



## HFRN 2025 Online Summer Workshop

### Transnational and Postnational Historical Fictions

#### Bios and Abstracts

##### Allan, Keisha

Dr. Keisha Allan is an assistant professor in the Department of Black & Latinx Studies at Baruch College. She is the recipient of the McKittrick Book Award. Her research focuses on twentieth-century Caribbean literature. Within this field, she examines Caribbean literature by women writers who critique social and political inequities in their societies. She examines how selected female authors from the Caribbean create fictional worlds that have the effect of subverting patriarchal perspectives and paradigms. She interrogates society and artistic responsibility, with women presented as creatively engaged in revolutionary activities aimed at reshaping ideas and perspectives in the national imaginary.

##### **Historical Fiction Without Borders: Postnational Critique and Transnational Memory in *Amour***

This paper examines the transnational and postnational dimensions of historical fiction in Marie Vieux-Chauvet's novel *Amour* (from her 1968 trilogy *Amour, Colère et Folie*), situating it within a broader framework of non-national historical narratives. In *Amour*, Chauvet engages in a veiled critique of Francois Duvalier's brutal regime in Haiti, using her fictional narrative space to protest against social and patriarchal repression. Chauvet camouflages her critique of the Duvalier dynasty by setting the story in 1939, four years after the United States ends its twenty-one year occupation of the nation. Although Chauvet masked the novel's political connection to Duvalier by inserting the historic events after the American occupation in 1939, her fiction is read as exposing and interrogating the reality of Duvalier's regime of terror to her readers. Set in a thinly veiled version of mid-20th-century Haiti under authoritarian rule, *Amour* foregrounds a deeply personal and psychological account of life under political repression. While embedded in a specific national context, the narrative resists containment within a singular national framework. Through its use of allegory, intimate subjectivity, and aesthetic strategies that transcend national realism, *Amour* articulates a historical consciousness shaped by exile, diaspora, and global structures of power. This paper argues that *Amour* performs a postnational critique by destabilizing the boundaries between private and public, memory and history, and self and nation. I argue that Chauvet's work exemplifies how historical fiction can reimagine history beyond national boundaries and contribute to a broader, transnational discourse on trauma, resistance, and the politics of remembrance.

##### Baghli Berbar, Souad

Dr Souad Baghli Berbar (she/her) teaches Anglo-American literature at Tlemcen University, Algeria. Her interests include travel literature, Orientalism and computer-assisted literary criticism. She is an active member of the Language, Literature and Culture research lab at Tlemcen University, of SELVA (the association for the study of Anglophone travel literature) and Managing Editor of the Journal *ELLiC*. <https://journals.univ-tlemcen.dz/ELLIC/index.php/ELLIC>  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4091-2306>



## **Colonial Algeria in the African–American Gaze: William Gardner Smith’s Novel *The Stone Face* (1963)**

Historical narratives about Algerian colonial past took various forms, ranging from chronicles and travel books, to epic poems, novels and even films, mediating the divide between fact and fiction, and providing complementary perspectives on the subject. Algerian as well as French authors, due to their primary concern with the matter, have certainly contributed their vision of “the years of fire” in Lakhdar Hamina’s words. What is less known is that colonial Algeria has also been documented by British novelists such as Norman Lewis and Allan Sillitoe, sympathising in fictional form with Algerian freedom fighters rather than embracing French positions. The present paper focuses on an even lesser-known portrait of Algerian subjugation and French colonial crimes by African–American author William Gardner Smith in his 1963 novel *The Stone Face*. At once a bildungsroman and a historical novel of commitment, it resonates with issues of identity and race, telling the story of Simeon Brown, a Black American exile in Paris where he discovers the hideous face of French colonialism and understands Algerian struggle for independence. He becomes an eye-witness of French violence and murder, especially the massacres of 17 October 1961 in the Paris which he had sought as a refuge from white racism in the USA, blending history with fiction and conveying a common human concern for all “the wretched of the earth” in a transnational novel.

