



UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA

Facultat de Filologia i Comunicació



PANDEMIC
AS
POLEMIC

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PANDEMIC AS POLEMIC

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a great challenge for everybody, individually and socially, and has raised many questions about lifestyle, environment, social and economic inequality, health policies, science and especially governance and politics. Covid-19, its development, impact and effects form the basis of most current debates in our media and politics, and the illness has therefore become a rich interface of conflict that exacerbates contemporary inequalities and creates new ones. Yet, polemic can also be the source of renovation and construction, and as such, Covid-19 needs and deserves to be discussed from a multidisciplinary, global perspective. The Barcelona November 2021 seminar entitled *Pandemic as Polemic* aims to provide such a floor for open-minded discussion.

La pandèmia Covid-19 ha suposat un gran desafiament, tant a nivell social com individual, i ens ha fet plantejar-nos moltes qüestions sobre els nostres estils de vida, el medi ambient, les desigualtats socials i econòmiques, les polítiques de salut i ciència, i, sobre tot, la governabilitat i les seves polítiques. L'evolució, l'impacte i els efectes de la pandèmia Covid-19 són al centre de la major part de debats als mitjans de comunicació i polítics aquests dies, i així la malaltia ha esdevingut una densa interfície de conflicte que exacerba les desigualtats existents i en produeix d'altres. Ara bé, la polèmica també pot esdevenir font de renovació i construcció d'alternatives. Per aquesta raó, la pandèmia Covid 19 convida a la discussió des d'una perspectiva global i multidisciplinària. El seminari *Pandemic as Polemic*, organitzat pel Centre d'Estudis Australians i Transnacionals de la Universitat de Barcelona, es planteja com un fòrum obert per fer possible aquesta discussió.

La pandemia Covid-19 ha supuesto un gran desafío, tanto a nivel social como individual, y nos ha hecho plantearnos muchas preguntas sobre nuestros estilos de vida, el medio ambiente, las desigualdades sociales y económicas, las políticas de salud y ciencia y, sobre todo, la gobernabilidad y sus políticas. La evolución, el impacto y los efectos de la pandemia Covid-19 están en el centro de la mayoría de debates en los medios de comunicación y políticos estos días, y de este modo la enfermedad se ha convertido en una densa interfaz de conflicto que exacerba las desigualdades existentes y produce otras nuevas. Sin embargo, la polémica también puede constituir una fuente de renovación y construcción de alternativas. Por esta razón, la pandemia Covid 19 invita a la discusión desde una perspectiva global y multidisciplinaria. El seminario *Pandemic as Polemic*, organizado por el Centro de Estudios Australianos y Transnacionales de la Universitat de Barcelona, se propone como un fòrum abierto para albergar esta discusión.

Thursday 4 November 2021		Friday 5 November 2021	
BCN 09-09:30am (SYDNEY + 10 hrs: 7-7:30pm)	Opening panel: Dr José Navarro (Vice Chancellor), Dr Javier Velaza (Dean), Dra Montserrat Camps (CEAT Dir.), Dr Martin Renes (CEAT Co-Dir.).	BCN 09-09:30am (SYDNEY + 10 hrs: 7-7:30pm)	Speaker 8: Dr Josep Maria Campistol, UB (title pending)
BCN 09:30-10am (SYD 7:30-8pm)	Speaker 1: Jose Gómez-Puerta "The Rheumatology point of view"	BCN 09:30-10am (SYD 7:30-8pm)	Speaker 9: Stephen Alomes, RMIT Melbourne "Engaging with the Global Pandemic"
BCN 10-10:30am (SYD 8-8:30pm)	Speaker 2: Carol Leon, U of Malay "Virus Colonialism: A Polemic on the Covid situation in Malaysia"	BCN 10-10:30am (SYD 8-8:30pm)	Speaker 10: Andrea Ruiz Cirlot, UB "El efecto de la Covid-19 en la enseñanza del inglés para los negocios"
BCN 10:30-11am (SYD 8:30-9pm)	Break	BCN 10:30-11am (SYD 8:30-9pm)	Break
BCN 11-11:30am (SYD 9-9:30pm)	Speaker 3: Catalina Wajs Tauscher, U Zaragoza "How can tradition, myth and folklore help us (better) understand the covid 19 pandemic"	BCN 11-11:30am (SYD 9-9:30pm)	Speaker 11: Nahum Welang, U of Bergen "Scientific Facts and Literary Truths: Examining the Role of Literature in Pandemic Narratology"
BCN 11:30-12 am (SYD 9:30-10pm)	Speaker 4: Martin Renes, UB "Echoes of 'The Waste Land': the Corona pandemic, Division and Fragmentation of Europe's Post-war Transnational Space"	BCN 11:30-12 am (SYD 9:30-10pm)	Speaker 12: Sergi Grau, UB "Divergent stories? Old and current reactions to pandemic situations"
BCN 12-12:30am (SYD 10-10:30pm)	Speaker 5: Alejandro Escobar-Vicent, UB "Pandemia: ¿catástasis de nuestra epopeya y recta final hacia la catástrofe de la tragedia moderna o perpetuación del régimen que ya conocemos?"	BCN 12-12:30am (SYD 10-10:30pm)	Speaker 13: Laura Llevadot & Javier Bassas, UB "PANDEMIK: perspectivas de política posfundacional"
BCN 12:30-01pm (SYD 10:30-11pm)	Break	BCN 12:30-01pm (SYD 10:30-11pm)	Break
BCN 01-01:30pm (SYD 11-11:30pm)	Speaker 6: Montserrat Camps-Gaset, UB, "What is in pandemics? How to face mortality as human fate: a literary approach"	BCN 01-1:30pm (SYD 11-11:30pm)	Closing panel: CEAT directors
BCN 01:30-02pm (SYD 11:30-12pm)	Speaker 7: Jytte Holmqvist, HBU-UCLan, "Pandemic as Polemic: Free Will in an Age of Restrictions"	BCN 01:30-02pm (SYD 11:30-12pm)	



