- BOOK OF ABSTRACTS -

International Conference

INTERFACES: Representing Human and Environmental Vulnerability in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

JUNE 9-10 2022

Faculty of Translation and Interpreting

University of Granada

Interfaces
P20_00008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Interfaces

USER: **hev@invitados.ugr.es**
PASSWORD: **UGR-22vul+**

Convenor

- Miriam Fernández Santiago (University of Granada, Spain)

Organizing Committee

- Safa Alshammary (University of Granada, Spain)
- Lucía Bennett Ortega (University of Granada, Spain)
- Ana Chapman (University of Málaga, Spain)
- Zhitong Chen (Sichuan University, China)
- Miriam Fernández Santiago (University of Granada, Spain)
- Cristina M. Gámez Fernández (University of Córdoba, Spain)
- Esperanza González Moreno (University of Granada, Spain)
- Carmen Hidalgo Varo (University of Granada, Spain)
- Christina Holgado Sáez (University of Granada, Spain)
- Javier Martín Párraga (University of Córdoba, Spain)
- Jiří Měsíc (University of Granada, Spain)
- Susana Nicolás Román (University of Almeria, Spain)
- Noelia Ojeda Muñoz (University of Córdoba, Spain)

International Advisory Committee

- Nancy Batty (Independent Scholar, Canada)
- Fu Chun (National Ilan University, Taiwan)
- Chris Cooper (Birmingham, UK)
- Shilpa Daithota Bhat (National Forensic Sciences University, India)
- Om Prakash Dwivedi (Bennet University, India)
- Kate Katafiasz (Newman University, Birmingham, UK)
- Bootheina Majoul (University of Carthage, Tunisia)
- Elisabetta Marino (University of Rome "Tor Vergata", Italy)
- Justyna Rusak (University of Katowice, Poland)
- Cheryl Stobie (University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa)
- Janet Wilson (University of Northampton, UK)

Interfaces

ONSITE PROGRAM

JUNE 9, THURSDAY

08:30	*REGISTRATION DESK OPENS*
09:00- 09:30	*OFFICIAL OPENING*
09:30- 11:00	*PANEL 1: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES I* **Hardack, Richard Bennett Ortega, Lucía Ferrández-San Miguel, María**
11:00- 11:30	*COFFEE BREAK*
11:30 –13:00	*PLENARY 1* **SONIA BAELO-ALLUÉ & MÓNICA CALVO-PASCUAL**
13:00 –15:00	*LUNCH BREAK*
15:00- 16:30	*PANEL 2: VULNERABLE SOCIAL/INDIVIDUAL CONFIGURATIONS* **Oliete Aldea, Elena Oria Gómez, Beatriz Mesiç, Jiri**
16:30-18:00	*PANEL 3: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES II* **Davis, Roger Shadurski, Maxim**
18:30	ICE-CREAM AT LOS ITALIANOS
20:30	WALK THROUGH ALBAICYN TO MIRADOR DE SAN NICOLAS CONFERENCE DINNER AT "Carmen de la Victoria"

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Interfaces

JUNE 10, FRIDAY

10:00 – 11:30	**PANEL 4: DIGITAL AND GENDER VULNERABILITY** **Anastasaki, Elena & Kitsiou, Roula** **Nicolás Román, Susana** **González Moreno, Esperanza**
11:30 – 12:00	*COFFEE BREAK*
12:00 – 13:30	*PLENARY 2* **PATRICK BROWN**
13:30 – 15:30	*LUNCH BREAK*
15:30 – 17:00	**PANEL 5: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES III** **Botelho, Teresa** **Hidalgo-Varo, Carmen** **Jones, Megan**
	PANEL 6: TBA **Liang, Xiaohui** **Chapman, Ana**
17:00 – 17:30	*COFFEE BREAK*
17:30 – 19:00	*PLENARY 3* **SUSANA ONEGA & JEAN-MICHEL GANTEAU**
20:00	*DINNER- FLAMENCO SHOW CUEVAS DEL SACROMONTE*

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

ONLINE PROGRAM

PANEL 7: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES
Chaves-García, Paula
Thierbach-McLean, Olga
Fernández Jiménez, Mónica
Carregal Romero, José

PANEL 8: VULNERABLE MINORITIES/MIGRANTS
Barros Grela, Eduardo
Sánchez-Palencia, Carolina
Rodríguez Arnaiz, Laura

PANEL 9: DIGITAL VULNERABLITY
Tonetto, Maria Grazia
Jeannin Hélène
Peinado-Abarrio, Rubén
Kaźmierczak, Janusz

PANEL 10: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES IV
Martínez Serrano, Leonor María
Shewry, Teresa
Dand Shah, Yamini

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

- JUNE 9 2022, THURSDAY -
Room *Alfonso X* (first floor)

| 08:30 | *REGISTRATION DESK OPENS* |

| 09:00 - 09:30 | *OFFICIAL OPENING* |

D. Enrique Quero Gervilla, Dean of the School of Translation and Interpreting, University of Granada

Miriam Fernández Santiago, Head of the English Department, University of Granada

| 09:30 - 11:00 | *PANEL 1: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES I* |

Chair: Ana Chapman, University of Málaga

Hardack, Richard – *"The Fantastic Nature of Corporations: The Post-Nature Posthumanism of Avatar"*.

Bennett Ortega, Lucía – *"Witnessing the Environmental Collapse in a State of* Bewilderment*: a Richard Powers Novel"*.

| 11:00-11:30 | *COFFEE BREAK* |

| 11:30-13:00 | *PLENARY 1* |

Chair: Ana Chapman, University of Málaga

Sonia Baelo-Allué and Mónica Calvo-Pascual

Vulnerability and the Posthuman in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Interfaces

| 13:00-15:00 | *LUNCH BREAK* |

| 15:00-16:30 | *PANEL 2: VULNERABLE SOCIAL/INDIVIDUAL CONFIGURATIONS* |

Chair: Susana Nicolás Román, University of Almería

Oliete Aldea, Elena – *"Transnational Representation of Precarity and Vulnerability in Post-Crisis Cinema".*

Oria Gómez, Beatriz – *"Master of None: Intimacy Under Threat in the Risk Society".*

Měsíc, Jiří – *"Build Back Better? Vulnerability in the Writings of Pope Francis and Klaus Schwab".*

| 16:30-18:00 | *PANEL 3: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES II* |

Chair: Jiří Měsíc, Universidad de Granada

Davis, Roger – *"Necrodidactics: Poetics and Pedagogy of the Anthropocene"*

Shadurski, Maxim – *"'A Revelation of the Recent Past and the Distant Future': Landscape and Temporality in Will Self's The Book of Dave".*

| 18:30 | *ICE-CREAM AT LOS ITALIANOS* |

| 20:30 | *WALK THROUGH ALBAICYN TO MIRADOR DE SAN NICOLAS*
CONFERENCE DINNER AT "Carmen de la Victoria" |

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

- JUNE 10 2022, FRIDAY -
Room *Alfonso X* (first floor)

10:00-11:30	**PANEL 4**: *DIGITAL AND GENDER VULNERABILITY*

Chair: Carmen Hidalgo-Varo, University of Granada

Anastasaki, Elena & Kitsiou, Roula – *"Construing acts of voicing in Christina Dalcher's Vox through vulnerability metaphors".*

Nicolás Román, Susana – *"Posthumanism, Online Theatre and Digital Dramaturgies: Crossing the Boundaries of Mind/Body".*

González Moreno, Esperanza – *"Eliza Clark's Boy Parts in the Death of Death: Elimination of Vulnerability in Late Capitalism".*

11:30-12:00	*COFFEE BREAK*

12:00-13:30	*PLENARY 2*

Chair: Miriam Fernández Santiago, University of Granada

Patrick Brown

Hoping as coping amid vulnerability: a post-formal perspective

13:30-15:30	*LUNCK BREAK*

15:30-17:00	**PANEL 5**: *VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES III*

Chair: Esperanza González Moreno, University of Granada

Botelho, Teresa – *"Ecosickness in Extration Literature: the Vulnerable Body in Jennifer Haigh´s Heat and Light and Caridad Svich´s The Way of Water".*

Hidalgo-Varo, Carmen – *"Climate Change Problems through Climate Science Fiction".*

Jones, Megan – *"The Vulnerable Township: Exploring the Urban Edge in Masande Ntshanga's, The Reactive and Triangulum".*

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Interfaces

Room *Alfonso X* (first floor)

15:30-17:00   *PANEL 6: PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL VULNERABILITIES*

Chair: *Lucía Bennett Ortega, University of Granada -* **Room 21**

Liang, Xiaohui – *"Human and Environmental Vulnerability in Pandemic Representation".*

Chapman, Ana– *"The Wounded: Emotional responsiveness and affect in Cary Joji Fukunaga's series".*

Sánchez-Sánchez , Ana - *"Representing Physical and Mental Disability in Leigh Bardugo's Six of Crows".*

17:00-17:30   *COFFEE BREAK*

17:30-19:00   *PLENARY 3*

Chair: *Miriam Fernández Santiago, University of Granada*

Susana Onega and **Jean-Michel Ganteau**
Towards an ecology of attention: considering human and environmental vulnerabilities (embeddings, embodiments, interdependences)

20:00   *DINNER – FLAMENCO SHOW AT "Cueva Los Tarantos"*

PANEL 7: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES IV

Chaves-García, Paula – *""For beauty is always fragile": Corporeal vulnerability and class divisions in Paolo Bacigalupi's "The Fluted Girl"".* [Link]

Thierbach-McLean, Olga –*"The Rebellion of Optimism: Addressing Environmental Vulnerability Through Solarpunk Fiction".* [Link]

Fernández Jiménez, Mónica – *"Literature of the Capitalocene: The Coloniality of Climate in Edwidge Danticat's Claire of the Sea Light (2013)".* [Link]

Carregal Romero, José – *""They Had the Same Unnameable Spiritual Injury": Millenial Vulnerability in Sally Rooney's Normal People".* [Link]

PANEL 8: VULNERABLE MINORITIES/MIGRANTS

Barros Grela, Eduardo – *"Chicanx Cultural Pedagogies: La Pocha Nostra and Spatial Vulnerabilities".* [Link]

Sánchez-Palencia, Carolina – *""All scattered like dry leaves": A necropolitical reading of Tim Z. Hernandez's All They Will Call You (2017)".* [Link]

Rodríguez Arnaiz, Laura – *""Blame the hurricane and spare the butterfly": Human and environmental fragility in the post-9/11 novel Faultline 49".* [Link]

PANEL 9: DIGITAL VULNERABILITY

Tonetto, Maria Grazia – *"On TheEdge of the Void: Ultraproximity in Microfiction".* [Link]

Jeannin Hélène – *"How the human body became a digital interface".* [Link]

