



EGE UNIVERSITY
THIRD INTERNATIONAL ANGLOPHONE
STUDIES GRADUATE SYMPOSIUM



ASGRAD

VIOLENCE

ABSTRACTS

DECEMBER 15-16, 2025

VENUE: EGE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF LETTERS
CONFERENCE HALLS

CO-ORGANIZED BY THE DEPARTMENTS OF AMERICAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE &
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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ASGRAD at a Glance

With the support of the Faculty of Letters at Ege University, the Anglophone Studies Graduate Symposium (ASGRAD) aims to encourage graduate students from various humanities departments to share their research to better understand our lives in a rapidly changing world, in line with their academic fields. In this way, ASGRAD fosters collaborative research and study among participants and facilitates cultural exchange.

ASGRAD emphasizes the importance of international graduate symposia by organizing one of the first such events in Türkiye. It provides a platform for participants to broaden their research by exchanging ideas in the symposium's interactive environment.

In 2018, ASGRAD—organized by committee members Asil Doğuş Taşkın, Aysel Bakır, Canan Kaplan, Ecem Gülerler, and Sergen Taştekin, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Aylin Atilla Mat—launched one of the first graduate symposia in Türkiye, titled *Transformation*. The second symposium, held in 2022 under the theme *Silence*, again included graduate students in its diverse and thought-provoking program.

EGE UNIVERSITY 1st ANGLOPHONE STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENTS SYMPOSIUM
October 22-23, 2018
“TRANSFORMATION”

EGE UNIVERSITY 2nd ANGLOPHONE STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENTS SYMPOSIUM
October 27-28, 2022
“SILENCE”

EGE UNIVERSITY 3rd ANGLOPHONE STUDIES GRADUATE STUDENTS SYMPOSIUM
December 15-16, 2025
“VIOLENCE”

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ABSTRACTS AND BIOS

Keynote Speaker

Toma SAVA is an Associate Professor in the Department of Humanities at Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad, Romania. He has led research on the cultural transmission of British literature in Romania across distinct socio-political periods (*Palimpsests: A Short History of British Literature in Romania*, 2015) and on the nineteenth-century origins and evolving mission of the modern university (*The Idea of the University*, 2017). In 2016, he edited a volume of critical essays on interwar Romanian modernism and academic thought (*Ion Botez – Studies*). The latter two publications are bilingual editions, intended to grant international scholars access to significant but little-known texts, previously obscured by language barriers.



Building on his interest in early modern narratives, he examined utopian and picaresque intersections through his comparative study and translation of Henry Neville's *Isle of Pines* alongside Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* (published together as *Henry Neville's Isle of Pines and Simplicissimus's Voyage Through Almost the Same Place*, 2019), and in his edition of *Francis Godwin's The Man in the Moone* (2023).

His teaching spans courses in British and American literature, literary theory, and intercultural studies, and he supervises BA and MA theses in literature.

Ahmet Ergün
Koç University, Türkiye

Ahmet Ergün is a master's student in Comparative Literature at Koç University, with a bachelor's degree in Western Languages and Literatures and Translation Studies from Boğaziçi University. He has attended the 12th IUS, SCOL'24, IAPTI2024, and UCOWLL'24 conferences as a presenter and published in the undergraduate journal *Criterion: A Journal of Literary Criticism*. He is a co-coordinator of the multilingual earthquake termbase *TermQuake*. His research interests include medical and health humanities, the Gothic genre, posthumanism, and the 19th-century novel.

**Violence in the Laboratory: A Plea for Non-Anthropocentric
Antivivisectionism in Wilkie Collins's *Heart and Science* (1883) and H. G.
Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896)**

Vivisection, the dissection of living bodies, is among the ethically debatable scientific practices that include violent treatment of animals. In Victorian England, the widespread practice of animal vivisection galvanized the ethical discussions regarding the subjection of animals to pain for scientific research across the writings of both scientists and laypeople, traversing non-fictional and fictional genres. Claude Bernard, the father of experimental medicine, deemed animal vivisection moral by portraying animals as sacrifices made for the improvement of human welfare. The common practice of animal vivisection triggered a large antivivisectionist sentiment that aimed to regulate, if not abolish, the cruel practice. Although condemning vivisection, antivivisectionist arguments remained in part anthropocentric for foregrounding the vivisector's morality and the potential transition to human vivisection instead of the animal subjects' painful experience. Namely, both proponents and opponents of vivisection tended to centralize the human in their ethical debates, displaying a hierarchical conception of the human-animal divide that relegates the latter to a secondary position. This presentation examines Wilkie Collins's *Heart and Science* (1883) and H. G. Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), respectively featuring the vivisector figures Dr. Benjulia and Dr. Moreau, to illustrate their criticism of the anthropocentric underpinnings of the Victorian vivisection debates. In these novels, the vivisector's opting for animal instead of human subjects stems not from a belief in human supremacy but, for Dr. Benjulia, the fear of legal penalty and, for Dr. Moreau, an arbitrary research design. I argue that the novels criticize the tenets of the Victorian vivisection debates by showing that even the vivisectors do not employ anthropocentrism to legitimize their practice. Instead, the novels urge the readers to scrutinize their perception of the experimental subject's capacity for pain irrespective of its species category and ultimately dispel anthropocentrism from antivivisectionist discussions.

Aybuke Erbaş
Ege University, Türkiye

Aybuke Erbaş graduated with honors from Hacettepe University in 2025, earning her degree in American Culture and Literature. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in the same field at Ege University, while also working as a lecturer at Yaşar University. Her academic interests include American history, ethnic and gender studies, and science fiction. During her undergraduate studies, she participated in an Erasmus exchange program and presented her research at conferences held at both Ankara University and Ege University. Committed to furthering her academic career, Aybuke continues to engage in research and teaching, exploring the intersections of culture, identity, and representation in American studies.

Soft Skins, Sharp Knives: The Erotic Aesthetics of Violence Against Women in Horror Cinema

Screams echo in the dark, and the camera captures every little detail of a trembling woman —fear in her eyes, her shaking legs, the sweat dripping down her chest and her vulnerability. In horror cinema, women are positioned in a place between terror and spectacle, their bodies become sites where fear and pleasure come together and intersect. Within the horror genre, violence against women, whether stabbing, sexual assault or brutal attacks, is never purely incidental or plot-driven events; rather, they are framed and decorated to serve multiple purposes including creating fear, suspense and even erotic engagement. This paper argues that such portrayals turn sufferings of women into a spectacle that blends fear with visual pleasure while manifesting patriarchal ideologies and fantasies through cinematic framing, male protagonism and the audience.

Building mainly on Laura Mulvey's theory of the male gaze, which argues that women are depicted as objects of visual pleasure when men act as active subjects and bearers of the look in cinema, this study will examine how horror movies operate cinematic techniques such as camera work, editing and narrative to aestheticize and sexualize female violence, focusing on examples from both classic and contemporary slasher movies in American cinema. Exploring these patterns across different historical periods, this study displays how horror cinema articulates a response to changing cultural shifts while simultaneously preserving a visual and ideological logic that frames women's vulnerability and suffering as a consumable, familiar spectacle.

Batuhan Antepli
Ege University, Türkiye

Batuhan Antepli is a master's student at Ege University in the department of American Culture and Literature. He has taken part in many symposiums both behind the scenes and as a presenter throughout his 4-year journey of getting his bachelor's degree. His interests and fields of study are fantasy literature, tabletop role-playing games, acting, theatre, music, video games, creative writing and voice acting. He aims to explore creativity in culture and literature surrounding popular culture and the legacies thereof.

The Role of Violence in TTRPGs and *Dungeons and Dragons*

Within tabletop role-playing games (TTRPGs), violence has historically served as the dominant framework for structuring play, most visibly through the combat systems of Dungeons & Dragons (D&D). These mechanics not only provide tension, strategy, and reward but also encourage players to negotiate questions of morality, ethics, and consequence within imagined worlds. At the same time, recent TTRPG systems have expanded the scope of play by offering non-violent alternatives that emphasize social interaction, community-building, emotional stakes, and collaborative problem-solving as equally engaging modes of gameplay. This presentation will examine how violence as a ludological and narratological structure continues to shape D&D's cultural influence, while also considering the innovative design of emerging non-violent systems that reimagine what role-playing can accomplish. By situating violence as both an enduring and contested element of TTRPG design, this analysis highlights the evolving landscape of role-play and its capacity to generate complex ethical reflection beyond combat.

Belkis Yavuz
Ege University, Türkiye

Belkis Yavuz got her bachelor's degree in American Culture and Literature from Hacettepe University in 2024 and is currently receiving her master's degree in the same area from Ege University. She participated in an undergraduate conference held at Hacettepe University in 2023, presenting her paper "Artificial Ego versus Human Ego: The Failed Trial of Roboethics in *Ex Machina*," and her main focus was on robot-ethics and transhumanism. Some of her other areas of interest, though not limited to, include gender studies, self-destruction, feminist theory, psychoanalytic criticism, materialism, science fiction and postmodern fiction.

Intellectual Despotism: The Significance and Strife of Educated African-Americans in *The Marrow of Tradition*

The harrowing and inhumane nature of slavery, specifically in the Americas, is a notoriously noted and recognized fact. Though minuscule when compared to the physical toll of slavery, bondage had also set rigid restrictions regarding the education of African-American individuals and had set back their quality of learning. The extent of these restrictions is most iconographically memorialised by the fact that Ruby Nell Bridges Hall had crossed the threshold into a whites-only elementary school in 1954, quite recently when considering the fact that slavery had been abolished for almost a century by then. Charles W. Chestnut's 1901 novel, *The Marrow of Tradition*, which is academically discerned as one of the most prominent exemplars of classic African-American literature, handles the contested positions of educated black people within a fictional Southern town, one Chestnut had constructed to replicate the environment of the Wilmington Race Riots of 1898 in North Carolina. Alongside the brutal living conditions, lynchings and psychological attacks both on slaves and "free people of colour," Chestnut most notably demonstrates how intellectual black people struck fear in the hearts of both the rooted Anglo-Saxon aristocracy and the older generation of "faithful" slaves. This fear of and the denial of education for African-Americans falls under Johan Galtung's definition of the term *structural violence*, which he explains in his 1969 article "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," "Violence is that which increases the distance between the potential and the actual, and that which impedes the decrease of this distance" (168). Thus, this presentation will aim at succinctly demonstrating a much more overt type of violence, in the light of Galtung's definitions, within Chestnut's fictional recording of not only the lynchings and physical brutalities African-Americans from all walks of life had to endure, but the structural limitations they were confined within, most specifically within the areas of education and intellectuality.

