

# FRINGE/ALUS Symposium

## Urban (Im)mobilities and Borderland Narratives

Universidad de Alcalá (Madrid, Spain)  
14-15 October, 2021  
**ONLINE**

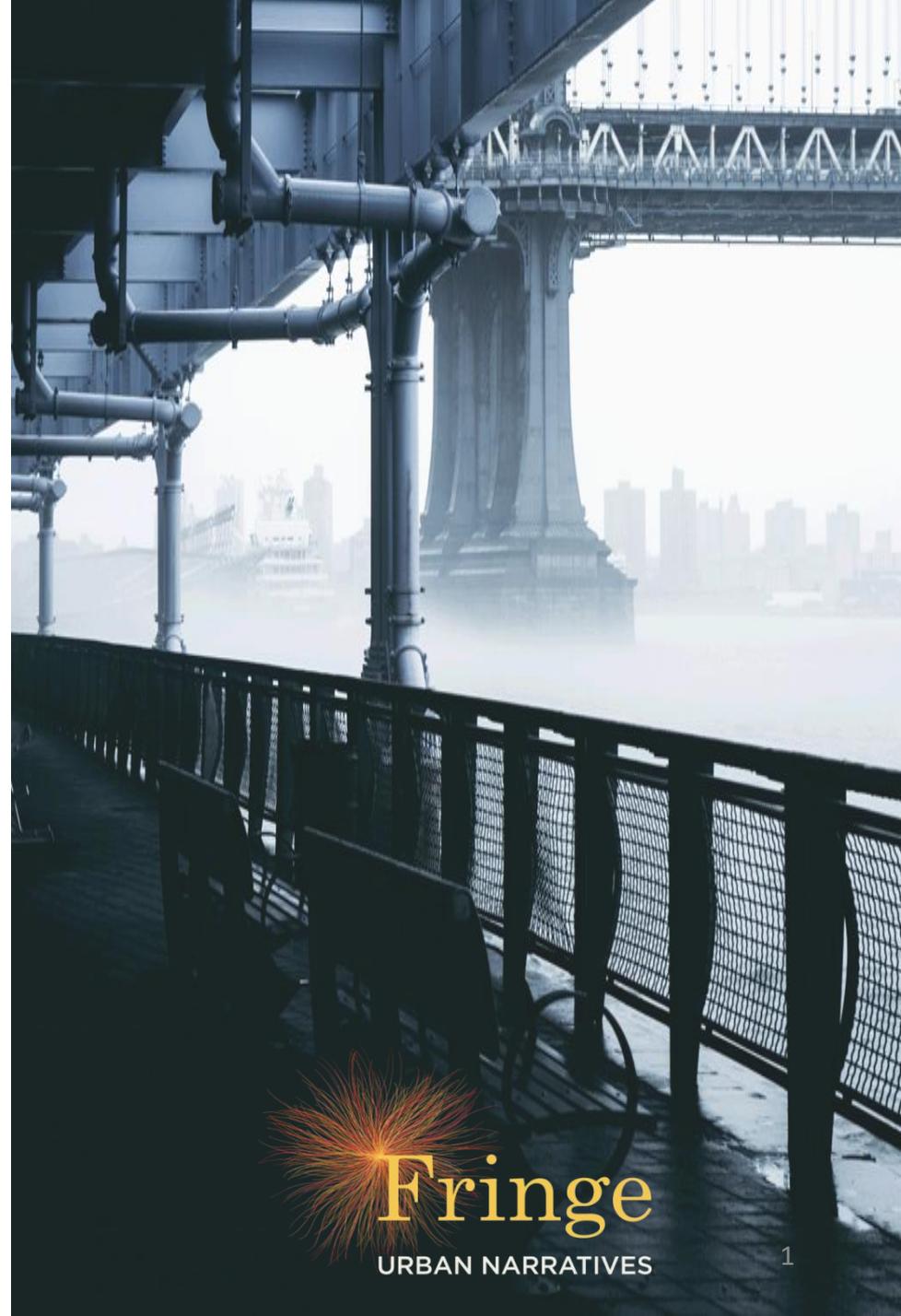
### FINAL PROGRAMME

Papers: **15min** length + panel discussion  
Keynotes: 30-40min + 15-20min discussion

**Registration** is free. Please register [here](#).

[fringe@uah.es](mailto:fringe@uah.es)

<https://www.urbanfringes.com/fringe-alus-symposium>



# LINKS

*CET (Spanish Time)*

URL ZOOM **Thursday 14 morning** (before lunch):

<https://uah-es.zoom.us/j/89950684709?pwd=YkxLSGtFQUlXODJQV3BCQzRWQU1Odz09>

Access code: 370164

URL ZOOM **Thursday 14 afternoon** (after lunch):

<https://uah-es.zoom.us/j/85449284071?pwd=Z1p0eGo3bDhwQW02c1piaDBJUkN2dz09>

Access code: 416329

URL ZOOM **Friday 15 morning** (before lunch):

<https://uah-es.zoom.us/j/84880159706?pwd=aUJXbnFuakVrL0JmL0xEa0hSWWg2dz09>

Access code : 458455

URL ZOOM **Friday 15 afternoon** (after lunch):

<https://uah-es.zoom.us/j/81667614261?pwd=c1NsUnNYQ293QzE4ZWhaNXdmV3NSZz09>

Access code : 874178

# Thursday 14 of October

CET (Spanish Time)

9.00-9.15: **Opening words by the organizers - FRINGE/ALUS**

9.15-11.00: **Keynote panel** (Chairs: **Lieven Ameel** and **Patricia García**)

**Anna-Leena Toivanen** (University of Eastern Finland), “Mobilities and the city in Francophone African literatures: Peripheral perspectives”

**Johan Schimanski** (University of Oslo), “Space, Borders and Cognition in Urban Diasporic Fiction”

Coffee break (with breakout rooms)

11.15-12.30: **Panel 1 - Of Other Spaces: Literary Fringes** (Chair: **Jean-Philippe Imbert**)

“Urban marginality and the coming of a railway: poverty and modernity in late 19<sup>th</sup>- century Hungarian fiction”, Zsuzsanna Varga (University of Glasgow)

“Colson Whitehead’s *The Intuitionist*: Contesting Elevation in the Modern City”, Lieven Ameel (Tampere University)

“The peripheries of Barcelona: gender perspectives on the suburban novel”, Patricia García (Universidad de Alcalá)

Lunch break

13.30-14.45: **Panel 2 - Metropolitan Margins** (Chair: **Marta Zorko**)