### **Balakrishnan, Sangeetha**

Sangeetha Balakrishnan holds a PhD in Chemistry and has conducted postdoctoral research in Nanoscience. After six years of teaching Chemistry, she transitioned to Literary Studies, aligning with her interest in the (inter-)discipline of Literature and Science. Her current PhD research explores biofiction and its intersections with scientific discourse.

### **R, Latha**

Latha R, an Associate Professor of English, has nearly 30 years of experience in higher education. Specialising in ELT and online pedagogy, she is an award-winning academic who has delivered numerous invited talks on language acquisition and digital learning. She is also actively engaged in curriculum design and development.

### **The Empire at Play: Transnational and Postnational Histories in *Lagaan***

This paper examines *Lagaan* (dir. Ashutosh Gowariker, 2001) as a cinematic work of historical fiction that narrates the colonial past of India through non-national frameworks. Set in late 19th-century British India, the film depicts a fictional cricket match between Indian villagers and colonial officers as a means of resisting oppressive taxation. While often read as a nationalist allegory, *Lagaan* simultaneously stages themes of cultural negotiation, global solidarity, and ethical resistance that exceed the nation-state. This raises the central research question: How does *Lagaan*, as a cinematic historical fiction, imagine the colonial past through transnational and postnational lenses rather than a purely nationalist one?

To address this, the paper adopts an interdisciplinary methodology, drawing centrally from Paul Jay’s theory of transnational literature and Ulrich Beck’s concept of the postnational constellation. These are supported by Arjun Appadurai’s framework of global cultural flows and Bruce Robbins’ notion of cosmopolitanism and ethical belonging. These theoretical perspectives are used to examine the film’s historical imagination, its narrative of collective resistance, and its circulation as a global cultural artefact.



The paper argues that *Lagaan* enacts a non-national historical imagination that reconfigures cultural identity, belonging, and political agency beyond the bounds of nationalist historiography. By mobilising cricket—an imperial sport turned site of subaltern performance—the film constructs a transnational idiom that resonates with global audiences while critically engaging colonial memory. *Lagaan*, thus, becomes a vital text for theorising how historical fiction in cinematic form can articulate layered, non-national visions of the past.

### **Barcz, Anna**

Anna Barcz is an Associate Professor at the T. Manteuffel Institute of History (Spatial History Lab), Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS) in Warsaw. She has held European fellowships, including the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship at the Trinity Long Room Hub (Trinity College Dublin) and the Rachel Carson Center Fellowship at LMU Munich. She was trained as a philosopher and literary scholar at the University of Warsaw and the Institute of Literary Research (PAS). Her main research projects focus on rediscovering various cultural sources that influence environmental narratives, particularly those related to rivers such as the Odra/Oder (2016–2018), Vistula (2019–2023), and main European rivers (2024 – now). The results of her teams' work have been published in key journals for the eco-debate and emphasize the humanities' role in it (e.g. *Environmental Hazards, Space and Culture*, *Water History*, *Secondary Texts*, *Environmental Humanities* – forthcoming in 2025). She is also the author of three monographs: “Environmental Cultures in Soviet East Europe: Literature, History and Memory” (Bloomsbury 2021); “Animal Narratives and Culture: Vulnerable Realism” (CSP 2017); “Ecorealism: from Ecocriticism to Zoocriticism in Polish Literature” (in Polish, 2016). Publications in OA: <https://pan-pl.academia.edu/AnnaBarcz>

### **Major Danube Floods in the 19th Century Europe: The Phenomenon of Travelogues**

What stories do rivers tell when they flood, and what stories do humans believe they tell? The Danube's transnational functions are deeply embedded in pan-European literary traditions, providing insights into its historical and political significance. However, the 19th-century history of the Danube's floods has not yet been juxtaposed with their literary representations in travelogues. Often written by British adventurers, these specific sources – and the genre – challenge the techno-centric perspective on the Danube's hydro-infrastructure and imperial hydroregimes, offering instead a more nuanced and sometimes even a non-anthropocentric understanding of the European "Nile" history.

