

PROGRAM: A MATTER OF LIFE/DEATH

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Andrea Carlino

Institut d'Histoire de la Médecine et de la Santé, Université de Genève

Enacted Corpses and Embodied Metaphors in Anatomical Images

Anatomy is a distinctively aporetic discipline. While it deals with the structure of the living body, it is nonetheless a knowledge acquired mainly from cadavers; it is meant to describe the pristine perfection of the human fabric, while anatomists mostly dissect spoiled corpses; the divine endeavour is seized in the rotting flesh and entrails of criminals, heretics, and social rejects. In this paper I discuss some of the visual, rhetorical, and technical strategies adopted in medical illustration in order to resolve these latent contradictions. The figures and visual artifacts used to display, communicate, and teach anatomy since the invention of printing in fact provide a privileged viewpoint on the strategies adopted in medicine (but not exclusively) to compose a discourse about life and death, decay and regeneration, suffering and relief.

Andrea Carlino teaches at the Institute of the History of Medicine and Health at the University of Geneva. On the history of anatomy and scientific visual culture, Carlino has published *Books of the Body: Anatomical Ritual and Renaissance Learning* (1999); *Paper Bodies: A Catalogue of Anatomical Fugitive Sheets (1538-1687)* (1999); and, in collaboration with the art historians Deanna Petherbridge and Claude Ritschard, the catalogue of the exhibition *Corps à vif: Art et Anatomie* (1998). Currently, Carlino's research focuses on the relationship between literature, medicine, and natural philosophy, specifically on the humanist foundations of scientific culture, as well as on literary practices and techniques in early modern science and medicine. Alongside this research, he is working on a project on skeptical and anti-medical literature in early modern Europe and has recently edited, with Alexandre Wenger, *Littérature et médecine: Approches et perspectives (XVIe-XIXe siècles)* (2007) and, with Michel Jeanneret, *Vulgariser la médecine: Ecrivains, styles et publics en France et en Italie (XVI et XVII siècles)* (2008).

Françoise Dastur

Archives Husserl, École normale supérieure Paris

Between Life and Death: Mourning as the Origin of Humanity

The human being has been defined in different manners: by the first Greek philosophers as the animal that possesses reason, or as the animal capable of speaking, depending on the translation given to the word *logos*; by Aristotle as the political animal, the animal that cannot lead a solitary life; and, more recently, by modern anthropologists as the animal capable of inventing tools. I would like to show that the most original manner of defining man could be simply to say that he is this strange animal who buries the dead, since that which characterizes humanity as such is the refusal to submit to the natural order, this cycle of life and death that rules over all living beings. This explains the importance in all cultures of the practice of funeral rites. The death with which we are

confronted is the death of others, and in particular of those who are close to us. The foremost experience is for us that of mourning. But the death of the other hurts us because it awakens in us that latent consciousness of our own mortality, which constitutes the hidden face of our existence. The purpose of funerary rites is to guarantee that the individual who has just died does not completely disappear, that something of the individual remains, at least in the memory of the survivor. The dead person is by essence the one who no longer “responds” in the living dialogue, a dialogue that endlessly requires being recommenced by each of the partners in it, and which is now definitively interrupted. Mourning can be therefore defined as the human capacity of having a relation to those who are no longer present in the world. Seen in this light, mourning can be considered as the fundamental mode of being human.

Françoise Dastur taught at the University of Paris I (Sorbonne) from 1969 to 1995, at the University of Paris XII (Créteil) from 1995 to 1999, and the University of Nice Sophia-Antipolis from 1999 to 2003. Currently, she is Professor Emeritus of the University of Nice Sophia-Antipolis and is affiliated with the Husserl Archives in Paris. She has written on and taught such subjects as phenomenology, German philosophy, philosophy of language, and poetic *Dasein* analysis. Some of her publications include: *Hölderlin. tragédie et modernité* (1992); *Dire le temps. Esquisse d'une chrono-logie phénoménologique* (1994); *La Mort. Essai sur la finitude* (1994); *Husserl. Des mathématiques à l'histoire* (1995); *Hölderlin. Le retournement natal* (1997); *Comment vivre avec la mort?* (1998); *Chair et langage. Essais sur Merleau-Ponty* (2001); *Heidegger et la question anthropologique* (2003); *Philosophie et Différence* (2004); *La phénoménologie en questions. Langage, altérité, temporalité, finitude* (2004); *À la naissance des choses. Art, poésie et philosophie* (2005); *Comment affronter la mort?* (2005); *Heidegger. La question du logos* (2007); *Daseinsanalyse* (with Ph. Cabestan) (2011); and *Heidegger et la pensée à venir* (2011).

David Palumbo-Liu

Department of Comparative Literature, Stanford University

A New Vocabulary for a New Age: An Argument for a Counter-Morality, Among Other Things

This talk argues that the contemporary moment calls for a re-examination and re-assessment of our lexicon. We use everyday terms casually as if they mean the same thing now, in our precarious twenty-first century, as they did in the nineteenth century. Key among them are a set of moralistic terms that are applied to those living in the margin between life/death—the indebted.

David Palumbo-Liu is Louise Hewlett Nixon Professor and Professor of Comparative Literature and, by courtesy, English, at Stanford University. Dr. Palumbo-Liu is the founder and editor of the electronic journal *Occasion: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities* and a contributing editor for the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. He has written three scholarly books and edited three academic volumes on issues relating to cultural studies, ethnic studies, and literary theory. His recent books are: *The Deliverance of Others: Reading Literature in a Global Age* (Duke UP, 2011) and *Immanuel Wallerstein*

and the Problem of the World: System, Scale, Culture, co-edited with Bruce Robbins and Nirvana Tanoukhi (Duke UP, 2010). He has published over forty articles in learned journals and anthologies on subjects ranging from the canon and socio-cultural criticism to multiculturalism and East Asian and Asian Pacific American studies. His work has been translated into Chinese, German, French, and Portuguese. He is part of the Public Intellectual Project at *Truthout* and blogs for the Boston Review, Al Jazeera America, and the Huffington Post. He is on the Steering Committee of HASTAC (Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory) and of the Open Library of the Humanities.

H. Peter Steeves
Department of Philosophy, DePaul University
This Life, This Death, This Animal—Again

More than 99.9% of the species that have ever lived on Earth are now dead—and we are currently experiencing a new planetary mass extinction event. In an attempt to understand this, we will take up (by means of philosophy as well as dance and music) examples of extinction and repetition, arguing that being-toward-extinction is humanity's main way of being in the world (*i.e.*, *Dasein* turns toward *Daussterbern*). Exploring the “monstrous” hybrid and the scientific test subject, we will follow the trace of echoes in our interactions with nonhumans, using this to unpack what it means to face one's death—with Heidegger, Derrida, and Freud as the main touchstones—until, ultimately, confronting rocks, planets, stars, and other beings outside of the false binary of life/death only to discover that with the nonbeing of each Other with whom I share the universe comes the nonbeing of the cosmos as a whole.

H. Peter Steeves was educated at Manchester University and Indiana University, has taught at Universidad del Zulia, Venezuela, and is currently Professor in the Department of Philosophy at DePaul University and Director of the DePaul Humanities Center in Chicago. His general research areas range from phenomenology (especially the work of Edmund Husserl), applied ethics (especially animal and environmental ethics), social-political philosophy (especially communitarianism), and the philosophy of science and of culture, to astrobiology, pre-biotic chemistry, cosmology, and the origins of the universe. Some of his book publications include *Founding Community: A Phenomenological-Ethical Inquiry* (Kluwer, 1998); *Animal Others: On Ethics, Ontology, and Animal Life* (SUNY P, 1999); *The Things Themselves: Phenomenology and the Return to the Everyday* (SUNY P, 2006); and *Being and Showtime: Performance Scripts of the Hardest Working Man in Academia* (forthcoming).

Elisabeth Weber
Department of Germanic, Slavic and Semitic Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara
Living Deaths

In June 2013, during the wave of hunger strikes at Guantánamo Bay Prison Camp, Shaker Amar described living in the camp as “a living death.” A November 2013 report by the ACLU on living on death row for non-violent offenses was entitled with

these same words: “A living death.” The drone war has transformed a vast area in Pakistan into “the world’s largest prison,” with the constant “specter of death” looming inescapably from above (Gibson), another incarnation of living death. How can thought in the humanities engage with these experiences? Jacques Derrida’s oeuvre offers conceptually inventive engagements with the thorny questions of state-sponsored violence. It offers such engagements out of necessity, for, according to Derrida, their absence would spell the “abdication, at once irresponsible and suicidal” of scholars, writers, and intellectuals. This paper proposes a reading of Derrida’s engagement of political thought in a time of terror.

Elisabeth Weber received her PhD in Philosophy at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg in 1988. Currently, she is Professor of German and Comparative Literature and Chair of the Department of German, Slavic and Semitic Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Weber’s teaching interests include the following courses: “Ethics and Psychoanalysis,” “German Judaism in Literature and Philosophy,” “Productions of Truth: Literature, Theory, Politics, and the Arts,” “Contemporary Theory: Activist Papers,” and “Humanities and Human Rights in Times of Torture.” She was the co-organizer of the international conference *Irreconcilable Differences? Jacques Derrida and the Question of Religion*, at which Jacques Derrida gave his last public address in the United States, and of a series of twelve public events under the title “Torture and the Future: Perspectives from the Humanities.” Currently, Weber’s research focuses on the ways in which literature and critical theory can contribute to an exploration of trauma, of human rights and their violations, and to a reflection on concepts whose definitions have become, in the contemporary context, more and more uncertain, including the concepts of “the human,” “democracy,” “justice,” and “rights.” Her publications include *Verfolgung und Trauma: Zu Emmanuel Levinas’ Autrement qu’être ou au-delà de l’essence* (Passagen Verlag, 1990); *Questioning Judaism: Interviews by Elisabeth Weber* (Stanford UP, 2004); *Speaking about Torture* (Fordham UP, 2012); and *Living Together: Jacques Derrida’s Communities of Violence and Peace* (Fordham UP, 2012). She is working on a book on poems written by detainees in Guantánamo Bay Prison Camp.

Mosaic

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- *A matter of lifedeath*

Visit the hospitality room, 111 St. John's College, any time throughout the conference for registration, information, refreshments, and to peruse display tables.

Wednesday October 1, 2014

4:00-6:30 PM

Registration

Conference Centre: 111 St. John's College (Quiet Room)

7:00 PM

Welcome: Janice Ristock, Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs),
University of Manitoba

Introduction: Dawne McCance, Department of Religion,
University of Manitoba; Editor, *Mosaic*

Keynote Address: Andrea Carlino

Enacted Corpses and Embodied Metaphors in Anatomical Images
Location: 172 St. John's College (Robert Schultz Theatre)

Thank You: Heather Penner, MA Candidate, Department of
Religion, University of Manitoba; Student Intern, *Mosaic*

Reception to follow: Galleria adjoining the Robert Schultz Theatre

Thursday October 2, 2014

8:30-4:00 PM

Conference Centre: Registration, Information, Book Display,
Coffee – 111 St. John's College (Quiet Room)

9:00-11:00 AM

Concurrent Sessions A1-A5

A1

Location: 108 St. John's College (Cross Common Room)

Session Chair: Chris Trott, Department of Native Studies,
University of Manitoba; Warden, St. John's College; Editorial
Board Member, *Mosaic*

Bryanne Young, PhD Candidate, Performance and Cultural Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
"Killing the Indian in the Child": Hunger, Death, and the Aesthetics of Erasure in Canada's Indian Residential Schools

Jane Barter Moulaison, Department of Religion and Culture, University of Winnipeg
Beyond Bare Life: Narrations of Singularity by Families of Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women

Ana Boessio, Literary Theory and Comparative Literature, Federal University of Pampa
The Feminine "livedead" Condition in The Remorse of Baltazar Serapião by Valter Hugo Mãe

Markus Bohlmann, School of English and Liberal Studies, Seneca College
Death and Desire: Textualities and Readings in Markus Zusak's The Book Thief

A2

Location: 407 Tier Building (UMIH Boardroom)

Session Chair: Rayleen De Luca, Department of Psychology, University of Manitoba

Deborah Goldgaber, Department of Philosophy, Louisiana State University
The Plasticity of the Trace and the Mnemonics of Matter

Graham Fraser, Department of English, Mount Saint Vincent University
Solid Objects/Ghosts of Chairs: On the Afterlife of Things

Sara Mills, MA Candidate, Department of Philosophy, University of Guelph
Anxiety, Authenticity, and Being-With in Being and Time

A3

Location: 206 St. John's College

Session Chair: Mark Libin, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba; Editorial Board Member, *Mosaic*

Aislinn C. McDougall, PhD Candidate, Department of English, Queen's University
"So you want to be a lesbian?": The Queerness of Infertility in Ruth Ozeki's My Year of Meats

Amalle Dublon, PhD Candidate, Department of Literature, Duke University
Queer Passages, Audible Thresholds

Alyson Brickey, PhD Candidate, Department of English, University of Toronto
"Advancing Necessarily Askew": The Technology of Mourning in Joan Didion's The Year of Magical Thinking

Mee-Ju Ro, PhD Candidate, Department of English Literature, Cornell University
Missing Mom: Translation as Testimony in Shin Kyung-Sook's Please Look After Mom

A4 Location: 307 Tier Building

Session Chair: Barry Ferguson, Department of History, University of Manitoba; Editorial Board Member, *Mosaic*

Brenda Austin-Smith, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba
The Half-Life of Adaptation in Rivette's Céline et Julie vont en bateau

Anders Bergstrom, PhD Candidate, Department of English and Film Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University
Memory, Modernity, and Cinematic Reincarnation in Apichatpong Weerasethakul's Uncle Boonmee Who Can Remember His Past Lives

Lisa Robson, Department of English and Creative Writing, Brandon University
Vampires, Zombies, and Identity in Contemporary Horror Cinema

A5 Location: 330 Elizabeth Dafoe Library (Archives and Special Collections)

Session Chair: Lance Roberts, Department of Sociology, University of Manitoba

Lesley Clement, Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Lakehead University
The Last Resort: Death and Liminality in Children's Picture Books on Emily Dickinson

Katherine Isaac, Independent Scholar

Leading Us to Tears: The Role of the Mausoleum Interior in Normalizing Grief

Karen Wilson Baptist, Department of Landscape Architecture,
University of Manitoba
The Politics of Absence

11:30 – 2:00 PM

Location: 216 Russell Building (Centre Space)

Introduction: Dawne McCance, Department of Religion,
University of Manitoba; Editor, *Mosaic*

Keynote Address: Elisabeth Weber

Living Deaths

Thank You: Katelyn Dykstra Dykerman, PhD Candidate,
Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba;
Student Intern, *Mosaic*

Light lunch reception to follow: 216 Russell Building (Centre Space)

2:30-4:45 PM

Concurrent Sessions A6 – A10

A6

Location: 330 Elizabeth Dafoe Library (Archives and Special Collections)

Session Chair: Louise Renée, Department of French, Spanish and Italian, University of Manitoba; Editorial Board Member, *Mosaic*

