical educational program. The main character, Ben Cash, decided to raise his entire family of 6 kids in the dense forests of Washington state. While training them to survive under extreme circumstances in the wilderness, he also undertakes their entire education, encouraging individual thinking and a strongly critical attitude to mainstream American society and culture.

The sudden suicide of his wife forces Ben to return to 'normal America' and confront both his parental decisions and his potential responsibility in his wife's death.

The movie skillfully satirizes some of the characteristic features and attitudes of mainstream American culture through the eyes of the children who experience it for the first time, subjecting the conventional 'American utopia' to a trenchant criticism. At the same time, it also questions the possibility of radical alterity: can a single family defy society by re-enacting a mythical American pattern and abandoning civilization to raise their kids in the woods? Do parents have the right to experiment on their children after their utopian hopes of opposing American capitalist society have been dashed? My presentation is going to address these questions through a critical reading of the movie.

81.   **Katarzyna Pisarska**, University of Coimbra, Portugal
Title: Modernity and Its Discontents: Dystopian Imaginaries in Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Gay Hunter* and Antoni Słonimski's *Two Ends of the World*
Abstract: The interbellum decades saw the increased production of modernist literature across Europe. In Scotland, the 1920s and '30s coincide with the period of the modern Scottish Renaissance, whose main aim was to reconstruct Scottish national identity alongside the regeneration of Scottish national literature. In Poland, which regained independence after 123 years of partition, early Modernism of the "Young Poland" period (c. 1890-1918), with its propensity for symbolism, neo-romanticism and decadence, gave way to new tendencies after WWI, which advocated vitalism, and reflected an optimistic fascination with everyday life. However, interbellum authors both in Scotland and in Poland looked beyond their national preoccupations, noticing the dangers of totalitarianism connected with the rise of Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany. Equally preoccupying was the threat of Communism represented by Soviet Russia. The sense of political instability and danger connected with the premonition of a new war looming on the horizon added to the pessimism of the 1930s, already aggravated by the hardships of the Great Depression and by the overwhelming feeling of civilisational crisis. This paper analyses two dystopian responses to the totalitarian "modernity", Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Gay Hunter* (1934) and Antoni Słonimski's *Two Ends of the World* (*Dwa Końce Świata*, 1937), which show the annihilation of humanity as directly resulting from the rise of Fascism and the use of modern technologies. The paper explores the intersection of themes and literary and philosophical inspirations underlying the imaginative projections of the two authors and their respective worldviews.

82.   **Alexander Popov**, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Bulgaria
Title: Paranoid Imaginaries and Megatextual Utopianism
Abstract: This paper focuses on paranoid imaginaries in science fiction (SF), tracing their dialectical relations to utopian imaginaries. Paranoid SF is analyzed as a contradictory amalgamation of two modes of representation – of *heterotopia* and *atopia*. Heterotopia sees reality as composed of incommensurable spaces that, following Michel Foucault, sabotage the capacity to create meaning and (utopian/dystopian) totalities. Atopia does away with individuated places, dissolving them in abstract spatiality governed by socio/cyber-technical algorithms. In paranoid SF the world is grasped as stranger than its surface, masking an underlying patchiness of irreconcilable forces, but also run by an impersonal system. Its conspiracies are ordered by carnivalesque logics, driven by a dialectic that moves centripetally *and* centrifugally. This accounts for the inflationary tendency of paranoid SF to construct megatexts in Damien Broderick's sense – textual universes bound together by shared signifiers and signification practices, such as those in works by Philip Dick, William Gibson, William Burroughs, Robert Anton Wilson. The process is paralleled in what are variously called postmodern *meganovels, systems novels, maximalist novels*, or *world texts*, the supreme

example of which is Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*. In fact, paranoid SF and meganovels even by different authors frequently refer to each other – a doomed strategy to represent supermodernity through an infinite process of multiplying signs. This constitutive and stubborn inability of paranoid SF to locate an organizing model, however, is analyzable as a strategy of utopian neutralization, which locates utopian possibility in the inherent instability of what is perceived as reality.

