

**4th International Environmental
Humanities Conference:**

The Blue Humanities

May 20-23, 2026

Book of Abstracts

Nevşehir/Türkiye



*4th International Environmental Humanities
Conference:*

The Blue Humanities

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

May 20-23, 2026

Cappadocia University

Mustafapaşa Campus / Ürgüp / Nevşehir

TÜRKİYE

cappadocia.ehconference2026@gmail.com

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Barış Ağır (Osmaniye Korkut Ata University, Türkiye)
Sinan Akıllı (Cappadocia University, Türkiye)
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Z. Gizem Yılmaz (Social Sciences University of Ankara, Türkiye)

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Interinstitutional Committee

Fatma Aykanat (İzmir Katip Çelebi University)

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Hakan Yılmaz (Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University)

Mete Çal (Cappadocia University)

Graduate Assistants

Aslıhan Babacan (Cappadocia University)

Havvanur Kılıç (Cappadocia University)

Alperen Özen (Cappadocia University)

KEYNOTE SPEECHES

Toward a Wetter World: The Blue Humanities in the Anthropocene

Steve Mentz

St. John's University, USA

mentzs@stjohns.edu

Each of us has a personal relationship with water, from the ocean beach or lakefront where we like to spend holidays, to the water we drink on a hot day, to water we used to wash our bodies this morning, to the water that irrigates the crops that become the food that we eat. Each of our nations and cultures also has a historical relationship with water that emerges from water-borne patterns of migration, violence, and trade. The Blue Humanities asks us to engage with water as both substance and idea. We think we know this element, but the more we pursue it, the more we must reimagine how human relationships with water shape our lives, our history, and our future. During the present Anthropocene, the rise in global temperatures and sea levels is giving us a wetter world – which means more water in places we do not want or expect it. In this watery world, human relationships with the blue element assume greater urgency. To understand the Blue Humanities as an Anthropocene Humanities requires us to engage with the changing waterscapes and fluid landscapes of our dynamic present. This lecture begins by introducing water's alien and intimate faces, as they show themselves in literary culture and in recent Blue Humanities scholarship. The first analytical focus will be the mythic figure of the mermaid, a creature who combines the human and the oceanic. Juxtaposing a brief description in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* of drowning Ophelia as "mermaid-like" with the recent novel *The Mermaid of Black Conch* by Anglo-Caribbean author Monique Roffey will enable a clearer sense of how these figures mediate between humans and water. Allusions in both texts to religious songs further suggest ways in which watery environments, including but not limited to the ocean, connect themselves to spiritual insights. Taking mermaids as pivotal representations of aquatic-human hybrids, the second half of the talk contains an analysis of watery eco-poetics, with special attention to asymmetries of form and to the experience of buoyancy, in which the force of displaced water supports a body's weight. We cannot all be mermaids, but we all can, with some practice, float. By taking account of representations of human buoyancy in and beyond poetry, I conclude with an effort to imagine new forms of intimacy between humans and water.

Keywords: Blue Humanities, Anthropocene, mermaid, poetics, buoyancy, Shakespeare, Melville

Short Bio: Steve Mentz is Professor of English at St. John's University in New York City. A leading voice in Blue Humanities scholarship, he is the author of seven books, including *An Introduction to the Blue Humanities* (2023), *Ocean* (2020), *Shipwreck Modernity* (2015), and *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean* (2009). His creative-critical eco-poetry has also appeared in the book *Sailing without Ahab* (2024) and two chapbooks, *Swim Poems* (2022) and *Two Crossings* (2025). He has edited or co-edited eight collections of scholarly essays, including most recently *Water and Cognition in Early Modern English Literature* (2024) and the forthcoming Bloomsbury Handbook to the Blue Humanities (2026). His research has been supported by the Rachel Carson Center, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the John Carter Brown Library, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Maritime Museum in London. He is currently writing a book about ocean swimming as eco-meditation for the Anthropocene. He (still) occasionally blogs at The Bookfish (stevementz.com) and tweets [@stevermentz](https://twitter.com/stevermentz).

Perceiving through the Blue Humanities: Eco-dimensionalism as a Reading and Methodological Practice

Simon C. Estok

Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea

estok@skku.edu

If, as Princeton University's Anne McClintock has claimed, "the problem of the Anthropocene is a problem of perception," then a possible solution to this problem could be dissolved in the mix that has come to be known as the Blue Humanities. This stream of inquiry has emerged from the Environmental Humanities as a developing interpretive force that can change our perceptions of and relationships with our global waters. Focusing on artistic representations of water, an element that is more intimate and essential to the human experience—and indeed to the experience of all living things—than perhaps any other element, the Blue Humanities almost demands a reading and methodological practice that expands possibilities for perceiving and understanding our hydrological experiences. In all of its forms, simply put, water compels us to see differently. It messes with our expectations and prompts us to think when we might rather rely on habit and preconceptions to do the thinking for us. It is a shape-shifter like none other in our world, existing, as we well know, naturally in all three states. Water allows us to consider dimensions that we might not otherwise have considered, to feel what we might not otherwise have felt, and to understand what we might not otherwise have understood. For want of a better term, we may call this expansion of perceptions (and the potential methodologies and reading practices that produce it) *eco-dimensionalism*. My talk explores the possibilities of such an approach initially through analyses of the immersive experiences represented in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and those discussed in the commentary and theories of Macarena Gómez-Barris on Indigenous Columbian filmmaker Carolina Caycedo. In the latter part of my talk, I wander into more frigid climes to think about how ice fascinates us and how we mourn its disappearance. From there, my discussion moves into more parched environments of water-knives and heat waves and deserts of the sort that spawned Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and other things thought to be divine. Indeed, water often touches the divine—let us not forget that the first major extinction event, according to three of the world's major religions, was a flood (and it was anthropogenic). The intensity of the experiences water provides animates literature and art throughout history. Eco-dimensionalism intensifies the experience of art so that it becomes intimate, sensuous, liberating, dangerous, and, above all, relevant.

Keywords: Blue Humanities, eco-dimensionalism, perception, practice

Short Bio: Dr. Simon C. Estok is a Professor of Literature and is a Senior Fellow at Korea's oldest university, Sungkyunkwan University (established 1398). He is an editor of *Neohelicon* and is an elected member of the European Academy of Sciences and Art. Estok has been in South Korea for almost thirty years where he received the National Research Foundation Writing in the Humanities Program book award twice. He is best known for his interdisciplinary theory of ecophobia, which has been profoundly influential, spawning an entirely new discipline—ecogothic studies—and several new journals. Estok began formulating the term “ecophobia” in his doctoral thesis, introduced the term to the ecocritical community in 2009, and then published his masterful book *The Ecophobia Hypothesis* through Routledge in 2018. Estok is not only an influential ecocritic but a pioneering Shakespearean. He was the *first* person to study “ecocritical Shakespeares,” against considerable resistance—now it is a thriving industry all its own. His work is wide-ranging. He has over a hundred articles published, 70 in A&HCI journals (including *PMLA*), 26 book chapters, and 9 books, notably *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia* (2011), *East Asian Ecocriticisms: A Critical Reader* (2013), and *The Ecophobia Hypothesis* (2018). His most recent book is entitled *Slime: An Elemental Imaginary*, published in 2024 by Cambridge University Press. He has a book entitled *The Agony of Water in an Age of Climate Change* contracted as the inaugural book in the Bloomsbury Blue Humanities series and forthcoming in October 2026.

Archiviolithic Value of Water: Oceans as the Sentient Repository of Ancestral Memory of Trauma and Mytho-Cultural Inheritance

Fatma Aykanat

İzmir Kâtip Çelebi University, Türkiye

f.aykanat67@gmail.com

This paper will treat the oceans as historical agents with their capacity of achieving various historical, cultural, social and psychological transformative experiences of humans. Utilizing Derrida's concept of "archiviolithic"^[1], which suggests a violent force determining what is to erase and destroy, what is to be preserved, what is to be included in and to be excluded from the documented collective socio-cultural memory, and adapting this concept to Blue Humanities (with references to the theories of Stacy Alaimo, Christina Sharpe, Édouard Glissant, Hester Blum, etc.), this paper aims to prove that the ocean emerges as a counter-archival agent capable of storing what is excluded and destroyed as well helping them revive and to be re-included. As relevant illustrative literary works, a set of Anglophone aquatic fiction including Fred D'Aguiar's *Feeding the Ghosts*, Natasha Bowen's *Skin of the Sea*, Rivers Solomon's *The Deep* will be referred in parallel with the theoretical discussions. In this regard, this paper is proposed as a scholarly attempt to exhibit waterscapes being not only as liminal spaces where human and nonhuman agents coexist and co-evolve inter and intra-actively transforming each other throughout ages, but also alternative (maybe more democratic and objective) archiviolithic sites storing the residues of all (otherwise excluded) experiences of any (human or nonhuman) agents interacting with, within, and through aquatic bodies. As the literary examples and relevant theoretical discussions will reveal in the end, the ocean becomes a sentient being capable of breeding new becomings -like the anthropo-mermaid mytho-creatures in Bowen's *Skin of the Sea*- and a nonhuman witness of the colonial crimes like the massacres of the African slave men and pregnant African slave women overboard and thrown into sea -as portrayed in D'Aguiar's *Feeding the Ghosts* and Solomon's *The Deep*.

Keywords: Blue Humanities, trauma studies, hydro-colonialism, archiviolithic

Short Bio: Holding BA, and MA degrees in English Literature, from Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University and Hacettepe University respectively, Asst. Prof. Dr. Fatma Aykanat received her doctoral degree in British Cultural Studies at Hacettepe University in 2018 with her thesis on

British Climate Change Fiction. Currently, Aykanat works as faculty in the Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at İzmir Kâtip Çelebi University (İzmir, Türkiye). Aykanat is also a member of the editorial board of *Ecocene: Cappadocia Journal of Environmental Humanities* contributing as Book Reviews Editor.

^[1] Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Translated by Eric Prenowitz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Out of “the Cave of Witch Poesy”: Terraqueous Minds in Shelley’s “Mont Blanc”

Sevda Ayva

Iğdır University, Türkiye

sevdakaratash@gmail.com

P. B. Shelley, in his poem “Mont Blanc”, recounts his encounters with the Alpine landscapes by emphasizing the “ceaseless motion” (32) in the mountain, expressed through the Arve River rushing, bursting, and raging; waterfalls “leaping for ever;” glaciers “creeping like snakes;” fountains and streams rolling down; winds contending, vapours rising and snow descending. The poem dissolves the boundaries between the human mind and the external world by underlining “an unremitting interchange / With the clear universe of things around” (39-40). This entanglement is described through a hydro-analogy: as alpine waters flow through the mountain, “[t]he everlasting universe of things / Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves” (1-2). Approached from the perspective of the extended mind theory, which argues that cognition goes beyond the limits of the mind by incorporating external, non-neural, and environmental components, Shelley’s poem defines thinking as emerging through dynamic interaction with the terraqueous worlds. By resisting the metaphorical representations of Mont Blanc including the Arve river, its glaciers, fountains and waterfalls which render nonhuman environments as inert and immaterial, this paper offers a terraqueous approach to highlight the agentic capacity of the mountain in Shelley’s cognitive and imaginative processes.

Shelley also invites a reconfiguration of Plato’s cave allegory as a metaphor for the human mind demonstrating that human cognition, without the real and material interaction with the outside world, turns it into a form of limited and distorted reality. The poet stresses that he is now deprived of the real interchange with Mont Blanc and “the unremitting interchange” with its materiality, therefore, his “human mind, passively renders and receives fast influencings,” and his thoughts turn into mere shadows in “the still cave of the witch Poesy,” (39-44) which is a metaphor for the poet’s creative faculty. Such an acknowledgement of the terrestrial and aquatic environments as parts of our minds and bodies forces us to ‘think with’ them and “motivates us to rethink our conceptualizations, our metaphors, and our figurative language, so that we can learn to listen to [their] voices. (Oppermann, *Blue Humanities* 26).

Keywords: Blue Humanities, P. B. Shelley, “Mont Blanc,” extended mind theory

Short Bio: Sevda Ayva received her Ph.D. in 2022 from the Department of English Language and Literature at Hacettepe University. She is currently an assistant professor in the Department of English at Iğdır University. Her doctoral research, drawing on posthumanism and cognitive neuroscience theories, examines how cognition emerges through the entanglement of mind, body, environment, and affect in literary narratives. Her research focuses on neuroscience, ecocriticism, blue humanities, and posthumanist theory, with particular interests in animal studies, plant studies, and disability studies. Her studies explore the intersections of environmental humanities and literary studies, with an emphasis on more-than-human agency and materiality in contemporary critical theory.

**Currents of Agency: Mythic Waters, Aquatic Subjectivity, and Blue Relationality in
Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson* Series**

Gouri Basavaraj Indi
National Institute of Technology, India
gouri.indi37@gmail.com

This paper studies Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series from a blue humanities perspective, positioning water as an agential, relational force that reshapes subjectivity, ethics, and mythic world-making in contemporary children's literature. The analysis focuses on key instances where water mediates human and more-than-human relations, for example, Percy's ability to heal when in contact with water during battle, the Mississippi River's refusal to help him without reciprocal respect, and the ocean's role as both refuge and threat throughout the series. These moments demonstrate water as a responsive entity whose cooperation is conditional, rather than guaranteed. The concept of "thinking with water" is exemplified here through the series, where agency emerges through relational negotiation and not through domination. Furthermore, the protagonist-Percy Jackson's status as the son of Poseidon, the ancient Greek God of Sea, produces an aquatic subjectivity that is defined by permeability and instability. Percy's power intensifies when he is in close proximity to water but is also dependent on its volatile currents, tides, and moods. This dependency destabilises heroic mastery and reframes power as relational and ecological. Similarly, mythic sea beings such as naiads, hippocampi, and ocean gods are depicted not as resources or obstacles, but as political actors situated within aquatic systems. By close-reading these texts alongside the Blue Humanities theory, the paper aims to show how the book series promotes a form of blue ethics that is rooted in multispecies responsibility, reciprocity, and environmental humility. The novels thus present a water-centered way of understanding the world that reflect contemporary concerns about climate change, rising sea levels, and global interconnectedness.

Keywords: Blue Humanities, aquatic agency, children's literature, mythic waters, multispecies ethics

Short Bio: Gouri Basavaraj Indi is a Doctoral Candidate in English Literature from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the National Institute of Technology, Goa, India. She is currently working on Blue Humanities as part of her research and has recently published a

paper on “Rewriting the Anthropocene through Hydrocolonial Memory in Indian Ocean Poetics.” Her research interests include the Blue Humanities, Post human studies, and Comparative literature.

**Biblical Rivers and the Thames–Mediterranean Plexus: Reimagining Jewish Identity in
George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda***

Hatice Bay

Cappadocia University, Türkiye

hatice.bay@kapadokya.edu.tr

This paper proposes that George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* explores Jewish identity through a “Thames–Mediterranean plexus”—a hydraulic network that reframes biblical river typologies, long entwined with desert narratives, through hydro-diasporic logic. Drawing on Steve Mentz’s blue humanities concepts—including shipwreck, hydro-agency, and wet globalization—I examine how this network shapes the novel’s thinking about Jewish continuity and belonging. The allusion to shipwreck appears in the protagonist’s salvaged origins, while hydro-agency is evident in his rescue of Mirah from the Thames, a scene that reworks the Moses-in-the-Nile narrative as an act of care occurring within exile rather than as an act of deliverance. Lastly, the novel’s concluding eastward Mediterranean voyage, read through the lens of wet globalization, displaces the Jordan-crossing typology onto the open sea, reframing the promised land not as a stable endpoint but as an uncertain horizon that beckons Daniel forward. By modeling Jewish belonging through this hydraulic plexus—marked by vulnerability, responsiveness, and historical flow—Eliot presents diaspora as a lived mode of existence shaped by movement, memory, and care. This reading complicates interpretations of *Daniel Deronda* as a straightforward proto-Zionist text, suggesting instead that the novel remains attentive to maritime uncertainty alongside the pull of territorial settlement.

Keywords: *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot, hydro-diaspora, Biblical rivers, River Thames

Short Bio: Hatice Bay is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Translation and Interpreting at Cappadocia University, Türkiye. She holds an MA in English Literature from Middle East Technical University, Türkiye, and a PhD in American Literature from the University of Hamburg, Germany. Her research interests include American and English literature, literary urban studies, and literary theory, with a particular focus on space, culture, and narrative form in modern and contemporary literature. Her work engages interdisciplinary approaches and examines how literary texts negotiate questions of identity, modernity, and cultural memory.

Co-affective Encounters with the Great African Seaforest

Vivienne Bozalek
University of the Western Cape, South Africa
vbozalek@gmail.com

This presentation focuses on our own thinking and co-affective encounters with the Great African Seaforest in Cape Town, South Africa. Our presentation is a contribution to the emerging field of Critical Forest Studies which is dedicated to critical, creative, and relationally embedded practices with forests. While Critical Forest Studies has paid attention to land forests, less is known about the seaforest, and the entanglement between territorial and marine forests. We believe that we have a great deal to learn from the Great African Seaforest, in particular, as it has been under-researched from marine biology, oceanography, environmental and blue humanities perspectives. In keeping with the interconnected hydrological cycle of which we are all a part, we consider the Great African Seaforest, as a Global South sentient interspecies learning community for broader global politico-ethico-onto-epistemological practices and relations. In our presentation, we explore how our collaborative practice of reading-writing-photographing-swimming with the Great African Seaforest brings to the fore insights regarding kelp forest sentience, kelp forest imaginaries, kelp forest regeneration and kelp forest pedagogies. For the purposes of this presentation, we scheduled four swims throughout the month of August 2025. During these encounters we documented our swims with photos and videos, followed by freewriting sessions in nearby coffee shops. Interspersed with the swims we diffractively read marine biology and social science texts about kelp forests and the vegetal turn through each other in order to gain new and more nuanced perspectives about kelp forests sentience and their ways of being and becoming in the world. In sharing excerpts of writings and visual images we give expression to how hopes and possibilities can grow in the light of our interconnectedness and shared vulnerability, as well as our interdependency with human and more-than-human worlds.

Keywords: Co-affective encounters; Great African Seaforest; kelp forest sentience, kelp forest imaginaries, kelp forest regeneration; kelp forest pedagogies

Short Bio: Vivienne Bozalek is Professor Emerita in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of the Western Cape, and Honorary Professor in the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL) at Rhodes University. Her research interests and publications include the political ethics of care and social justice, posthumanism and feminist new materialisms, hydrofeminism, and postqualitative inquiry. Her most recent co-edited book is *Hydrofeminist Thinking with Oceans: Political and Scholarly Possibilities* with Tamara Shefer and Nike Romana (Routledge, 2024).

Sensibilities of the Ocean World: Toward a More-Than-Human Care Ethics in Social Work

Vivienne Bozalek
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Michalinos Zembylas
Open University of Cyprus, Cyprus
vbozalek@gmail.com
m.zembylas@ouc.ac.cy

This presentation explores how engaging relationally with ocean life might expand ethical sensibilities beyond human-centered paradigms in social work. We analyse three examples from ocean life – the hermaphroditic sea hare (*Aplysia*), fish cleaning stations near coral reefs, and echolocating toothed whales (odontocete cetaceans) – to explore how these more-than-human practices embody key ethical sensibilities. Specifically, we examine how these marine beings demonstrate moving beyond binaries, the practice of rendering each other capable, care-full attentiveness, deep listening, and response-ability. The sea hare, with its sequential hermaphroditism and cooperative reproductive behaviors, challenges rigid notions of individuality and reciprocity, offering insights into relational ethics. The cleaning stations of coral reefs, where fish and other marine species engage in mutualistic interactions, illustrate practices of trust, care, and interdependence. Finally, echolocating whales, which rely on sophisticated forms of sonic communication and collective sensing, exemplify the ethical significance of attuned listening and co-navigation. By engaging with these examples through a diffractive methodology, we reimagine social work ethics beyond human exceptionalism, attuning to the complex relationalities of more-than-human worlds.

Our paper is structured into four parts. First, examine how the political ethics of care and feminist new materialist or posthuman ethics, both of which emphasise relational ontology, offer a promising alternative to traditional principle ethics. Second, we outline our diffractive methodology, which involves reading marine biology texts alongside social science texts. This approach enables us to understand the behaviors of marine creatures and, in turn, think-with posthuman and care ethicists to speculate on what these practices might reveal about ethics. Third, we analyse three oceanic more-than-human practices, identifying key ethical sensibilities— moving beyond binaries, rendering each other capable, care-full attentiveness,

listening, and response-ability. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the broader ethical implications of these insights and practice in welcoming a more-than-human approach for ethics.

Keywords: Sensibilities, oceanic practices, seahares, cleaning stations, echolocation

Short Bio: Vivienne Bozalek is Professor Emerita in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of the Western Cape, and Honorary Professor in the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL) at Rhodes University. Her research interests and publications include the political ethics of care and social justice, posthumanism and feminist new materialisms, hydrofeminism, and postqualitative inquiry. Her most recent co-edited book is *Hydrofeminist Thinking with Oceans: Political and Scholarly Possibilities* with Tamara Shefer and Nike Romana (Routledge, 2024).

Short Bio: Michalinos Zembylas is Professor of Educational Theory and Curriculum Studies at the Open University of Cyprus and Honorary Professor at Nelson Mandela University in South Africa. He currently holds the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Chair in Open and Distance Learning (2023–2026). His research explores the role of emotion and affect in education, particularly as they intersect with issues of social justice, decolonization, and politics. He is the author and editor of numerous books and scholarly articles.

“The sage delighteth in water”: Henry Beston Hydro-poetics

Stefano Maria Casella

IULM University, Italy

stefanomaria.casella@alice.it / stefanomaria.casella@gmail.com

The line borrowed for the title, from Ezra Pound’s “Canto 83”, perfectly emblemizes Beston’s attitude towards the world of water – his trilogy *The Outermost House* (1928), *Northern Farm* (1948), and *The St. Lawrence* (1942) being almost entirely dedicated to this element.