Peinado-Abarrio, Rubén – *""Fragmented and bewildering": the new risk society in Jenny Offill's Weather".* [Link]

Kaźmierczak, Janusz – *"From Heavy metal to Love, death and robots: Adult animation and human vulnerability in the Fourth Industrial Revolution".* [Link]

PANEL 10: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES V

Martínez Serrano, Leonor María – *"Poetry in Pandemic Times: Mourning Collective Vulnerability in Sue Goyette's Solstice 2020. An Archive".* [Link]

Shewry, Teresa – *"Vulnerability by Night: Contemporary Time Lapse and Poetry of Dark Sky Reserves"* . [Link]

Dand Shah, Yamini – *"Political and gendered interventions on mangroves through ecological and humanist literature: Selected poems from Yamini Dand Shah's 'Abstract Oralism' in comparison with Amitav Ghosh's 'The Hungry Tide'".* [Link]

Ferrández-San Miguel, María – *"Vulnerable Selves, Weird (Eco-)Systems: Posthuman Intra-actions in Jeff Vandermeer's Annihilation".*

Sonia Baelo-Allué and Mónica Calvo-Pascual (University of Zaragoza, Spain)

VULNERABILITY AND THE POSTHUMAN IN THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The fourth industrial revolution is defined by its exponential speed, scope, and unprecedented impact on how we live, express ourselves, work, connect with others, and get information. It comes with a set of emerging technologies which make use of digital power and are organized around the physical, the digital and the biological domains which co-evolve, fuse and interact (Schwab 2016). This continuum between the physical, digital and biological domains also affects the definition of the human and fits well with the conception of the posthuman as seen by critical posthumanists who understand the human and the non-human (the machine, the plant, and the animal) as a continuum (Braidotti 2013; Herbrechter 2013; Nayar 2014). This nonfixed, mutable and co-evolving posthuman nature also brings new forms of vulnerability as the nonhuman becomes an essential part of the (post)human sense of identity. The dependence and entanglement of our organic bodies with the non-human brings both the unwillingness to accept but also the fear of losing this posthuman aspect of our previously autonomous selves. This talk will deal with two forms of vulnerability that have emerged from the fourth industrial revolution and our posthuman condition: the excesses of techno-scientific development and the consequent environmental degradation in the Anthropocene. Both types of vulnerability will be explored in the analysis of three recent dystopian novels: Don DeLillo's The Silence (2020) with its aesthetics of melancholia caused by the sudden loss of technology and Larissa Lai's Salt Fish Girl (2002) and The Tiger Flu (2018) and their depiction of the exploitation and resilience of the more than human world.

Susana Onega (University of Zaragoza) and **Jean-Michel Ganteau** (University Paul Valery, Montpellier, France)

TOWARDS AN ECOLOGY OF ATTENTION: CONSIDERING HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL VULNERABILITIES (EMBEDDINGS, EMBODIMENTS, INTERDEPENDENCES)

In the contemporary economy of attention, various types of vulnerability are on show. The SARS-COVID19 pandemic has been instrumental in revealing the global reach and nature of vulnerabilities, of the human type, clearly, but also of our non-human environment. The mediasphere is full of instances of precariousness: physical, social, economic, environmental, etc. Still, despite a permanent exposure that does not shy from the spectacular, the everyday attentional regime that we are submitted to is one in which our attention as the rarest of commodities on demand is permanently solicited by the plethora of messages and alerts transforming natural rhythms into permanent emergency and submitting our apprehension of vulnerability to a model that is cut off from direct experience. In other terms, our contemporary experience of vulnerability is mediated, generic, and remains abstract despite our being bombarded by images and reminders.

Against this tyrannical model stands one that is represented by literature and, more specifically perhaps, by the contemporary fiction that literary scholars are intent on promoting. In other terms, our contention is that the novel is a privileged apparatus for paying attention to ordinary vulnerabilities of various types, whether they are physical, social, economic, environmental, in that it provides ways to generate attention to what matters. This it does either by drawing attention to invisibilities or to ordinary elements of our social or natural environment that are too visible to be perceived. In other terms, the novel trains our attention so that we envisage perception not as a given but as a capacity that has to be built up. This is does through various specific devices (like the incarnated event of the character, focalisation, the use of special rhythms, etc.) that are instrumental in getting the reader to attend to singularities as opposed to abstractions. In so doing, fiction promotes an ethics of the particularist type that works hand in hand with an ecology of attention taking into consideration human and natural interdependences and providing an experience of the vulnerabilities that they present. We will attempt to justify this contention by providing textual evidence taken from various examples from contemporary British fiction, with special reference to Artificial Intelligence, disability and new nature writing.

Patrick Brown (University of Amsterdam)

HOPING AS COPING AMID VULNERABILITY: A POST-FORMAL PERSPECTIVE

Hope is a fundamental and enduring process by which individuals, organisations and communities cope amid conditions of vulnerability and uncertainty. Whereas some perspectives on hope, for example in theology and the caring sciences, have tended to emphasise its positive impact on motivation and endurance amid suffering, critical work in sociology and anthropology has also indicated a 'dark-side' to hope. In this keynote I will explore some of these important insights into hoping in late-modernity, first drawing upon a wider literature and, in particular, developing insights from the sociology of risk and uncertainty, which help us to conceptualise hope in relation to other social processes of coping amid vulnerability and uncertainty, such as trust, risk and magic.

From this conceptual basis, I will then draw upon research in different healthcare contexts, including treatment for psychosis and for advanced-stage cancer, to explore in more detail what it means to live with hope. I especially want to illuminate some of the inherent tensions and contradictions that are very much apparent within vulnerable individuals' narratives of hoping. Indeed, I will argue that these tensions are central to the nature of hope and, moreover, grant us important insights into related processes of coping such as faith, magic and rituals. Social scientists have created a number of obstacles to understanding these everyday forms of coping amid vulnerability. I will conclude my lecture by considering some useful techniques for working round these obstacles, which I characterise in terms of adopting a 'post-formal' perspective.

PANEL 1: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES I

Hardack, Richard, SouthWest Research Institute, USA

The Fantastic Nature of Corporations: The Post-Nature Posthumanism of Avatar

In this paper, I argue that the film Avatar insinuates that nature was always already a virtual and finally corporate reality. (I begin by noting that the film only appears to offer a trans- or posthumanist perspective based on a fantasy of an indigenous ontology of nature). The corporation in Avatar does not simply engage in social malfeasance, but mimics and usurps the role of nature, and, more unexpectedly, helps reveal that nature itself was always a kind of corporate commodity.

Avatar dramatizes the antebellum transcendentalist belief that the world is a living being—a conceit American pantheists, like Avatar's writers, developed from aboriginal cultures. (Their pantheism is developed in response to over-industrialization). Melville depicted a similarly sentient planet throughout his novel Mardi:

> There are more things alive than those that crawl, or fly, or swim. Think
> you there is no sensation in being a tree? Think you it is nothing to be a
> world? What are our tokens of animation? That we move, make a noise,
> have organs, pulses, and are compounded of fluids and solids. And all these
> are in Mardi as a unit. Its rivers are its veins, and as the body of a bison is
> covered with hair, so Mardi is covered with grasses and vegetation. Mardi
> is alive to its axis.

But Pandora, Avatar's animated world, repeats the surprising ulterior message of transcendentalism: nature always represented a virtual, and finally corporate, reality. Avatar dramatizes the premise that nature not only has disappeared from a ravaged, post-industrial earth, but that it always existed only virtually as a construct. Critically, Pandora's Navi interact with "nature" as avatars: they plug into horses, dragons, and so on with the equivalent of organic USB cords. In this new-age posthuman fantasy, vulnerable nature survives as a cyborg. The electrochemical connections between trees serve as neural-nets and a world-wide-web; as a character exclaims, the Navi can "download and upload data" through these interfaces. Pandora and nature itself exist only as digital creations. But where the Navi "plug" into their sacred tree, earthlings can encounter this otherwise poisonous nature only while using protective prostheses and virtual technology.

The corporate premise of seeking "Unobtanium"—a recurring science fiction motif that perhaps unwittingly represents the Lacanian lack of Western ontology—suggests that colonization allows us to seek utopia in digitized versions of primitive worlds we've destroyed. The supernal energy source Vibranium plays a similar role in Black Panther, a more sophisticated film about race, colonialism and capitalism. Like unobtanium, vibranium evokes the loss of what it putatively represents, and a return to a retroactively fabricated primitive past that is also a digitized future. What Žižek says of Black Panther applies to Avatar— that doses of "traditional wisdom will [not] contain the excess of wild capitalism, [because] 'return to roots' fits perfectly with global capitalism." Žižek concludes one cannot recuperate authentic pre- Western identities, which is the fantasy of Avatar and Black Panther, but must form new identities that engage with contemporary crises.

PANEL 1: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES I

Bennett-Ortega,Lucía, University of Granada, Spain

Witnessing the Environmental Collapse in a State of Bewilderment*: a Richard Powers Novel*

Set in the present capitalogenic climate crisis, Richard Powers' most recent novel, Bewilderment (2021), follows the story of Robin, a neurodivergent child with a great sensitivity towards the natural world. However, technological and digital advances, the "race for priority" (Powers, 43), and the constant need for instant gratification do little to help Robin's desire for "all sentient beings [to] be free from needless suffering" (Powers, 24). In the novel, climate change is not presented as the backdrop of the story, nor as a simple concern or preoccupation of the characters. Rather, it constitutes a trigger for Robin's mental health issues. In my paper I argue that Bewilderment does not only raise mental health awareness by resisting the labelling and stock categorisation that frequently accompany notions of disability, it also allows for the character to become and intersectional site of functional and environmental vulnerabilities. What is more, Robin's neurodivergence is not constructed as a literary device on which narrative prosthesis relies on (Mitchell and Snyder, 2000), but is instead presented as an experience of socio-political implications. In my analysis, I firstly examine the double conceptualisation of 'bewilderment' as on the one hand, the state of confusion that emerges within an anthropocentric and ableist society, and on the other hand, as a celebration of nature's uncanniness, preventing disability from being limited to a positivist convention of normalcy (Michalko and Titchkosky, 2009). In addition, I explore how the novel, seemingly avoiding the cynical nihilistic misanthropy that Braidotti warns readers against falling into (2013), emphasises that climate change and ableism are brought about by a lack of human empathy, clearly evoking Philip K. Dick's (2007) envisaging of a world in need of an empathy box for its survival. Finally, I delve into the sense of discouragement and impotence that dwindles all hope in the novel. Very much in line with Johns-Putra's (2019) "sense of no ending", Bewilderment concludes with an element of cyclicality, denying readers any sense of closure or optimism with regard to the vulnerabilities it depicts.