83.   **Zvonimir Prtenjača**, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia
Title: "¡Líik'ik Talokan!": The Chican@futurist Ethnoscape of *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*
Abstract: American mainstream cinema has historically portrayed peoples indigenous to Mesoamerican territory as futureless savages, but this paper argues that the thirtieth entry in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* (2022), takes a different route. The film constructs a Chican@futurist ethnoscape, a fictional "socio-spatial environment" which urges the viewer to rethink the "human landscapes of race and ethnicity as constituted" by the Hollywood blockbusters' "historical, social, scientific, and technological engagement" (Lavender III 158) with the Central American present. Focusing on Indigenous Mesoamerican populations, the film utilizes a reconfigured Afrofuturist cinematic language of its 2018 prequel, which envisioned and articulated Wakanda as a locus of African people and the African diaspora divorced of their firmly entrenched racial stereotypes. Therefore, when the effects of forceful dislocations, endured by the Indigenous Mesoamerican populations during and after the Western colonial expansion, converge in the characters of Namor and the Talokanil as the occupants of the eponymous underwater kingdom, they do not affix them to a "primitive and racialized past" or dissociate them from "science and technology" as "signifiers of civilization, rationality, and progress" (Ramírez 188). Instead, the Talokanil are imagined as both surviving the West's hegemonic advances and thriving against them in a technologically advanced seat of power, which enables them to safeguard their community's way of life. Ultimately, the film's Chican@futurist ethnoscape makes Central Americans, and especially the Indigenous Mesoamerican populations, visible, disrupting the stereotypical, "age-old racist … binaries" that have so far excluded them "from visions of the future" (Ramírez 189).

84.   **Nimisha Pudussery Subramanian,** The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India
Title: Reproductive Governance in South Asian Feminist Dystopias
Abstract: With the question of discontent with the feminist critical dystopian genre for the dystopian world being largely placed in a non-western context, the South Asian dystopian writers attempt to redefine a genre that deserves critical attention. This paper is premised on the question of literary representations of sexual and reproductive rights and it aims to examine the very critical nature of critical dystopias The central concern of my study is to analyse the way in which the sexual and reproductive rights are conceived in South Asian feminist dystopias and explore how feminist dystopias emend and develop the general perceptions on sexual and reproductive rights. The way dystopian narratives reflect upon contemporary debates on reproductive justice is also a part of this inquiry. Distinct from the early research in utopian studies, this study takes up the question of delineations of governmentality of sexual and reproductive rights in feminist dystopias, specifically in the South Asian dystopian novels in the twenty first century. I suggest the possibility of generating more interdisciplinary engagements in this area to raise compelling questions about the nature and content of the genre and the peculiar social realities it has augmented.

85.   **José Eduardo Reis & Chris Gerry,** Instituto Literatura Comparada, Faculdade Letras, Porto, Portugal
Title: The crisis of the mind in the modern age and its poetic consequences: textual examples from Joyce, Zamiatin and Pessoa
Abstract: This paper interrogates some of the utopian and dystopian characteristics found in key modernist texts by Joyce, Zamyatin and Pessoa, the literary effects of which have been strongly influenced by the crisis of narrative self-representation and the allegorical demythification of totalitarian social and political experiments. Two distinct perspectives are deployed in order to achieve this: François Valéry's dystopian cultural-philosophical reflections on the intellectual crisis of Western civilization (in his 1919 essay "The Crisis of the Mind"; and Frank Kermode's essay on the contradictory nature of modernism, published in 1965–1966.

86.   **Elizabeth Russell**, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain
Title: Warzones and Dystopian Imaginaries
Abstract: Some weeks ago, I began reading *The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah. Published in 2015, it has become a bestseller in the USA. This historical novel follows the lives and emotions of two sisters in occupied France who struggle to survive and resist the Nazi occupation of their country. I managed to read halfway through the book but could not continue. It was too distressing. Distressing, because I knew what would happen. The emotional violence it caused entered my dreams, and my memories of past novels, of articles on past wars and present-day wars. The visual aspects of warzones on TV and the debates of politicians leading to an increase in militarization in order to "stop the war", the separation of women and children from the men in their families, followed by deaths and destruction, have led me to think about the following phrase in the Call for Papers: "...the reality surrounding us, the way we interact with it, and transform it."
This paper will discuss the relationship between women and war, based on various utopian and dystopian fictions, from Ruskin to today.