### **Bergmann, Ina**

Ina Bergmann is an Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Würzburg, Germany (JMU) and the co-founder of Irish Studies Würzburg (ISWÜ). She has held fellowships with the Rothermere American Institute (RAI) at the University of Oxford, UK, the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts & Humanities Research Institute (TLRH) at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, and the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens at San Marino, CA, USA. She is the author of two monographs, among them *The Nineteenth Century Revis(it)ed: The New Historical Fiction* (Routledge 2021), the (co-)editor of twelve volumes of essays and special issues of journals, most recently *History in Stories: The Irish Past and the Challenges of the Present* (Lang 2024) as well as a frequent contributor to peer-reviewed journals and international book projects such as "A Genealogy of the New



Historical Fiction" for The Routledge Companion to Neo-historical Fiction (Routledge forthcoming).

### **Transatlantic Herstory: Nation and Gender in the New Irish American Historical Fiction**

The 'maps and chaps'-version of history for a long time dominated the traditional historical novel, which focused mainly on male protagonists and was perceived as a genre of nation building. Today, an emerging body of historical fiction revisits and revises hegemonic historiography, among them texts that reclaim the marginalized experiences of Irish women who emigrated across the Atlantic during pivotal historical periods, for example during the Great Famine or the labor movements of the early twentieth century. This paper explores what I term Transatlantic Herstory, historical fiction that centers on female Irish immigrants in the Green Atlantic and examines the intersections of gender, migration, and national identity. Texts like Colm Tóibín's *Brooklyn* (2009) and *Long Island* (2024), Emma Donoghue's *Astray* (2012), and Colum McCann's *TransAtlantic* (2013) foreground female agency, trauma, and resistance. They tell complex stories of Irish American women whose identities are shaped not only by their heritage, but also by the social and political forces of the diaspora. The transatlantic settings function not just as geographical elements emphasizing cultural mobility, they also serve as material substitutes of metaphorical journeys towards self-definition. Themes like motherhood, domestic labor, religious repression, and sexual autonomy work as vehicles for challenging both Irish and American cultural memory. The narratives thus interrogate national myths of both Ireland and America. In addition to thematic innovation, these texts frequently disrupt linear historical timelines, experimenting with narrative form to reflect the fractured experiences of immigration. The texts aim at historical visibility, bringing to the fore the voices of women too long silenced in both Irish and American historiography. By engaging with current theoretical frameworks in Transatlantic North American Studies and New Irish Studies, this paper argues that Transatlantic Herstory rewrites history from a gendered perspective, questions the concept of nation, and innovates the form of historical fiction.

### **Demirbas, Leman**

Leman Demirbaş is a PhD candidate at the Department of English Culture and Literature at Atılım University (Ankara- Türkiye) with a full scholarship. She completed M.A with her thesis on postcolonial theatre titled "Cultural nationalism in the wake of postcolonial resistance: A comparative analysis of William Butler Yeats and Wole Soyinka" under the supervision of Dr. Clare Brandabur and Prof. Dr. Barry Tharaud at Fatih University with a full scholarship. She has presented and published on Wole Soyinka, Shakespeare, Dorothy Wordsworth, Philip Larkin, Marquez, Kazuo Ishiguro, Patrick McCabe, John Banville, and Bernardine Evaristo.