The Atlantic ocean is the subject of the first book, from the perspective of the writer living a solitary year in front of the oceanic vastness and wilderness. The second book is a personal, familiar and social record of the author’s life with his family and neighbours next to lake Damariscotta (Maine). The third one is a narrative flowing along the course of the homonymous river between Canada and the USA, (re-)tracing the socio-historical features of places, landscapes, peoples and other-than-human beings living close to or in that fluvial environment.

Beston’s attention and sensitivity are constantly focused on, and attuned to, all the phenomena of the water expanses: seas, lakes, rivers as well as ponds and marshes, springs and watercourses, rains and storms, snow and ice. In this sense quite a considerable number of topics of the Conference CfP: hydro-geo-logical, naturalist, animalist, eco-environmental, climactic, historical, post-colonial, socio-cultural, philosophical, and literary-aesthetic are exhaustively dealt with in Beston’s *oeuvre*.

Thought firmly keeping his feet on the ground, Beston has his mind entirely projected towards water and its manifold manifestations. His approach and perspective are fundamentally hydro-centric, the definition “thinking with water” perfectly fitting his psychological, creative-aesthetic, and spiritual relationship with the liquid element. He observes, reflects, identifies himself with, and sometimes almost physically breaths according to the rhythm of waves and breakers, tides and flows, icing/freezing and melting – and shapes remarkable sections of his prose accordingly. He conforms to the seasonal cycles of water(s), spontaneously sharing the elemental relationship of all the other-than-human beings whose life depends on this element. He “swims” with fish, “flies” over the waters with birds, quenches like mammals, and is always careful of, and concerned with, their life and well being (also presciently warning about the risks of sea pollution right one century ago).

Keywords: Henry Beston's hydro-poetics, sea rivers lakes in XX c. American literature, waterscapes and other-than-human living beings, environmental ethics

Short Bio: Stefano Maria Casella taught English and Anglo-American Literature at IULM University/Milan (1986-2023).

Research and publications: essays, book chapters, journal articles in UK, Europe, USA, and papers at international Conferences on Modernism, E. Pound, T.S. Eliot, comparative literature, environmental literature, eco-criticism, animal studies, literature and theology.

Member of/speaker at: the "Ezra Pound International Conference", the "International T.S. Eliot Society", the "Power of the Word Conference" and several other Conferences on the above mentioned topics.

Visting Fellowships: Clare Hall College/Cambridge; Heythrop College/London; The Bogliasco Foundation/New York-Genoa.

Invited peer reviewer: Oxford University Press; Peter Lang. Nominated in the Advisory Board of *Italian Americana*.

Toward Subaquatic Intra-Relations: Planetary Sensibilities and Paradoxical Visions in Contemporary Mermaid Performance in Taiwan

Fan-Ting Cheng

National Taiwan University, Taiwan

fantingcheng@ntu.edu.tw

War, pandemics, extreme climate events, and rapid technological development have together generated global precarities and states of exception that have, in turn, provoked new critiques and reconceptualizations of the Anthropocene. Discourses such as ecofeminism and new materialism continue to seek epistemological paradigms capable of breaking away from anthropocentric frameworks. Building on the fluid agency and co-constitutive logic of the blue humanities, this paper focuses on the recent surge of mermaid performance art, tracing its development and community culture from the postwar period to the present. It then turns to localized cases in Taiwan, including the mermaid theatre produced by Farglory Ocean Park and Dayeh Takashimaya Department Store, mermaid scenes in variety programs, short films by Taiwan Underwater Production, and social media performances by mermaid artists, complemented by field interviews.

This paper argues that mermaid performances—positioned at the intersection between the fantastical imagination of mythical creatures and the commercialized reality of entertainment industries—exemplify a contemporary planetary art technique of survival through linguistic reconstruction, nonhuman situational exploration, and ideological subversion. At the same time, the latent structures of labor exploitation, gender and body discrimination, colonial and touristic imaginaries, and ecological ethical concerns embedded in mermaid performances make it impossible for them to fully disengage from the frameworks of capitalism, patriarchy, and anthropocentrism. Yet it is precisely these entangled potentials and contradictions that reveal the transdisciplinary, self-reflexive, and relational criticality of contemporary mermaid performance.

Keywords: Mermaid performance, Blue humanities, planetary arts, ecofeminism, New Materialism

Short Bio: Fan-Ting Cheng is Professor in Graduate Institute of Taiwan Literature at National Taiwan University. She received her PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles, in

Theater and Performance Studies and has published widely on queer performance and activist theater in Taiwan. Her newest essay “Activist Comradeship Within the Contingent Being: 24hrs Sleep Experiment—Hibernation into the Mycelium World as an Example” was published in 2025 on *Universitas: Monthly Review of Philosophy and Culture*. In addition to academic journals, she also writes regularly for contemporary art and literary publications such as *Unitas Literary*, *Fountain*, and *Art Collection +Design*.

Billabongs and Binaries: Thinking beyond Rivers' Boundaries in Environmental History

Harrison Croft

Universität Augsburg, Germany

Harrison.Croft@uni-a.de

Geographical boundaries are historically contingent. They mean different things, to different people, in different places, and at different times. What a river is to an Australian fur seal, differs from the view of the river of a short-finned eel. Billabongs and mangroves likewise evidence the changing form of the river through Deep Time. This paper seeks to bring together methodologies employed by practitioners of environmental histories and queer ecologies, to offer an expanded view of Birrarung (Yarra River), a stream flowing through the southeast Australian city of Melbourne. Officially, the river's course from source to mouth is 242 kilometres, yet the eels who inhabit the river and migrate thousands of kilometres into the open ocean might not be so quick to agree. Furthermore, oral histories and archaeological evidence confirm an original riverbed running underneath the (relatively geologically recent) Port Phillip Bay. What do these mean for the river's boundaries? I also explore the river's historic floodiness and the various nineteenth- and twentieth- century schemes to arrest this, to stress that the rigid course that the river takes through the city of Melbourne in the twenty-first century is the product of the settler coloniser project, demanding constant subjugation and impoundment. Moving beyond fresh/salty, wet/dry, and source/mouth binaries, this paper provides an array of historical examples from Deep Time to the present for a river that is much longer, deeper, older—and generally more superlative—than the colonial archive can reproduce.

Keywords: Environmental history, river, billabong, settler colonialism, queer ecologies

Short Bio: Harrison Croft is a Humboldt research fellow in Global Environmental History and Environmental Humanities at the Universität Augsburg, where his research interests are in climate history and more-than-human histories. His PhD, undertaken at Monash University, Melbourne, examined changing human, animal, and plant relationships with Birrarung (Yarra River) through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Harrison has published most recently

with *History Australia* and *Environment and History*, and is a HDR representative on the Australian Historical Association Executive Committee.

**From Sublime Ice to Living Rivers: Thinking with Water and the Genealogical
Evolution of Literary Ecosystems in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Richard Adams's
*Watership Down***

Özden Dere

İğdır University, Türkiye

ozden.dere@igdir.edu.tr / ozdendere@gmail.com

This paper provides a genealogical reading of literary ecosystems by examining how representations of water register a historical transformation in environmental ethics from Romantic modernity to late twentieth-century ecological thought. Based on the Blue Humanities concept of *thinking with water*, the paper places *Frankenstein* (1818) and *Watership Down* (1972) in dialogue to trace how water mediates shifting configurations of agency, responsibility, and multispecies relationality across literary history. In *Frankenstein*, icy seas, glaciers, alpine lakes, storms, and fog articulate an early ecological crisis of modernity. These hydrological and cryospheric environments function as sites of ethical rupture, where Enlightenment rationality and extractivist ambition encounter their limits. Water operates as sublime excess: an unstable medium that exposes the fragility of human-centered epistemologies and the vulnerability produced by severed ecological relations. Shelley's novel thus stages a proto-ecological consciousness grounded in uncertainty and isolation rather than care or reciprocity. *Watership Down*, written in the context of postwar environmental awareness, reframes this earlier crisis within a different ethical framework. Rivers, streams, wetlands, rainfall, and flooded crossings form a lived hydro-ecology through which multispecies communities negotiate migration, survival, and collective decision-making. Here, water becomes an ethical infrastructure, enabling attentiveness, interdependence, and adaptive relationality within a damaged landscape. Read genealogically, the movement from *sublime ice* to *living rivers* marks a shift from narratives that register ecological breakdown to narratives that tentatively imagine multispecies repair. By foregrounding water as a material, historical, and ethical agent, the paper argues that literature actively participates in the evolving articulation of environmental ethics under conditions of planetary uncertainty.

Keywords: Blue Humanities, genealogical ecocriticism, thinking with water, literary ecosystems, multispecies ethics

Short Bio: Özden Dere is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at Iğdır University, Türkiye. Her research explores the relationship between literature, environment, and culture, with interests in ecocriticism, environmental ethics, and contemporary narrative. She has published on modern and contemporary literature and is currently working on projects that examine ecological change, multispecies relations, and questions of responsibility, as well as posthuman agency and subjectivity in the digital age.

Constellations of Co-Resistance through Water: An Aquatic Analysis of Emotional Communities as Counternarratives in “Stand Up / Stand N Rock #NoDAPL” (2016)

Zoë-Ann Duppen

Radboud University, The Netherlands

zoe.duppen@ru.nl

This study examines how Indigenous #NoDAPL protest music mobilizes water as both an ontological framework and an affective force in the construction of emotional communities. Focusing on the 2016 protest song “Stand Up / Stand N Rock #NoDAPL” by Taboo, this paper asks: How do references to (bodies of) water facilitate the formation of emotional communities as a counternarrative to 21st-century U.S. colonial land and resource management? While existing scholarship has addressed hydrosocial imaginaries in #NoDAPL protest music, it has not examined these songs through the lens of the politics of feeling, nor considered how Indigenous water ontologies play a role in this. Drawing on Barbara Rosenwein’s concept of emotional communities, Sara Ahmed’s theory of affect as circulation, and José Medina’s work on resistant epistemic communities, this study places these frameworks in dialogue with Nishnaabeg writer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson’s work *Theory of Water* (2025), in which she reflects on resistance, futurity and decoloniality through water. Through a close reading of the song’s lyrics, this study argues that the song’s narrative mobilizes water as both symbolic and relational medium through the circulation of love and anger as affective forces. Love operates as a sintering force, binding subjects into coalitional attachments, while anger delineates an oppositional “they” associated with systematic colonial violence. These affective forces converge in what I conceptualize as a shoreline space, an affective zone within the song where emotions do not cancel one another out but instead create an affective territory of attachment and resistance. This shoreline space constitutes the emotional community the song calls into being: a constellation of co-resistance structured through relationality to water. In this sense, water functions not only as an analytical lens, but also as a guiding epistemological framework, a way of thinking about how emotions circulate, how affective ties between bodies are formed, and how relationality is understood beyond colonial frameworks.

Keywords: Indigenous water ontologies, emotional communities, politics of emotions, #NoDAPL

Short Bio: Zoë-Ann Duppen is a Research Master's student in Historical, Literary and Cultural Studies at the Radboud University, Nijmegen. Her research focuses on Indigenous Studies, Feminist Theory, and decolonial approaches to literature and cultural production. She holds a BA in European Languages and Cultures from the University of Groningen, where her award-nominated thesis examined the territory, contact zones, and the body in the affirmation of identity in poetry of Indigenous women in Québec. Her work combines close reading with decolonial reflexivity and interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks.

Siltbed as Storyform: Infrastructure of Deltaic Commons in Amar Mitra's *Dhanapatir Char* (2022)

Satyaki Dutta

University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA

satyakidutta@umass.edu

How do you make sense of a land beneath your feet that is always slipping away?

In the Bengal delta, shaped by the shifting courses of the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna river system meeting the Bay of Bengal, land is provisional. Transient islands of silt known as *chars* surface through sedimentation and disappear through erosion, producing ways of life attuned to seasonal uncertainty and migration. This paper reads the novel *Dhanapatir Char: Whatever Happened to Pedru's Island?* by Amar Mitra (translated from Bengali by Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey) as a literary meditation on what it means to inhabit such unstable ground.

Set on a *char* that exists only for part of the year, the novel traces a community shaped by rhythms of the water rather than permanent settlement. Lives unfold through fishing, seasonal labour, ritual gatherings, and repeated acts of rebuilding after floods. The island's mythic origin stories, especially the figure of the tortoise that bears the land on its back, sit alongside everyday negotiations over belonging and authority. These elements show how memory and shared practices become ways of holding a world together when land cannot be secured.

The paper brings this narrative into conversation with David Harvey's understanding of the commons as an ongoing practice and Akhil Gupta's work on infrastructure as the everyday face of the state. Through these lenses, *Dhanapatir Char* reveals a commons continually made through collective effort, while the state appears unevenly through surveillance and developmental fantasies such as proposals to convert the island into a tourist destination. Drawing on delta scholarship by Debjani Bhattacharya, Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, Gopa Samanta, and Camelia Dewan, the paper situates the novel within longer histories of governing the Bengal delta and attempts to stabilize fluid landscapes. By aligning its episodic narrative with deltaic hydrology, *Dhanapatir Char* offers a blue humanities perspective in which survival depends on learning how to live with movement.

Keywords: Bengal delta, *char* islands, commons, Blue Humanities

Short Bio: Satyaki is from a small river town in India that was once a Dutch colony in the Bengal delta. He holds a BA (English) from the University of Calcutta, an MA (English) from the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, and an MA by Research (Human Sciences) from Indian Institute of Technology Bombay. He is currently a PhD student in English at University of Massachusetts Amherst. His research explores how South Asian literatures think with water as socio-historical knowledge systems, shaping debates on mobility, sovereignty, development and climate change.

The Watery City, Contagion, and Posthuman Entanglements in Contemporary Historical Novels

Barbara Franchi

Durham University, UK

barbara.franchi@durham.ac.uk

In contemporary Anglophone historical novels, watery cities are fluid spaces where life, death, love, illness, and grief flow within the same river or canal systems. In Tracy Chevalier's *The Glass Maker* (2024) and Elif Shafak's *There are Rivers in the Sky* (2024), the waters that constitute and define the cities in which they flow become sources of contagion: by carrying plague and cholera, respectively, the canals of Venice and the Thames intermingle the life-giving and mobile essence of water in the city with a temporary deadly current.

At the same time, however, it is precisely when waters are forced to stand still that childbirths, epiphanies, and catharses occur. In Chevalier, the Rosso family survives when it embraces the transcorporeal entanglement across water, human bodies, stones, and the titular glass that makes Venice and its inhabitants. In this respect, the end of the 1577 plague is marked by the birth of a new baby, delivered on one of Venice's quarantine islands, and determines the family's and the city's longevity over five centuries, up to modern-day floods and the twenty-first century Covid19 pandemic.

Similarly, in Shafak, Arthur Smyth, born on the mudbanks of the Thames to a poor 'tosher' (scavenging) woman, experiences epiphanic discoveries during the 1854 London cholera epidemic. Arthur's riverine essence links him inextricably to Yazidi culture and the waters of the Tigris, where he will find his death after a self-made archaeological career. The water in his body survives his death, enabling the survival of at least two twenty-first-century girls who carry the Thames and the Tigris in their blood.

This paper argues how, in contemporary renditions of early-modern Venice and Victorian London, the survival of the city is coterminous with the survival of its waters, and the entangled ways of life they enhanced for humans and non-humans alike through history. Through their focus on human existences forged in and by water, Chevalier's and Shafak's novels propose a model of posthuman existence where gestation, birth, and death, transcend the particular individual's experience, moving towards a more-than-human, liquid continuum.

Keywords: Riverine cities, Venetian lagoon, River Thames, fictions of contagion, transcorporeal entanglement

Short Bio: Dr Barbara Franchi is Career Development Fellow in English and Postcolonial Literature at Durham University, UK. Her work crosses Environmental and Blue Humanities with material feminism, and a preoccupation with the legacies of imperialism in contemporary historical fiction. She has published on Sarah Moss, Eleanor Catton, A. S. Byatt, Rose Tremain, in journals such as *Contemporary Women's Writing*, *Partial Answers*, *The Journal of the Short Story in English*, *Neo-Victorian Studies*. She is working on a book on cultural and ecological memory in A. S. Byatt, Sarah Moss and Sarah Hall.

**The Lungs of the Mediterranean: Coastal Aesthetics and Ethics of Conserving
Posidonia oceanica Seagrass Meadows**

Müge Gedik

Stanford University, USA
mugedik@stanford.edu

As a child swimming in the Mediterranean sea, I was evading the dark green meadows underneath, speculating on what types of creatures might be hiding in those patches. I later learned that these were the meadows of the endemic flowering plant *Posidonia oceanica* that clings to the seafloor in coastal waters. Frequently championed as the “lungs of the Mediterranean” and powerful actors in the face of the climate crisis for their roles in oxygen production, carbon fixation, and shoreline protection, seagrass meadows are discussed within blue carbon economies and sustainability discourses through metrics of measurability and technocratic management. Such framings overlook how seagrass meadows operate as infrastructures of perception that shape coastal aesthetics, relational ethics, and modes of living across the Mediterranean. Thinking *with* water, I consider seagrass meadows as dynamic, multispecies entities that interact with water currents, sediments, and light, and create coastal images of clarity that have become central to tourism and environmental campaigns. Thinking with seagrass enables us to think of the coastline as an ethical–aesthetic continuum in which responsibility flows across borders through currents and shared vulnerability. Anchoring damage, pollution, and coastal development in one place are felt through the waters and implicate distant shores in one another’s futures. Centering on *EasttoWest Mediterranean* (2025), a documentary film by marine biologist and underwater cinematographer Dr. Mert Gökalp, I explore the potential of eco-media practices to make seagrass conservation efforts visible and relatable to wider audiences. Tracing grassroots collaborations in Bodrum against coastal development and seagrass destruction in solidarity with Corsica, the documentary resituates seagrass meadows as mediators of Mediterranean cultural heritage. The film’s underwater visuals and storytelling move the audience from a surface gaze to a relational mode of attention attuned to multispecies entanglements, coastal vulnerability, and shared futures across the Mediterranean. Drawing on Blue Humanities and ecomedia scholarship that understands immersion as epistemological shift (Jue) alongside eco-media as a bridge between

art, activism, and environmental communication (Carruth), I will contribute to conversations on blue aesthetics and coastal futures centered around multispecies ethics.

Keywords: Seagrass meadows, blue ethics and aesthetics, Mediterranean cultural heritage, ecomedia studies, aquatic practices

Short Bio: Müge Gedik is a Ph.D. Candidate in Comparative Literature at Stanford University (USA). She explores how water narratives from the Turkish coast of the Eastern Mediterranean to the Caribbean illuminate relationships between human and more-than-human worlds. She studies how literature and film document the shift from small-scale to industrial fishing, portray multispecies entanglements in marine environments, and imagine climate futures grounded in reciprocity and justice. Bridging comparative literary studies, environmental history, and sustainability science and practice, her work investigates how stories about water, animals, and technology can function as cultural resources, foster environmental awareness, and contribute to intergenerational well-being.

**From *Shipwreck Modernity* to the Ship-Breaking Anthropocene: A Blue Humanities
Reading of Paolo Bacigalupi's *Ship Breaker* and Tahmima Anam's *The Bones of Grace***

Tanushree Ghosh

University of Copenhagen, Denmark

tgh@hum.ku.dk

In maritime history, ships have long symbolized technological prowess, enabling transoceanic trade, colonial expansion, and the transatlantic slave trade. Classical nautical fiction, most notably Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, often celebrates the ship as an anthropogenic instrument of Eurocentric modernity. However, Steve Mentz's *Shipwreck Modernity* (2015) interprets early-modern shipwreck narratives as expressions of oceanic agency that disrupt human mastery. Building on Mentz's intervention, this paper traces the paradigm shift from "shipwreck modernity" to what I term the "ship-breaking Anthropocene" through a reading of ship-breaking narratives. Employing a Blue Humanities lens, I examine Paolo Bacigalupi's dystopian *Ship Breaker* (2010), set in a Gulf Coast shipyard, alongside Tahmima Anam's realist *The Bones of Grace* (2016), unfolding in the shipyard of Bangladesh, to analyze the entanglement of social and ecological damage under late capitalism along the littoral zone.

Ship Breaker imagines a post-apocalyptic world where decommissioned ships become "mines" after fossil fuel depletion. The littoral zone, strewn with derelict ships leaking oil and toxins, reveals ecological damage that endures long after the ships' carbon emissions have ceased. The corporate structure of the ship-breaking industry enforces a hierarchical coastal labor system, assigning adolescents to metal scavenging and adults to hazardous dismantling as their primary livelihood. Whereas Bacigalupi constructs a speculative dystopia in a Global North-inflected world, Anam's novel is grounded in the lived realities of the Global South. Anam parallels two narrative trajectories: the marine paleontologist Zubaida's team's failed excavation of the fossilized bones of the walking whale *Ambulocetus*, and the precarious crew dismantling the metallic "bones" of the ship *Grace* in a toxic environment controlled by capitalist postcolonial elites.

I argue that both novels use organic metaphors of bones, flesh, and extinct or dead animals to depict the metallic assemblages of fragmented ships as "technofossils" of maritime modernity and the Anthropocene projected into a planetary deep future. By shifting the focus from "oil encounters" to "metallic encounters," this paper argues that ship-breaking yards exemplify a radical transformation of the littoral zone into a "post-natural" environment, in which the

“narrative agency” (*Blue Humanities*, Serpil Oppermann) of salvaged metal actively reshapes oceanic ecologies and coastal livelihoods.

Keywords: Ship-breaking, metallic encounter, technofossil, maritime capitalism, Blue Humanities

Short Bio: Tanushree Ghosh is a PhD Fellow at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Funded by the Independent Research Fund Denmark, her doctoral project examines how “coastal climate fiction” from the Global North and South represents ocean-oriented climate crises and reimagines socio-ecological justice through planetary yet locally grounded oceanic frameworks, from a Blue Humanities perspective. She holds an MPhil and MA from the University of Calcutta, India, and has five years of experience teaching English literature in India. Her published work includes articles and book chapters on climate fiction and environmental humanities.