87.   **Gheorghe Săsărman,** Romanian Science Fiction, Utopia and Dystopia writer
Title: How I Got From Utopia to Dystopia
Abstract: Utopia was born as eutopia, out of the desire to depict an ideal world, in contrast to the society of the present. The attempts to realize utopian ideas have catastrophic results. Dystopia emerged out of the intention to fight utopia with its own weapons.
My biography somewhat mirrors this dialectic. As a teenager, I was fascinated by the Coomunist ideal. As an editor with the Party daily I discovered the effects of the application of utopia in practice and I evolved, through delimitation and critique, towards dystopia. Eventually, I exiled myself, only to see afterwards that utopian ideas manifest themselves vehemently in the world I had believed to be free. My attitude as a writer can be seen in a nutshell, in fact in two nutshells, separated by half a century. In 1971, as a journalist at *Scînteia*, I finishing the manuscript of *Cuadratura cercului*, essentially a dystopian book, rejected by several publishing houses before appearing, four years later, without almost a third of its texts, cut by censors. After 1989, the book was edited in its full form, and translated into many languages; ironically, it was exactly the American edition which was subjected to another type of censorship, using criteria of militant feminism. Lately, the free world is unfortunately the stage of attempts to limit the freedom of thought and of expression, in the name of a so-called "political correctness", to which someone who has gone through decades of "popular democracy" can only be allergic. This is why in my book, *Alfabetul distopiilor* ("The Alphabet of Dystopias", 2021), I attempted to offer a literary illustration of the disastrous consequences of some ideas that circulate in the present. And to which I thought Romania, only three decades

after the fall of Ceauşescu, would be immune. But I'm afraid I was wrong. The first publisher I approached rejected my manuscript, and a second one did not even bother to answer. Nonetheless, the book was eventually published.

88.   **Alexandra Sippel,** Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès, France
Title: Political economy against utopian imaginaries in early nineteenth century Britain
Abstract: This paper proposes to examine the ways in which Political Economists envisioned society in the first decades of the nineteenth century, and more precisely, how their vision collided with the lingering utopian hopes born of the French Revolution of 1789 and subsequent radical and cooperative movements that followed in the footsteps of Robert Owen. Women, especially young ladies were the main target of these teachings and where it had been deemed too abstract and complex for such a public, political economy became the (self-proclaimed) science that was to teach them to relinquish their supposedly inborn sensitivity and adopt a more rational attitude, one that might be described as callous. Jane Marcet's *Conversations on Political Economy* do just that, with a private tutor teaching a character called Caroline out of the emotional education rooted in poetry that she had received as a child, and abandoning a lost, maybe altogether fictitious past imaginary for a new understanding of human nature and human society away from poetry. I will therefore focus on what had been Caroline's somewhat utopian education, that had led her to believe that what Fénelon described in his Telemachus, or what William Goldsmith pictured in his Seasons, as reality, and how Mrs. B, her tutor, gradually introduces her to the main principles of political economy to better grasp the industrializing world in which she lived.

89.   **Ana Maria Spăriosu,** European University Institute, Florence, Italy
Title: Re-orienting human – nature relationships in an age of climate crisis: social imaginaries in theory and practice in two contemporary utopian communities
Abstract: In response to the rift between the organization of industrial production and the ability of the earth to regenerate itself, contemporary utopian communities imagine and strive to put into practice alternative social realities that would hinder further damage to the environment. In this way, they represent just one example of a collective imaginary built in response to the climate crisis and can be useful, by providing different logics and perspectives, in the imagining of alternative futures for our societies. One belief at the root of their social imaginaries and which will be the main subject of this paper, is the perceived need for human-nature relationships to be re-negotiated and more specifically for this relationship to be conceived of in terms of cooperation rather than domination. Through practices like permaculture and small-scale agriculture in contrast to industrial agriculture, contemporary utopian communities seek to re-educate themselves and bring forward another relationship with the natural world. This paper will therefore explore how two contemporary utopian communities, one in Italy and one in Russia, imagine and explain their social existence, and their ensuing practices, in the context of the Anthropocene.

90.   **Simon Spiegel,** University of Zurich, Switzerland
Title: THE TROUBLE WITH BEING BORN – A New Take on an Old Trope
Abstract: The figure of the artificial human being has a long tradition in utopian and science fiction films; robots and androids are a genre staple. While they can obviously serve very different narrative purposes, we can trace a general shift in how artificial beings are being depicted in movies – from mindless tools and equally mindless threats to full-fledged characters indistinguishable from human beings. In general, the focus of the more sophisticated works of recent years like EX MACHINA, WESTWORLD or BLADE RUNNER 2049 has been on where –or rather if – we can draw the line between human beings and artificial entities and

therefore on the question what actually makes us human. THE TROUBLE WITH BEING BORN by Austrian director Sandra Wollner which only saw a minor release 2020 but nonetheless received multiple awards, takes a very different approach by portraying its main character, an „artificial girl" called Elli, as radically other. In contrast to familiar plot patterns, we as viewers do not get to know Elli better and learn to empathize with her over the course of the movie; rather she becomes more and more alien. In my paper I will analyse how THE TROUBLE WITH BEING BORN is at the same time building on and deconstructing established genre traditions. The result is a deeply disturbing and truly estranging film