Berfin Gökçe Kelepircioğlu
Koç University, Türkiye

Berfin Gökçe Kelepircioğlu has graduated from Boğaziçi University's Department of Western Languages and Literature, and also finished her double major program with the Department of Turkish Language and Literature. She wrote her senior thesis on Eugenides and Kür's novels through a feminist lens of female individuality. She is currently working to get her Master's degree in Comparative Literature at Koç University. So far, she has presented her articles on Lale Müldür's early poetry, re-imagined fairytales in Anne Sexton's poetry and Intertextual Dialogues within Didem Madak and Emily Dickinson's poetry. Her interests include feminist literary criticism, feminism and gender studies, comparative literature and cultural studies.

**The Regulation and The Destruction of Female Body and Sexuality in
The Virgin Suicides and *Asılacak Kadın***

A close examination of feminine sexuality brings together the conversation of subjectivity, body and societal or individual violence. A woman existing with her sexuality becomes a paradox within herself in society: a desired, beautiful doll that threatens the so-called order and morality of the home and the state. Jeffrey Eugenides' *The Virgin Suicides* and Pınar Kür's *Asılacak Kadın* explore this paradoxical existence and patriarchal rhetoric of control that is built upon the image of the female body. Although written in and about completely different geographies, time periods and social morals, both books underline how patriarchal systems of power inflict violence on marginal bodies in order to regulate or even destroy them to protect status quo. This paper will examine *The Virgin Suicides* and *Asılacak Kadın* through Judith Butler's theories in their influential book *The Gender Trouble*, with a special focus on their definition of "the body" as a social, political and cultural institution. Butler's ideas show how the patriarchal jury punishes gendered "bodies" that do not perform femininity in an acceptable way, often through violent acts that result in violation and destruction of the female subject. Therefore, Butler displays the violence inherent in gender essentialist practices of patriarchal juridical systems and this violence is highlighted through several external characters that affect women in *The Virgin Suicides* and *Asılacak Kadın*. In the novels, Lux and Melek showcase an irregularity towards the idealized "feminine" performance of their periods, and the irregularity is controlled, punished and eliminated by institutions of the juridical systems of power through external or internal acts of violence that erase female subjectivity.

Berna Erkalaycioğlu
Ege University, Türkiye

Berna Erkalaycioğlu has recently completed her BA in English Language and Literature at Ege University. She participated in the Erasmus Programme in the University of Bamberg, Germany in 2024-2025. She has acted in various drama plays as a part of the English Drama Groups of both universities. She is currently carrying out her MA in English Language and Literature with a Double Major in English Translation and Interpreting Studies at Ege University.

Affinity Between Colonialism and Abuse in Tanika Gupta's *The Empress*

Tanika Gupta's Neo-Victorian play *The Empress* (2013) is a rewriting of history exploring the relationship between Queen Victoria and her Indian servant Abdul Karim after she was proclaimed the Empress of India in 1877. Concurrently, Gupta recounts a story of Indian servitudes in her characters whose story parallels Queen Victoria's story in the play. Despite the fact that *The Empress* is generally read as a celebration of Indian-Anglo relations, this paper aims to analyse a particular scene to disentangle the affinity between colonialism and abuse by combining post-colonial and feminist perspectives. The scene in which Rani, working as an Indian nanny, is sexually abused by her employer, Lord Oakham, not only changes the course of the plot dramatically, but it also offers insight into the destructive power dynamics of colonialism, especially on women. Hence, the paper argues that sexual abuse as a tool of colonial violence is in line with Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which makes Lord Oakham perceive Rani as his inferior, therefore taking advantage of her through coercion. Because of her intersectionality, she is already in a disadvantaged situation and dependent on her employer. The dialogue between the two in this scene is also rich with the metaphor of consumption; as the exploitation of goods and people of a colonised country goes hand in hand, and this exploitation leads to violence. Rani's relenting will also be read through Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?". In short, this paper will demonstrate the destructive effects of colonialism on women in Gupta's historical play.

Beyza Aslıhan Güngör
Boğaziçi University, Türkiye

Beyza Aslıhan Güngör graduated from the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Boğaziçi University and also from the double major program with the Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies. She is doing her Master's Degree in the Department of English Language and Literature at Boğaziçi University. She has a special interest in Greek mythology and feminist theory, alongside poetry and gender studies. She has written her senior thesis, "Transcending Mythology: Rewriting Women of Ancient Greek Mythology in the 20th Century Poetry," and she gave a speech on "Extinction of Heroism: Rethinking and Rewriting of Greek Mythology in Poetry" at the Undergraduate Conference of Western Languages and Literatures at Boğaziçi University. She also attended undergraduate conferences of Ege University, Çanakkale 18 Mart University, and Pamukkale University. She is planning to continue her academic endeavors in the fields of feminist writing and poetry.

Rewriting Patriarchal Violence: Comparison of Ovid's and Duffy's Eurydices through Feminist Lenses

Women have been exposed to violence of all kinds, and they still are. This might not manifest itself as "physical" violence all the time, but the psychological and systematic violence against women is prominent in these ancient stories. Adrienne Rich introduces the concept of revisionary mythmaking, in which women should go back, look back, and rewrite established and patriarchal mythological stories so that women can find their voice, agency, and autonomy in the ongoing patriarchal order. Similarly, Helene Cixous' *écriture féminine theory* is valuable in terms of providing women with a type of writing in which they can reclaim the male-dominant language through their bodies, emotions, and sexualities. Ancient Greek mythology, as still a part of contemporary life, embodies patriarchal stories, giving little space to or silencing women. In this regard, the story of Orpheus and Eurydice can be categorized as patriarchal violence against women. Ovid, in his narrative poem "Metamorphoses," mentions the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, with a focus on Orpheus's grief, excluding Eurydice's thoughts, emotions, and desires – quite compatible with the patriarchal conventions and norms. However, Carol Ann Duffy takes Rich's and Cixous's approach and retells the story of this silenced woman in her poem "Eurydice". In this presentation, I will compare and contrast the differences between Ovid's and Duffy's versions of the story by touching upon Judith Herman's theory of trauma from her book *Trauma and Recovery*, while also using Adrienne Rich's and Helene Cixous's feminist theories. I will mainly focus on the language and literary tone in both versions.

Beyza Beşik
Ege University, Türkiye

Beyza Beşik is a graduate student in the Department of English Language and Literature at Ege University. She has worked on a collaborative TÜBİTAK scholarship project where she has analysed rewritings of Shakespeare's comedies through the lens of cultural criticism. Her current interests regarding topics of study include Cultural Criticism, Narratology and Feminism. Lately, she has been focusing on the concept of the womb in order to explore its symbolic, cultural, and political dimensions within feminist discourse.

Home to Horror: The Making of Violence Through The Mother Figure in Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy*

The identification of violence is coated with uncertainty. However, it can be said that violence as an instrument of ideology is personal, familial and cultural. In Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy* (1992), an unreliable narrative through the mentally unstable skull of Francie Brady reveals how violence is a topic of interest that is both mimetic and systemic with the absent mother as its originating source. Francie's nameless mother, who is psychologically fragile and mentally abused, fails to provide the stability and intimacy that might anchor her son in a coherent social world. Her lack thereof leaves Francie suspended in a void where his desire turns into mimetic violence, which is directed toward the Nugents' respectable domestic life, and systemic violence, which finds its expression as social institutions reinforce his exclusion rather than caring for him. The result is a wanton subjectivity shaped by violence at all strata: As his personal desire requiems, he is not exempt from an identity that is fragmented; it appears as a fact that shrouds his narration with an unfading feeling of uncertainty and instability. His act of violence can be read as an outburst of the lack of a mother figure. It is fuelled by cultural and institutional structures, and the tension is discharged through the scapegoating of Mrs. Nugent as a maternal substitute to his very own void. In this framework, the mother figure is not peripheral but central to the violence, both personally and ideologically. Therefore, this study aims to discuss the mother figure as something personal, familial and cultural in Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy* as it becomes a phenomenon under which violence is normalized, reproduced, and narratively inevitable.

Buse Atalay
Ege University, Türkiye

Buse Atalay holds a BA and an MA degree in American Culture and Literature from Dokuz Eylül University, and she is currently a PhD student at Ege University, English Language and Literature program. She also works as a Research Assistant at the English Language and Literature department at Istanbul Aydin University

The Violence of Faith: Sexuality, Identity, and the Lacanian Self in *The Bell*

Iris Murdoch's *The Bell* (1958) interrogates the modern individual's quest for moral clarity and subjectivity in the aftermath of the Second World War. Set within the borders of Imber Court, a religious community that aspires to cultivate virtue while suppressing personal desire, the novel stages the clash of faith, sexuality, and identity. The spiritual leader of the Imber Court, Michael Meade, is a homosexual man who once dreamt of becoming a man of God; however, his vision for such a future is shattered by Nick Fawley when he betrays Michael by exposing his homosexual tendencies and their relationship to the management. In the wake of this disappointment, Michael retreats to his ancestral family home and denounces his sexual identity. Yet Imber Court, far from being a sanctuary, becomes a site of psychic and spiritual violence and thus emerges as a Platonic cave where individuals conceal both their desires and their fractured selves. However, the resurfacing of the old bell recalls Michael to face his undisclosed desires and to "reconcile the violence in his heart," while suggesting that reconciliation between faith and desire, morality and art, remains possible. This paper argues that *The Bell* dramatises the violation directed toward Michael's subjectivity by institutional religion and societal norms, while also illuminating literature and art as possible means of negotiating identity. Through a Lacanian framework of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real, the novel exposes the modern subject's inner struggle to form a coherent self under the conflicting demands of tradition, sexuality, and moral philosophy.

Büşra Doğru
Dokuz Eylül University, Türkiye

Büşra Doğru is a PhD student in American Culture and Literature at Dokuz Eylül University and a research assistant at İstanbul Aydin University. She received her BA from Dokuz Eylül University, Department of American Culture and Literature. She completed her MA thesis in Native American Literature and Necropolitics at Dokuz Eylül University.

**Roots of Resistance: Capitalism, Nature, and the Human Condition in
Richard Powers's *The Overstory***

Richard Powers's novel *The Overstory* comprehensively explores the commodification of nature and the capitalist system's exploitation of the natural world. The novel's characters are compelled to search for meaning in the face of environmental destruction and the ecological disasters wrought by large industries; this process reveals how both nature and the human spirit are systematically oppressed by capitalist mechanisms. Although the characters come from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, their privileges are constrained by the very system that sustains them. Both the wealthy and the educated, as well as the marginalized, experience the consequences of ecological disaster and violence. In this context, the novel embodies the concept of "metabolic rift" proposed by John Bellamy Foster and other eco-Marxist thinkers, demonstrating that capitalism disrupts the human-nature relationship, destroying both. Powers emphasizes how modern life and large capitalist apparatuses have disconnected people from nature, forcing them into a consumer-driven passivity. Furthermore, by demonstrating the conflict between the rapidity of human time and the slow, enduring rhythms of nature, the novel reveals how capitalism alienates not only nature but also the human spirit. The despair experienced by activist characters, the disintegration of communities, the spiritual void, and the trauma caused by systemic violence –even among the privileged characters. By drawing upon the theories of Franco "Bifo" Berardi and Byung-Chul Han, I argue that this novel reveals the destructive effects of capitalist exploitation on both nature and human beings, while offering a deep ecological consciousness, and the urgent necessity of environmental activism through the experiences of the characters.