Blue Ecopoetics of *Burning Days* (2022): Limnology, (Environmental) Justice, and Gender Politics

Gülşah Göçmen

Aksaray University, Türkiye

gulshgocmen@gmail.com

The Turkish director Emin Alper's award-winning movie *Burning Days* (2022) revolves around the story of a young and idealist prosecutor Emre, appointed to Yanıklar, a small town that equally and drastically suffers from both water crisis, political and gender conflicts. The story begins with an examination of a large sinkhole caused by an excessive drain of natural water reserves by the settlers to have fresh water in their homes. As they keep disregarding the scale of the ecological harm that they inflict on their environment (though it is both literally and metaphorically embodied in the movie), they cause more sinkholes to appear. This paper aims to approach the wet matter reality in this ecocinema by adding a limnological perspective to its critical role and discuss how access to fresh water might require a revisiting of anthropocentric ideologies, environmental justice, as well as gender politics. The oppressive and aggressive phallogocentric practices in nature find their best expression in such certain scenes as the wild hunt of boar in the streets of the town, the mob's attack at the prosecutor's house when he decides to punish the hunters, or the rape of a mentally unstable gypsy girl. Emre tries to bring justice not only for the damaged landscape there, but also for the slaughtered boars, and the wrecked girl and her family cohabiting in the same local environment. Though Emre's justice-for-all attempt is constantly challenged in the movie, Emin Alper's blue ecopoetics that disturbs the audience through its different types of violence leads us to consider more sustainable relations with our fresh water, rely on a more scientific perspective in arranging their co-existence, and offer a liberating gender politics.

Keywords: Limnology, gender politics, environmental justice, ecocinema, *Burning Days*

Short Bio: Gülşah Göçmen is an Associate Professor in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Aksaray University, Türkiye. Her research spans a variety of areas, with a special focus on place-based narratives. Her doctoral work centers on the modernist sense of place in the works of E. M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence, and Virginia Woolf from an ecocritical viewpoint. She also serves as an advisory board member of the Environmental Humanities

Center at Cappadocia University and co-managing editor of *Ecocene*. Her research interests continue to evolve within the frameworks of Ecocritical Theory, The Novel, Environmental Ethics, and Blue Humanities.

**Imitative or Transformative? Decolonising Colonial-Capitalist Epistemes in Atin
Bandopadhyay’s “Somudre Oshoriri”**

Tonisha Guin

Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur, India

guin.tonisha@gmail.com

This paper reads Atin Bandopadhyay’s short story for young adults, “Somudre Oshoriri” [The Phantom at Sea] as an instance of epistemic border dwelling, simultaneously a tale of adolescent adventure, haunting, travel, nautical life and superstitions and of course a (post-)colonial commentary on continuities of economic colonisation in the Indian Ocean. The narrative—a quasi-autobiographical account of a young refugee’s maiden voyage in the *Seoul Bank*, an ancient behemoth of the Calcutta shipyard—interweaves these thematic threads while consistently telling a ripping yarn. The ship is both the monster and a refuge—of great importance for a migrant refugee protagonist who feels his homelessness very keenly—both an alien machine and an integral part of the organic lifeways of the sea. It emerges as a key character distinct from its inhabitants, the hierarchies of work, and shifting terrains.

The influence of the long-running colonial epistemic intervention has shaped Indian—particularly Bengali—modernity into being colonial/modern and in conversation with British/European modernity. As such, it is very easy to not just trace modernist elements in this short story but find it actively intertextual in its evocation—imitative both in style and content—of Coleridge’s “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.” This paper argues that rather than being solely imitative, “Somudre Oshoriri” is an example of transformative epistemic border dwelling, making a decolonial reading of the story crucial for a better understanding.

Keywords: Decoloniality, horror, maritime fables, colonial epistemes, partition narratives

Short Bio: Trained in English Literary and Cultural Studies, Dr Tonisha Guin’s areas of research interest include identity studies, spatiality studies, popular culture, decoloniality, knowledge systems in the Global South, politics of representation, Indian modernity/ies, and new media studies. She joined the School of Liberal Arts of the Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur, India, as an Assistant Professor in July 2022.

Dr Anomitra Biswas is interested in Indian media historiographies, popular culture, speculative and fantasy fiction, and Indian mythologies. She has been teaching English

Literature, Cultural Studies, and Linguistics at GITAM Deemed University, Visakhapatnam, since November 2021.

From Monotony to Flow: Ecological Movement and Relational Transformation in Dante's *Divine Comedy*

Rouaa Hammadi

Independent Scholar, Sweden

rouaa_123@hotmail.com

Situated within the framework of the Blue Humanities, this paper approaches Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* through the concept of thinking with water, using movement, flow, and rhythm as analytical tools for examining ecological transformation. Rather than treating water as a metaphorical motif, the paper draws on aquatic logics of circulation and fluidity to explore how modes of movement structure relational understandings of self, environment, and cosmos.

Through an ecocritical reading informed by deep ecology, the presentation argues that Dante's journey through *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso* stages distinct forms of motion - monotone, transitional, and dynamic - that correspond to shifting ontologies. In *Inferno*, movement is characterized by repetition and stagnation, reflecting an anthropocentric and hierarchical worldview in which separation from the more-than-human world prevails. The immobilized trajectories of the souls mirror an ecological dissonance marked by control and enclosure.

Purgatorio introduces a transitional mode of movement, defined by ascent, rhythm, and embodied effort. Here, motion becomes processual rather than punitive, opening space for relational thinking and ethical recalibration. The paper culminates in *Paradiso*, where movement takes on a fluid and dynamic form. Circulation through light, sound, and harmony articulates an ecocentric vision grounded in symbiosis, interdependence, and self-realization. Rather than positioning the human subject as sovereign or observer, *Paradiso* presents a world structured by flow and mutual attunement.

By foregrounding movement as a mode of ecological knowledge, this paper aligns Dante's medieval cosmology with contemporary Blue Humanities concerns, particularly relational ontology, and non-hierarchical world-making. Aquatic logics of flow and circulation challenge terracentric frameworks and reveal how movement itself becomes a vital force in ecological imagination.

Keywords: Blue Humanities, ecocriticism, movement, relational ecology, deep ecology

Short Bio: I hold a master's degree in literature from Stockholm University, Sweden. My research centers on classical literature and ecocriticism, with a focus on how canonical texts can be reread to generate new insights into contemporary ecological, ethical, and philosophical questions. I am particularly interested in non-anthropocentric and relational approaches, as well as in movement and environment as modes of literary world-making. I am currently seeking PhD opportunities and plan to pursue doctoral research at the intersection of classical literature, ecocriticism, and the environmental humanities.

Aquatic Englishes: Thinking World Anglophone Studies with Water

Clara Hebel

Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Germany

clara.hebel@em.uni-frankfurt.de

Much like water, the connotations and practical repercussions of the English language are ambivalent, complex and ever shifting. The utopian potential of a reciprocal communication across the planet exists simultaneously with a hegemony of the anglophone that can ignore, suppress and eradicate other forms of expression. As Aamir R. Mufti puts it: “the language of the colonizer was a problematic and painful acquisition” (13). What does it mean, then, to think transcultural Englishes with water? What role does water play in the ways planetary relations are formed, imagined and represented in Anglophone literatures and films of the twenty-first century? And what influence do such blue planetary poetics impose on the field of World Anglophone Studies?

In my paper, I explore such questions through my analysis of three examples of world anglophone fictions: Elif Shafak’s *There are Rivers in the Sky* (2024), Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor’s *The Dragonfly Sea* (2019) and the portmanteau film *Vai* (2019), directed by Nicole Whippy et al. In addition to their commonality of being steeped in blue aesthetics and themes, the narrations’ main language is English and importantly, an English which arises from a “pluriverse of linguistic assemblages” (Malreddy and Schulze-Engler 17). Their approach to the English language is one that emphasises its extreme fluidity, affirming the fact that the Anglophone cannot be clearly isolated from the non-Anglophone. Through the planetary water cycle boundaries between local and global become muddled. I argue, then, that when thought with the element of water, transcultural Englishes can be understood to entail diverse cultural and linguistic contexts and an overarching communality and relation.

Language is often considered one of the most distinctly human faculties and is readily used in the conceptual demarcations between humans and animals, as well as in binary constructions of culture and nature. Rather than remaining at the level of metaphor, aquatic linguistics reframes this stance by emphasising the material influence of the more-than-human world on language development. The pluriverse of aquatic Englishes is thus made up of a multitude of entanglements formed through the interaction of human and non-human forces alike.

Keywords: Aquatic relationality, transcultural Englishes, World Anglophone Studies

Short Bio: Clara Hebel is a PhD candidate at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main. She specialises in World Anglophone Studies with a focus on the Blue Humanities, transculturality and planetarity. Clara has studied in London, Toronto and Frankfurt and has presented her work at international conferences, including in Nairobi, Zaragoza and Zurich. In her PhD project, she investigates how across vast regions, literatures and films are created that mobilise the aquatic for their expressions of relations. Her research is funded by the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

‘We need new prayers’: Hydro-imaginings and Fluvial Thinking in Indian Speculative Fiction

Ashwini M. Hegde

Indian Institution of Technology Madras, India

hegdeashwini4424@gmail.com

How might speculative fiction enable us to *think with water* in an era of ecological uncertainty, extractivism, and hydrological crisis? This paper examines how contemporary Indian speculative fiction reimagines rivers not as passive resources or symbolic backdrops, but as dynamic, relational agents that shape planetary futures. It explores the manifestation of “hydro-imaginings”, a term I propose to describe a distinct form of fluid imagination in speculative fiction structured around the appearance, disappearance, and reappearance of rivers, through which ecological, ethical, and political relations are reconfigured. Situated within the Blue Humanities, the paper foregrounds rivers as ethical, multispecies, and speculative entities that mediate human, nonhuman, and planetary interconnections. Drawing on Jennifer Wenzel’s argument that literary texts intervene through the forms of their imagining rather than as empirical evidence (Wenzel 19), I examine how human–river relations are “created, contested, and remoulded” (Varughese 9) in speculative narratives. These texts invite a relational mode of thinking attuned to hydrological flows, temporalities, and scales that exceed the human.

The paper offers close readings of three twenty-first-century Indian speculative works: Ruchir Joshi’s *The Last Jet-Engine Laugh* (2001), Sarnath Banerjee’s *All Quiet in Vikaspuri* (2015), and Veena Nagpal’s *Radius 200* (2017). Across these narratives, rivers emerge as sites of ecological, social, and political negotiation—shaped by water wars, privatisation, infrastructural violence, and quests for lost or buried waterways. By linking rivers to broader hydrological systems such as monsoon cycles, groundwater extraction, and glacial sources, these texts situate localised human crises within planetary water flows. I argue that these speculative narratives cultivate a distinct hydro-narrative grammar, reimagines the aesthetic, spiritual, and material dimensions of rivers, while dramatizing ecological collapse and articulating ethical, multispecies relationality. In doing so, they enact a blue humanity–inflected imagination that challenges extractivist logics, advances postcolonial critique, and gestures toward interconnected, post-exploitative water futures.

Keywords: Hydro-imaginings, speculative fiction, relational thinking, ethics

Short Bio: Ashwini M. Hegde is a freelance translator, visual artist and a research scholar in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Madras, India. She is currently working on a Blue Humanities project under the supervision of Prof. Swarnalatha Rangarajan. She has previously been a fellow at the *Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama*. Her work has appeared in MDPI's *Religions* and Sahitya Akademi's *Indian Literature*. She has contributed a chapter to the forthcoming Bloomsbury Academic volume "Terranarratives of the Western Ghats: Cultural Imaginings of the Western Ghats as a Biodiversity Hotspot".

Ancient Empowerment: Invoking the Gods in Movements for Environmental Justice

Jaime Uluwehi Hopkins
Universität Augsburg, Germany
jaime.hopkins@uni-a.de

Mauna Kea is a site of contention that has long suffered from imperialistic constructions of science and profit built by institutions that deprivilege environmental wellness and indigenous traditional ecological knowledge. It is located on the island of Hawai‘i in the Pacific Ocean, and is the tallest mountain in the world when measured from its base at the sea floor. In the 1960s, its lofty height became its downfall when astronomers deemed it an ideal location for a telescope, and since then thirteen structures have desecrated its peak. In 2014, the Kū Kia‘i Mauna (to stand guard over the mountain) movement erupted to prevent the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT), and in the succeeding years rapid communication methods has bolstered support from indigenous communities around the world. One practice that fostered connection among supporters was engaging in daily protocol: the performance of chants and dances that invoke the Native Hawaiian pantheon of gods.

This paper explores Native Hawaiian ontologies related to Mauna Kea and how they empowered a global movement. Elemental phenomena are regarded as Akua, Gods, and are still witnessed today. For the mountainous environment, many of these deities are water-based, and these were invoked in chants used in the protection movement. Modern cultural practitioners gave these chants ‘ea, life, by setting them to harmonies and dance movements, which were then taught to the multitudes. This physical and spiritual engagement helped to empower the movement and give life back to Mauna Kea and its family of Gods.

Keywords: Mauna Kea, Indigenous ontology, environmental movements

Short Bio: Uluwehi Hopkins is a Humboldt research fellow at the Universität Augsburg in the Global Environmental History and Environmental Humanities program. She is a Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) from the island of O‘ahu, Hawai‘i, who researches oral histories and their intersection with environmental processes, with a special focus on water. Her PhD examined Native Hawaiian ontology about water and how water management practices and laws changed from antiquity into the Kingdom era (1800s). Hopkins is the senior lecturer in the University of Hawai‘i-West O‘ahu’s History department.

"In Blood the Minerals of the Rock": Lorine Niedecker's Metabolic Poetics and the Hyperobjective Lake

Isabella Jingyuan Huang
University of California, USA
isabella.jy.huang@berkeley.edu

For a poem about a lake, Lorine Niedecker's "Lake Superior" is strikingly dry. While celebrated for her riverine and marshland poetics, the poem performs a paradox Niedecker noted in her travel journals: one can drive almost entirely around Lake Superior without accessing the water, despite its visual proximity. Yet the surrounding rocks are invariably parts of the lake, carrying its minerals and shaped by similar forces. Niedecker's lake is everywhere present yet persistently withheld, enfolded in what James Smith calls "centuries of sedimented narratives": geological change, extinct species, French and English colonial explorations, and industrial mining. Read this way, Niedecker's Lake emerges as what Timothy Morton calls a hyperobject: an entity massively distributed in time and space, impossible to grasp as totality. This paper argues that Niedecker develops a metabolic poetics for approaching hyperobjective waters from within. Unlike hydrological models emphasizing cyclical renewal, Niedecker attends to water's *violent* transformations: consuming bodies into coral and rock, enabling extractions, eroding Indigenous and French place-names into anglicized traces ("Sault Ste. Marie" to "Soo"). Yet beauty, for Niedecker, lies in these "impurities in the rocks." As Lowell Duckert observes, the lake negotiates the "middle spaces between desire and disaster" (210). What emerges from the poem is therefore not eco-pessimism but an ethics rooted in honest attention to the violent and fragile particulars of the Lake. Through close readings of extinction ("mash the cobalt / and carnelian / of that bird"), metabolized presence ("In blood the minerals of the rock"), and linguistic corruption ("glorious corruption"), I show how Niedecker writes about immensity from within, with a fragmentary language insisting on the irreducible importance of the small, the singular, the delicate—facts that still matter, and matter especially, in the face of hyperobjects and in an era of ecological uncertainty. Niedecker's hydroproximate poetics model for us how to live inside metabolic and violent systems without pretending we can step outside them.

Keywords: Hyperobjects, ecopoetics, objectivism, Lorine Niedecker, extinction

Short Bio: Isabella Jingyuan Huang is a first-year PhD student in English at University of California, Berkeley. Her research explores ecocritical and affective dimensions of modernist short stories and poetry, with particular attention to how women writers engage with non-human materiality. Her past projects focus on the eating and non-eating in Clarice Lispector and Katherine Mansfield's short stories. Her current project examines Lorine Niedecker's engagement with geological time and environmental violence in early twentieth century.

Hydrofeminism in Speculative Fiction: The Confluence of Women and Water in Fantasies of Female Rebellion

Yasmin Nesibe Inkersole
University of Warwick, UK
yasmin.inkersole@gmail.com

This paper examines how contemporary fantasy narratives of female empowerment and rebellion against patriarchy both shape and are shaped by posthuman and hydrofeminist perspectives. The fantasy novel is framed as an ecotone, bordered by absolute reality and unreality while occupying a liminal space. As with a biological ecotone, the fantasy novel harbours unique endemic lifeforms, including magical systems founded on the natural elements. A growing trend within the fantasy genre is the portrayal of rebellious female protagonists with hydrokinetic abilities or an affinity for water. Through close analysis of the protagonists Nehal in *The Daughters of Izdihar* and Amina in *The Adventures of Amina Al-Sirafi*, I consider how such representations expand upon concepts of the 'leaky' female body and Astrida Neimanis's seminal discourse on hydrofeminism. Nehal uses hydrokinesis to dominate male antagonists by manipulating the water in their blood, while Amina's life of piracy provides an escape from a future of prescribed domesticity. Rivers and seas are depicted as landscapes resistant to absolute governance; by utilising them, these protagonists challenge the authority of man-made hierarchies. In transcorporeal exchange with their liquid environments, Nehal and Amina are inevitably altered by them. Their bodies are shaped by water-borne curses and untameable oceans. Water underpins the revolt, survival and remaking of these women. Hydrofeminist scholarship often neglects the role of fantastical storytelling in conceptualising exchanges of power, blood, and contamination between women and water. My research is founded on the distinct ability of speculative fiction to distance us from terracentric perspectives. It centres on non-Eurocentric novels with roots in the rich historical canon of the Middle Eastern imaginary. As such, my work builds on growing efforts towards a globalised discourse on posthuman feminism.

Keywords: Hydrofeminism, fantasy, posthumanism

Short Bio: Yasmin Inkersole is a British-Turkish poet and writer from Oxfordshire. She is a second year PhD student in Writing at the University of Warwick, funded by the AHRC. Her

practice-based thesis explores the representations of the Ottoman Empire in fantasy writing through a feminist lens. She holds a master's degree in Writing from the University of Warwick and received the University of Bristol Creative Writing Prize for her undergraduate dissertation.

Haunting the Domestic: Female Water Creatures and Spatial Otherness in German Literature

Dana Jeblawi

Koç University, Türkiye

djeblawi20@ku.edu.tr

Western literary tradition repeatedly positions female water creatures on the fringes of human society, characterizing them as alluring but dangerous beings, and therefore, uncontainable. This paper argues that such figures are initially spatially othered through the bodies of water they inhabit, but later embody an uncanny and destabilizing force when they enter the space of the home, exposing it as a patriarchal social structure. In reading Homer's *The Odyssey*, Heinrich Heine's "The Loreley," Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's *Undine*, and Ingeborg Bachmann's "Undine Goes" through feminist theory and blue humanities, the paper examines aquatic environments not as mere symbolic settings, but as material ecologies that shape textual form, embodiment, and spatial ordering.

By drawing on Mary Douglas' theory of danger as something that defies categorical norms, and on Sigmund Freud's concept of *unheimlich* (the uncanny), the paper outlines a shift from 'outside' spaces of nautical threats to 'inside' spaces of domestic collapse. Early female water creatures, such as the sirens and the Loreley, remain confined to the external water body that refuses human—particularly male—domination. By contrast, Undine's entrance into the domestic space disrupts the boundaries between water and land, revealing its structural and ecological fragility. The home, therefore, becomes not a site of safety, but of patriarchal dominance that relies on the suppression and disciplining of fluid identities and female agency. In de la Motte Fouqué's *Undine*, the attempts to assimilate Undine into human society through marriage, Christianity, and domestic labor ultimately fail, exposing the violence required to maintain a patriarchal and terrestrial spatial order on fluid aquatic life. Bachmann's "Undine Goes" further highlights this failure, rejecting assimilation and reclaiming water as resistance not only to the previous male-dominated narratives, but also to male-centric literary form and language. Fluidity, instability, and spatial disruption no longer present as threats, but as modes of feminist empowerment. The paper concludes that the perception of danger attached to female water creatures stems not from inherent threats, but from patriarchal and anthropocentric spatial dynamics that rely on the suppression of female existence and water-based ecologies.

Keywords: Female water creatures, spatial otherness, gendered space, the uncanny.

Short Bio: Dana Jeblawi is a graduate student in the department of Comparative Literature at Koç University. Her research focuses on postcolonial theory, memory studies, and trauma studies, with a primary focus on prison narratives and exile literature. Her work also engages with the ecocritical dimensions and spatial dynamics of such texts, examining how displacement, environmental crises, and power relations are narrated. Additionally, she maintains an interest in translation between Arabic and English, particularly with regard to how narratives are linguistically and culturally transformed in the process.

From Alien Waters to Animate Worlds: Reimagining Oceanic Futures with Vandana Singh's "The Word for World is Ocean"

Anumitha John

University of Augsburg, Germany

anumitha.john@uni-a.de

How can a distant, watery moon trouble mainstream representations of the earth's oceans today? Vandana Singh's oceanic futurist short story "The Word for World is Ocean" unfolds this question through explorations of far futures, the epistemic dimensions of colonialism, and multispecies kinships in deep space/oceans.

The story's protagonist Nissa is faced with defending her home-moon Samudra from the explorer Shard, who arrives with a team of mercenaries to claim ownership of the world, its resources, and its knowledges. To distract Shard from targeting her kin, Nissa spins tales of the moon's origins and enigmatic inhabitants, (re)discovering unexpected faces to familiar places in the process.

By charting how historically extractive logics extend into speculative fictional futures, the story holds up a mirror to current realities of climate injustice. This paper then takes its cue from the text to critically examine narratives and tropes instrumentalized in colonial and capitalist conquests of oceans, the forms of community and storytelling that could resist such extractive logics, and the interactions between these worldviews shaping climate futures imagined and imminent. The research question that emerges from this line of inquiry is as follows: How can oceanic modes of speculative world-making re-envision climate futures?

This paper focuses on the story's engagement with fictional representations of the ocean—particularly with colonial tropes that emerge from science fiction and flow into Anthropocene discourse to inflect representations of oceanic ecological devastation. The short story recognizes and speculatively reframes three such tropes – the *mare nullius* or empty ocean, first contact with "alien" species, and the coming-of-age narrative – to articulate its visions of alternative oceanic futures and more-than-human agencies.