91.   **Bianka Szendrei**, University of Debrecen, Hungary
Title: Janelle Monáe's Afrofuturism: Affective Vulnerability in *Dirty Computer*
Abstract: Contemporary Blackqueer Afrofuturist singer, visual artist, actor, and writer Janelle Monáe's latest studio album and film, *Dirty Computer* (2018) tells a compelling story, set in the dystopian far future, about an "outlaw" dirty computer Jane 57821 (played by Monáe) who is kidnapped by the regime called The House of the New Dawn and her memories are forcefully erased. Throughout the "cleaning process," the viewer witnesses Jane's Black queer radical imageries about an inclusive and emotionally charged utopia which, on the one hand, ruptures white supremacist heteropatriarchal time and space that actively erases marginalized cultures, histories, narratives, and bodies; and, on the other hand, challenges and disrupts the normative thinking on gender, race, and sexuality. At the same time, by inviting the audience and other dirty computer to Jane's discrete space and see her most vulnerable moments (opening up about her queerness, being afraid of rejection, and struggling to express her feelings) Monáe demonstrates how to utilize vulnerability to counter the emotionless and rigid world of The House of the New Dawn. Radical openness and vulnerability are thus inherently utopistic aspects of Monáe's Afrofuturist vision and generative forces in *Dirty Computer*. Monáe destigmatizes vulnerability and shifts the focus to its affective and transformative potential that inspires her viewers to experiment with new modes of self-expression, form a deep interconnection with each other, and become active agents who collectively work together towards a better and more inclusive future in which dirty computers like her are embraced and loved.

92.   **Kamelia Talebian Sedehi**, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy
Title: Postapocalyptic Narrative and Memory and Identity Formation in *The Marrow Thieves*
Abstract: Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* (2017) is set in 2050 and imagines a land in which people lost their ability to dream and Indigenous people are those who can still dream. In such postapocalyptic narrative, Dimaline warns about the post apocalypse world while she focuses on present time. She envisions the future in order to focus on settler colonialism; mainly the effect of residential schools. By focusing on an apocalyptic climatic future, she expresses her concerns regarding racism in the present which is directly tied to the imperial and colonial pasts, specifically linked to the colonial residential school system. The main protagonist of the novel, Frenchie, has no memory of his Indigenous roots; therefore, he needs to create his identity based on societies' collective memory. In order to reflect on the process of identity and subjectivity formation, I will apply Dori Laub and Shoshana Felman's concept of witnessing and testimony and Aleida Assmann's concept of individual and collective memory to Cherie Dimaline's The Marrow Thieves.

93. **Cristian Tamaş, Romanian Science Fiction & Fantasy Society**
Title: Landscape After Battle. Romanian Science Fiction and Utopia Today

Abstract: Romanian SF was and is a rather militant science fiction committed to humanist ideals using extrapolation, analogy and syllogism as a protest against anomie. A soft, allegorical-metaphorical SF is predominant, having a precarious status in society, ostracized by the mainstream and the local literary-critical establishments, vegetating in a mainly virtual existence: the predilection for soft science fiction, for approaches characteristic of the social sciences, the influence of the fantastic, the reversing of the religious motifs, the use of allegories and parables against totalitarianism and dictatorships, of satires describing the alienation caused by an absurd-machine civilization and the consequences of hyper-capitalism, mercantilism and consumerism, moral decay and social disaggregation, abulia, anomie and alienation. A rather gloomy and desperate general picture, brilliant with intelligence, humor, irony, Romanian SF it's not hesitating to investigate the causes of underdevelopment, corruption, omnipresent violence: predatory and corrupt pseudo-elites, incompetent and irresponsible, the complicity of the majority of the population with whatever kleptocracy/autocracy/dictatorship that knows how to manipulate the themes of populism through reckless demagoguery, weak social cohesion, the inability of the intelligentsia to conceive development and reform projects and to rally the majority of the population, the chronic deficit of volunteering for civic causes, mass emigration as a social valve, pervasive poverty, despair and cynicism and drift. Failed states, anomic societies, incapable of progress, evolution and civilization: "Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate!" Sounds familiar?