Meredith Reddy, PhD Candidate, Department of Fine Art,
University of Toronto
Lifting the Veil: Séance Photography and the Materiality of Death

Sarah Bezan, PhD Candidate, Department of English and Film Studies, University of Alberta
Necro-Eco: The Ecology of Death and the Animacy of the Corpse in Jim Crace's Being Dead

Léa Kon, PhD Candidate, Department of French, Spanish and Italian, University of Manitoba
Overcoming an Anesthetized Existence: Michel Houellebecq and the Necessary Paradox of Self-Annihilation

Marie Cazaban-Mazerolles, PhD Candidate, Université de Poitiers
« Crab n'est pas en vie, indéniablement, mais de là à prétendre qu'il est mort »: de l'antagonisme clinique à l'axiologie prescriptive

A7

Location: 407 Tier Building (UMIH Boardroom)

Session Chair: Shepherd Steiner, School of Art, University of Manitoba; Editorial Board Member, *Mosaic*

Robert Trumbull, Stevenson College, University of California, Santa Cruz
Cruelty, Life, Survival: Psychoanalysis and the Deconstruction of the Death Penalty

Gwynne Fulton, PhD Candidate, Interdisciplinary Studies in Philosophy, Cinema and Art History, Concordia University
"Phantasmatism": Sovereignty and the Image of Death in Derrida's Death Penalty Seminars

Kathryn Droske, PhD Candidate, Department of French and Italian, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
"Courriers de la mort": Reading lifedeath in Denis Thériault's Le facteur émotif

Garry Sherbert, Department of English, University of Regina
Ghost Dance: Derrida, Stiegler, and Film as Phantomachia

A8

Location: 307 Tier Building

Session Chair: Gaby Divay, Archives and Special Collections, Elizabeth Dafoe Library, University of Manitoba; Editorial Board Member, *Mosaic*

Ronald Mendoza-de Jesús, PhD Candidate, Department of Comparative Literature, Emory University
The Impossible Possibility of Death: Toward Another Intensity

Zacharie Montreuil, MA Candidate, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba
In the Spirit of the Age: A Study of Victorian Photography of the Dead

Tiziana Nannavecchia, PhD Candidate, Department of Translation and Interpretation, University of Ottawa

Writing to Remember, Translating to Survive: The Double Life of a Migrant's Story

A9

Location: 108 St. John's College (Cross Common Room)

Session Chair: Gordon Fitzell, Marcel A. Desautels School of Music, University of Manitoba; Editorial Board Member, *Mosaic*

Diane Enns, Department of Philosophy, McMaster University
Loveline ~ Lovedeath

Kas Saghafi, Department of Philosophy, University of Memphis
Dying Alive: The Phantasmatology of Living Death

Adina Arvatu, PhD Candidate, Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism, University of Western Ontario
Derrida's Archive as Absolute Metaphor

David Wills, Department of French Studies, Brown University
Textual Reproduction

A10

Location: 206 St. John's College

Session Chair: Christopher Johnson, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba; Editorial Board Member, *Mosaic*

Sung-Ae Lee, Department of International Studies, Macquarie University
Spectral Incognizance as Social Commentary in South Korean TV Drama

Lucas Tromly, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba
Mortality and Mobility in Chinese American Travel Writing

Athena Colman, Department of Philosophy, Brock University
"Death Lives a Human Life": Kristeva's Revitalization of the Death Drive

Romén Reyes-Peschl, PhD Candidate, Schools of English and History, University of Kent
The Detective as "Zombie of the Interrogative Mood" in Cameron McCabe's The Face on the Cutting-Room Floor

6:30-9:00 PM

Sessions A11 – A12: Panels 1 and 2

Location: 108 St. John's College (Cross Common Room)

A11

Panel 1: *Life/Death through Deleuze and Derrida*

Panel Chair: James Martell, PhD Candidate, Literature Program,
University of Notre Dame

Christopher Langlois, PhD Candidate, Centre for the Study of
Theory and Criticism, University of Western Ontario
*"Compassion for suffering humanity": Reading Derrida Reading
Blanchot*

Erik Larsen, PhD Candidate, Literature Program, University of
Notre Dame
*Moby-Dick's Inorganic Vitalities: Nature beyond Bodies in
Melville and Deleuze*

James Martell, PhD Candidate, Literature Program, University of
Notre Dame
*Immanent Limits: How to Live and Die the Human/Animal Divide
in Derrida and Deleuze*

Fernanda Negrete, Department of Romance Languages and
Literatures, University at Buffalo, SUNY
"A Vital, Unlivable Force": Rhythm in Natalie Sarraute's Writing

A12

Panel 2: *Lifedeath in the Wake of Blanchot: Three Variations on
the "Already Dead"*

Panel Chair: Cory Stockwell, Program in Cultures, Civilizations
and Ideas, Bilkent University

Laura Zebuhr, Department of English and Foreign Languages,
University of St. Francis
The Lives of Stones in Thoreau's Philosophy

Cory Stockwell, Program in Cultures, Civilizations and Ideas,
Bilkent University
Prophecy and Revolution in von Trier's Melancholia

Sarah Clift, Contemporary Studies Programme, University of
King's College
*Grave Departures: Melancholic Materiality in W.G. Sebald's
"Max Ferber"*

Reception to follow: 108 St. John's College (Cross Common Room)

Friday, October 3, 2014

8:30-4:00 PM **Conference Centre:** Registration, Information, Book Display,
Coffee – 111 St. John's College (Quiet Room)

9:00-11:00 AM **Concurrent Sessions B13 – B16**

B13 Location: 307 Tier Building

Session Chair: Tina Chen, Department of History, University of
Manitoba; Editorial Board Member, *Mosaic*

Antonio Calcagno, Department of Philosophy, King's University
College

*Roberto Esposito: On the Possibility of Life Outside Politics and
the Self*

Jonathan Singer, PhD Candidate, Department of Philosophy,
DePaul University

*"The Flesh of My Flesh": Animality, Difference, and "Radical
Community" in Merleau-Ponty's Late Philosophy*

Joseph Barker, PhD Candidate, Department of Philosophy,
Pennsylvania State University

*Against "vital materialism": Thinking Life through the Virtual in
Deleuze*

B14 **Panel 3:** No Future: *Ten Years Later*

Location: 330 Elizabeth Dafoe Library (Archives and Special
Collections)

Panel Chair: Hee-Jung Serenity Joo, Department of English,
Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba

Jeremy Strong, PhD Candidate, Department of English, Film, and
Theatre, University of Manitoba

*Destroying Biopolitical Boundaries: Posthuman Zombies and New
Life for the Death Drive*

Katherine Thorsteinson, PhD Candidate, Department of English,
Cornell University

Final Words: The Death Penalty and Lee Edelman's No Future

Katelyn Dykstra Dykerman, PhD Candidate, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba
Floating on the Waters of Queer Life/Death

Riley McGuire, PhD Candidate, Department of English, University of Pennsylvania
Queer Children, Queer Futures: Navigating Reproduction and Negation in The Hunger Games

B15

Panel 4: *Alive Enough? Robot, Animal, Human*

Location: 407 Tier Building (UMIH Boardroom)

Panel Chair: Kenneth MacKendrick, Department of Religion, University of Manitoba

Teresa Heffernan, Department of English, Saint Mary's University
Robot Capital, Commodity Fetishism, and Rights Discourse

Karen Asp, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University
Instrumentality, Vulnerability, and the Possibility of Animal Suffering

Stella Gaon, Department of Political Science, Saint Mary's University
More than Life: Human Dignity and the Problem of Rights

B16

Location: 108 St. John's College (Cross Common Room)

Session Chair: Moti Shojania, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba; Dean of Studies, St. Paul's College

Andrea Charise, PhD Candidate, Department of English, University of Toronto/Health Studies, University of Toronto, Scarborough
Animal, Vegetable, or Mineral? The Physioaesthetics of Suspended Life

Andrew Christensen, PhD Candidate, Department of English, Boston University
Hereditas damnosa: Heredity and Anti-Heredity in Hardy and Ibsen

Daniel Scott Tysdal, Department of English, University of Toronto, Scarborough
"Poetry Makes Nothing Happen": The Image of the Dead and the Twenty-First-Century Elegy

Philip Michael I. Paje, PhD Candidate, Philippine Studies, University of the Philippines-Diliman
Death and Disaster Preparedness in the Philippines

11:30 – 1:00 PM

Location: 136 ARTlab (School of Art)

Introduction: Diana Brydon, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba; Canada Research Chair, Globalization and Cultural Studies, Tier 1; Editorial Board Member, *Mosaic*

Keynote Address: David Palumbo-Liu

A New Vocabulary for a New Age: An Argument for a Counter-Morality, Among Other Things

Thank You: Riley McGuire, PhD Candidate, Department of English, University of Pennsylvania; Former Student Intern and Conference Assistant, *Mosaic*

2:00 – 4:30

Light lunch reception to follow: Adjoining Room 136

Concurrent Sessions B17 – B21

B17

Location: 407 Tier Building (UMIH Boardroom)

Session Chair: Paul Morris, Littérature Anglaise, Université de Saint-Boniface

Vincent Bruyere, Department of French and Italian, Emory University
A Matter of Survivability: Medical Humanities in a Culture of Life

Jan Plug, Department of English and Writing Studies, University of Western Ontario
They Have All Been Healed: Walser's Process

Elizabeth Alexandrin, Department of Religion, University of Manitoba
Delirium, Dreams, and Discipline

Helen MacDonald, School of Historical and Philosophical
Studies, University of Melbourne
Into the Twilight Zone: lifedeath and Organ Transplants

B18

Location: 307 Tier Building
Session Chair: Brenda Cantelo, Department of Religion,
University of Manitoba; Dean of Studies, St. John's College;
Editorial Board Member, *Mosaic*

Sarah MacKenzie, PhD Candidate, Institute of Women's Studies,
University of Ottawa
*Liminal Encounters and Decolonial Aesthetics in Marie
Clements's The Edward Curtis Project*

Laura Hinton, Department of English, City College of New York
*Mourning, Visuality, and Multi-Media in Women's Contemporary
Poetics*

Salomé M. Krell, Actor and Producer, New York City
The Mortality Project: Chasing Tales and Codas

Natashe Lemos Dekker, PhD Candidate, Centre for Social
Science and Global Health, University of Amsterdam
*End of Life with Dementia: Challenging the Boundaries between
Life and Death*

B19

Location: 108 St. John's College (Cross Common Room)

Session Chair: David Arnason, Department of English, Film, and
Theatre, University of Manitoba

Ery Shin, PhD Candidate, English Literature, Brasenose College,
University of Oxford
Felix Volkbein's Death Wish in Nightwood

Jacob Bachinger, PhD Candidate, Memorial University/
Department of English, University College of the North
*"Baby, It's Cold Outside": Wallace's The Lure of the Labrador
Wild and Krakauer's Into the Wild*

Pamela McCallum, Department of English, University of Calgary
Between Life and Death: Representing Trafficked Persons

Andrea Stojilkov, PhD Candidate, Department of Philology,
Belgrade University

Harry Potter's *Circular View of Life and Death: Which Came First, the Phoenix or the Flame?*

B20

Panel 5: *Textures of lifedeath: Vulnerable Embodiment as Transversal Be(com)ing in Contemporary Literary and Media Productions*

Location: 330 Elizabeth Dafoe Library (Archives and Special Collections)

Panel Chair: Dominique Hétu, PhD Candidate, Department of Comparative Literature, Université de Montréal

Cyrielle Dodet, PhD Candidate, Comparative Literature, Paris III-Sorbonne Nouvelle/Université de Montréal

L'apoptose en scène: deux créations de Claude Régy

Dominique Hétu, PhD Candidate, Department of Comparative Literature, Université de Montréal

"The Wonder of the Encounter": Shared Vulnerability and the Materiality of Hostile Environments in the Novels Room and Sous béton

Laura Tusa Ilea, Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture, Concordia University

Haneke's Amour: Toward a Cinematic Phenomenology of the Misfit

Cristina E. Farcas, PhD Candidate, Comparative Literature, Université de Montréal

Dépossession, précarité et performativité politique dans le documentaire d'animation Le voyage de M. Crulic

B21

Location: 206 St. John's College

Session Chair: Robert Coutts, PhD Candidate, Department of History, University of Manitoba

Russell Kilbourn, Department of English and Film Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University

Death—and Life—in Venice: City, Memory, Cinema

Axel Perez Trujillo, PhD Candidate, Spanish and Latin American Studies, University of Aberdeen

Violence, Struggle, and Bloodshed in the Argentinian Prairies

Karalyn Dokurno, PhD Candidate, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba
Fear and Martyrdom in the Work of Robert Southwell and “Upon the Image of Death”

John Calvelli, PhD Candidate, Critical and Creative Studies, European Graduate School
The Birth of the Image and the End of the World

5:00 – 7:00 PM

Location: 290 Education Building

Introduction: Dawne McCance, Department of Religion, University of Manitoba; Editor, *Mosaic*

Keynote Address: H. Peter Steeves

This Life, This Death, This Animal—Again

Thank You: Karalyn Dokurno, PhD Candidate, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba; Student Intern and Conference Assistant, *Mosaic*

Reception to follow: 200 Education Building

Saturday October 4, 2014

8:30-4:00 PM

Conference Centre: Registration, Information, Book Display, Coffee – 111 St. John’s College (Quiet Room)

9:00-11:30 AM

Concurrent Sessions C22 – 27

C22

Location: 206 St. John’s College

Session Chair: Susan Close, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba

Michele Di Bartolo, Independent Scholar
« *Let it Express Itself* »: *La vie la mort dans Cosmopolis de Don DeLillo*

Banu Helvacioğlu, Department of Political Science, Bilkent University
“*Modern Death*” in *Don DeLillo: A Parody of Life?*

Declan Wiffen, PhD Candidate, School of English, University of Kent

“Between earth and sky”: The Liminality of lifedeath in Mourid Barghouti’s I Was Born There, I Was Born Here

David Carruthers, PhD Candidate, Department of English Language and Literature, Queen’s University
Lines of Flight of the Deadly Nightshade: An Enquiry into the Properties of the Magical Plant, its Literature and History

C23

Location: 108 St. John’s College (Cross Common Room)

Session Chair: Peggy Kamuf, Marion Frances Chevalier Professor of French and Comparative Literature, University of Southern California

William McNeill, Department of Philosophy, DePaul University
A Sense of Time: Aristotle, Nietzsche, and Heidegger on the Temporality of Life

Tilottama Rajan, Department of English, University of Western Ontario
Systems and Autoimmunity: Blake’s Lambeth Books

David Farrell Krell, Department of Philosophy, DePaul University
Lifedeath and Suicide

Charles E. Scott, Department of Philosophy, Vanderbilt University
Livingdying

C24

Location: 172 St. John’s College (Robert Schultz Theatre)

Session Chair: Herb Enns, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba; Editorial Board Chair, *Mosaic*