Through engaging tidalectically (Brathwaite and Mackey 34) and non-linearly with concepts such as the ocean and outer space, past and present, colonizer and colonized, this paper aims to think alongside the text about nuanced understandings of oceanic worlds and multispecies relationships, looking to the ocean as a creative and critical force in reimagining pasts, presents, and still-unfolding futures.

Keywords: Ocean futurism, anthropocene, multispecies, speculative fiction

Short Bio: Anumitha John is a PhD researcher with the International “Rethinking Environment” doctoral programme, a cooperative between the University of Augsburg and LMU Munich. She holds a master’s degree in Arts, Literature and Media from Leiden University and works at the interdisciplinary intersection of the environmental humanities, literary studies, and cultural analysis. Her current research explores representations of oceanic climate change in speculative media, with a focus on cultural production from and for the global south.

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Generational Cultures of Work: Contesting the Decline of the Tradition of Seasonal Agricultural Labor in Selfoss, Iceland

Ashley Jun

Independent Scholar, USA

ashleyjun40@gmail.com

Since the 19th century, Icelandic children have been sent to rural farms during summer vacation for cultural and educational formation, thus conferring social skills, improving mental health, and providing an opportunity for immersive learning. In recent years, however, this tradition has experienced a decline as children increasingly become involved in urban culture and seek to maximize the impact of leisure time through athletic activities. As a result, a significant proportion of southwest Icelandic youth find themselves in the vanguard of an evolving relationship between labor and intergenerational educational transmission. Although this trend has previously been observed in ethnographic studies of Icelandic work culture, the impact of the decline of the summer farmwork tradition on agriculture-centered families remains undertheorized. This dynamic has recently been observed in Selfoss, Southwest Iceland, an agricultural region in which this study conducted interviews across multiple generations. Interview questions focused on comparisons of residents' past and current beliefs regarding agricultural practices, and often gave rise to more free-ranging discussions, which illuminated broader views across Selfoss with respect to culture and work. Interviews with younger residents yielded insights into evolving cultural understandings and expectations concerning rapid urbanization and its effects. Strikingly, many respondents exhibited strong reactions when asked about youth involvement in agriculture. Indeed, the tradition of underage farmwork elicited favorable reactions only among families that shared a long history of agricultural enterprise, often across many generations. The more recent shift has correspondingly been perceived with great concern among agriculture-centered families, members of which frequently expressed feelings of futility and helplessness in preserving the declining tradition, citing the rapid urbanization of Iceland as a principal obstacle to resisting change. This paper accordingly argues that the declining intergenerational transmission of the practice of summer work represents an abrupt, contested shift within the Southwest Icelandic culture of labor and education.

Keywords: Rural labor, agricultural identity, narratives, work ethics, Iceland

Short Bio: Located in New Jersey, Ashley Jun is an independent scholar of sustainability and cultural traditions of agricultural communities in Iceland. Her work examines the role of urbanization and rapid political and economic change in the changing traditions of work labor in Southwest Iceland. Ashley Jun has conducted ethnographic field research in Iceland and has spent a couple of months directly participating in rural farmwork at a farm supplying the biggest dairy supplier of Iceland. She plans to further pursue anthropology and the study of labor with a geographical focus on Arctic regions.

Waterscapes, Timescapes, and Inundations: Notes on *Odds Against Tomorrow*

Narie Jung

Mokpo National University, South Korea

nariejung@gmail.com

Waterscapes and timescapes are indissolubly mixed in Nathaniel Rich's *Odds Against Tomorrow*. This is important because time (like water) is one of the most critical vectors of our current age, a point emphasized recently by the news from the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists that the Doomsday clock has edged closer to midnight than ever before. Thinking with water must address the ways in which authors such as Rich have linked watery and temporal issues. *Odds Against Tomorrow* exposes the causal role of a focus on the present to climate issues and vigorously ridicules both the hedonism of the characters and their various failures to understand the structural complexity of the present. These failures are a response to the sense of fragmentation and alienation capitalism produces, a fragmentation made material by the inundation of New York City. One of the results in the novel is that characters seek solace in the sense of wholeness that they mistakenly believe the synchronization of time proffers. In many, many ways, water is the great dissolver and unifier in this novel, but the one thing it doesn't unify is time; rather, it shows that time, like water itself, is fluid and that understanding this fluidity is critical if we are going to have any kind of tomorrow at all.

Keywords: Flooding, *Odds Against Tomorrow*, time

Short Bio: Narie Jung researches and teaches at Mokpo National University in South Korea. Jung's areas of research include ecocritical theory, climate change literature, and the posthuman Anthropocene. She has published in *Anglia: Journal of English Philology*; *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes, and Reviews*; *Cultura: International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology*; *The Explicator*, *Neohelicon: Acta comparationis litterarum universarum*; and others. She has just been hired as a tenure-track professor and is working on a book about postnatural fiction, with a focus on the impacts of climate change on narrative structure.

Tides of Transformation: Creaturely Aesthetics in Richard Powers' *Playground*¹

Yağmur Kızılay

Lecturer PhD, Ankara University School of Foreign Languages, Türkiye

ykizilay@gmail.com

The term “creaturely aesthetics”, proposed by Stacy Alaimo in *The Abyss Stares Back: Encounters with Deep-Sea Life* (2025), refers to aesthetic representations and depictions of the diverse, astonishingly complex, and enticing life in the depths of the ocean and the potential of such aesthetic engagement with marine life across literature, science, media and art to awaken interest, concern, and care for deep-sea creatures. The American novelist Richard Powers' *Playground* (2024) interweaves technological and ecological issues surrounding AI technology, oceanography and a seasteading venture on the French Polynesian island of Makatea through its distinct but ultimately connected storylines. Centering one of its main narrative strands on Evelyn Beaulieu, a French-Canadian oceanographer modeled on the highly acclaimed marine biologist Sylvia Earle, the novel foregrounds the central role of the ocean in sustaining life on Earth, with a particular emphasis on the remarkable diversity and dynamism of deep-sea life. Within the framework of Alaimo's concept of “creaturely aesthetics”, this study draws on the critical concerns of the blue humanities to argue that the employment of vivid and striking sensory descriptions of deep-sea life with its abundance, complexity, and diversity in *Playground* cultivates an immersive encounter with the many wonders and species of the deep sea. In contrast to the long-standing and notorious delineation of the deep sea as “alien”, which often results in lack of concern and indifference for marine life, *Playground* seeks to familiarize its readers with marine creatures as playful, awe-inspiring, and affectively engaging more-than-human beings. This study also emphasizes that through its aesthetic and sensory engagement with deep-sea life, *Playground* has the potential to elicit affective responses that could foster environmental care and concern toward marine creatures that are increasingly threatened by extraction, pollution, and ocean warming in the Anthropocene.

Keywords: Blue Humanities, creaturely aesthetics, marine creatures, affect, *Playground*

¹ This study is one of the outcomes of my Fulbright Postdoctoral research project.

Short Bio: Yağmur Kızılay received her PhD degree in English Language and Literature from Ankara University, Turkey in 2023. For the 2024-2025 academic year she was awarded with Fulbright Postdoctoral Program Grant with her research project on the affective potentialities of blue humanities narratives. She conducted her postdoctoral research in the Literature Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz, USA. Her research interests include the environmental humanities, blue humanities, climate change literature, and affect studies. She is currently working as an instructor of English at Ankara University School of Foreign Languages, Turkey.

The Beach as Archive

Ursula Kluwick

University of Bremen, Germany

ukluwick@uni-bremen.de

This paper explores how littoral space, a space characterised by instability and transformability, is inscribed and read. Specifically, it focuses on how art and literature attempt to make beaches readable. One key function the beach appears to assume in these different media is that of a memory space in which stories are buried and suppressed, but also preserved and eventually exposed or brought to light. We can see this, for instance, in texts as diverse as Par Barker's modern rewriting of the Trojan War (*The Silence of the Girls*, *The Women of Troy*, and *The Voyage Home*, 2018-2024), in which characters face hidden pasts and uncertain futures on the beach and Wilkie Collins's Victorian detective novel *The Moonstone* (1868), in which the beach is a site of burial and unburial that hides and yields clues and exposes not only gothic stories of repression but also of colonial oppression. But the beach is also a place of connection and landing place, and jetsam and flotsam also play a significant role for the beach as a material archive, a memory space constructed of storied matter. To unpack this, I draw on Margaret Mazzantini's *Morning Sea (mare al mattino)*, (2015), a novel about the refugee crisis, in which a character tries to preserve a record of those that perished during clandestine crossings of the Mediterranean through an art installation. But the ability of the beach to constitute an archive is intrinsic and material, and not exclusive to literature, of course. Therefore, I also turn to an actual art installation by Columbian artist Doris Salcedo, in order to explore how a different medium engages with this key function of littoral space.

Keywords: Littoral studies, archive, storied matter, memory

Short Bio: Ursula Kluwick is Professor of English Literature and Cultural Studies at the University of Bremen, Germany. Among her main research interests are the environmental and the blue humanities, nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first century literature, postcolonial studies, as well as non-realist forms of writing. Her books include *Exploring Magic Realism in Salman Rushdie's Fiction* (Routledge 2011), *The Beach in Anglophone Literatures and Cultures* (ed. with Virginia Richter; Ashgate 2015), *Nachhaltigkeit – interdisziplinär* (ed. with Evi Zemanek, UTB 2019), and *Haunting Ecologies: Victorian Conceptions of Water*

(University of Virginia Press 2024). She is currently writing a monograph on the Mediterranean beach.

Ocean Literacy for a Better Future

Kerstin Knopf

University of Bremen, Germany

kknopf@uni-bremen.de

As we go into the next quarter of the 21st century, our oceans, their marine life, and marine cultures are under threat as never before. They are faced with plastic and industrial pollution, overfishing through distant water fishing fleets, coral dying, melting glaciers and poles and subsequent rising sea levels, intensified hurricanes and weather phenomena. Islands and coastal areas are slowly drowning, while their fresh water sources are increasingly salinated. The biggest threat, however, might yet be the new tendencies to bluewash neoliberal capitalist desires to exploit the oceans even further – often called “blue growth” or “blue economy.” These plainly economic concepts, which include development of marine aquaculture, coastal and marine tourism, marine biotechnology, ocean energy production, and seabed mining, are often trumpeted as sustainable growth, even “holistic management of complex marine socio-ecological systems” (Ertör and Hadjimichael 2020). At the same time, 90 % of the ocean depths, including its marine life, are unresearched or basically unknown, while large parts of our global populations are unconcerned about troubled seascapes (Oppermann 2023).

In order to protect our oceans as the UN has defined as humanity’s goal with SDG No. 14, we need ocean literate populations that are able to understand the stress that humanity imposes on our oceans and its marine life, that see through euphemistic concepts such as blue growth, and that are ready to limit their own needs and comforts to be able to protect and clean oceans and coasts and to work towards a gradual “blue degrowth” (Ertör and Hadjimichael 2020).

This paper introduces my class “Ocean Literacy” in which I work with teacher students on several texts and documentaries to crystallize their didactic potential for ocean literacy projects. Specifically, I will show how we can use the documentary film *My Octopus Teacher* (Netflix, 2020) and accompanying non-fiction texts to make students and the lay public more aware of ocean life, understand its biodiversity, and eventually make them care for and, hence, wanting to protect oceans and marine life.

Keywords: Ocean literacy, bluewashing, blue degrowth, *My Octopus Teacher*

Short Bio: Kerstin Knopf is professor for North American and Postcolonial Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Bremen in Germany and founder of the Bremen Blue Humanities Research Group. Her main research interests are Indigenous film and literature, American and Canadian romantic literature, Postcolonial Studies focusing on North America and the Pacific region, and Blue Humanities. In this field she published *Postcolonial Oceans: Contradictions, Heterogeneities, Knowledges, Materialities* (ed. with Sukla Chatterjee, Joanna Chojnicka and Anna-Katharina Hornidge, HeiUP 2023) and with Caroline Rosenthal “Writing Water in Classical American Literature.” Special Edition of *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* (DeGruyter 2025).

Rethinking the Oceanic Sublime in the Age of Plastics

Emre Koyuncu

Ankara University, Türkiye

ekoyuncu@ankara.edu.tr

The image of the ocean in the European aesthetic tradition keeps returning to the sea as a privileged scene of the sublime: a field of magnitude and power that exceeds measure and eludes human mastery. This paper argues that the oceanic sublime was much more than an affect; it helped sediment a durable cultural perception of the “blue” as indefinite, limitless, and thus implicitly inexhaustible. I trace a conceptual itinerary from eighteenth-century theories of sublimity, focusing especially on Edmund Burke’s emphasis on terror and vastness and Immanuel Kant’s analytic of the mathematical and dynamical sublime, to modern juridical and economic imaginaries of maritime openness. Kant’s striking instruction to regard the ocean “as poets do,” rather than through its ecological life or its role in commercial networks, clarifies how the sublime depends on suspending relational and material registers of the sea. What is striking is that this aesthetic purification resonates with and historically accompanies the operationalization of the ocean as open space for circulation and extraction, from Hugo Grotius’s *Mare Liberum* to later regimes of empire and maritime logistics.

Against this stream, I propose that contemporary ocean images increasingly function as an “anti-sublime” or forensic blue: they render the sea not as pure immensity but as a finite, thick medium of traces: plastics, sediments, toxic blooms, coral bleaching, and multispecies injury. Touching on the visual politics of marine debris photography (e.g., Mandy Barker and Chris Jordan) and the mass public circulation of deep-sea ROV livestreams, I show how today’s blue aesthetics oscillate between wonder and evidence. This oscillation matters ethically and politically: it can land on a techno-sublime that renews frontier fantasies, or it can reframe planetary waters as relational, vulnerable, and historically saturated, in such a way that is closer to Donna Haraway’s imperative to “stay with the trouble” than to inherited habits of oceanic fantasies.

Keywords: Oceanic sublime, blue aesthetics, Kant, plastics, oceanic photography

Short Bio: Emre Koyuncu received his PhD from Purdue University in 2014 with a dissertation entitled “From Animal Trials to the Animal Advocacy Movement: A Foucauldian Reflection

on the Animal Question.” His work focuses on modern philosophy, especially Spinoza, and on twentieth-century philosophy, particularly French poststructuralism and its legacies, with a special interest in human–animal–environmental relationships. He currently serves as a faculty member in the Department of Philosophy and the head of the Division of Environmental Social Sciences at Ankara University, Türkiye.

**“their joy was tidal and their anger came in waves.” Literal/Litoral Readings of Water
in Sue Goyette’s *Ocean***

Zuzanna Legan

University of Warsaw, Poland

z.legan@student.uw.edu.pl

When Natalie Diaz writes in *Postcolonial Love Poem*: “I carry a river. It is who I am: ‘Aha Makav [ha’makaw] This is not metaphor.” (Diaz, 2020) she reclaims human’s watery belonging that has been reduced to a figure of speech. In order to realize the very real need of protecting the water environments, we have to be able to understand being “oceanated” as a real, chemical connection rather than purely metaphoric one. The tendency of using water qualities as a mirror for world’s rapidly shifting dynamics is a concern that blue humanities scholars articulated thoroughly in their work (Alaimo 2016; DeLoughrey 2017; Mentz 2024, Oppermann, 2019). The material-discursive research methodologies have been bringing the discursive attention back to sea's ontologies. However, as Zygmunt’s Bauman’s idea of “liquid modernity” becomes more and more relevant in the times of “widespread feelings of instability, insecurity, and loss of control” (Mörtenböck, 2025) there is still a risk of consolidating sea’s superficial imagery without immersing into its material depths. In my paper, I would like to observe the way contemporary poetics may draw from the ontological, oceanic turn and use the figurative language to trace the agentive, multispecies becomings. To do that, I will use the example of Sue Goyette’s book-length poem *Ocean*. The Canadian poet re-mythologizes the world and builds it on the fluid ground where the lyrical “we” emerges in constant negotiation with oceanic moods. Goyette takes the vast metonymic potential of planetary waters to extremes and uncovers the experiential background of meanings, finding “an implication of orcas beneath our talk” (Goyette, 2013). I argue that this kind of poetics decolonizes language and allows for an inclusion of the creative, nonhuman matter in the process of narrating the world and re-writing of the human-ocean history through our shared affections.

Keywords: Metaphor, blue poetics, *Ocean*, ecocriticism

Short Bio: Graduate of Artes Liberales on University of Warsaw and School of Eco-poetics under Institute of Reportage. Currently a PhD student at the University of Warsaw in Literature. Her academic interests are circling around interdisciplinary field of environmental humanities.

Her research aims to explore human–water relations registered in literary sources, particularly the ways water’s materiality influences lyrical subjectification, practices of writing and poetics of crisis. Merges scientific research with other creative ways of expression; mostly photography and poetry.

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Through the Shallow Waters of the Caiman: City, Coexistence and Disappearance

Bruno Amadei Machado

Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

bruno.machado@fau.ufrj.br

This proposal is dedicated to multispecies life in polluted urban waters. It revolves around everyday encounters with the broad-snouted caiman (*Caiman latirostris*), a crocodylian found in lentic subtropical environments extending across the lowlands of South America. In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's second-largest metropolis, an estimated population of around five thousand individuals inhabits the urbanized margins of a coastal lagoon system, although the decline in new births has already been observed.

In a context where rapid urban expansion converges with untreated sewage discharge and habitat fragmentation, caimans reinvent unlikely modes of survival within hydraulic infrastructures, such as drainage canals, sewage outlets and lagoons. Since the late twentieth century, these conditions have given rise to new feral ecologies, understood as unintentional more-than-human arrangements emerging from urbanization, pollution, and hydrological transformation.

Inspired by Australian ecofeminists Val Plumwood and Deborah Bird Rose, this proposal engages in *slowly writing into the Anthropocene* by walking along the margins of lagoons and canals in densely urbanized areas, in search of these other presences. In dialogue with what has recently been termed *Water Urbanism*, this analysis asks what architects and urban planners can learn from the cross-disciplinary approaches and questions brought by the Environmental Humanities. By slowing the gaze upon the city and some of its non-human inhabitants, the combination of ethnographic fieldwork, data collection and archival research can point to new ways of thinking, narrating and designing waterscapes.

Through shallow and polluted waters, this discussion contributes to a non-oceanic blue aesthetics by cultivating attentiveness to urban contexts characteristic of many biodiversity hotspots in the Global South. Emerging from beneath the turbid surface, it argues that the eye of the caiman can become an analytical vantage point from which to reframe multispecies coexistence and justice, and to imagine blue futures beyond the human–animal divide.

Keywords: Multispecies urbanism, water urbanism, waterscapes, infrastructure, pollution

Short Bio: I hold a Bachelor's degree in Architecture and Urbanism, a Specialization degree in Urban Sociology and a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning. I am currently a PhD student in Urbanism at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and a professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, teaching courses in Landscape Architecture.

My research focuses on the entanglements of cities and more-than-humans, especially interested in emerging Environmental Humanities interdisciplinary approaches to landscapes. During the first semester of 2026, I am a visiting researcher at KU Leuven (Belgium), where I am conducting part of my doctoral research.

Thinking with Tides and Deep Time

Aaniyah Martin

University of the Western Cape, South Africa

aaniyah.kersie@gmail.com

Klasies River Cave, located along South Africa's southern coastline, is one of the most significant archaeological sites in global narratives of early *Homo sapiens*. Yet its coastal setting—shaped by tides, erosion, currents, and ancestral presence—has rarely been foregrounded as an epistemic force in how deep time is taught, communicated, or encountered. This paper brings Klasies into dialogue with Blue Humanities by asking how *thinking with water* might reframe pedagogies of human origins, access, and knowledge production.

Drawing on situated learning and teaching and research engagements at Klasies, the paper examines how encounters with the site are mediated through private land ownership, scientific permitting, and institutional authority. An initial invitation to approach the site through a ritualised act of coastal care—honouring ancestors through a beach clean-up—was refused, while subsequent access was granted through scientific credentials. These uneven pathways of entry reveal how colonial land regimes and epistemic hierarchies continue to shape who may encounter, care for, and speak to deep time.

Approaching Klasies as a coastal an-archive, the paper attends to its spectral and aqueous dimensions: tidal rhythms, submerged histories, stratigraphic absences, and fragmentary remains that diffract with conditions of partial access and authorised knowledge. Water here is not merely a backdrop, but a relational presence that unsettles linear temporalities and narratives of human origins.

By holding scientific evidence alongside embodied learning, ancestral presence, and ritualised care, the paper proposes a tidal pedagogy of deep time—one attuned to movement, refusal, and relational accountability. In doing so, it contributes to Blue Humanities conversations on postcolonial seas, multispecies ethics, and the politics of access, arguing that coastal archaeological sites demand modes of knowing that are as fluid and contested as the waters that shape them.

Keywords: Blue Humanities, deep time, coastal archaeology, access and pedagogy, thinking with water

Short Bio: Aaniyah Martin is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of the Western Cape whose work sits at the intersection of environmental humanities, coastal studies, and decolonial pedagogy. With over two decades of experience in the conservation sector, her practice bridges environmental and social justice, foregrounding care, access, and community-rooted knowledge. She is the founder of The Beach Co-op and a founding fellow of Women for the Environment in Africa. Aaniyah earned her PhD from Rhodes University in 2024, where her research focused on co-creating a pedagogy of care for South Africa's hydrocommons.