94.   **Urszula Terentowicz-Fotyga**, MC Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland
Title: The "end of society of the self": The Anti-utopia in Dave Eggers's *The Every*
Abstract: Dave Eggers's 2021 novel *The Every* is a sequel to the much acclaimed and poorly adapted novel *The Circle*, published in 2013. Both present a vision of a near future in which ever greater aspects of everyday life are ruled by algorithms and controlled by ubiquitous surveillance. Clothed in a light satire, *The Every* issues a warning about the digital era and much of its almost 600 pages concentrates on describing the steps humanity takes in engineering a self-inflicted nightmare. The paper will focus on the anti-utopian function of the narrative; it will explore the way Eggers's construction of digital dystopia is shown to grow out of utopian aims and convictions. One of the central questions that the paper will address is the issue of trust and mistrust and their social, political and psychological implications in the context of digital utopianism.

95.   **Philipp P. Thapa,** Sustainable Europe Research Institute, Köln, Germany
Title: Green artivism and the need for fully imagined utopias
Abstract: With the urgency of climate action increasing, the term 'artivism', a contraction of 'artistic activism', has gained even more currency in the art scene. As a case in point, this paper emerges from The Big Green (2023–2027), an EU-funded arts-and-culture project on sustainable development involving partners in over a dozen countries. The project includes a four-year work package on artivism. But what the term means is often unclear. Some apply it to any use of artistic means for activist purposes, including awareness-raising visuals or costumed performances at public protests. Others reserve it for result-oriented direct action that treats social movements themselves as artistic material. I survey both terminology and practical examples. Many examples of artivism lend themselves to utopian readings, at least in that they support alternative social-ecological imaginaries. Does artivism contribute to a more utopian public debate? Conversely, can we interpret utopianism as an artivist tradition? What does artivism imply for utopian practices and studies, and vice versa? I try to clarify this relationship while focusing on environmental themes.
I suspect that what I learn about artivism will have to stand up to the same scepticism as some supposedly utopian interventions in environmental discourse: How does this go beyond the

environmental awareness raising of the past half-century? If it does not, what is the point? I argue that what we need more than ever are fully imagined utopias of a post-fossil age, and that both artivists and utopian activists should measure themselves by how they contribute to them.

96.   **Valentina Tirloni,** Université Côte d'Azur, Nice, France
Title: Transhumanism as dystopian ideology
Abstract: Transhumanism is not a philosophy of life and death; it is an ideological thought that is increasingly concerned with the human body, its medicalisation, and its control for political purposes. As Michel Foucault explained, political power in the contemporary era is becoming increasingly technical and efficient. Power is not anymore dealing with human will of debating social, economic, and political topics: it is becoming an extension of technical tools. In the public space, the political debate gives way to an injunction to massively identify with the exploits of technology, so that otherness is considered as inconvenient and dangerous as out of the regular standard not anymore discussed by human beings but optimised by algorithms. Massive and compulsory vaccination during the most recent, and probably not the last, pandemic is the most effective illustration of this. The media have amplified the technical discourse of this transhumanist biopower by banishing doubt about a possible alternative truth and by introducing the new liberticidal procedure of fact-checking.

97.   **Luis Toledo Machado**, Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain
Title: The Role of Human Nature in the Reemergence of Utopianism in the Twentieth Century
Abstract: The resurgence of utopianism during the latter half of the 20th century can be attributed to the unforeseen consequences of Western modernity. This resurgence was marked by the reprinting and translation of classic utopian thinkers, the development of utopian studies as an academic field, the establishment of intentional communities, and the design of utopian architectural and urban plans. This study seeks to examine the hypothesis that the prevailing understanding of human nature played a significant role in the resurgence of utopianism. The belief that the current social system was alienating the human condition and that modern devices were promoting selfish and possessive values among individuals, led to the revival of the utopian ideal of creating a world that that is more in tune with human needs and allows individuals to express their cooperative and amorous nature. Through an examination of the underlying historical imaginaries, this study aims to shed light on the relationship between human nature and the resurgence of utopianism during the latter half of the 20th century.