“Urban Ambivalence: Work and home at Delhi’s margins”, Anubhav Pradhan (Indian Institute of Technology Bhilai)

“Delhi on the Move: a Literary Account on Urban Mobility”, Valentina Barnabei (Ca’ Foscari University/Heidelberg University)

“Spatiotemporal contours and horizons of Amman: A translocal reading of Amman in three Arabic Novels from Jordan”, Ismael Abder-rahman Gil (Ca’ Foscari University of Venice/University of Marburg)

14.45-16.00: **Panel 3 - Visual Arts in Motion** (Chair: **Giada Paterle**)

“Villages in the city: exploring the creative potential through contemporary artistic practices in China”, Federica Mirra (Birmingham City University)

“Narratives of Border Crossing in Kati Horna’s Photographic Tales”, Karla Segura Pantoja (CY Cergy Paris Université)

“The (Sub)urban Horrors of Post-Industrial America in David Robert Mitchell’s *It Follows*”, Alan Mattli (University of Zurich)

# Thursday 14 of October

*CET (Spanish Time)*

Coffee break (with breakout rooms)

16.30 – 17.45: **Panel 4 - Politicizing Movement, Challenging Borderlands** (Chair: Anubhav Pradhan)

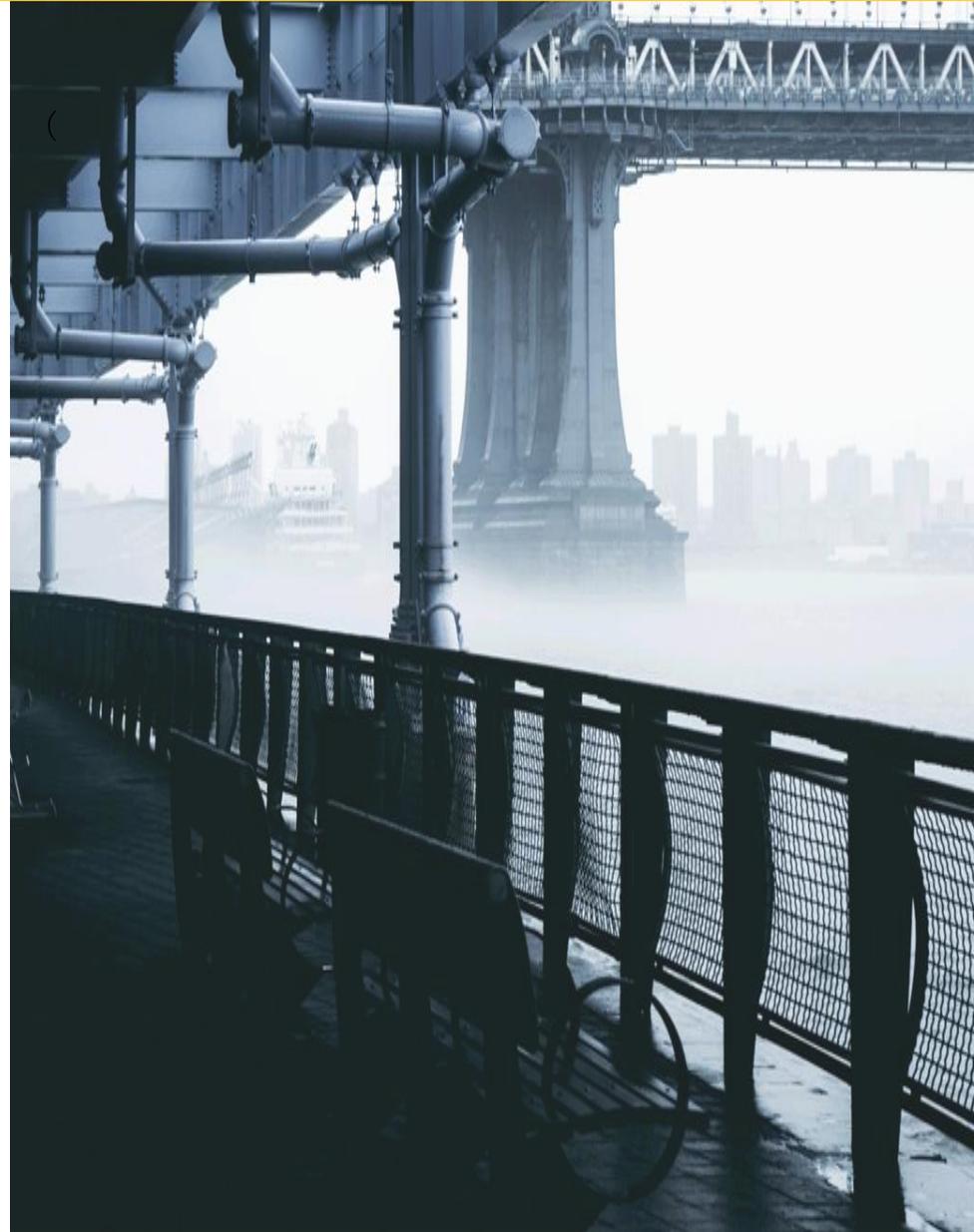
“The Power of Not-Moving. Standing Still as Political Action”, Maciej Kowalewski (University of Szczecin)

“The paradox of COVID-19 related re-bordering and re-territorialization of EU periphery: border narratives and everyday border practices”, Marta Zorko (University of Zagreb)

“Spatial mobilities as agency? Queer strategies in Beirut”, Jean Makhlouta (University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

17.45-18.45: **Keynote session** (Chair: Lieven Ameel)

**Tania Rossetto** (University of Padova), “From the Cartographic Fringes: Map Mobilizations and the Urban”





# Friday 15 of October

CET (Spanish Time)

10.00-11.15: **Panel 5 - Revisiting Flânerie** (Chair: Rosa María Díez Cobo)

Lunch break

“‘The Moving World’: Flâneur, Flâneuse, and Invisible City Borders”, Alexandra Urakova (University of Tampere/Russian Academy of Sciences)

14.15-15.30: **Panel 7 - Of Other Spaces: Literary Fringes III** (Chair: Olga Springer)

“Crossing the Boundaries of Naples: Wandering Women and Female Subjectivity, from Matilde Serao to Elena Ferrante”, Sophie Maddison (University of Glasgow)

“Health, Hazard, and Hallucination of Intra-City Cycling: Modern Japanese Narratives of (Im)Mobilities and Affordances in (Sub)Urban Space”, Atsuko Sakaki (University of Toronto)