### **Virginia Woolf's Orlando and the Non-National Shift in Historical Fiction**

The aim of this paper is to explore Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928) as a radical challenge to the national frameworks of historical fiction as theorized by Georg Lukács and his successors. While Lukács associates the historical novel with the emergence of national consciousness, Woolf presents a transhistorical and transnational narrative that resists the gendered, linear, and realist conventions of the genre. As Diana Wallace argues, the dominant tradition of historical fiction has systematically excluded women's contributions, particularly those that reimagine history outside of patriarchal and nationalist models. *Orlando* offers precisely such a reimagining, combining biography, fantasy, fiction, and satire to construct a fluid and ironic relationship to history. By tracing *Orlando*'s journey across centuries and borders, from Elizabethan England to Ottoman



Constantinople and back to modern London, Woolf displaces the nation as the primary frame of historical experience. Constantinople, in particular, functions as a liminal, transformative space where fixed identities (national, gendered, historical) dissolve and new possibilities emerge. Thus, Orlando foregrounds the non-national in historical fiction, not only as a setting but as a method, a way of telling history that is fluid and deeply resistant to the teleologies of national progress. This paper argues that Orlando offers a feminist alternative to dominant historical narratives by embracing multiplicity, fluidity, and imagination.

### **Downes, Stephanie**

Dr Stephanie Downes is a Lecturer in English and Creative Writing at La Trobe University, Australia. She holds a PhD in medieval literature (University of Sydney) and a Masters in Publishing and Communications (University of Melbourne). She researches medieval and early modern literary and book cultures and contemporary historical fictions.

### **Here and There: Australian Historical Fictions and International Literary Awards**

Jerome De Groot has argued that the historical novel is an 'international form' with the capacity to achieve success on a 'transnational scale' (2009: 93). Major awards for literary fiction support the genre's transnational potential by promoting the visibility of certain historical fictions in the international market – as in the case of US-based Australian writer Peter Carey's *The True History of the Kelly Gang* (2001), which won both the UK's Booker Prize in 2001 and France's Prix Meilleur du Livre Étranger in 2003 in addition to a number of Australian prizes. Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, historical fictions by Australian writers have performed exceptionally well in the international award scene, especially in the US and the UK: four of the five Australian winners of the Booker Prize were works of historical fiction; while the only Australian-born author to have been awarded the Pulitzer Prize is Geraldine Brooks, in 2006, for her historical novel *March* (2005), set during the American Civil War.

In this paper, I explore the relatively high number of historical fictions by Australian writers to have won major awards overseas, paying attention to the transnational movement and success of such fictions in relation to the prize mechanisms that drive their broad commercial appeal. In so doing, I consider the various contradictions – cultural, social, political and economic – inherent in the genre's perceived relationship to nationalistic sentiment(s), and its articulations of transnational identity as they manifest in western colonial contexts.

### **Irei, Nozomi**

Nozomi Irei (Ph.D., Comparative Literature) is an associate professor in the English Department at Southern Utah University. She teaches courses in World Literature, Continental European Literature, Critical Theory, and Existentialism. Her current research interests include post-war writing and the broader relationship between the atomic bombings in Japan and the mining and testing in the American Southwest.

### **"Non-National" Historicity in Endo's *Silence* and *Silko's Ceremony***

My paper explores how the "non-national" appears in post-WWII historical fictions. I will compare two novels that are often considered to be instances of strong national or transnational articulations. *Silence*, Shusaku Endo's 1966 novel written in Japanese, is



considered to be a hallmark of modern Japanese literature, exploring "Japanese-ness" via the question of whether or not a truly Japanese Christianity is possible. Likewise, *Ceremony*, Leslie Marmon Silko's 1977 novel written in English, is considered to be "representative" of "Native American Literature," exploring the specificity of the Laguna people within the United States of America. While both novels are indeed important texts in their categories of national literatures, they are perhaps even more valuable in their destabilizing of the very concept of the "national." The novels put into question concepts of national identity, cultural identity, and even the trans-national or international, i.e., neither novel attempts to resolve the character's plight or the plot through a universalizing of suffering. I propose that *Silence* and *Ceremony* remain grounded in an historicity that insists on an intimate, uncanny resemblance between the time of the historical fiction and the present. *Silence* and *Ceremony* pose powerful questions to their present-day (post-war Japan and post-Vietnam War America, respectively), and as such, they show how historical fiction--as writing--can open up possibilities to reflect on (vs. "represent") the past, present, and future, when an authentic historicizing seems otherwise impossible in the atomic age (Haver 1996: 110).