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS & BIONOTES (in alphabetical order)

1. Stephen Alomes, RMIT University Melbourne

“Engaging with the Global Pandemic”

ABSTRACT. Facing a global pandemic many citizens, including artists, writers and academics, have responded by engaging through analytical and creative works. Many of us have become 'citizen scientists' in a meaningful way, which is not the same as the many "Facebook Certified Experts" (often denialists and anti-vaxxers) who declare that they have "done my research" ...often on YouTube or other Googly sites.

I will offer a personal account of my own three responses.

1. Wearing my social researcher hat, I have analysed where social patterns meet evolving science, particularly the mask/aerosol transmission debates, in which short-sightedness has been evinced by expert committees in Australia and Canada as well as by denialists in social media.

<https://johnmenadue.com/expert-denialism-federal-covid-advisory-committee-slow-to-accept-airborne-evidence/>

Wearing that citizen hat I have also communicated with epidemic researchers and politicians and, fruitlessly perhaps - and always emphasizing the comparative frame - shot down the many Facebook fools.

2. As a prose poet, I have coped personally (along with my walks and escapes into television travelogues and nature tales... and chocolate) through writing. Everyday prose poetry accounts of our pandemic life pursue experiences from 'To Zoom or not to Zoom' to 'Millennials just wanna have fun', and reflect on the clouds of angst which hover above us. While, like the pandemic, the oeuvre continues, a kind of poetic diary of 2020 appeared as *Our Pandemic Zeitgeist*, Ginninderra Press, 2020.

3. Habitually I am an expressionist portrait painter of populist political leaders - a flow-on from my academic research. Now, I have picked up the brush to explore the stress of the pandemic in one specific painting, and to fly away through two different escapes:

One, Eucalyptus Dreaming, paintings of blue gums and flowering gums, and, unusually;

Two, abstract escapes into bright fantasies of colour.

This paper tells those continuing pandemic era stories in words and pictures.

BIONOTE. Dr Stephen Alomes is a contemporary cultural historian and futurist, adjunct professor in the Globalism Research Centre at RMIT University, and author of *Australian Football: The People's Game 1958-2058*. He has expertise in globalisation of culture, and has conducted extensive research into the cultural significance of sporting and social events, including Halloween in France, Japan and Australia.



2. Montserrat Camps, Universitat de Barcelona

“What is in pandemics? How to face mortality as human fate: a literary approach”

ABSTRACT. Pandemics are caused by a disease that spreads quickly, is highly contagious and causes a great mortality in a short period. The consequence is terrible panic among the population, but at the core of it, the real fear is not the pandemic itself but the obvious statement of mortality as the unavoidable human fate. Denying pandemics is therefore a way to deny human mortality, as if denial and oblivion granted an eternal life. Literature through the ages has dealt with the issue, and has provided different solutions, from religion to science or social commitment, including lack of solidarity or aggressive reactions. This paper aims to look at different literary texts, from Antiquity to modern times, from the perspective of the acceptance or denial of death as the true epidemics for which there is no long-term solution, and its consequences in facing life in a time of disease. Cyprian of Cartago in his text “De mortalitate” exhorts to a moral life, and so does the Hebrew Talmud, facing death as human destiny and therefore stressing the need for a conscious moral life. In other authors (like Chaucer and Hesse), the stress is on death itself as the unavoidable epidemic, where as in Poe and Ionesco among other authors all the efforts to escape Fate prove futile and useless. Some aggressive reactions to the current pandemics also reveal this ultimate denial of death itself as part of human life.

