

# AUTHORS AS CHARACTERS

IN FICTION, FILM AND GRAPHIC NARRATIVES

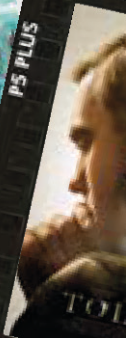
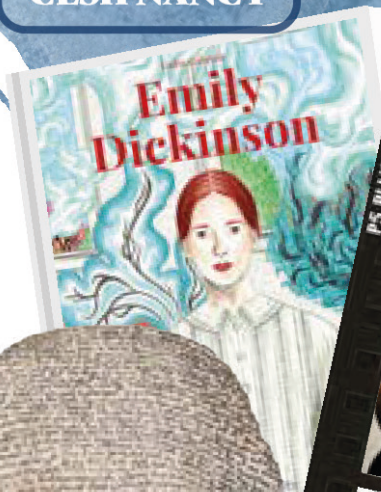
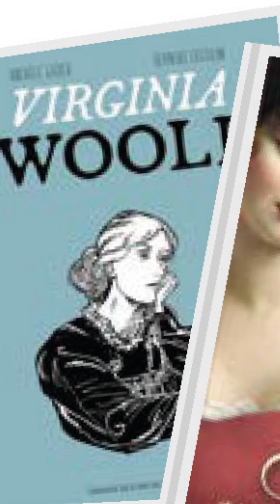
Conference

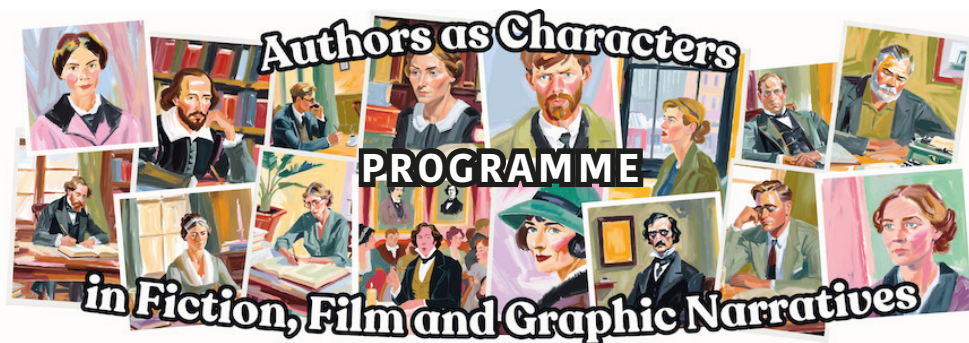
12-13 March 2026

Université de Lorraine, Nancy

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**Thursday 12 March**

**8:30-9:00**

## Introduction

Monica Latham, Nathalie Collé & Armelle Parey

**9:00-10:00**

## 'Performing Late Style: Ageing and Creativity on the Screen'

Belén Vidal is Reader in Film Studies at King's College London. She is the author of *Heritage Cinema* (2012), *Figuring the Past: Period Film and the Mannerist Aesthetic* (2012), and co-editor (with Tom Brown) of *The Biopic in Contemporary Film Culture* (2014); she has published widely on screen biography. She is currently co-investigator in the research project AGE-C: Ageing and Gender in European Cinema (2023-2026).

### Keynote Speaker:

Belén Vidal  
(King's College London)

### Chair:

Matthew Smith

**10:00-10:15**

Coffee Break

**10:15-11:45**

## 'The Politics of Biofiction'

Chairs: Barbara Muller and William McKenzie

**10:15-10:35**

## 'Faustian Bargains and False Romanticism in Colm Tóibín's *The Magician*'

Virginia Rademacher  
(Babson College, United States)

Colm Tóibín's biographical novel, *The Magician* (2021) conjures the life of Thomas Mann from 1891 to midway through the twentieth century, traversing key moments in Mann's life and family amid two world wars and the rise and fall of fascism. We follow the contours of Mann's public conversion from the autocratic, nationalist rhetoric of *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man* (1918) to a vocal defender of democratic ideals – increasingly so in the years following World War II. Yet, Tóibín's biofiction explores the more contradictory and equivocal aspects of Mann's political transformation. What biofiction does especially well is to illuminate powerful spaces of uncertainty. Such gaps of knowledge and 'not seeing' are not internalized, apolitical actions, but expose unsettled, contentious realities that continue to act on our lives. In fact, it is fear of and retreat from the unknown that for Tóibín complicates his protagonist's thinking and fiction. Tóibín's novel exposes how his Mann internalized a false romanticism that rationalized personal and political modes of detachment and disengagement. Through his biofictional Mann, Tóibín explores how individuals become lost when they use imagination not as a means of contesting reality to understand or challenge aspects of the human condition, but rather to conceal and evade this inquiry – deepening deceptive fictions. In this way, Tóibín's biofiction speaks deeply to authoritarian threats in our own time, so often cloaked in the guise of romantic rebellion. The imagined narratives we create of each other and the world can be modes of walling off and false romanticism – evading how the fictions we invent have real consequences – or, alternatively, windows to imagine alternative ways of being and understanding that speak to powers of redemption and reinvention.

Virginia (Jenny) Newhall Rademacher is Professor of Literary and Cultural Studies at Babson College and Chair of the Arts and Humanities Division. She has published widely on genre, identity, and new narrative formats, including the contemporary surge in biofiction. Her book *Derivative Lives: Biofiction, Uncertainty, and Speculative Risk in Contemporary Spanish Narrative* (Bloomsbury, 2022) creates an interdisciplinary nexus, exploring the rich field of biofiction in relation to concepts of uncertainty, speculation, and risk in a post-truth age.

**10:35-10:55**

## 'From Poet to Product: Making Emily Dickinson's Rebelliousness Consumable in *Dickinson* (Apple TV)'

Rocío Saucedo Dimas  
(Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México)

Rebellion is a value that, since the founding of the United States in the eighteenth century, has become deeply embedded in the nation's most institutionalized sense of identity. To reinforce this ideology – undoubtedly a component of U.S. exceptionalism – the country's hegemonic discourse has appropriated various rebellious historical figures, including literary icons such as Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson (see Martin, 2007: 122). In a talk at Smith College, Alena Smith contends that while Emily Dickinson's poetry was radical, Dickinson herself was not necessarily radical as a person. Smith explains that her creative decision in the television series *Dickinson* (Apple TV, 2019-2021) was to portray Dickinson as being as radical in her actions as she was in her poetry. Clearly, one aspect of this constructed rebelliousness is the character's queer sexuality, but it is not the only one. This paper aims to examine how the series constructs a sense of rebellion in this particular version of Dickinson, not only through her depiction as a character who defies heteropatriarchal norms, but also through an intermedial and metafictional dialogue with contemporary celebrity culture. I will focus on two key scenes from 'Because I Could Not Stop for Death' (S.1, E.1): a mid-episode



scene in which Emily and Susan kiss beneath a tree, and a final scene in which Emily (once again outdoors and actively fleeing paternal repression) climbs into a carriage with the personified figure of Death. As Emily converses with Death, portrayed by rapper Wiz Khalifa, Billie Eilish's 'Bury a Friend' plays in the background. In this way, the figure of the poet becomes associated with two contemporary pop culture celebrities who employ gestures coded as rebellious in the construction of their public personas. This use of celebrity culture is particularly revealing since rebellion occupies a paradoxical position within it: celebrated as a cultural value, yet simultaneously neutralized by the fetishizing and commodifying logic of fame. This dynamic mirrors the broader efforts of hegemonic U.S. discourse to assimilate and neutralize the rebellious potential found in artistic expressions such as Dickinson's poetry.