### **Lehnen, Christine**

Christine Lehnen is a Lecturer in English and Creative Writing at the University of Exeter. Her upcoming monograph, "The Historical Novel in the Twenty-First Century: Grievable Bodies and Marginalised Histories," will be published by Routledge in 2026.

### **The Transnational Historical Novel: Some Initial Observations**

There are two difficulties in thinking about transnational historical fictions: Firstly, we do not know what we mean when we look for the transnational or postnational in literature, because literary history has traditionally been told along national lines. Secondly, the historical novel has been characterised as a national genre, even as a nation-building endeavour, by critics from Georg Lukács to Diana Wallace and Susan Brantley. In "The Historical Novel, Transnationalism, and the Postmodern Era" (Routledge, 2017), Brantley diagnoses the British historical novel in particular as a fundamentally national genre.

In this paper, I argue that the British historical novel is a nationalised rather than national genre: I suggest that we do not recognise the transnational because we have not thought about what it might look like, and because we have learnt to reflect through historical fictions on national history and historiography. Drawing on postcolonial critic Edouard Glissant, I will offer some initial observations on the shape of the transnational in literature and sketch out an analysis of transnational elements in twenty-first-century British historical fiction, as well as, hopefully, some examples from earlier periods. These novels might demonstrate a transnational historical consciousness, or they might reflect on the role afforded to the non-national in the imagining of national history – or both. If this is the case, they may already contain a transnational historical imaginary, the outlines of which I hope to trace in this paper.

### **Li, Yuetong**

Yuetong Li is a candidated PhD student in the faculty of History at the University of Cambridge, with the dissertation about the popularisation of history in the second half of the nineteenth century in Germany.



## **Mediating the Past: Lion Feuchtwanger and the Narrative Transmission of Historical Knowledge**

Lion Feuchtwanger (1884–1958) stands at the intersection of historical imagination and literary mediation, offering a distinctive model of how fiction can transmit historical knowledge across national and temporal boundaries. Writing during the Weimar Republic and later in exile, Feuchtwanger crafted narratives—such as *Jud Süß* and the Josephus trilogy—that do more than recount historical events; they reframe the past through the lens of contemporary ethical and political dilemmas. His historical fiction emerges as a narrative form capable of shaping public understandings of history beyond academic discourse, combining rigorous research with the affective and rhetorical powers of literature.

Set against the nationalist melodrama of Felix Dahn, whose works exemplify a 19th-century *völkisch* mythos, and the reflective, morally nuanced prose of Ricarda Huch, Feuchtwanger's writing offers a postnational approach to the past. Through comparative attention to narrative technique, historiographical posture, and patterns of reception, the discussion reveals how these authors differently negotiate the tension between historical accuracy and fictional invention—particularly within a rapidly expanding literary marketplace.

Feuchtwanger's fiction functions not merely as representation but as intervention: a form of historiographical expression that contests national master-narratives while engaging readers in historical reflection. In foregrounding the literary, material, and ethical dimensions of historical fiction, the analysis highlights how such works mediate the past for a global readership and participate in the broader cultural production of historical meaning."

### **Mulalic, Lejla**

LEJLA MULALIĆ, PhD, teaches British literature, history and culture at the Department of English Language and Literature, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her main areas of research are: contemporary British and specifically Scottish literature, vulnerability studies and ethics of care, historical novel and peace education.