PANEL 2: VULNERABLE SOCIAL/INDIVIDUAL CONFIGURATIONS

Oliete Aldea, Elena, University of Zaragoza, Spain

Transnational Representation of Precarity and Vulnerability in Post-Crisis Cinema

Grounded on a series of latent crises stemming from the neoliberal revolution of the twentieth century, the 2008 financial crash marked a watershed in the initially optimistic context of the 4rth Industrial Revolution. The virtual intangibility of capital flows and the deregulation of financial markets were initially pointed out as the main causes of the global crisis. The focus, however, soon shifted towards the unsustainability of the welfare state, which resulted in a revival of neoliberal discourses with an even further "economization of the everyday life" (Brown 2015). Post-crisis societies at a global scale have witnessed capital accumulation in the hands of a few, while risk exposure inevitably falls into precarious communities (Beck, 2006). The growing polarization of wealth and poverty has propelled the consolidation of a transnational overclass and a vulnerable precariat with a pervasive presence not only in developing and emergent countries but also in the so-called advanced economies of North America and Europe (Bauman and Bordoni 2014, Standing, 2016). Social mobility has diminished due to the widening gap between the rungs of the social ladder, even in social democracies. Paradoxically, cultural discourses of meritocracy have not disappeared, on the contrary, they have reinvigorated (Littler, 2018). Simultaneously, the individualistic ethos fostered by neoliberal discourses has enhanced individual responsibility of one's own precarity while obscuring the structural oppression of the precariat at a global scale.

The consequences of this polarized socio-economic order have been represented in an eclectic variety films. More specifically, the (im)possibility of social mobility in post-crisis societies has been tackled in post-crisis (tragi)comedies and dramedies, such as Horrible Bosses (Seth Gordon, 2011, USA), I Can Quit Whenever I Want (Smetto quando voglio, Sydney Sibilia, 2014, Italy), Justice&Co (Justi&Cia, Ignacio Estaregui, 2014, Spain), Hustlers (Lorene Scafaria, 2019, USA), and Parasite (Bong Joon Ho), 2019, South Korea), and White Tiger (Ramin Bahrani, 2021, India, USA) among others. I propose to explore the ambivalent meanings that these films disclose when vulnerable individuals become trapped in the paradoxes of meritocratic neoliberal practices. On the one hand, the individual aspirations of the main characters actually perpetuate social division as superrich members of the transnational overclass are regarded as role models to follow. On the other hand, the cinematic depiction of precarity and vulnerability contribute to denounce the global scope of the conjuncture and thus create a borderless sense of transnational communities which may contain the seeds of social change (Bardan 2013).

PANEL 2: VULNERABLE SOCIAL/INDIVIDUAL CONFIGURATIONS

Oria Gómez, Beatriz, University of Zaragoza, Spain

Master of None*: Intimacy Under Threat in the Risk Society*

Master of None (2015-) is an original Netflix series created and written by Aziz Ansari, who also plays the protagonist, Dev Shah, a struggling actor trying to navigate the turbulent dating scene of New York while finding himself in the process. The show deals with issues such as identity, career, racism, and self-obsession, but it is particularly concerned with millennials' difficult transition into fully-fledged adulthood and the new meanings attached to contemporary notions of intimacy in the "liquid" society of the 21st century (Bauman, 2000; 2003).

This presentation will deploy Anthony Giddens's ideas about the self (1992), Urlich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim's notions about the current process of "individualization" (1995; 2002), and Lauren Berlant's concept of "systemic crisis" and the disruption of the "good life" it entails (2011), to analyze the representation of two key issues frequently explored in Master in None: the infiltration of the neoliberal ethos into the intimate realm, which leads to the governance of consumer market dynamics in romantic relationships and turns the members of the couple into capital-enhancing actors; and the acute self-centeredness and individualization often attributed to the millennial generation, which habitually pit the individual interests of the self against the shared goals of the couple.

These two phenomena may be understood as products of a time marked by the changes brought about by the "risk society" (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1998), increasing the vulnerability of contemporary relationships to the breaking point, which makes us wonder about the viability of traditional configurations of intimacy in the context of the 4th industrial revolution. The presentation does not try to establish any continuum between fiction and reality but rather seeks to highlight the importance of media representations in the construction of contemporary notions of intimacy and romance in an increasingly unstable socio-economic scenario.

Mesiç, Jiri, University of Granada, Spain

Build Back Better? Vulnerability in the Writings of Pope Francis and Klaus Schwab

This contribution aims at identifying intersections between the latest encyclicals by Pope Francis and writings by Klaus Schwab and Thierry Malleret (World Economic Forum). All three authors regard crisis, or various crises (economic, environmental, societal, migrant, Covid-19, and others) that we are currently facing, as a chance to transform our society. Key terms of these authors are the "Common Good" and "Universal Destination of Goods," which are not only a part of Christian Social Thought but are currently being promoted by affiliated corporations. When analysing Schwab's proposals about how to transform our society where, for example, private ownership will cease to exist, and Pope's views on distribution of goods, we notice striking similarities between the two. It is not only that the first predicts that society in the future will rent everything they need, but the latter proposes that in this way everyone will share what belongs to everyone (based on ancient Christian writers). For this reason, it is not surprising to see Pope Francis participating at World Economic Forum Annual Meetings in Davos, Switzerland and supporting projects as diverse as the development of artificial intelligence.

PANEL 2: VULNERABLE SOCIAL/INDIVIDUAL CONFIGURATIONS

The Catholic Church's interest in transforming our society with the help of corporate world is further corroborated in its support for the Council for Inclusive Capitalism whose very few members employ over 200,000 million people worldwide and manage $10,5 trillion in their assets. According to one of the founders, Lynn Forester de Rothschild, all founding members are committed to the teachings of the Pope, and to "inclusive capitalism," or "stakeholder capitalism" aiming at equal opportunities and just society. However, the union of the Holy See, World Economic Forum, and the Council for Inclusive Capitalism suggests that individuals are not able to bring about the change in society, because they are not willing to contribute to the costly transformation. In words of Klaus Schwab, ordinary people will always prefer "low price and convenience" over better future. Therefore, transformation must be achieved by big corporations united under World Economic Forum or the Council for Inclusive Capitalism (beside others) with the Vatican providing ethical and moral support.

The speech will raise following questions: Is it ethical to use vulnerable people a means to be exploited by big corporations? Should global problems we are facing be left in their hands, rather than in those of our governments? Should the Catholic Church altogether with those institutions shape the lives of individuals who are not willing to participate in their designs? Is global governance not contributing to the same crises they supposedly address and promise to end?

PANEL 3: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES II

Davis, Roger, Red Deer Polytechnic, Canada

Necrodidactics: Poetics and Pedagogy of the Anthropocene

Recently, two slim volumes have been published with nearly identical titles: Roy Scranton's Learning to Die in the Anthropocene: Reflections on the End of a Civilization (2015) and Robert Bringhurst and Jan Zwicky's Learning to Die: Wisdom in the Age of Climate Crisis (2018). Addressing the existential threat of climate change, the volumes imply both a learning and a teaching of death: necrodidactics. This paper proposes to use these volumes as starting points to read Canadian poet Jan Zwicky's work as an engagement with the Anthropocene, particularly in her books Robinson's Crossing (2004) and Songs for Relinquishing the Earth (1998). Drawing together philosophy, poetry, and music, Zwicky's writing opens up a possible critique of how we think and teach about climate change and climate fiction in the classroom (specifically), in poetry and literature (generally), and in popular culture (broadly). Put simply, we are teaching death rather than, say, solutions. Much of the discourse around climate change manufactures consent for catastrophe as opposed to the growing chorus of young voices that point to drivers of climate change like industrialism, capitalism, and consumerism. Replying to the limitations of individual subjective responses to the overwhelming scientific data on climate change, Zwicky establishes an aesthetic modality for addressing the limitations of mitigation or adaptation, and she suggests a possibility for radical change through ecological listening and epistemological acceptance.

Zwicky's poetry is frequently informed by Ludwig Wittgenstein, and both Learning to Die volumes coincidentally end with references to him. In her poem "The Geology of Norway," Zwicky's speaker adopts Wittgenstein's voice and articulates a desire to challenge analytical philosophy's dominance of epistemology. Her poetry makes a case for meaning that surmounts contingent human categories of interpretation, uncertainty, and vulnerability to gesture towards an ecological epistemology grounded in landscape and geology: "And will they understand? / And will they have a name for us? – Those / perfect changeless plains, / those deserts, / the beach that was this mountain…?" While Zwicky's poetry often concerns itself with local loss and nostalgia, many of her poems offer glimpses into longer timescales outside those of human perception and conception. Her poetry invites readers to imagine a non-human thinking world. In learning to die, the negative response is to wallow in the misery of human extinction, while the positive response is to face such extinction with humility, responsibility, and self-knowledge. In teaching to die, necrodidactics facilitate a possible rejection of existing human structures, to gain perspective on the futility of immediate demands of market fluctuations, learning outcomes, and commodified existence.

PANEL 3: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES II

Shadurski, Maxim, Siedlce University, Poland

A Revelation of the Recent Past and the Distant Future': Landscape and Temporality in Will Self's The Book of Dave

In *Literature and the Anthropocene* (2020), Pieter Vermeulen has observed: 'If naming a geological epoch after our species elevates us to the status of a veritable geological agent, it does so only to underline our impotence and vulnerability in the face of the forces we have helped unleash' (84). Albeit terminologically contestable, the Anthropocene heightens human culpability in the anthropogenically induced phenomena that leave inerasable geological inscriptions on the planet. In the Anthropocene, human and environmental vulnerability acquire a heightened apprehension in the representations of landscape and temporality. Being a framed view of the environment, landscape foregrounds the less spectacular and frequently less visible processes that open up vast temporal expanses.

This paper examines the conjunction between landscape and temporality in Will Self's The Book of Dave (2006). Subtitled as 'a revelation of the recent past and the distant future', the novel self-consciously furnishes a series of landscapes that bear the imprint of multiple temporalities. Self develops this conjunction by recruiting major psychogeographical concepts: dérive and detournement (for definitions, see Coverley 120-121). Whereas dérive allows the writer to establish a vantage point from which the representation of landscape is conveyed, detournement enables the intertextuality of landscape at the level of allusion and genre.

Dérive highlights the effects of the Anthropocene on the protagonist Dave Rudman. Predominantly, he engages with the physical environment from within the taxi cab he drives through the London streets. The landscapes he observes are nearly always mediated through either his rear view mirror or his windscreen. Such mediating lenses detract from Dave's own culpability and reinforce his personal delusions. Much as Dave gains proleptic insight into a flooded landscape, this prolepsis only produces a bigoted and misogynistic testament, which will survive as a sole nondegradable legacy five centuries later. The protagonist's unmediated engagement with landscape occurs outside London. With the screen 'removed from his eyes' and the mirror 'cast away', Dave gazes into deep time (404). The landfill grants him a foretaste of the future, where his own past actions will amount to permanent signatures in the landscape.