Les pandèmies són malalties que s'escampen ràpidament, són molt contagioses i causen una gran mortaldat en un breu període de temps. La conseqüència és un pànic terrible entre la població, però en el fons, l'autèntica por no és la pandèmia mateixa sinó la constatació evident de la mortalitat com a destí humà inevitable. La negació de la pandèmia, doncs, és una manera de negar la mortalitat humana, com si la negació i l'oblit garantissin una vida eterna. La literatura de totes les èpoques s'ha ocupat del tema i ha proporcionat solucions diferents, des de la religió a la ciència o al compromís social, passant per la falta de solidaritat o les reaccions agressives. Aquesta comunicació pretén llegir diferents textos literaris, des de l'antiguitat fins a l'època actual, des de la perspectiva de l'acceptació o la negació de la mort com a autèntica epidèmia per a la qual no hi ha cap solució a llarg termini, i de les conseqüències a l'hora d'afrontar la vida en època de malaltia. Cebrià de Cartago, en el seu text Sobre la mortaldat, exhorta a una vida moral, com ho fa també el Talmud hebreu, afrontant la mort com el destí humà i per tant subratllant la necessitat d'una vida moral conscient. Altres autors (Chaucer, Hesse) subratllen la mort mateixa com a epidèmia inevitable, mentre que per a Poe i Ionesco, entre d'altres, tots els esforços per evitar el destí es revelen vans i inútils. Algunes reaccions agressives a la pandèmia actual manifesten també aquesta negació, en darrer terme, de la mort com a part de la vida humana.



3. Dr. Josep Maria Campistol, Director General de l'Hospital Clínic (UB)

Pending title

BIONOTE. Josep Maria Campistol es el director general del Hospital Clínic de Barcelona desde enero de 2016. Es Licenciado en Medicina y Cirugía por la Universidad de Barcelona, especialista en nefrología y Doctor en Medicina. Ha sido director del Institut Clínic de Nefrología i Urología entre 2007 y 2014 y es profesor agregado de nefrología y miembro del staff de la Unitat de Transplantament Renal del Hospital Clínic, en la Universidad de Barcelona. Asimismo, Campistol es miembro de la junta editorial de las principales revistas internacionales en el área de trasplantes.

4. Alejandro Escobar-Vicent, UB

“Pandemia: ¿catástasis de nuestra epopeya y recta final hacia la catástrofe de la tragedia moderna o perpetuación del régimen que ya conocemos?” / “Pandemic: catastasis of our epic poem and the final stretch towards the catastrophe of modern tragedy or perpetuation of a regime that we already know?”

RESUM. Sobrevenida una situación que para muchos era inimaginable, nuestra tragedia humana se vio sacudida por la intensidad con que una peripecia irrumpió en escena, modificando de arriba a abajo, al parecer, el discurrir de la trama. La agitación de nuestras vidas cotidianas, inseparablemente amigadas con el frenesí de las urbes, se vio abruptamente cortada, hasta el punto de hacernos pensar a muchos que algo cambiaría drásticamente: que era el momento adecuado para la catarsis, porque un *Deus ex machina* nos habría dado una nueva oportunidad para enderezar el camino hacia nuestra redención, hacia una “nueva normalidad”.

La realidad de los hechos, no obstante, es siempre más esquiva, pertinaz y astuta que la raposa de Esopo: no es nuevo lo que experimentamos en nuestra cotidianeidad, no es distinta nuestra existencia ahora, como no son de naturaleza diferente los eventos que nos acaecen, por más esfuerzos que hacemos de figurárnoslos de las formas que mejor encubran nuestra indigencia ante la magnitud de los hechos.

Aquí defenderemos que los acontecimientos jurídico-políticos derivados de la pandemia, si han podido constituirse como causa de algún cambio en el discurrir de nuestras vidas en democracia, tan sólo han supuesto la catálisis de un largo proceso de desintegración de aquel mito democrático moderno, por el cual nos prometimos, una vez, un modo de vida sembrado en la dignidad humana y regado por gotitas de libertad. La sistemática y progresiva relativización del valor absoluto de los derechos fundamentales en nuestros regímenes democráticos es el producto de un largo camino de totalización del Estado, hasta el punto de convertirse en controlador total de la vida y administrador único de la democracia. El mito moderno está en vías de desaparición, para encaminarnos hacia otros mitos, aunque no sabemos cuán libertarios vayan a ser. Nuestra investigación



intentará demostrar este hecho.

ABSTRACT. Once a situation occurred that for many was unimaginable, our human tragedy was shaken by the intensity with which a peripety burst onto the scene, apparently modifying the course of the plot from top to bottom. The turmoil of our daily lives, inseparably attached to the frenzy of the cities, was abruptly cut off, to the point of making many of us think that something would drastically change: That it was the right time for catharsis, because a *Deusex machina* would have us given a new chance to straighten the path towards our redemption, towards a “new normal”.