Chío Saucedo is an Associate Professor at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, where she teaches nineteenth-century British and American literature and poetry in Spanish. Her most recent publications are 'Emily Dickinson: ni Dios, ni marido, ni editor o "Publication – is the Auction / Of the Mind of Man –"' (*Anuario de Letras Modernas*, 2023); 'Arma Cargada: El cuerpo metaforizado y la metáfora corporeizada en "My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –" de Emily Dickinson' (*El placer de la lectura: cuerpos, afectos, textos*, 2022); '¿Quién habla en el poema?: Reflexiones en torno al yo lírico, voz poética y autoría' (*¿Qué es poesía? Manual de análisis de textos poéticos*, 2021); 'La noción (emersoniana) del *self-made man* en el personaje Don Draper de *Mad Men*' (*TVficciones: reflexiones críticas sobre televisión estadounidense*, 2019).

10:55-11:15

### 'The Limits of Feminist Elegy in Shakespearean Biofiction: Reading O'Farrell's *Hamnet*'

Archy P. Venu  
(Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, India)

Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet* (2020) reimagines William Shakespeare's domestic life through a feminist lens, centring on the death of his son and the family's experience of grief. The novel not only mourns the loss of a child but also reflects on the fragility of life, the complexities of familial love, and the redemptive possibilities of art. By foregrounding feminine grief, O'Farrell disrupts traditional elegiac conventions; yet the novel's subversive potential remains ambivalent. While Agnes (Anne Hathaway) is given emotional and psychic depth as a bereaved mother, the narrative ultimately redirects the resolution of grief toward Shakespeare, whose artistic creation becomes the locus of consolation. This displacement, as Louise Fradenburg's concept of 'elegiac misogyny' suggests, risks reinscribing patriarchal frameworks, granting female grief visibility only to subsume it within male-authored closure. The paper argues that *Hamnet* simultaneously destabilises and reinforces androcentric elegiac traditions: it empowers female mourning but constrains its agency within structures of bardolatry and commodification inherent to Shakespearean biofictions. Drawing on the work of Fradenburg, Melissa Zeiger, David James, and Nouri Gana in feminist elegiac theory and grief studies, this paper examines how the novel negotiates the tension between feminist reimagining and patriarchal containment. It contends that Agnes's identity as a grieving mother is rendered precarious: socially, emotionally, and symbolically, revealing both the possibilities and the limits of feminist interventions in biographical fictions of Shakespeare.

Archy P. Venu is a PhD candidate in English at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee, India. Her research examines the intersections of gender and grief in biofiction.

11:15-11:45 Questions and discussion

11:45-13:45 Lunch Break

13:45-14:45

### 'Queer(ing) Biographiction: Hybridity, Cultural Memory, Queer Temporalities'

Keynote Speaker:

Xavier Giudicelli  
(University Paris-Nanterre, France)

Chair:  
Nathalie Collé

This talk explores how the genre of graphic biofiction – 'biographiction' – reimagines canonical queer authors as characters, and how this genre expands our understanding of literary afterlives. Focusing on a range of contemporary graphic narratives featuring figures from Oscar Wilde to Alison Bechdel – whose *Fun Home* (2006) engages with canonical writers such as Proust and Wilde – I will argue that these works do more than represent queer authors: they queer the genre of biographiction, troubling binaries and boundaries, between text and image, past and present, fact and fiction, history and imagination.

Biographiction is a fundamentally hybrid artform combining textual narration with visual representation and, in the case of queer biographiction, often relying on intertextuality and interpictureity, thereby weaving rhizomatic networks of media, cultural memory, and affective resonance. In so doing, the genre foregrounds what may be called queer temporalities: a non-linear, affect-driven experience of time which resists the logic of what Walter Benjamin called 'homogeneous empty time' (i.e., linear historicism).

Drawing on Elizabeth Freeman's *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, I will show how queer biographiction proposes modes of living and remembering which embrace temporal disjunction, echo and resonance, and how it reframes canonical figures within a broader politics of representation and memory.

Xavier Giudicelli is Professor of British Literature and visual arts at the English Department of Université Paris Nanterre. His research interests include Oscar Wilde, *fin-de-siècle* art and literature, word and image and translation studies. He authored a monograph entitled *Portraits de Dorian Gray: le texte, le livre, l'image* (2016), which proposes an analysis of illustrated editions of Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. He edited an issue of *Études anglaises* on Wilde and the arts, and co-edited a volume on British Aestheticism. He has also published essays on E. M. Forster and contemporary British writer Alan Hollinghurst.

14:45-15:00 Coffee Break

15:00-16:50

### 'The Author as Elusive and Fugacious Figure'

Chair: André Kaenel

15:00-15:20

### ""It Was Part of Sonny's Disguise": (De)constructing the Myth of J.D. Salinger"

Adriana Haben  
(University of Lorraine, France)

J.D. Salinger is notorious among American writers for his highly reclusive and mysterious persona, which has made him an object of fascination for readers and critics alike. Indeed, he consistently refused to give interviews or to sign away the rights to his works for film adaptations, and did not officially publish any new works between 1965 (the publication of 'Hapworth 16, 1924' in *The New Yorker*) and his death in 2010. Salinger's reclusive image has often been emphasized whenever he appeared as a character in various productions, from the 2015 film *Comin' Through the Rye* (directed by J.S. Sadwith) and the second season of Netflix series *BoJack Horseman* to the 2017 biopic, *Rebel in the Rye*. Among these representations, Jerome Charyn's 2021 novel, *Sergeant Salinger* offers an entirely new perspective on the author by making him the main character of a biofiction which explores Salinger's youth and his experience in World War II, stopping just short of his literary success as a writer with the publication of *The Catcher in the Rye*. Charyn departs from established descriptions of Salinger by

focusing on his experience as a counterintelligence officer and his role in the liberation of France, in a narrative that is threaded with multiple callbacks to his lesser known works, including short stories and the Glass Family novellas. The novel uses the name 'Sonny' for its main character, which was Salinger's private nickname within his family, in a clear effort to distinguish the real-life J.D. Salinger, writer and public figure, from the 'Sergeant Salinger' featured in the story. This paper will contrast Charyn's novel with other biofictions that feature Salinger as a character, to see how the blend of two normally opposite modalities (the biography of a real person and fiction) allows the transition of Salinger from author to character, and how this affects the myth surrounding his representation as a reclusive writer (which, paradoxically, relies on unveiling or fictionalizing certain details of the author's private life). We shall pay particular attention to the way these fictional narratives incorporate elements from Salinger's own fictional stories, creating parallels between the author and his work, and between him and his fictional characters. Finally, the intermedial dimension of these biofictions of Salinger will also be a point of interest, as we shall compare Charyn's novel with other depictions of Salinger as a character on screen, and analyze the discrepancies in the author's representation between literary fiction and film.