“I Am My Own Landscape: Reframing the Flâneur in the Fringes of Urbanism and Illustration”, Tânia A. Cardoso (University of Amsterdam)

“Urban Queer Mobility in China and Mu Cao’s Poetry of Abjection”, Federico Picerni (Ca' Foscari University of Venice/Heidelberg University)

11.15-12.30: **Panel 6 - Of Other Spaces, Literary Fringes II** (Chair: Julia Faisst)

“The Nomadic Subject in Teju Cole’s *Open City*”, Aristi Trendel (Le Mans University)

“Space and Mobility in Paton’s *Cry, the beloved Country* (1948): A Postcolonial Analysis”, Sophie Kriegel (Leipzig University)

“Border Crossings and Liminal Urban Spaces in Margaret Atwood’s Fiction”, Olga Springer (Dublin City University)

“What Lurks in the Peripheries: The Unusual in Liminal Suburban Territories in Recent Short Story Collections”, Rosa María Díez Cobo (Universidad de Burgos)

# Friday 15 of October

*CET (Spanish Time)*

15.30- 17.00: **Panel 8 - Latin American Cultural Peripheries in Motion** (Chair: Zsuzsanna Varga)

“Punk as Urban Fringe Culture: On Daniela Catrileo’s "Warriache" (2019) and Mapuche Punk in the Periphery of Santiago de Chile”, Maxwell Woods (Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez)

“U.S.-Mexican Boderlands and (Inter)Media Child Migration Narratives”, Julia Faisst (University of Regensburg)

“Cihuateteo Wander: The Representations of the Female Walk in Mexico City and its Peripheries”, Orly C. Cortés Fernández (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana- Xochimilco)

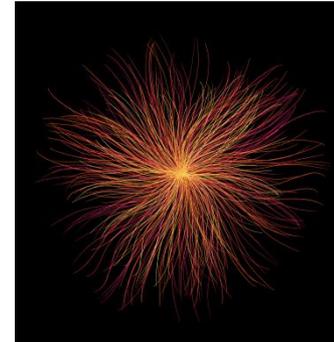
“Nuyorican Masculine Identities and Urban (Im)mobilities in New York”, Eliseo Jacob (Howard University)

Coffee break (with breakout rooms)

17.30-18.30: **Keynote session** (Chair: Patricia García)

**Jean-Philippe Imbert** (Dublin City University), “Once upon a Queer: Sexual Monstrosity, Sexual Misery and the Metropolis”

**Closing words**



# Keynote speakers



**Anna-Leena Toivanen**, Academy Research Fellow and docent in postcolonial literary studies at the University of Eastern Finland.

**“Mobilities and the City in Francophone African Literatures: Peripheral Perspectives”**

**Johan Schimanski**, Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Oslo.

**“Space, Borders and Cognition in Urban Diasporic Fiction”**



**Tania Rossetto**, Associate Professor of Cultural Geography at the Department of Historical and Geographic Sciences and the Ancient World of the University of Padova.

**“From the Cartographic Fringes: Map Mobilizations and the Urban”**



**Jean-Philippe Imbert**, Associate Professor at Dublin City University.

**“Once upon a Queer: Sexual Monstrosity, Sexual Misery and the Metropolis”**



*Bionotes and abstracts can be downloaded [here](#).*

**“Urban marginality and the coming of a railway: poverty and modernity in late 19<sup>th</sup>- century Hungarian fiction”,  
Zsuzsanna Varga (University of Glasgow)**

The 1867 Austro-Hungarian Compromise opened the avenue for material and political modernisation in Hungary. Population increase in cities, and the general spread of urban modes of life and urban attitudes became increasingly dominant in the shaping of social mores. The rapid and radical extension of the railway network were part of this process, leading to the reliable spread of the communication system well established by 1900, and the increasing self-assertion of Budapest is nowhere clearer than in the urban architecture surviving even today.

Creative writers were increasingly responsive and also critical of human effects of such rapid and near social and human transformation, and they identified Budapest (rather than any other city), as the site of social tension and moral decay, as the ‘city of sensual pleasure’ and the ‘Babylon of misery.’ An awareness of socially critical naturalism were part of this reflection, as evidenced by the work of Sándor Bródy and Ignác Acsády. This paper revisits the representation of the world of the dispossessed in the writing of Mór Jókai, known as the pre-eminent Hungarian novelist of the century. Rooted in a plot related to the existence of the railway, his late novel *The poor who are rich* (*Gazdag szegények*, 1890) shows his attempt at negotiating the intention to describe the world of the dispossessed and his natural instinct for a traditional Victorian conciliatory poetic work, conflict resolution and social harmony.

**“Colson Whitehead’s *The Intuitionist*: Contesting Elevation in the Modern City”, Lieven Ameel (Tampere University)**

In *The Intuitionist* (1999), Colson Whitehead offers a starkly allegorical novel that is centred on competing elevator inspector guilds in an alternative late-twentieth-century New York City, and on the promise of continued elevation. The urban environment and the elevators in Whitehead’s novel are deeply symbolical of the broken promises of modernity, but also of fraught American race relations. This paper will approach the allegory of the elevator in *The Intuitionist* as a figure that contests urban modernity’s promises of universal upward mobility.

## **“The peripheries of Barcelona: gender perspectives on the suburban novel”, Patricia García (Universidad de Alcalá)**

By means of the framework provided by feminist geographers in the recent years, this paper examines gender relations in contemporary novels set in different peripheral areas of Barcelona. This city, marked by migratory patterns from other Spanish and Catalan regions in the decades of the 60s, 70s and 80s, constitutes an important locality to study on the intersections between class and gender when approaching the theme of urban mobility. The novels I analyze are narrated from the points of view of female characters who immigrated themselves or who are the daughters of these migrant workers. I will focus on how their access to the city and their movement within it is determined by their gender, including the construction of urban imaginaries of possibilities and liberation, the impact of safety and fear in the characters' capacity for movement, the feminization of the systems of care and their role in grassroot neighborhood organizations, among other aspects currently at the center of feminist urban approaches.

## **“Urban Ambivalence: Work and home at Delhi's margins”, Anubhav Pradhan (Indian Institute of Technology Bhilai)**

If Southern infrastructures have tended to be ambivalent, then Southern literatures have been the primary sites wherein this uncertainty has manifested itself in all its tense contraries. Specifically, contemporary writing from the Global South tends to reflect deeply on the implications of the networked urbanisation and structural readjustments happening across this region. In radically altering the conditions of work and leisure as these have been known in Southern cities, large-scale infrastructure projects backed by global finance and governance paradigms have not only transformed the contours of the quotidian but also the ways in which these are negotiated, understood, and articulated.