Aaron Mauro, Department of English, University of Victoria
Ancestral Computing: Topic Modelling and Machine Time

Nancy Nisbet, PhD Candidate, Critical and Creative Studies, The European Graduate School
Conceiving the Subject of Mutation: Event, Plasticity, and Molecular Worlds

María Antonia González and Rosaura Martínez, Faculty of Philosophy and Literature, National Autonomous University of Mexico
The Freudian Psychic Apparatus: A lifedeath Bioartifact

C25

Location: 115 St. John's College

Session Chair: Susie Fisher, PhD Candidate, Department of History, University of Manitoba

Kara Wentworth, PhD Candidate, Department of Communication, University of California, San Diego
Sensing Sentience and Managing Microbes: lifedeath in the Slaughterhouse

Ryan Fics, PhD Candidate, Department of Comparative Literature, Emory University
"To live the death of the other": Thinking through Animality in Derrida and Heidegger

Matthias Fritsch, Department of Philosophy, Concordia University
The Life and Death of Democracy's Presentism

C26

Location: 114 St. John's College

Session Chair: Sharon Alward, School of Art, University of Manitoba

Cory Ferrer, MFA Candidate, Department of English, Northern Michigan University
A Mandate from Those who are Silent: Obligation and Remembrance in the Poetry of Czeslaw Milosz

Marisol Soto, PhD Candidate, Hispanic Literature and Cultures, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Interstitial Escape as a Resource for Denunciation in Granito and Insensatez

Monique Dumontet, Academic Learning Centre, University of Manitoba
Ghosts, Communion, and Recovery in Canadian Great War Literature

Rosina Martucci, Department of Humanities, University of Salerno
Life and Death through the Words and the Paintings of Some War Poets and Artists of the First World War

C27

Panel 6: *The Ecosystem, the Corpse, and the Fetus: Edgar Allan Poe's Shadowy Boundaries*

Location: 201 St. John's College

Panel Chair: Chuck Axelrod, Department of Sociology,
University of Manitoba

Sara Crosby, Department of English, The Ohio State University at
Marion

*The Ecological Detective or, Edgar Allan Poe's Practical Tips for
Surviving the Environmental Apocalypse*

Caitlin McIntrye, PhD Candidate, University at Buffalo, SUNY
The Dark Ecology of Edgar Allan Poe's Marie Rogêt

Dana Medoro, Department of English, Film, and Theatre,
University of Manitoba
The Life/Death of the Fetus in Edgar Allan Poe

12:00- 2:00 PM

Lunch

Location: TBA

2:30-4:15 PM

Location: 172 St. John's College (Robert Schultz Theatre)

Introduction: Dawne McCance, Department of Religion,
University of Manitoba; Editor, *Mosaic*

Keynote Address: Françoise Dastur

Between Life and Death: Mourning as the Origin of Humanity

Thank You: Andree-Anne Boisvert, Production Manager, *Mosaic*

Closing Remarks: Ryan Fics, PhD Candidate, Department of
Comparative Literature, Emory University; former Student Intern
and Conference Assistant, *Mosaic*

Reception to follow: Galleria (adjoining the Robert Schultz
Theatre)

7 – 11 PM

Closing Banquet

Broadway Room, Fort Garry Hotel (222 Broadway Avenue)

PRESENTER ABSTRACTS – REGULAR SESSIONS

Alexandrin, Elizabeth – Session B17
Department of Religion, University of Manitoba
Delirium, Dreams, and Discipline

This paper constitutes a brief introduction to the physiology of sleep and the optics of dreams and visionary experiences in Najm al-Dīn Kubrā's (d. ca. 1220 CE) corpus. In the first part of the paper, I consider Kubrā's treatment of the body's subtle centres (*laṭā'if*)—the primary loci of delusions, dreams, and visionary experiences that are correlated with colours and the individual practitioner's mystical states and stations. Arguing that medical scripts have shaped the literary representations of sleep, dreaming, and visionary experiences in Sufi texts, this paper then turns to Ibn Sīnā's (d. 1037 CE) and Ibn al-Haytham's (d. 1040 CE) treatment of the concepts of "vision," "memory," and "imagination." The thirteenth-century reception of the Avicennian medical canon and Ibn al-Haytham's study on optics offers another way to consider how Sufi thinkers drew upon medical models in order to distinguish between "varied body states portrayed by the body—representing maps along a range of possibilities."

Arvatu, Adina – Session A9
PhD Candidate, Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism, University of Western Ontario
Derrida's Archive as Absolute Metaphor

In the tradition of de-familiarizing reassessments of Derrida (Sloterdijk 2007), this paper proposes a critical rapprochement between Derrida and the German neo-Kantian thinker Hans Blumenberg. This rapprochement enables first an understanding of what Derrida's "metaphoricity" is *not*, i.e. a "classical" account of figurality as improper speech to be superseded in the process of conceptual maturation. Derrida's *Glas* and Blumenberg's writings on metaphorology help separate off this "classical" account from the "nonclassical" theory of figurality that both thinkers worked toward, wherein metaphor is a cipher for an irreducible figurality that both resists and makes possible concept formation and proper speech. In Derrida's *Archive Fever*, just such a "theory of nonconceptuality" (Blumenberg 2007), the archive functions like an "absolute metaphor," i.e. a figure that provides a point of orientation for thought and informs a particular attitude toward the world, but cannot be reabsorbed into the conceptual order that it makes possible.

Austin-Smith, Brenda – Session A4
Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba
The Half-Life of Adaptation in Rivette's Céline et Julie vont en bateau

In Rivette's 1974 film *Céline et Julie vont en bateau*, two female accomplices conspire to rescue a young girl from a haunted house before she is killed by its zombie-like inhabitants. The two happen upon the house by accident and, over time, each is absorbed into the repetitive drama that plays itself out day after day inside the ivy-covered

mansion. Both find themselves in the at-once horrifying and thrilling nightmare of every actor: thrust into the moment of performance without knowing any of the lines, but without any of the other performers noticing. Outside the house there is apparent freedom, authenticity, and an immediacy of response to the world. Inside the house, there is deception, mindless repetition, and, eventually, death. But this simple opposition masks a more complex dramatization of the interdependence of life and death. At the end of the film, the half-dead inhabitants of the mansion lie ahead of, as well as behind, our heroines.

Bachinger, Jacob – Session B19

PhD Candidate, Memorial University/Department of English, University College of the North

“Baby, It’s Cold Outside”: Wallace’s *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* and Krakauer’s *Into the Wild*

This presentation is an ecocritical exploration of the death of Leonidas Hubbard in Labrador as recounted in Dillon Wallace’s *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* (1905) and the death of Christopher McCandless as recounted in Jon Krakauer’s *Into the Wild* (1996). My paper explores the ways in which these two popular narratives can be read as meditations on the meaning of wilderness. These narratives have much to say to each other (and to us), as they examine the role of wilderness vis à vis civilization at opposite ends of the twentieth century. By making sense of Hubbard’s and McCandless’s deaths, by making *story* out of their deaths, Wallace and Krakauer attempt to bring their subjects safely back home.

Barker, Joseph – Session B13

PhD Candidate, Department of Philosophy, Pennsylvania State University

Against “vital materialism”: Thinking Life through the Virtual in Deleuze

Vital materialism and associated pan-psychist positions have recently become prominent as part of a move away from deconstructive, linguistic positions in claiming that theorists must attend more closely to matter and the material sciences. An important inspiration for this claim has been Deleuze’s vitalist argument that all things think. However, this argument does not necessarily entail a privileging of materiality and science. Everything thinks on the level of the virtual, but not at the level of the actual. In fact, not even humans think on the actual or empirical level. Given this lack of thought (or *bêtise*, “stupidity”), we must ask: what is a vitalism which engages with life and the sciences on the level of the virtual? An important answer comes in Deleuze’s concept of writing (through a kind of “nomadic poetic language”) as the point at which the virtual and the actual meet.

Barter Moulaison, Jane – Session A1

Department of Religion and Culture, University of Winnipeg

Beyond Bare Life: Narrations of Singularity by Families of Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women

This paper explores the enactment of ontological reasoning on identity by families of murdered and missing Aboriginal women in Winnipeg. Drawing on the work of philosophers Giorgio Agamben and Adriana Cavarero and the literary work of Craig S. Womack, the paper argues that the narrations of identity of the stolen sisters by their loved ones are a lived protest against the biopolitical identities ascribed to them by their assailants, the media, and the justice system. Instead of identifying these women with bare life, family members insist on both the singularity of the women lost and their collective and specific victimization as Aboriginal women. Through an analysis of the work of family members in remembering their “stolen sisters,” the paper makes a case for the exemplariness and courage of female family members as feminist and Indigenous activists, and also as those who demonstrate how identity might be reinstated without being reified in political action.

Bergstrom, Anders – Session A4

PhD Candidate, Department of English and Film Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University
Memory, Modernity, and Cinematic Reincarnation in Apichatpong Weerasethakul's Uncle Boonmee Who Can Remember His Past Lives

This paper, offering a reappraisal of the work of André Bazin, explores the role that cinema, through memory, plays in the perpetuation of the spiritual concern with the role of subjectivity beyond death. I argue that cinema, as constitutive of memory in its various functions and metaphors, fulfills many of the same roles in modernity that spiritual practices fulfilled and continue to fulfill in pre- and/or post-secular societies. Looking at Thai director Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* in particular, this paper examines the notion that cinema, as a form of memory, is a kind of reincarnation or continuation of life beyond death.

Bezan, Sarah – Session A6

PhD Candidate, Department of English and Film Studies, University of Alberta
Necro-Eco: The Ecology of Death and the Animacy of the Corpse in Jim Crace's Being Dead

Crace's *Being Dead* (1999) situates the decomposition of the corpse at the forefront of human un-becoming. Lying upon the beach of Baritone Bay, the bodies of two zoologists, Joseph and Celise, are host to a number of micro-organisms, bacteria, vermin, and sea creatures that come into intimate proximity with their putrefying and decaying flesh. Through their participation in the decomposition of Joseph and Celise, these non-human creatures initiate a lively animacy that incites the demarcation (and dissolution) of the bounds of animal and human, life and death, object and subject. The corpses of Joseph and Celise become necro-ecological organisms, their bodies enacting an enlivened post-mortem “subjectivity” that enables life to go on after death. In exploring the necro-

ecological as a mode that represents death as an active and intimate process of human-animal participations, I argue that *Being Dead* destabilizes the notion of the human, and the condition of “being dead.”

Boessio, Ana – Session A1

Literary Theory and Comparative Literature, Federal University of Pampa

The Feminine “livedead” Condition in The Remorse of Baltazar Serapião by Valter Hugo Mãe

This paper analyzes the construction of the feminine and its condition of lifedeath in Valter Hugo Mãe’s work *The Remorse of Baltazar Serapião* (*O Remorso de Baltazar Serapião*) from the point of view of Baltazar, the main character who, through a process of physical and emotional brutalization of his wife, gives voice to a cultural (de)constitution of the feminine. Understanding culture as an anthropological construction, we may establish a relationship between the work of a literary writer and the work of an anthropologist as someone who “invents the culture he believes himself to be studying.” As for the anthropologist, in Mãe’s fictional world, culture is presented as a kind of illusion, “a foil (and a kind of false objective)” to aid the narrator/reader in arranging his or her experiences and understandings about the feminine as a cultural construction and therefore limited by time and space.

Bohlmann, Markus – Session A1

School of English and Liberal Studies, Seneca College

Death and Desire: Textualities and Readings in Markus Zusak’s The Book Thief

Death and life form a famous couple. Death has come to figure as absence or a limit against which life takes its shape in its present form. That this binary comes with fear-based pathologies is taken up in Markus Zusak’s *The Book Thief*. Set in Nazi Germany, the novel follows the life and death of its characters as they struggle with the trauma of World War II. Yet the novel aims at distancing its characters, text, and readers from the binary of life and death through its narrator, Death, who opens them onto something that operates outside the bounds of personhood: desire. This paper turns to death through a Deleuze/Guattarian lens that charts death as a “productive principle” throughout Zusak’s text and beyond as well as along an intensive reading (and writing) experience that pushes Barthes’s famous proclamation of the death of the author toward intense vivifications.

Brickey, Alyson – Session A3

PhD Candidate, Department of English, University of Toronto

“Advancing Necessarily Askew”: The Technology of Mourning in Joan Didion’s The Year of Magical Thinking

This paper engages the concept of mourning as what Derrida, following Freud, calls

“work”: an active labour that is nonetheless construed as automatic, and therefore technological. Focusing on a certain spatial orientation evident throughout Joan Didion's 2007 *The Year of Magical Thinking*, I suggest that mourning requires an oscillation in which looking back also means confronting head-on the inescapability of death's happening. The ameliorative structure in which mourning is culturally nested—the idea that we mourn in order to overcome a sense of anguish and leave it behind—interferes with the necessarily backward-looking orientation that one who mourns must assume. I bring to bear on this discussion David Wills's concept of “dorsality,” whereby the human “turns as it walks. [. . .] with each step correcting its bearing, limping from one foot to the other, [. . .] deviating from its forward path in order, precisely, to move forward, advancing necessarily askew.”

Bruyere, Vincent – Session B17

Department of French and Italian, Emory University

A Matter of Survivability: Medical Humanities in a Culture of Life

In this paper I propose to err on the speculative side with respect to describing a domain of research. The intervention is speculative in the sense that it will not come up with facts, figures, or definitional outcomes explaining why the domain of Medical Humanities matters, or why it manages to mobilize resources and warrant expenditures. It is a domain to the extent that it occupies a space of answerability that revolves around a question: how do we stay attached to the humanities, understood as social project and discourse of self-formation, in a culture of life, and what forms of life do these attachments take? In that sense, Medical Humanities are less a division of the humanities, or even a division of literature within the research university, than that which endures the disjuncture between the human and life, and endures as form of reliance in such states of disjuncture.

Calcagno, Antonio – Session B13

Department of Philosophy, King's University College

Roberto Esposito: On the Possibility of Life Outside Politics and the Self

Whereas Foucault and Agamben see the force of politics as controlling life, even destroying it, Roberto Esposito argues that the nature of life is such that it cannot be controlled completely by the political: life itself, understood as the impolitical, can continue to take risks within its immunological structure such that it can create new possibilities for its survival outside of an ever-increasing political practice of control. One of the consequences of Esposito's position is that a new notion of the self needs to be developed, what he calls a negative self. In this paper, I will argue that the self for which Esposito argues is incompatible with the immunological view he advances of the relation between life and politics. The negative self requires embodiment and individuation, as all life does, and once these are brought into the picture, the negative self of Esposito has to be rethought.

Calvelli, John – Session B21

PhD Candidate, Critical and Creative Studies, European Graduate School

The Birth of the Image and the End of the World

With the image is born both our future and our finitude. I consider the image not only as material artefact to be grappled with during the long history of its human production, but also as a primary cognitive tool, fuelling our desire for the future in the face of death, and fuelling our end by the burning of our desire. It is phantasm, in the sense Catherine Malabou articulates, emerging from ontological difference and orchestrating the plasticity of change. There is a stake in this investigation, at a time when our future is threatened. Although true, this awareness is nothing new: it is an effect of the image already present from our beginnings. The question then becomes: how can we use the image to further a human future today?