Adriana Haben is Associate Professor (Maître de conférences) at the Université de Lorraine in Nancy. She specializes in American Literature and the visual arts, more specifically on photo-textual interactions in US documentary books during the Great Depression. Her PhD thesis, defended in 2022, focused on the redefinition of the documentary genre in the works of writer James Agee and photographer Walker Evans. She has also worked on representations of the everyday and the commonplace in literature and photography.

15:20-15:40

### 'Joseph Conrad in the Background: Questioning the Power of the Author'

Nathalie Martinière  
(University of Limoges,  
France)

In his *Au bord de la mer violette*, Alain Jaubert imagines a meeting in the port of Marseille between Joseph Conrad and Arthur Rimbaud in which he has Conrad 'sense that he may himself be a character in a novel' (88). Jaubert thus points out both the romantic dimension of these two authors' lives and more generally, the attraction of writers' lives on readers (and other writers), an attraction that goes beyond their works. Probably because of his 'many lives', Conrad gives contemporary authors the opportunity to deal with a wide array of situations and to use him as a screen onto which they can project their own centres of interest. Contrary to other writers, however, he is not transformed into a sleuth, and is not credited with extraordinary adventures. So far, there even seems to be a pattern in the fictionalisation of Conrad. Having analysed previously novels or graphic novels in which Conrad plays a major role and leaving aside the 'romantic' dimension of his life, I would like to concentrate on cases in which he remains in the background, and to interrogate the authors' choice of including him in their fiction. What point is there in having a famous novelist like Conrad as a secondary/minor character? How does his presence impact the very definition of what a minor character is? How does such a choice characterise our time's preoccupations? Most of the time, it seems to reflect the authors' interest in what Conrad's overbearing presence left in the shadow: supposedly insignificant lives, traditionally minor characters (servants, secretaries, etc.), or more specifically the influence of his fiction on the picture of these minor characters' country, which they wish to rectify. What is his presence then symbolic of? How does such an interest reflect what Michel Foucault called 'the classificatory function' of the author's name? How does this affect the way the general public remembers Conrad as a person and as a writer? How does his fictionalisation influence the public's approach to his works? Why is it at times so exasperating for critics/specialists of Conrad? And who do writers belong to, in the end? These are questions I would like to examine in this paper.

Nathalie Martinière is Professor in the Department of English, University of Limoges, where she teaches literature. She wrote her doctoral dissertation on spatial representations in Joseph Conrad's novels and works both on Conrad and on postcolonial rewritings of classics. She is the author of *Figures du Double: du personnage au texte* (2008). More recently, she has co-edited *Rewriting in the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Centuries: Aesthetic Choice or Political Act?* (2015), *Conrad's Presence in Contemporary Culture: Adaptations and Appropriations* (2024) and contributed a chapter to the *Routledge Conrad Companion* (2024). She is the editor of *L'Epoque Conradienne*.

15:40-16:00

### 'In Search of Bram Stoker's Secret Self: Joseph O'Connor's *Shadowplay* (2019)'

Bertrand Cardin  
(University of Caen, France)

In 2016, Irish novelist Joseph O'Connor wrote *Vampyre Man*, a radio play about the real-life relationship between Bram Stoker and the two most prominent stage actors of the Victorian era, Henry Irving and Ellen Terry. Three years later, in 2019, he made these same historical figures the protagonists of *Shadowplay*. The text presents itself as a collection of various documents given by Stoker to Terry after Irving's death. The first of these is a letter dated 1908 in which Stoker explains the conceit of the book, 'a clutch of diary pages and private notes I kept on and off down the years and had begun working up into a novel or perhaps a play'. Obviously, *Shadowplay* is a biographical novel, but it is also linked to the theatre, as evidenced by the presence of the word 'play' in the title or the division of the text into three acts. The theatre is not only the world that brings the three protagonists together, but it is also the main setting for the plot. As business manager at the Lyceum Theatre in London, Stoker remained at Irving and Terry's side for close to three decades, from 1878 to 1905. *Shadowplay* focuses on that period precisely. It is interesting to examine first how this osmosis between theatre and biofiction is established, but also to answer the following questions: is Bram Stoker totally absorbed into the realm of fiction to the point of being indistinguishable from the purely fictional characters of the story? Or does he import his referential status into a fictional text that reincarnates the man by merging person and character, as far as possible? Beyond these issues, *Shadowplay* is original insofar as the text focuses on a specific part of Stoker's life, namely the years prior to the publication of *Dracula*. O'Connor tries here to anticipate the world of Stoker's famous novel. He seeks to understand how the story came about in the author's mind, how far the world of theatre was linked to his creative process. He also fills in the gaps left by biographers by offering credible conjectures in an attempt to understand what Stoker may have experienced and felt deep inside during those years. Following on from the biography *Ellen Terry and Her Secret Self*, written by her son, director and theatre theorist Edward Gordon Craig, Joseph O'Connor, in *Shadowplay*, seeks to reach Bram Stoker's secret life and turns possibilities into probabilities.

Bertrand Cardin, Professor of Irish literature at the Université de Caen Normandie (France), has published many articles and several books about contemporary Irish novelists and short story writers: *Neil Jordan, Author and Screenwriter. The Imagination of Transgression* (2023), *Colum McCann's Intertexts: 'Books Talk to One Another'* (2016), *Lectures d'un texte étoilé. 'Corée' de John McGahern* (2009) and *Miroirs de la filiation. Parcours dans huit romans irlandais contemporains* (2005). In 2014, he was the guest editor of a special issue of the *Journal of the Short Story in English* on 'The 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Irish Short Story'. He co-edited *Ecrivaines irlandaises / Irish Women Writers* with Professor Sylvie Mikowski (2014) and *Irlande, écritures et réécritures de la Famine* with Professor Claude Fierobe (2007). He also published a work of fiction, *The Butterfly Effect and Other Short Stories* (2025).