Ceren Kurban
Koç University, Türkiye

Ceren Kurban is currently an M.A. student in Comparative Literature at Koç University and a graduate of Boğaziçi University's Translation and Interpreting Studies program. Her research interests include children's literature, migration, cultural memory, and growing up in diaspora, with a focus on how narratives shape identity and belonging across generations and communities.

Growing Up Under Patriarchy: Violence, Resistance, and Women's Narratives in Cisneros and Munro

Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* (1984) and Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971) both center on girls coming of age within patriarchal societies, where gendered oppression, silencing, and violence shape the transition from girlhood to womanhood. Read together, the two texts illuminate the shared struggles of young women while also underscoring the ways race, class, and cultural background intensify those struggles.

In Cisneros's vignettes, Esperanza grows up in a Chicago barrio where poverty, racism, and sexism intersect. Her education in womanhood is mediated through watching the neighborhood women: mothers trapped by regret, girls forced into marriage, and peers subjected to sexual harassment and abuse. Violence here is both structural and embodied. Cycles of poverty and gendered control manifest in physical danger, domestic confinement, and silences that Esperanza both inherits and resists. By contrast, Munro's Del Jordan confronts patriarchy in the quieter forms of small-town Ontario: social surveillance, gossip, reputational policing, and sexual harassment. Del's struggles are no less real, but they reflect the relative privilege of whiteness and class stability, affording her more intellectual and physical mobility than Esperanza.

Both texts also foreground mother-daughter relationships, female friendships, and connections as central to character formation. By juxtaposing Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* and Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*, this paper aims to reveal how women's lives are shaped by patriarchal violence and how young women are forced to internalize sexism through the norms and silences of their societies. It argues that female friendships and women's circles, while can be fragile, are essential sites of survival and potential disruption of oppression. By also acknowledging the intersectional forces (poverty, race, and immigrant identity) that intensify certain women's struggles, this paper draws attention to the violence women face across the world and to the ways younger generations struggle to break free from it.

Ceren Turan Yalçın
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Ceren Turan Yalçın is an English Instructor at Eskişehir Technical University, School of Foreign Languages. She received her B.A. from the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Boğaziçi University in 2011 and her M.A. in English Literature from Yeditepe University in 2020 (M.A. Thesis: “Memory and Mourning in The Last Man and Wittgenstein’s Mistress”). She is pursuing her Ph.D. in the Department of English Language and Literature at Ege University and is currently working on her doctoral dissertation titled “Spectral Encounters in Literature: Hauntology and Postmemory in Contemporary Irish Novel.” Her research interests include literature and philosophy, literature and ethics, Irish Studies, and Memory Studies.

Violence and Postmemory in Glenn Patterson’s *Fat Lad*

Belfast, with its long history of political upheavals, has begun to have a more visible part in the fiction of Northern Irish novelists, particularly from the 1990s onwards, following the end of a period of sectarian violence known as the Troubles. Glenn Patterson’s *Fat Lad* (1992) stands as an exemplar of this literary inclination toward reimagining the city of Belfast. Patterson weaves the story around the return of Drew Linden, a young Protestant man, to his hometown, Belfast, from England, where he has lived for years. Drew’s return in the early 1990s, when the city is subject to sectarian violence, discloses not only the familial history of three generations but also the communal history of violence, including sectarian segregation and the Troubles. While the story of the family is told through different narrative voices, the eighty-year period of the city’s history unfolds concurrently. Hence, upon his return, albeit with reluctance, Drew not only has to confront with the familial history, leading to his realisation that he has always been haunted by those mediated memories. He also becomes affiliated with the unresolved history of his native city. Accordingly, this paper aims to examine the novel through a theoretical perspective shaped by Marianne Hirsch’s concept of postmemory, which can be construed as the transmission and inheritance of traumatic memories across generations through narratives, images, and cultural practices. To that end, drawing on Hirsch’s notion of postmemory, this study argues that in the novel, Belfast operates as a postmemorial site where Patterson interlaces communal history with the familial, underscoring how inherited memories continue into the present and the future.

Ceyda Özçelik
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Ceyda Özçelik is a Master of Arts student in the Department of English Language and Literature at Hacettepe University. She received her Bachelor's degree in the same field at Ankara University. Her research interests include contemporary British fiction, with a focus on weird fiction, symbolic violence, trauma narratives, and ecofeminism.

Symbolic Violence and Weaponized Bodies in *The Power* by Naomi Alderman

Violence has many forms, and it is often inflicted upon the subordinated groups of society to control these groups. Whether it is a brawl between two people or military oppressions and revolts against them, physical violence has been a common theme in literature. However, there are other non-physical forms of violence that suppress the marginalized groups by embedding violence into the very fabric of culture so that the subordinated groups are manipulated into accepting it as the norm and cannot defend themselves against it. This paper aims to analyse the patriarchal oppression of the female body and how the power dynamics are eventually subverted as the body becomes a weapon in Naomi Alderman's *The Power* by focusing on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of Symbolic Violence. In Bourdieu's social theories, Symbolic Violence is explained as non-physical acts of violence that often go undetected because the social codes do not recognise it as actual violence. Patriarchal society dominates and controls women through these non-physical acts of violence; however, the acceptance of them oppresses women further and paves the way towards actual physical aggressions and even forms of assault. *The Power* subverts this subjugation by giving the female body the ability to create and use electricity: with their newly-found power, women regain their bodily autonomy, demolish the oppression of the patriarchal ideology, and recreate the social fabric by taking over the dominant group's assumed position. Alderman weaponizes the body by absorbing the symbolic violence that is inflicted on it and transforms it into an instrument of resistance; by powering the body, she empowers the subordinated group to revolt against the social codes that were used by the patriarchal society to normalise the suffering of women.

Dünya Yenidünya
Ege University, Türkiye

Dünya Yenidünya is a Ph.D. candidate in American Culture and Literature at Ege University (İzmir, Turkey) and a longtime lecturer in the university's School of Foreign Languages. Her teaching and service focus on writing pedagogy, assessment, and academic listening and speaking; she previously coordinated the Writing Program and served on exam preparation and measurement units. Her research examines race, identity, and region in U.S. literature—especially African American fiction and the American South. She serves as a peer reviewer for *Academia Letters* and is a former reviewer for Oxford University Press. Recent public-facing work includes the 2022 seminar “The American South: Story, Art, and Music.”

Gardens Against the Grind: Cultivating Care in Violent Worlds

Reading six contemporary novels - Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad*, James McBride's *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*, Loretta Nyhan's *Digging In*, Jessica Francis Kane's *Rules for Visiting*, Namrata Patel's *Scent of a Garden*, and Christy Wilhelmi's *Garden Variety* - this paper maps how scenes of cultivation register and resist violence. Across these texts, gardens are not pastoral retreats; they are makeshift infrastructures where people metabolize state terror, racialized dispossession, economic precarity, ecological stress, and intimate grief. In Whitehead, the plot garden and the Valentine farm figure horticulture as fugitivity and fragile commons, briefly sheltering lives under pursuit; McBride's Depression-era Pottstown makes the grocery, yard, and back lots into interethnic care networks that counter eugenic carceral logics. Nyhan and Kane relocate violence to the everyday: HOA bylaws, workplace austerity, and social isolation pressure bodies and landscapes, while digging becomes a method for grief-work and boundary-making. Patel and Wilhelmi foreground gendered and diasporic constraints: scent and seed become archives of memory and tools to negotiate microaggression, drought, and scarcity politics in community gardens. Bringing ecocriticism into conversation with Black studies and care ethics, this paper argues that the novels model “slow care” - durational, communal, and materially attentive practices that do not cancel violence but hold it at bay. Two analytic through-lines organize the reading: (1) “plot as plot,” where land parcels double as narrative engines; and (2) “horticultural refusal,” small acts of sowing, sharing, and sabotage that produce livable time amid the grind. This study reframes garden writing as a critical literature of survival: it records harms, improvises repair, and imagines forms of belonging rooted in soil rather than sovereignty.

Ecem Özkol
Ege University, Türkiye

Ecem Özkol is a graduate of Ege University, Department of English Language and Literature and currently a master's student in the same field. After studying abroad through the Erasmus program, she unexpectedly wandered from literature into teaching, then into international education consultancy, and finally into the health insurance sector—a journey she likes to call her “fairy tale of career plot twists.” Blending these diverse experiences, she continues her academic work with curiosity and a commitment to critical thinking.

Rewriting Violence: Feminist Subversions in Angela Carter's *Fairy Tales*

The presentation aims to explore the ways in which Angela Carter's feminist rewritings of fairy tales expose and resist the underlying structures of violence embedded in traditional narratives. Focusing on “The Company of Wolves,” “The Werewolf,” and “Wolf-Alice” from *The Bloody Chamber*, the study argues that canonical fairy tales, while seemingly innocent childhood stories, have long perpetuated symbolic and institutional violence through the reinforcement of patriarchal norms, silencing of female voices, and reproduction of unequal gender roles.

Drawing on feminist and postmodern criticism, the analysis demonstrates how Carter dismantles the grand narratives of tales such as “Little Red Riding Hood” and reconfigures them to highlight women's agency, sexuality, and subjectivity. The texts reveal that violence in fairy tales operates not only in overtly brutal images—blood, punishment, and control—but also in subtler forms, such as the erasure of women's perspectives and the normalization of their passivity. Carter's reimaginings subvert these violent mechanisms by empowering female characters to confront predatory forces, reclaim their bodies, and articulate their own desires.

By situating Carter's stories within the broader context of postmodern feminist rewritings, the paper underscores how literature can serve both as a site of oppression and as a tool of resistance. Ultimately, these tales demonstrate that the rewriting of canonical narratives is itself an act of resilience: it transforms inherited patterns of violence into opportunities for critique, empowerment, and renewal.

Elçin Süner
Ege University, Türkiye

Elçin Süner graduated from Hatay Mustafa Kemal University with a degree in English Language and Literature in 2022. In 2023, Elçin had her Pedagogical Formation certificate. She began her Master's Degree programme in English Language and Literature at Ege University in 2024. She has a particular interest in Victorian sensation novels, Gothic fiction and many other genres. Her research focuses on how Thing Theory can explain the role of objects in shaping narrative, character development and the reader experience in sensation fiction. These days, she is studying for her thesis focusing on the thing theory and sensation novels.