Carruthers, David – Session C22

PhD Candidate, Department of English Language and Literature, Queen's University

Lines of Flight of the Deadly Nightshade: An Enquiry into the Properties of the Magical Plant, its Literature and History

Writing of his encounters with a Sonoran sorcerer between 1961 and 1964, Carlos Castaneda describes in *The Teachings* his experience of flight, soaring high above the desert mountains, under the influence of the nightshade *Datura*. To the question—"Did I really fly, don Juan?"—his benefactor explains that, while in flight, Carlos's corporeal body was "in the bushes." While such reflections on extrasensory perception are affronts to rationalist sensibilities, they raise intriguing questions on the relationships of consciousness to the corpse, the body to perceptual environments, the human mind and perception to nature's psychotropic plants. This paper traces lines of flight of the deadly nightshade and attempts to address the question, "Did I really fly, don Juan?," adding to its phenomenological and ecocritical approaches toward (dis)embodied perception, including the psychotrope as a perceptual dialectic at plant-human intersections and the locus of resistance to the metaphysical "logic of totalization."

Cazaban-Mazerolles, Marie – Session A6

PhD Candidate, Université de Poitiers

« Crab n'est pas en vie, indéniablement, mais de là à prétendre qu'il est mort » : de l'antagonisme clinique à l'axiologie prescriptive

Il est une figure, plus discrète que celle du mort-vivant à proprement parler, qui hante la littérature romanesque du vingtième siècle et n'est presque jamais étudiée en tant que telle : celle du « plus ou moins vivant ». A partir de l'étude d'œuvres narratives franco-britanniques privilégiant sa mise en scène, l'enjeu sera de tenter de comprendre la fonction de ce dépassement de la dichotomie clinique vie-mort par une vision continuiste selon laquelle la différence entre les deux termes n'est plus qualitative mais intensive.

Perspective profondément a-scientifique par laquelle la littérature s'engage dans une démarche non plus descriptive mais prescriptive ; substituant à toute proposition normative dont la vie fait l'objet une évaluation axiologique du vivide et du morbide. Les romanciers posent alors à nouveau cette question que formulait déjà Saint-Paul il y a vingt siècles et que reprit le philosophe Slavoj Žižek : « qui est réellement vivant aujourd'hui? »

Charise, Andrea – Session B16

PhD Candidate, Department of English, University of Toronto/Health Studies, University of Toronto, Scarborough

Animal, Vegetable, or Mineral? The Physioaesthetics of Suspended Life

In the contemporary Western context, the comingling of life and death has become less estranged. An aging population has expanded the enigmatic temporal and existential condition of suspension to include neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's and other dementias; in lay and professional registers alike, such persons are often disturbingly reduced to the inoperative matter of "vegetables," "shells," and (in medical slang) "rocks." My paper is an interdisciplinary examination of suspended life and its association—in both the physiological and aesthetic senses—with stone, petrification, and minerality. I focus on a nineteenth-century instantiation of this phenomenon: George Henry Lewes' influential but now rarely-cited Victorian text *The Physiology of Common Life* (1859), demonstrating how the Lewesian understanding of aging as a state of suspension is taken up by the Victorian literary imagination, perhaps most intriguingly by the realist novelist George Eliot.

Christensen, Andrew – Session B16

PhD Candidate, Department of English, Boston University

Hereditas damnosa: Heredity and Anti-Heredity in Hardy and Ibsen

This paper examines the uses of heredity in Ibsen's *Ghosts* and *The Wild Duck* and Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, both of which deftly blend the metaphorical and literal (biological) dimensions of heredity and draw on themes which might be classified as "anti-heredity." It is frequently observed that Ibsen uses fatherhood metaphorically to critique patriarchy and the bourgeois family, but less attention is paid to the troubling implications that arise when we turn from metaphor back to literal heredity—from patriarchy to paternity. Heredity is frequently a malevolent agent in Hardy as well, yet Tess's is an overdetermined fate. There are many suggestions that she is partly to blame for her downfall due to inherited guilt or hereditary flaws in character. But, in trying to sort out "the political value and the imaginative value of these things," the novel suggests that not only heredity but also genealogy can be repressively deterministic.

Clement, Lesley – Session A5

Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Lakehead University

The Last Resort: Death and Liminality in Children's Picture Books on Emily Dickinson

This paper addresses the suitability of Emily Dickinson's poetry to introduce the concept of death to child readers through the picture book format. Arguing that the concept of liminality, as developed by Victor Turner, can be applied to multiple elements of these picture books, this paper focuses on Dickinson the muse as a liminal figure and death as a liminal state, both of which require liminal spaces that invite child readers, the "communitas," into encounters with death. These are not the safe and snug encounters of the early pictorial versions of Dickinson's life and poetry but encounters that reflect a concept of "knowing childhood," as developed by Anne Higonnet (1998) and Judith Plotz (2001). Liminal spaces are generated by text-image interanimation through four main strategies: peritextual elements (covers, title pages), threshold images (doors/windows, birds, graveyards, ports, and harbours), frame-breaking, and the interstices of page turns.

Colman, Athena – Session A10

Department of Philosophy, Brock University

"Death Lives a Human Life": Kristeva's Revitalization of the Death Drive

I argue that Kristeva, in her rereading of Freud's death drive, articulates a theory of sublimation that discovers the reflection/return of the death drive on the ego at the core of our imaginary capacity. I suggest that Kristeva concretizes this "other" fate of the death drive by offering an interpretation of the life and work of the French surrealist Louis Aragon. Kristeva frames her reading of Aragon both as a cautionary tale to warn us against the rigidification of certain forms of identification, and as an index of the possibilities of new forms of intimate revolt—new modalities of being, writing, thinking, and relating, which are always undergone in the shadow of the death drive. This paper explores how this fundamental ambiguity of the death drive is both its risk and possibility for life.

Di Bartolo, Michele – Session C22

Independent Scholar

« Let it Express Itself »: La vie la mort dans Cosmopolis de Don DeLillo

En partant du roman *Cosmopolis*, que Michael Naas a défini une fable de la déconstruction comme auto-immunité, ce travail se propose d'analyser la relation entre l'analyse conduite par Derrida sur la pulsion de mort freudienne, la notion de l'auto-immunité et les thématiques de l'événement, de la relation à l'autre et de l'hospitalité. La pulsion de mort entraîne le protagoniste du roman, le jeune spéculateur financier Eric Packer, non pas tout simplement vers le suicide mais plutôt vers la mort qui lui est propre. Nouvel Icare en chute libre depuis sa tour phallique de neuf cents pieds, métaphore d'un Moi en déconstruction qui se défait progressivement de toute défense, il répète, comme s'il s'agissait d'un mantra, la phrase « let it express itself ». Il s'agit d'un mouvement d'exappropriation qui, en exposant Packer au risque extrême de l'auto-

destruction, ouvre toutefois à la possibilité d'une rencontre avec l'autre dans ses formes multiples.

Dokurno, Karalyn – Session B21

PhD Candidate, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba
Fear and Martyrdom in the Work of Robert Southwell and “Upon the Image of Death”

My paper examines the relationship between fear of death and unmitigated certainty of the benefits of martyrdom in works attributed to the Jesuit priest and martyr Robert Southwell (1561-95). While many of Southwell's pieces (including “Triumphs Over Death,” “I Die Alive,” and “Decease Release”) either extoll the virtues of martyrdom or blur the line between life and death, the poem “Upon the Image of Death” reveals a discordant uncertainty and hesitation concerning death. My paper considers why this poem, which some editors have suggested might have been wrongfully attributed to him, has been considered by several scholars over the last four hundred years to be an integral part of Southwell's work. In particular, I explore the psychological allure to the reader of fear in the face of death in addressing the question of why critics and bibliographers have been so eager to attribute this poem to Southwell.

Droske, Kathryn – Session A7

PhD Candidate, Department of French and Italian, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
“Courriers de la mort”: Reading lifedeath in Denis Thériault's Le facteur émotif

As its title suggests, Jacques Derrida's *La carte postale* (*The Postcard*) draws upon a postal lexicon to carry out its analysis of Sigmund Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Matthew Paris's visual depiction of Plato and Socrates, and Jacques Lacan's Seminar on *The Purloined Letter*. Derrida's multiple deployments of the epistolary go beyond mere wordplay or metaphor to become objects of analysis, methodology, textual performance, and “courriers de la mort.” *La carte postale's* use of the epistolary provides a critical framework for my reading of Denis Thériault's 2005 novel *Le facteur émotif* (*The Postman's Round*), a contemporary Québécois novel that stages a death that must be confronted repeatedly, that always returns to be confronted again. My analysis of *Le facteur émotif* turns on the relationship of the epistolary, *lifedeath*, and prosthesis.

Dublon, Amalle – Session A3

PhD Candidate, Department of Literature, Duke University
Queer Passages, Audible Thresholds

This paper attempts to think the bond between sound, reproduction, and the figuration of death as passing—understood temporally, musically, and spatially—in the work of Crystal Campbell. In his influential 2003 history *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*, Jonathan Sterne tracks discourses surrounding early sound recording and finds a persistent analogy between the idea of the “disembodied” voice

preserved through recording and that of the corpse embalmed for display. Bending from this figure of preservation toward the movement of passing, my paper is guided by Fred Moten's invocation of the poet and theorist Nathaniel Mackey's concept of the "sexual cut" in Mackey's epistolary work *Bedouin Hornbook*. The form of the sexual cut aids my reading of "queer passages" in Campbell's work. Operating in the join between death-as-passing and sound reproduction, her practice constructs temporal partitions that function simultaneously as barriers or thresholds and sites of reproduction.

Dumontet, Monique – Session C26

Academic Learning Centre, University of Manitoba

Ghosts, Communion, and Recovery in Canadian Great War Literature

Canadian literary texts about the Great War (1914-18) are haunted by ghosts. This paper examines the presence of ghosts, the interaction between these ghosts and the living, and the process of recovery in relation to uncanny visitations represented in a selection of Canadian Great War texts. While texts of the inter-war years, such as Will Bird's *And We Go On* (1930), endorse a faith in a spiritual realm that is both personally and socially redemptive, more recent Canadian Great War texts, such as Stephen Massicotte's *Mary's Wedding* (2002), go further by suggesting that survivors can, and must, move toward the dead, as much as the dead move toward the living. Freud's theories of the uncanny and of mourning and melancholia help to explain how communion with the dead is necessary for individual recovery from loss, as well as for the well-being and social continuity of the larger community.

Enns, Diane – Session A9

Department of Philosophy, McMaster University

Loveline ~ Lovedeath

This paper explores the confluence of two poignant works by philosophers facing death in order to consider the life and death of love. Jacques Derrida and Gillian Rose reflect on what it means to live while dying, refusing death in the affirmation of life, and surviving rather than learning how to live, finally. Survival is not simply what remains, Derrida tells us, "it is the most intense life possible." In both of these dying thinkers we find an irrepressible passion for survival—one that exceeds the drive for the perfectibility of life or love. "To live, to love, is to be failed," Rose insists. I will suggest that our most intense love possible is not one of getting it right—not an exceptional love—but one that is preoccupied with the work of survival, even over love's own death.

Ferrer, Cory – Session C26

MFA Candidate, Department of English, Northern Michigan University

A Mandate from Those who are Silent: Obligation and Remembrance in the Poetry of Czesław Miłosz

In his Nobel Lecture, Milosz writes, “Those who are alive receive a mandate from those who are silent forever. They can fulfill their duties only by trying to reconstruct precisely things as they were and by wresting the past from fictions and legends.” As a Lithuanian-Polish writer whose community was destroyed by Nazi occupation, Milosz spent his literary life wrestling with the ethical complications of remembrance and representation. How can one insist on the value of an individual human life while addressing astronomical casualties that challenge the imagination? How can one believe in our capacity for moral reason when confronted daily with brutal counterexamples? Drawing on the literary objectives and aesthetic principles set forth in Milosz’s prolific essays, this paper examines his response to these challenges. Milosz’s poetics builds on mystery and ambivalence, affirming the role of uncertainty in attempting the impossible promise of restoring reality to the dead.

Fics, Ryan – Session C25

PhD Candidate, Department of Comparative Literature, Emory University

“To live the death of the other”: Thinking through Animality in Derrida and Heidegger

One of the many questions that lie at the heart of Jacques Derrida’s work, from his earliest writings to his last, is how “the Animal” has been configured in Western philosophy and metaphysics, from the Heraclitus fragments, where it is proposed that “Man” alone has the exclusive power “to live the death of the other,” to the writings of Martin Heidegger, who claims that only man can die, whereas “the animal” perishes. This paper attempts a close reading of Session Six of Derrida’s final seminar *The Beast and the Sovereign Volume II*, where Derrida explains what the meaning of a “living-death” holds for philosophy. Building on Derrida’s insights, I consider how this ancient formula has influenced conceptualization of the legal status of animals in Western discourses on law and “rights.”

Fraser, Graham – Session A2

Department of English, Mount Saint Vincent University

Solid Objects/Ghosts of Chairs: On the Afterlife of Things

Objects removed from human perception or context—abandoned, disused, broken things—fascinate Virginia Woolf. Her attention to such abandoned objects is so exquisite that Michel Serres can write that in her work, “inanimate objects have a soul.” This paper traces the progress of these inanimate souls in *To the Lighthouse* and her later story “Solid Objects” from the human realm to the afterlife of things. Abandoned after having outlived their usefulness, such objects and furnishings begin to spectralize. Woolf reveals their spectral afterness as strange and beautiful—a transformation toward an ultimate aesthetic and ontological illegibility. Reading the luminous and melancholy afterlife of Woolf’s abandoned objects through the lens of theories of spectrality, ruin, and the melancholy of physical objects reveals an overlooked space that hovers not only between life and death, but between the animate and inanimate.

Fritsch, Matthias – Session C25
Department of Philosophy, Concordia University
The Life and Death of Democracy's Presentism

I seek to connect Derrida's conception of the death penalty to his work on animality. For Derrida, capital punishment is the "keystone" of the political, including of today's democratic nation states, because in it comes to a head the fatal, and fatally flawed, faith in the possibility of the human mastery of death. That is why the conception of sovereignty that is expressed in capital punishment, as sovereign mastery of death, is so intimately linked to human exceptionalism and the traditional idea—dominant from Plato to Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, and Levinas—that animals, though living and thus by definition mortal, have no access to death, properly speaking. I will stress the ways in which Derrida presents deconstructive "double" affirmation as an affirmation of life-death, suggesting possible ways of reconceiving democracy on this basis.