16:00-16:20

**‘An Author in  
Hollywood: F.  
Scott Fitzgerald  
in *West of Sunset*  
by Stewart O’Nan’**

Tricia Reid  
(University of Lincoln, UK)

This talk focuses on the presentation of F. Scott Fitzgerald as a character in literary biofictions, while also bringing biofictions by F. Scott Fitzgerald into critical debate. My talk investigates how the character of Scott in the novel is created from not only his biographical details, but also the influence of his own literary style, as well as incidents and characters from his writings. These influences form part of the unique characteristic of literary biofiction, which is the intricate, intertextual dialogue between, in this case, Fitzgerald's writing and O’Nan’s novel. Furthermore, this dialogue reveals a feature of literary biofiction, which I term double fictionality. Biofictions of Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald are further complicated as Fitzgerald famously incorporated incidents from his and his wife's lives into his writings, meaning his novels and short stories are a form of autofiction. I focus on examples of double fictionality in *West of Sunset*, where I demonstrate how the character of Scott is created through incidents, events, and characters from Fitzgerald's writings, set against the background of Hollywood. By looking at *West of Sunset* through the lens of double fictionality, this reveals how the fictional Scott is shaped by Fitzgerald's writings. While the desire of the biofiction maybe to present a narrative about Scott's agency, I suggest that the overwhelming influence of Fitzgerald's writings presents the fictional Scott, in part, as a character in one of his novels. Furthermore, I also suggest that double fictionality adds an extra dimension to *West of Sunset* inviting readers to read or re-read Fitzgerald's writings.

Tricia Reid successfully completed her PhD at the University of Lincoln UK. Her thesis investigates the poetics of 21<sup>st</sup>-century literary biofiction. She has also contributed a chapter on a biofiction of Rupert Brooke to a collection of essays published by Cambridge Scholars titled *Biofictions and Writers’ Afterlives*.

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**16:20-16:50**    **Questions and discussion**

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**19:00**

**Dinner in town**

(N.B. not included in basic conference fee)

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**Friday 13 March**

8:45-9:45

**‘Orwell, Author,  
Character’**

**Keynote Speaker:**

Lucia Boldrini  
(Goldsmiths University of  
London, UK)

**Chair:**

Monica Latham

Biofiction, a genre which constructs narratives centred on historical individuals, can be concerned with the interior life – thoughts, emotions, memories, fears, desires, etc.: the constitution of the self as a self – and/or with how individuals relate to their social and historical contexts, including social and historically determined constructions of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and race, or the legal, philosophical, ideological and economic conditions of a subject's existence. The individual – both historically real and a literary character in the biofiction – acquires a number of overlapping roles: spouse, child, parent, friend, boss or employee, etc. “[T]he occupation as author” as Ned Kelly calls it in Peter Carey’s *True History of the Kelly Gang*, is one of these roles. As author, the character will be seen as engaging in the creation of an imaginative world, struggling with the demands of form, often also struggling with political constraints and economic necessities.

George Orwell – the author-persona of historical individual Eric Blair; the author of essays of autobiographical bent, which reflect on writing, on society, on politics, on class, on war, on the natural world, on everyday life; the subject of biofictions (*The Last Man in Europe* by Dennis Glover; *Barnhill* by Norman Bissell) and of hybrid texts merging biography, memoir, fiction and cultural critique (Rebecca Solnit’s *Orwell’s Roses*, Anna Funder’s *Wifedom*) – appears to be an ideal case study for this complex interrelation of ethical, political, personal and aesthetic issues explored by biofiction.

To what extent is the author George Orwell a character created by Eric Blair, a product of such a desire for realism that he is made to live the life of the destitute, the homeless, the soldier at the front, in order to be able to write truthfully about the political, social and personal predicaments of the working class, about democracy, war and totalitarianism in the middle of the twentieth century? To what extent is George Orwell's uncompromising championing of truth and decency, his desire for justice, the expression of this author-persona, while the person remains blind to, or takes advantage of, the patriarchal and misogynist privilege that enables him to exploit, while erasing, the women around him, in particular his wife Eileen, as exposed by Funder’s *Wifedom*? To what extent is our fetishizing of that unflinching allegiance to truth and decency (despite his clear recognition of the inevitable tension between ideals and the actual conditions of life) obscuring the softer aspects of his personality, such as his love of flowers and nature, as shown by Solnit’s *Orwell’s Roses*? (It is interesting that, of the four works on Orwell I have mentioned, the two written by female authors, the more hybrid in form, also are the more questioning of the many, and all male-authored, biographies of Orwell, while the more straightforward biofictions, both written by male authors, follow the biographies more closely.) And how do biofictions of Orwell relate to biofictions of other authors and help us reflect on the genre as a whole?

Lucia Boldrini is Professor Emerita of English and Comparative Literature at Goldsmiths, University of London. She is Honorary Professor of Comparative Literature at University College London. Her specialisms include biofiction, comparative literature, James Joyce, modernism and medievalism, areas in which she has published widely and organised numerous events, including the Auto/Bio/Fiction series. Among her books are *Joyce, Dante, and the Poetics of Literary Relations* (2001), *Autobiographies of Others: Historical Subjects and Literary Fiction* (2012) and, as editor, *Medieval Joyce* (2002), *Experiments in Life-Writing: Intersections of Auto/Biography and Fiction* (2017), and the *Routledge Companion to Biofiction* (2025). She served as President of the International Comparative Literature Association from 2022 to 2025.

**9:45-10:00**

**Coffee Break**

10:00-11:50

## 'Elegiac and Pathological Visions of the Author'

Chair: Monica Latham

10:00-10:20

### 'Rewriting Icons: Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath in Contemporary Biofiction'

Francesco Di Perna  
(Università degli Studi  
Roma Tre, Italy)

Since Roland Barthes announced the 'Death of the Author', few figures have been resurrected as insistently in cultural imagination as Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath. Both have become emblematic of the paradoxes of modern authorship: canonical and yet endlessly appropriated, celebrated for their literary innovation as much as for their tragic lives, part of the mass culture. This paper examines two recent biofictional works that reimagine these writers for new audiences: Michael Cunningham's *The Hours* (1998) and Lee Kravetz's *The Last Confessions of Sylvia P.* (2022). *The Hours* interweaves Woolf's process of writing *Mrs Dalloway* with the lives of two later women readers, staging a dialogue across time that reanimates Woolf's stylistic signature while foregrounding her enduring cultural afterlife. Kravetz's novel, by contrast, constructs a fragmented portrait of Plath through the voices of three peripheral figures who mediate, distort and mythologize her presence. Taken together, the two works dramatize different strategies of biofiction: stylistic imitation and intertextual homage on the one hand, narrative polyphony and oblique testimony on the other. My analysis considers three key questions: Which biographical episodes are selected, dramatized, or mythologized? How do these novels attempt to transpose Woolf's and Plath's distinctive literary styles into new fictional registers? What role do gender, celebrity, and reception play in sustaining the posthumous canonization of these authors? By situating these texts within the frameworks of biofiction studies (Lackey, Layne) and 'author as character' criticism, I argue that *The Hours* and *The Last Confessions of Sylvia P.* exemplify how contemporary biofiction reshapes literary afterlives. They do not merely recycle the myths of Woolf and Plath but rather reconfigure them as sites of cultural negotiation where private life, public celebrity and literary legacy converge. In doing so, they illuminate the ongoing fascination with authorship in the twenty-first century and the imaginative power of rewriting canonical women writers as characters.

Francesco Di Perna, MA candidate at 'Roma Tre' University, researches on ecocriticism, gender studies, subjectivity in nineteenth- and twentieth-century women authors. He has presented at different conferences in 2025, published reviews in academic journals, and previously earned a BA at Sapienza with a thesis on Virginia Woolf and Judith Butler.