Accordingly, in this paper I am interested in evaluating literary cultures of the South to understand how individuals' and communities' notions of urbanity, informality, and work have responded to systemic changes occurring in our cities. Focussing on Delhi, a city shrouded in construction dust for more than two decades now, I will read Aman Sethi's *A Free Man* (2011) and Mridula Koshy's *Bicycle Dreaming* (2016) as two recent—but not rare—literary reflections on the often uncontrollably changing meanings of labour, home, and family in Southern mega cities. While Sethi tracks the life and work of a homeless daily wage worker with an unfiltered honesty not usually achieved in such writing, Koshy presents a fragmented bildungsroman on the adolescent daughter of an increasingly impoverished *kabadi*, an itinerant waste worker. Marked as much by intense, unpredictable mobility as by a crushing lack of it, and operating at the neglected borderlands of bourgeois urbanity, these texts work against the legacies of English writing in India to speak cogently of the psychosomatic footprint of Delhi's ongoing worlding. In thus reading literature against the background of policy, I hope to complement discourse on the ambivalence of Southern urbanisation with the capriciousness of its impact.

## **“Delhi on the Move: a Literary Account on Urban Mobility”, Valentina Barnabei (Ca' Foscari University/Heidelberg University)**

In the last few decades, urban spaces have become the focus of many researches that studied them from several perspectives. Beyond academic research, urban contexts served as the setting and the inspiration for many literary works that voice issues of marginality. This presentation, using a framework based on literary geography researches, will analyse two literary works of contemporary Hindi literature: *Bahurūpiyā śabar* (Tabassum et al. 2007) and *Isq mein śabar honā* (Kumar 2015). These texts, both set in Delhi, bear witness to what it means to live at the margins -not only geographically - of a metropolis such as the Indian capital city. At the same time, they bring out the instances of urban and rural migrants and dwellers who have been evicted from their houses and forcibly relocated in other parts of the city. I will look at how these texts address the impact of changes of urban landscapes on Delhi's unauthorized and resettlement colonies' residents. I will analyse how the authors depict mobility in the city from the perspective of these dwellers, which live in areas that are constantly threatened by the risk of a demolition or that are the result of it. In doing so, the presentation tries to answer the following questions: how do unauthorized and resettlement colonies dwellers move within the city? How does the access to public or private transport influence their daily life? What is the picture of mobility in Delhi that these texts, through their exaggerations, omissions, and fictional elements, give to the readers? In conclusion, by looking at the experience of migrants and evicted people I aim to address the issues of urban mobility in liminal areas of the city.

## **“Spatiotemporal contours and horizons of Amman: A translocal reading of Amman in three Arabic Novels from Jordan”, Ismael Abder-rahman Gil (Ca' Foscari University of Venice/University of Marburg)**

This paper aims at understanding the spatiotemporal and affective boundaries of Amman as expressed in three Jordanian novels: *Ard al-Limbūs* (Elias Farkouh, 2008), *Aktar min wahm* (Abdelsalam Saleh, 2017) and *Al-Hāmīš* (Khaled Sameh, 2020). As seen from the titles (in English: *the Land of Limbo; More than an illusion; The Margin*), they evoke suspension, in-betweenness, transition, and even detachment and disenchantment. Amman is a protagonist in the three novels, and the three works express the angst, the feelings of alienation, the sense of dislocation and the frustrations of the protagonists who live in Amman, and at the same time; these feelings have to do not only with the failure of the political projects or aspirations of the characters, but also with what I call the “disruptions of the geographical horizon”, or in other words, the abrupt rupture in the connection of a city with other cities, which in the case of Amman as shown in the novels is the effect of the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem and the West Bank (1967), and the wars on Iraq and the occupation of Baghdad (1990 & 2003) among other events, processes and locations.

Through a geocritical approach (Westphal) to the texts and by putting together different subjectivities, I attempt to examine the spatiotemporal contours of both, the texts and the city by linking them to the geographical and temporal referents of Amman and offer a translocal reading of the city. Through this reading, I foreground the ways belonging and linkage to the city are felt and experienced in the novels, and at the same time; how different locations transcend their own physical boundaries; how these locations are embodied and felt; and how all these processes affect the production of the locality of Amman, and thus our experience and understanding of a city.

## **“Villages in the city: exploring the creative potential through contemporary artistic practices in China”, Federica Mirra (Birmingham City University)**

Situated within the city and yet not officially part of the urban core, the Chinese villages in the city (*chengzhongcun*) are hybrid and multi-diverse sites where informal settlements emerge along with irregular economies and services. Although they are often made invisible, renewed, or even eliminated by authorities for their overcrowded, disorganized, and unattractive appearances, villages in the city (VICs) provide informal services that are crucial to rural migrants and the functioning of the urban cores. This paper investigates VICs through the lens of contemporary artistic practices to shed light on this urban phenomenon. Although the literature around VICs is increasingly expanding, especially in the field of urban and social studies, the focus on contemporary artistic practices can be particularly useful in revealing the invisible interlinkages between centre and periphery, urban and rural, and visible and invisible. Specifically, I focus on selected artistic practices to demonstrate how these liminal areas have been represented. Whereas the work by Weng Fen and Cao Fei highlight the fracture between urban and rural, the socially engaged practices of Handshake 302 in Shenzhen illustrate the creative potentiality of villages and rural migrants. Deploying visual analysis and socio-spatial theories, this interdisciplinary paper expands the current research on urban-rural fringes and narrates the ways in which VICs are represented. Moreover, through the exploration of visual art practices I argue that VICs are not merely irregular settlements, but liminalities that have the creative potential to redefine and reimagine the city.

## **“Narratives of Border Crossing in Kati Horna’s Photographic Tales”, Karla Segura Pantoja (CY Cergy Paris Université)**

My recent scholarship on the surrealist exiles in Mexico during World War II was developed within a sociological and epistemological discussion about displacement. This framework posits the intersecting dimensions of power and discrimination in Mexico City’s urban narratives during the exile of one of these refugees, Hungarian photographer Kati Horna (1911-2000). Since her Parisian stay (1935), Kati Horna developed series of photographs infused with surrealism that challenge the space of politics and operate a displacement of power at the private space in the context of the rise of fascism. Later, throughout her documentation of the Spanish Civil War, she photographed the behind-the-scenes of the conflict: the restless faces of injured soldiers, mothers and children within their quotidian details. Her multiple exiles to Paris, to several places in Spain and then to Mexico permeate her narratives of border crossing. In this paper, I would like to examine how the city is narrated by Kati Horna, tracing intersections not only of nationality, class, and gender but also of disability. In her Mexican photographs Kati Horna addresses liminal identities and urban borderlands not only as part of the city’s architecture but also as the borders between sanity and insanity. I will examine her lesser known series *La Castañeda* and *Loquibambia* (1944) as portraits of liminal spaces that reveal the peripheral setting of a public psychiatric institution. In this work, Kati Horna’s sharp eye narrates a suburban environment outside the margins of society where mobility and immobility are confronted.