Bodies of Water, Bodies in Water: Transcorporeality and Toxicity in *Aathi*

Syama Mohan

Indian Institute of Technology, India

syamamohan1309@gmail.com

Aathi (2011) by Sara Joseph is a Malayalam-language novel that narrates the story of the eponymous fictional wetland village, drawing on real-life instances of wetland landfilling and water pollution in Kerala. It shows how the lives of its inhabitants — both human and nonhuman transform over time under the pressures of ecological exploitation disguised as modernity. This paper analyses the novel using Stacy Alaimo's concept of transcorporeality and David Harvey's idea of accumulation by dispossession. It interprets the novel as a literary representation of how wetlands turn into sacrifice zones through extractive urbanisation. The ancestors of *Aathi*'s inhabitants, driven from the mainland by caste oppression, arrive in this once-saline region, considered uninhabitable. Through rotational farming and the careful, non-exploitative use of mangrove and aquatic resources, they reshape the wetland into a livable village through coexistence within the ecology. Kumaran, an expatriate, returns to the village after 30 years to persuade villagers to sell their land in exchange for assurances of urban prosperity. Thus, the gradual decline of the amphibious ecosystem begins. The events that unfold thereafter in the *Aathi* show that bodies in the novel are not located beside the wetland but are constituted through it. Drawing on Alaimo, the paper contends that the dying ecosystem of the wetland through landfilling and pollution thereafter directly and interdependently affects the bodies- human bodies, crabs, fishes, plants, fertile land, etc. As landfilling and pollution expand, toxicity spreads across human and nonhuman life, exposing the porous interpenetration of organisms and environments. Using Harvey's framework, the paper further explores acts of resistance and care to portray the biographical unmaking of a multispecies community. It thus shows how a terracentric developmental logic reconfigures the wetland as a disposable frontier, where urbanisation advances through dispossession and the erasure of water-dependent life.

Keywords: Wetland, transcorporeality, dispossession, toxicity, environmental justice, urbanisation

Short Bio: Syama Mohan is a PhD scholar in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Bombay. She works on Malayalam literature with a focus on ecocriticism and ecological imagination. Her doctoral research examines how literature represents ecological crises in the socio-ecological context of Kerala. Her research interests include bioregionalism, ecocriticism, blue-humanities, eco-gothic studies, cli-fi, temporality, narrative ecologies, and postcolonial environmental studies. She occasionally engages in translation and writes fiction and poetry alongside her academic work. Her work is situated within environmental humanities and draws on literary analysis to study place, memory, and community in regional writing and lived ecological histories.

‘Trade, Conquest, Dream’: Hydrocolonial Seascapes in Daruwalla’s *For Pepper and Christ*

Ambika M S

BITS-Pilani Hyderabad Campus, India

p20230040@hyderabad.bits-pilani.ac.in

Most scholars for a long time have understood the Indian Ocean through linear narratives of discovery, conquest, and commercial expansion. This paper draws from Sugata Bose’s *A Hundred Horizons* (2006), which conceptualizes the Indian Ocean as an interregional arena shaped by circulation rather than a closed system, and reads Keki N. Daruwalla’s *For Pepper and Christ* (2009) as a literary articulation of the ocean as a hydrocolonial space where trade, faith, violence, and knowledge converge. The novel imagines the sea as a dynamic, inhabited medium that structures political authority, cultural encounter, and historical memory rather than treating it as a passive route linking Europe and Asia.

The paper conflates Bose’s spatial understanding of oceanic connectivity with Isabel Hofmeyr’s notion of water as an “informed material,” and taking that into account argues that Daruwalla’s narrative foregrounds the sea as a central force that both enables and unsettles imperial ambition. Pepper, which was cultivated in Malabar yet consumed all over Europe, emerges not just as a commodity but also as a material agent that sustains fleets, finances conquest, and binds distant regions into asymmetrical relations of dependence. *For Pepper and Christ* exposes the limits of imperial knowledge by privileging local maritime experts and pilots who know hidden currents and shoals, embodied navigational practices, and sensory engagements with tides, salt air, and monsoon seas. These littoral and aquatic spaces, ranging from Portugal, Egypt, Mozambique, Gujarat, Calicut, and more, function as cultural microregions layered with power, resistance, and memory. In these spaces, language, belief, and identity are continually negotiated. By reading the novel through hydrocolonial and ‘hundred horizons’ frameworks, this paper suggests that Daruwalla imagines the sea not as backdrop but as an active historical agent that mediates encounter, produces exile and longing, and resists complete territorial or epistemic capture. As Taufiq the sailor wonders, “And what when the sea boils over, water foaming over the stern, the skyline inclined and tilted, as the sea bucks and rears, and the boat dips and then keels over, at one with the turmoil beneath? The sea demands passion.”

Keywords: Hydrocolonialism, seascapes, littoral spaces, postcolonial reading

Short Bio: Ambika is a doctoral research scholar working in Blue Humanities, at the Department of HSS in BITS-Pilani Hyderabad Campus, focusing on the Indian Ocean World writings. She has done her MPhil in Welsh mythology. Besides a few published academic papers, she writes for magazines, translates from the native Malayalam to English, and vice-versa. She has worked as a lecturer in a college and as an academic content developer in an international school.

Reformulating the Anthropocene Ocean: Cinema and the Global South

Chinmayee Nanda

School of Liberal Arts, XIM University, India

chinmayee@xim.edu.in

This paper explores the select cinema from the Global South interface with Anthropocene Oceans as sites of environmental catastrophe, genealogy, and susceptibility. This study argues that Global South Cinema verbalizes oceanic space through lived histories of colonialism, labor, migration, and ecological injustice. Capitalizing on ecocritical film theory, postcolonial studies, and blue humanities scholarship, the paper scrutinizes select feature films and documentaries from South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific that spotlights coastal and maritime worlds under threat due to climate disruption, mechanized fishing, adulteration, and resource extraction. This study would look at how these films realign the Anthropocene not as a hypothetical terrestrial epoch but as a distinctive as well as consolidated experience—where coral bleaching, rising seas, and toxic waters traverse with fragility, displacement, and survival. Cinematic strategies employed such as gradual observation, vernacular storytelling, non-chronological transience, and consciousness towards multispecies relations objects to extractivist visual cultures and dominant Global North ecological imaginaries. Oceans emerge as chronicles of memory and brutality, holding vestiges of slavery, trade and contract, meanwhile also operating as spaces of resistance, care and alternate futures. Global South Cinema destabilizes universalistic discourses of the Anthropocene and unfolds the lopsided distribution of liability as well as risk by consolidating indigenous, subaltern, and oceanic perspectives. As a whole, this exploration asserts that these cinemas subscribe to a decolonial oceanic imagery that emphasizes relationality, accountability, and environmental justice. Hence, this would augment the horizon of Environmental Film Studies and advance essential insights into how visual and cultural studies can reformulate planetary emergency through situated, ocean-based narratives from the Global South.

Keywords: Anthropocene, global south cinema, ocean narratives

Short Bio: Dr. Chinmayee Nanda is currently serving as an Assistant Professor (Senior Grade) at the School of Liberal Arts, XIM University, India. Her academic interests span a wide range

of interdisciplinary fields including Posthumanism, Environmental Humanities, Medical Humanities, Feminism, Gender Studies, Tribal Literature, and Translation Studies.

Dr. Nanda's co-authored book, *Symbiotic Wisdom: Exploring Ethnoecological Paradigms within Indigenous Environmental Law Narratives* (Springer), marks a significant interdisciplinary contribution to the field of Environmental Humanities.

Waters as Territories of Resistance: Indigenous Women Navigating Global Emergencies

Ana Maria Noguera Duran

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain

amarianogueraduran@gmail.com / anogueradu@uoc.edu

This work explores how Indigenous Amazonian epistemologies, articulated by women in contexts of territorial defense, reconfigure the relationship between bodies, water, and territories. From the perspective of environmental humanities and decolonial critique, it analyzes the concept of body, territory, and water as a relational ontology that challenges the dominant dichotomies of nature/culture and human/more-than-human. Based on interviews conducted within the framework of the INDIWOMINT project with women leaders from Brazilian Amazonian communities, we show how situated knowledge about rivers and hydrological cycles—understood simultaneously as foundations of life, as living entities, and as political actors—shapes cosmopolitical and cosmopoetic understandings that destabilize extractivist paradigms and foreground alternative ways of perceiving, narrating, and governing aquatic worlds.

Drawing on debates within the Environmental Humanities, this analysis highlights the political agency of water and its centrality in Indigenous women's struggles for environmental justice, climate resilience, and the defense of planetary life. Empirical accounts reveal how Amazonian waters are not only material and ecological forces, but also relational, ethical, and epistemic agents that participate in the creation of worlds. Even when Amazonian rivers are not blue, their multiple colors, flows, and materialities remind us that the plurality of waters implies a plurality of worlds, each sustained by specific forms of care, memory, and territorial attachment. By highlighting Indigenous women's hydro social knowledge as sustainable technologies, this work contributes to pluriversal dialogues that broaden the conceptual and political scope of the Blue Humanities, offering pathways to rethink planetary futures from Amazonian water ontologies.

Keywords: Water justice, indigenous women, Amazonia, decolonial futures

Short Bio: Ana Maria Noguera Duran is a researcher in environmental humanities and feminist studies focusing on Indigenous epistemologies and relational ontologies. She is a Marie

Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral fellow at the GenTic research center of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. She leads the project INDIWOMIN, centered on situated knowledge and traditional technologies for climate change mitigation in the Brazilian Amazon. Her work bridges transnational feminisms, territory, and decoloniality, highlighting body-territory defense and the ancestral knowledge of Indigenous women's organizations. She aims to strengthen global academic networks grounded in plural, critical, and justice-oriented perspectives that foster collaborative research for transformative environmental futures globally.

**Companion Species on the Move: Yörük Pastoralism and the Life Cycles of
Chirocephalus in the Temporary High-Altitude Lakes of the Bolkar Mountains
(Türkiye)**

Selda Öztürk
Cappadocia University, Türkiye

Sinan Akıllı
Cappadocia University, Türkiye

Erdoğan Çiçek
Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, Türkiye

selda.ozturk@kapadokya.edu.tr
sinan.akilli@kapadokya.edu.tr
erdogancicek50@gmail.com

Temporary high-altitude lakes in the Bolkar Mountains (Central Taurus, Türkiye) are short-lived aquatic worlds shaped by snowmelt, rapid warming, and seasonal drying. They host highly specialized freshwater assemblages, including branchiopod fairy shrimps (*Chirocephalus* spp.) and diverse macrobenthic invertebrates documented from Bolkar lakes in recent faunal studies. These systems are simultaneously ecological sentinels and lived landscapes: they coincide with the summer upland routes and grazing practices of nomadic Yörük pastoralists, whose herds use lake margins as watering and resting sites. This paper offers an integrated reading of Bolkar temporary lakes as coupled biological–cultural assemblages. It synthesizes published limnological and macroinvertebrate records from the Bolkar Mountains with a conceptual ecological framework focused on hydroperiod, nutrient pulses, and rapid succession, and it places these dynamics alongside pastoral mobility as a seasonal rhythm that intersects with aquatic life cycles.

We argue that *Chirocephalus*—often described as an “archetypal” temporary-water taxon—can be read as a “companion species,” in Donna Haraway’s terms, of these pastoral waterscapes in two complementary senses: first, ecologically, as an indicator tied to hydroperiod and food-web onset, and second, relationally, as a species whose persistence depends on the continuity of the lake’s annual drying–refilling cycle and on landscape processes that sustain early-season productivity. In a warming climate, high-mountain lakes are increasingly vulnerable to altered snowmelt timing, shortened hydroperiods, and thermal extremes, which may compress or destabilize these short aquatic seasons. We conclude by outlining a practical, place-based

monitoring logic that connects macrobenthic indicators and simple water metrics to seasonal land-use patterns, aiming to support conservation and sustainable visitation strategies aligned with local pastoral livelihoods.

Keywords: Temporary high-altitude lakes, macrobenthic invertebrates, *Chirocephalus*, hydroperiod, pastoral mobility

Short Bio: Dr. Selda Öztürk is an assistant professor at Cappadocia University and Coordinator of the university's Sustainability Office. She holds a PhD in Biology (2021) from Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University and specializes in freshwater ecosystems, limnology, benthic macroinvertebrates, biological monitoring, and water-quality assessment. She teaches biostatistics and research methods at undergraduate and graduate levels and contributes to national and EU-supported projects on ecological assessment and monitoring in river basins and high-altitude lake systems.

Short Bio: Dr. Sinan Akıllı is an associate professor of English Language and Literature at Cappadocia University, where he has also served as founding chair of the department and holds administrative roles as graduate studies and environmental humanities. He received his BA, MA, and PhD in English Language and Literature from Hacettepe University. His research focuses on ecocriticism, environmental humanities, posthumanism, animal studies, and British cultural studies. He has published widely in international journals and edited volumes, and with Serpil Oppermann, co-edited *Turkish Ecocriticism* (Lexington Books), and still co-edits the journal *Ecocene: Cappadocia Journal of Environmental Humanities*.

Short Bio: Dr. Erdoğan Çiçek is a professor of Biology at Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, specializing in fauna, wetland ecology, and hydrobiology. He graduated from the Faculty of Fisheries at Çukurova University in 1996. He completed his master's and doctoral studies at Çukurova university and received his PhD in 2006. He held various academic positions at Çukurova University, Harran University, Gaziantep University. He currently serves as professor in the Department of Biology at Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University. He has been involved in numerous national and international scientific publications and project studies in the fields of zoology, hydrobiology, wetlands, and ecology.

Hydropolitics in 21st Century South African Fiction

Saadia Peerzada

University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA

speerzada@umass.edu

This paper reads water disparities across two South African novels from the twenty first century. Troubling the ‘post’ in the term ‘post-apartheid,’ the paper traces the ongoing effects of apartheid in access to water and health care. *Thirteen Cents* (2000) by K. Sello Duiker and *Crooked Seeds* (2024) by Karen Jennings show a nation in flux, one that is still marked by the patterns of water inequality that emerged from European settlement and apartheid-era water theft.

Karen Jennings’ *Crooked Seeds* is set in the future, in 2028, and follows an Afrikaner woman as she deals with poverty, alcoholism and dehydration in the shadow of family involvement in pro-apartheid violence. Even as the book tries to understand the tangled present of Afrikaners in South Africa, it is attentive to the lack of water that is at the heart of the protagonist Diedre’s desolation. Azureh, the protagonist of *Thirteen Cents* has a desire to survive, despite being cut off from accessing clean water or safety. The post-colonial, post apartheid state is unable to provide basic necessities or intervene meaningfully in Azure’s life. If there is momentary relief, it is in the water. But even the water signals towards a greater catastrophe. Nature itself crumbles by the end of the novel, revealing a rain of fire and hellish explosions (164). Azure’s relationship with the water ends up in one complete realisation, a blank nothingness at the beginning of another ruination, “When I let go, I open my eyes. I have seen the centre of darkness. I have seen the slave-driver of darkness and he is a mad bastard. I know his secrets. I know what he does when we sleep. My mother is dead. My father is dead” (164). The deliverance promised by a “desire for water” is overshadowed by Azure’s refrain “[m]y mother is dead. My father is dead.” The site of trauma is a constant visitation.

Keywords: Post-apartheid, hydropolitics, biopolitics, colonial legacy

Short Bio: Saadia Peerzada is a graduate student of English at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She works on twentieth and twenty first century South African literature and performance, focusing on practices of being human that exceed legal personhood. She has published poems in Salt Hill Journal, San Antonio Review, Rowayat, Critical Muslim and

Inverse Journal. Her poetry responds to images that chip away at the alienation that emerges out of conditions of separation.

Chromatophore Grammars: Thinking with Cuttlefish, Color, and Fluid Language

Morgan Rose

The University of Oxford, UK

morgan.rose@hertford.ox.ac.uk

The language of giant cuttlefish is wondrous and brief. Lives that begin and end within a year produce a language that is psychedelic in its maximalism, a shimmering mosaic of cadence and variety that verges on baroque. Sentences of chromatophores and iridiospheres, manipulations of light and papilla of fine muscles holding bags of pigment. Most cuttlefish thoughts are spoken to no one but themselves, simply the iridescent shift of a thought running across the skin: the silken stretch of musings and wonderings and ponderings, possibilities and potentials and could be's. Words and thoughts bloom across the thinking membrane of the cuttlefish, who are possessed, taken by their inner world, until it overflows across them, each time to say something that has never been said before. Of course, "language" here is arguably a metaphor. The blue humanities demand them. The biologist Richard Lewontin says it is impossible to "do the work of science" without using metaphors, as "the entire body of modern science is an attempt to explain phenomena that cannot be experienced directly by human beings." *Metaphora*, according to Aristotle, "give(s) names to nameless things by transference, from things kindred." This is the genesis of this paper: a means of understanding the creativity of our kin beneath the sea, a fluid world-making practice where language itself is the medium.

Thinking *with* water, I consider its agency: an element that does not simply hold bodies but actively reshapes what bodies can think, express, imagine. At the center is the giant cuttlefish, whose communicative life unfolds not through sound or inscription but through rapid, full-body transformations of color, texture, and light. Read as a language, cuttlefish expression becomes a form of world-making: a thinking-through-skin in which cognition, affect, and environment are inseparable.

Weaving together marine biology, phenomenology, constructed linguistics, and contemporary multimedia literary practice, this presentation draws on my recent book-length project: a speculative compendium of languages from the sensory and bodily constraints of different species. It asks: what happens when we stop talking about the creatures of the ocean, and begin listening to the ways that they speak for themselves?

Keywords: Blue Humanities, multispecies communication, constructed languages, marine biology,

fluid aesthetics

Short Bio: Morgan Rose is a writer, artist, and environmental humanities scholar who considers imagination a primary methodological tool. Their doctoral research at the University of Oxford explores how alternative narrative forms and constructed languages can rewire ecological perception and foster relational ways of thinking with nonhuman worlds. Their creative and critical work spans multimedia literature, speculative linguistics, and contemporary environmental art, with a particular focus on water, embodiment, and non-anthropocentric modes of expression. More accurately, they spend a lot of time thinking about how if a bird already has wings, they must have dreams even more secret and empyrean than flying.

Unlocking the Wild in Rivers of Empire: Decolonizing Settler-Colonialist Waters

Caroline Rosenthal

Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Germany

caroline.rosenthal@uni-jena.de

Freshwater is becoming a highly embattled resource. It is enmeshed in colonial, racial, gendered, and capitalist regimes that not only affect humans but rivers themselves which have been dredged, dammed, and canaled in colonial enterprises. These human acts of “ecological violence” (Oppermann 2023: 41) have “led to changes in the hydrological cycle, the balance of species, and the destruction of ecosystems” (Mauch/Buell 2021: 233) and, moreover, deprive water of its liveliness and vibrancy both not only as a material resource but as a site of liveliness and artistic imagination.

In times of what the UN recently called “water bankruptcy” a new water consciousness is needed which understands water less as resource and more as kin. While for First Nations People land, water, and self form an inseparable entity, for American settler-colonialists it was a resource with no original connection. This is why river studies today call for a decolonization of water knowledge (Marca/Lübken 2001: 18) and for a return to indigenous ways of learning from water and of using it in sustainable ways. Indigenous knowledges and activisms around the globe are forging a new river consciousness by struggling to re-naturalize rivers to restore both their spiritual and material liveliness. At the same time, Native peoples are fighting not only for their lands but for control over the course, accessibility, and purity of their waters.

In my talk, I will present indigenous approaches to water by e.g. Michael Blackstock, Lee Maracle, and Jeanette Armstrong and analyze literary texts by indigenous and non-indigenous authors from Henry David Thoreau to Natalie Diaz which decolonize settler-colonialist waters not only in their subject matter but through distinctly water-based means of representation. They unlock the inherent qualities of water and return rivers’ wild spirit to our repertoire of poetic images to arrive at a new, decolonized water literacy which acknowledges reciprocity and kinship.

Keywords: Indigenous knowledges, river studies, decolonization of water

Short Bio: Caroline Rosenthal is Professor of American Studies at Friedrich Schiller University, Jena. She has published on the symbolics of food, on the production of space and city fiction, on narrative deconstructions of gender and on present day reverberations of Romantic ideas and practices, especially Henry David Thoreau. Her current research focuses on The Blue Humanities, Ecocriticism, and Nature Writing. Caroline Rosenthal is a founding member of the DFG-funded Graduate Training School “The Romantic Modell” (2015-2024) and of the “Thuringian Water Innovation Cluster Wasser” (2022-2025).

Timescapes of Relationality: Rivers (as) Archives

Katja Sarkowsky

University of Augsburg, Germany

katja.sarkowsky@uni-a.de

Rivers connect and relate. While this is an obvious truism regarding rivers as material bodies of flowing water, the cultural translation of riverine affordances into different literary genres works with this connecting capacity to explore a range of temporal and spatial relationalities and their implications: For instance, Elif Shafak’s novel *There Are Rivers In The Sky* (2024) deploys the rivers Thames and Tigris as both structural elements and central settings to foreground a connectedness that is historical, ethical, and material; Natalie Diaz’s poem “The First Water is the Body” (2020) looks at the Colorado River as the material node of relations between individual body, the Akimel O’odham people, language, and the land to counter settler colonial assumptions of the river as economic and energy resource.

Taking its cue from John Charles Ryan’s notion of hydro-poetics and the three features of “embodiment, relationality, and multiscalarity” he identifies (2022, 487), this contribution centers on how the aesthetic translation of river materialities can construct and explore the timescapes of relationality that rivers embody and create; it looks at how such translation (or, with Ryan, *poiesis*) makes them function as archives of knowledge about relations across time and space. Its central example for the possibilities of such translation is the collaborative mapping of and multimedia engagement with the Columbia River in “Beholden” (2018) by Canadian poets Rita Wong and Fred Wah. The contribution sets out to explore how the different facets of the work – the initial spatial installation, the book publication, and the interactive website – allow for thinking through questions of settler colonial complicity, responsibility, and allyship. While the representations of the river functions as an archive of different forms of spatial and temporal relationalities, this archive, I want to argue, is not merely a repository of the past, but also a critical analysis of present relations and of future possibilities – aesthetically, politically, and ethically.

Keywords: Rivers, relationality, time, hydro-poetics, archive

Short Bio: Katja Sarkowsky holds the chair of American Studies at Augsburg University, Germany, and is vice president of the Bavarian American Academy. Her publications include

the monographs *AlterNative Spaces: Constructions of Space in Native American and First Nations Literatures* (2007) and *Narrating Citizenship and Belonging in Anglophone Canadian Literature* (2018), the co-authored “Place-Based Knowledges, Water, and the Classics: Teaching the Environmental Humanities in Warsaw, Augsburg, and Ghent” (2025) and the forthcoming co-edited volume *Environmental Citizenship: Politics, Practices, Representations* (2026). She teaches classes on ‘literary waters’ every semester and asks students to actively and creatively engage with local waters in each class.