10:20-10:40

### 'The Victimisation of Sylvia Plath in Biofiction'

Elisha Wise  
(University of Sheffield, UK)

Among canonical twentieth-century writers, Sylvia Plath's biography is one of – if not the – widest known. Yet, even though everybody knows how Plath's story ends, fictional accounts of her life, which focus almost exclusively on her final years and dramatize the breakdown of her marriage to Ted Hughes and her eventual suicide, keep being produced. Why do these tragic events hold such continual fascination for the reading and writing public? And what more is there to say and reimagine about such a mythologised period in Plath's life? This paper will examine how two recent works of biofiction about or featuring Plath – *uphoria* by Elin Cullhed (2021, translated by Jennifer Hayashida) and *Assia* by Sandra Simonds (2023) – exploit, simplify, and victimise her image by depicting her as troubled woman first and artist second. These novels were among the first works of Plath biofiction published after Plath's letters to her psychiatrist were made publicly available in 2018, which attracted widescale attention for allegations within them that Hughes beat Plath on at least one occasion. This paper therefore

explores how *Euphoria* and *Assia* approach Hughes' alleged abuse of Plath, and how their portrayals of Plath as victim contribute to the already popular perception of her as feminist martyr 'murdered' by her husband, as made famous by Robin Morgan's poem 'Arraignment' (1972). Furthermore, both texts add an eroticised element to the marital violence, which, though in keeping with Plath's own portrayals of her marriage, make for uncomfortable and perhaps unethical reading. Should we be imagining a famous woman's most degrading and intimate moments? What, precisely, is there to be gained from reproducing the image of a suffering Plath time and time again? Overall, my aim is to evaluate the purpose behind biofictions centring on Plath, and to problematise their focus on scandal as damaging to her literary legacy.

Elisha Wise is a White Rose College of Arts and Humanities funded PhD student at the University of Sheffield. Her thesis will read Sylvia Plath's collective works as an 'intertextual autobiography' and examine how she (re)constructs identity across autobiographically-drawn modes of writing. Wise previously graduated from York St. John University with a BA (Hons.) in English Literature in 2018 and the University of Sheffield with an MA in English Literature in 2020. In addition to Plath, her research interests include F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Christopher Isherwood, and life-writing and twentieth-century American Literature more broadly. In 2018, Wise presented a research paper entitled 'Transforming Literary Histories into Literary Fiction: Zelda Fitzgerald and Contemporary Feminist Biofiction' at York St. John's 'Transformation – Literature, Creative Writing, and Change' student symposium. More recently, she presented on intertextual overlaps between Zelda Fitzgerald's *Save Me The Waltz* and two of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novels at the Fitzgerald Society's centenary conference for *The Great Gatsby* in New York. She is also the author of two online articles: 'Zelda, Daisy, Taylor: Beautiful Fools?' (2020) for Post 45's cluster on Taylor Swift's *evermore* album, and 'Sylvia Plath's 'Fig Tree Analogy' from *The Bell Jar* is Being Misappropriated' (2025) for *The Conversation UK*.

10:40-11:00

### 'From Biofiction to Thanatofiction: Contemporary Representations of the Death of an Author'

Dominique Jeannerod  
(Queen's University,  
Belfast, UK)

The proposed paper intends to look at fictional representations of the last days of some famous writers. It will question aims, modes and significance of such representations of authorship, captured in the dying moments of the author. It will be based on a corpus of recent French books, all of which challenge, each in their own way, generic categorisation between fiction, biography and literary evocation. This will include: Maylis Besserie, *Le tiers temps* (2020), Alexandre Postel, *Un automne de Flaubert* (2020), Régis Jauffret, *Le Dernier Bain de Gustave Flaubert* (2021) and Philippe Delerm, *Le Suicide exalté de Charles Dickens* (2025). Texts analysed here are chosen for the exemplarity and literary significance of the author they present but also for the varied strategies they apply in articulating biofictional issues. While all these texts on, respectively, Beckett, Flaubert and Dickens were published in the past five years, the argument of this proposed paper is not that these tentatively called 'Thanatofictions' constitute per se a new form of biofiction. Not only have fictional representations of the last days of a literary figure been successful for a long time (Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Les Derniers Jours de Charles Baudelaire*, 1988; Henri Raczymow, *Notre cher Marcel est mort ce soir*, 2013...) but there are also authors whose death has inspired a range of creative productions across various media (Pushkin, Garcia Lorca...). We will discuss how texts locating such representations at the extremity of an author's life push the boundaries of biofiction, tackling important themes (legacy, summary, last wishes...) and articulate productive tropes (rewriting, expansion, trans-fictionality...) contributing to energize and fertilize discourses on literature and biography.

Dominique Jeannerod is a Senior Lecturer in French Studies at Queen's University, Belfast. He works on Crime Fiction, cinema, and popular culture. His publications include *San-Antonio et son double* (2010); *La Passion de San-Antonio* (2021), Frédéric Dard, *Romans de la nuit* (2014 and 2020), and Boileau-Narcejac, *Suspense. Du roman à l'écran* (2025). With Andrew Pepper and Benoit Tadié, he coordinated the upcoming special issue of the journal *Belphegor*, 'Crime Fiction and Democracy' (2025).



11:00–11:20

**‘Beyond Blame:  
The Ethics of  
Writing Mental  
Illness in Scott  
and Zelda  
Fitzgerald  
Biofictions’**

Laura Cernat  
(KU Leuven, FWO, Belgium)

In ‘Biofiction, Heterobiography and the Ethics of Speaking of, for and as Another’ (2022), Lucia Boldrini raises the question of ‘the potential violence of the demand of coherence intrinsic in narrativization’. To create a communicable meaning, biofiction authors inevitably simplify the interplay of motifs and actions behind the unfolding of tragedies, with the risk of either embellishing reality or hastily assigning blame. This paper explores how biofiction can navigate the delicate balance between two undesirable extremes: the violence of misrepresentation and the loss of narrative coherence. It theorizes this distinction at the hand of four case studies, all based on the lives of Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald: Therese Anne Fowler’s *Z* (2013), R. Clifton Spargo’s *Beautiful Fools* (2013), Erika Robuck’s *Call Me Zelda* (2013), and Gilles Leroy’s *Alabama Song* (2007). In cross-comparing these examples, I take into account the way in which they make use of Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald’s own writings (especially *Tender is the Night* and *Save Me the Waltz*) and of how they stage competing claims to truth belonging to two writers whose attempts at fictionalizing their shared life raise questions of accountability, reliability, and image manipulation. In my reading, I try to move beyond blame in framing the question of the ownership of accounts of mental illness, striking a balance between the potential unreliability of Zelda’s perspective and Scott’s own failed objectivity and self-victimization, and discussing how the different biofictions solve the issue of negotiating a middle ground. Exploring this rare and complex situation in which the writers were each other’s *roman-à-clef* characters before becoming biofiction characters, I aim to introduce a new dimension in the study of authors as characters in fiction.