The actuality, however, is always more elusive, persistent, and cunning than Aesop's vixen: what we experience in our daily lives is not new, our existence now is no different, asevents that happen to us are not of a different nature, no matter how much effort we make to figure them out in the ways that best conceal our indigence when facing it to the magnitude of the events. Here we will defend that the juridical and political events derived from the pandemic —if they have been able to constitute a cause of any change in the course of our lives in democracy— have only supposed the catalysis of a long process of disintegration of modern democracy myth, by which we promised ourselves, once, a way of life sown in human dignity and watered by droplets of freedom. The systematic and progressive relativization of the absolute value of fundamental rights in our democratic regimes is the product of a long path of totalization of the State, to the point of becoming the total controller of life and the sole administrator of democracy.

The modern myth is on the way to disappearing, to lead us towards other myths, although we do not know how libertarian they will be. Our investigation will attempt to demonstrate this fact.

5. Dr. Jose-Alfredo Gómez-Puerta

“The Rheumatology point of view”

ABSTRACT. The current pandemic affects many scenarios, including social, health, and economic sectors among others. As expected, people involved in health care suffered a big impact in their activities, including high stress to deal with the management of patients during different waves, as well as the different challenges to bring health care for all those patients with chronic disorders such as rheumatic diseases. I present here a pandemic perspective from a Rheumatology point of view, including the difficult days during the initial phases of the pandemic, the impact of COVID-19 over their diseases, as well as the results of vaccination in this particular group of patients with a higher risk of infection.

BIONOTE. Jefe del Servicio de Reumatología del Hospital Clínic de Barcelona, el Dr. Jose-Alfredo Gómez-Puerta es ex-fellow del *Servicio de Enfermedades Autoinmunes* del *Hospital Clínic* de Barcelona (1997-2012) y de la *Lupus Unit* del St.



Thomas' Hospital de Londres (2001), centros en los que realizó su tesis doctoral sobre el síndrome antifosfolípido, así como del *Brigham and Women's Hospital* de la *Harvard University* (2012-2014), donde realizó un Máster en Salud Pública. Desde el año 2014 desarrollaba su labor en el Grupo de Inmunología Celular e Inmunogenética (GICIC) y el grupo de Reumatología de la Universidad de Antioquia (Medellín, Colombia). Entre otros galardones, el Dr. Gómez-Puerta ha obtenido el premio Emilio Letang (2008) del Hospital Clínic de Barcelona al mejor residente de la promoción 2004-2008 y el premio Fernando Chalem a la Excelencia en Reumatología (2013) de la Asociación Colombiana de Reumatología.

6. Sergi Grau, Universitat de Barcelona - Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica

“Divergent stories? Old and current reactions to pandemic situations”/ “Relats divergents? Reaccions antigues i actuals a les situacions de pandèmia”

ABSTRACT. Although this virus is new, it is well known that this pandemic, in its medical characteristics, in its impact on the population and even in its social and economic repercussions, is nothing new: we know a long tradition of previous pandemics that have affected Western culture and left literary footprints over the centuries. The story of the pandemic, significantly, also has common features: the description of the symptoms, the response of the authorities, even the confinement of the population, are recurring, and help us to see the current situation with perspective.

There is, however, one differentiating factor on which I would like to draw attention in this presentation: the reaction of the majority of society, in the literary accounts of the pandemics of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, is always a moral upheaval that leads to the loss of religious and ethical values, to a reversal of the established order. In the current pandemic, quite differently, we have seen how the population mostly obeys, without much fuss, the guidelines, cumbersome and clearly contrary to collective freedom, of the authorities, and how civic values, far from weakening, have been even strengthened.

To clearly delineate an area that would be unapproachable in such an analysis, in this study we will mainly analyse the social reactions to the pandemics described by Thucydides (fifth century BC) and Procopius of Caesarea (sixth century AD), to contrast them with social reactions in the West during this pandemic, to try to draw conclusions about changes in social and human paradigm, but also, fundamentally, about the importance of storytelling for understanding and managing liminal experiences.

RESUM. Malgrat que aquest virus sigui nou, és prou sabut que aquesta pandèmia, en les seves característiques mèdiques, en el seu impacte en la població i fins i tot



en les seves repercussions socials i econòmiques, no és pas res de nou: coneixem una llarga tradició de pandèmies anteriors que han afectat la cultura occidental i han deixat petges literàries al llarg dels segles. El relat de la pandèmia, significativament, presenta també trets comuns: la descripció de la simptomatologia, la resposta de les autoritats, fins i tot el confinament de la població, hi són recurrents, i ens ajuden a veure la situació actual amb perspectiva.