## **“The (Sub)urban Horrors of Post-Industrial America in David Robert Mitchell’s *It Follows*”, Alan Mattli (University of Zurich)**

*It Follows*, David Robert Mitchell’s 2014 horror film about a shape-shifting entity that stalks its victims until they “pass it on” by engaging in sexual intercourse, is most commonly read as a metaphorical treatment of the social stigma associated with sex in general and the sexual agency of teenage girls and women in particular. However, the film’s geographic and demographic specificity, coupled with a deliberately non-committal temporal setting, points towards a broader engagement with its sociocultural context.

Set in post-industrial Detroit and its suburban environs, whose failing infrastructure and decrepit factories serve as pivotal loci of horror, *It Follows* focuses on the lives of financially dependent college students working minimum-wage service sector jobs – a situation that not only leaves them ill-prepared to climb the social ladder but also renders them virtually unable to ever truly escape either their supernatural pursuer or the gravitational pull of the stagnant Detroit metro.

Indeed, at times, the film itself seems to de-emphasise the sexual connotations of its premise in favour of a more geographically-minded focus. This tendency is succinctly illustrated by Mitchell’s curious deployment of the film score’s main theme (simply called “Title”), which, in a breach of the horror genre’s musical conventions, does not play over a moment of supreme fright or the revelation of a villain, but instead accompanies a conversation about Detroit’s famous 8 Mile line and the lessons learned in childhood about “where the city started and the suburbs ended.”

Drawing on some of Franco Moretti’s claims in “Dialectic of Fear” – particularly his association of the horrific figure with capitalism and bourgeois anxieties – I will argue that the horror of Mitchell’s film, by virtue of its depiction of the economic and spatial realities of the postindustrial Midwest, is primarily located in the inherently problematic American notion of social mobility through geographic mobility.

## **“The Power of Not-Moving. Standing Still as Political Action”, Maciej Kowalewski (University of Szczecin)**

This study explores the meaning of not-moving in protest actions. I address three issues to support my argument: firstly, I refer to studies on social movements that describe tactics of standing (alone) protest (Sbicca & Perdue 2014, Birringer 2018). Standing-still fits into the logic of bearing witness (della Porta and Diani, 2006), it is a demonstration of determination, an act of taking control of space, a challenge to authority. Secondly, I reach out to the field of urban art, where standing still is not only a practice of movement, but an important approach of philosophizing about the space and mobility. And finally, I look at sociological research methods of not-moving in the public space (Stanley et al. 2020), focussing mainly on Krzysztof Konecki’s (2017) concept of standing still as a contemplative research practice.

I argue that the poetics of standing still focuses on reversing the spatial order: against constraints, and towards contemplation and the breaking of dominant urban rhythms. Standing is unsettling, unusual, a counterpoint to the spatial (and political) dispersion and forced mobility. Standing-still protest is a refusal, a testimony to the ‘power of the powerless’. The not-moving protesters are not ghosts, but monuments to a moment of defiance.

## **“The paradox of COVID-19 related re-bordering and re-territorialization of EU periphery: border narratives and everyday border practices”, Marta Zorko (University of Zagreb)**

The most important geopolitical game that influenced bilateral relations during COVID-19 pandemics is related to the politics and policy of (non) movement. Measures imposed by states (and/or blocks of states) were different but the first reaction to pandemics was border closure worldwide. This paper analyses dynamic of border closure and its consequences in European continent, specifically on external EU border towards Balkans as Other. Abolition of Schengen Agreement in Europe challenged the usual border dynamic in this part of Europe. Nevertheless, mechanisms of strong(er) border control or even completely closed borders have had its exceptions. Border closing politics and practice were selective due to the nature of bilateral relations (moreover the perception of the quality of relations) between states; specific timing (forthcoming elections or tourist season); and individual preferences (nationality, ethnicity, status). This paper highlights imparities between theory and practice in COVID-19 related crisis with an accent on the paradox between global security challenges, national responses and local dynamics through border narratives and border practices. Countries taken into consideration for analysis are Italy, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, as they form a frontier of EU border externalization in different phases. Research question strives towards categorization of different/similar border practice(s) in the pandemic environment as Othering in geographical/territorial sense. Border walls, migrant hubs and trapped people, openness and closure, will be researched trough critical geopolitical prism of border narratives.

## **“Spatial mobilities as agency? Queer strategies in Beirut”, Jean Makhlouta (University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)**

Beirut, often seen as an exceptionally diverse and cosmopolitan city in the Middle East, is characterized by a divided political-sectarian geography. Each neighborhood is considered as an independent socio-spatial entity, rendering everyday practices and mobilities into restrained areas, and thus profoundly marking the realities and perception of the city (Hafeda, 2019). Consequently, multiscale material and immaterial borderlines can be noted on the urban fabric, varying from east/west, center/periphery, private/public. Underlining the fragmented geography of Beirut does not consider its borderlines as the sole determinants of its spatial structure. Instead, it reveals the particularity of its urban fabric that lends itself to the emergence of different subversive practices. From the thresholds, marginalized communities make it possible to nuance, even temporarily, fixed spatial divisions in the city through their spatial mobilities (Gorman-Murray, 2009; Cattan, 2012).

Based on ethnographic fieldwork, this paper focuses on the agency of queer individuals in Beirut who negotiate their spaces in the city through movement. From a legal point of view, the article 534 of the Lebanese penal code, instituted in 1943 by the colonial French Mandate, punishes same-sex relations. In addition, queer bodily performances are subject to a general social intolerance towards nonconformity to cisheterosexual norms. In order to navigate these constraints, queer mobilities make use of spatial resources to create an interconnected and ephemeral urban practice to manage an access the city. Based on different spatial-temporal factors (Massey, 1994), everyday queer mobilities challenge the existing material and immaterial borderlines on the scale of the city, of the neighborhood and its architecture. By transcending socio-spatial binaries (Sheller & Urry, 2006), queer mobilities in Beirut make it possible to note an alternative urban logic within the city. Queer mobilities reveal territorial reconfigurations and thus propose a critical standpoint from which to rethink dominant urban narratives through movement, gender and sexuality.