As Dave's dériving practices culminate in the countryside, the novel registers a symptomatic detournement, which reactivates allusion to John Ruskin and William Empson, among others. Similarly to Ruskin, Self summons up landscape as a synecdoche for the rubbish of civilized life and endows it with apocalyptic temporality. Self also follows Empson in offering movement towards the simple. However, the pastoral landscape proves always already anthropogenically contaminated, and Self's novel supplies a temporal perspective that renders the material and ideological traces of the Anthropocene overwhelmingly warped and aggravated. Even though The Book of Dave rejects optimistic futurism, it upholds landscape as a psychogeographical site situated at the interfaces of human and environmental vulnerability.

PANEL 4: DIGITAL AND GENDER VULNERABILITY

Anastasaki, Elena and **Kitsiou, Roula**, University of Thessaly, Greece

Construing acts of voicing in Christina Dalcher's Vox *through vulnerability metaphors*

"A word after a word/ after a word is power"; Margaret Atwood's poem Spelling echoes the power of words and draws attention to the power of superfluity, redundance, reiteration even, to make a voice heard. Words can carry one's action beyond the limited space the body can reach. They are the means to tell one's fear, to assume one's vulnerability and work towards alleviating it. Imposed silence then appears as a mechanism of oppression; processes of silencing have been extensively addressed by social-anthropological and sociolinguistic research especially focusing on minorities such as women (see for example Jaworski, 1992). Moreover, in the information economy of the new media, word limits and practices of algorithmic censorship are becoming increasingly popular (O' Connor & Smith, 2012; Cobbe, 2021). Although a word limit is a common practice permeating all levels of activity, it is seldom thought upon. Electronic forms of various importance allow only so many words as answers, twitter has a (recently increased) 280 sign-limit for its users, educational institutions have rigid wordcount, and the same holds for academic and other publications.

In the digital era, where everyone's voice can, potentially, reach the entire world, Dalcher's dystopian novel expresses a very real fear of being silenced. In modern America, a purist movement voted into power has silenced all women and girls overnight, using an electronic device on their wrist that allows them a limit of a hundred words a day, administering electroshocks for any additional words. Reading and writing are also banned for all women and language is also used as a brain-washing tool with an obligatory mantra to be daily spoken into the counter devices.

The novel investigates the intersection of physicality and the immaterial essence of words. With the counters, words become physical entities detected as pulses as they come out of the physical body. The narrator, a former neurolinguist working on aphasia (the loss of the ability to speak due to brain damage) indicates a further link between physicality and speech. Her voice, sober but without restriction, contrasts sharply with the limitations imposed around her and uncovers the silent horror of a dystopian America where half the population has lost all rights of self-disposal, both physical and discursive.

Speechlessness, usually a reaction to something shocking expressing its debilitating effect, is here reversed; it is the debilitating effect that is sought after through rendering women literally speechless. The play between metaphor and literal meaning permeates the novel. Speaking is recognised as an act by the authoritarian government, while it is reduced to its physical expression. The wider metaphor of the body-politic is also taken literally, with government policy focusing on the physicality of the individual. For instance, we are told that it all started with the "Bible Belt" when "that swath of Southern states where religion ruled, started expanding. It morphed from belt to corset, covering all but the country's limbs."

Employing Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory (2003), we propose to explore metaphors in Vox that shape discourse(s) on voicing vulnerability and on voice as visibility through an interdisciplinary discourse analysis that draws on the fields of literature and sociolinguistics.

PANEL 4: DIGITAL AND GENDER VULNERABILITY

Nicolás Román, Susana, University of Almería, Spain

Posthumanism, Online Theatre and Digital Dramaturgies: Crossing the Boundaries of Mind/Body Dualism

The current pandemic has now engaged the online theatre in a dialogue with decades of scholarship and research about post-humanism, which focuses on the deconstruction of the boundaries between "human" and "machine" and "human" and "animal." Post-humanism also poses a fundamental issue for the current theatre-maker, as mainstream theatre particularly engages with and focuses on the anthropocentric. As the human and machine become more entangled in the move to "virtual theatre," this paper primarily follows N. Katherine Hayles (1999) and her thesis on the misleading conception of mind-body dualism suggesting that the body remains connected even in cyberspace. Perspectives on human vulnerability (Butler, 2009; Butler et al, 2016; Butler 2020) and online interfaces (Maynard, 2015) will also be explored in this discussion as interconnected theoretical frameworks.

Performance artists, theatre-makers and other artists like Annie Dorsen, Underground Resistance or Mette Ingvartsen have questioned the permeable boundaries between the human and the machine before the pandemic exploring online performance-making. For instance, Performance Space New York held a Posthuman Series (September to December of 2018) and noted that their objective for the series was to explore worlds that extend beyond human perspective.

This study of the ramifications of the body and mind in cyberspace also remain appropriate in digital theatre as well. B. Bridger and J.R. Carpenter in the article "Call and Response - Towards a Digital Dramaturgy" (2013) note how dramaturgy remains capable of contributing and critiquing digital literary practice. Therefore, digital dramaturgy challenges the anthropocentric nature of theater and highlights the predicaments of human and machine through digital textual practice. Conclusively, this paper untangles new directions on drama and other performance-based cultural expressions by questioning the function of the "new" human being in the current technological world.

PANEL 4: DIGITAL AND GENDER VULNERABILITY

González Moreno, Esperanza, University of Granada, Spain

Eliza Clark's Boy Parts *in the Death of Death: Elimination of Vulnerability in Late Capitalism*

"In Feminism and the Mastery of Nature (1993), Val Plumwood analysed the oppression of gendered, racialized, and non-human beings as based on the humanist dichotomies culture/nature and mind/body. In 1976, Jean Baudrillard took a wider approach in Symbolic Exchange and Death by identifying the capitalist division between life and death as the locus of origin of normalcy and, therefore, discrimination. According to his ideas, death —like it was already done with the asylum, school, and prison (1976: 19)— has been increasingly made disappear in order to favour the positivity on which the system keeps on working. The constant reminder of death the body as a symbol represents has been commodified into an eternal sign without reference to the Real.

I argue that this can be observed in Boy Parts (2020). In her first novel, Eliza Clark narrates the story of Irina in what has been considered the mix between American Psycho (1991) and My Year of Rest and Relaxation (2008). Set in current times, with blog entries and references to Keeping Up With the Kardashians and Timothée Chalamet, a normative woman devotes her time to manipulating her friends and taking photographs of non-normative men through a female gaze as sexualizing and fetishized as the one men devote to her. Like Bateman, she is obsessed with her physical appearance and unexpected elements of pop culture, and her sexual life is fuelled by her homicidal drive. In my analysis, I observe that Boy Parts can be read as the portrayal of immortality achieved in simulacra that Baudrillard observed humanity strived for.

In my analysis, I have a look at the exploitation of vulnerability that can be observed in the main character's work and the signification the disappearance of the corpse of her only deceased human victim may develop. Through Irina's story, Clark may be metaphorically representing a near future in which death has died following the death of the body in images and sex in roleplay.

PANEL 5: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES III

Botelho, Teresa, Nova University of Lisbon, Portugal

Ecosickness in Extration Literature: the Vulnerable Body in Jennifer Haigh´s Heat and Light *and Caridad Svich´s* The Way of Water

In this talk, I explore arts that link vulnerability in the Fourth Industrial Revolution to Earth's changing nights. Drawing on environmental humanities scholarship about the night as well as environmental justice frameworks, I interpret online time lapse and poetry affiliated with dark sky reserves, a global network of lighting-regulated places intended to shape atmospheric clearness, darkness, and a "spectacular night sky." The International Dark Sky Association (IDA) represents night as vulnerable to global lighting expansion, and connects efforts to intensify and expand darkness to climate change mitigation, endangered species protection, and human health. The startlingly strange and beautiful nights of time lapse feature prominently on websites affiliated with dark sky reserves. In time lapse shot within the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve in Aotearoa/ New Zealand, stars run down skies, buildings flow sideways, and mountains turn askew. Drawing on celestial elements and the darkness to depict highly mobile landscapes, these films suggest that night matters because it can shape unique perspectives on the cosmos. They do not so readily evoke night's more troubling impacts on our present. Very different nights emerge in Star Waka (1999) by Robert Sullivan (Ngāpuhi, Kāi Tahu), a poet whose ancestral lands include the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve. Sullivan describes nights that nurture Māori agriculture, cosmology, and navigation, but he also engages with injustice interwoven with the after-dark, including western astronomic cultures that have supported resource extractive economy, socially uneven access to lighting, and traumatic histories of police violence by night.

So marginal is night across so many disciplines that "McDonald's, as a $30-billion real estate powerhouse with an explicit night-time strategy, probably knows more about the after-hours than most policymakers," suggests Michael Acuto in an argument for a "science of the night." Night is an important site for engaging with human and environmental vulnerability in the 4th IR, from lighting expansion to after-hours workers and the effects of digital technologies on sleep. But we might be critically cautious regarding narratives of night that only emphasize its "natural" vulnerability and dream of its intensification and extension. Instead, in this essay I consider night in terms of "vulnerable naturecultures," examining how the elemental conditions of night are shaped by power and economy as well as the precarious forms of life interwoven with these conditions.

Hidalgo-Varo, Carmen, University of Granada, Spain

Climate Change Problems through Climate Science Fiction

Climate change is becoming a tangible issue nowadays. Scientists have already confirmed what the consequences would be if we do not alter our relation with the environment immediately. This ecological global problem has been addressed in different media, such as movies, TV shows, and, of course, literature. There are novels that take climate change as the central plot line; however, the novel analysed in the present paper positions climate change as a backdrop: Jasper Fforde's novel Early Riser (2018) depicts a possible near future in which humans have to hibernate during winter. The main plot line revolves around oppression, social inequality and the commodification of health, which is a consequence of the hostile environment that governs that alternate world. Thus, it can be said that Fforde presents climate change not as a "scientific projection" but as a social lived experience that alters society to the core.

According to Whiteley, Chiang and Einsiedel, presenting climate change as a cultural concept may trigger the creation of new psychosocial imaginary that understand this issue both as an individual and collective problem and not as a distant, cold and impersonal scientific discourse (32,34, 35). Thus, this novel can be addressed through the lens of Climate Science Fiction since it goes beyond the problem of climate change and delve into its consequences at a societal level, investigating the "potential and complex human reactions under situations of stress and change" (Whiteley, Chiang and Einsiedel 31). In fact, Science Fiction has "the potential value" of dealing with the existing relation between humans and their "changing surroundings and abilities" (Aldiss qtd. in Pak 6). I expect to conclude that the use of climate change as a backdrop within the narrative may alter the readers' psychosocial imaginaries and society's understanding of climate change.