98.   **Hande Tunç,** Özyeğin University, Istanbul, Turkey
Title: Imaginary Possibilities of New Babylon
Abstract: Urban utopias are the result of the quest for a location where the idealized society will coexist and the desire to change and improve one's own surroundings. The goal of experimental utopianism, which lies at the intersection of the possible and the impossible, is to create critical future scenarios using fantasy and imagination under conditions that have not yet appeared in the current reality. One of the best examples of experimental utopianism is New Babylon urban utopia of the Situationists, which bases its existence on the creation of opportunities to <transform reality= and <shape the urban environment=. The world-changing endeavors of the Situationists begin with a description of a classless society in which exploitation has been abolished. New Babylon, which is depicted as an unlimited labyrinth with its defined new social model and the new individual (homo ludens) who will become both a resident and an architect of the new city, gains visibility with its neutral structure and interchangeable interiors with technological systems. Therefore, the project allows the user to design imaginative spatial structures, and the city's continually changing landscape can be

depicted using a representational technique that can only be transferred to paper through layering. This study tries to reveal the diversity of new living possibilities that will be produced by the spaces designed with users' imaginations, on the axis of the New Babylon project, through the concepts of utopia, space and representation.

99.   **Laura Tușa Ilea**, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Title: Utopian Philosophies of More-than Darwinism
Abstract: The beginning of the 21st century has been confronted with diverse crises, where the ethical issue has returned to the debate: The Earth (described as Gaia) has turned against man in the form of a figure of revenge (Medea), in the environmental crisis; the upheavals of populations have given rise to extremist discourses – war and populism –; biotechnology has raised intractable questions about the limits of life and death; prostheses and algorithms disrupt natural intelligence. In order to discuss the paradigm in which I would like to place my presentation, I will start from a text written by Brian Massumi, "The Superhuman Animal" from the volume *The Non-Human Turn*, which could constitute a doorway to a transdisciplinary space of reflection where natural sciences mingle with philosophical meditation (since Massumi invokes biologists such as Darwin, Tinbergen, Perdeck, Ruyer, but also philosophers such as Bergson, Whitehead, Deleuze, Guattari, W. James, and Simondon). Biotechnological utopian constructs draw on a form of eclectic pan-humanism that melts different forms of traditional tendencies, which go beyond the adaptive categories propelled by Darwinism. Milennial aspirations are refashioned into a melting pot of social and political philosophies, in which utopia means overcoming the basic conditions of human nature, towards a kind of superhuman. The question that we raise is whether, instead of following adaptive trends propelled by Darwinism, we should not rather go in the direction of a super abundant instinct, a decisive vector that surpasses, from the beginning, our adaptive instinct. Instinct is in itself utopian, is overcoming, superabundant, excessive. The creative life of instinct is a vital art (Ruyer). The human body is therefore in an animal continuum, not only from the biological point of view of adaptation, but rather from the point of view of a "supernormal" instinct: "It is when the human assumes its immanent excess of animality that it becomes all the more itself. Brilliantly so." (Massumi, p.10).

100.   **Maria Varsam,** The University of the Peloponnese, Greece
Title: The Romantic Love Plot in Classic Dystopian Fiction: Commodification, Affect, Resistance
Abstract: The surge in dystopian narratives has partly led, according to Raffaella Baccolini, to the commodification of the genre which potentially endangers its subversive intentions. In classic dystopian fiction, totalitarian regimes suppress individual rights and attempt to control every aspect of the social and private lives of their citizens, including romantic relationships whose expression forms an essential part of the characters' resistance in the quest for freedom. At the same time, the reader's identification with the characters and their investment in the outcome of the romantic sub-plot is central to the main plot line which involves the hope of escape since the state views affective relationships as potentially dangerous to the political status quo. As a result, the pairing of love and freedom constitutes more than escapism or distraction from the main narrative, on the contrary, it is central to the novels' message in so far as the protagonists' desire to experience love freely fuels their desire to escape their society's boundaries. As such, the romantic plot line suggests points of weakness in the dystopian world which function as manifestations of hope where readers' identification with affective relationships form part of the imaginary of a utopian impulse which resists commodification and appropriation. This paper will focus on three classic dystopian narratives in order to illuminate the revolutionary potential of the romantic plot by demonstrating its role

in oppressive socio-political systems in directing the narrative beyond a complacent escape into domesticity or the dilution of the dystopia's message/warning and object of social criticism.

101.   Evy Varsamopoulou, University of Cyprus, Cyprus
Title: Temporal Imaginaries in Cinematic Dystopian Apocalyptic Satire
Abstract: The discussion of the environment and of its destruction by human activity might initially be understood as a question of our relation to space, in general, and to places we do and do not inhabit, in particular. It is only faced with the rising (belief in the) threat of mass extinction, including our own, that time, in the guise of a preoccupation with the future, prevails in theoretical and artistic work. However, I will be arguing that from an ecocritical perspective, it is a linear concept of temporality that has always preceded and grounded our anthropocentric spatial behaviour, and what that temporal imaginary may reveal when faced with the end of things. My paper consists of two parts. First, I will start by a brief critique of the variety of terms proposed to designate our era since the *great acceleration:* Anthropocene, Chthulucene, Zoocene, and others. What temporalities underlie the different nomenclature proposed? The second part of the paper will consider the film *Don't Look Up* (dir. Andrew McKay, 2021), in which competing temporal imaginaries inform the generic interface of dystopia with satire.