Violence of Objects: The Material Agency of Things in *The Moonstone*

This paper examines the emergence of violence from the transformation of objects into “things” in Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* (1868), through the theoretical framework of Thing Theory and within the context of the Victorian Sensation Novel. As one of the earliest and most influential sensation novels, *The Moonstone* merges elements of mystery, domestic realism, and psychological intensity to expose the unsettling effects of material and moral disturbance in the 19th century England. Drawing on Bill Brown’s Thing Theory, in which he argues that an object becomes a “thing” when it disrupts human use, meaning, or control and asserts agency rather than being defined only by function or ownership, this study argues that Collins’s Moonstone, an Indian diamond violently seized during British colonial conquest, operates as a powerful “thing” that generates and sustains violence throughout the narrative. Once the diamond is removed from its sacred origin, its circulation through imperial and domestic spaces produces acts of theft, secrecy, suspicion, and murder, reflecting the hidden violence inherent in colonialist exploitation and capitalist desire. The Moonstone’s agency transforms it from a symbol of wealth into an active participant in human corruption and suffering that demonstrates how material culture can destabilize identity, morality and social order. By including the conventions of the sensation novel with its emphasis on crime, emotional excess, and the disruption of domestic stability, Collins accentuates the tension between human control and material autonomy. Ultimately, this paper asserts that *The Moonstone* reveals how the transformation of objects into things exposes the prevalent structures of physical and psychological violence that lie behind the Victorian society.

Elifnaz Yüksel
Middle Eastern Technical University, Türkiye

Elifnaz Yüksel graduated from Hacettepe University, Department of English Language and Literature, in 2022 and has been pursuing her master's studies in English Literature at Middle East Technical University since 2024. She began working in literary translation in 2020 and translated Derya Yalimcan's science fiction novel *The Minute-man Algorithm* (2021). Her academic interests include contemporary British fiction, comparative literature, and the intersections of violence, resistance, and the politics of the body, with particular attention to how marginalized identities are represented in literature and culture.

Chose Else: Violence Against the Body as Resistance in Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting*

Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* (1993) portrays a generation of Scottish youth caught between heroin addiction, unemployment, and systemic neglect in Thatcher-era Britain. Although often read as a narrative of self-destruction, this paper argues that the novel's violence—particularly the violence inflicted upon the body—functions as a mode of resistance. Drawing on Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics and Slavoj Žižek's theory of systemic violence, I read heroin addiction not as a simple pathology, but as a violent refusal of the disciplinary and normative demands of late-capitalist society. For Renton, Sick Boy, Spud, and their peers, drug use becomes a way of rejecting social expectations to be healthy, productive, and economically useful. Their addicted bodies, degraded yet defiant, act as sites of protest against an order that seeks to regulate, exploit, and ultimately discard them. Žižek's distinction between subjective violence—visible acts of harm—and systemic violence—the hidden brutality of economic and political structures—illuminates how their self-destructive acts emerge as responses to the invisible violence of poverty, unemployment, and social abandonment. The novel's climax, where Renton betrays his friends to “choose life,” underscores the paradox of violence as both destructive and liberating. Bodily harm in *Trainspotting* is at once a symptom of systemic oppression and a means of asserting agency within a hostile world. By staging violence against the body as both suffering and defiance, Welsh's novel challenges conventional distinctions between victimhood and resistance, revealing the body as a contested site where systemic power and individual agency violently collide.

Elzem Aksu
Kocaeli University, Türkiye

Elzem Aksu is a research assistant at the Department of Western Languages and Literatures, Kocaeli University. Her main interests are modern and postmodern novel and drama, utopian studies, gerontology, and ethics. She is currently studying on her PhD dissertation which is about ageism and the ethics of love in postmodern English novels.

Edward Bond's *The War Plays*: A Dystopian Reaction to Real-Life Violence

Being known as one of the prominent figures of political theatre in England, Edward Bond reacted against the sources of ongoing political and social problems in his plays. According to Bond, the major nuisance was violence among people which was an outcome of the capitalist social structure. The Western society in the 21st century, especially after the Second World War, was highly shaped by capitalism, consumerism, and therefore, struggles between the working class and the upper classes. Bond believed that the structure of violence has changed together with the emergence of this new "irrational" social organisation in which the gap between social classes has widened in accordance with the growing demands of capitalism and consumerism. As technology has been improved to meet the demands of this society, the means and the scale of violence have changed, too. The individual has become helpless against the continuing and growing violence. In his dystopian trilogy, *The War Plays*, Bond portrayed how dangerous capitalism and consumerism could be at the highest level for the individual. Being set in a nuclear war period, the first play of the trilogy, *Red, Black and Ignorant*, demonstrates the corruptness of the capitalist society and the vulnerable position of the individual in it while the other two plays, *The Tin Can People* and *Great Peace* illustrate a nuclear holocaust. Bond's trilogy presents social and political criticism in the form of dystopia, a genre that is believed to be an efficacious means to criticise social and political issues. Accordingly, this study aims to analyse Bond's dystopian trilogy as a reaction against the problems in social and political structures of the Western society such as violence.

Esin Edagül Akgün

Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Türkiye

Esin Edagül Akgün is an enrolled master's student in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University. She graduated from Selçuk University in January 2024 with a bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature. Her current work focuses on feminist reinterpretations of classical mythology with an emphasis on patriarchal violence and narrative agency in contemporary rewritings. She wants to write her master's thesis on feminist philosophy, with a focus on Écriture féminine and heteronormativity.

Institutional Violence in Madeline Miller's *Circe* and Jessie Burton's *Medusa*

This study examines the embodiments of institutional and systemic violence through the divine figures in Madeline Miller's *Circe* (2018) and in Jessie Burton's *Medusa: The Girl Behind the Myth* (2021), while analysing how the gods function as manifestations of patriarchal voice via the perspective of second-wave feminist theory. Challenging the classical myth, Miller rewrites Circe as a dynamic protagonist reclaiming her story rather than a wicked witch of Aeaea. On the other hand, Burton reimagines Medusa as a Gorgon, and a survivor of Poseidon's sexual violence and institutional betrayal. This analysis argues through the lens of second-wave feminism that divine systems generate institutional oppression within both novels, blaming the victims—Miller's *Circe* and Burton's *Medusa*. Helios, Athena, and Zeus, as representations of patriarchal hegemony, silence Circe's agency and autonomy by expelling her from the community to Aeaea. Likewise, in *Medusa*, Athena enacts an unjust penalty for Medusa, revealing the corrupted law—victim-blaming and institutional failure—while demonstrating that patriarchal structures accuse the victim indirectly while justifying the offender. Through close textual analysis, this study illustrates how both female protagonists suffer from systemic oppression, exposing how Medusa reclaims her voice and diverts her story from the patriarchal voice in the myth, and highlighting how Circe undertakes alienation to build her identity. The divine figures in both novels represent hegemonic power dynamics that sustain violence to validate male dominance, mirroring second-wave feminism's critique of myth as patriarchal propaganda (Millett, 1970). This study concludes that *Circe* and *Medusa* embody the key tenets of second-wave feminist philosophy by indicating institutional oppression, restoring marginalized women's voice, and challenging patriarchal authority.

Ezgi Artuç
Istanbul University, Türkiye

Ezgi Artuç is currently an MA student in the Department of English Language and Literature at Istanbul University. She received her Bachelor's degree from the same department of Istanbul University in 2024. Her research interests are Gothic literature, spatiality, gender studies, theatre studies, performance arts, visual arts, mythology and socioeconomics in literature.

When Is Violence Transgressive, When Is It Socially Tolerated? Moral and Social Contradictions in *A Mouthful of Birds*

Carly Churchill and David Lan's play *A Mouthful of Birds* (1986), drawn from Euripides's *The Bacchae*, interrogates the sociocultural visibility of violence by staging acts of physical violence that emerge from possession. The play presents seven characters who commit violent acts such as infanticide, murder, and severe bodily assaults after being possessed by various spiritual, mythological, and historical figures, pointing out the dominating social constructs that haunt the individual. This paper aims to argue the contradiction in recognition of the violence, discussing how violent acts exposing physical boundaries become the focus of moral attention while systemic violence is socioculturally accepted, normalized, and rendered invisible. Through the representation of characters who are both victims and perpetrators, the play underscores the circular continuity of violence. For instance, Lena, who kills her child, is constrained by expectations of motherhood, manipulated emotionally by her husband, and loses her agency; Dan, a vicar who becomes a serial killer, experiences sexual transformation, repression and crosses heteronormative patriarchal religious boundaries; Doreen, who slashes her neighbor's face and threatens people with physical violence, seeks peace among the ongoing violence within the society; and Paul, a businessman whose company already exploits pigs for material benefit, falls in love with one, highlighting how normalized systemic violence is until the exploitation becomes physically visible. To analyze these dynamics, this paper draws on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence and Hannah Arendt's theories on violence to situate individual and collective acts of aggression within cycles of sociocultural domination and oppression. In this regard, *A Mouthful of Birds* is a play that not only depicts physical violence but also brings the invisible cycle of social violence and the duality of moral norms on stage.

Gizem Gül Can
Ankara University, Türkiye

Gizem Gül Can is a Master of Arts student at the Department of English Language and Literature at Ankara University. She did her Bachelor's degree at the same department and at the same university. She is interested in feminism and women's empowerment, short story and rewriting, and contemporary British theatre.

Rewriting Violence: Gothic and Feminist Transformations in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*

Fairy tales, spanning over 5,000 years, were a part of the oral tradition at first. Having been passed down from generation to generation, with their darkest and gruesome nature, it was not until the 17th century that the fairy tales joined the written tradition. However, the original and horrid endings of these fairy tales were not appropriate for the society in which they were published, since these tales were made to be a warning for children. Therefore, Charles Perrault and the Grimm Brothers altered the tales, making them less intimidating, teaching children how to be good and stand against evil. These fairy tales conveyed the cultural and moral values of the time and place they were told and still continue to do so. Even though they made some changes, the hidden agenda remained intact, especially for the girls. These values and social norms teach girls to behave accordingly to avoid being punished. Moreover, the constant threat of sexual assault and violence is romanticised by the interference of an outsider hero. Although she describes her collection of stories as "new stories, not retellings" in her work *The Bloody Chamber*, Angela Carter gives the readers a new perspective of the female protagonists, or rather 'victims', by reconstructing the old fairy tales. This study argues that Angela Carter unveils the latent content, which is highly sexual and violent, by preserving elements such as the heroine's dependence on male predators, the submissive role of women, and traditional Gothic settings. She both reproduces and rewrites violence by breaking the norms and societal expectations while empowering the female characters through Gothic transformation.

Gülcan Irmak Aslanoğlu
Ege University, Türkiye

Gülcan Irmak Aslanoğlu is a graduate student in the Department of English Language and Literature at Ege University, specializing in contemporary literature and postcolonial studies. Her research focuses on retellings and the representation of historical trauma in fantasy literature, with particular interest in how speculative fiction engages with real-world violence and war. She currently works with intellectually gifted students at TEV İnanç High School.