## “‘The Moving World’: Flâneur, Flâneuse, and Invisible City Borders”, Alexandra Urakova (University of Tampere/Russian Academy of Sciences)

Walter Benjamin famously granted Edgar Allan Poe with the invention of the flâneur in “The Man of the Crowd” (1842). Comparing Poe’s story with E.T.A. Hoffmann’s “The Cousin’s Corner Window,” he notices a telling difference: “Poe’s narrator observes from behind the window of a public coffee-house, whereas the cousin is installed at home. Poe’s observer succumbs to the fascination of the scene, which finally lures him outside into the whirl of the crowd. Hoffman’s cousin, looking out from his corner window, is immobilized and paralytic; he would not be able to follow the crowd even if he were in the midst of it.” Benjamin thus directly relates the new phenomenon of the modern urban space – a flâneur – to the question of mobility; the moment of flâneurie occurs at the borderline between watching and moving, observation and action. This paper, reflecting upon the controversial emergence of the flâneur and flâneuse as a fictional character, questions to what extent the ability to move and cross borders is essential for understanding it. If the freedom of movement excludes a disabled person (Hoffman’s “cousin”), what can we say about nineteenth-century women who were not expected to travel unaccompanied and had certain constraints about their urban routes? Speaking about making but also about unmaking a flâneuse in the mid-nineteenth-century United States on the example of Lydia Maria Child’s *Letters from New York* (1843) and Susan Warner’s *The Wide, Wide World* (1850), the paper will examine how nineteenth-century female urban writing accentuates invisible city borders.

## “Crossing the Boundaries of Naples: Wandering Women and Female Subjectivity, from Matilde Serao to Elena Ferrante”, Sophie Maddison (University of Glasgow)

‘Trenta per cento’ (1889) is a short story in which the Italian author and journalist Matilde Serao depicts a short-lived investment frenzy that spreads rapidly through the city of Naples followed by a financial crash. The narrative centres on the experience of a married, middle-class woman whose physical mobility departs from both social and literary convention. Wandering the streets alone and ‘descending’ into working-class neighbourhoods, Eleonora Triggiano is swept up by crowds and overwhelmed by the sensory stimuli of food markets – and in doing so, she becomes acutely aware of the economic situation playing out. By drawing on but simultaneously reworking characteristics of earlier, male, Parisian flâneurs, Serao makes room for a Neapolitan *flâneuse* whose social awareness is a direct result of her ability to move and think *through* urban space. Taking ‘Trenta per cento’ as a relatively early example of female perambulation in post-unification Naples, this paper argues that Serao’s story bears an underappreciated relation to later, more explicitly existential narratives of subjectivity written by and about Italian women. Eleonora’s thought process is distinctly corporeal; dependent upon and at times nauseatingly entangled with urban materiality, physical movement and sensory perception. Not only can this be seen to influence Anna Maria Ortese’s *Il mare non bagna Napoli* (1953), but it offers striking resonances with the *smarginatura* (dissolving margins) and *frantumaglia* (a subjective process of shattering) that recur throughout Elena Ferrante’s writing. This paper examines such connections, with reference to English translations of Italian texts. Focusing on areas of Naples that are shaped by geographical borders as well as stark divisions of class and gender – by marginalisation and inequalities of a spatial and social kind – it demonstrates that the notion of (im)mobility has long been, and continues to be, a feature of female-authored literature about Naples.

## **“I Am My Own Landscape: Reframing the Flâneur in the Fringes of Urbanism and Illustration”, Tânia A. Cardoso (University of Amsterdam)**

Poetic landscapes stem from the pages of my sketchbook as I capture shreds of everyday life in the city. Focusing on multiple senses and intimate perspectives, these drawings connect walking as wayfinding and urban research to artistic practice. The resulting illustrations, some poetic, others descriptive, are critical pieces to explore and reflect on urban issues, practices and experiences. The illustrator-researcher, an urban chronicler, acknowledges their body as part of the territory, situated in place and part of urban experience. By following a site-specific practice the illustrator-researcher becomes part of urban impressions, rhythms, cadences, knowledge and imaginary production. For this purpose, I critically reflect on Walter Benjamin's concept of the flâneur through my illustration performance in the city. After all, the 'original' flâneur was an illustrator himself. Following Deborah L. Parsons' consideration of how the contemporary flâneur can be re-established as an androgynous character and redefined as a metaphor for the urban explorer regardless of their gender, I suggest that the act of flânerie as practised by the urban illustrator-researcher is androgynous. The importance of androgyny relates to the complexity of the city in itself - one specific gaze is not enough to give it justice. As such, this presentation invites the discussion about what these performative experiments through drawing may reveal, disrupt or challenge in traditional urban concepts. In the engagement between the illustrator as an urban explorer, the city, and its inhabitants, reframing the concept of the flâneur can be a playfully work tool inside the visible mapped territory, transforming or subverting it by intersecting both bottom-up and top-down. Understood in this way, my artistic research as practice allows me to simultaneously consider multiple gazes while redefining the tools to engage with and communicate urban space questioning the mechanisms of power placed to regulate it.

## **“The Nomadic Subject in Teju Cole’s *Open City*”, Aristi Trendel (Le Mans University)**

Space in Teju Cole's acclaimed but also criticized, erudite novel, *Open City* (2011), is inextricably related to vision, in particular the double vision of its main character, as the classic motif of flâneur is endowed with a transcultural dimension in the narrative.

The intertwining of the two motifs, namely of the European flâneur and of the transcultural (Welsch) occurs the intersection of three continents, Europe, US and Africa, and of the categories of race, class, and gender.

Teju's peripatetic character, whose walks translate into an ontological and intellectual energy, both single and multiple, independent and interconnected, seems to diffuse a nomadic consciousness “the kind of critical consciousness that resists settling into socially coded modes of thought and behaviour” (Braidotti). This paper examines Cole's novel through Rosi Braidotti's concept of the nomadic subject.