Fulton, Gwynne – Session A7
PhD Candidate, Interdisciplinary Studies in Philosophy, Cinema and Art History,
Concordia University
"Phantasmatism": Sovereignty and the Image of Death in Derrida's Death Penalty Seminars

This paper elucidates a deconstructive account of the spectral structure of photography by investigating the relation between sovereignty and the representation of death in Derrida's 1999-2000 Death Penalty seminar, where sovereignty, under the lineage of thinking inherited from theologico-political modernity, is conceived as a certain right over the life and death of the condemned that presupposes the ability to master a singular, objective instant of death clearly divided against life. I deconstruct this putative instantaneity of death in a reading of the 1939 photograph of the execution of Eugene Weidmann. This image of the last man publicly guillotined in France returns like a ghost to haunt Derrida's memory in a peculiar temporality of *contretemps* that divulges the spectral structure of an instant that is never fully present, but shot through by the memory and prospect of absence and death. This phantasmatic temporality invokes another understanding of death as interwoven with life, challenging the metaphysics of presence and simultaneously helping us to rethink traditional conceptions of sovereignty.

González, María Antonia and Rosaura Martínez – Session C24
Faculty of Philosophy and Literature, National Autonomous University of Mexico
The Freudian Psychic Apparatus: A lifedeath Bioartifact

The Freudian psychic apparatus is a bioartifact, a machine that mediates between life as tension and death as the complete discharge of it. From a close reading of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, we pay special attention to the paradoxical or speculative relation that Eros and Thanatos have in this text. We maintain that this speculative relation

between opposite tendencies is the “origin” of the psyche as a complex mechanism of negotiation between life and death. The core of the argument will be that, for Freud, life in historical and evolutionary terms is a burden that has to be *un-lived*. Thus, the psyche as an apparatus is designed to discharge tension (life) but, at the same time and in paradoxical ways, to obey another tendency Freud calls the *constancy principle*, which creates a reserve of energy in the form of a memory that resists a shortcut, immediate or suicidal death.

Goldgaber, Deborah – Session A2
Department of Philosophy, Louisiana State University
The Plasticity of the Trace and the Mnemonics of Matter

Derrida’s notion of the trace is often taken to be a description of signifying processes, broadly construed. However, when we define the trace in terms of meaning, we reinvigorate traditional dualisms between mind/matter, culture/nature. Properly understood, the Derridean trace undercuts the very possibility of drawing these sorts of essential distinctions. Indeed, in the reading I present, the trace allows us to see how human language is scaffolded on biological and, finally, inorganic matter. The essence of the material (thought in terms of the trace) is the capacity to retain a modification: matter is essentially plastic. Retained modifications—“in-formed” matter—are the basis for more complex chains of retention (“texts”). Such textual systems are themselves essentially plastic or modifiable. It is this plasticity that allows us to conceive of matter as the survival of a past or the creation of system-memory. In this way, the deconstructive notion of the trace productively disrupts traditional distinctions between the in/animate, the in/human, and the non/vital.

Helvacıoglu, Banu – Session C22
Department of Political Science, Bilkent University
“Modern Death” in Don DeLillo: A Parody of Life?

At an analytical level, DeLillo’s novels simultaneously denature the immanence of death *and* take us to an existential negotiation with life. The challenge this thought process presents to us lies in specific points in time, when the prospect of death appears in its most banal *fin de siècle* representations and in intellect’s angst about mortality. This paper argues that the notion of modern death as articulated by Murray, one of DeLillo’s characters in *White Noise*, comes close to encapsulating the incongruity between death’s actuality and its representational adaptability. I analyze this paradox at an intersection between Kierkegaard’s mid-nineteenth-century reflections of “death as the end of life” and DeLillo’s presentation of Kierkegaard’s thoughts as a parody of the past. I especially examine Kierkegaardian dread in DeLillo’s unsettling, anxiety-ridden episodes associated with responses to the public threat of death by terrorism or by chemical spill.

Hinton, Laura – Session B18
Department of English, City College of New York

Mourning, Visuality, and Multi-Media in Women's Contemporary Poetics

My paper examines the use of multi-media in poetic acts of mourning—mourning initiated by close deaths and loss—in works by three New York City-based contemporary women poets: Kristin Prevallet's poetry-essay hybrid, *I, Afterlife: Essay in Mourning Time* (2007), which places grey-wash graphic plates in the centre of a verbal text; Akilah Oliver's book about the loss of a son, *A Toast in the House of Friends* (2009), which uses images of the son's graffiti art; and Stephanie Strickland's visual hypertext structure in her internet book about a daughter's illness, *V: WaveSon.nets/Losing L'una* (2006). The paper also discusses my own use of enhanced photography in a poetry book about a husband's near-death experience and draws theoretically upon literatures about mourning as well as visual-culture theories about specularity and the spectator.

Isaac, Katherine – Session A5

Independent Scholar

Leading Us to Tears: The Role of the Mausoleum Interior in Normalizing Grief

Our emotions and actions within space are often seen as distinct from the environment in which they occur, and yet it is not difficult to understand that space acts on us, subtly intertwining with our experiences and inner life. This paper explores the power of the interior to prick our conscious, specifically as it relates to the process of and spaces for mourning. Interiors associated with the act of marking loss and ritualizing death provide physical places dedicated to grief and remembrance, among other functions. What is the responsibility of the interior as it relates to its grieving users? A case study analyzes AIA award-winning Lakewood Cemetery's Garden Mausoleum interiors, contrasting post-modern notions of grief with modern spatial invocations of stability, order, and equilibrium.

Kilbourn, Russell – Session B21

Department of English and Film Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University

Death—and Life—in Venice: City, Memory, Cinema

The interpenetration of life and death, of the physical and metaphysical, is a recurrent theme in films set in Venice. This paper puts into dialogue three of the most famous: Luchino Visconti's *Death in Venice* (1971); Nicholas Roeg's *Don't Look Now* (1973); and Paul Schrader's *The Comfort of Strangers* (1990). Each is an adaptation of a literary text, a condition—of being between one genre or medium and another—that only amplifies each film's thematic and structural emphasis upon characters who exist in-between life and death. These themes take on a wholly different dimension when remediated in the visual and aural medium of film, and the use of the city's spaces to invoke the *res cogitans*, the interior life of the protagonist, her or his memories, dreams, and desires, is common to all three.

Kon, Léa – Session A6

PhD Candidate, Department of French, Spanish and Italian, University of Manitoba
Overcoming an Anesthetized Existence: Michel Houellebecq and the Necessary Paradox of Self-Annihilation

Masochism is the ultimate muse for the French writer Michel Houellebecq (b. 1956), who considers self-afflicted violence an effective repellent against modernist existential detachment. The novel *Extension du domaine de la lutte* (1994) (*Whatever*) decries the shallowness of contemporary society that is devoid of profound fellowship, feeling, and virtue. Houellebecq's literary universe is an elegy for a humanism he deems endangered and dying. The main anti-hero, a disenchanted young man devoid of vitality, leads a life of tranquil desperation. Frantic to attain personal transcendence, he embraces the death drive, Thanatos, in order to feel alive. Pain is sought as a confirmation of existence and as an assurance that one is still capable of feeling, enabling the main character to retain his humanity. This presentation reveals the ways in which self-annihilation humanizes the individual and may be harnessed for personal elevation.

Krell, David Farrell – Session C23

Department of Philosophy, DePaul University
Lifedeath and Suicide

When someone we know ends his or her life we are banished to the silence of the outside; *uncomprehending* is too weak a word for this extrusion. Among the matters of lifedeath, suicide is perhaps one of the most compelling. I will touch on the debate surrounding “assisted suicide,” although this is not my theme. My theme is the radical exteriority and the silence to which we others are abandoned in every instance of suicide.

Krell, Salomé M. – Session B18

Actor and Producer, New York City
The Mortality Project: Chasing Tales and Codas

These will be musings on mortality through a collection of stories gathered during my year of training and working as a hospice volunteer in New York City. I trace the questions I had at the outset, the answers I was seeking, and the answers I received. I trace the questions I was asked and the answers I eventually came to find. The task of sharing this journey publicly led to a collaboration with a remarkable musician and composer whose talent for merging thought with sound and words with music will create a fuller sensory experience of this past year—a year spent embracing mortality by embracing the dying.

Lee, Sung-Ae – Session A10

Department of International Studies, Macquarie University
Spectral Incognizance as Social Commentary in South Korean TV Drama

South Korean TV dramas have recently linked the schema of “spectral incognizance” (a ghost’s inability to recognize it is dead) with the murder of a young woman to explore an analogy between the abjected condition of ghosts and the position young women are seen to occupy in society: objectified, displaced to the periphery, and deprived of effective agency. Two major themes that drive the narratives are issues of lost identity and a quest for justice: the catalyst for most of the action is a perception that the attainment of justice is almost invariably prevented by partiality in the operation of the South Korean legal system. A characteristic of ghost narratives examined in this paper is that they critique both social formations such as extreme socio-economic differences in society and lack of impartiality in judicial systems and less visible problems such as the damaging impact of gender performatives on individual subjectivities.

Lemos Dekker, Natashe – Session B18

PhD Candidate, Centre for Social Science and Global Health, University of Amsterdam
End of Life with Dementia: Challenging the Boundaries between Life and Death

In this research I study what is considered a “good” death in Dutch society by considering the process of dying with dementia. I address how notions of a good death relate to end-of-life decision-making and the provision of care for people with dementia, where death is not an event but a process. Kaufman states that dementia “obscures the distinction between life and death” (23). In this line of thought, it seems that dementia does not fit in our cultural notions of what constitutes life and death. As Lock states, “death is not a self-evident phenomenon. The margins between life and death are socially and culturally constructed, mobile, multiple, and open to dispute and reformulation” (11). The question—what is good care at the end of life of people with dementia?—therefore requires us to study how we conceptualize death and where we localize it.

MacDonald, Helen – Session B17

School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne
Into the Twilight Zone: lifedeath and Organ Transplants

Soon after the modern era of transplant surgery began during the mid-twentieth century, it became apparent that this endeavour required two opposing things: a dead person whose organs yet remained alive. The most desirable of these organs were contained within the body of someone who had suffered a catastrophic, irreversible brain injury and lay in a hospital attached to a respirator. Those who sought to remove organs from such a body argued that it was a corpse, but others wondered if someone in this condition existed in “the twilight zone” between life and death. Transplantation thus gave new urgency to considerations about what had earlier appeared to be a stable boundary between these two states, one that now appeared instead to be mobile and capable of being manipulated. This presentation explores how what Margaret Lock has called the “new death” played out in Britain during the nineteen-sixties and-seventies.

MacKenzie, Sarah – Session B18

PhD Candidate, Institute of Women's Studies, University of Ottawa

Liminal Encounters and Decolonial Aesthetics in Marie Clements's The Edward Curtis Project

This paper explores ways in which Cree/Métis playwright Marie Clements's *The Edward Curtis Project* invokes spectrality to elucidate the discursive and manifest colonial violence to which Indigenous people are yet subject, and to suggest creative mechanisms for decolonization. Overshadowed by the freezing deaths of three Aboriginal girls left outdoors by their alcoholic father, the plot revolves around the psychological journey of the female protagonist, Angeline, a Dene reporter who falls into a deep depression after reporting upon the girls' deaths. Angeline's recovery, enabled by the vociferous spectre of Edward Curtis, involves a recognition that writing *true* life stories can function to remove minority victims from historical obsolescence. In Clements's play, merged antithetical binaries—Curtis/Angeline, male/female, colonizer/colonized, past/present, life/death—work to rekindle Angeline's hope. Refusing to clearly delineate between life and death or living and dying, the playwright presents a decolonial aesthetic that serves to empower real-life Indigenous and mixed-blood people.

Martucci, Rosina – Session C26

Department of Humanities, University of Salerno

Life and Death through the Words and the Paintings of Some War Poets and Artists of the First World War

War poets, especially those who denounced the horrors of the First World War, translated their personal and tragic war experience into poetry. Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Loraine Sassoon, Rupert Chawner Brooke, Philip Edward Thomas, Isaac Rosenberg, Edmund Charles Blunden, and others became the voices of the dead soldiers. Wilfred Owen, the greatest of war poets, expresses the shock and suffering of frontline experience. In art, painters such as John Nash RA, CRW Nevinson, Eric Kennington, William Orpen RA, John Singer, John Lavery, and Percy Windham Lewis were true witnesses of the war's atrocity. The legacy of war poets and war artists like Owen, Sassoon, Orpen, and others is taken up in this paper.

Mauro, Aaron – Session C24

Department of English, University of Victoria

Ancestral Computing: Topic Modelling and Machine Time

This paper describes some of the most pressing theories and methods in the digital humanities, while demonstrating some of the potential consequences natural language processing techniques like topic modelling have for philosophical discourses. For example, the speculative realists—led by Alan Badiou, Quentin Meillassoux, and

Graham Harman—have found that the absolute meaning and clarity afforded by the analytic tools of mathematics and computer science have also produced a viable alternative to a metaphysics predicated on a correlation between language, thinking, and being. Computation is undermining the phenomenological basis of ontology; or, in other words, proving one's existence no longer requires human perception because complex tools can verify these facts independently of our experience. This paper demonstrates the abilities of computing methods to parse and visualize philosophical concerns.

McCallum, Pamela – Session B19
Department of English, University of Calgary
Between Life and Death: Representing Trafficked Persons

Persons trafficked for undocumented labour or the sex trade exist between life and death. They live in a condition resembling Giorgio Agamben's *homo sacer*, an individual shrunk to bare life, positioned outside the protections of legal and political rights. In *Precarious Life*, Judith Butler writes about those who are denied humanity, exposed to a "violence of derealization," existing in a shadowy world that is not quite life and not quite death (32). This paper analyzes two cultural texts about human trafficking—Chris Abani's short novel *Becoming Abigail* and Justin Chadwick's BBC film *Stolen*—to explore issues raised by the representation of trafficked children. Cultural texts are sites that open up the possibility of bearing witness to conditions and lives that are not readily visible in the urban spaces of contemporary cities in the developed West, challenging readers to imagine and be open to the lived experience of others.

McDougall, Aislinn C. – Session A3
PhD Candidate, Department of English, Queen's University
"So you want to be a lesbian?": *The Queerness of Infertility in Ruth Ozeki's My Year of Meats*

Lee Edelman describes the queer as "those abjected as nonreproductive, anti-social, opposed to viability, and so as threats to the Child who assures and embodies collective survival" ("Survival" 148), and Edelman associates this opposition to viability with the "death drive." In an application of Edelman's work to Ozeki's novel, characters Akiko and Jane emerge as embodiments of Edelman's "queerness," demonstrating how, like queer individuals, infertile individuals in society can be marginalized for their incapability, and how a death drive is often attributed to them as they are degraded as nonreproductive. Concurrently, John represents heteronormative society: the driving force which advocates for reproductive futurism, and fetishizes "the Child" or futurity itself. In the novel, such fetishization leads to the subordination of those who are infertile, violence for the sake of collective survival, and to a heavy focus on "choice" to procreate as imperative, yet impossible for some.