Laura Cernat is an FWO postdoctoral researcher at KU Leuven, Belgium. She contributed work on biofiction to seven edited collections and has published articles in *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*, *Par’al Answers*, *African American Review*, and *Chronotopos*. She guest-edited a special issue on autofiction and autotheory and co-edited a special issue on Eastern European Women’s Life Writing and the recent *Routledge Companion to Biofiction*. She is a member of the Executive Committee of the ICLA.

11:20–11:50 Questions and discussion

11:50–13:30 Lunch Break

13:30–14:30

**Biofiction author  
interview**

Keynote Speaker  
Stephanie Barron  
interviewed by  
Marie-Laure  
Massei-Chamayou  
(University Paris  
Panthéon Sorbonne, France)  
and Matthew Smith  
(University of Lorraine, France)

Stephanie Barron is the author of fifteen novels featuring Jane Austen as a detective, the *Being a Jane Austen Mystery Series*, which follow the Georgian author from the age of 26 in 1802 (*Jane and the Unpleasantness at Scargrave Manor*), until her death at age 41 in 1817 (*Jane and the Final Mystery*). Stephanie received her BA in European History from Princeton University and her MA from Stanford, where she was an Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in the Humanities. A frequent lecturer on Austen topics, she has also written novels featuring Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West (*The White Garden*), Queen Victoria (*A Flaw in the Blood*) and Jennie Jerome Churchill (*That Churchill Woman*). As Francine Mathews, she has published an additional thirteen novels of suspense. She lives and works in Denver, Colorado.

14:30–14:45 Coffee Break

14:45–16:35

**‘The Myth of the Author’**

Chair: Antonella Braidà

14:45–15:05

**‘The Icon as  
Biofiction: On  
Jill Dawson’s  
*The Great Lover*  
(2009)’**

Lucia Fiorella  
(University of Udine, Italy)

It may be argued that Winston Churchill’s praise for Rupert Brooke upon his death in 1915 established – together with the studied looks of many an intense portrait – the two-dimensional icon of the British war poet and hero, and with that, his most enduring biofiction. This is the premise for Jill Dawson’s *The Great Lover* (2009), a work which has received little critical scrutiny so far, despite the wealth of issues raised and the ingenuous representational strategies adopted. Cast in the fashion of an English country-side novel, the story focuses on an imaginary affair between the poet and his maid on the background of the sexual experimentation and the mental uneasiness that led Brooke to a severe nervous breakdown in 1913. Dawson succeeds in producing a captivating narrative by juxtaposing the voices of her protagonists, using Brooke’s actual letters and writings alongside the maid’s sound, intense memoirs. Yet, the strengths of the book do not lie only in the complexity of the moral and psychological portrait of the poet and his humble muse. As it often happens in neo-Edwardian literature, the events are set in a long hot summer, a Golden age, an Arcadia inhabited by privileged, super-educated dwellers living lives of ease and pleasure, dramatically

distant – even when animated by modernising and democratising intentions – from the actual concerns of the better part of their country: of course, the poet must die an unflattering death to compensate for his impious and parasitic existence. Apart from issues of social injustice, gender and class inequalities (which are always topical), and the ethical demand for moral integrity raised by authorship ('was he a good man?' is the question originating the story), the novel unwittingly brings up the issue of the social prestige of the educated élite in times when learning that cannot be put to immediate use constantly needs to find reasons of legitimation.

Lucia Claudia Fiorella is Associate Professor of English Literature at the University of Udine, Italy. She specialised on the work of J.M. Coetzee (*Figure del Male nella narrativa di J.M. Coetzee*, 2006) and auto/biographical studies, especially autofiction (*Oltre il patto autobiografico. Da Barthes a Coetzee*, 2020). She has always been passionately interested in contemporary visual and performing arts and how they intersect with literature. She is co-convenor, with Lucia Boldrini and Natasha Bell, of the Auto / Bio / Fiction series of Goldsmiths College's Centre for Comparative Literature.

15:05-15:25

### 'Dramatising Oscar, Liberating Wilde: Biographiction and the Perpetuation of the Wilde Myth'

Doriane Nemes  
(University of Lorraine,  
France)

When it comes to the genre of biofiction, Oscar Wilde appears as a crucial figure—not only because he wrote one of the first and the most important contributions on the subject, but also because he features in a plethora of examples of the genre. Yet, if his biofictional reappropriations have been analysed by various scholars, his presence in graphic biofiction – or 'biographiction', to use Tim Lanzendörfer's term – has largely been overlooked. This paper will attempt to fill in this scholarly gap by exploring the extent to which the recycling of Wilde in biographiction ultimately confines his life within a univocally dramatic narrative arc. Drawing on two contemporary graphic novels – *La Divine comédie d'Oscar Wilde* (2021) and *Oscar Wilde: The Season of Sorrow* (2019) – this paper will first argue that these biographictions seem to offer an unambiguous dramatic reading of Wilde's life. They anchor Oscar in a post-1895 context and emphasise his downfall and exile in Paris, notably through sepia-tinted and black-and-white images. Yet, they also paradoxically facilitate Oscar's crossing of borders – be it through the physical displacements depicted in these novels, the transgression of the boundary between the visual and the textual, or the queer temporality displayed in these works, making the past, the present and the future connect and intersect through flashbacks, flashforwards, pauses and prolepses, notably. In the end, these biographictional afterlives enable Oscar's Inferno to become Wilde's Purgatorio in that they are means whereby the figure of Wilde can be immortalised and survive the test of time. By archiving the past, perpetuating Wilde's multifaceted personality and creating a transtemporal, transgeographical auctorial space, they enable Wilde to evolve beyond his historical self and contribute to the ever-expanding Wilde myth. Drawing on literary studies, intermedial studies and reception studies, this paper will adopt an interdisciplinary approach in order to demonstrate that, if biographictions seem to circumscribe the character's life within a dramatic narrative arc, they paradoxically allow for the liberation of the author and the perpetuation of his mythologised self.

Doriane Nemes is *professeure agrégée* and a full-time PhD student at Université de Lorraine in Nancy, France. After having been awarded an excellence scholarship in 2022, she is now preparing a dissertation entitled 'Oscar Wilde as Aesthete-Object: Analysis of the Satirical Reception of Wilde's Aestheticism, 1880-1900', under the joint supervision of Xavier Giudicelli (Université Paris Nanterre) and Nathalie Collé (Université de Lorraine). Her research focuses on the way in which Wilde managed to take advantage of the satires that turned him into a genuine aesthete-object, and aims at highlighting his paradoxical relationship with consumer society, which he excoriated and embraced at the same time. She recently wrote a chapter entitled 'Oscar as Forgery of Wilde? Biofiction and the Truth of Masks', due to be published with Bloomsbury in 2026.