Violence as Inheritance: War Crimes and National Trauma in *The Poppy War*

This paper examines how Chinese-American writer R. F. Kuang, through her fictional world of Nikan, reimagines and amplifies the horrors of these historical events. In *The Poppy War*, the Mugenese invasion of Nikan acts as a direct parallel to the devastating violence inflicted upon China during the 1930s and 1940s. Kuang's portrayal of war crimes, including genocide, mass executions, and sexual violence, serves as a potent reflection of real-world atrocities, while also underscoring the psychological and moral costs of warfare.

Particular attention will be given to the violence against women, a significant aspect of both the historical reality and the novel, where rape is used as a weapon of war and cultural erasure. Drawing on postcolonial and trauma theory, the paper will explore how Kuang's narrative acts as a means of witnessing and processing these historical wounds, as well as how violence is woven into the very fabric of national identity and resistance.

The moral ambiguity of the characters' responses to war crimes will be examined, particularly in the case of the protagonist, Rin, whose path toward vengeance and power mirrors the complex moral decisions faced by nations and individuals caught in cycles of violence. This paper will argue that *The Poppy War* doesn't just recount war crimes; it challenges readers to confront how these events shape collective memory, identity, and the legacy of violence that persists long after the physical war has ended.

Gülce Aydemir
Dokuz Eylül University, Türkiye

Gülce Aydemir is a PhD candidate at Dokuz Eylül University's Institute of Social Sciences, pursuing a degree in American Culture and Literature. In her studies, she focuses on ecofeminism and environmental ethics, which sparked her interest during her doctoral studies. She had her bachelor's and master's degrees in English Language and Literature. During her bachelor's, she participated in an undergraduate symposium on *Borders*, presenting on the dystopic world of *Pan's Labyrinth* in 2010. In her master's thesis, she studied the works of Jane Austen within the romantic and realist eras. Currently, she has been working at Izmir Demokrasi University

Silent Hurricane: Exploring the Intersections of Domestic and Slow Violence in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

As a timeless story written by Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* offers a complex portrait of a young black woman, Janie Crawford, seeking freedom, against a background of intersecting violence both interpersonally and environmentally. The novel presents domestic violence not only as physical abuse from her three husbands, Logan Killicks, Joe Starks, and Tea Cake, but also as forms of emotional control and silencing she faced from her community and 'Nanny'. Through the works of Bell Hooks and Judith Herman, this fiction will reflect the patriarchal norms and the concept of trauma that normalize gendered violence. Besides, the idea of slow violence, coined by Rob Nixon, which refers to gradual and invisible harm, is equally crucial for understanding Hurston's presentation of nature and human suffering. In Hurston's narrative, the destructiveness of the hurricane functions not just as a sudden natural disaster but as a downfall of the dynamics of Janie's relationship with Tea Cake. This downfall, manifesting as emotional and environmental inequities, highlights how ecological vulnerability coincides with gendered oppression. Therefore, by pairing domestic violence with slow violence, the novel exposes the continuity of violence that limits Janie's life. This limitation causes Janie to tolerate a layered deficiency both in her relationships and nature. Through her constant struggle and undeniable connection to the land, Hurston enlightens that Janie's silent struggle is a form of resistance against both interpersonal and environmental violence embedded in social and ecological systems. This dualistic perspective harmonizes with ecofeminist and intersectional critiques, showing how women and nature are subjected to violent exploitation by men, positioning Hurston's epic work within broader discourses on violence and gaining autonomy.

Hasan Efe Girenes
Ege University, Türkiye

Hasan Efe Girenes is a graduate student in the Department of English Language and Literature at Ege University. His undergraduate thesis, *Representation of the Socio-Economic Position of Victorian Women in the Novels of the Brontë Sisters*, examines three novels and four heroines in their struggle to achieve economic agency. The study also highlights the relationship between Victorian law, social life, and women's roles. His research interests include Victorian fiction, feminist criticism, and historiography. He is currently preparing a conference paper on Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and its representation of sexual and institutional violence in the late-Victorian era.

Sexual and Institutional Violence in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891)

Throughout human history, sexual and institutional violence have worked hand in hand to harm disadvantaged communities under patriarchal societies. Issues such as rape, domestic abuse, and women's autonomy were central concerns in the Victorian period. These ongoing issues left significant marks on literature, especially in the late-Victorian era. In the light of the English law and the common attitudes surrounding sexual and institutional violence during the period, Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) tells the tragic story of a working-class woman named Tess Durbeyfield. Striving to provide for her family after the death of their only horse, Prince, Tess becomes a victim of rape by Alec d'Urbervilles after repeated sexual harassments done by him. In the eyes of society, Tess transforms into a fallen woman who had to baptize her infant by herself before the baby dies. The society, as well as Tess's beloved Angel, repudiate her for an act she had no power to prevent, and the marginalized Tess tragically returns to her abuser Alec after she tries everything to survive on her own. The story ends with Tess killing her abuser and being executed for the deed. Hardy problematizes a common Victorian fiction trope "fallen woman" and points out the issue of what it means to be pure or fallen in the modern world where individuals have no agency to change their tragic fate. Reflecting on Tess's fictional story, this research sheds light on the conditions and struggles women had to endure in late-nineteenth century England. Using feminist and historicist approaches, the analysis of Hardy's novel helps one to understand the systematic violence Victorian women endured under the hypocrisy of church and the institution of family. Finally, considering the condition of women underneath the late-Victorian morality, this research argues that as a working-class woman in the late-Victorian era, Tess Durbeyfield is subjected to sexual and institutional violence in her struggle to achieve an economic agency under oppressive moral codes of her society.

**Hilal Tavlancı
Ege University, Türkiye**

Hilal Tavlancı graduated from the American Culture and Literature bachelor's program at Hacettepe University and is currently finishing her master's in the same field at Ege University. Her research is focused on science fiction and fantasy, including research about cultural studies and names such as Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard and Susan Sontag. In her free time she likes to draw and play video games.

Microscopic Terror: Chaos, Fear, and Violation of the Body in *Blood Music*

In the wake of ecological consciousness and environmental campaigns that question the role of humans in determining the fate of the Earth, "posthumanism" became a way of thinking about the intersecting human, nonhuman, and technological worlds. This paper examines the interplay of violence, chaos, and fear in Greg Bear's *Blood Music* through the character of Suzy, the solemn savior of a technologically created disease in fictional America, in the light of posthumanist theory. While Suzy herself is not a violent character, her trajectory in the novel demonstrates how violence can be enacted upon individuals through external, uncontrollable forces. Based on posthumanist theory, specifically on works such as Hayles N. Katherine's *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics* and Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto* as well as the concept of "biopower and biopolitics" by Michael Foucault, I argue that the intrusion of the noocytes, genetically engineered cellular organisms by Vergil Ulam's blood cells, constitutes a distinct form of "biological violence" as this situation strongly resonates with the posthumanist theory by challenging the boundaries between human and the machine. It also proves to be an interconnected experience with chaos, fear and anxiety which all illuminate her psyche experiencing an unknown transformation. First, the novel highlights violence within a context of chaos and fear, where anxiety and panic create the conditions for bodily violation. Suzy seems to be forced into an encounter with an invisible yet relentless threat, one that destabilizes her psychologically as much as physically. Second, Suzy embodies the perspective of the victim, internalizing the violence inflicted upon her as her humanity is gradually lost. In this sense, Bear stresses how violence need not involve visible acts of aggression but can instead emerge through processes of transformation that dissolve the boundaries between self and other.

Through Suzy, *Blood Music* reveals how literature can describe violence beyond traditional frameworks of war, crime, or domination. The noocytes' invasion demonstrates that violence may operate microscopically, producing terror not simply through death but through the loss of autonomy and the self. Ultimately, Suzy's role illustrates how chaos and biological intrusion combined construct violence as both a personal and collective experience. Biological violence in this aspect can be regarded as a mode of violence in its own right, one that diminishes human identity and reveals the vulnerability of the body in the face of uncontrollable change.

İrem Ehlidil
Ege University, Türkiye

İrem Ehlidil is currently pursuing a master's degree in American Culture and Literature at Ege University. Throughout her student life, she has always taken an active role in projects and symposiums. She was a part of "The River Project," and as a result, her short story was published in a collective book. She worked as a translator at Fihrist Kitap and is now a freelance translator.

Symbolic Violence in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper"

The patriarchal system decides whether a woman is mad or not, but what lies deep down in those women's lives? Which experiences drove them 'mad'? Or are they really mad? Violence in this sense explains the experiences of women who have been exposed to it for centuries. The aforementioned violence is the symbolic violence, introduced by Pierre Bourdieu, which is the unconscious order of cultural and social domination. *The Awakening* (1899) by Kate Chopin and *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman showcase the mentioned symbolic violence in the form of patriarchal oppression of women. Chopin's main character, Edna Pontellier, gradually realizes the oppressive domestic construct that defines her life and develops a different understanding of herself. She starts to behave beyond the usual norms of that time or rather 'madly' for the 19th century conventions. On the other hand, Gilman's anonymous narrator descends into madness due to her confinement in a domestic life and due to being silenced. These two works together act as the two sides of patriarchal oppression's results. Both women are exposed to symbolic violence and find their own way to escape from it, whether their story ends well or not.

Kardelen Aslan
Ege University, Türkiye

Kardelen Aslan is an MA student of the Department of American Culture and Literature at Ege University. She received her BA from the same department. Kardelen is currently working on her master's dissertation entitled "Home and Child: A Spatial Analysis of Home in Childhood Experiences and Developments in Selected American Short Stories." Her focused interests include science fiction, sparse poetry, literary criticism, spatial, cultural, and childhood studies, as well as women's studies, film, and media studies.

If Parents Fail, So Does Home: Child Neglect in Katherine Anne Porter's "He" and Flannery O'Connor's "The River" as a Form of Violence

Child neglect is one of the most predominant forms of child abuse. It should be considered a form of violence due to its harmful consequences on children. The World Health Organization defines neglect as "a parent failure to ensure the development of a child when a parent is able to do so, in one or more of the following areas: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, and shelter." Child neglect can appear in many types, such as physical or environmental neglect. It can occur through several related risk factors alongside "three causal models of neglect" that Anne Blumenthal identifies: "the parental deficit model, the environmental deficit model, and the ecological-transactional model." Neglect has multiple and long-term consequences for children, ranging from a deprived sense of identity and place to the death of the child. Katherine Anne Porter's "He" and Flannery O'Connor's "The River" are two influential American short stories that draw scholarly attention for the ways they portray the causes and consequences of child neglect. These works also show how homes can shift into "places of drudgery, abuse and neglect," as Gillian Rose states, due to their close link to their inhabitants. This study will analyze these stories by combining spatial and neglect theories. First, it will apply the causes of neglect and related factors, as discussed by scholars like Schumacher, Akehurst, Parkinson, and Stith, along with Blumenthal's "three causal models of neglect," to the stories. This step will consider the ideas of Gaston Bachelard, Janet Carsten, and Stephen Hugh-Jones on how people shape their homes. Then the consequences of child neglect, such as lesser brain development, worthlessness, and death, will be discussed in reference to Yi-Fu Tuan's view that a "child is adrift—placeless— without the supportive parent." This study aims to demonstrate and raise awareness of child neglect as a detrimental form of violence by focusing on characters and settings in selected American short stories.