McNeill, William – Session C23

Department of Philosophy, DePaul University

A Sense of Time: Aristotle, Nietzsche, and Heidegger on the Temporality of Life

The phenomenon of movement in the broadest sense appears to be essential to any understanding of life. And this would seem to imply that all life is constituted by temporality as its very condition. Does this entail that everything that lives also has a sense of time? Aristotle writes of a “sense of time”; yet it is only certain living beings, not all, that possess this sense of time, he claims. Nietzsche gives us the famous image of grazing cattle completely absorbed in the moment and, having no sense of time, completely content. Heidegger, in the context of the issue of affection, identifies as a crucial problem the question of “whether and how the Being of animals is constituted by a ‘time,’” a question that he deliberately neglects to pursue in his most detailed analyses of animal life. In this paper I begin to explore what is at stake in the question concerning a sense of time, with reference to the three thinkers mentioned.

Mendoza-de Jesús, Ronald – Session A8

PhD Candidate, Department of Comparative Literature, Emory University

The Impossible Possibility of Death: Toward Another Intensity

This paper interrogates the link between intensity and finitude by revisiting Martin Heidegger’s thinking of death in *Sein und Zeit*. In paragraph 53, Heidegger states that the more one would approach death as a possibility, the more its impossibility would increase. Paradoxically, death’s impossibility becomes “*immer größer*,” when death is experienced in the mode of anticipation (*Vorlaufen*) as an absolute and irreducible distance. My paper inquires after the status of this uncanny “intensification,” which makes death evermore impossible the more it is anticipated as a possibility. How should we think of the “intensity” that characterizes death’s infinity, and that belongs to death by virtue of its singular mode of modality (possibility of impossibility). Can this co-implication of distance and proximity and the concomitant intensification of both (the nearest is the most distant, the most distant is the nearest) be understood in relation to any traditional schema of intensity?

Mills, Sara – Session A2

MA Candidate, Department of Philosophy, University of Guelph

Anxiety, Authenticity, and Being-With in Being and Time

For Martin Heidegger, the fact of human mortality is a structuring element of human experience. The facticity of human death and the human condition as “thrown” produce an inescapable existential anxiety which is described as man’s fundamental mood. One responds to this existential anxiety either inauthentically, through flight, or authentically, through an act of self-ownership. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger emphasizes the individuating character of anxiety. Acknowledgement of one’s mortality must be one’s own acknowledgement; when experiencing anxiety, the possibilities revealed to *Dasein* are likewise his own possibilities; thus the choice between authentic enownment and

inauthentic flight is ultimately his own choice. Authenticity, then, is irrevocably “mine.” My paper investigates the implication of authenticity’s “mineness” and asks what I consider to be an important and unresolved question in Heidegger scholarship: Is authenticity fundamentally non-relational, owing to its inextricability from anxiety, or can being-with others foster an authentic comportment toward death?

Montreuil, Zacharie – Session A8

MA Candidate, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba

In the Spirit of the Age: A Study of Victorian Photography of the Dead

For nearly as long as the photographic process has existed, it has been equated with death and used to capture images of the dead. Post-mortem photos, which often picture the dead in a lifelike pose and dress in the presence of the living, point toward a deeply material Victorian conception of mourning, bolstered by emerging capitalism, and a desire to preserve identifying visual indicators of the dead. These curious photos appear symptomatic of an increasingly realist and spiritually transitory understanding of artwork and its relationship with the living. In a culture that was both intensely fixated on the visual and increasingly anxious over the decaying reliability of visual status indicators, significance of the deceased was preserved by images which simultaneously immortalized and obfuscated their own death.

Nannavecchia, Tiziana – Session A8

PhD Candidate, Department of Translation and Interpretation, University of Ottawa

Writing to Remember, Translating to Survive: The Double Life of a Migrant’s Story

Survival is a central motif of both migrant writing and translation, where the idea of “living on” through the written word becomes a battle against silence and oblivion. Migrant narratives recount stories of a painful past: separation, loss, distance, displacement, and nostalgia. Writers decide to relive and recount the painful experience of migration in the hope his/her story will live forever and live on beyond the physical death of the migrant him/herself: a promise of the collective remembrance. This paper explores the double way in which the migrant story can “live on”: if the simple act of writing will allow the migrant to remember and re-live his/her story (a reiteration of the experience), translation could assure the survival of the migrant’s legacy and its afterlife, the spatial and temporal survival of the narrative, its language, and its story.

Nisbet, Nancy – Session C24

PhD Candidate, Critical and Creative Studies, The European Graduate School

Conceiving the Subject of Mutation: Event, Plasticity, and Molecular Worlds

Events happen. As contingent ruptures whose traces mark the possibility of real change, events indirectly constitute the subject. With particular reference to the philosophies of Alain Badiou, Catherine Malabou, and Gilles Deleuze, this paper considers the possibility

that mutations can be molecular events, and puts forward the idea of the *subject of mutation*. Mutation is aleatory change at the level of nucleic acids; a contingent and indifferent process to which all living beings are susceptible. Through the concepts of event, plasticity, existence, and finitude, I explore what it might mean to become a subject constituted by the biological event of mutation. Rather than submitting to the constitution of life by its certain finitude, the subject of mutation affirms that death is but a possible consequence and not a necessary constitution of life.

Paje, Philip Michael I. – Session B16

PhD Candidate, Philippine Studies, University of the Philippines-Diliman

Death and Disaster Preparedness in the Philippines

The intersection of hazards and people often produces deadly results. In the Philippines, unsound social and public policies complicated by the lack of emergency managers often put millions of Filipinos at risk. Violent volcanic eruptions, sea vessel mishaps, earthquakes, super typhoons, crowd stampede, and armed conflict are just some events included in a list of casualty-stricken situations that marred Filipinos' short collective memories in the last three decades. This is the context that this paper wishes to thread alongside the following specific queries: How are life and death factored in or manifested in pieces of legislation concerning disaster preparedness in the Philippines? What factors add to the life-threatening rather than life-saving features of disaster preparedness? How responsive are these policies and programs to actual experiences? This paper shows how concerned state agencies in disaster preparedness address issues of life and/or death in extraordinary circumstances such as disaster events.

Perez Trujillo, Axel – Session B21

PhD Candidate, Spanish and Latin American Studies, University of Aberdeen

Violence, Struggle, and Bloodshed in the Argentinian Prairies

This paper seeks to reveal the stark dangers that the prairies have inspired in literature, taking as a point of departure the Argentinian Pampa in Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's account of some of the most notorious frontiersmen in South America: the *gauchos*. Death for these almost mythical figures was being alone in the prairies without horse or saddle, for the environment gives no respite. Both the infinite horizon and its limitless flatlands signify death at its most cruel. The Argentinian *gaucho* is constantly faced with the prospect of death, not necessarily at the hands of his peers, but rather from the complete absence and lack that efface life from the barren landscapes of the prairies.

Plug, Jan – Session B17

Department of English and Writing Studies, University of Western Ontario

They Have All Been Healed: Walser's Process

A sentence from Benjamin's essay on Robert Walser provides the impetus for this paper. There Benjamin formulates the "process of healing [*Heilung*]" that traces the struggle for freedom from "suffering" also found in fairy tales, where the hero "lives to this day." Thus, Walser's *Snow White* is exemplary for Benjamin, because Snow White survives her own death. Giorgio Agamben builds on Benjamin's understanding by taking his process to its necessary theological conclusions, for *Heilung* also means *salvation*. For Agamben, Walser offers the greatest objection possible to the theology of redemption, since his figures are *neutral* with respect to salvation. Walser's figures have been healed of healing; his figures outlive every understanding of healing conventionally understood, as a passage between life and death. Thus, the narrator of Walser's "The Walk" will proclaim "I am dead," will explore the possibility of what it might mean to live one's death.

Rajan, Tilottama – Session C23
 Department of English, University of Western Ontario
Systems and Autoimmunity: Blake's Lambeth Books

Blake wrote that he must be enslaved by another man's system or create his own, laying it out in *Jerusalem* geographically and geometrically. But in the Lambeth books, Urizen is ejected as a body in bits and pieces that is neither plant nor human. This paper explores Urizen's body as a lurid auto-referential figure for Blake's own corpus. Blake's later system tries to resemble Kant's "architectonic" as a body whose parts form a whole. But what if the body is not an anatomical body but also contains other systems: circulatory, digestive, nervous? The work of John Hunter, from whom Blake derives his imagery of globules and fibres, discloses in Romantic science a body without organs that is "flesh and nerve" and that Deleuze finds in Bacon and Artaud. Played out in Blake's theatre of cruelty, Hunter's physiology lets us think of systems in a new, if traumatic, way: as enabled precisely by blockages and involutions that make autoimmunity the source of their power.

Reddy, Meredith – Session A6
 PhD Candidate, Department of Fine Art, University of Toronto
Lifting the Veil: Séance Photography and the Materiality of Death

Within the hushed and darkened space of the séance, mediums found a number of ways to bring phantoms of the dead back to life, including automatic messages, table levitations, and a variety of "materialization phenomena." It is this latter form of ghostly manifestation that I primarily consider here. My paper examines the photographic documentation of séances from circa 1910, produced by a number of prominent scientific researchers who were intent on investigating mediumistic claims. Their resulting documentary photographs and written accounts were largely devoted to instances of the medium conjuring *ectoplasm*—a ghostly, fleeting material resembling cobwebs and scraps of fabric. Ectoplasm was exceedingly difficult to pin down, and managed to evade the scientists' grasp (and gaze) at nearly every turn. Yet it was also inscribed with

compelling religious and cultural meanings that merit a closer look, such as I offer in this paper through photographic documents.

Reyes-Peschl, Romén – Session A10

PhD Candidate, Schools of English and History, University of Kent

The Detective as “Zombie of the Interrogative Mood” in Cameron McCabe’s The Face on the Cutting-Room Floor

Julian Symons praises McCabe’s largely overlooked 1937 mystery novel *The Face on the Cutting-Room Floor* for being “the detective story to end detective stories,” praise that paradoxically betrays the novel as both exemplifying and exterminating the detective fiction genre. Indeed, McCabe’s formal experimentations make the reader question the purpose and presentation of the novel’s generic mystery elements, in turn questioning the reader’s very role. This echoes Padgett Powell’s *The Interrogative Mood* (2009), a novel comprising solely questions which even uncannily question their own reading: “Does it change things a bit for you to perceive that these questions [. . .] are perhaps independent of me, to some degree? That they are akin to, say, zombies of the interrogative mood?” Here zombified questions act as “independent” detectives, prompting the reader into providing a strange undead-life-force of reciprocal interrogation that reveals the mutually shared interrogatory responsibilities of critic and writer, reader and detective, living person and inanimate text.

Ro, Mee-Ju – Session A3

PhD Candidate, Department of English Literature, Cornell University

Missing Mom: Translation as Testimony in Shin Kyung-Sook’s Please Look After Mom

At the heart of Shin Kyung-Sook’s novel is a woman, Park So-Nyo, who cannot be proclaimed legally dead or alive for she is “missing,” probably suffering from early onset Alzheimer’s, illiterate, unable to give an account of herself nor lay claim to her own identity: the extraordinary example of the limits of testimony and an institutional system that bars her from effectively returning. Her children, her husband, and possible eyewitnesses ultimately fail in their attempt to provide an accurate testimony on behalf of So-Nyo. In the face of an absent testimony and a missing person, what remains? If testimony as transfer or as “arrival” is not impossible, what does it mean to think about it as translation? A translation in transit? As a mode of literary analysis, the notion of translation provides a mode of reading that neither demands an authentic original nor abandons all notions of fidelity or indebtedness.

Robson, Lisa – Session A4

Department of English and Creative Writing, Brandon University

Vampires, Zombies, and Identity in Contemporary Horror Cinema

Horror narratives frequently embed their sense of monstrosity in the disruption of the division between the living and the dead. Two highly popular cinematic series of late, *The Walking Dead* and *True Blood*, concentrate on two such figures, the zombie and the vampire. Extrapolating from Donna Haraway's notion of the cyborg, I examine these series' presentations of the living dead as beings who, like the cyborg, offer the opportunity to reimagine the human self. Creatures that begin as human and transform into an other that echoes its living self, the zombie and the vampire stretch understandings of human identity to embrace otherness and multiplicity. However, the pure brute animalism of AMC's "walkers" and *True Blood*'s construction of an origin myth privileging the vampire as the chosen primary self-circumscribe the revolutionary potential of these imaginative figures for advancing understandings of human identity.

Saghafi, Kas – Session A9

Department of Philosophy, University of Memphis

Dying Alive: The Phantasmatology of Living Death

The question of the threshold between life and death remained a persistent one for Derrida throughout his life. In his later work he approached the topic from the perspective of what he referred to as "dying alive" or "living death." As he shows in his seminar *The Beast and the Sovereign, Volume 2*, if life and death *as such* are not separable *as such*, then a recourse to the concept of phantasm is necessary to configure "living death." In the seminar, Derrida comes to the realization that the phantasm and dying alive/buried alive need to be thought together. Consequently, this paper poses the question: How are we to think the relation between living death or dying alive and the phantasm? How should we understand a "phantasmatology" of dying alive in Derrida's work?

Scott, Charles E. – Session C23

Department of Philosophy, Vanderbilt University

Livingdying

I will speak of livingdying, speak in attunement with that neologism. Such attunement is poetic in its manner and connects, always I imagine, experientially and autobiographically with the person thinking, speaking, and writing. This perspective is guided by *how* livingdying happens in its immediacy. I will speak of livingdying as I look for a discourse to speak of what cannot be said directly. Stories and poetry (especially that of Robinson Jeffers) will be important for what I say: I am saying now that *what* I say will not—cannot—say livingdying directly, and that impossibility is intrinsic in the way of speaking of livingdying if we want—if we *desire* to draw closer to livingdying in the sense we make as we speak. The desire to draw closer to livingdying will permeate my remarks. This engagement will have no conclusion.

Sherbert, Garry – Session A7

Department of English, University of Regina
Ghost Dance: Derrida, Stiegler, and Film as Phantomachia

During an interview in *Echographies of Television* (2002), Bernard Stiegler quotes Roland Barthes's claim that "*The photo of the departed being comes to touch me like the delayed rays of a star.*" Stiegler's ontological claim is that in photography, "*I can never deny that the thing was there*" (113), that the referent of the photograph "was there," present at one time in the past. Derrida, on the other hand, proposes in Ken McMullen's *Ghost Dance* that "to be haunted by a ghost is to remember what one has never lived in the present, to remember what in essence, has never had the form of presence. Film is a 'phantomachia'" (115). This paper argues that Stiegler's appeal to Barthes's cinematic realism uncovers a metaphysics of touch in Stiegler's understanding of the technical, cinematic image, a metaphysics of touch deconstructed in Derrida's book *On Touching*—Jean-Luc Nancy (2005).