15:25-15:45

### 'Terence Davies' Siegfried Sassoon in *Benediction* (2021): The "Memory-Mirror"'

Yann Tholoniati  
(University of Lorraine,  
France)

The British film director Terence Davies (1945-2023) had already realised to great acclaim a number of autobiographical films (such as *Distant Voices*, *Still Lives*; *The Long Day Closes*), of film adaptations (*The House of Mirth*; *Sunset Song*...) and a biopic (*A Quiet Passion*, about Emily Dickinson), when he tackled the life of the war poet Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967). Inspired by Sassoon's own memoir (*Siegfried's Journey*, 1945) and John Stuart Roberts's biography (1999), the biopic *Benediction* (2021) develops what might be called a 'retro-modernist' aesthetic (in the wake of what Christian Gutleben called 'nostalgic postmodernism', see Gutleben 2001) which manages to put Sassoon's life and poems to the fore. In the editing which verges on collage, *Benediction* interweaves a great number of Davies's frequent motifs (homosexuality, Catholicism) and devices (fictional timelapses to suggest the passing of time...). *Benediction* (*bene dicere* > to say well) is also about poetry conceived as a collective effort: Sassoon's poems are set into perspectives by the poems of other WWI poets, like Wilfred Owen, and by other artworks and artists (Ivor Novello, Edith Sitwell). The retro-modernist aesthetic used in *Benediction* is consubstantial to Terence Davies, who said in an interview: 'I don't like change, I will always resist it, yet I promote it as well, that's the irony' (in Koresky 89). This talk aims at exploring this paradox which is dramatized in a protagonist torn between his past traumas and the modernity of his present.

Yann Tholoniati is Professor at the University of Lorraine in Metz. His publications include '*Tongue's Imperial Fiat*: les polyphonies dans l'œuvre poétique de Robert Browning' (2009) and a number of articles and chapters on British and Irish literature and arts. An aspect of his research combines British poetry and film studies.

15:45-16:05

### 'Words and Images: Virginia Woolf in Her Most Compelling Moments'

Elisabetta Varalda  
(Independent Scholar, Italy)

Among the many graphic biographical narratives published in the last few years all over Europe, this paper mainly focuses on three written in Italian (Alessandro Bacchetta: *Una stanza tutta per te*, Lucrèce: *Virginia*, Liuba Gabriele: *Virginia Woolf*), which delve into Woolf's life and push the boundaries of storytelling by using images as well as words. They all recreate a life by borrowing facts, details, and events, not only from Woolf's real life but also from her fictional world. They all depend not only on minute factual research on Woolf's life, but also on the authors' imaginative and creative ability. These narratives, which are now in the literary mainstream, share many characteristics with more traditional life writing forms and mainly with biofiction, a hybrid genre at the crossroads of biography and fiction. The innovative textual practice offered by the visual-verbal form is undoubtedly an effective way to invite active participation on the reader's part and engage them in a more emotional connection than prose since the graphics manage to involve the reader more effectively than words. Graphic biographies, which are the object of this paper, take Woolf's life from history, but they then convert it into a metaphor and create their own Virginia. The artists reshape their works into something that they can claim as their own and skillfully exploit the hybrid nature of the visual-textual code.



Elisabetta Varalda completed her PhD in English Literature at the Sapienza University of Rome, after defending a thesis entitled 'Postmodernist Rereadings of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*', which explores the influence of Woolf's novel on postmodernist fiction. She has collaborated on a collection of essays published by Cambridge Scholars called *Biofiction in Context*. Her contribution is entitled "'Time Passes'" in Maggie Gee's *Virginia Woolf in Manhattan*". Her essay 'Virginia Woolf through Images and Words' was published in the journal *Linguarum Universe*, Volume 2, Issue 2, 2025. She has presented papers exploring the influence of Virginia Woolf's life and works on Postmodernist biofictions and graphic biographies at many international conferences. She is currently working as an independent scholar. She is a member of the Italian Virginia Woolf Society.

## 16:05-16:35 Questions and discussion

## 16:35-16:50 Coffee Break

16:50-18:20

### 'The Brontë Sisters as Authors in Fiction and Film'

Chair: Matthew Smith

16:50-17:10

### 'Eco-Material Posthuman Authorship in Frances O'Connor's Brontë Biopic *Emily*' (2022)

Katrijn Bekers  
(University of Antwerp &  
FWO – Research Foundation  
Flanders, Belgium)

This paper examines Frances O'Connor's 2022 film *Emily*, a biopic about the nineteenth-century writer Emily Brontë that merges the story of the author's life with elements of her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*. The most obvious overlap between the novel and the biopic is arguably the biopic's adoption of a *Wuthering Heights*-like romance. While not much is known about Emily Brontë's love life, the film speculates about a turbulent relationship she might have had with her father's Heathcliff-like curate, William Weightman, and suggests that this romance inspired her novel. Analysing the film through an eco-material posthumanist lens, however, this paper argues that Emily's authorship and writing of *Wuthering Heights* are depicted not just as inspired by human emotions, but as co-constituted by non-human elements. It will be argued that Emily is depicted as an 'eco-material posthuman author'. This will enable the paper to propose an alternative type of authorship, one that diverges from the Romantic genius, that is, the Humanist and patriarchal prototype of authorship, according to which authors (including Emily Brontë) are typically depicted in films (Shachar 2019: 15-16). This new type of representation foregrounds how the author is not an individual, separate, autonomous, transcendental genius, but a co-creator with the non-human environment and objects, thereby acknowledging that literary creation does not take place in a vacuum, but in mutual entanglement with the non-human. The author's environment is not portrayed as a mere background, but as a co-constitutor. The objects manipulated by the author are not portrayed as passive tools, but as active participants in the writing process. The author is physically enmeshed with her surroundings, which is the entanglement from

which literature arises. As such, the representation of the author offered by *Emily* moves away from the typical anthropocentric, humanist Romantic representation of authors that are dominant in author biopics. Moreover, by turning to the non-human, it also goes beyond the previously theorized feminist depictions of women authors on screen, such as those by Hila Shachar (2019), Shelley Cobb (2015), Anna Baccanti (2023), and Katrijn Bekers (2024).

Katrijn Bekers holds two Master's degrees from the University of Antwerp (Belgium) – one in Theater and Film Studies (Department of Literature and Linguistics) and the other in Film Studies and Visual Culture (Department of Communication Studies). As a PhD student at the same university, she is currently working on a project about contemporary artist biopics and posthuman feminism. She has published academic articles in *Adaptation*, *Film International* and *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*.