102.   Jose Vela Castillo, IE School of Architecture and Design, Madrid, Spain
Title: The power of phantasy
Abstract: On January 12 1977, the day of his opening introductory session for his lecture course at The Collège de France 'How to live together. Novelistic Simulations on Some Everyday Spaces' Roland Barthes surprisingly introduced the term *Fantasme* (translated in English into 'Fantasy'). After mentioning (how he cannot) Bachelard, Barthes stablished the link between Fantasy and Living-Together, via Fourier by saying: Phalanstery= the fantasmatic form of Living-Together. Just a bit ahead in his notes Barthes adds: 'Still apropos of Fourier: utopia is rooted in a certain day-to-day existence.' The 'fantasmatic force of Living-Together' led him to the harmonious way of living together as an illusion that '[can be] the right sort of material for a novel.' This presentation would like to elaborate on Barthes ideas on fantasy (*fantasme*) as presented in this course, on the living-together, and on the shared spaces and times in which it happens from an architectural point of view (my training) in the search of a phantasmatic (or imaginary) utopia for the present (if this makes any sense). I will propose a delicious (is it possible to describe it differently?) garden at the center of Antwerpen's Begijnhof as one of the possible loci for the fiction of living together, including, of course, the whole range of non-human presences that are also part of the phantasmatic world. And it will do it in the form of a fiction.
Let me tell you, then, a story…

103.   Fátima Vieira, University of Porto, Portugal
Title: Complex Democracy, Complex Utopianism
Abstract: In the book he published in 2019, *A Theory of Complex Democracy*, Spanish philosopher Daniel Innerarity argues that we live today with a serious conceptual problem, as we have been trying to understand the problems of the 21st century with conceptual tools that were defined at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Innerarity argues that, in order to understand the complex world in which we live, we need complex theories, capable of analysing and communicating sometimes contradictory ideas. While science has changed much of its paradigms, the concepts central to contemporary political theory have not undergone an equivalent change.

Subscribing to Innerarity's argument, I argue that in order to understand today's utopian thinking – the way it feeds our social imagination, thus contributing to the transformation of communities – we need a theory of complex utopianism. Indeed, far from the grand narratives, contemporary utopianism has become practical, realistic and polyphonic, feeding mainly on heterotopian experiences. It is this profusion of utopian proposals that I set myself to analyse.

104. **Gabriella Vöő,** University of Pécs, Hungary
Title: Wilderness Well-Designed: Poe's Landscape Tales as Gothic Dystopias
Abstract: The prose works of Edgar Allan Poe frequently engage with natural, geological, or cosmic phenomena of a monumental scale: storms, sea vortices, cosmic travel, and an alternative human world within the hollow earth. Within this cluster of works, the so-called landscape tales envision American natural spaces as materializations of the national narrative and national imaginary, spaces of utopian fantasy. However, the narrators of "Morning on the Wissahiccon," "The Domain of an Arnheim," and "Landor's Cottage" report ambivalent, if not outright threatening, experiences as they make their way through these landscapes on pre-arranged routes. They reveal insidious designs in the landscape architecture that create confusion, insecurity, and even terror. The presentation proposes a reading of Poe's landscape tales as gothic doubles of the utopian national narrative. It argues that the utopian spaces of landscape gardens create corrected versions of "nature," anticipating the modern theme park.