Shin, Ery – Session B19
PhD Candidate, English Literature, Brasenose College, University of Oxford
Felix Volkbein's Death Wish in Nightwood

That racial outsiders should face extinction can be defied within the literary imagination when they will annihilation upon themselves. Pleasuring in agony becomes a statement, then, a way of validating loss by imbuing it with resistant meaning. The abject preemptively strike against the law by welcoming its punishment with open arms. To that end, in *Nightwood*, Felix's triumph lies in his surrender to the worst. He symbolically counters the threat of genocide by wedding a woman who will bear him Guido, the "idiot" child who will end the Volkbeins. This paper considers how masochism evolves into a politicized gesture against anti-Semitism by observing how a Jewish father's death wish possesses a transfiguring element. Such shifts occur insofar as Barnes gestures toward Deleuze's inverted affect regime: the power of punishment to enforce repressive sexual regulations through pain and hence bridle perversion becomes inverted when punishment opens the portal to pleasure, when pleasure relocates to sites of perversion.

Singer, Jonathan – Session B13
PhD Candidate, Department of Philosophy, DePaul University
"The Flesh of My Flesh": Animality, Difference, and "Radical Community" in Merleau-Ponty's Late Philosophy

In his later writings and unfinished working notes, it is evident that Merleau-Ponty comes to realize that his earlier insights into the incarnation of (inter)subjectivity have profound ontological implications, not the least of which concern the relationship between "humanity" and "animality." I suggest in this paper that Merleau-Ponty's ontology offers a basis for problematizing the anthropocentrism constitutive of so much of Western philosophy, as well as positive possibilities for thinking and honouring the presence of other-than-human otherness in human experience. Merleau-Ponty suggests that "the

human” and “the animal” are foundationally intertwined or co-constituting, which is to say *chiasmatically* implicated: while irreducibly different, they are non-oppositionally and non-hierarchically inter-defining. Thus, in the *Nature* lectures Merleau-Ponty claims that “animality and human being are given only together.” Indeed, on Merleau-Ponty’s account, we are just as radically embedded in relations with non-human Others as we are with human Others.

Soto, Marisol – Session C26

PhD Candidate, Hispanic Literature and Cultures, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Interstitial Escape as a Resource for Denunciation in Granito and Insensatez

In the 80’s, the government of Guatemala led a violent persecution against Mayan civilians that resulted in the torture and murder of more than 200,000 adults and children (Casas Arzu). Survivors have suffered a terrible trauma, making it extremely difficult to gather evidence to charge, bring to court, or even propagate the memory of this genocide. Guatemalan Nobel Prize winner Rigoberta Menchu has advocated for their rights. However, the accuracy of her testimony has been questioned by arguing an inaccurate reconstruction of past events. This review does not consider that testimonies have inevitable loss of contents in the stories of the victims (Sommer). Pamela Yates and Horacio Castellanos Moya give us some invaluable artistic resources to demonstrate how the testimony and the perpetuation of the memory allow genocide survivors to emerge from their social and traumatic interstice.

Stojilkov, Andrea – B19

PhD Candidate, Department of Philology, Belgrade University
Harry Potter’s Circular View of Life and Death: Which Came First, the Phoenix or the Flame?

Renowned literary critics and theorists of literature have triggered a debate over whether *Harry Potter* should be considered a naïve work of fantasy, an intricate, gripping fairytale patched on bits of literary tradition, or a serious, controversial, and profound writing on metaphysical, biblical, alchemical, and anti-stereotypical topics. Meanwhile, “Pottermania” has turned into an intercultural and global phenomenon. This paper tackles one of the leading themes and leitmotifs of the seven *Harry Potter* novels: the imminence and inevitability of dying. What the author strived to convey through more than four thousand pages of her plot was a great moral on the acceptance of death, by which one is absolved from it. Metaphors for the (in)finity of both life and death are ubiquitous. There are Horcruxes, the Deathly Hallows, sacrifice, resurrection, mourning, metempsychosis—J.K. Rowling offered a rich fountain of symbols and notions of this liminal area that are undoubtedly worth analyzing.

Tromly, Lucas – Session A10

Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba

Mortality and Mobility in Chinese American Travel Writing

My paper examines narratives of travel to China undertaken by older tourists in Chinese American writing. Traditionally, this form of heritage tourism has been understood through the Chinese aphorism “Falling leaves return to the root,” a cultural script that understands a good death as entailing a return to a site of ancestral origin. My paper demonstrates that this relationship between mortality and mobility echoes in contemporary tourist practice in complex ways. I argue that such travel experiences are negotiations of citizenship, history, and identity. In fact, narratives of this form of travel—that, for some elderly tourists, necessarily bear connotations of repatriation—demonstrate that travel to China actually challenges a sense of rootedness there, and confirms a sense of belonging in America.

Trumbull, Robert – Session A7

Stevenson College, University of California, Santa Cruz

Cruelty, Life, Survival: Psychoanalysis and the Deconstruction of the Death Penalty

In this paper, I explore how this thinking of life and death allows us to mount a new deconstructive critique of the death penalty. Looking at Derrida’s 1999-2000 Seminars on the death penalty, I argue that the deconstruction of the death penalty can perhaps best be understood in terms of the particular thinking of cruelty Derrida locates in Freud. If this is the case, I suggest, it is because this notion of cruelty opens onto a particular thinking of life, whereby cruelty and destruction are absolutely originary. The deconstructive-psychoanalytic conception of life as continually exposed to the threat of destruction (what Derrida calls “survival”) challenges the basic logic of the death penalty; a punishment that is always practiced, Derrida allows us to see, in the name of the absolute inviolability of human life.

Tysdal, Daniel Scott – Session B16

Department of English, University of Toronto, Scarborough

“Poetry Makes Nothing Happen”: The Image of the Dead and the Twenty-First-Century Elegy

In this multimedia-supported talk, I discuss the potential defining features of the twenty-first-century elegy—taking a somewhat unconventional approach. Rather than providing a survey of the contemporary elegy, I instead present my poetic “research and findings.” For it was while exploring this understanding of the elegy that I composed *The Mourner’s Book of Albums* (Tightrope, 2010), poems that engage the expanding range of possible forms that the poet’s work of mourning can take, an expansion fuelled by advances in computer technology (i.e., the poet’s new pen) and the proliferation of the means for producing and exchanging images. Furthermore, these poems examine how these same technologies have changed not only elegiac expression, but also the very content of the “elegizable,” generating new answers to the old questions, what is “our loss” and what constitutes “the mourned”?

Wentworth, Kara – Session C25

PhD Candidate, Department of Communication, University of California, San Diego

Sensing Sentience and Managing Microbes: lifedeath in the Slaughterhouse

The slaughterhouse kill floor is a lively space of death, populated by animals-humans-microbes in various states of living and dying together. My work is based on multimodal ethnographic research (film, still images, conversation, and document analysis) on US slaughterhouse kill floors. In this paper, I explore two events in which life and death are distinguished and managed: (1) watching an animal's movements to determine whether it is "dead enough" to be skinned, and (2) managing the relative rates of proliferation and death of microbes that swarm animal and human bodies. Through a detailed analysis of these material practices of sensing sentience and managing microbes, I describe the attempts to constitute a meaningful boundary between life and death. I argue that these practices are undertaken by an entanglement of animals/humans/microbes, and that the practices themselves enact boundaries between categories of killable (animals), protectable (humans), and manageable (microbes).

Wiffen, Declan – Session C22

PhD Candidate, School of English, University of Kent

"Between earth and sky": The Liminality of lifedeath in Mourid Barghouti's I Was Born There, I Was Born Here

This paper explores the liminal nature of lifedeath in the context of Palestinian writer Mourid Barghouti's memoir *I was Born There I was Born Here*. Barghouti is trying get from Ramallah to Jordan, traveling in a taxi with seven others across the landscape of his homeland. The taxi driver, Mahmoud, announces that Israel has told the foreign diplomats in Ramallah that it will invade tomorrow, and then receives a call concerning a flying checkpoint up ahead. They drive off-road, through fields, alongside massacred olive groves, and further on through the landscape they reach an impasse: a trench has been dug by the IDF that will make it impossible for the taxi to cross. And the problem is not just about delays and impracticalities. This physical chasm is a matter of life and death, something I explore in this paper and relate to the memoir's representation of Palestinian dispossession.

Wills, David – Session A9

Department of French Studies, Brown University

Textual Reproduction

In fall 1974, Derrida has just published *Glas* and, in a sense, turned the page on the "classic" deconstructions that we associate with the preceding period of his writing (*Grammatology* to *Margins*). At that point, he embarks upon a seminar entitled "La vie la mort," whose first ten sessions include readings of François Jacob, Nietzsche, Marx, and Heidegger, before terminating with the four sessions later published in *The Postcard* as

“To Speculate—on Freud.” The explicit theme of those first ten sessions is reproduction, and especially self-reproduction (as opposed to mechanical reproduction) as the definition, for Jacob, of the logic of what lives, which is deconstructed by Derrida in more or less “classical” terms. I propose reading that deconstruction of Jacob’s text (and of the life-death opposition), both within the seminar and in relation to a series of textual revisions and realignments that take place from *Glas* to *The Postcard*, and that stage textuality or, in Derrida’s precise terms in the seminar “text,” as “the very structure of the living.”

Wilson Baptist, Karen – Session A5

Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Manitoba
The Politics of Absence

Roadside memorials have performative intentions, in that they are intended to serve as warnings to other motorists to drive cautiously, to allow for others who have suffered or witnessed similar tragedies to grieve, and to serve as elegies to what are perceived as unmerited demises. For the inquisitive on-looker, an encounter with a roadside marker can initiate a glimpse into the life and the death of another. These tawdry assemblages of fake flowers disturb the apathetic experience of the everyday and gather to speech the purgatorial fate of the unjust dead. For the families of victims the roadside memorial signifies the quest for justice of those who mourn an unjust death. This paper investigates the politics of absence and the role of the roadside memorial in the search for justice that follows in the wake of tragic death.

Young, Bryanne – Session A1

PhD Candidate, Performance and Cultural Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

“Killing the Indian in the Child”: Hunger, Death, and the Aesthetics of Erasure in Canada’s Indian Residential Schools

This paper takes as its object the Canadian Government’s mandate for the Canadian Indian Residential School System: “to kill the Indian in the child.” In doing so, I aim to open a dialogue between the psychic and the social, the ethical-political and the aesthetic, in order to question the extent to which this biopolitical configuration, spanning from 1884 to 1996, contributed to the production of the death-bound Indian subject and imagined into being a new form of death—in excess of both the biopolitical and the sphere of sovereign power and bare life. By unknitting this historical, material, and psychic conjuncture, I complicate and destabilize the inadequate polar vocabularies of the pleasure principle and the death drive, nature versus culture, psyche versus body, and survival versus death, rendering the annihilation of the Indian other toward a unified, white, “Canadian” citizenry an impossible and un-theorizable horizon.

PRESENTER ABSTRACTS – PANELS

Panel 1: *Life/Death through Deleuze and Derrida* – Session A11

Langlois, Christopher – Session A11

PhD Candidate, Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism, University of Western Ontario

“Compassion for suffering humanity”: Reading Derrida Reading Blanchot

By looking closely at Jacques Derrida’s reading of Maurice Blanchot’s “The Instant of My Death” in *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony*, this paper will decipher, through a critical exchange with Martin Hägglund, the significance of what Derrida means by saying “literature and death, truth and death: this is the subject” (22). There is a risk in Hägglund’s otherwise refreshing intervention into the contemporary reception of Derrida in *Radical Atheism* of conflating violence and death into a single temporal mechanism driving the logic of deconstruction (the “arche-violence” of *differance*). To be sure, violence is Hägglund’s master trope in the schema of what he calls the “ethicopolitical significance of deconstruction,” yet by failing to adequately distinguish between the temporal economies of violence and death, Hägglund inadvertently elides Derrida’s deconstructive investment in life *between* violence and death that the temporal spaces of literature and narrative, *pace* Blanchot, so singularly render imaginable (101).

Larsen, Erik – Session A11

PhD Candidate, Literature Program, University of Notre Dame

Moby-Dick’s Inorganic Vitalities: Life beyond Bodies in Melville and Deleuze

This paper will focus specifically on how Melville’s *Moby-Dick* challenges Kant’s influential bifurcation of nature into living, self-organizing bodies, and dead, or causally determined bodies. I will explore the manner in which the novel contrastingly conceptualizes nature as fundamentally systematic and conative—although without a pre-existing super-sensuous model for its systematicity. The paper will investigate these reflections through close analysis of Ahab’s response to his own ambiguous bodily life; the Captain’s body is not only a strange hybrid of whale and man, but more importantly of “dead” bone and “living” matter. More generally, the presentation will raise questions regarding the boundaries commonly set between “life” and its commonly identified “others”—matter and machines. This reading will draw explicitly on Gilles Deleuze’s articulation of a new materialist vitalism in order to explore *Moby-Dick*’s profound explorations of animality, matter, and technicity.

Martell, James – Session A11

PhD Candidate, Literature Program, University of Notre Dame

Immanent Limits: How to Live and Die the Human/Animal Divide in Derrida and Deleuze

Between Deleuze and Derrida an entire zoology borders and flirts with an anthropology, or with an ontology intra- or trans-species. Nevertheless, if there is a clear line between their philosophical projects, their understanding of difference, and thus the division

between humans from animals, where is it? For both of them the animal would have been a question of immanence, of *immaneo* or what “remains in,” at the same time that death would be always immanent to life. To draw a line between life/death in their work would be to draw a series of immanent lines beyond and amidst the human/animal divide. This paper considers these lines as events, as different possibilities of living the problem of division itself in between the two authors.

Negrete, Fernanda – Session A11

Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University at Buffalo, SUNY

“A Vital, Unlivable Force”: Rhythm in Natalie Sarraute’s Writing

Sarraute’s account of writing as a subtly potent series of minuscule movements is exemplified in her *Tropismes* and *Entre la vie et la mort*. These texts, I demonstrate, transmit a liminal experience to a reader, who therein undergoes a *tropism* at the limits of the speakable—*between life and death*. I connect this central problem in Sarraute’s work to Deleuze’s thought on rhythm, qualified as an “almost unliveable,” yet vital *puissance*. Considering Deleuze and Guattari’s turn to Sarraute’s literary theory to explain the nonorganic plane of writing, which supports their statement that this plane “allows us to perceive the imperceptible,” I show that Sarraute’s predominantly aural scenes and treatment of words, as singular articulations of the liminal site of rhythm in its almost unlivable character, offer insight into the question of *lifedeath* beyond a binary logic.

Panel 2: *Lifedeath in the Wake of Blanchot: Three Variations on the “Already Dead”* – Session A12

Zebuhr, Laura – Session A12

Department of English and Foreign Languages, University of St. Francis

The Lives of Stones in Thoreau’s Philosophy

In this paper I argue that Henry David Thoreau’s writing offers a productive entry point for rethinking concepts of life and death through an unusual and provocative treatment of rocks and stones. Rocks and stones often appear, in Western literary and philosophical writing, as a paradigmatic example of lifelessness. Thoreau’s writing, in his journals and in *Walden*, grants the stone affects and capacities that he imagines can lead to knowing and experiencing the world in ways that are foreclosed to the tradition’s subject of self-presence and its relation to objects. If stones are not “dead” in Thoreau’s writing, neither is “life” a self-evident concept. By disengaging life and death from any absolute sense, Thoreau’s writing holds the question of what it means *to live* open. It demands, in other words, that we not take for granted the infinitive moment of the ancient philosophical imperative to live well.