17:10-17:30

### "Re-Authoring" the Brontës in Sally Wainwright's Post-Heritage Female Literary Biopic'

Armelle Parey  
(University of Caen, France)

With Jane Austen and Charles Dickens, the Brontë sisters are possibly the most famous nineteenth-century writers today, because of their works and their numerous adaptations but also because they have become characters in several biofictions and biopics. These are part of cultural products that 'reframe, re-interpret and revisualize the author's words, looks, body and life. In doing so, they ensure a prolonged afterlife for their idol, but at the same time they re-author, in a sense, the author's image and oeuvre' (Franssen and Honings 3). Biographical accounts in fiction and film will thus vary, depending on the period and the novelist/director's choices, all contributing to general perception in the collective imagination. Kohlke and Gutleben's palimpsestuous definition of biofiction as re-interpreter of circulating accepted ideas is thus also helpful when considering biopics. Commissioned by the BBC for the anniversary of Charlotte Brontë's death, Sally Wainwright's *To Walk Invisible* thus returns to the most famous siblings in literary history. Focusing mostly on the short period leading up to their publication of their poetry and novels, the film title refers to their decision to publish their work under male pseudonyms. Released in 2016, and followed by Frances O'Connor's *Emily* (2022), Wainwright's film is the last but one to date on the Brontës. Contrasting with O'Connor's *Emily*, *To Walk Invisible* falls into what Robert A. Rosentone calls 'the serious biofilm, [...] in which the director has either worked closely with an historical consultant and/or adhered faithfully to events as recounted in one or more written biographies, and in doing so has indulged in a minimal amount of invention with regard to character and events' (Rosentone 93). With passing references to O'Connor's Brontë biopic, this paper will focus of Wainwright's film and examine how it 're-authors' the Brontës for our times and what this tells us both about the Brontë sisters and about biopics of female writers today. Wainwright's literary female biopic will be discussed in relation to Bekers and Willems's classification of the genre along with the post-heritage critical framework proposed by Abbiss. This paper will also consider the choice and effects of Wainwright's realist aesthetics for her rendition of the Brontë siblings.

Armelle Parey is Professor of contemporary literature in English at the Université de Caen Normandie. Her research interests include narrative endings, memory and rewritings of the past, with a special emphasis on neo-Victorianism and adaptation studies. She has written several articles and co-directed several collections of essays or special issues on the question of endings. She is the editor of *Prequels, Coquels and Sequels in Contemporary Anglophone Fiction* (2019) and co-editor of *Adapting Endings from Book to Screen* (2020) and *Beyond Biofiction: Writers and Writing in Neo-Victorian Media*, a special issue of *Neo-Victorian Studies* 15. 1 (2024). Her book *Kate Atkinson* was published in 2022.

**17:30-18:00** Questions and discussion

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**18:00** Cocktail





## Thursday 12 March 2026

8:45-9:00

### Introduction

Monica Latham, Nathalie Collé & Arnette Parey

9:00-10:00

**'Performing Late Style: Ageing and Creativity on the Screen'**  
Keynote Speaker: Belén Vidal (King's College London)  
Chair: Matthew Smith

10:00-10:15

### Coffee Break

10:15-11:45

**'The Politics of Biofiction'**  
Chairs: Barbara Muller and William McKenzie

10:15-10:35

**'Faustian Bargains and False Romanticism in Colm Tóibín's *The Magician*'**  
Virginia Rademacher (Babson College, United States)

10:35-10:55

**'From Poet to Product: Making Emily Dickinson's Rebelliousness Consumable in *Dickinson* (Apple TV)'**  
Rocio Saucedo Dimas (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México)

10:55-11:15

**'The Limits of Feminist Elegy in Shakespearean Biofiction: Reading O'Farrell's *Hamnet*'**  
Archy P. Venu (Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, India)

11:15-11:45

### Questions and discussion

11:45-13:45

### Lunch Break

## Friday 13 March 2026

8:45-9:45

### 'Orwell, Author, Character'

Keynote Speaker: Lucia Boldrini (Goldsmiths University of London, UK)  
Chair: Monica Latham

9:45-10:00

### Coffee Break

10:00-11:50

**'Elegiac and Pathological Visions of the Author'**  
Chair: Monica Latham

10:00-10:20

**'Rewriting Icons: Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath in Contemporary Biofiction'**  
Francesco Di Perna (Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Italy)

10:20-10:40

**'The Victimisation of Sylvia Plath in Biofiction'**  
Elisha Wise (University of Sheffield, UK)

10:40-11:00

**'From Biofiction to Thanatofiction: Contemporary Representations of the Death of an Author'**  
Dominique Jeannerod (Queen's University, Belfast, UK)

11:00-11:20

**'Beyond Blame: The Ethics of Writing Mental Illness in Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald Biofictions'**  
Laura Cernat (KU Leuven, PWO, Belgium)

11:20-11:50

### Questions and discussion

11:50-13:30

### Lunch Break

13:30-14:30

**Keynote Speaker Stephanie Barron (biofiction author)**, interviewed by Marie-Laure Massei-Chamayou (University Paris-Panthéon Sorbonne, France) and Matthew Smith (University of Lorraine)

14:30-14:45

### Coffee Break

13:45-14:45

**'Queer(ing) Biographiction: Hybridity, Cultural Memory, Queer Temporalities'**  
Keynote Speaker: Xavier Giudicelli (University Paris-Nanterre, France)  
Chair: Nathalie Collé

14:45-15:00

### Coffee Break

15:00-16:50

**'The Author as Elusive and Fugacious Figure'**  
Chair: André Kaenel

15:00-15:20

**'"It Was Part of Sonny's Disguise": (De)constructing the Myth of J.D. Salinger'**  
Adriana Haben (University of Lorraine, France)

15:20-15:40

**'Joseph Conrad in the Background: Questioning the Power of the Author'**  
Nathalie Martinibre (University of Limoges, France)

15:40-16:00

**'In Search of Bram Stoker's Secret Self: Joseph O'Connor's *Shadowplay* (2019)'**  
Bertrand Cardin (University of Caen, France)

16:00-16:20

**'An Author in Hollywood: F. Scott Fitzgerald in *West of Sunset* by Stewart O'Nan'**  
Tricia Reid (University of Lincoln, UK)

16:20-16:50

### Questions and discussion

19:00

**Dinner in town**  
(N.B. not included in basic conference fee)

14:45-16:35

### 'The Myth of the Author'

Chair: Antonella Braida

14:45-15:05

**'The Icon as Biofiction: On Jill Dawson's *The Great Lover* (2009)'**  
Lucia Fiorella (University of Udine, Italy)

15:05-15:25

**'Dramatising Oscar, Liberating Wilde: Biographiction and the Perpetuation of the Wilde Myth'**  
Doriane Nemes (University of Lorraine, France)

15:25-15:45

**'Terence Davies' Siegfried Sassoon in *Benediction* (2021): The "Memory-Mirror"'**  
Yann Thloniat (University of Lorraine, France)

15:45-16:05

**'Words and Images: Virginia Woolf in Her Most Compelling Moments'**  
Elisabetta Varalda (Independent Scholar, Italy)

16:05-16:35

### Questions and discussion

16:35-16:50

### Coffee Break

16:50-18:20

**'The Brontë Sisters as Authors in Fiction and Film'**  
Chair: Matthew Smith

16:50-17:10

**'Eco-Material Posthuman Authorship in Frances O'Connor's Brontë Biopic *Emily* (2022)'**  
Katrijn Bekers (University of Antwerp & PWO – Research Foundation Flanders, Belgium)

17:10-17:30

**'Re-Authoring' the Brontës in Sally Wainwright's Post-Heritage Female Literary Biopic'**  
Arnette Parey (University of Caen, France)

17:30-18:00

### Questions and discussion

18:00

### Cocktail