Merve Kurşunluoğlu Öztan
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Merve Kurşunluoğlu Öztan holds a B.A. in English Language and Literature from Ege University (2014) and is currently pursuing an M.A. in American Culture and Literature at the same institution. Her scholarly interests encompass Gothic literature, mythology, Middle-earth and the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, computer and board games, narrative design and storytelling, digital narratives, as well as metal, rock, and folk music, psychology, and cultural studies. With eleven years of experience as an English teacher and two years as an instructor at a School of Foreign Languages, she brings extensive pedagogical expertise to her research on the intersections of literature, media, and interactive forms of narrative.

Interactive Gothic: Violence and Trauma in Digital Storytelling

Gothic literature has long explored dark minds, haunted places, psychological and identity issues, trauma, and various forms of violence within an intertwined framework of cause and effect. Readers have encountered psychological, physical, societal, and self-imposed violence throughout its pages. With the rise of 21st-century digital spaces, however, audiences no longer merely read Gothic narratives; they actively participate in them, making decisions and confronting violence firsthand. This study examines the representation of violence and trauma in a contemporary American Gothic video game through Dominick LaCapra's trauma theory. LaCapra's concepts of "acting out" and "working through," developed in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001), reveal the individual, cultural, and narrative dimensions of trauma. This framework shows how digital Gothic game mechanics simulate trauma's cyclical nature while offering players temporary spaces for reflection and healing.

The analyzed video game reproduces themes from the American Gothic tradition—doppelgänger, shadow self, fragmented identity—in a digital environment. Psychological violence (hallucinations, time distortions), supernatural violence (dark entities, "Taken" figures), and mechanical violence (light-dark cycles, safe zones) permeate the game world. These elements evoke LaCapra's "acting out" by simulating trauma's repetitive reliving, while also suggesting "working through" by enabling critical distance and reinterpretation.

Constantly confronting darkness and threats, players experience the cyclical, obsessive nature of trauma yet find respite and narrative reconstruction in light-defined safe zones. This process reframes violence from a mere aesthetic element into a central force in identity, memory, and narrative construction. Thus, interactive Gothic narratives extend LaCapra's trauma model into digital media, revealing violence, trauma, and identity through a new participatory form. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that Gothic literature and trauma theory expand in interactive digital narratives, where violence becomes not only a theme but an active cycle of experience.

Münevver Yakude Muştak
Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, Türkiye

Münevver Yakude Muştak is a doctoral student in English Language and Literature at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University and a Research Assistant at Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University. She earned her undergraduate degree from Gazi University and completed her MA in the same field at Selçuk University, focusing on contemporary literature and critical theory.

The Politics of Animal Cruelty in Burns' *Milkman*: Gendered Oppression and Sociopolitical Trauma

This research investigates the symbolic and political significance of animal violence, encompassing both felicide and canicide, in Anna Burns' *Milkman*. It argues that such deliberate acts of cruelty are deeply built into the socio-political and gendered realities of Northern Ireland during the Troubles. The study explores the underlying reasons for this violence, viewing it as a displacement of masculine rage and a reaction to frustration and aggression toward vulnerable and innocent creatures as a response to complex dynamics of femininity, powerlessness, and social control within a highly oppressive environment. This deliberate targeting of animals depicts not only a manifestation of individual and collective trauma but also a symbol of the systemic violence inflicted by a society divided by sectarianism, surveillance, and political conflict. By analyzing the portrayal of animal cruelty in *Milkman*, the analysis describes how these violent acts are metaphors for the culturally sanctioned silencing, disciplining, and marginalization of the Other. This Otherness is multifaceted, including species difference as well as gendered and emotional identities that challenge dominant power structures. The study, in this way, examines how such violence reflects internalized suffering and the wider community, revealing the pervasive impact of political oppression on everyday life and interpersonal relationships. The violence becomes both a subtle and clear staging for political frustration, showing patriarchal control internally while external conflict remains unresolved. It is, thus, staged, meant to instill fear and enforce obedience. Therefore, this research argues that animal violence in *Milkman* goes beyond mere acts of cruelty, instead functioning as a politically charged symbolic practice that exposes the interconnection of gender, power, and trauma in Northern Ireland's troubled history.

Murat Eray Köklü
Ege University, Türkiye

Murat Eray Köklü is currently pursuing his master's degree in American Culture and Literature. His academic interests include science fiction, fantasy literature, bildungsromane, history, and comparative literature. In 2023, he took part in the Sailing to Madness project and presented on "Existential Expectations and Consequences of Actions through Moby-Dick." In 2024, he volunteered for the organization of the CSS Risk Narratives event. In 2025, he participated in the IUS Conference both as a presenter and as part of the organizational team. He graduated from Ege University, Department of American Culture and Literature, in 2025 as the top student of his class.

Violence as Catharsis: Why We Cheer for Anti-Heroes

This paper explores the cultural fascination with violent anti-heroes and the cathartic role they play in contemporary literature and film. While anti-heroes often employ brutality and destruction, audiences not only tolerate but also celebrate their actions. Why do we cheer for figures who transgress moral and legal boundaries? To address this question, the paper draws on theoretical perspectives from Walter Benjamin, Slavoj Žižek, and Friedrich Nietzsche. Benjamin's *Critique of Violence* provides a framework for distinguishing between law-preserving and law-making violence, allowing us to interpret anti-heroes as agents of foundational transformation rather than mere outlaws. In *V for Vendetta*, for instance, the protagonist's violent actions aim to dismantle an oppressive state and establish new political possibilities. Žižek's analysis of subjective, symbolic, and systemic violence further reveals how anti-heroes respond to hidden injustices embedded within social and economic structures. Walter White in *Breaking Bad* and *Joker* (2019) exemplify how visible eruptions of violence expose the underlying systemic violence of class inequality, alienation, and marginalization. Finally, Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* helps us understand the anti-hero's radical ethical stance. By rejecting established categories of "good" and "evil," figures such as Rorschach in *Watchmen* embody the creation of alternative moralities that challenge conventional norms. Their violence thus becomes a philosophical statement about the instability of moral categories themselves. By synthesizing these perspectives, the paper argues that the violent anti-hero represents more than personal vengeance or nihilism. Instead, such figures dramatize cultural tensions around justice, legitimacy, and morality. Their violent acts, rather than alienating audiences, provide a form of catharsis that reflects both the failures of existing systems and the desire for alternative forms of justice.

Nihan Ercihan
Dokuz Eylül University, Türkiye

Nihan Ercihan is an Istanbul University bachelor's graduate and currently a master's student at Dokuz Eylül University's American Culture and Literature program, focusing on a variety of fields such as ethics, religion, gender, speculative fiction, gothic media, and American history.

Assenting to the Influence of the Violent in NBC's *Hannibal*

Will Graham is one of the greatest morally intriguing and intricate characters of literary and television history. First seen in Thomas Harris' *Red Dragon* (1981), later reimagined into a television series by NBC, created by Bryan Fuller, *Hannibal* (2013-2015) puts forth this mentally distressed special FBI agent who represses violent urges contradicting moral and social convictions, caused by encephalitis and unexplored trauma. Papers published on the series would put Hannibal Lecter on the spotlight, although his patient Will turns out to be a more violent character than the titular antagonist. While Hannibal is a pure psychopath, a decent villain; Will's portrayal draws parallels to a stereotypical hero's journey, where he has to endure mental challenges, and is expected to overcome the darkness inside. However, corruption through physically and psychologically violent methods gradually change Will's apparent disdain for the unethical. Another way to explore Will Graham's deteriorating mental state and gradual descent into violence is through Carl Jung's theoretical framework. Jung says that violence is innate, inherited, and natural, yet it can be repressed. The Shadow self mainly encourages the individual to, in this state of violence, create a socially undesirable environment within the host psyche. Often appearing in the shape of the Devil, the Shadow requires intimacy with the Ego, and hints at its existence through the unconscious stream or dreams. Unlike how it is portrayed in similar media, Will turns to this Shadow instead, conflicted yet desperate, and accepts the immorality of his violent impulses. This paper discusses the nature of visceral and carnal viciousness in NBC *Hannibal*'s Will Graham in terms of ethics and the psychology of violence, studying comparable characters from the show such as Randall Tier and Francis Dolarhyde, all of whom are under the influence of the Jungian devil, the wendigo-like creature that is Dr. Hannibal Lecter.

Nur Şevval Kosova
Ege University, Türkiye

Having received her B.A. in 2024 from Ege University in the department of American Culture and Literature, Nur Şevval Kosova is currently pursuing her M.A. degree in the same field and institution. Her research interests include psychoanalytic theories, identity, gender studies, culture and nature, mythology, and poetry. In 2024, she volunteered in the organization of the 12th International Undergraduate Symposium "Identity" and the 19th Cultural Studies Symposium "Risk Narratives". She is also enthusiastic about music and passionate about finding out the traces of culture and how it is carried out within different forms of art.

Within the Bounds of Fear: Exploring Tuan's Place and Violence in Norwegian American Fiction

The concept of place, which can be both simple and intricate, has been a significant matter for people, as it directly impacts their everyday experiences and the way they live in specific environments. In the quest for better economic and social living conditions, people tend to change the places they have lived in. However, the act of migrancy and the experience of a new place can either be a promise or a destructive dare for those leaving their own lands. Through the themes of identity, belonging and adaptation, immigrant literature not only utters the stories of the individuals experiencing new lands but also carries a collective historical memory for both migrating and migration-receiving. Written by Ole Edward Rølvaag, the novel *Giants in the Earth* tells the story of a family moving from Norway to the United States in the late 19th century and how their striving for life in new territories later becomes the main reason for their self-destruction. In the novel, the reason why violence occurs between people and nature can be understood through the concepts of places by Yi-Fu Tuan. In this presentation, it is aimed to interpret the continuous struggle of Norwegian immigrants in the prairie, their attempt to dominate and control the new land, and their disintegration from themselves through violence, oppression, and fear of land expressed in *Landscape of Fear* by Yi-Fu Tuan.