Jones, Megan, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

The Vulnerable Township: Exploring the Urban Edge in Masande Ntshanga's, The Reactive *and* Triangulum

In this paper, I employ the rubric of waste to consider how South Africa's townships represent sites of precarity. Historically, the 1950 Urban Areas Act ensured the forced removal of residents from urban areas designated as "white". In Cape Town, this entailed the transplanting of predominantly "coloured" families out of the city to the Cape Flats, an area that continues to be described as a "dumping ground", signalling not only its undesirability as a living location, but also the extent to which such communities are considered surplus and disposable. In Johannesburg, white capital captured black workers for mining while keeping them out of the white city in "locations" situated far from the urban centre. If a township such as Soweto was distanced from sites of white consumption and leisure, the same cannot be said for its proximity to the mining sites that supported them. Achille Mbembe speculates that the "end of apartheid raises anew the question of how to inhabit the city" (2008, 53). And yet for many township residents, the question of "how" to inhabit the city continues to be constrained by the after-life of apartheid. As Johannesburg deindustrialises, abandoned mine dumps remain behind, looming over townships, polluting water supplies and poisoning the air.

PANEL 5: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES III

Ntshanga's novels evoke both the plight and the perseverance of township communities. In The Reactive (2014), protagonist Lindanathi helps his uncle construct a latrine in Dunoon, near Cape Town. The latrine connects the production and management of material waste to the ongoing marginalisation of the urban poor in and around the city. The polluted and noxious effects of waste on township inhabitants speaks to Rob Nixon's formulation of "slow violence" (2011), the consequences of which are unevenly distributed across the body politic. Triangulum (2019) speculatively imagines a future Johannesburg where townships remain spaces of abandonment, discarded by the state and handed over to the private sector, "The townships were meant to serve as micro-cities, we were told: self-contained, privately owned zones" (215). These tactics most obviously echo the "separate but equal" lie of apartheid, although the origins of the Zones are international, having first developed in Asia. In this way, the book establishes ties between the township and the global urban poor, whose lives are controlled by transnational corporates and who are destined for slave labour.

Alongside the depictions of superfluous people that Nstshanga's work expresses, the paper asks what defiant strategies his texts offer up. In The Reactive, relationality between township bodies re-shapes the environment (Butler, 2014), whereas Triangulum writes the destruction of the environment by corporations as inevitable without the intervention of an extra-terrestrial entity known as "The Machine", which enters the consciousness of the protagonist. Thus if the earlier novel suggests a convivial future embedded in the local, the later extends this vision to otherworldly, transhuman spaces.

PANEL 6: PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL VULNERABILITIES

Liang, Xiaohui, University of Science and Technology Beijing, China

Human and Environmental Vulnerability in Pandemic Representation

This article analyses three novels that address Covid-19 with the enlightenment of Hubert Zapf's Cultural Ecology, which considers the sphere of human culture as interdependent with and transfused by ecological processes and natural energy cycles. Among the three novels, Fang Fang's Wuhan Diary (2020) is a direct response to the outbreak of the pandemic, which stays in the sphere of outpouring to the pandemic as an anthropogenic disaster and considering of human vulnerability. However, its British equivalent Oana Aristide's Under the Blue (2021) and its Chinese equivalent Shumin Bi's Coronial Virus (2013), two works which were written well before the outbreak of Covid-19 but anticipated remarkably the coming pandemic as a coalition of natural and anthropogenic disasters, have presented adequate cultural reflection over anthropocentrism by highlighting natural elements as object to achieve ecological balance, and have hereupon demonstrated environmental as well as human vulnerability which combine British or Chinese local culture with global visions.

Chapman, Ana, University of Málaga, Spain

The Wounded: Emotional responsiveness and affect in Cary Joji Fukunaga's series

This paper aims at discussing instances of the internal bodily responses that trigger the emotional reaction towards the environment and its societal conceptualization of (in)correct paradigms. Ray Kurzweil's envisagement of technology as our "revered pet" (2005) plays havoc with the targeted human mental refinement in Netflix's series Maniac (2018). AI takes control of the human mind in the quest to categorise and diagnose mental disorders. The so-called AI mechanism establishes itself as a threat once it gains emotional response to its environment. Hence, the natural environmental interaction is substituted by a technological-driven trial therapy that not only looks to solve mental affections through categorising or labelling them but also to "correct" them. The posthuman envisioning of human-machine reliance sets the main backdrop to present phenomenological aspects of the affect theory, the sense of shame and the consequences of displacement in (the categorising/labelling of) mental health stigma and medicalization (Foulkes 2021; Szasz 1961) in a series where emotions and mental (dis)ableism interact in reifying vulnerability.

Sánchez-Sánchez, Ana, University of Granada, Spain

Representing Physical and Mental Disability in Leigh Bardugo's Six of Crows

Disability representation in the Young Adult, fantasy genre is increasingly becoming important in the past years, but there needs to be accurate depiction of the disabled experience that does not fall into conventional ableist tropes. That is why this study analyses the realist and complex representation of both physical and mental disabilities in Leigh Bardugo's Six of Crows (2015). In order to develop this argument, I will firstly analyse the character of Kaz as a physically disabled individual and the impact that Bardugo's disability has on his depiction. Then, I will take into consideration the depiction of mental disabilities (PTSD, ADHD and dyslexia) with the characters of Inej, Nina, Matthias, Jesper, and Wylan and show how Bardugo does not romanticize nor demonizes mental disabilities.

The effect of the quest will be explained as a moment of vulnerability necessary for the disabled characters to face their trauma and detach themselves from the ableist society. This is why the elements used to construct this fictional, dystopian society will be discussed in order to show how the characters are not welcomed in this ableist world. Finally, I will show how Bardugo does not fall into ableist tropes found in Young Adult, fantasy literature.

PANEL 7: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES

Chaves-García, Paula, University of Córdoba, Spain

*"For beauty is always fragile": Corporeal vulnerability and class divisions in Paolo Bacigalupi's "*The Fluted Girl*"*

Paolo T. Bacigalupi (1972) is an American science-fiction and fantasy writer. His debut novel, The Windup Girl (2009) won several awards, including the Nebula and the Hugo awards, both for best novel. His nonfiction essays appeared in the environmental journal High Country News and several newspapers, including the Idaho Statesman and the Albuquerque Journal. Throughout his corpus, Bacigalupi uses science fiction to explore the possible aftermaths of the environmental crisis, the potential dangers of a capitalist economy, and speculates about the effects of bioengineering.

This paper will explore Bacigalupi's short story "The Fluted Girl," collected in Pump Six and Other Stories (2008). It narrates the tale of two twins, Lidia and Nia, whose development has been stopped before puberty, their bodies designed and genetically modified into musical instruments for show by a patron, Madame Belari. She trains and exhibits the sisters, creating a decadent, erotically charged show for elite circles to enjoy, with the final purpose of trading their bodies in exchange for her own financial and bodily autonomy. As a result, it is safe to describe them as extremely vulnerable characters.

"The Fluted Girl" depicts a dystopian future society ruled by a system where capitalism and feudalism are intertwined. By picturing a society marked by strong class divisions, where people in power utilize human enhancement and advanced technology as violent, physically damaging weapons to control and exploit the population, the story puts the focus on the vulnerability of groups that economically depend on higher status individuals. This idea of corporeal vulnerability is highlighted throughout the story, which constantly brings the attention to Lidia's body: its fragility, the level of violence it can or can't endure, and even its potential profitability.

In Biopunk Worlds of Paolo Bacigalupi (2019), Aleksandra Mochocka analyzed this short story from an ecocritical lens, which explores cyborganics and human enhancements in "The Fluted Girl" as a metaphor of the environmental crisis. In this paper I will depart from this approach by analyzing this story from a perspective which places the focus on the vulnerability of those under the power of more economically powerful figures. Vulnerability, according to Butler, is part of bodily life; however, it becomes highly exacerbated under certain social or political situations (2004). In "The Fluted Girl," the economic situation of the characters is the factor that defines whether their body is brutalized, or whether it is the agent inflicting violence. By narrating the story from Lidia's point of view, the author allows the reader to experience the story from the eyes of the last link in the chain. This perspective brings the attention to the importance of protecting and ensuring the freedom of vulnerable groups.

PANEL 7: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES

Thierbach-McLean, Olga, University of Hamburg, Germany

The Rebellion of Optimism:
Addressing Environmental Vulnerability Through Solarpunk Fiction

In recent years, the escalating destruction of physical ecosystems has increasingly manifested in traumas to the collective emotional landscape. Unprecedented mass phenomena such as eco melancholia and climate anxiety are on the rise particularly among young people. According to a recently published international survey, a majority of respondents aged 16 to 25 "perceive that they have no future, that humanity is doomed, and that governments are failing to respond adequately" (Hickman et al.). But this eco-melancholic zeitgeist is not only a direct reaction to political and economic inertia, but also a long-term product of cultural autosuggestion. Most notably, the decades long prevalence of the dystopian mode in speculative fiction has conditioned audiences to think of humanity's prospects as inescapably bleak, suggesting over and over that we are irreversibly headed towards environmental cataclysm driven by the unstoppable mechanics of hypercapitalism. As several conservation psychologists have observed, this fictional mantra is now becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Not only does the culturally entrenched sense of futility result in environmental inaction, but it even fuels climate change denial and unrestrained material consumption as devil-may-care hedonistic coping strategies. Hence, there has been an increasing emphasis in the ecological humanities on fostering "a new set of ecological virtues, which include courage and radical hope against despair and hopelessness" (Kretz 277).

Supplying such positive visions is the declared goal of the emerging solarpunk movement, which understands itself as a "rebellion against the structural pessimism of how the future will be" (Owens). Counter to the dystopian bias of contemporary speculative fiction, solarpunk is dedicated to imagining pathways to a socially and environmentally sustainable civilization. However, despite this emphasis on hopefulness and optimism, solarpunk is far from being an escapist feel-good genre. To the contrary, it directly engages with the painful implications of ecological precarity as a necessary step to developing possible solutions. If "our failure to deal with the collective and individual pain generated as a result of our destructive economic system is blocking us from reaching out for the solutions that can help us to find another direction" (Confino), then solarpunk provides a much-needed venue for the public articulation of environment-related feelings of anguish, sadness, and guilt.

This paper takes stock of the budding solarpunk movement with a special focus on the creative strategies it employs to address our shared environmental vulnerability. In particular, it explores how solarpunk fiction uses optimism as an epistemic approach to unlocking new conceptual territory beyond the dominant capitalist paradigm – and thus foster a sense of human (and more-than-human) solidarity in the face of existential crisis.