Stockwell, Cory – Session A12

Program in Cultures, Civilizations and Ideas, Bilkent University

Prophecy and Revolution in von Trier's Melancholia

The paper reads one of the two main characters in von Trier's *Melancholia*—Justine, played by Kirsten Dunst—as a revolutionary in the sense Blanchot gives to this term. On the one hand, her actions are entirely directed toward the effacement of the borders between death and life: her life is only “whole,” it seems, on the condition of welcoming death within it; she is literally “already dead.” On the other hand, she is what one might call a “prophet of the present”: far from predicting something that may occur, she deals with an event that is already taking place, already present in the form of its inevitability, even if she is the only one able to bear witness to it. It is in this life already death, in this present already future, Justine suggests, that the spirit of revolution lies.

Clift, Sarah – Session A12

Contemporary Studies Programme, University of King's College

Grave Departures: Melancholic Materiality in W.G. Sebald's "Max Ferber"

This paper examines W.G. Sebald's “Max Ferber” (from *The Emigrants*) in relation to what Blanchot, in “Literature and the Right to Death,” characterizes as the “physical weight” of the materiality of language. After considering the role played by melancholia in Sebald's writing, I examine Sebald's claim of the “weak redemptive force” of literature in the attachments to the dead that are played out in “Max Ferber.” I give particular attention to the ways in which the materiality of stone and the tools of writing—paper, pencils, letters, and words—function not as transparent media for the communication of meaning but as so much unyielding materiality, obsession with which allows for new possibilities and new relations to emerge. Through a close examination of two scenes, I argue that for Sebald, melancholia moves beyond the death drive to act as a resistance against fixed boundaries and reified collective identities.

Panel 3: No Future: *Ten Years Later* – Session B14

Strong, Jeremy – Session B14

PhD Candidate, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba

Destroying Biopolitical Boundaries: Posthuman Zombies and New Life for the Death Drive

This paper interrogates seemingly defined lines between social, sexual, and political identities primarily by examining the death drive, reproduction, and the rearing of children in the imagined time and space of the post-Apocalyptic. I write in dialogue with Lee Edelman's *No Future* (2004) in my examination of the zombie apocalypse as a time and space that should open more possibility to queer life through continual denial and destruction of reproductive futurism. Ultimately, riffing on Edelman's text helps me to nuance my own argument that the AMC series *The Walking Dead* provides a space that should be fertile ground for queer human identities to prosper. I then reconsider the ways

in which the show fails to explore the queer experience and juxtapose human representation with the experiences and representations of the zombie.

Thorsteinson, Katherine – Session B14

PhD Candidate, Department of English, Cornell University

Final Words: The Death Penalty and Lee Edelman's No Future

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice has publicly catalogued the final statements of condemned prisoners since capital punishment was reinstated in 1982. Using this online database as an archive, this paper explores Lee Edelman's notions about reproductive futurity and the queer death drive in one of the few contexts where the government commits and celebrates the putting to death of its own citizenry. In *No Future*, Edelman argues that, despite successful attempts to make the narrative of family values appear apolitical, "the fantasy subtending the image of the Child invariably shapes the logic within which the political itself must be thought." The Child promises the reproduction of futurity, a promise upon which all political discourses depend. This paper will establish how the US prison industrial complex and the rhetoric of "ultimate justice" have been maintained by the logic of reproductive futurity that has imposed the distinction between "innocence" and "guilt."

Dykstra Dykerman, Katelyn – Session B14

PhD Candidate, Department of English, Film, and Theatre, University of Manitoba

Floating on the Waters of Queer Life/Death

This paper illuminates how Edelman's text forms a strategy of queer resistance to the normalizing of sex and politics in the postmodern reimagining of eugenics—which polices the when, where, and how of death for queer bodies—in Timothy Findley's *Not Wanted on the Voyage*. Findley's text provides an opportunity to rethink Edelman's theories in the context of non-reproductive human/non-human animal and human/celestial relationships in order to explore the livability of those oppressed under a system which prizes reproductive-futurity over vulnerability and queer kinship structures. Dykstra Dykerman considers whether Edelman, through Findley, is able to imagine the queer death-drive as a potential site of resistance for queer kinships that are outside of the hetero-/homo-normative modes of human relationships as a way of expanding the reach of Edelman's rhetorical and political strategies.

McGuire, Riley – Session B14

PhD Candidate, Department of English, University of Pennsylvania

Queer Children, Queer Futures: Navigating Reproduction and Negation in The Hunger Games

This paper revisits the cultural construction of the Child within queer theory as a figure that performs a suturing of life and death. I will nuance Lee Edelman's notion of the

oppressively political nature of the Child by examining cultural representations of queer children, figures between the reproductive and the non-generative. I will unpack this theoretical conversation through the contemporary cultural fascination with narratives of the death of children as mass public spectacles. Specifically, I will contextualize Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* book trilogy and movie franchise through the obsessive American media coverage of the infiltration of fatal violence into the spaces of childhood. By examining this text (and closely linked disturbing social realities) alongside notions of queer children, I aim to understand the figure of the Child as removed from binaries of creation/negation, and instead as a cultural force blurring the already porous boundaries between life and death.

Panel 4: *Alive Enough? Robot, Animal, Human* – Session B15

Heffernan, Teresa – Session B15

Department of English, Saint Mary's University

Robot Capital, Commodity Fetishism, and Rights Discourse

From Kismet to Domo, social robots are increasingly considered “alive enough,” as Sherry Turkle and others have argued, to warrant discussions about “robot emotions” and robot rights. If Descartes considered non-human animals as organic complex machines that were not conscious of feeling, there is the growing view of machines as inorganic feeling creatures and, thus, like animals, deserving of rights. A number of contemporary films echo these sentiments: Spielberg's *AI*, for instance, puts the question of rights front and centre as David, the captured mech boy, pleads for his life at the “Flesh Fair.” Marx, however, cautioned that the more lively commodities become, the more depleted humans become as these fetishized objects cast their magical spell, obscuring human labour. This paper will suggest the limits of this rights-based discourse and the long and problematic history of collapsing animals and machines in the newly emerging context of robot capital.

Asp, Karen – Session B15

PhD Candidate, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University

Instrumentality, Vulnerability, and the Possibility of Animal Suffering

In her earlier work on the figure of the “cyborg,” Donna Haraway's critique of biopolitical “monstrosities” relied, at least implicitly, on contingency and possibility. Her more recent work on “companion species,” however, gives way to certain ontological necessities: relations between species are seen as necessarily instrumental, intrinsically “unequal and asymmetrical,” and as entailing suffering and/or death on the part of various “partners.” The important question then becomes not whether animals can suffer, but whether acknowledging their intrinsic capacities for work and play will produce better worlds. I argue that Haraway's appeal to animal capacities re-entrenches the very

values that historically have qualified human life as more worthy than that of animals, and that she fails to understand the logic of possibility implicit in “suffering.”

Gaon, Stella – Session B15

Department of Political Science, Saint Mary’s University

More than Life: Human Dignity and the Problem of Rights

Charles Beitz argues that “human dignity” can serve as “more than a phrase” in human rights theory if one limits its meaning to “the status of a self-directing agent.” Yet, this restriction notwithstanding, “human dignity” still embodies its traditional, rationalist-humanist freight: *a life that is worth more than life*. Without such metaphysical excess, the phrase carries little normative weight. As Derrida clarifies, “what Kant calls the dignity [of man as] the end in itself” corresponds to what “bears witness, in some manner, to the infinite transcendence of that which is worth more than it.” On one hand, anything that embodies less than “more than life” is not “alive enough” (Turkle) to merit rights at all. On the other hand, if humans’ purported “capabilities” as “self-directing agents” are conditioned by what Derrida calls the *machinalité* of iteration and the trace, the “dignity” of human life is destabilized. The “life” underlying human rights discourse is thus problematic in the cases of humans, animals, *and* machines.

Panel 5: *Textures of lifedeath: Vulnerable Embodiment as Transversal Be(com)ing in Contemporary Literary and Media Productions* – Session B20

Dodet, Cyrielle – Session B20

PhD Candidate, Comparative Literature, Paris III-Sorbonne Nouvelle/Université de Montréal

L’apoptose en scène: deux créations de Claude Régy

Dans *Quelqu’un va venir* de Jon Fosse (1999) et *La barque le soir* d’après un extrait du roman de Tarjei Vesaas (2012), le metteur en scène français Claude Régy transpose l’apoptose. Ce suicide cellulaire programmé, mais aussi régulé par des interactions permet la vie, comme l’a montré le médecin Jean-Claude Ameisen (*La Sculpture du vivant*, 1999). La mort n’est plus pensée selon l’image d’une faucheuse brutale, mais selon la figure d’un sculpteur travaillant au cœur du vivant, pour façonner une forme complexe. Seront notamment analysés l’écriture théâtrale de ces deux auteurs norvégiens, leurs espaces-temps où vie et mort se confondent et se co-crésent, ainsi que la spectralité conférée aux acteurs, dont la revenance performative est amplifiée par une décomposition du spectre lumineux et par une immobilité présentant des « états latents du réel » (Régy 2007). L’apoptose, comme dispositif, fait vivre aux spectateurs l’expérience de contradictions irréductibles, complémentaires et fondamentales.

Hétu, Dominique – Session B20

PhD Candidate, Department of Comparative Literature, Université de Montréal
“*The Wonder of the Encounter*”: *Shared Vulnerability and the Materiality of Hostile Environments in the Novels Room and Sous béton*

My entry point for this paper is the moment of wonder in several encounters between child characters, objects, and events in the novels *Sous béton* (*Cemented*), by Karoline Georges, and *Room*, by Emma Donoghue. I argue that this sense of wonder reveals an “endless process of becoming” in life-threatening situations of vulnerability, violence, and hostility (McCann 499). In these texts, child characters struggle to make sense of and survive in toxic environments by developing caring and careful relationships with manifold others, in particular with objects. They question, in wonder, their place in the world by asking questions about life and death processes, illuminating “patterns of association that compromise the distinction between ‘human’ and ‘non-human,’” between the living and the dead (Whatmore 159). Another goal of this paper is to explore these particular inter-corporeal relations that instigate new spatial and affective moments, leading the troubled characters to develop survival strategies and actions.

Ilea, Laura Tusa – Session B20

Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture, Concordia University
Haneke’s Amour: Toward a Cinematic Phenomenology of the Misfit

My intention in this paper is to examine Michael Haneke’s film *Amour* through a conceptual displacement: I will shift the emphasis from disability, lack of autonomy, and absence of self-determination to the idea of *misfit* as defined by Rosemarie Garland-Thomson. This paper argues that a new, materialist, aesthetico-political approach to Haneke’s film, centering on the concept of *misfit*, allows for an affirmative, non-dualist reading of this work. The protagonists’ closed environment seems to blur distinctions between life and death. I also suggest that the concept of *misfit* implies both multiple lived embodiments and a questioning of the notion of a singularized disabled body. A key notion here is that of *intra-active becoming*, as defined by Karen Barad, a concept that allows us to situate the materiality of the misfit, as well as vulnerability and dependence in the materiality of the world.

Farcas, Cristina E. – Session B20

PhD Candidate, Comparative Literature, Université de Montréal
Dépossession, précarité et performativité politique dans le documentaire d’animation Le voyage de M. Crulic

Ma communication analysera *Le voyage de M. Crulic* (2012) de la réalisatrice Anca Damian, film qui interroge la dichotomie entre le vivant et le non-vivant à travers trois aspects. D’abord, la voix-off se distingue par son humour noir. Ensuite, l’affect de l’image animée souligne le corps décharné de Crulic et provoque une réflexion critique sur sa tragédie et sur l’indifférence des autorités concernées. Finalement, une performativité politique du corps dépossédé fait exploser les polarisations néolibérales. Je

propose donc de réfléchir les figures de la dépossession et de la précarité dans ce film. Plus concrètement, il s'agit de montrer que ce documentaire animé constitue à la fois un document incriminant et une performance de résistance et de protestation contre la « logique des corps jetables » (Butler et Athanasiou 2013) du capitalisme néolibéral.

Panel 6: *The Ecosystem, the Corpse, and the Fetus: Edgar Allan Poe's Shadowy Boundaries* – Session C27

Crosby, Sara – Session C27

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The Ecological Detective or, Edgar Allan Poe's Practical Tips for Surviving the Environmental Apocalypse

Poe, about more than death, concentrated just as fully on life and on how to negotiate an ethical relationship to nonhuman life. Taking him seriously as an ecological thinker suggests an alternative tradition for American environmental writing, much of which, threading its way out of Emerson and Thoreau, encounters the very problem that Poe criticized in his sociopathic narrators: the demand that the nonhuman world conform to and express some spiritual “Truth” relevant to the human observer. In an era of accelerating global warming and extinction, in which the earth has been both saturated with the human and made less amenable to human and nonhuman life, this demand looks less like an affirmation of life and more like a dangerous and deadly delusion. By contrast, Poe's environmentally ethical detective-artists, with their humble attention to surface and relations, provide us with more effective models for living in a dying world.

McIntyre, Caitlin – Session C27

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The Dark Ecology of Edgar Allen Poe's Marie Rogêt

Edgar Allen Poe's 1842 story “The Mystery of Mary Rogêt” is a fictionalized account of the real-life murder of a young woman, Mary Rogers, in Manhattan. A would-be “whodunnit” mystery, the pages abound with corpses and “nearly lifeless” bodies. This paper offers an ecocritical reading of the land and space in the story—and Marie's place in it. Specifically, this paper reads Marie Rogêt in light of ecocritic Timothy Morton's concept of dark ecology: that nature “has more in common with the undead than with life,” and the grief associated with an always dying yet reiterative world. Marie's body and the soil on which she lives and dies entwine life and death together. Her graves are teeming with life, such as the grass, fungus, and mildew that grow at the place of her murder. This growing demonstrates that decomposition is always a (queer) composition, is alive with the story of death in its own way.

Medoro, Dana – Session C27

This paper focuses upon Poe's "Murders in the Rue Morgue," arguing that the tale's staging of the murderous violence against the L'Espanaye women (ostensibly by an orangutan) opens onto questions about what exactly constitutes murder, not only when a non-human animal is involved but also in cases of terminated pregnancies. I start from the tale's reference to the women as fortune-tellers, arguing that this is a euphemism, for in mid-nineteenth-century America, abortionists advertised themselves as fortune-tellers or "clairvoyant physicians" skilled in the secrets of women. During the first half of the nineteenth century, first-trimester abortions were tacitly accepted as a birth-control measure, but by the eighteen-forties an intensity of focus arose around reproductive control as embryonic cells were increasingly discussed as "human life." The rise of forensic detection in Poe's time contributed to such discussions and to attempts to read the line between life and death that would define abortion as murder. I argue that Poe's story refuses such definitive statements—that the "signs of life" are not necessarily legible and that language itself designates death as life's antithesis, even as it exceeds such delineations.