Hi ha, tanmateix, un factor diferencial sobre el que voldria cridar l'atenció en aquesta comunicació: la reacció de la majoria de la societat, en els relats literaris de les pandèmies de l'Antiguitat i l'Edat Mitjana, és sempre la d'un daltabaix moral que du a la pèrdua de valors religiosos i ètics, a un capgirament de l'ordre establert. En la pandèmia actual, ben altrament, hem pogut constatar com la població obeeix majoritàriament les directrius, feixugues i clarament contràries a la llibertat col·lectiva, de les autoritats, sense gaires escarafalls, i com els valors cívics, lluny d'afeblir-se, s'han enfortit, fins i tot.

Per delimitar clarament un àmbit que seria inabordable en una anàlisi d'aquesta mena, en aquest estudi, analitzarem fonamentalment les reaccions socials a les pandèmies descrites per Tucídides (segle V aC) i Procopi de Cesarea (segle VI dC), per contrastar-les amb les reaccions socials a Occident durant aquesta pandèmia, per mirar d'extreure conclusions sobre canvis de paradigma social i humà, però també, fonamentalment, sobre la importància del relat per a la comprensió i per a la gestió de les experiències liminars.

BIONOTE. Professor lector de Filologia Grega a la Facultat de Filologia i Comunicació de la Universitat de Barcelona i investigador adscrit a l'Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica. Les seves línies de recerca se centren en els tòpics retòrics de la biografia grega antiga (especialment de la biografia de filòsofs, i en particular, de Diògenes Laerci), en la construcció de la imatge dels autors a través del gènere biogràfic i en les seves relacions amb altres gèneres, sobretot el drama antic i les hagiografies tardoantigues. S'ha dedicat també a estudis de filosofia "presocràtica" i de bizantinística, així com a l'edició i la traducció de diversos autors grecs antics.

Lecturer of Ancient Greek Philology at the Faculty of Philology and Communication of the University of Barcelona and affiliated researcher at the Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology. His lines of research focus on the rhetorical topics of ancient Greek biography (especially the biography of philosophers, and in particular, Diogenes Laertius), the construction of the image of authors through the biographical genre and its relations with other genres, including ancient drama and Late antique hagiographies. He has also devoted himself to the study of "pre-Socratic" philosophy and Byzantine studies, as well as to the edition and translation of various ancient Greek authors.



7. Jytte Holmqvist, HBU-UCLan School of Media, Communication & Creative Industries

“Pandemic as Polemic: Free Will in an Age of Restrictions”

ABSTRACT. Inserting the discourse within an existentialist framework, this Barcelona conference paper examines our current existence of interrupted realities through the lens of Kierkegaardian thoughts and likewise draws on Simone de Beauvoir’s highly pertinent take on life as we know it (or, from the perspective of our surrealist new COVID reality, “life as we didn’t know it”) as expressed in her brief 1947 “Qu’est-ce que l’existentialisme?” (first translated into English in *Philosophical Writings*). Our pandemic new (sur)reality of 2019-2021—and, no doubt, beyond—raises existential questions and concerns. As we find ourselves collectively crossing the threshold to an alternative realm, we face a both daunting, unnerving and downright horrifying parallel reality which is fascinating, strangely alluring and bewildering all at once. Operating under a revamped world order where our lifestyles only faintly resemble daily life in globalised western societies pre-COVID, we step away from materialism and urban hype and reassess what really matters. Nature has finally had a say, delivering its own powerful statement and forcing us to step up to an occasion that matters above all others. In the aftermath of a virus that continues to impact on our everyday lives, the ripple effects of the initial outbreak are felt on a both private and public level. As societies across the globe face continuous restrictions, what happens to free will? Beauvoir defines our *raison d’être* as the individual having reality “only through his engagement in the world”. If the parameters within which we now move have shifted to such an extent that we see our free will being infringed on until we lose our individual freedom, can we still talk of free will and how shall we engage with this all-pervasive, rule-changing pandemic “New Normal”?

BIONOTE. Dr Jytte Holmqvist is employed as a Consultancy Lecturer at HBU-UCLan School of Media, Communication & Creative Industries. She earned her PhD at University of Melbourne 2015 and has presented and chaired at conferences nationally and abroad. A published scholar and researcher with insights into film and media, arts, languages and the humanities, she is a Feature Writer for the *Segmento* magazine, an arts reviewer for the *bemelbourne* website, and has lifestyle reflections published in *Thrive Global*. She has interviewed scholars, filmmakers, singers and actors alike and is sole editor of the interdisciplinary volume *The Patient-Doctor Dynamics – Examining Current Trends in the Global Healthcare Sector*-based on a 2016 Oxford University conference. A certified translator, editor and proof reader, she enjoys film and theatre and texts that take us higher; emotionally interconnecting audiences across languages, histories and cultures.