Reference: John Charles Ryan, “hydropoetics: the rewor(l)ding of rivers,” *river res.applic.* 38 (2022): 486-493.

Liquid Stage: Dramaturgy as an Hydrofeminist Practice

Carlo Sella

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), Spain

csella0@uoc.edu

This presentation emerges from an ongoing artistic research project along the Llobregat River in Catalonia, a water body shaped by extractivist histories and ongoing infrastructural violence. It focuses on salinity contamination linked to potash mining by Israel Chemicals Ltd. (ICL), whose impacts exceed local ecologies, connecting the river to broader geopolitical and hydrological networks.

Drawing on critical hydrofeminism and Black hydrocriticism, the research investigates how critical water ontologies can be performed. Water is treated as a relational, materially differentiated ontology *to be practiced*, that binds bodies and territories (unevenly). Through performative and dramaturgical methods, the project attends to the frictions through which watery relations are lived and enacted.

Central to the project is the question: How can dramaturgy function as a hydrofeminist practice, enabling thinking-with water through embodied, political, and situated performance-making? Engaging with people living in relation to the Llobregat, the research approaches community encounters without framing them as empowerment or participation per se, nor reducing them to extractive knowledge. Dramaturgy becomes a method for staying with uncertainty, exposure, and proximity, allowing water's material conditions (salinity, flow, contamination) to shape the form, rhythm, and ethics of performance-making.

The presentation includes a performative reading from an emerging dramaturgical text developed in relation to the Llobregat, offering a concrete example of how critical water ontologies are articulated through voice, body, and language. The work wants to position dramaturgy as an experimental hydrofeminist practice, contributing to debates in the Blue Humanities on fluid world-making, extractivism, and relational ethics, highlighting performance as a mode of aquatic thinking that resists abstraction and romanticisation.

Keywords: Hydrofeminist dramaturgy, extractivism, Llobregat River, relational ethics

Short Bio: Carlo Sella is a theatre-maker, artistic researcher, and PhD candidate at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Society, Technology, and Culture program). Their work

explores the intersections of performance, memory, and socio-environmental justice, focusing on water, extractivism, and relational ethics. Combining ethnographic theatre, hydrofeminist thinking, and participatory methods, Carlo develops site-specific performances and collective storytelling projects that engage human and more-than-human ecologies. Their practice emphasizes embodied encounters, material conditions, and relational approaches to ecological and political challenges.

Blue Humanities Hydrofeminist Critical Approaches to City Ecosystems

Tamara Shefer
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Garyn Phillips
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

tshefer@uwc.ac.za
garynphillips@gmail.com

‘What might the urban become if one challenged the proposition that cities are equated with land? How might urban theory be done differently if wetness was brought into centre stage in the politics of habitation?’ asks Maan Barua. This scholar promotes an amphibious urbanism as a way of thinking cities differently in current times of multiple crises and challenge, arguing that scholarly outlooks on infrastructure ‘remain largely anthropocentric’ (Barua, 2021, p. 1468). Responding to this provocation, we think with hydrofeminism, and the notion that we are all ‘bodies of water’, connected by our hydrocommons, ‘the lifeblood of humans and all other bodies on this planet’ which ‘is increasingly contaminated, commodified and dangerously reorganised’ (Neimanis, 2013, pp. 27–28). In this paper we draw on contemporary empirical research and theoretical work to think about one South African city, Cape Town, from the ocean, other bodies of water and the watery non-human. Current watery challenges in Cape Town speak both to historical and current forms of anthropogenic environmental injustices and crises, as well as social inequalities, located in histories of colonization. Sharing examples of the impact of global patriarchal capitalism, ongoing extractivist and denialist approaches to the hydrocommons, we argue the imperative for thinking from coastal spaces and facing the oceanic ghosts of the past and present, for planning educators and practitioners. As Green and Farr (2024, p. 69) plead: ‘An ecopolitics for living on a damaged planet must begin with the reconfiguration of knowledge through a politics of attention to material flows that make for habitability or inhabitability’. Thinking the urban with oceanic and other water, across different entangled geopolitical spaces, in rethinking urban livabilities is crucial in current times of growing climate crises and escalating intersecting social challenges.

Keywords: Hydrofeminism, hydrocommons, amphibious urbanism, Cape Town

Short Bio: Tamara Shefer is Professor of Women's and Gender Studies, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town. Her current work focuses on feminist decolonial and hydrofeminist scholarship towards social and environmental justice. Most recent edited volumes include *Reimagining social justice scholarship: creating decolonial feminisms in South Africa and beyond*, with Carmine Rustin and Floretta Boonzaier (Routledge, 2026); *Decolonial feminisms, decolonising feminisms* with Deevia Bhana and Giti Chandra (Routledge, 2026); *Hydrofeminist thinking with ocean/s: Political and scholarly possibilities* with Viv Bozalek and Nike Romano (Routledge, 2024) and the *Routledge Handbook of Global Feminisms and Gender Studies* (Torres, Pinto, Shefer & Hearn, 2025).

Short Bio: Garyn Phillips is a Master's candidate in the Department of Women's & Gender Studies at the University of the Western Cape, Cape Town. His thesis explores how water and oceanic changemakers, such as activists and academics, resist anthropogenic practices in Table Bay and how this matters in the broader oceanic and South African ocean and water contexts. He is an active member of Save A Fishie NPC, who host regular beach cleanups and advocate for conservation of the hydrocommons in Milnerton, Cape Town and across South Africa. He is a recipient of the Mastercard Foundation Scholarship, an award which recognises and grows emerging leaders and changemakers, which will profoundly support his research.

‘And I, a newly evolved fish’: Artistic Engagements with Water for Social and Environmental Justice

Lwando Scott
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Rory Tsapayi
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Tamara Shefer
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

lscott@uwc.ac.za

rktsapayi@gmail.com

tshefer@uwc.ac.za

This paper shares a recent exhibition entitled *And I, a newly evolved fish* (Iyatsiba Lab, Cape Town, August-October 2025), part of an EU funded project, RE-WIRING (<https://re-wiring.eu/projects/>), which considered bodies of water as sites, subjects, and frameworks through which to critically imagine gender, sexuality, and power within broader social and environmental justice goals. The show’s title is borrowed from the poem *Points of View* by Jamaican-British poet Lucinda Roy. In the poem, the “newly-evolved fish” represents the speaker’s desire for an unalienated and embodied relationship with water. More broadly, it refers to a fundamental idea of the exhibition: that water, being fluid and forceful, is a vector of constant change, or evolution. Water connects all life on this Blue Planet and humans did indeed evolve from primordial seas. In this way, we are all fish: old, new, and ever-evolving. Located in ‘hydrofeminism’, a term coined by Astrida Neimanis, the show is underpinned by the feminist figuration of a body of water which speaks to our relationalities with each other as humans, more-than-humans and the planet. In line with this critical watery approach, the exhibition asked what water can teach us about human and planetary justice. The exhibition included artworks and practices that represent and engage with water and wateriness to disrupt gender and other binaries and their entanglements within (post)coloniality, patriarchy, the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene. It attended to these entangled violences within our increasingly vulnerable hydrocommons in the coastal and riverine Cape Town area and beyond. The exhibition primarily consisted of contemporary artwork, accompanied by a selection of modern works from local collections. In this paper we share how the artistic works gathered in

the show demonstrate diverse watery methodologies like erosion, submersion, sweating, genesis, crystallisation, drifting, splashing, and play which are interpreted as evolving ‘fishy’ methodologies. We share our thoughts on how the show challenged the conservative determinism of terrestrial thinking and engaged the hauntological and environmental complexities of the South African coast, raising consciousness about both entangled social and environmental injustices, historically and in contemporary times.

Keywords: Art, exhibition, hydrofeminism, postcolonial, Cape Town

Short Bio: Tamara Shefer is Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town. Her current work focuses on feminist decolonial and hydrofeminist scholarship towards social and environmental justice. Most recent edited volumes include *Reimagining social justice scholarship: creating decolonial feminisms in South Africa and beyond*, with Carmine Rustin and Floretta Boonzaier (Routledge, 2026); *Decolonial feminisms, decolonising feminisms* with Deevia Bhana and Giti Chandra (Routledge, 2026); *Hydrofeminist thinking with ocean/s: Political and scholarly possibilities* with Viv Bozalek and Nike Romano (Routledge, 2024) and the *Routledge Handbook of Global Feminisms and Gender Studies* (Torres, Pinto, Shefer & Hearn, 2025).

Short Bio: Lwando Scott holds a PhD in Sociology, and is currently a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape. Scott is an interdisciplinary scholar with a focus on gender and sexualities, on how these categories must be linked to ideas of freedom in post-apartheid South Africa. Scott is interested in the nature of post-apartheid freedom, in thinking with and through the South African Constitution, to upend the complex legacies of slavery, colonialism, and racial domination whose effects extend into the contemporary moment.

Short Bio: Rory Tsapayi is a curator pursuing an MA in Historical Studies at the University of the Western Cape where he is an MA Fellow in Visual History & Theory. His research applies watery thinking to photographic archives in order to disrupt the colonial histor(iography) of the Kariba Dam on the Zambezi River. From 2023 to 2025, Tsapayi was a Curatorial Researcher at Zeitz MOCAA, and is currently Coordinator for the late Koyo Kouoh’s team for the 61st Biennale Arte: In Minor Keys (2026).

Slow Affective Oceanic Encounters: Reparative Swimming-Writing-Reading for a Justice-to-Come

Tamara Shefer
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Vivienne Bozalek
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

tshefer@uwc.ac.za
vbozalek@gmail.com

This chapter gives expression to the notion of Slow affect through our practice of oceanic-swimming-documenting-writing-reading. Swimming in the ocean brings one into intimate encounters with both a myriad of oceanic species and hauntings of past, present and future. We locate our thinking in the work of Brian Massumi, Erin Manning, Greg Seigworth and others who draw on Baruch Spinoza's process philosophy and relational ontology. Affect from this perspective is understood as intensity, a force of encounter that is part of an ongoingness; it is about the body's capacity to move and be moved. We are interested in how our oceanic encounters allow for affects to become more apparent or resonant through a process of slowing down, both materially and conceptually. These embodied and sensate Slow oceanic encounters affect us and others we engage with in unforeseeable ways. Oceanic swimming is in this way a hauntological spacetime-mattering endeavor. Swimming in particular oceans, alongside particular beaches surfaces many entangled violences of slavery, colonisation, global capitalist and anthropocentric extractivism sedimented in the ocean. As we meet the disasters of past, present and future, the polluted and violated seas, our Slow affective relational encounters with water and more-than-human species sharpen our response-ability to and responsibility for ecocidal damages to the ocean and planet. We suggest that this Slow affective swimming-documenting-writing-reading practice opens up a reparative engagement towards a social and environmental justice-to-come.

Keywords: Hydrofeminism, swimming-writing-reading, ocean, slow affect, justice-to-come

Short Bio: Tamara Shefer is Professor of Women's and Gender Studies, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town. Her current work focuses on feminist decolonial and hydrofeminist

scholarship towards social and environmental justice. Most recent edited volumes include *Reimagining social justice scholarship: creating decolonial feminisms in South Africa and beyond*, with Carmine Rustin and Floretta Boonzaier (Routledge, 2026); *Decolonial feminisms, decolonising feminisms* with Deevia Bhana and Giti Chandra (Routledge, 2026); *Hydrofeminist thinking with ocean/s: Political and scholarly possibilities* with Viv Bozalek and Nike Romano (Routledge, 2024) and the *Routledge Handbook of Global Feminisms and Gender Studies* (Torres, Pinto, Shefer & Hearn, 2025).

Short Bio: Vivienne Bozalek is an Emerita Professor in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of the Western Cape, and Honorary Professor in the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning at Rhodes University. Her research interests and publications include the political ethics of care and social justice, posthumanism and feminist new materialisms, hydrofeminism, post-qualitative and participatory methodologies. Her most recent co-edited book is *Hydrofeminist thinking with oceans: Political and scholarly possibilities* with Tamara Shefer and Nike Romana (Routledge, 2024).

Ethics Underwater: Interspecies Entanglement, Urchin Agency, and Justice at Depth

Rebekah Sinclair

Oregon State University, USA

Rebekah.sinclair@oregonstate.edu

As the coastal ecosystems of Oregon and the Pacific U.S. are entangled in a net of ecological crises, multispecies injustices, and contested restoration practices, purple sea urchins are trawled to the epistemic surface. Framed as primary culprits of kelp forest loss, they face large-scale, violent culling initiatives: bludgeoning or harvesting for consumption. Using relational and Native American ethico-epistemologies, I argue this framing is epistemically, ecologically, and ethically problematic. Isolating urchins as “the problem” obscures colonial and capitalist culpability, erases urchin agency, and reinforces control-oriented marine management.

I argue essentialist ontologies in mainstream science reduce urchins to ravenous, (kelp)baby-destroyers, rendering them morally invisible through vertebrate-centered and invasion logics that justify eradications incompatible with kinship and responsibility. Scapegoating urchins also sidelines deeper drivers of kelp collapse: capitalist-driven ocean warming, overfishing, and the settler-driven extinction and strategically stalled reintroduction of sea otters, keystone predators and relatives to coastal communities. Current strategies thus reproduce, not resolve, multispecies injustices.

Amplifying feminist science studies and Native traditional ecological knowledges (TEK), I critique pain-centric, vertebrate biases that limit urchin visibility and protections in labs, on plates, in conservation. I argue urchin social practices, young protection, and environmental engagements render them world-making agents, not just destroyers. Ignoring this builds what I call epistemic seawalls that hold back how urchins can be perceived and addressed, especially by those tasked with killing them: science divers.

As an ethicist, urchin lover, and science diver, I believe human-urchin relations could begin improving with different science diving curriculum. Oregon divers are critical but understudied interfaces in coastal science, collecting policy-informing data and conducting culls. I thus end with a pedagogical upswelling, outlining how my *Ethics Underwater* course collaborates with marine scientists, boat captains, and Oregon First Nations members to literally and figuratively submerge science diving students in embodied, relational pedagogies, alternative knowledge frameworks, improved data ethics, and values. We examine urchin agency through science and TEK, how TEKs prioritize balance and multi-species agency over restoration, and learn from

the Pacific how somatic diving knowledge can foster ethico-epistemologies favoring fluidity over fixity, allowing urchin aversions drift through us, not solidify into blame.

Keywords: Urchins, Indigenous ethics, multispecies injustice

Short Bio: Rebekah Sinclair is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Oregon State University, working on the shores where environmental/animal ethics, Native American philosophies, philosophy of biology, and blue humanities meet. Her work explores and intervenes in how scientific knowledge claims shape inter-species ethical relations. Recent and forthcoming research amplifies feminist and Native American knowledges to explore how concepts of invasivity, biological individuality, and genetic causation are frequently figured in both scientifically dubious and ethically harmful ways. She is an avid diver and ocean mammal currently researching and teaching to improve how her fellow science divers interface with ocean ecosystem management.

Aquatic Indeterminacy: Relational Openness in Aquatic Worlds

Emre Sünter

Kadir Has University, Türkiye

emre.sunter@khas.edu.tr

Blue Humanities scholarship has emphasized relational modes of thinking that challenge terracentric perspectives and foreground the multispecies, dynamic character of aquatic environments. Within this framework, water is often approached as a medium that connects bodies, scales, and temporalities through fluid relations. Yet uncertainty in such accounts frequently appears as a provisional condition, implicitly framed as something to be clarified, stabilized, or ethically managed.

This paper proposes the concept of *aquatic indeterminacy* to rethink relationality in aquatic worlds beyond such provisional framings. Aquatic indeterminacy does not refer to a lack of knowledge or an epistemic limitation. Rather, it articulates a constitutive condition of aquatic relationality, in which relations remain structurally open and non-finalizable regardless of explanatory refinement. In watery environments, relations do not tend toward closure or equilibrium but persist through ongoing variation, unevenness, and transformation.

Drawing on examples of aquatic events such as mulrtithe paper argues that these moments do not generate indeterminacy but render its enduring presence perceptible. Such events intensify relational processes without resolving them, making visible the ways in which aquatic relations resist stabilization across human, nonhuman, material, and temporal registers. Water thus appears not simply as a connective medium, but as a milieu through which relational openness is sustained.

By articulating indeterminacy as an ontological condition rather than a temporary disruption, this contribution extends current debates in the Blue Humanities toward a conception of aquatic worlds in which relations endure precisely through their resistance to final determination. Aquatic indeterminacy, in this sense, foregrounds openness not as a problem to be solved, but as a defining feature of relational life in planetary waters.

Keywords: Aquatic indeterminacy, relational ontology, Blue Humanities, multispecies relations, aquatic events

Short Bio: Emre Sünter is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Visual Communication Design at Kadir Has University, Turkey. His research explores the intersections of environmental humanities, media theory, and contemporary philosophy, with a particular focus on aquatic ecologies, multispecies relations, and speculative modes of thinking. He works across philosophy, design, and art–science practices, examining how ecological events challenge dominant epistemologies and modes of representation. His recent work engages with blue humanities, process-oriented ontologies, and the conceptual implications of ecological indeterminacy.

“When, Not Where: Aquatic Lifeworlds and the Politics of Belonging”

Berfin Toregün Özer

Middle East Technical University, Türkiye

berfin.toregun@metu.edu.tr

In contemporary governance, address functions as a regime of subject formation and political legibility. It registers subjects within state infrastructures and constitutes political belonging by determining who one is as a governable subject. In such a system, home is fixed within territorial boundaries, belonging is confined to residence, and the political subject becomes legible only through territorial location. This territorial regime makes mobile and sea-based lifeworlds structurally difficult to register, locate, and govern. As a result, indigenous aquatic communities remain systematically excluded from regimes of address, recognition, and political belonging. In aquatic lifeworlds, what makes a subject a subject is not where they are, but when they are. Here, being is constituted through timing, movement, and continuous adjustment to surrounding forces. In this context, address as a fixed spatial indicator is displaced by locating as continuous relational attunement to the environment. Following this shift, this paper examines how locating operates under conditions of depth, mobility, and multispecies co-presence through analysis of Bajau sea nomads' dwelling practices and documentary observations of multispecies underwater coordination. Underwater locating does not rely on a single principle of position but unfolds across layered sensory and material regimes: through magnetic fields, electrical signals, ultrasonic vibrations, chemical gradients, and rhythmic coordination with shifting currents. By building on relational ontologies and posthuman forms of belonging, this paper argues that existing territorial modes of governance are inadequate for aquatic lifeworlds. Drawing on this layered ecology of locating, this paper reveals the inadequacy of multi-level governance for aquatic lifeworlds and points toward multi-modal alternatives. Unlike contemporary multi-level governance models organized around hierarchy and domination, multi-modal governance emphasizes shifts, attunements, and continuous reconfiguration in response to changing conditions.

Keywords: Aquatic governance, Indigenous lifeworlds, politics of belonging, multispecies relationality, territorial critique

Short Bio: Berfin Toregün Özer is a philosophy MA student at Middle East Technical University, working at the intersection of sociology, environmental thought, and new materialism. Her research centers on embodiment, selfhood, and more-than-human forms of care through relational ontologies and decolonial frameworks. She holds a BS in Sociology from METU (2020) and an MSocSc in Environmental Policy and Law from the University of Eastern Finland (2022), where she examined ecosexual discourse in environmental governance. Alongside academic work, she creates new media video art exploring fluid and relational philosophies.

Beyond the Organizational Surface: "Documentaried Water" Flowing Toward the Meaning System of the Lake Marmara Field

Onur Ünlü

Yalova University, Türkiye

ounlu@yalova.edu.tr

Management and Organization (M&O) literature offers several avenues to investigate the drying up of Lake Marmara. The first avenue focuses on the exchange practices (Leblebici et al., 1991) within the local agricultural and livestock sectors, which exert continuous ecological pressure on the lake's water levels. A second, more critical avenue reveals that the Gördes Dam—constructed to meet İzmir's urban water needs—stands as a primary cause of the lake's desiccation. This finding necessitates an organizational fields (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010) approach to analyze how state planning and private sector interests prioritize urban demands over the lake's survival. Furthermore, if the scope is expanded to include preservation efforts, a third avenue emerges through the issue fields literature (Hoffman, 1999, 2001), addressing the struggle of social movements to reclaim the lake's future against state and private sector regulations.

However, no matter which path is taken, two crucial points are overlooked in all these avenues: the lake and the peasantry. The lake is overlooked because none of these avenues "think with water" (Oppermann, 2023); instead, they perceive water merely as a depleted yet supposedly renewable resource (George et al., 2015). Simultaneously, these initiatives fail to account for the peasantry, treating them as a "historical remnant" (Burrell, 2019; Cunha et al., 2021) and ignoring the profound system of meaning born from the togetherness of the peasant and the lake.

To move beyond these boundaries, this research turns to Blue Humanities (Mentz, 2009) as a transdisciplinary framework. It conceptualizes Lake Marmara and its surrounding villages as a "field" with a non-organizational centered meaning system. Drawing on the concept of "storied water" (Oppermann, 2023), this study proposes the term "documentaried water" to reveal the lake's unexplored dimensions. Methodologically, the research employs discourse analysis on episodes of the Green Nature (Yeşil Doğa) TV program and selected newspaper columns. The contribution of this research is to introduce "documentaried water" as a tool for understanding aquatic meaning systems and to illuminate the peasant-lake relationship that has been neglected in organizational field studies.

Keywords: Organization fields, storied water, documentaried water

Short Bio: Onur Ünlü is an Associate Professor at Yalova University, Turkey. His research focuses on environmental issues through the lens of organizational fields and exploring the dynamics of positive deviance. Employing a reflexive reasoning approach, he seeks to expand the boundaries of management literature by engaging with diverse disciplines. His current work serves as a brief scholarly visit to the Blue Humanities, where he aims to learn from its transdisciplinary insights to better grasp the socio-ecological meaning systems of threatened landscapes like Lake Marmara.