PANELS

PANEL 7: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES

Fernández Jiménez, Mónica, University of Valladolid, Spain

Literature of the Capitalocene: The Coloniality of Climate in Edwidge Danticat's Claire of the Sea Light (2013)

One of the most relevant fragments from Edwidge Danticat's last novel Claire of the Sea Light (2013) that situates it as an example of Climate Fiction or Literature of the Anthropocene is the one where the erosion of the land is described: "Many of the peasants living in the villages surrounding Ville Rose were just as stubborn. Laurent often held meetings in the shop with the peasants who lived up and downriver from them, warning them that the rivers were swelling in response to the lack of trees, the land erosion, the dying topsoil" (CSL 52). The Anthropocene, a twenty-first century concept that describes our current geological epoch, characteristically affected by human activity to the point that it constitutes the only determining force (Crutzen and Stoermer 17), proves a good framework for analysing literature at the turn of the millennium, when environmental concerns are an essential topic to be tackled. However, the reference to erosion has more to unpack and rather aligns with Jason W. Moore's belief that the Anthropocene argument is too simple (2-3). Erosion has been a consistent problem in the Caribbean since the colonisers mistook diversity for fertility when they arrived (DeLoughrey, Gosson, and Handley 6; Lowenthal 14) and is an enterprise that has been handed from these invaders to the new neo-colonial empire par excellence, the United States. Another Haitian writer, Marie Vieux-Chauvet (1916-1973), has noted this transfer. In her novella Amour (1968), set in a fictitious Haitian town already devastated by erosion, "American ships routinely leave [the town's] ports filled with prized wood from trees the loss of which is causing that erosion" (qtd. in Danticat, CD 67). It is this presentation's aim to establish Danticat's novel as an example of literature of the Capitalocene, considering the argument that the extension of land granted by the invasion of the Americas was a key factor in the development of world capitalism. Thus, all analyses of capitalism and its environmental effects have to include a critique of coloniality and, consequently, postcolonial texts prove crucial in this enterprise.

Carregal Romero, José, University of Huelva, Spain

"They Had the Same Unnameable Spiritual Injury": Millenial Vulnerability in Sally Rooney's Normal People

Touted as "millennial's fiction most important voice" (Barry, 2018), Sally Rooney explores in Normal People the experiences of a disaffected youth that has come of age in a post-crash Ireland which, while having experienced the woes of financial crisis and discarded the optimism of previous years, still preserves neoliberal principles constructing people's social and affective lives. Instead of reversing the process, post-crash Ireland has apparently reinforced "the inculcation of norms of individual accountability and self-empowerment" (Kiersey, 2014). The flaws of the system, Rooney explains in interview, inform her protagonists' erratic and sometimes neurotic behavior, for neoliberalism fails to provide an "ethical outlook" on one's and others' "immense suffering" (Nolan, 2017).

PANELS

PANEL 7: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES

In Rooney's novels, this suffering becomes intensified by silence and miscommunication, and the writer foregrounds the chasm between her characters' social and private selves. In an age of social media and constant self-projection, Rooney's characters often engage in conversations on radical politics and alternative lifestyles, but they nonetheless struggle with emotional intimacy, and their relationships become affected by neoliberal constraints like class-based distinctions and prejudice, as well as gender and sexual hierarchies often established through (self)objectification.

Drawing on recent research on neoliberal affects (Anderson, 2016) and the connections between neoliberalism, (self)abjection and vulnerability (Tyler, 2013; Butler, 2012), this study argues that millennial culture in Rooney's novels loses its glow of full and free self-expression, as it reimposes silences and reconfigures old types of shaming. At interpersonal levels, some physical and emotional wounds –like mental illnesses, self-harm or realities like domestic violence– are experienced as unspeakable, as they continue to be constructed (and internalised) as signs of abnormality and weakness, in a society that often equates vulnerability with failure. If such ways of thinking are difficult to resist, as several theorists have explained, it is because, socially, neoliberalism makes its rationality the condition for self-advancement and well-being, thus shaping the formation of human subjectivity and affects. Rooney's characters usually adopt self-management strategies such as passing and concealment, but they also display an uneasiness that lays bare the inequalities and deceptions of their neoliberal culture. The main characters' self-awareness foregrounds a heightened sense of millennial disaffection. Rooney's novel does not propose a model of radical social change, as her protagonists remain trapped by their circumstances. Change is produced, though, on interpersonal levels, when characters confront their self-abjection and manage to express (and come to terms with) what once remained unspoken, achieving a renewed sense of freedom away from previous restrictions.

Barros Grela, Eduardo, University of A Coruña, Spain

Chicanx Cultural Pedagogies: La Pocha Nostra *and Spatial Vulnerabilities*

In 1993, Guillermo Gómez Peña founded La Pocha Nostra in Los Angeles to bring together artists and citizens who "collaborated across national borders, race, gender and generations as an act of radical citizen diplomacy and as a means to create 'ephemeral communities' of rebel artists" (LPN's Live Art Laboratory & Border Research Institute). Their project was inspired by Gómez Peña's intensive work on the imagination —and the construction—of a future spatiality that not only questioned the asymmetrical demography and the political disposition of Chicanx communities' vulnerabilities in the United States, but that would also transpose them. In his work, which has been frequently positioned within the Chicanxfuturism aesthetics (Ramírez 189), Gómez Peña has transversally dialogued with other Chicanx artists interested in the experimentation with science, technology, and science fiction from a non-imperialistic and postcolonial stance (Marion C. Martínez, Coco Fusco, or Roberto Sifuentes). Their appropriation of the artistic discourses of technology and science through mestizaje and radical politics invigorated the necessity to reformulate both the popular and the academic discourses of space, art, and progress in a world that diminishes the potentiality of agency amongst the so-called minority groups. But it also contributed to build new discursive venues that interrogated the definitions of the human by projecting defamiliarized deconstructions of the body.

This presentation will examine the performative power of La Pocha Nostra to build a transnational alternative space for neglected communities. I argue that such space represents, through radical politics, a form of struggle to counter the vulnerabilities of non-hegemonic epistemologies, in which disidentified bodies coalesce to create new forms of society based on a posthuman aesthetic. In their Chicano cyber-punk pedagogical performances, I argue that La Pocha Nostra members move cultural vulnerabilities to the center "while the alleged mainstream is pushed to the margins and treated as exotic and unfamiliar, placing the audience members and readers in the position of foreigners or minorities" (Live Art Laboratory).

Sánchez-Palencia, Carolina, University of Sevilla, Spain

"All scattered like dry leaves": A necropolitical reading of Tim Z. Hernandez's All They Will Call You (2017)

A. D. Alonso and B. Nienass claim that though images of dead migrant bodies have become so ubiquitous that they have been naturalized as "the new normal", yet thousands of them around the world remain unnamed, invisible, ungrievable and unritualized (xxii). Tim Z. Hernandez's All They Will Call You (2017) is a revisitation of the tragic plane crash that killed 28 Mexican deportees at Los Gatos Canyon (Fresno County, California) in 1948 and of the subsequent oblivion that prevented their memorialization for almost seven decades except for a mass grave containing their unidentified remains and a protest song composed by Woody Guthrie.

PANELS

Drawing partially on the ethics of alterity formulated by Mbembe (2003) and Agamben (1998), this paper adopts a necropolitical perspective to confront the intersections of life, death and mourning in migratory contexts. My analysis of Hernandez's docu-fiction focuses on the complex ways he restores the anonymous deportees' humanity dismantling the tropes of threat, criminality and expendability that Latino immigrants are associated with as a result of their racialized vulnerability. As if to compensate the failed forensic work in connecting migrants' bodies and names, his text is patchwork-like in its gathering the pieces of testimonial investigation in life narratives that had so far been ignored and forgotten, provided the fragile condition of rememberability for people that do not count as citizens (Oberprantacher 2016). Excavating in the background stories of these unacknowledged victims seems to me an ironic contestation to the mass burial where they were placed without names, identification or rituals. But even admitting to Hernandez's political gesture in naming the anonymous deportees and trying to dignify their memory, I agree with Edkins on the ambiguity of such politics of registration and documentation, since "the use of names both distinguishes individuals as equal and of value and, at the same time, in a sense reduces each person to bare life." (2011, 32) This paper addresses this double bind that, on account of the all-too-discussed notion of "transparency" (Han 2015), positions these expendable migrant experiences as simultaneously absent and present, invisible and hypervisible, included and excluded, thus inviting, a reconsideration of "vulnerability in/as resistance." (Butler, 2016).

Rodríguez Arnaiz, Laura, Complutense University of Madrid, Spain

"Blame the hurricane and spare the butterfly": Human and environmental fragility in the post-9/11 novel Faultline 49

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, marked the U.S. entrance into the world's shared history of violence, effectively shaking Americans' sense of security and invincibility. The new 'vulnerable' state in which the U.S. suddenly found itself needed to be confronted as soon as possible. This way, what would later be known as the 9/11 official narrative had its origin in the words spoken by George W. Bush that same evening when he put the focus on "the steel of American resolve," clearly stating that they might have been wounded but not defeated. In accordance, the country's mass media—following the lead of the American authorities—moved on to shape the attacks as a national tragedy that had to be revenged, effectively providing the needed context in which to ground future political and military actions. This short of 'false' vulnerability—not because the terrorist hadn't exposed some of the failures in the country's defenses, but because it was deliberately constructed in a way that helped to convey the sense of a nation still in control—was nevertheless felt as real by the American people, whose anxieties and trauma were used to gain the needed public support for the measures that were about to be taken as part of the 'War on Terror'.

In such context, with authorities and media manipulating the emotional trauma caused by the event, impeding the exploration of the psychological, individual, historical significance of the attacks, some authors began to offer counternarratives with which to challenge the official narrative.

PANEL 8: VULNERABLE MINORITIES/MIGRANTS

One of these writers was David Danson, whose post-9/11 novel Faultline 49 (2012) presents an alternative reality with Canada as the latest U.S. focus of attention—first with the 9/11 attack on the WTC in Edmonton, Alberta, by an American citizen, and last with the subsequent military invasion of Canada by U.S. forces. The merging of narration and essay forms throughout the novel, along with the inclusion of multiple references to real documents and official statements from the period after 9/11, helps to defamiliarize the reader from what they knew about 9/11, the War on Terror and the invasion of Iraq—as what is extracted from the real world becomes part of the fiction's new world. The misplacement the reader experiences reflects the national disorientation after 9/11, leaving them vulnerable to be the author's manipulation similarly to how the American public was conditioned by the official discourse. This way, Danson deals with the problems of mass media's supposed objectivity and its dangers by contesting the 'truths' about 9/11 and the War on Terror provided by the American government and spread by the national media, all while addressing the fragility of human and diplomatic relations that the 2001 terrorist attacks exposed.