### **History at the intersection of storytelling, landscape and global change in Jim Crace's *The Gift of Stones***

Set in an unspecified part of the world in the Stone Age, Jim Crace's novel *The Gift of Stones* (1988) portrays the unique moment of transition from one prehistorical era to another. Instead of a neat chronological text-book transition to the Bronze Age, the novel offers an insight into a dismal routine of stone workers who think highly of themselves and their skill until the tales of the gift of bronze take their village by surprise. The tales of the new mysterious smiths and the wide world beyond the boundaries of the stoneys' community are narrated by two village outcasts – a nameless young man whose amputated arm makes him unfit for stone work and a little girl, daughter of a prostitute, whom he claims as his own. The novel roots its meaning in the changing landscape and climate, effectively demonstrating the provisionality of the concept of nation or any such "imagined community" in the face of global transitions. In doing so, it challenges the seductive illusion that, even though nation-states are a new concept, nations stretch far back into immemorial past and progress into endless future (Anderson 2006).

This paper explores the vulnerability of history, the body, and the landscape as the familiar world is dissolving and a new terrifying one is turning fiction into truth, with father's



stories becoming the only viable reality for the stoneworkers. Furthermore, the paper argues that, by exploring “humankind’s place within the greater evolutionary scheme of nature” (Tew, 2006, p. xii) and the concept of the end of the dominant ideologies, Crace’s novel powerfully resonates with the present time by foregrounding our intrinsic vulnerability and by celebrating storytelling as a form of resilience.

### **Nandini, Vagesh**

Vagesh Nandini is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in English Literature at the School of Liberal Arts, Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur, India. Her research interests encompass Literary Urban Studies, South Asian Literature, the Literature of the Global South, and Magic Realist fiction.

### **Entangled Pasts: Transnational Memory and Postnational Identity in Amitau Ghosh’s novel *The Shadow Lines***

National identities, as Benedict Anderson suggests, are constructed upon the twin altars of memory and forgetting. The selective exhumation or burial of historical events is often dictated by state narratives, and it is no coincidence that much historical fiction seeking to define national identity gravitates toward wars, martyrdom, and conquest—events that reinforce a binary between the nation and the “other.” Yet, it is precisely through these moments of rupture and violence that the coherence of national identity can also be destabilized and questioned.

This paper contends that Amitau Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* (1988) interrogates the boundaries of national memory by foregrounding the personal and transnational over the collective and nationalist. The novel reframes key historical events—such as the Partition of India and the Dhaka riots—not as discrete national traumas but as interconnected experiences of dislocation that transcend borders. Ghosh reveals the porousness of national boundaries by tracing the ripple effects of violence waged on national lines across multiple geographies and personal lives. The paper explores how the novel’s treatment of space, memory, and narrative voice enables a postnational reimagining of historical fiction—one that resists the hegemonic claims of the state over history and identity. The study asserts that Ghosh’s novel *The Shadow Lines* (1988) can be read as a seminal work of transnational historical fiction, which challenges the authority of nationalist historiography through its nuanced portrayal of entangled pasts and offers an alternative archive grounded in multiplicity, intimacy, and movement.

### **O’Connor, Siobhan**

I was awarded my doctorate by Manchester Metropolitan University in 2021 for a thesis entitled *The Tudor Turn: The Poetics and Politics of Englishness in Contemporary Historical Novels*. This research has been published by Bloomsbury Academic and Manchester University Press. I have also published with Bloomsbury on *The Historical Novel* and with the *Literary Encyclopaedia* on Philippa Gregory and C.J.Sansom. I have a forthcoming publication on the Tudor world in contemporary British historical crime novels with Manchester University Press and am preparing several publications for Brill’s *Global Historical Fictions* book series. This includes co-editing and contributing to the inaugural edited collection of the series on reparative historical fictions (2026).



I am one of the series editors for Brill's Global Historical Fictions and am Chair of the Historical Fictions Research Network.

### **The Transnational Female in Philippa Gregory's Fairmile Trilogy**

Philippa Gregory is probably one of the most popular and prolific authors of contemporary British historical fiction. She is best known for her depictions of the Plantagenet and Tudor courts and for telling the stories of the women who inhabited them. Because of this, it is tempting to see her work as firmly rooted in the national. However, there has always been a transnational dimension to Gregory's novels. This is most evident in her sympathetic narratives of figures like Catherine of Aragon and Anne of Cleves – Henry VIII's foreign-born queens – each of whom must assimilate Englishness whilst simultaneously embodying international alliances.