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Fluid Ecologies, Multispecies Kinship, and Narrative Form
in Yuvan Aves' *Intertidal: A Coast and Marsh Dairy*

Rajitha Venugopal
FLAME University, India
rajitha.venugopal@flame.edu.in

Set in the climate-vulnerable coastal city of Chennai, southern India, Yuvan Aves's *Intertidal: A Coast and Marsh Dairy* (2023) engages with the conceptual concerns of the Blue Humanities by foregrounding watery landscapes as dynamic zones of relational becoming. Situated within the interstitial terrain of coast and marsh, the text destabilizes terracentric imaginaries and instead articulates what Astrida Neimanis terms "thinking with water", an epistemological orientation that recognizes fluidity, interdependence, and material entanglement as foundational to ecological existence.

Through diaristic fragments anchored in close observation, *Intertidal* constructs a narrative ecology attentive to the rhythms of tides, migratory species, vegetal emergence, and sedimentary shifts. Such attentiveness resonates with new materialist and posthumanist frameworks that decentre the human as the primary locus of agency. The marsh and coast emerge not as landscapes to be described but as assemblages of human and non-human actors whose interactions produce shared vulnerabilities. In this sense, the diary operates as a practice of multispecies witnessing, rendering perceptible the subtle yet profound disruptions introduced by climate change.

Rather than invoking climate crisis through catastrophic abstraction, Aves' writing stages an ethics of relational attention, where ecological precarity is encountered through situated, embodied engagement. The text thereby exemplifies a mode of nature writing that aligns with contemporary multispecies scholarship: it reframes environmental care as a distributed ethical practice grounded in co-presence, reciprocity, and affective attachment. Water, in this narrative, functions not merely as setting but as agentic medium, shaping perception, temporality, and modes of interspecies relation.

This paper argues that *Intertidal* contributes to Blue Humanities discourse by modelling a "blue ethics" attentive to fluid interdependencies and shared climate vulnerability in the postcolonial, Global South. In doing so, the text reimagines nature writing as a critical practice capable of articulating ecological belonging beyond anthropocentric frameworks.

Keywords: Blue Humanities, climate change, multispecies kinship, nature writing, coastal ecologies

Short Bio: Dr. Rajitha Venugopal is Assistant Professor of Literary and Cultural Studies in the Department of Humanities and Languages, FLAME University, India. Her research straddles the intersection of environmental narratives, indigenous lives and cultures, postcolonial studies, Indian writing in English and translation, and writings from the margins. She is a recipient of a translation grant from the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment and is working on a translation project related to the biography of an environmental activist, Dayabai. Recently she was invited as a visiting scholar at the Rachel Carson Centre for Environment and Society, Germany.

**Blackwater: Swamp “Waste,” Freedmen, and the South Carolina Land Commission,
1869-1890**

Morgan P. Vickers
University of Washington, USA
mvickers@uw.edu

Nearly 30 rivers course through South Carolina, once creating a 2,400-mile-long inland navigation system. But as the waters channel toward the sea and into the Lowcountry, the flow slows to a “tortuous course,” spreading outward and producing over 5,500 square miles of swampland. The Lowcountry, once home to hundreds of rice plantations, lie fallow and waterlogged after the loss of the Confederacy in the American Civil War. It was in this post-Civil War, Reconstruction-era that the state General Assembly created the South Carolina Land Commission, an entity tasked with purchasing the largest plantations in the region and subdividing the land to be sold to landless and newly emancipated Black people. The Commission was immediately met with opposition by those who used innumerable watery metaphors to denigrate the State, arguing that it was “sinking” funds into the swamp and “floating” debt along the way. As one *Washington Post* writer opined in 1878, “The land was utterly worthless... It is a swamp, covered with water all year, and can never be made valuable.” Yet, analyzing the experience of Black land recipients tells a different story. Approximately 16,000 Black individuals received more than 50,000 acres of low-cost swampland between 1869 and 1890, through which they built interracial “school farms,” grew hydrophilic crops without the exploitation of a landlord or master, and built one of the largest Black settlements in the South. But, perhaps more significantly, Black land recipients did not fight the waters, as the State and white settlers did; rather, they learned to live with and through the quagmire, establishing terraqueous Black community structures founded upon mutually consented land- and water-use practices, collective governance structures, and hydrological stewardship. Therefore, this paper seeks to upend historical and enduring myths of swamp waters as worthless, wasted, and interminable. Instead, I historicize the swamp through a Blue Humanities framework, unsettling the boundaries between land and water, illuminating the racial and economic consequences of ecological denigration, and demonstrating how the breaking up of agricultural monopolies and the rewatering of swamplands can offer guidance on how to navigate murky ecologies of the future.

Keywords: Swamplands, South Carolina land commission, commons, Reconstruction Era

Short Bio: Morgan P. Vickers is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Law, Societies & Justice at the University of Washington. They are the Chair of the Landscape Specialty Group and an Executive Board member of the Black Geographies Specialty Group of the American Association of Geographers. Vickers is currently writing a book that illuminates how American policy programs and swamp reclamation projects were designed to facilitate the destruction of Black populations and the ecocide of unruly geographies. They have published articles related to these themes in the *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, *Environment and Planning F*, and *American Anthropologist*.

Environmental Art and Rivers: Reparative Practices in the Blue Anthropocene

Yi-Ting Wang

Saarland University, Germany

yi-ting.wang@khk.uni-saarland.de

Modern rivers have been treated as the ultimate “sink” for wastewater (Tarr 1996)—invisible infrastructures that epitomize the Blue Anthropocene, an era where aquatic environments are systematically abstracted into sites of waste disposal. This externalization resonates with the concept of the “Wasteocene” (Armiero 2021), which facilitates environmental abstraction through the colonial *othering* of human and non-human beings, places, and stories. This paper examines how environmental art functions as a reparative practice that resists this logic of abstraction. The proposed three-axis methodology—*re-pair*, *trace*, and *co-habit*—is grounded in a genealogy of river-oriented artistic interventions. *Re-pair* draws on Allan Kaprow’s concept of the “environment” as actively surrounding and engaging the viewer. From Kaprow’s happening *Course* within the Cedar River (1969) to Marta Pan’s urban planning that evokes imaginary watercourses in Brest (1985–1986), the river’s fluidity and systemic qualities function as a phenomenological mediator for reconnecting what modern dualism has separated. The second axis focuses on revealing *traces* of extractive violence, exemplified by the Harrisons’ investigation of toxic residues in the Sava River watershed (1989). This project laid the conceptual groundwork for the UNESCO Mura-Drava-Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve. Finally, the third axis interrogates multispecies *co-habitation* within damaged environments. Since the 2010s, site-specific art events have become instrumental in addressing the Anthropocene. The Helsinki Biennial on Vallisaari, a former military island in Finland, highlights more-than-human agency, while the Mattauw Earth Triennial along the transformed Zengwen River in Taiwan initiates long-term fieldwork with Tsou Indigenous hunters, with the aim of recognizing the river as a legal entity. This three-axis framework informs my reparative practice—the Walking Seminars on the Saar River in Saarbrücken (June 2026). By integrating the perspectives of hydrologists, geographers, and historians, these seminars mobilize embodied experience through tracework—a material and sensory reading of fluvial self-inscription—to generate situated environmental knowledge. This research culminates in a collaborative roundtable within a Citizens’ Forum organized by Camille de Toledo, whose ongoing project, *Toward an International Network of Rivers*, serves as a foundation for future

advocacy for river personhood and ecological reparation. The seminars offer a situated way of navigating the Blue Anthropocene.

Keywords: Environmental art, wasteocene, reparation, walking seminars, river personhood

Short Bio: Yi-Ting Wang is a researcher specializing in environmental art and its reparative potential in the Anthropocene. She is currently a research fellow at the Käthe Hamburger Centre for Cultural Practices of Reparation (CURE), Saarland University. Her work examines the intersection of site-specific artistic practices, environmental history, and the politics of waste. Currently focusing on fluvial landscapes, she collaborates with cross-disciplinary networks to develop “walking seminars” as a methodology for situated knowledge production. Her research positions environmental art not merely as a response to crisis, but as a generative tool for advocating river rights and multispecies cohabitation.

“If the river is a ghost, am I?”: Indigenous Onto-Epistemologies and the Environmental Crisis

Katarzyna Więckowska

Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland

klew@umk.pl

In “The First Water Is the Body” (2020), the Mojave American poet Natalie Diaz portrays the human and more-than-human world as based on co-dependence, co-constitution and co-evolution, where “[w]e carry the river, its body of water, in our body.” Starting from Diaz’s insistence that “[a] river is a body,” and that this is not a metaphor, I draw on the work of Indigenous thinkers and artists to illustrate how and why aquatic thinking offers an alternative to the land-based logic of the Anthropocene which, as Heather Davis and Zoe Todd argue, enacts “a severing of relations between humans and the soil, between plants and animals, between minerals and our bones” (2017). In particular, I refer to Robin Wall Kimmerer’s nonfiction, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson’s art and writing, and Carey Newman’s artworks to discuss ways of thinking and being that have been violently suppressed by the colonial project and continue to be suppressed by the politics of pollution which, as Max Liboiron claims, “is not a manifestation or side effect of colonialism but is rather an enactment of ongoing colonial relations to Land” (2021). My reading of the Indigenous art and thought builds on the ideas of grounded normativity, place-based solidarity, and ecology of intimacy developed by Simpson and Glenn Coulthard (2016), the concept of spiraling time described by Kyle P. Whyte in relation to dystopian fantasies of climate crises (2018), and Elizabeth A. Povinelli’s notion of geontopower (2016).

Keywords: Water, Indigenous thought and art, anthropocene, geontopower

Short Bio: Katarzyna Więckowska, D. Litt., Associate Professor at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland and Lab for Exclusion and Alienation Research (LEAR) member. Her research interests include environmental criticism, feminist criticism, postcolonial studies, post-anthropocentric ethics of care, and contemporary Anglophone literature. She is the author of *Spectres of Men* (2014) and *On Alterity* (2008), and articles and chapters on the environmental crisis, toxicity, climate witnessing, the Gothic, and eco-fiction. She is the co-

editor of the themed issue of *Anglica. An International Journal of English Studies (Beyond the Anthropocene, 2025)*.

**To Know the Water from Within: Swimming as Method, Memory, and Multispecies
Encounter in Jessica J. Lee’s Hydro-Trilogy**

Kathryn Yalan Chang
National Taitung University, Taiwan
yalan.chang@gmail.com

The Blue Humanities, as Serpil Oppermann asserts, is grounded in “acknowledging the ontological inseparability between lithic and liquid realms, and challenging ‘terracentric criticism’” (53). To engage with these dynamic interrelations, this paper adopts what Steve Mentz describes as an “offshore perspective,” a method of “looking at terrestrial literary culture” from the water (2024: 31). I propose that in the non-fiction trilogy of British and Taiwanese writer Jessica J. Lee, including *Turning* (2017), *Two Trees Make a Forest* (2019), and *Dispersals* (2024), swimming functions as a form of recreation and as a critical epistemology, offering an embodied way of knowing history, ancestry, and ecology through physical immersion.

In *Turning*, Lee swims fifty-two lakes in Berlin to navigate personal grief, using the “frog’s eye view” to dissolve the fear of deep water and touch the submerged “ghosts” of German history. In *Two Trees Make a Forest*, swimming becomes a tool for diasporic recovery. By plunging into the “barrel-shaped depths” of the Qikong Waterfall in Taiwan, Lee accesses the sensory reality of her mother’s displaced childhood. This method culminates in the “earthquake lake” of Shuiyang, where Lee strips down to swim among drowned cypress trees. Here, the swimmer’s stroke transforms a site of geological trauma into a “new ecosystem,” where the water acts as a living archive. Finally, *Dispersals* utilizes swimming in the littoral zone to tangle with “invasive” weeds, proposing an embodied ethics of contact. All in all, Lee’s work suggests that to understand the “Anthropocene ocean” (Mentz 2024: 23) or the inland lake, one must refuse the view from the bank and accept the vulnerability of getting wet.

Keywords: Swimming and embodiment, hydro-memoir, multispecies entanglement, Blue Humanities; Jessica J. Lee

Short Bio: Kathryn Yalan Chang is Professor of English at National Taitung University, Taiwan. Her current research interests include critical plant studies, food and garden studies, ecofeminism, material ecocriticism, and critical animal studies. Her latest publications include

“‘Not Unloved Ones’”: Moss, Gender, and the Plantationocene in Elizabeth Gilbert’s *The Signature of All Things*,” in *English and American Literary Review* (2023), “Filtering Death, Performing Life: Environmental Humanities and the Ecologies of Taiwan’s Wetlands in Chinyuan Ke’s Documentaries” in *Lagoonscapes* (2025), and “The Vegetal Turn, Plant Affect, and Ecofeminism: Han Kang’s *The Vegetarian* and ‘My Wife’s Fruit,’” in *Chung-Wai Literary Quarterly*, forthcoming, (2026).

Watery Witnessing: Nonhuman Gaze in Rivers Solomon's *The Deep*

Muhsin Yanar

Cappadocia University, Türkiye

muhsin.yanar@kapadokya.edu.tr

Although existing scholarship on Rivers Solomon's *The Deep* has productively focused on memory, transgenerational trauma, and posthumanity, less attention has been paid to how the novella reconceptualizes witnessing through water itself. Bringing witnessing theory into dialogue with Blue Humanities, this paper argues that *The Deep* reimagines the sea not merely as a site of memory, but as a nonhuman witness whose aqueous gaze preserves and mediates submerged histories of collective trauma. In this sense, the sea functions not only as an archive of loss, but also as a mode of perception through which histories of violence become legible beyond the limits of human-centered testimony. Rather than locating trauma within the boundaries of an individual speaking subject, Solomon disperses remembrance across an oceanic environment where concealment and retention, erasure and endurance, operate simultaneously. The inherited burden of the Middle Passage is thus figured not simply as content to be remembered, but as a fluid and relational form of witnessing carried by water itself. Reading the novella in this way shifts critical emphasis from memory alone to watery witnessing as a more-than-human process of historical mediation. By foregrounding the sea as a material and epistemological medium, the paper shows how *The Deep* challenges anthropocentric models of testimony, perception, and historical remembrance. Water emerges here not as passive setting or metaphorical backdrop, but as an active participant in the preservation and transmission of submerged histories. Ultimately, this paper suggests that Solomon's novella expands the terms of both trauma studies and Blue Humanities by imagining the ocean as a nonhuman gaze through which collective trauma is not only stored but continuously witnessed.

Keywords: Blue Humanities, watery witnessing, nonhuman gaze, Black Atlantic

Short Bio: Dr. Muhsin Yanar is a faculty member at Cappadocia University and an Honorary Research Fellow at Birkbeck, University of London, where he also conducts postdoctoral research. His scholarship focuses on posthumanism, ecocriticism, science fiction, and contemporary English and American literature, examining how literary narratives reimagine

the human amid technological transformation, environmental crisis, and biopolitical regimes. He was awarded a TÜBİTAK postdoctoral research grant and led internationally oriented research projects on posthuman futures, gender, and planetary literacies. He is the author of *DeLillo and Meta-Human: Commodification in Contemporary American Fiction* and is currently completing forthcoming publications with Bloomsbury and Brill, including *Sciences and Fictions* and “Planetary Literacies,” reinforcing his contribution to transnational and interdisciplinary literary studies.

Tracing the Oceanic: The Watery Call in J. G. Ballard's "Now Wakes the Sea"

Hakan Yılmaz

Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Türkiye

hknymzz@gmail.com

J. G. Ballard's short story "Now Wakes the Sea" follows the protagonist Richard Mason's nightly waking experiences or visions caused by the call of approaching waters that inundate the town where the nearest sea is a thousand miles away, advancing further each night before receding and disappearing without leaving any traces. These waters and waves remain accessible and visible only to Mason whose wife, despite his protests, insists on neither hearing nor seeing them, hinting at Mason's possible delusion. The submergence of social and human structures under water at night puts Mason in touch with an otherworldly feeling or sensation that gestures toward the existence of an order that is inexplicable yet obscurely and intensely felt – a feeling of something, that Freud calls, in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929) after Romain Rolland, "limitless, unbounded, something 'oceanic.'" This paper aims to trace the unfolding of a form of oceanic feeling in J. G. Ballard's "Now Wakes the Sea," evaluating it as an expression of transtemporal relationality that enables the self to catch a glimpse of both the ancient natural waters, and by extension in a twisted manner, the amniotic waters that have irrevocably been lost. By virtue of the transcendence of the *hic et nunc* facilitated by the resurgence of perennial waters in the story, it further argues that the watery call heeded by Mason results in him being completely swallowed by the waking ancient sea, highlighting Ballard's reconfiguration of subjectivity as dissolving into an archaic, pre-symbolic relationality figured through water.

Keywords: J.G. Ballard, "Now Wakes the Sea," oceanic feeling, transtemporal relationality, water agency

Short Bio: Hakan Yılmaz is an Associate Professor of English in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University. He is also a co-managing editor of *Ecocene: Cappadocia Journal of Environmental Humanities* and a member of the Advisory Board of the Environmental Humanities Center at Cappadocia University. His latest publications include contributions to *Re-Membering Hospitality in the Mediterranean*

(Palgrave Macmillan) and *Edebiyat ve Ekoloji* (VakıfBank Kùltür Yayınları). His research interests include modern and contemporary British fiction, phenomenology, environmental humanities, ecophenomenology, critical theory, and cultural studies.

Kafe (кѡафѡ) as an Oceanic Choreography

Z. Gizem Yılmaz Eriş

Social Sciences University of Ankara, Türkiye

zumregizem.yilmaz@asbu.edu.tr

Taking the theoretical strand of material feminisms from Karen Barad's agential realism and spacetime mattering, the main aim of this presentation is to trace material intersectionality in Anatolian and Caucasian heritage with the example of the traditional Circassian dance as an oceanic choreography. Focusing on the Black Sea as a significant oceanic space, the presentation argues that dance functions as a non-textual, performative archive shaped by watery geographies of exile and survival. This presentation further draws upon Jeffrey J. Cohen and Lowell Duckert's veer ecologies and Sianne Ngai's ugly feelings to trace how affect circulates through porous materialities in which bodies, water, and history remain entangled. Rather than treating dance as a purely cultural form, this presentation situates it within a confluent waterscape where love, intimacy, grief, and endurance are continuously eroded and re-formed through contact with water. The traditional Circassian dance Kafe (кѡафѡ) is read as an oceanic choreography of affect that embodies overlapping temporalities, ancestral histories, colonial violence, ecological memory, and contemporary practice. Each movement carries traces of the 1864 Circassian exile across the Black Sea, transforming water into a medium of both loss and connective agency. By tracing my own ancestral lineage from Caucasia to present-day Türkiye, and by reflecting on how I teach Circassian dance movements to my daughter, this presentation foregrounds how affective knowledge persists beyond textuality through embodied, relational, and more-than-human practices. The presentation also proposes Caucasian dance as a form of oceanic storytelling that unsettles epistemological certainty and privileges emergent, embedded agency over fixed narratives. That is how the Black Sea is indeed a place to feel for Circassians as it is a place where histories, generations, and material existences remain bound through water.

Keywords: Circassian history, migration, performance studies, Kafe (кѡафѡ)

Short Bio: Dr. Z. Gizem Yılmaz Eriş is a faculty member in the Department of English Language and Literature at Social Sciences University of Ankara. She received her BA (2010), MA (2012) and PhD (2018) degrees from the Department of English Language and Literature

at Hacettepe University. She also composes dance choreographies. She is the author of *Kozmik Koreografi: Bedenlerin Element Dansı* (2023) and *Tiyatronun Posthümanist Tarihçesi* (2023). Yılmaz Eriş has published nationally and internationally on posthumanism and ecocriticism in relation to theatre and performance. She is also the co-editor of *Beşeri Bilimlerin 50 Rengi: Ekolojik, Dijital, Tıbbi ve Posthüman Sesler* (2023).

Panel 1 – Fluid Perspectives: Rethinking Water in Contemporary Culture and Environment

Alperen Yedekçi – Social Sciences University of Ankara, Türkiye

Asım Esat Kalyon – TED University, Türkiye

Doğa Özmen – TED University, Türkiye

Sevilay Keçelioğlu – OSTİM Technical University, Türkiye

alperen.yedekci@student.asbu.edu.tr

esat.kalyon@tedu.edu.tr

doga.ozmen@tedu.edu.tr

sevilay.kecelioglu@ostimteknik.edu.tr

Within the framework of traditional scholarship, water is often relegated to a passive setting or a mere metaphor, yet contemporary narratives increasingly position it as an active, world-structuring force. This panel seeks to challenge terracentric assumptions by examining how “wet ontologies” and “blue logic” reorganize knowledge, identity, and relational agency. Spanning a diverse range of media and material phenomena, including hydro-fantasy, “oceanic immersion”, eco-gothic resistance, and the “leaky” viscosity of water, these papers intend to ignite discussions on how the “Blue” functions not as an external entity, but as a constitutive, shared condition of being in the Anthropocene. Ultimately, this panel investigates the porous boundaries between the human and the aquatic.

**Thinking with Water: Hydro-Fantasy and Oceanic Ontology in *Children of the Sea*
(2019)**

Alperen Yedekçi

Social Sciences University of Ankara, Türkiye

alperen.yedekci@student.asbu.edu.tr

This paper examines the anime film *Children of the Sea* (*Kaijuu no Kodomo*, dir. Ayumu Watanabe, 2019) as an example of hydro-fantasy. This is a speculative narrative in which water functions not as a passive setting or metaphor, but as an active, world-structuring force that reshapes knowledge, identity, and relational existence. Situated within the theoretical framework of the Blue Humanities, this study argues that the anime film enacts the principle of thinking with water by challenging terra-centric assumptions about agency, perception, and meaning. The narrative follows Ruka, a young girl whose encounter with two enigmatic boys, Umi and Sora, figures seemingly born of the sea, coincides with ecological anomalies and mysterious marine disappearances. Rather than resolving these events through scientific explanation or human-centered interpretations, the film gradually shifts attention toward the ocean itself as a site of agency and worldmaking. The sea is presented as a medium through which reality is reorganized. It produces disturbance, generates connection, and transforms the limits of what can be sensed or understood. This is precisely how hydro-fantasy operates in the film, as water does not only surround the characters but determines the ontological and epistemological conditions of the narrative. Through investigating the scenes from the movie supported by visual analysis, this paper demonstrates how *Children of the Sea* constructs an oceanic ontology in which the human is neither autonomous nor central. The film's audiovisual aesthetics reinforce this shift through its immersive depth effects, rhythmic soundscapes, and overwhelming marine imagery, and they replicate the sea's scale and instability. This pushes the viewer to experience water not as an object of interpretation but as a force that exceeds human categories. In the end, this paper positions *Children of the Sea* as a significant Blue Humanities text because it does not simply represent aquatic life, but it reorganizes narrative around water's relational agency. In doing so, it offers an imaginative model of ecological coexistence in which the ocean is acknowledged not as an external entity but as a shared condition of being.