8. Carol Leon, University of Malaysia

“Virus Colonialism: A Polemic on the Covid situation in Malaysia”

ABSTRACT. We are struggling to come to terms with what is a plague that is ripping our lives apart. Through all this, like educators the world over, I have had to go online to teach. Virtual classes are challenging and tiring on many fronts and it has been difficult for the students as well. This semester for my undergraduate postcolonial literature course, I gave my students a recent local publication, *The Lockdown Chronicles*, to overview. Dividing the class into small groups I asked them to put together a collage on a selection of stories from the book. There was minimum guidance from me; my only instruction was that they place these stories within the larger framework of the Malaysian context. The groups came up with interesting slides which showcased the ways in which the Covid-19 has disrupted, perhaps even changed forever, our daily lives. They saw the pandemic as “colonizing” our world, not only in terms of what it does to our bodies but also in the ways we now have to live. One group coined the word “virus colonialism” to reflect this reality.

In this paper, I would like to share the ideas of my students and explore how this pandemic has also compelled us to review our past. Certainly, the pandemic has colonized the world but interestingly, it has exposed certain limitations and deficiencies in Malaysian governance and systems which have been in existence before the pandemic

BIONOTE. Carol Leon is Associate Professor of English at The University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She obtained her doctoral degree from the Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. Her book entitled *Movement and Belonging: Lines, Places and Spaces of Travel* which offers what she considers an “ethical” way of travelling was published by Peter Lang, NY. Her areas of research are diaspora, travel, postcolonial theory and literature as well as Malaysian Literature in English. She has published in various international and local journals in these areas of research and has presented at many conferences both within and outside the country.

9. Laura Llevadot y Javier Bassas, Universitat de Barcelona

“PANDÉMIK: perspectivas de política posfundacional”

RESUM. Nuestra propuesta consiste, primero, en presentar de manera general el libro colectivo que hemos editado, titulado [*Pandémik. Perspectivas posfundacionales sobre contagio, virus y confinamiento*](#) (Ned ediciones, 2021). Un libro surgido al calor de la pandemia, de sus miedos y sus polémicas, y escrito por



algunas de las voces más profundas y críticas del panorama de pensamiento catalán e hispanófono.

Seguidamente, Laura Llevadot y Javier Bassas presentarán las hipótesis más polémicas de la presentación que han redactado conjuntamente y de los artículos que ellxs mismxs han escrito en dicho volumen. Por una parte, Llevadot denunciará cómo la reconversión actual de neoliberalismo necesita la confluencia de un Estado autoritario. Por otra, Bassas incidirá en las políticas temporales de esa reconversión del neoliberalismo que la pandemia ha puesto de manifiesto: la urgencia vs. la indeterminación.

Lo que ambxs ponen en evidencia es la comprensión crítica de la pandemia, y su horizonte represor o emancipador.

BIONOTES.

Laura Llevadot es profesora titular de Filosofía Contemporánea de la Universidad de Barcelona. Dirige el Máster de Pensamiento Contemporáneo y Tradición clásica en la misma universidad. Es también investigadora asociada del "Laboratoire d'études et de Recherches sur les Logiques Contemporaines de la Philosophie" (Paris VIII). Fue directora e impulsora del Festival e Filosofía «Barcelona Pensa». Especialista en el pensamiento de Derrida, Kierkegaard y el pensamiento francés contemporáneo, dirige actualmente la colección de «Pensamiento político posfundacional» (Gedisa), en la que ha publicado recientemente: "Jacques Derrida: Democracia y soberanía" (Gedisa, 2020).

Xavier Bassas es filósofo, traductor y editor. Doctor en Lengua francesa y Filosofía por la Universidad de la Sorbona-París IV y la Universidad de Barcelona, donde trabaja como docente de Estudios franceses. Especializado en el pensamiento y la escritura de Jean-Luc Marion, Jacques Derrida y Jacques Rancière, de los que ha traducido numerosos libros. Recientemente, ha escrito *Jacques Rancière. Ensayar la igualdad* (Gedisa, 2019) y también *El litigio de las palabras*, un diálogo sobre la política del lenguaje con el mismo Jacques Rancière (NED, 2019).

10. Martin Renes, Universitat de Barcelona

“Echoes of ‘The Waste Land’: the Corona pandemic, Division and Fragmentation of Europe’s Post-war Transnational Space”

ABSTRACT. TS Eliot’s famous Modernist poem “The Waste Land” (1922) has become one of the main expressions of fragmentation and dissolution of a—Western—world fallen to pieces as a result of the brutalities of the First World War. While traditional Humanist literary criticism has read the poem as the expression of a universal human condition, Eliot’s poem cannot be properly understood without its socio-historical context although it was long read in a detached, essentialist, and universalist way. Recent criticism has not only



highlighted the presence of the Great War in “The Waste Land”’s desolate lines but also, arguably, of the Spanish Flu pandemic (1918-1920), which took over from the Great War and significantly increased the latter’s final impact. The flu virus initially spread from American army camps to the war trenches and civil society, eventually killing between 20 to 100 million people worldwide, that is, with an average of 60,000 mortal victims or three times higher than the estimated number of deaths caused by WWI. Indeed, the excessive death toll caused by the Spanish Flu on and away from the European battlefields exactly a century ago should sensitise us to the consequences of the current Corona/Covid-19 pandemic. It tests our capacity for solidarity, justice and inclusion in a scenario that insists on Othering and nationalist hate, fear and intolerance in an increasingly divided European continent which is not alien to the racist, colonial tensions that led us to the death and destruction of the Great War, though we may ignore this link. This paper seeks to read “The Waste Land” against the Covid-19 pandemic and establish the poem’s contemporaneity in terms of its engagement with cultural difference.