Gregory's late career trilogy of novels, *Tidelands* (2019), *Dark Tides* (2020) and *Dawnlands* (2022) which span the years between Britain's Interregnum and the exile of King James II, can arguably be seen as post-national. The Britain of these narratives is an emerging colonial and trading power whose activities extend far beyond its borders and this is reflected in settings that range beyond England to Venice, New England and Barbados. Whilst addressing horrors such as the genocidal treatment of Native Americans and the trans-Atlantic slave trade, Gregory also traces the networks and kinships that link the ordinary people of different countries, undermining nationalist ideas of monoculturalism and ethnocentrism.

This talk will focus on the second and third novels and will consider three female characters from different nations and different social positions, whose fluidity enables them to transgress the limits of gender, class and nationality.

### **Padmore, Catherine**

Associate Professor Catherine Padmore teaches creative writing and literary studies at La Trobe University, with research interests in historical and biographical fictions.

### **On writing near and far: Transnational author biofictions from Australia and New Zealand**

This paper analyses three historical biofictions from Australia and New Zealand that have at their heart the life of a 'great' writer from the northern hemisphere: Steven Carroll's *A New England Affair* (2017), in which an elderly Emily Hale reflects back upon her relationship with T.S. Eliot; Marija Peričić's *The Lost Pages* (2017), which appears to present the newly discovered memoir of Franz Kafka's contemporary Max Brod; and Damien Wilkins' *Max Gate* (2013), which observes an ailing Thomas Hardy from the perspective of his maid. The novels foreground questions of authorial identity and power dynamics, sharing a concern with literary legacies: what happens to authors' reputations, works, and even their bodies, after death.

By choosing the perspective of a marginal figure, the novels shift traditional perceptions of the writer and their works in important ways, simultaneously reinscribing and challenging prevailing understandings. That these novels' subjects are from Europe, England or America, while their contemporary authors write from Australia and New Zealand, further resituates the 'great' writers, provoking wider questions about colonial relationships to imported cultural canons. Written from a doubly marginal position, then, these novels provide important insights into ongoing debates about the complex and evolving relationships between fiction, history, biography, and national literary traditions.



## **Paraschis, Nikolaos**

Nikolaos Paraschis is a PhD researcher in the Department of History at the European University Institute and works on the intersection of comparative literature and modern intellectual and cultural history. His PhD project involves the discussion of the historical importance of Soviet Literature for the Greek political Left. He also works with literary translations between Modern Greek, English, Russian and Swedish.

### **An examination and critique of the 'non-national' in Elizabeth Kostova's 'The Historian' (2005)**

The standing of Elizabeth Kostova's 2005 best-seller 'The Historian' vis-à-vis the genre of 'historical fiction' can best be described as 'awkward'. Narratively stationed among imagined academic personages of 20th century Europe and the US, and dealing straightfacedly with the supernatural, it certainly is not a 'historical novel' in the conventional sense. Though it lacks a parodical register common to many of its peers, the work rather more firmly constitutes part of a species of writing that has come to be termed 'historiographical metafiction'. In its multi-layered intertextuality, 'the Historian' involves the detailed, even self-consciously 'obsessive', reconstructing of historical narrative and actively grapples with historical realities as well as the related interplay of historical fact and historical fiction. This talk will engage these elements of 'The Historian', framed and compared with other similar works of post-modern historiographical fiction, in discussing the role of the non-national in the unfolding of the work's narrative form and theoretical concerns. More specifically, the role of the 'scholar' and the 'historical document' will be discussed and deconstructed in the way that they serve as transnational actors in this literary work, a work whose aspirations evidently encompass the transgression of the strictly national and tribalistic. In its post-national aspirations, however, Kostova's 'The Historian' will also to be shown as betraying unchecked Anglo-American prejudices and, in searching for a transcendental historical perspective, suffering from a certain simplifying naivete that often only superficially engages with the particularities of the local traditions and intra-local conflicts it wants to artistically transcend.