Keywords: Blue Humanities, hydro-fantasy, oceanic ontology, anime

Short Bio: Alperen Yedekçi is an English Language and Literature MA student at the Social Sciences University of Ankara, and he is a part-time English instructor at OSTIM Technical University in the Modern Languages Unit. His academic interests include fantasy and science fiction literature, comic book and graphic novel studies, manga and anime studies, ecocritical studies, and utopian/dystopian literature. In addition to his academic pursuits, he also contributes to the performing arts as a playwright and actor. His thesis focuses on the exploration of dreamscapes and fantasy elements in *The Sandman* graphic novel series.

**Oceanic Resilience: Ecogothic Horror and the Violence of Blue Capitalism in
Underwater (2020)**

Sevilay Keçeliöđlu

OSTİM Technical University

sevilay.kecelioglu@ostimteknik.edu.tr

This paper examines the movie *Underwater* (2020) through the conjunction of eco-gothic aesthetics and blue capitalism, arguing that the film stages the deep sea as a contested site of capitalist enclosure and ecological resistance. Set in a corporate drilling station at the Mariana Trench, the film portrays the ocean floor not as wilderness but as an industrial frontier of extractive capitalism. This reminds us of Astrida Neimanis' idea that water, "the lifeblood of humans and all other bodies on this planet—is increasingly contaminated, commodified, and dangerously reorganized," in accordance with capitalistic purposes (27). Therefore, just as in real life, in the movie, the oceanic abyss becomes enclosed, operationalized, and subordinated to corporate ambition.

Yet the film's horror aesthetics destabilize this logic of mastery. *Underwater* mobilizes eco-gothic imagery to reanimate the deep sea as an active and resistant environment. The movie benefits from Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's suggestion of how the body of a monster gives life to fear and anxiety, and is born as an embodiment of the particular culture of the time (4). In light of this argument, the monstrous entity that emerges from the trench operates not merely as spectacle but as allegory. The monster materializes the repressed materiality of the ocean, its depth, opacity, and nonhuman agency by returning violently against the extractive regime that seeks to commodify it. The creature embodies the gothic "return of the repressed," exposing the illusion that planetary waters can be fully enclosed, controlled, or monetized.

By interpreting the monster in the movie as a symbolic manifestation of the hardships that will emerge as a consequence of blue capitalist practices, this paper aims to analyze how *Underwater* reveals the instability of blue capitalist expansion as it positions eco-gothic horror as a political aesthetic that renders the submerged violence of oceanic enclosure and the abyssal forces that resist it.

Keywords: Blue capitalism, ecogothic, ocean, resilience, *Underwater*

Short Bio: Sevilay Keçelioğlu holds a BA in English Language and Literature from TED University, where her undergraduate graduation project focused on posthumanism in literature and was titled *Trans/Posthuman Bodies in the Anthropocentric Universe of The Stone Gods*. She completed her MA in the same field at TED University, with a thesis entitled *The New Gothic Turn in Cli-Fi: Jeff VanderMeer's Annihilation and Tim Lebbon's Eden as Dark Hyperobjective Narratives*. She currently works as an instructor at OSTİM Technical University, School of Foreign Languages. Her research interests include posthuman theory and the environmental humanities.

Feeling “Blue”: Oceanic Depth and the Ontology of Grief in *Sea Wall*

Doğa Özmen

TED University, Türkiye

doga.ozmen@tedu.edu.tr

Simon Stephens’s *Sea Wall* (2008) articulates the trauma of sudden loss through a blue logic that foregrounds visceral human-ocean entanglement. This logic is most evident in the speaker’s recollection of his encounter with the sea wall, where the terrestrial comfort of a “gradual slope” is shattered by a submerged precipice plunging into abyssal darkness. Rather than presenting this bathymetric rupture as a hostile void, I argue that it is a radical site of contact where the illusion of solid ground gives way to the turbulent yet constitutive fluid essence of the self. The sea thus frames the narrative, materializing the ontology of grief.

When reframed through Steve Mentz’s conceptualization of the ocean as an environment that is fundamentally “alien” yet constitutive of the human experience (*Ocean 2*), the play presents grief as a submersive immersion into our own aqueous vulnerability, marking a return to, rather than an escape from, reality. Alex’s encounter thus becomes a form of “oceanic immersion” that “teaches through feeling” (*Introduction* 132), forcing him to relinquish the illusory stability of the shore and confront the “ancient intimacy” of oceanic depth (*Ocean* 116).

This revelation marks a shift from a “dry” rational epistemology to a “wet” ontology. As the illusion of a “gradual slope” collapses, knowledge itself becomes a visceral encounter with depth, revealing the limits of terrestrial explanations. Reading Steinberg and Peters’s “wet ontology” alongside Oppermann’s “storied matter”, I argue that the sea in *Sea Wall* operates both as a volumetric void that resists terrestrial mapping and as an agentic narrative force that materializes human fragility. As this encounter with oceanic depth enters the speaker’s bodily experience, drawing on Astrida Neimanis’s hydrofeminist framework, I interpret the physical “hole” in Alex’s stomach not as a metaphor for sadness but as a somatic internalization of the oceanic abyss, a trans-corporeal reminder of our shared watery embodiment. Ultimately, the play suggests that weathering grief requires abandoning the illusion of solid ground and inhabiting the shifting rhythms of our aqueous vulnerability within planetary entanglements.

Keywords: *Sea Wall*, wet ontology, storied matter, hydrofeminism, grief

Short Bio: Doğa Özmen holds a BA in English Language and Literature from Hacettepe University and is currently a master's student in the same field at TED University. She is also an Instructor at the School of Foreign Languages at OSTİM Technical University. Her research focuses on posthumanist theory and interdisciplinary literary studies, particularly the interconnectedness of literature and science, and how this relationship shapes narrative form and ways of thinking, which also form the core of her master's thesis.

The Viscous Deluge: Marmara Mucilage as a Posthuman Reimagining of the Great Flood

Asım Esat Kalyon
TED University, Türkiye
esat.kalyon@tedu.edu.tr

In the classical imagination, the “Great Flood” serves as a divine reset, a violent cleansing of the world where water acts as a tool of purification. However, in the epoch of the Anthropocene, the perception of the water as a grandiose body has taken on a different, more unsettling consistency. This paper explores the 2021 Marmara Sea mucilage as a contemporary, viscous deluge that challenges the traditional tropes of the Blue Humanities.

Building upon my previous conceptualization of the “fluid persona,” the idea that societal norms are leaking and wet rather than self-contained and dry, I argue that the Marmara mucilage represents the sea’s own *leaky* protest. Through Stacy Alaimo’s *trans-corporeality*, sea is seen as a body of its own with an anatomical structure. In this framework, the mucilage is not merely an external ecological disaster but a biological “phlegm” that reveals the literal lack of boundaries between the industrial human and the marine ecosystem.

While the mythic Great Flood was a crisis of volume, the mucilage is a crisis of viscosity. By contrasting the mythic “cleansing” waters of the Ark with the “clogging” mucus of the Marmara, this paper seeks to dismantle the “tidy and elegant persona” of modern terrestrial life. The mucilage coats our hulls, enters our gills, and disrupts our binary of land/sea, forcing an encounter with the “Blue” in its abject form. Ultimately, I propose that we are no longer sailing over a submissive ocean, but are instead submerged in a sticky, shared biological reality. The Marmara mucilage thus serves as a grim, fluid manifesto: a reminder that when the planet leaks, there is no dry ground left to stand on.

Keywords: Marmara mucilage, The Great Flood, posthumanism, viscosity, leaky bodies

Short Bio: Asım Esat Kalyon is an MA student at TED University, Department of English Language and Literature. Having completed his Erasmus+ in the University of Milan, Italy, he received his Bachelor’s degree in English Language and Literature from the Social Sciences University of Ankara. His areas of interest include posthumanism, new materialism, magical

realism, and animalities. Kalyon currently works as a research assistant at TED University, Department of English Language and Literature.

Organizing Committee

Hosts

Müge Artar, Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Cappadocia University,

Türkiye

muge.artar@kapadokya.edu.tr

Prof. Dr. Müge Artar graduated from Middle East Technical University (METU) with a degree in Psychology in 1988. She then served for two years on the academic advisory team for the Turkish Television (TRT) program *Sesame Street* in Ankara. In 1990, she joined Ankara University, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Department of Psychological Services in Education as a research assistant and retired in August 2021. In the same period, she began her role as Professor of Psychology at Cappadocia University, Faculty of Humanities. At Cappadocia University, Prof. Dr. Artar has also served as coordinator of the Child Development program and nursery schools, coordinator of the Psychology Department, and Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Design, and Fine Arts until 2024. Since 2025, she has been serving as Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

**Serpil Oppermann, Director, Environmental Humanities Center, Cappadocia
University, Türkiye**

serpil.oppermann@kapadokya.edu.tr

Serpil Oppermann is Professor of environmental humanities and director of the Environmental Humanities Center at Cappadocia University. She was the 7th President of EASLCE (2016-2018). She is one of the signatories to the “World Scientists’ Warning to Humanity: Second Notice” (2017) and the “World Scientists’ Warning of Climate Emergency” (2020). She is a member of the Advisory Council of METI (Messaging Extraterrestrial Intelligence-- <https://meti.org/advisors>) and the Turkish Ambassador in the SLSAeu (European Society for Literature, Science and the Arts-the sister organization of the international, USA-based Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts-- <https://www.slsa-eu.org/governance.html>). In her work, she explores the expressive creativity of everything that is more-than-human in the intersections of science studies and the environmental and blue humanities. Oppermann is the author of *Ecologies of a Storied Planet in the Anthropocene* (West Virginia UP, 2023), *Blue Humanities: Storied Waters in the Anthropocene* (Cambridge UP, 2023), She is also the editor and co-editor of seven collections and over 100 essays and articles on ecocriticism and environmental and blue humanities. Among them are *Material Ecocriticism* (Indiana UP, 2014), *Environmental*

Humanities: Voices from the Anthropocene (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), both co-edited with S. Iovino, and Turkish Ecocriticism: From Neolithic to Contemporary Timescapes (Lexington Books, 2021), co-edited with Sinan Akıllı.

**Sinan Akıllı, Director, School of Graduate Studies and Research, Cappadocia
University, Türkiye**

sinan.akilli@kapadokya.edu.tr

sinanakilli@gmail.com

Sinan Akıllı is currently an associate professor of English at the Department of English Translation and Interpreting at the Faculty of Humanities, Cappadocia University. After receiving his doctoral degree from the British Cultural Studies program of Hacettepe University in 2005, has specialized in various areas in cultural studies such as cultural theory, popular culture, travel writing, and adaptation studies. In the past decade, Akıllı has been concentrating his research on ecocriticism, critical animal studies and posthumanism. Most recently, he has published his “The Rise of the Novel and the Narrative Labor of Horses in the English Novel of the Early Anthropocene” in the edited collection Planet Work: Rethinking Labor and Leisure in the Anthropocene (Bucknell University Press, 2022); co-edited, with Serpil Oppermann, Turkish Ecocriticism: From Neolithic to Contemporary Timescapes (Lexington Books, 2020); and contributed the article “The Agency and the Matter of the Dead Horse in the Victorian Novel” to the edited volume Equestrian Cultures: Horses, Human Society and the Discourse of Modernity (University of Chicago Press, 2019).

In Türkiye, Akıllı’s work in critical animal studies has been published in peer-reviewed journals such as Pasajlar (special issue title “Antroposen Çağı” [The Anthropocene Age], Article Title: “Antroposen’de Türlerarası Adalet için Bir Model: Çalışma ve Ölüm Temelinde İnsan-Hayvan Ortaklıkları” [A Model for Interspecies Justice in the Anthropocene: Human-Animal Commonalities in Labor and Mortality], September 2022); DoğuBatı (special issue title “Faunaya Ağıt: Hayvan” [Elegy to Fauna: The Animal], Article Title (with Adem Balcı): “Biz Kim Oluyoruz?: Hayvan Hakları/Özgürlüğü Savunuculuğu ve İnsanmerkezcilik Paradoksu” (“Who are We Becoming?: The Paradox of Animal Rights/Liberation Advocacy and Anthropocentrism”, March 2018); Şarkî Edebiyat ve Sanat Dergisi 1.2 (Ekoeleştirme Özel Sayısı [Ecocriticism Special Issue], Article Title: “Hayvan Çalışmaları “İnsan-merkezci” Olmaktan Kurtulabilir mi? “İnsansonrası” Kuramların Sundukları...” [Can Animal Studies Go Beyond Anthropocentrism? The Prospects of Posthuman Theory...], 2017). Dr. Akıllı was also the

guest editor of the Şarkî Edebiyat ve Sanat Dergisi 6-7 (Hayvan Çalışmaları Özel Sayısı [Animal Studies Special Issue], June 2018).

More recently, Akıllı gave a talk entitled “Hayvanın (Yeniden) İcadı [(Re)Invention of the Animal]” as part of the Ankara Konuşmaları series and has been the guest of the national radio program Antroposen Sohbetler (Conversations on the Anthropocene) with his talk on “Antroposen ve Hayvanlar: Empati, Ekoloji, Geçmişten Bugüne İlişkilerimiz [The Anthropocene and Animals: Empathy, Ecology, Our Relationships from the Past to the Present],” both of which have been published as podcast and transcribed text.

Akıllı has been serving with Serpil Oppermann in the administration of the Environmental Humanities Center at Cappadocia University since 2018. With Serpil Oppermann and Steven Hartman, he serves as co-editor of Ecocene: Cappadocia Journal of Environmental Humanities, a publication of the Environmental Humanities Center and co-edits the series in Environmental Humanities by Cappadocia University Press with Fatma Aykanat. He also serves on the boards of national and international peer-reviewed journals, book series, and conferences organized by various institutions.

Interinstitutional Committee

Fatma Aykanat, İzmir Katip Çelebi University, Türkiye

f.aykanat67@gmail.com

Dr. Fatma Aykanat holds BA and MA degrees in English Language and Literature and has obtained her PhD. in British Cultural Studies at Hacettepe University. Currently, she works as Asst. Prof. in the Department of English Language and Literature at İzmir Katip Çelebi University. Besides, Aykanat is one of the executive members of the Environmental Humanities Center at Cappadocia University, the chair of Cappadocia University Sustainability Committee, the Book Review Editor of *Ecocene: Cappadocia Journal of Environmental Humanities*, and the co editor of the Environmental Humanities Series of Cappadocia University Press (KÜN Yayınları). Aykanat's recent research areas and academic interests include Anthropocene Studies with a particular focus on Cli-Fi, Blue Humanities, Posthumanities, critical animal and plant studies, and eco-psychology.

Sevda Ayva, Iğdır University, Türkiye

sevdakarataş@gmail.com

After obtaining her Ph.D in 2022, in the Department of English Language and Literature, Hacettepe University, Sevda Ayva joined the English Department at Iğdır University as assistant professor. Her recent research interests are ecocriticism, blue humanities, posthumanism, animal studies, plant studies, and disability studies.

Hatice Bay, Cappadocia University, Türkiye

hatice.bay@kapadokya.edu.tr

Hatice Bay is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Translation and Interpreting at Cappadocia University, Türkiye. She holds an MA in English Literature from Middle East Technical University, Türkiye, and a PhD in American Literature from the University of Hamburg, Germany. Her research interests include American and English literature, literary urban studies, and literary theory, with a particular focus on space, culture, and narrative form in modern and contemporary literature.

M. Sibel Dinçel, Cappadocia University, Türkiye

sibel.dincel@kapadokya.edu.tr

M. Sibel Dinçel is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at Cappadocia University. She received her BA, MA, and PhD in English Language and Literature from Hacettepe University. Prior to her current position, she held academic posts at Hacettepe University, Ufuk University, and TOBB University of Economics and Technology, where she also undertook administrative roles such as department and program coordination. Her research and teaching span a wide range of literary and cultural studies, with particular emphasis on British drama, feminist criticism, gender studies, and ecofeminism. She has published articles and book chapters on topics including Shakespearean influences, modern British theatre, and representations of identity and gender in literature. In addition to her academic work, Dr. Dinçel is actively engaged in professional literary translation and has translated a variety of scholarly and literary texts. In 2025, she served as the editor of the special “Ecofeminism” issue of *PASAJLAR* journal. Her recent translation of Greta Gaard’s *Critical Ecofeminism* is forthcoming, and a book chapter titled “*British Feminist Theatre*” is also expected to be published soon.

Gülşah Göçmen, Aksaray University, Türkiye

gulshgocmen@gmail.com

Gülşah Göçmen is Assistant Professor in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures, Aksaray University, Turkey. Her PhD centers on the modernist sense of place in the works of E. M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence, and Virginia Woolf from an ecocritical viewpoint. She is an advisory board member of the Environmental Humanities Center at Cappadocia University. She is also the co-managing editor of the center’s international, peer-reviewed, transdisciplinary Environmental Humanities journal *Ecocene*. Göçmen’s Turkish translation of Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan’s co-edited collection *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explanations* (Duke University Press, 1995) has been partly published as short series in 2022 (A7 Publishing, İstanbul). Among her academic research interests are Ecocritical Theory, The Novel, Environmental Ethics, and Blue Humanities.

Selda Öztürk, Cappadocia University, Türkiye

selda.ozturk@kapadokya.edu.tr

Selda Öztürk is an Assistant Professor at Cappadocia University's School of Health Sciences. She completed her B.Sc. in Biology Education at Ondokuz Mayıs University in 2014, followed by an M.Sc. (in 2017) and Ph.D. in Biology (in 2021) at the Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University. Her doctoral research focused on using Ephemeroptera (Insecta) for ecological assessments in water monitoring, which showcases her deep commitment to environmental science.

Öztürk's publications feature her expertise in hydrobiology, fish population dynamics, and water quality management, with a keen interest in biological monitoring and river basin management. She is also an active researcher, contributing significantly to projects that assess biodiversity and water quality across various regions in Turkey.

In addition to her research, Dr. Öztürk holds significant administrative roles at Cappadocia University, including Coordinator of the Sustainability Office, Member of the Sustainability Committee, and Executive Board Member of the Environmental Humanities Center. She also advises the Sustainable Development Student Community, emphasizing her dedication to fostering environmental awareness and sustainability in academia.

Dr. Öztürk's academic contributions appeared in numerous publications such as *Biologia* and the *Journal of Applied Ichthyology*. Her teaching repertoire includes courses on Biostatistics, Soil and Water Information Pollution and Control, and Scientific Research Methods and Techniques, reflecting her comprehensive knowledge and approach to education in environmental and biological sciences.

Hakan Yılmaz, Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Türkiye

hyilmaz@mehmetakif.edu.tr

Hakan Yılmaz is Associate Professor and Chair in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures, at Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Türkiye. He has published several articles both in English and Turkish on ecocriticism, phenomenology, and British fiction. His latest publications include "Antoposen ve Etik: Antroposen Çağı'nda Etiği Yeniden Düşünmek" [Anthropocene and Ethics: Rethinking Ethics in the Anthropocene] ve "J. G. Ballard'ın Cennete Bir Koşu Romanında Aynılık ve Başkalık Üzerine Bir İnceleme" [A Study on Sameness and Alterity in J.G. Ballard's *Rushing to Paradise*]. His fields of interest are modernist and contemporary fiction, phenomenology, ecocriticism, and cultural studies. He also currently serves as co-managing editor of *Ecocene: Cappadocia Journal of Environmental Humanities*

and an advisory board member of the Environmental Humanities Center at Cappadocia University.

Mete al, Cappadocia University, Trkiye

mete.cal@kapadokya.edu.tr

Mete al earned his PhD in 2022 from the Department of English Language and Literature at Pamukkale University. He is currently employed as an Assistant Professor at Cappadocia University, where he continues his academic pursuits in the field of English literature and cultural studies. His areas of expertise and research interests encompass postcolonial identity, migration, language, and space, with a particular focus on how these intersecting themes shape individual and collective experiences in literary and cultural contexts. His scholarly work engages critically with questions of belonging, displacement, and the complex negotiations of identity in transnational and postcolonial frameworks.

Graduate Assistants

Aslıhan Babacan, Cappadocia University, Türkiye

aslihan.babacan@kapadokya.edu.tr

Aslıhan Babacan is a Research Assistant in the Department of English Language and Literature at Cappadocia University. She is currently a PhD student in the Department of English Language and Literature at Erciyes University. Her academic work engages with literary theory and critical approaches to textual analysis, with a particular focus on in-depth psychoanalytic readings of literary texts. She is especially interested in interpretive methods that enable nuanced and critical engagement with literature.

Havvanur Kılıç, Cappadocia University, Türkiye

havvanur.kilic@kapadokya.edu.tr

Havvanur Kılıç is a Research Assistant in the Department of English Language and Literature at Cappadocia University. She is currently pursuing her M.A. degree in English Language and Literature. Her academic work is grounded in hermeneutics and psychoanalytic theory. Her research interests include the study of the English novel, with a particular emphasis on interpretive methodologies and psychoanalytic approaches to literary texts.

Alperen Özen, Cappadocia University, Türkiye

alperen.ozen@kapadokya.edu.tr

Alperen Özen works at Cappadocia University in Türkiye as a lecturer at the School of Foreign Languages and as a staff member at the International Relations and Exchange Programmes Office. His research interests include the Blue Humanities, hydro-criticism, nineteenth-century British literature, and human–nonhuman relations, with a particular focus on how water shapes narrative form, cultural imagination, and ethical thoughts. Currently, he is in progress to complete his master’s thesis.