Oğuzhan Ayrım
Ege University, Türkiye

Oğuzhan Ayrım is a master's student in the Department of English Language and Literature at Ege University. He has contributed to both individual and collaborative projects, including a TÜBİTAK scholarship, an editorial role in the collective volume titled *Sailing to Madness: New Essays on Moby-Dick*, and an authorial role in the fictional book project called *The River Project*. He has also written and co-authored several academic articles. His current research focuses on the representation of disease and illness in literature, post-apocalyptic fiction, and cultural theory.

Perishable Filth and the Western Imagination of the Diseased Other

One of the existing discourses of violence lies in the idea of disease on an ideological basis. Even though we are no longer strangers to that very notion thanks to Covid-19, following the AIDS crisis back in the 1980s, the recipient of these crises, namely the concepts of civilisation and culture, reminded us of something that has been working as an undertow since the beginning of humanity: when disease befalls the subject of culture, it is coded as "negative", yet when projected onto "the Other", it becomes "positive" as a confirmation of identity-in-difference, deviance, and legitimisation. Processing from this configuration, since the earliest concords of civilisation, performances of blame, domination, and ideological violence have been enjoying this metaphorical coding, particularly within Western civilisation, which has perennially framed the Other as diseased, contagious, and virally threatening to Western hygiene. In such a coercive approach, the violence of identity is incubated precisely where the Other has been viewed as *a perishable filth*, which has functioned as both the legitimisation and the drive of the ascendancy of the West through any dominative acts, including the obvious ones such as colonialism, imperialism, and even patriarchy, too. This study aims to explore how the ideological overtones of the disease metaphor as a tool of violence within the ideological history of Western thought were used, focusing on selected historical intervals, narratives, and texts to delimit the scope.

Özge Şenyurt
Dokuz Eylül University, Türkiye

Özge Şenyurt is a graduate student in the American Culture and Literature Program at Dokuz Eylül University. Her academic interests include American theatre, postmodernism in American drama, adaptation studies and American cinema. She is especially interested in the journey of a play from text to performance, and the deconstruction of plays in a contemporary context.

The Abundance of Absent Violence in Tyler Keevil's Short Story *The Herd* (2013)

Too much violence turns into an unsettling composure. Therefore, Tyler Keevil's *The Herd* (2013) is a short story with extensive consequences. After being exiled due to being possessed by a devouring spirit, a wendigo, upon killing and feeding on his brother, he wanders alone in an environment where one should be a part of a commune—hunting on animals, zombie-like creatures, deadheads, and humans. Thomas Hobbes' "state of nature" indicates that having no authority as an individual drags men to chaos and insecurity as one becomes the jury, the judge, and the executioner of his own actions. While the unnamed narrator of *The Herd* is in exile, alone; instead of chaos and war, he creates a still and organized environment out of his first initial fear of violent death, the fear Hobbes states as the fear that defines man. In his subjective and unreliable first person narration, he appears calculated and seems to not realize, or force himself to forget, the density of his actions. As he is occupied with the vicious desire for flesh, he learns to enjoy the catastrophic situation, thus he lives to eat, not eat to live. He makes this "wasteland" his playground and sees himself superior to the other inhabitants. However logical and arranged he sounds, the absence of violence in his narration exposes the excessive amount of violence he had to endure in order to survive the brutality of nature. This paper studies the narrator's environment, opposition between his storytelling and actions as well as his behaviours from a Hobbesian perspective.

Samiye Sinem Çoban
Akdeniz University, Türkiye

Samiye Sinem Çoban is a Research Assistant in the Department of English Language and Literature at Akdeniz University, where she also completed her BA and MA studies. Her master's thesis, *Death of Drama: Entropy in Sarah Kane's Blasted, Crave and 4.48 Psychosis*, explored postdramatic theatre through the lens of entropy. Her research interests focus on science fiction, fantasy literature, theatre studies, and cultural theory, which she approaches from an interdisciplinary perspective that bridges literary criticism with broader cultural and theoretical frameworks.

Rage Against the Machine: Biopolitics and Violence Against Robots in *Westworld*

This presentation focuses on the portrayal of violence against humanoid robots in *Westworld* (1973) as an expression of pleasure, control, and power, along with its implications for broader social structures. The film depicts a futuristic theme park where visitors indulge in violent fantasies with robots, free from consequences. By viewing the park as a managed environment, the study probes: what forms of violence are practiced, how are they normalized, and what do they reveal about biopolitical governance when the governed are posthuman bodies? Using Michel Foucault's theory of biopolitics, the analysis examines key scenes, including saloon shootouts, repair bays, sexual encounters, and the morning "resets." Through close reading, the presentation develops a typology of violence within a posthuman context where simulated life is structured and governed. *Westworld* demonstrates not only direct acts of aggression but also a layered system: (1) sovereign spectacle, where guests wield absolute power without consequences; (2) disciplinary management, which maintains robot obedience through monitoring, repair, and reprogramming; (3) sexual commodification, treating robots as objects and removing consent; and (4) structural impunity, justifying harm by framing robots as property, with their suffering considered part of the park's business. These practices create beings susceptible to domination but not protection, fostering a cycle that normalizes violence and extends power over artificial life. The study offers an interpretive rather than empirical perspective and focuses solely on the 1973 film, excluding later adaptations. Its primary contribution is demonstrating how biopolitical logics migrate into posthuman realms. The presentation provides a framework for considering current debates about AI, responsibility, and rights as artificial intelligence becomes more integrated into workplaces, entertainment, and healthcare.

Seda Fikriye Yılmaz
İstanbul Aydin University, Türkiye

Seda Fikriye Yılmaz holds a BA degree in English Language and Literature from İstanbul Kültür University, and an MA degree in English Literatures and Literary Theory from Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg. Her MA thesis is “Metaphors of Entropy: Degradation, Destruction and Hope in Jeanette Winterson’s *The Stone Gods*”. She is currently a PhD student of English Language and Literature and works as a Research Assistant at İstanbul Aydin University.

Textual and Corporeal Spaces of Violence in Sarah Kane’s
4.48 Psychosis

Sarah Kane’s *4.48 Psychosis* (2000) is an experimental play exploring the unnamed protagonist’s grappling with severe depression and suicidal desire through disjointed language, silences and fractured voices. Written shortly before Kane’s death, the play has often been interpreted by focusing on her suicide, yet its fragmented structure, repetitions, and ruptured voices demonstrate that it should also be understood as a formal experiment representing the psychic violence. For trauma as an event defies any definition or representation, the language’s capacity falls short of any description of the experience. No matter how indefinable, spaceless, or timeless the experience is, it has to be articulated in a narrative form by being both temporally and spatially organised within the textual space. Kane represents how trauma can manifest itself in spatial representations such as the text, body, and mind of the protagonist, which can be perceived as the textual, corporeal, and mental spaces. The play’s disjointed form—its repetitions, stutters, and vanishing sentences—mirrors the protagonist’s fractured psyche and the self-inflicted violence that both alienates and reconnects her body to her mind. Moreover, the refusal of conventional stage directions, stable characters, or linear temporality transforms it into a textual space where trauma is enacted rather than narrated, performed rather than explained. Drawing upon the theories of Cathy Caruth and Henri Lefebvre, this paper will investigate how the play represents the traumatic experience as being articulated in the textual space in the narrative form, then as being re-enacted through the lived body and the mind both temporally and spatially. It stages psychological and corporeal violence as inseparable from trauma’s spatial inscriptions, where the text itself becomes a site of both testimony and absence.

Selin Kanber
Dokuz Eylül University, Türkiye

Selin Kanber is a PhD candidate at Dokuz Eylül University, pursuing a degree in American Culture and Literature. In her research, she is focusing on ecofeminism, animal rights and cultural fears associated with nature. Her master's thesis was on cyberfeminism, post-humanism and internet cultures. During her studies, she has volunteered for animal rights associations, which further contributed to her interest in animal ethics. Ms. Kanber has her bachelor's degree from Hacettepe University in the field of American Culture and Literature and completed her master's degree at the University of Warsaw in Poland, at the Institute of English Studies.

Up or Down: Illusion of Choice and Systematic Violence in *How Fish Is Made*

How Fish Is Made is an indie ecohorror game in which players inhabit a fish navigating a grotesque environment that resembles a factory, facing disorienting choices. The fish character moves through what appears to be rooms and tunnels made out of flesh and machines combined in a twisted manner, encounters other fish and learns about their choices. In an ever-changing environment of machines and flesh, the fish main character is then forced to choose either going up or down, while at the same time being manipulated by other fish who are convinced that their choice is the right one. By putting players into the body of a fish and providing them with a binary choice of "up or down," *How Fish Is Made* turns ecohorror into a tool for experiencing systematic violence and confronting human disconnection from nature. The game's portrayal of machinery, the illusion of choice and autonomy in decision-making, all highlight violence in different forms, such as industrial, structural and epistemic. To analyze these dynamics, this paper draws on Richard Louv's works on human disconnection from nature, Carolyn Merchant's and Karl Marx's critiques of mechanization and alienation, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak on epistemic violence, and the works of Peter Singer and Tom Regan on animal rights. By positioning the game within an ecohorror framework and emphasizing the violence and grotesque imagery, this reading demonstrates how a game in which non-human animals struggle with making choices can promote ethical awareness and show the consequences of human estrangement from nature.

Sema Duman

Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Türkiye

Sema Duman is a dedicated graduate of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, where she earned her bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature. With a strong interest in language education and literary studies, she continues to develop her academic and professional skills continuing her master's degree in the department of English Language and Literature, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University.

Dark Lives Behind the Perfect Images in Liane Moriarty's *Big Little Lies*

Big Little Lies (2014) by Liane Moriarty explores female solidarity, examining the complexities of motherhood and social perception as the women who are at the heart of the plot support each other and have their individual traumas. Set in a seaside town of Australia, the novel portrays an idyllic group of successful parents and charming families, cheerful school events in a seemingly perfect order. However, beneath the perfectly maintained surface lie darker realities such as domestic abuse and the pressures of parenting. This paper studies how the novel challenges popular culture's perfect life image and relationships often seen in popular culture by emphasizing the hidden pain, trauma, and complications carried by the main characters, such as Celeste, Madeline, and Jane. These three women are connected through shared experiences of pain despite their outward differences. The novel also serves a critical perspective on the competitive culture among mothers, where appearance and reputation take priority over well-being. By showing the performative nature of social interactions within motherhood, Moriarty gives a chance to question the societal pressure that shapes women's identities and the burden of maintaining a flawless image in public. Furthermore, the novel touches on the shaping effect of parents' repressed emotions in their children's lives through the characters Ziggy and Max. Beyond its literary significance, this novel also became a commodity of popular culture with its adaptation to television and there have been studies on both the adaptation and the novel regarding violence, gender roles, and misogyny. This study aims to contribute to the field with analyses from a psychoanalytic perspective. It employs Sigmund Freud's theories regarding the pleasure principle, death drive, and repression with the aim of deconstructing the glamorous images of the family and women in popular culture.