## **Tek Demir, Meri**

Meri Tek Demir holds a PhD in English Literature and works as a research assistant in the Foreign Languages Department at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, formerly known as the Department of Western Languages and Literatures. She completed her PhD at Ege University with a dissertation on Ekphrasis in Contemporary British Women's Writing, and earned her MA in English Literature from Istanbul University, where her research focused on historiographic metafiction in postmodern British novels. She holds a BA from Istanbul Kültür University with a full scholarship and a minor in Arts Management. Her research interests include British women's writing, visual-textual narratives, ekphrasis, and historiographic metafiction.

### **Through the Artist's Eye: War, Memory, and Resistance in Pat Barker's Life Class**

This paper aims to examine Pat Barker's Life Class, the first novel in her trilogy exploring art and war, through the lens of ekphrasis, with a focus on how it foregrounds the personal experience of artists responding to the trauma of conflict within a collective historical setting. Set during the First World War, the narrative follows students from the Slade School of Art as they move between Britain and the European front, transitioning from creative freedom to roles shaped by violence, caregiving, and public expectation. Rather



than presenting a heroic or patriotic account of war, the novel centres on emotionally complex and ethically charged responses to conflict. Paul Tarrant sketches under fire with uncertainty, Kit Neville takes on the role of official war artist under institutional demands, while Elinor Brooke deliberately avoids visualising violence, positioning her refusal as a form of resistance. Each character's relationship to art reflects an attempt to engage with history not through national myth but through personal experience. Drawing on theories of visibility, trauma, and post-national historical fiction, the paper argues that *Life Class* reimagines war and its representation through the subjective vision of the artist. Barker presents a historical narrative shaped by inner perception, moral tension, and aesthetic hesitation. In doing so, the novel challenges the traditional function of historical fiction and opens space for more intimate and transnational ways of witnessing the past.

### **Tripathi, Ishan**

Ishan Tripathi is a postgraduate scholar specializing in Modern and Contemporary Literature with a master's degree from the University of Manchester. Their research focuses on the intersections of postcolonial theory, cultural studies, meme studies, critical caste studies, and decolonial praxis. They are pursuing PhD opportunities for a project exploring how the politicization of aesthetics in cultural representations intersects with caste privilege in post-1980 Indian cultural productions.

### **The Algorithmic Archive: Streaming Platforms and the Non-National Turn in Historical Fiction**

This paper explores how global streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ are reshaping historical fiction through what may be termed the algorithmic archive: a commercially driven, transnational mode of curating the past. Unlike conventional forms of historical fiction tethered to national pedagogy or heritage, streaming historical dramas are increasingly optimized for global distribution, emotional intensity, and "bingeability." In this context, history becomes "content"—reformatted and repackaged for maximum affective engagement across cultural borders.

Focusing on series such as *Babylon Berlin* (Germany), *The Empress* (Austria), *Pachinko* (Korea-Japan-U.S.), and *The Forgotten Army* (India), the paper examines how these narratives offer hybridized and often decontextualized versions of national history. These shows frequently bypass the constraints of nationalist historiography, instead foregrounding spectacle, trauma, and personal narrative as globally recognizable markers of the historical. While such post-national storytelling allows for diverse and previously marginalized histories to circulate widely, it also risks flattening political complexity and local specificity in favour of platform-optimized universality.

Drawing on theories of digital archives, media infrastructure, and global genre systems, the paper argues that streaming platforms constitute a new kind of historical fiction engine—where algorithmic curation, rather than archival fidelity or cultural accountability, dictates how the past is represented and consumed. In doing so, these platforms extend and complicate what it means to produce, circulate, and receive historical fiction in a post-national media ecology.