Tonetto, Maria Grazia, LUMSA University, Rome, Italy

On the Edge of the Void: Ultraproximity in Microfiction

In the persuasion that a new literary genre emerges when existing literary conventions fail to capture a vital portion of reality, this paper will examine microfiction (Botha 2016, 202) as the literary form that is articulating the reader and writer's struggles for meaning in the Age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

In spite of its still morphing features, it is undeniable that microfiction emerged in the Nineties – the decade that Schwab singles out as a major shift in the systems of production, networking and the beginning of unprecedented impacts upon mentalities. The correlation between the extreme contraction of the short story to its minimal terms, fruition within digital spaces, and data-driven culture has often been evoked but never fully explored as a critical frame to understand this genre. My hypothesis is that the development of microfiction has been triggered by a tendency to atomize the event into byte-sized units. It is no longer a vastity of temporal connections that writers focus upon – the kind of material that would shape a novel, a short story or event a short-short – but rather the implication of history into its minimal evental site, the micro-event, caught in its undecomposable terms. The theoretical frame I will adopt originates from Alain Badiou's Being and Event. As Charles Baxter underlines in a seminal introduction, microfiction exemplifies "a shift in the imperial self of the traditional novel to the we and the they of communal stories" (Baxter 1986, 91). As a consequence, "the nuances of individual perception and character have become irrelevant" (William Nelles 2012, 92). As inheritors to a clustering gaze that categorizes singularities into similarities, writers explore the evental site as a tension-filled area where the ab-normality of the singular subtracts itself from similarity.

Charles Baxter labels flash fiction as the fiction of proximity. Paradoxically, in a globalized world "we are all living in tighter psychic spaces", so that a "reduced geography" is the privileged setting of microfiction (Baxter 1986, 91). While space shrinks into tighter and tighter units – such as the inside of a car, a plane cabin, a bed or even a toilet seat – fiction explores the issue of personal/privacy boundaries being constantly renegotiated by and through the invading presence of the other. Thus, literature illuminates how ultraproximity has become the paradoxical condition of individuality in the Fourth Industrial Revolution Age.

Jeannin Hélène, University of Paris III Sorbonne-Nouvelle, France

How the Human Body Became a Digital Interface

Several visions and analogies have coexisted on how to think about the interactions between the human body and technologies: cooperation, entanglement, hybridization. Based on these visions, how did the human body gradually become a digital interface?

We propose to follow a chronological and genealogical thread of the evolution of techniques revolving around the body or taking the body as an object. We will show that embodied implants are at the end of a progressive lineage. This includes (among others): wireless technologies (RFID/NFC), the Internet of Things, wearable computing and e-textile, the Internet of Bio-NanoThings (IoBNT), Wireless Body Area Networks (WBANs)…

At the same time, the emergence of big data has allowed the development of practices related to the massive and systematic collection of data, and the NBIC (Nanotechnology, Biotechnology, Information technology and Cognitive science) or the BANG (Bit, Atom, Neuron, Gene) movement has advocated the convergence between different fields against the backdrop of the transhumanist movement.

First, we will review several visions of design engineers. They have hatched in the form of texts of several natures (manifesto, article, book…). They were initially propagated in the technical sphere, in specific places (research laboratories, limited geographical areas) and via learned societies or professional associations such as the ACM (Association for Computing Machinery) and the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) - as examples. We will then show that these visions have been realized in many ways. They have paved the way for new applications using the skin as a substrate and interface. For instance, building on pioneering work on epidermal electronics, the HCI (Human Computer Interaction) community has proposed using on-skin devices for interactive purposes. Work on epidermal devices, interactive fabrication, sketch-based interfaces, and flexible electronics have emerged. On-skin devices, a theme tightly coupled with body art and tattooing, or in-the body technologies have led to new practices. New concepts have risen: beauty technology, electronic tattoo, and so on, - in connection with scientific figures or even new celebrity scientists.

Finally, we will highlight the communication strategies used by some of them to show and promote their work, with the use of concrete examples and case studies.

Peinado-Abarrio, Rubén, University of Zaragoza, Spain

"Fragmented and Bewildering": The New Risk Society in Jenny Offill's Weather

Since the publication in 2014 of Dept. of Speculation, US novelist Jenny Offill has been at the forefront of a trend in contemporary first-person writing in English by female authors, characterized by compressed and fragmentary forms that evoke the distracted nature and the energy of the internet, as well as the communication patterns of social media. In her most recent novel, Weather (2020), the autodiegetic narrator strives to come to terms with what she labels "twenty-first-century everything" (159). Her idiosyncratic take on the notion of risk society highlights the interconnectedness of climate emergency, political and economic crises, family tensions, and emotional and psychological distress. Reflecting many of the anxieties brought forth by the 4th Industrial Revolution—the threat posed by uncritical techno-optimism and transhuman enhancement; the contemporary seen as a perplexing, complex reality of networks; or the ever-present insecurity in work relations, to name a few—the narrative explores the individual's search for meaningful interconnection—which is constantly in danger of turning into enmeshment.

Informed by the belief that "there is no higher or lower. […] Everything is equally evolved" (46), the novel portrays the need to strike a balance between a reactive position defined by shared vulnerability and fear of imminent ecological catastrophe, and a productive affirmation of the nature-culture and life-death continua.

Approaching this central conflict from a critical posthumanist perspective, this paper studies Weather vis-à-vis the transversal interconnection or 'assemblage' of human and non-human actors theorized by Rosi Braidotti, together with Donna Haraway's ideas of tentacularity, making-with, thinking-with, and becoming-with as a way to account for the dynamic subject's entanglement in technologies, relations, and changes.

The textual analysis proposed attends to the role of fragmentation both regarding form—as the narrative leaps contribute to a sense of generic instability that makes Weather difficult to categorize—and content—as "regular life" becomes increasingly "fragmented and bewildering" (44) for the characters. Likewise, since the examination of paratextual material provides new insights into Offill's project, particular attention is paid in this paper to the book's accompanying website, www.obligatorynoteofhope.com, with which Weather grows into a transmedia narrative. Ultimately, if one understands "Obligatory Note of Hope" as a signal of Offill's ambition to have a direct impact on reality, her choice to expand the text across more than one medium lays the foundations for a discussion of the potential and limitations of literary creation as a tool to effect positive social change.

Kaźmierczak, Janusz, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland

From Heavy metal *to* Love, death and robots*: Adult animation and human vulnerability in the Fourth Industrial Revolution*

The adult animated series Love, death and robots, distributed by Netflix, has had two seasons, released in 2019 and 2021 respectively, with the release of the third season planned for 2022. In both 2019 and 2021 the series won Emmy awards for outstanding short form animated program. It arose out of its creators', David Fincher and Tim Miller's, plan to work on a remake of the 1981 film Heavy metal. This film, an adult animated anthology movie, had achieved a cult status among sci-fi fans in its own right. With this level of recognition and appreciation, both Heavy metal and Love, death and robots can be judged to be significant cultural texts, resonating strongly with the times when they were created and received. In the words of one critic, writing for the tabloid Daily Beast, Love, death and robots is "Black Mirror for the ADD-addled video game crowd" (Schager 2019). The importance of the British series Black Mirror (2011-2019) as a commentary on the human vulnerabilities aggravated by the Fourth Industrial Revolution cannot be overstated: the series has been evoked in a significant body of scholarly work (see, for instance, Michaud 2019; Gibson and Carden 2020). Even without the opinion expressed in The Daily Beast, similarities between Black Mirror and Love, death and robots are noticeable. This paper aims to investigate the ways in which Love, death and robots, in its particular manner, responds to the challenges brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In the process, the paper also aims to underscore the significance of adult animation for the representation of key human concerns of a given era; concerns which, through the conventions of the genre, can find unique expression.

PANEL 10: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES IV

Martínez Serrano, Leonor María, University of Córdoba, Spain

Poetry in Pandemic Times: Mourning Collective Vulnerability in Sue Goyette's Solstice 2020. An Archive

This paper explores how dealing with the effects of a global pandemic through the medium of poetry can act as a catalyst in raising awareness about collective vulnerability. As Canadian poet Sue Goyette (b. 1964) explains in a brief textual threshold to Solstice 2020, during the first 21 days of the locked-down and uncertain month of December 2020, she wrote a poem each morning that was published by Halifax's The Coast in the afternoon. Her plan was to give the newspaper's readers "[a] daily microdose of poetry, […] to mark the calendar's march towards Winter Solstice" (Mullin np). Endowed with a strong sense of commitment to her art and her community, she felt obliged to fill people's lives with hope and help them make sense of what it meant to live amidst a pandemic. She said: "If I'm a poet in the community, I can contribute some words" (Mullin np). Then, Gaspereau Press published the resulting 21 prose poems in a beautifully handbound letterpress collection titled Solstice 2020. An Archive. The poems gathered under this title dwell on global vulnerability at a time of darkness when people were faced with an unprecedented event in the history of humankind. Yet they also shed light on our existence and offer a way to move on in the hope that a return to the old normal might be possible in the near future. All of this is suggested by Goyette's skillful use of words in making poems that somehow reconcile our fragile lives with a momentous event that has affected humankind on a planetary scale. On 1 December, the very first day of her advent calendar of poetry, Goyette writes thus: "we are the words left intact surrounded by darkness in this new version of December." She ponders the etymology of the word dark, which turns out to be central to the whole collection, both literally and figuratively, as December 21 is the shortest day of the year and the pandemic revealed itself to be a time of darkness as well. In her own words, "dark comes from the Middle English derk, from Old English deorc, a distant relative to the German tarnen, "conceal"." On 2 December, she thinks deeply about humans' need for connection and contact in moving terms: "I miss you. I miss the crowd of you, the eloquence of how we move together, the collaboration of motion." On 3 December, she writes: "And here we are: up to our ears in it – the unknown and its cut. And the grieving, burying what we knew as normal. This mourning is no small thing." Amidst utter uncertainty and chaos, Goyette insists that poetry can offer solace and spiritual comfort. She does not give up on hope: "At the heart of mourning is an inlet with small boats for us to row forward. This is the work of remembering," she writes on 6 December. When winter solstice comes, Goyette is amazed at "how our feet are ahead of us, making a new path," away from the chaos and uncertainty of the pandemic.