Ufuk Altunbaş
Ege University, Türkiye

Ufuk Altunbaş is currently pursuing a master's degree in the Department of English Language and Literature at Ege University, Türkiye. During his undergraduate term, he conducted a creative writing project named *The River Project* in his second year. The product of this project was published as a collective book titled *Nehrin Sonsuz Serüveni* the next year, including his steampunk-themed ecocritical short story. His research studies include such topics as EcoGothic, postmodern Gothic, posthuman Gothic, folk-horror, and techno-horror. For his master's thesis, he is currently studying the concepts of EcoGothic, ecophobia, and eco-trauma within the works of classical writers of Gothic fiction.

Willow Trees as the Agencies of Trauma: An EcoGothic Examination of Algernon Blackwood's "The Willows"

EcoGothic examines the circumstances of fear, terror, and dread arising from humans' relationship with nature. Yet, even though nature is indifferent to human existence and does not surely actively engage in violence against humans, EcoGothic deals with the concept of violence as well. For, humans are deluded into believing that nature is violent against them. Leaving their familiar cultural space, humans gradually begin to lose their human values behind sublime nature, which in turn creates psychological violence. This anthropogenic violence can be conceptualized as violence of lackness – since humans, who have tried to control nature, lose rational abilities in the presence of awe-inspiring nature. As humans cannot grasp the seccries of nature, they begin to feel the lack of ability to reason and interpret nature. Thus, due to their psychologically shattered minds, humans get mentally hurt by this deficiency because their civilizational codes have been destroyed. As this situation is convenient to Gothic imaginations, there are literary works exemplifying such occurrences where the characters suffer from losing their basic cultural human traits such as communication and language. Also, as they are exposed to violence of lackness, they slowly get dehumanized, starting to inflict both psychological and physical violence on each other. In this context, the aim of this article is to examine the EcoGothic reflections in Algernon Blackwood's story "The Willows" and to argue that willow trees, which are the source of horror in the story, violently create a traumatic barrier between people and language. The article discusses how this barrier overthrows some dominant features of culture, such as mutual conversation, understanding what is heard, and naming the unknown, and shows that the relationship between culture and nature, in this particular text, drives people to madness.

Uğur Yılmaz
Ege University, Türkiye

Uğur Yılmaz is currently working as a research assistant at Ege University, Department of American Culture and Literature. He completed his M. A. thesis titled “Barbecue as a social space in American culture and narratives” in June 2022. His interests mainly focus on African American Studies and Video Game Studies.

Blackness as Constraint: Structural and Cultural Violence in Contemporary African American Fiction

This paper examines how Johan Galtung's theories of structural violence and cultural violence illuminate the theme of “writing Black” in Jason Mott's *Hell of a Book* (2021) and Percival Everett's *Erasure* (2001). Galtung defines structural violence as “violence built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances” (Galtung 1969), while cultural violence consists of “those aspects of culture...that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence” (Galtung 1990).

In *Erasure*, Everett's protagonist Thelonious Ellison bitterly observes, “The absurdity of it all is that I do not exist” (Everett 2001), a declaration that captures the structural violence of invisibility when Black writers do not conform to expected stereotypes. His parody novel *My Pafology*—“I just made up the worst thing I could imagine and they loved it” (Everett 2001)—satirizes the publishing industry's reward of reductive caricatures while suppressing more complex depictions of Black identity.

Two decades later, Mott's *Hell of a Book* demonstrates the persistence of these conditions. The narrator, confronted with expectations to produce a “Black book,” confesses: “They wanted me to be tragic. They wanted my life to hurt so they could feel better” (Mott 2021). Here, cultural violence is evident in how Black suffering is commodified for a predominantly white readership, framed as authenticity rather than constraint.

The retrospective comparison underscores that across a twenty-year span, structural and cultural violence continue to govern the literary marketplace. Both novels reveal how African American authors must negotiate imposed identities, linguistic policing, and the commodification of stereotypes. By exposing the normalization of these violent mechanisms, Mott and Everett demonstrate how the demand to “write Black” remains a site of systemic oppression.

Ülkü Altınbaş & Serpil Demir
Akdeniz University, Türkiye

Being a graduate of Middle East Technical University, Ülkü Altınbaş is continuing her MA studies at Akdeniz University. Her research interests include drama, novel, gender studies, and science fiction, with a particular focus on apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic narratives. Aspiring to an academic career, Altınbaş engages in research that deepens her expertise in these fields. Alongside her graduate studies, she teaches English at the high school level in a private institution in Antalya.

Serpil Demir, an English teacher at a private school in Antalya and an MA student at Akdeniz University, has research interests in drama, politics, and the queer movement. She previously presented at the 7th Pamukkale Conference of English Studies (2023) and the 12th International Undergraduate Symposium at Ege University (2024). She enjoys engaging in discussions on politics and queer rights, and aspires to pursue an academic career by conducting research in these fields to further develop her knowledge and expertise.

Psychological Violence and Queer Experiences in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*

Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* depicts the struggles of New York City's queer community with illness and intense homophobia during the 1980s AIDS pandemic. The play mainly centers on interactions among heterosexuals and queer individuals. The stigmas directed at queer individuals from outside the community highlight the psychological violence they face and show how these stigmas can transmit violence from outside to inside the community when the targeted group internalizes them. The play demonstrates characters' use of defense mechanisms, such as denial and repression, to cope with psychological violence—seen in Joe's failed attempt to sustain a heterosexual marriage and Roy's firm denial of his homosexuality. This study aims to contribute to research on psychological violence against queer individuals and to address the gap in existing studies through the lens of Eric Goffman's stigma theory. While most analyses of the play focus on themes of illness, politics, and queer identity, this paper mainly emphasizes psychological violence and labeling directed at the queer community. Stigmas and practices of psychological violence against queers have been examined using a close reading procedure and textual analysis informed by queer theory.

Yavuz Ekim Bovkır
Akdeniz University, Türkiye

Yavuz Ekim Bovkir is a research assistant at Suleyman Demirel University and a PhD candidate based at Akdeniz University. Their work focuses on theatre, with a particular interest in modern British and American theatre. They take a multidisciplinary approach in their work, blending multiple concepts and theories to explore key elements and discussions in literature.

An Existentialist Reading of Edward Bond's *Saved*

Edward Bond's *Saved* (1965) is one of the most controversial plays in modern British theater, mainly because of its violent scenes. Nonetheless, Bond insists that his plays are no more violent than real life, suggesting that violence on stage simply reflects societal violence. Although previous studies have addressed the play's violent scenes, they rarely explored its existentialist implications. As this presentation argues, an existentialist perspective adds a new philosophical layer to the play's analysis by demonstrating that violence arises not only from social factors but also from specific human failures. Therefore, through multiple close readings, this study analyzes Bond's characters to show how he creates conditions that justify violence by drawing on Sartre's concept of bad faith and Clarke's Kantian view of heteronomous evil. While uncovering the philosophical foundation of the play, the study argues that Bond rationalizes violence by portraying self-deceptive, heteronomously evil characters in *Saved*.

Yusuf Aybars Elçi
Middle East Technical University, Türkiye

Yusuf Aybars Elçi graduated from the Middle East Technical University's department of Foreign Language Education in 2024 and began his master's in English Language and Literature at METU within the same year. He participated in METU's British Novelist International Conference in 2024, presenting his paper "The Impact of 'Otherness' in Buchi Emecheta's *In The Ditch*: A Post-colonial, Orientalism Focused Reading." His research interests include Modern and Postmodern Literature, Post-colonial Literature, Interactive Narratives, and Narratology.

Titus Andronicus and Volumnia as Incarnations of The Roman Institutions of War In Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *The Tragedy of Coriolanus*

William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* provides an overarching, continuous experience of graphic violence, culminating in scenes of extreme and sudden aggression by the characters. The titular Titus serves as a character who is noted as "in all his deeds a father and friend to Rome" by Bassianus. Titus wholly embodies the militaristic and warlike features of Rome, fathering twenty five sons and burying twenty one of them as martyrs for the Roman cause. The extreme violence instigated and experienced by Titus, in both physicality and language, amplified by the praise and admiration of the Roman People directed towards him, renders him an icon of the Roman militaristic ideal. In accordance with Titus, Volumnia, in Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Coriolanus*, embodies an ambitious and unyielding mother figure to the titular Coriolanus. Controlling and directing her extremely capable son to military success with little regard or doubt for his safety, Volumnia serves as an alternative symbol for the Roman military ambition. This study aims to analyse and compare the figures of Volumnia and Titus as symbolic incarnations of Rome and Roman Military ambition by their instigation of violence physically, linguistically, and meta-dramatically to provide a greater understanding of political and institutional depictions of violence in Shakespeare's Roman dramas. Furthermore, by inspecting the figures of Lucius, in *Titus Andronicus*, and Coriolanus, the study at hand aims to highlight the proliferation of societal violence in Shakespearean Drama in light of the actions of *Titus Andronicus* and *Volumnia*.

Zeynep Türkü Ekşi
Yeditepe University, Türkiye

Zeynep Türkü Ekşi is an MA student at Yeditepe University in the Department of English Language and Literature who is currently working on her dissertation. She completed her bachelor's education in the fields of English Language and Literature and Turkish Language and Literature as a double major student at Yeditepe University. Her major fields of interest include comparative poetry, Faustian narratives, and Victorian novels. As a master's student who aims to build her career in literary studies, she believes in the importance of participating in conferences that are helpful both in the sense of personal academic development and of intellectual sharing with future colleagues.

Violence “Embroidered” in Metaphors: A Comparative Ecofeminist Analysis of the “Hunting” Metaphor in English Renaissance Poetry and Turkish Divan Poetry

Conventionally, both women and nature have been considered inferior to men, and this false consideration can be observed in the depictions of women and nature in literature. In most of the works of the traditional literary canon, there have been similar representations of women and nature, especially considering the idea that both of them “should” be taken under control by men through the use of violence. Departing from this idea of a parallel portrayal of women and nature in literary works, under the scope of this presentation, four poems -“Whoso List to Hunt” by Sir Thomas Wyatt, “Amoretti LXVII: Like as a Huntsman” by Edmund Spenser, 195th Ghazal of Bâkî and 152nd Ghazal of Ahmed Pasha- will be analysed in connection to the “hunting” metaphor from an Ecofeminist perspective and with a strong link to the concept of “violence”. By choosing a specific metaphor to be elaborately examined, the “hunting” metaphor, this presentation focuses on how violence is “embroidered” in metaphors. Through a comparative analysis of four different poems, two of them from English literature and the other two from Turkish divan literature from the selected perspectives, this presentation aims to display the uncanny doubleness considering the oppression of and violence against women and nature, and to search for the reason behind this doubleness, which is the universality of the patriarchal male perception, particularly in the context of violence.

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