## **“What Lurks in the Peripheries: The Unusual in Liminal Suburban Territories in Recent Short Story Collections”, Rosa María Díez Cobo (Universidad de Burgos)**

Urban centers often expand, blur and intersect with the natural and/or rural areas, creating spaces with diffuse borders, which are characterised more by their absences and shortcomings than by what they possess or which is unique to them. This aporetic essence is the one detected in the narratives of a series of authors who, from diverse interests, but with a common inclination towards the exploration of the fantastic and the unusual, portray those “other spaces” that orbit between population hubs. This is the case of two recent short story collections: *Black Juice* (2004) by Australian Margo Lanagan and *La oscuridad es un lugar* (2020) by Spanish author Ariadna Castellarnau. Thus, from a comparative stance, this proposal aims to address how the spatial element, which in these narratives may seem an incidental backdrop, stands as a character in itself. Its primary importance accentuates the strangeness that characterises the unusual characters, relations and situations. Topics such as identity, childhood, family or couple involvements in these stories oscillate between the hyperrealistic and the absurd or impossible. The fact that most of them take place in no man's lands compels us to associate their plots with the liminal nature of these central territories, threshold fluctuations between the fantastic and the plausible. An attempt will be made to illuminate this significant convergence considering the theoretical conceptualization of the unusual by expert Carmen Alemany combined with the studies on the postmodern fantastic space by Patricia García among other authors.

## **“Health, Hazard, and Hallucination of Intra-City Cycling: Modern Japanese Narratives of (Im)Mobilities and Affordances in (Sub)Urban Space”, Atsuko Sakaki (University of Toronto)**

This paper considers bicycle rides as affordances, or how to use things in space (Norman), under the precarious conditions of cities whose hardware (architecture) and software (navigation technology and tactics) are being made and unmade. The focus is on the bicycle as (1) a prosthesis of the human body; (2) a tool for the restoration and enhancement of the health and fitness threatened by yet promoted in capitalist society; (3) a means of transport more efficient than walking but less efficient than automobiles in a regime that prioritizes speed; (4) an accomplice in spatial practices (de Certeau) that form Augé's non-place or Foucauldian heterotopias; and (5) a measure to overcome disability and manage the instability of urban infrastructure in wartime. The corpus is canonical modern Japanese male literary authors' lesser-known pieces, in each of which the narrator-protagonist seeks comic relief in his own physical ineptitude and vulnerability while exerting narrative authority in textual space. I examine the Japanese male body struggling for greater athleticism in London and Wimbledon at the end of Victorian England (Natsume Sôseki, “The Bicycle Diary”), the body of an aspiring author feeling entrapped in a developing local city in mid-1930s Japan (Hagiwara Sakutarô, “The Bicycle Diary”), and a disabled female body enabled by cycling in the air-raid prone Tokyo of early 1945 (Ishikawa Jun, “Moon Gems”)—with occasional forays into Mark Twain's “Taming the Bicycle” and Samuel Beckett's “Fingal”—to illustrate the volatile dynamic between the human body, the physically demanding yet liberating vehicle, and suburban or urban space. I show how modern subjectivity in each first-person narrative is contested in cities plagued with air pollution, the traffic of strangers who rarely communicate with each other (Simmel), law-enforcement's surveillance over personal use of public space, and communal vigilance over incidental spectacles in the *terrain vague* (Solá-Morales).

## “Urban Queer Mobility in China and Mu Cao’s Poetry of Abjection”, Federico Picerni (Ca' Foscari University of Venice/Heidelberg University)

Rural-to-urban mobility is often understood as a way to emancipation for queer individuals in China. As opposed to rural areas and lower-tier cities, where prejudices and discrimination are still heavily present, major cities have a more relaxed and tolerant environment, also signalled by the active presence of queer associations and art projects, mostly film festivals. In addition, recent years have shown timid signs of openness by state officials and early symptoms of a “pink economy.” However, these practices have also generated forms of (middle-class) homonormativity, largely to the exclusion of queer people belonging to the urban underclass. The paper engages with issues of emancipation, abjection and agency in queer rural-to-urban mobility in China through the early-2000s poetry of Mu Cao. Written shortly after his transition to the city, this body of poems captures the condition of a queer migrant worker and his subjective impact with the city, addressing both mobility into the urban social space and the immobility of gender- and class-based subalternity. The analysis concentrates on the association of urban places, environments and symbols with sexual abjection, instead of liberation. I suggest that Mu Cao’s poetry is an example of urban self-narrative by queer individuals often overlooked in (urban) middle-class LGBT+ discourse, and it remains valid today as an injunction against the homonormative forgetting of the history of queer abjection. By bridging literary urban studies, the sociological scholarship on queer mobilities in China, and suggestions coming from the “new mobilities” paradigm, the paper aims at demonstrating the validity of an intersectional approach to grasp the different experiences of LGBT+ urban mobility.

## “Space and Mobility in Paton’s *Cry, the beloved Country* (1948): A Postcolonial Analysis”, Sophie Kriegel (Leipzig University)

This paper will focus on the complex relations of power, space, and mobility in the postcolonial novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* (Paton 1948). It will explore the question of how mobility is constructed at the intersection of race, nation, and gender in an urban narrative about Johannesburg at the rise of apartheid. The 'new mobilities paradigm' is often used to investigate state borders and interstate mobility as relevant for the discourse of national belonging, when in fact the production and organisation of inner state spaces is equally relevant. Culturally significant cities like Johannesburg are the places where national belonging is negotiated through spatialising practices. Movement is an essential part of this. I explore the fundamental categories of space and mobility as relational and discursive, defining space as a process of materially embedded practices (Massey 2005) and movement as discursively constituted (Frello 2008).

Paton's *Cry, the beloved Country* exemplifies how discourses of belonging are formed around mobility. For example, the characters negotiate belonging by realising the transgressional potential of streets through their mobility. This process stresses, first, that the 'immobility' of women enables the marginalised mobility of coloured men between liminal urban spaces, which are normatively controlled by white men. This combination of (im)mobilities turns the urban space into a relatable place of individual (and national) belonging. Second, language competence constraints free movement as a marker of class and race thus impacting the belonging to Johannesburg as a symbol of the modern South African nation. Beyond that, the white author's attempt to speak for marginalised communities of colour allows insight into the kinds of mobility and belonging that were perceived (from a position of power) as accessible to people of colour in the socio-historic context at the time. In summary, this paper will help to further establish the 'new mobilities paradigm' as a tool of analysis in postcolonial literature to understand how mobility, space and questions of belonging are related in a postcolonial context.