PANELS

PANEL 10: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES IV

Shewry, Teresa, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA

Vulnerability by Night: Contemporary Time Lapse and Poetry of Dark Sky Reserves

In this talk, I explore arts that link vulnerability in the Fourth Industrial Revolution to Earth's changing nights. Drawing on environmental humanities scholarship about the night as well as environmental justice frameworks, I interpret online time lapse and poetry affiliated with dark sky reserves, a global network of lighting-regulated places intended to shape atmospheric clearness, darkness, and a "spectacular night sky." The International Dark Sky Association (IDA) represents night as vulnerable to global lighting expansion, and connects efforts to intensify and expand darkness to climate change mitigation, endangered species protection, and human health. The startlingly strange and beautiful nights of time lapse feature prominently on websites affiliated with dark sky reserves. In time lapse shot within the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve in Aotearoa/ New Zealand, stars run down skies, buildings flow sideways, and mountains turn askew. Drawing on celestial elements and the darkness to depict highly mobile landscapes, these films suggest that night matters because it can shape unique perspectives on the cosmos. They do not so readily evoke night's more troubling impacts on our present. Very different nights emerge in Star Waka (1999) by Robert Sullivan (Ngāpuhi, Kāi Tahu), a poet whose ancestral lands include the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve. Sullivan describes nights that nurture Māori agriculture, cosmology, and navigation, but he also engages with injustice interwoven with the after-dark, including western astronomic cultures that have supported resource extractive economy, socially uneven access to lighting, and traumatic histories of police violence by night.

So marginal is night across so many disciplines that "McDonald's, as a $30-billion real estate powerhouse with an explicit night-time strategy, probably knows more about the after-hours than most policymakers," suggests Michael Acuto in an argument for a "science of the night." Night is an important site for engaging with human and environmental vulnerability in the 4th IR, from lighting expansion to after-hours workers and the effects of digital technologies on sleep. But we might be critically cautious regarding narratives of night that only emphasize its "natural" vulnerability and dream of its intensification and extension. Instead, in this essay I consider night in terms of "vulnerable naturecultures," examining how the elemental conditions of night are shaped by power and economy as well as the precarious forms of life interwoven with these conditions.

PANELS

Dand Shah, Yamini, University of Mumbai, India

Political and gendered interventions on mangroves through ecological and humanist literature: Selected poems from Yamini Dand Shah's 'Abstract Oralism' in comparison with Amitav Ghosh's 'The Hungry Tide'

The paper proposes to interpolate critical enquiries into selected poems of Yamini Dand Shah's research poetry collection 'Abstract Oralism' in comparison with Amitav Ghosh's 'The Hungry Tide'. The environmentalist cum eco-critical methodology unearths the rather humanist understanding of the two genres based on ecological degradation of mangroves and their depiction. The biodiversity of backwater-estuarine type of mangroves of the west coast to the deltaic mangroves of the east coast of India create a backdrop of resilience shifting the focus on the cultural politics that comes with regional identity under the larger rubric of the pitfalls of national consciousness. The paper also raises issues surrounding varied forms of enunciation, be it oral or local subsumed under the project of narrativization. The thesis statement being the gendered microcosmic study of their impact in contrast with global economies and environmental precarity.

Ferrández-San Miguel, María, University of Zaragoza, Spain

Vulnerable Selves, Weird (Eco-)Systems: Posthuman Intra-actions in Jeff Vandermeer's Annihilation

Matter has been considered by the dominant Euro-Western tradition as a passive substance intrinsically devoid of meaning. This conception of matter and the view of humans as ontologically different from and radically external to it has in recent years begun to be contested by new materialist critics. As Karen Barad argues in Meeting the Universe Halfway (2007), "[m]atter is neither fixed and given nor the mere end result of different processes. Matter is produced and productive, generated and generative. Matter is agentive, not a fixed essence or property of things" (137). For her, "matter is substance in its intra-active becoming—not a thing but a doing" (151; emphasis in the original), it is what it does. The emphasis is, therefore, on the intra-action, performativity and agency of matter. Barad's work offers a compelling posthumanist model for reconceiving human and more-than-human nature, emphasizing the role of matter as "co-productive in conditioning and enabling social worlds and expression, human life and experience" (Sencindiver).

This paper reads Jeff Vandermeer's New Weird novel Annihilation (2014), the first book of The Southern Reach trilogy, from the combined perspectives of new materialism and critical posthumanism. Winner of the Nebula and the Shirley Jackson awards for best novel, Annihilation centers on "Area X," a teeming, pollution-free ecosystem somewhere on the US east coast in which nature seems to be progressing in unforeseen and disconcerting directions. Team after team of scientists is sent out by a secret government agency to explore the area. Most expeditions have not returned, and those who have seem changed and die of cancer within a few months. Annihilation introduces us to the twelfth expedition and is narrated from the perspective of the unnamed biologist in the crew.

PANELS

PANEL 10: VULNERABLE ECOLOGIES/BODIES IV

After a few days in Area X and while exploring a mysterious tunnel whose walls are covered by a text composed of living, fungi-like letters written by some sort of creature called "The Crawler," she accidentally breathes in some spores and begins to change, eventually transforming into something new—herself, but not herself anymore.

As I will argue, Vandermeer's Annihilation engages with a number of key western dichotomies, namely the human/nonhuman, meaning/matter, subject/object, self/other and nature/culture dichotomies, exploring the pleasures and anxieties derived from the breaching of their boundaries. Therefore, my main focus will be the vulnerability of the human and the performativity and agency of matter, bringing to the fore the posthuman subject's relationality, embodiedness and embeddedness to the multiple ecologies that constitute us. My contention will be that the novel resorts to the speculative mode to dramatize the fact that "[w]e are of the universe—there is no inside, no outside. There is only intra-acting from within and as part of the world in its becoming" (Barad 396).

SOCIAL EVENTS

INTERFACES Conference Day 1: **9th June**

Afternoon walk

At the end of the academic sessions and panels scheduled for Day 1, attendees are invited to go to the delicious *Los Italianos* ice-cream shop located at the heart of the city center, after which a lovely walk through the historical neighborhood of the Albaycin will take us to the stunning sight of the Alhambra from the San Nicolás viewpoint.

Conference dinner

Our late afternoon walk will end at the *Carmen de la Victoria*, one of the typical Arabic estates that are part of the Granada landscape. This is where our conference dinner will take place at **21:00 CEST**.

INTERFACES Conference Day 2: **10th June**

Dinner and flamenco show

After the second and last day of the *INTERFACES* Conference, attendees are welcome to enjoy a flamenco show and dinner at *Cuevas Los Taranto*s in the typical Sacromonte neighborhood at **20:00 CEST**.

*Notice that the **payment** for both events has to be done **in cash** at the **registration desk** upon arrival.*

- Please, wear a mask in interior spaces for shared use, especially when safety distance cannot be guaranteed.

- We encourage the use of hand sanitizers available at our facilities.

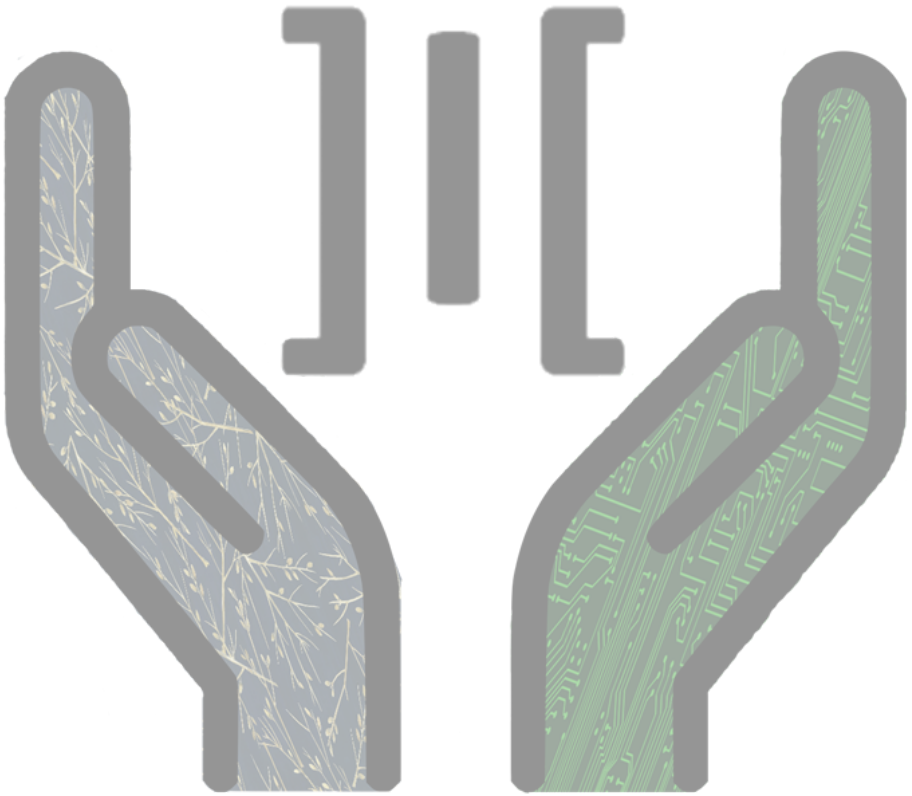- Ventilation will be ensured in premises and interior spaces.

MAP

All the sessions will take place in **room Alfonso X**, on the **first floor** (the room is next to the lift).
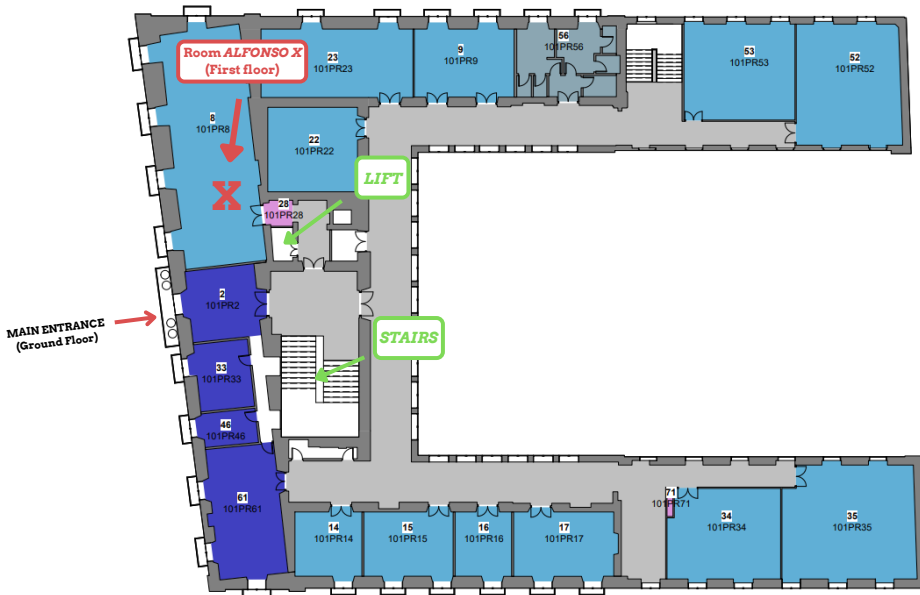
University of Granada
June 9-10 2022

- International Conference -

INTERFACES: Representing Human and Environmental Vulnerability
in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Designed and edited by Carmen Hidalgo-Varo