105. **Rafał Włodarczyk,** Uniwersytet Wrocławski, Poland
Title: Utopia and the populist imaginary
Abstract: The properties of the contemporary crisis of liberal democracy, whose specific syndrome is the increase in the importance and strength of populist movements, can also be studied in the dimension of social imagination and its political imaginary. For example, in the eyes of the critics of populism, the suspicion of populism is sometimes seen as tantamount to recognising that a particular movement, political party or organisation poses a significant threat to the proper functioning of Western liberal democracies, contrary to how the leaders of these movements, parties or organisations and their members or supporters perceive and portray themselves as well as the state of democracy in particular countries. Populists proclaim, among other things, that they are devoted ordinary citizens of the states which are only nominally democratic. For the fundamental ideas of democracy have been distorted, squandered or simply not realised. This state of affairs is – populist claim – primarily due to socially alienated elites, especially political and intellectual, and state institutions, especially those that are bureaucratic, the other culprits are often found among the strangers – migrants or foreign capital. In turn, critics of such a way of understanding the democratic, political and social reality and the crisis of democracy seem to first of all recognize this populist way of thinking as naive, misleading, and emotionally polarizing and particularistic. Moreover, they consider the self-identification of populists with the people - a sovereign deprived of its proper place in democracies - as a usurpation that distorts the fundamental ideas of democracy. Politicians and the media who identify themselves with one of the sides of the dispute over the state of democracy and society, develop in the public sphere an image of the opponent, themselves and the crisis in line with these antagonistic images, thus trying to influence the social imagination and politics of a given state. This is one of the reasons why researchers of populist movements devote much attention to the imagery that populists have and their political and social meanings. It might therefore seem that due to the role played by utopia in the social imagination and its political function,

researchers of populism will pay attention to it proportionately to its importance. However, this is not the case, probably because, firstly, it is difficult for researchers to determine the identity of populism, and secondly, in the political imagination of populism, utopia is not revealed directly. Therefore, in my presentation, I would like to pose the question of what forms can utopia take in the populist imaginary? In response to this question, referring to the perspectives developed within utopian studies, I would like to focus on three figures of utopia in the populist imaginary: as part of political ideology (Roger Eatwell and Matthew Goodwin), as a heartland (Paul A. Taggart), and as a promise of democratic renewal (Margaret Canovan).

106. **Kevin Martens Wong,** Merlionsman of the Republic of Singapore
Title: **Istoria Krismatra: Toward a provisional reclamation of our shared human history through the revitalisation of the critically endangered Kristang language and culture of archipelagic Southeast Asia**

Abstract: Kristang (iso 639-3: mcm) is a critically endangered creole language spoken by around 1,000 people primarily in Melaka and Singapore, including the author; both the language and its community, the Kristang or Portuguese-Eurasians, trace their origins to coercive intermarriages between arriving Portuguese colonisers and local Malay residents following the conquest of Melaka in 1511 by the former. This deep-seated intergenerational shame and trauma, coupled with further marginalisation under later empires and governments, meant that Kristang was almost moribund by 2015; however, since 2016, a internationally-recognised revitalisation effort led by the author known as Kodrah Kristang has dramatically reinvigorated Kristang language, culture and identity in both locations, permitting further exploration of Kristang thought and ways of being. This paper examines one facet of these explorations employing the Kristang social imagining method known as Sunyeskah / Dreamfishing as a vehicle for uncovering more of our universal past as a human species; it also explores how Kristang social imagining is arguably uniquely suited for this due to our creole community's inherent openness to drawing on sources of all kinds and noticing "what is not said", having lived at the periphery of history for generations. Through analysis of common elements of myth, legend and contemporary science fiction and fantasy taken as fragmentary, unconscious reflections of our shared past, therefore, a provisional assemblage of that past is excavated also as a means of finally understanding the roots of many still-extant forms of intergenerational trauma, and hopefully as a way of moving past or embracing them.

107. **Jean-Jacques Wunenburger,** Université Jean Moulin, France
Title: **Covid, utopie sanitaire, dystopie de la prophylaxie**

Abstract: Depuis l'avènement de l'Etat, les gouvernements veulent s'assurer de la santé de leur population. Il existe trois types de politiques de la santé publique : soit l'Etat laisse chaque citoyen libre de son corps sans lui imposer de contrôle ni de normes (modèle libertaire) ; soit il prend en charge toute la vie de l'individu, le politique devenant une science de la vie et pas seulement des volontés et des intérêts ; soit il met en place un régime mixte, qui garantit le droit à la liberté individuelle de se soigner, tout en autorisant l'Etat à imposer des conditions générales partagées de santé. Bien des Etats ont réactivé depuis le XIXème siècle le second modèle, anticipé dès les premières conceptions totalitaires de Platon, en les étendant à tous les stades de la vie : naissance, santé quotidienne des citoyens, fin de vie, en pratiquant euthanasie, surveillance et contrôle sanitaires (Michel Foucault), etc. Ainsi s'est développée une utopie de la santé parfaite (OMS) sous l'autorité de l'Etat, que vient d'illustrer et renforcer la récente pandémie de la COVID, et qui est au coeur des révolutions numériques (E-santé, transhumanisme). Quels en sont les modalités et les enjeux ?

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