## **“Punk as Urban Fringe Culture: On Daniela Catrileo’s ‘Warriache’ (2019) and Mapuche Punk in the Periphery of Santiago de Chile”, Maxwell Woods (Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez)**

Urban mobility under neoliberalism is categorized not only by the movement of bodies through a city space, but additionally by the circulation and exchange of commodities. Within this understanding, to be a resident on the fringe is not only to be located in the so-called periphery or borderlands of a city, but additionally to receive the residues of the cultural goods that constitute the hegemonic culture of the center. To be on the fringe is to consume knock-offs, counterfeits, off-brands, replicas, and fakes produced in factories across the world, circulated within the mobile global market, and eventually placed in urban spaces’ peripheries as the fringe alternative to high culture. As a result, cities throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have been populated by various fringe cultures constituted by reshaping the residues of globally mobile cultural commodities into a counterculture. This presentation will examine one such globalized mobile urban fringe culture: Punk. More precisely, in this presentation I will examine the 2019 short story, “Warriache” (the Indigenous Mapuche word for ‘city dweller’), by Daniela Catrileo, in which she expresses how she developed her identity as a Mapuche woman living on the fringes of Santiago de Chile by yoking together the residues of globally mobile pop-culture commodities—Michael Jackson’s zombies in the “Thriller” music video, cartoons on Nickelodeon, and dozens of records of bands from Europe—into a punk identity that articulates her self as woman, Mapuche, and peripheral urban subject. In this way, I argue that Catrileo is a *quadruple-fringe* subject in a world dominated by neoliberalism, patriarchy, coloniality, and urban centralism. Catrileo’s short story demonstrates how punk at times serves as a contestatory fringe urban culture constituted by knotting together the residues of globally mobile cultural commodities.

## **“U.S.-Mexican Boderlands and (Inter)Media Child Migration Narratives”, Julia Faisst (Catholic University of Eichstaett-Ingolstadt)**

In the face of the global rise of migratory movements, authoritarianism, racism, and violence, this paper examines contemporary literary and visual migration narratives of transcultural borderspaces that transcend national borderlines and turn into deterritorialized and necropolitical zones of exception with diminished constitutional protections. More specifically, I take into view the current refugee crisis as it plays out in the Mexican-U.S. American border region, and in particular documentary and fictional depictions of child migration, such as John Moore’s photography series on the refugee crisis that accompanies families on their journey North, Valeria Luiselli’s novel *Lost Children Archive* (2019) with its layered narratives in which a personal family journey is set against the stories of thousands of children trying to cross the southwestern border into the U.S., and Tom Kiefer’s photographic assemblages of personal possessions that were seized from migrants in a Customs and Border Protection facility in southwest Arizona.

I thus focus on cultural narratives that tackle—and often critique—the extrajudicial enforcement practices and politics enacted in transcultural borderzones, increasingly militarized and policed by border technology. Considered together with the “emergence of transnational cities in the U.S. Mexican borderlands” (Butler, Gurr, and Kaltmeier 1), they comprise a transnational space in which “distinct national localities are linked together by migrant flows, and the diaspora formed by this migration” (Schmidt Camacho 5). Away from the economic precariousness, government corruption, crime, and environmental instability of the global South and towards the domestic battles of the North—and often back again by way of deportation—I argue that migrants from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras experience what postcolonial theorist Trinh T. Minh-ha calls the “elsewhere [that is] within here” (Minh-ha). This ‘elsewhere’ takes place both while migrants pass through a hostile Mexico and arrive at the U.S. southern border, before they enter a U.S. that denies them basic human rights. Amongst those rights is “the ability and freedom—some argue the essential human right—to move freely from one place to another” (Sheehan 4). That this right is frequently forestalled by “enforcement policy that prioritizes immobility over migrant lives” (Demo 64) I consider even more reason to investigate (im)mobility in peripheral urban environments from the perspective of child migrants and their (inter)media refugee narratives.

## **“Cihuateteo Wander: The Representations of the Female Walk in Mexico City and its Peripheries”, Orly C. Cortés Fernández (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco)**

A woman who wanders the city has been called, from a European perspective, *flâneuse*. The study of the female city walker in the Mexican Arts and Literature has scarcely considered the vision of women and, until now, it has been proposed that their walking is a *flâneuse* act. However, this motif must be problematized –and decolonised– in the Mexican urban context, where femicide and gender violence increase every day. In this paper, I propose to do so by using the term *Cihuateteo Wander* to carry out a comparative, intertextual and intermedial study of Literature and Performance Art that represents the female walk in Mexico City and its peripheries. *Cihuacóatl* is the Aztec goddess from which *La Llorona* derives, and the *Cihuateteos* were the spirits of “divine women” related to her (usually women that died giving birth). Hence, *Cihuateteo Wander* denotes the wanderings shown in Mexican literary and artistic representations. Considering the term *Cihuateteo Wander*, I will study a novel and an ongoing piece of performance art made by Mexican authors during the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The proposed corpus is *Fire 20* (2017) a novel by Ana García Bergua, which shows the wanderings of a young woman who dies in the fire that took place at the National Cinemas in 1982; and *Death Comes Out From The East* (2014-present) by Sonia Madrigal, where the artist explores the increasing femicides in the State of Mexico –in the periphery of the Mexican capital.

In summary, I propose a comparative analysis where the otherness that inhabits the cities are taken into account. I seek –among other things– to contribute to the dissemination of works created by Mexican authors, and to contribute knowledge to the Mexicanist Studies field.

## **“Nuyorican Masculine Identities and Urban (Im)mobilities in New York”, Eliseo Jacob (Howard University)**

My paper, which uses theories of the public sphere to frame the reterritorialization of urban space by marginalized communities, examines the ways in which Afro-Latinx literature and literary productions in New York point towards larger social dynamics, such as community-based activism, access to urban spaces, institutional racism, and gentrification. Afro-Latinx authors have brought life to marginalized figures that Juan Flores classifies as “lower case people”. My research examines the ways in which these authors’ representations of youth reveal an engaged citizenry seeking to stabilize communities in response to larger social problems. This paper will focus on Nuyorican writers Ernesto Quiñonez, Willie Perdomo, and Bonafide Rojas and it will analyze how they provide critical reflections of marginalized, masculine identities in the face of gentrification and poverty. In recent years, Afro-Latinx communities in major urban areas throughout the Americas have increased their efforts to mobilize around issues related to racism, state violence and poverty. Writers from these communities interpret these social changes in their literary works, in effect questioning social inequality rooted in race and class differences. Analyzing the social dynamics that unfold within these literary works can offer us a more complex understanding of the impacts of counterpublics within Afro-diasporic communities. By using the lens of the public sphere to examine the themes within these literary works, my research on writers from marginalized communities contributes to the field of Afro-Latinx literary studies.

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