BIONOTE. Martin Renes, PhD, Associate Professor for English Studies at the University of Barcelona, Spain, specialises in postcolonial literatures from Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. As co-director of the Australian and Transnational Studies Centre (CEAT), he is involved in a wide range of academic activities and initiatives, including editing of the Centre’s online journal Coolabah. He is a member of the Spanish Ministerial Project “Literatura en la era transmoderna: Celebración, límites y transgresión” (University of Zaragoza). He was the chair of the European Association for Studies of Australia (EASA) from 2015 to 2019.

11. Andrea Ruiz Cirlot, Universitat de Barcelona

“El efecto de la Covid-19 en la enseñanza del inglés para los negocios” / “The consequence of the Covid-19 in the teaching of English for Business”

RESUM. Desde mi experiencia como profesora de inglés para los negocios en la Facultad de Economía y Empresa de la Universidad de Barcelona compararé el curso académico 2019-2020 que fue de carácter presencial hasta el mes de marzo de 2020, con el curso académico 2020-2021 que fue *online* debido al efecto de la epidemia mundial provocada por la Covid-19. Fijaré las ventajas y los inconvenientes que he percibido en este cambio del modo presencial al modo *online*, por si de algún modo dicho cambio vislumbra de cara al futuro un giro en el modo de realizarse la enseñanza universitaria. Esta experiencia comparativa afecta tanto a la comunicación profesor-alumno como a la realización de los exámenes, las tareas (por ejemplo los Estudios de Caso), las presentaciones orales y los ejercicios prácticos. Todo ello se comentará tanto desde el punto de vista del docente como desde el punto de vista del alumnado. En el primer caso, me serviré



de mi experiencia y de mis conversaciones con colegas, y para el segundo caso realizaré una serie de encuestas para fijar la posición de los alumnos ante la posibilidad de que la enseñanza del inglés para los negocios derive hacia un uso exclusivo del modo *online*.

Con esta aportación quiero contribuir al actual debate de la transformación pedagógica que supone la fusión de la enseñanza presencial con siglos de existencia con la enseñanza *online* tan activa en los meses de la epidemia. En ese sentido, fijaré las claves de si son compatibles, por tanto fusionables y complementarios los dos modos de enseñanza; o si, por el contrario, en los próximos años entraremos en un debate que exigirá determinar en qué cursos se aplicará la enseñanza presencial, la enseñanza *online* o una fusión de ambas. Y qué opinión tienen de ello las partes más intensamente implicadas, los profesores y los alumnos.

ABSTRACT. From my experience as a lecturer of English for Business at the Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of Barcelona, I will compare the academic course 2019-2020 that was face-to-face nature until March 2020 with the academic course 2020-21 that was online due to the effect of the worldwide pandemic caused by the Covid-19. I will set the advantages and disadvantages that I perceived in this change from face-to-face mode to online mode, in case that change somehow glimpse for the future a turn of how to execute teaching at university. This comparative experience affects not only the communication learner-professor but also the performance of exams, tasks (such as Case Studies), oral presentations and practical exercises. All this will be remarked both from the perspective of the professor and from the perspective of the learners. For the first case, I will use my experience and the conversations with my colleagues, and for the second case I will conduct surveys to determine the position of the learners given the possibility that the teaching English for Business will lead to an exclusive use of the online mode.

With this contribution I would like to contribute to the current debate of the pedagogical transformation, which involves merging the face-to-face teaching that has existed for centuries with the online teaching that has been so active during the months of the pandemic. In this respect, I will set the key points of whether the two modes of teaching are compatible, therefore mergeable and complementary; or if, on the other hand, in the coming years we will enter into a debate that will require determining in which courses face-to-face teaching will be applied, in which online teaching will be applied or if a merger of both will be applied. And finally I will determine what opinions do learners and professors, the most intensely involved parts, have.

BIONOTE. Andrea Ruiz Cirlot was born in Barcelona, May 22nd 1992. She graduated in English Studies at the University of Barcelona, and undertook the Master of Teacher Training in Secondary Education, High School and Official



Language School with a major in English. She is a doctorand of the Doctoral Program *Translation and Language Sciences* at the University of Pompeu Fabra. She is a lecturer of English for Business at the Economics and Business Faculty from the University of Barcelona. She is the author of a poetry book called *El amor, la vida y las estaciones* (Barcelona, Mondo Escrito Ediciones, 2018). Besides, she is the translator to Spanish of *The Shortest History of Europe* by John Hirst (Barcelona, RBA, 2015).

12. Catalina Wajs Tauscher, Universidad de Zaragoza

“How can tradition, myth and folklore help us (better) understand the covid 19 pandemic”

During the third year of my doctoral thesis investigation, which is devoted to the exploration of the presence and role of folklore in a selection of contemporary Irish novels, Covid 19 burst into our lives, Throughout these last months, I found out that some scientists have expressed ideas regarding the pandemic which have interesting points in common with notions and thoughts that I am studying and analyzing in the research process towards my dissertation.

The present exposition explores these points, with the intention of offering evidence that cultural and social issues related to tradition, myth and folklore can be meaningful in our contemporary times, even in the present extraordinary circumstances which depend so much on science and technology. The issues which will be explored are the human need to combine science with magic and ritual, including the importance of proper burial rites, the infected person as an example of Mary Douglas’ pollution, the liminal aspect of Covid lockdown, the changing perception of the concepts of inside/outside in Covid times, or the meaning of the concept of resilience.

The exposition is based on the work of scientists and cultural theorists like Patrick Brown, Andy Alaszewski, Agustin Fuentes, Mary Douglas, Sarah Ahmed or Ana María Fraile-Marcos.

BIONOTE. Catalina Wajs Tauscher worked in Israel in the field of education and was awarded a B.A. degree in English Literature by the Tel Aviv University, and in 2017 a second B.A degree and a Master degree in English Literature by the Open University in London. She is currently a graduate student at the University of Zaragoza working on a PhD dissertation on the presence and function/s of folklore in four contemporary Irish novels. So far, she has taken several courses on the Irish novel, has attended different seminars and conferences and has presented two papers based on her research: one at the Seing graduate Seminar at the University



of Zaragoza in April 2019 and another one at the XVIII AEDEI International Conference (University of the Balearic Islands, May 2019).

13. Nahum Welang, University of Bergen

“Scientific Facts and Literary Truths: Examining the Role of Literature in Pandemic Narratology”

The Covid-19 pandemic dramatically upended knowledge systems about the functionality of contemporary life. The widespread reach of the coronavirus contagion, its mysterious origins and its impact on human life, both physical and emotional, has triggered and sustained passionate debates about economic inequity, access to healthcare, scientific skepticism, climate change and environmental degradation, deteriorating democratic structures etc.

Although scientific facts about preventative measures (wearing masks, washing hands, social distancing etc.) and the rapid development of effective vaccines reemphasized, for many, the indispensability of science, others are rebelling against these measures and inoculations, pointing to the loss of their personal freedoms and exposing a deep distrust for macro governmental structures and pharmaceutical corporations. This tension is epitomized in the global popularity of and contradictory reactions to epidemiologists like Dr. Anthony Fauci (USA) and Dr. Anders Tegnell (Sweden). Both men, arguably loved and hated in equal measure, represent the polarizing nature of science in a post-fact era, which seems intent on peddling conspiracy theorists and debunking common sense.

In my presentation, I argue that literary texts can nuance scientific narratives on pandemics by addressing the complexity of truths. Although published more than a century ago, Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague* (1912), for example, captures the same panic, chaos and distrust in science we are witnessing during the Covid-19 crisis. Moreover, in Josep Pla's *The Gray Notebook*, set in the backdrop of the 1918 flu pandemic, we witness familiar scenes of denial about the severity of the contagion. Both texts reveal and examine an uncomfortable truth: the innate and recurrent human paranoia of pandemics. Thus, by seeking to understand the complicated nature and implications of this paranoia, literary texts can positively influence scientific pandemic narratology. The complexity of literary truths, I argue, validates our primal fears and initiates a more demonstrative dialogue on survival and science.

BIONOTE. Nahum Welang is Research Fellow in American Literature and Culture at the University of Bergen in Norway, and he is currently a Visiting Fellow at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies (Freie Universität Berlin). His research interests include early to mid-twentieth century American literature, film noir, literature



and pandemics, popular culture and travel narratives. His work has been published in journals like *The Journal of Popular Culture* and *Open Cultural Studies*.

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REGISTRATION AND FORMAT

The seminar will be free of charge and held **online** on Thursday 4 and Friday 5 November. Nevertheless, registration at ceatubenrolment@gmail.com is mandatory in order to attend. Information updates and links for the Seminar will be sent to all registered participants. Delegates may deliver their papers in English, Catalan or Spanish. Please note that **no** translation will be provided.

For further information contact us at ceatubmissions@gmail.com

Scientific committee: Dr. Isabel Alonso Breto, Dr. Montserrat Camps-Gaset, Dr. Maria Grau-Perejoan, and Dr. Martin Renes.



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