

Sharing Critical Testimonies of Wellness in Times of Crisis

Abstracts &
Bios

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Abstracts

- **Name:** Despoina N. Feleki

Title: Testimonies of Wellness in a COVID-19 Period: Turning Grief into Creation

Abstract: As we are experiencing the implications of the fourth wave of COVID-19 on physical as well as mental injury, news about death, illness, and loss keeps monopolizing our daily information intake, not to mention our media interaction. Reacting against the ills and the discourse of the pandemic, in this presentation paper, I choose to investigate a selection of contemporary testimonies of wellness that pose as a healthy response to the realities of confinement and to the anxiety of death at this particular time, confirming a denial of shutting down and accepting the inevitable. I will be studying work coming from three exemplar writers and cultural activists, from American Nigerian Teju Cole, Nigerian Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and American Amanda Gorman, in which they address the power of loss that leads to resilience, recovery, and rebirth. Narrating one's painful experience feels like "[a] new urgency. An impermanence in the air," notes Adichie in her latest *Notes on Grief* (27). Through photography, poetic and non-fiction writing, they suggest their creative way of documenting life and prioritize the need to turn pain into solidarity. When dark times can seem to be turning darker, philosophy, photography, and writing may encompass a therapeutic post-traumatic effect. Thus, I will be looking at different forms of creative impulses via various media, studying their relation to time at times of grievance and depression, hoping to trace the possible implications of a crisis of narration and representation when dealing with the COVID-19 crisis.

- **Name:** Zafiris Nikitas

Title: Towards a Medical Theatre: Staging Breast Cancer Trilogy by Catalina Florina Florescu

Abstract: In *Staging Breast Cancer Trilogy*, Catalina Florina Florescu explores the maladies and reinvigoration of the body through three plays: *Mia*, *Snowdrops and Chlorine* and *Cancer, Choreographed*. The playwright, a Professor at Pace University in New York, who holds a PhD in Medical Humanities, brings into focus a topic that is often overlooked in modern theatre; that is, the challenges of the body (and psyche) under the distress of illness. In *Mia*, Florescu explores themes of health and illness through the female gaze and places the emphasis on relationships, femininity, and fertility. However, in the second play, *Snowdrops and Chlorine*, she brings into focus—unexpectedly—the male gaze and looks into a male breast cancer. In this way, she chooses to (de-)localize the subject of cancer and investigate the burden of the diagnosis and the possibilities of healing in both sexes and expand our outlook on the disease. The third play, *Cancer, Choreographed*, concludes her "anatomy" of cancer within the context of fictional testimonials on manifestations of wellness and demise. In these plays, Florescu expands the Feminist Theatre on cancer that has risen these past

decades in the U.S.A. As I argue in my paper, the writer moves towards a “Medical Theatre” that projects the disruptions of health and illness.

- **Name:** George Vasilikaris

Title: The Aesthetics of Grief: Exploring Sorrow in the Paradigm of *Gris*

Abstract: Ever since their early days, videogames have monopolized the attention of the audiences, providing unique and unprecedented experiences to gamers all around the globe. Despite their fierce critics and the arguably contested space they occupy in public perception, videogames have managed to enter the mainstream media and establish themselves as one of the prime methods of storytelling. Their functions, however, do not limit themselves to entertainment contexts, since they are often used in medicine to help the patients cope with long-term hospitalization (such as the GO Karts from Gamer’s Outreach); detect the risk of dementia (*Sea Hero Quest*, 2016); as well as raise awareness about mental illness and communicate to the wider audience the feeling and struggles of everyday living (*Depression Quest*, 2013; *Before I Forget*, 2020). This presentation will explore the aesthetics of grief, sorrow, and how someone can cope with them by analyzing the award-winning videogame *Gris*, which was developed by Nomada Studio and released by Devolver Digital in 2018. *Gris* tells the story of an unnamed protagonist, who must come to terms with her loss, embrace her emotions, and overcome sorrow to build her shattered world anew, coursing through the five stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance), as introduced by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her book *On Death and Dying* (1969). Although the function of color and music in the game will remain the primary focus of the presentation, more concepts will be introduced regarding the gameplay, ludo, and how they intertwine to resonate with the players, allowing them to reflect on their personal struggles and, potentially, overcome them via a virtual healing experience.

- **Name:** Stavroula (Stave) Vergopoulou

Title: Advertising, Translation, and Gender: Testimonies of Pseudo-Wellness, Translational Dead Ends, and the Struggle for Equality

Abstract:

Within the context of advertising, translation, and gender, this study examines three interrelated issues: testimonies of pseudo-wellness in audiovisual advertising (commercials), gender-related dead ends in the translation of commercials, and the struggle for gender equality in which both translators and consumers may engage in different ways. To begin, commercials—which are, in fact, mediated fictional data—frequently offer narratives that serve as testimonies of wellness achieved through the use of a product. According to some of these narratives, the viewer should eat the promoted snack to instantly increase their energy level, take the promoted medicine to get healthy, or use the promoted face cream to delay the aging process; in other

words, they should buy the promoted product to *feel better*. However, the fact that these “testimonies” are constructed for the purposes of the commercial and given by paid actors (characters) raises the following question: Although wellness is promised, is it actually realized? Apart from the issue of individual wellness, this paper will explore how commercials can contribute to societal unwellness through discriminatory representations of gender. To this end, television commercials from 2010–15 promoting the chocolate bar *SNICKERS* will be presented as an example of advertising from one of the largest private companies in the United States (Mars, Incorporated). An analysis of the original English commercials as well as their German and Greek translations demonstrates the dead ends to which translators of commercials may often be led when dealing with themes of gender. This being the case, (how) can a feminist translator fight against (often subtly) sexist advertising that threatens the well-being of society? Finally, how can consumers utilize the tools of media literacy and advertising literacy to navigate and mitigate the ongoing social crisis of gender inequality?

- **Names:** Antony Castet and Constantine Chatzipapatheodoridis

Title: Moving from Trauma to Healing: Finding Pathways to LGBTQ+ Resilience

Abstract: In the post-Stonewall era, America’s LGBTQ+ movement has made strides in the domains of civil rights and cultural visibility. Yet, the history of the community, which is already burdened with narratives of discrimination, bigotry, and violence, and which is still in the making, has certainly not been unperturbed by world crises. Most recently, COVID-19 has thrown conventional modes of social interaction into question with queer groups experiencing the pandemic rather uniquely, as, according to a Humans Rights Campaign survey, access to healthcare and financial stability were chief concerns, especially for the most vulnerable groups within the LGBTQ+ umbrella.¹ Arguably, queer people facing the challenge of COVID-19 rakes over the ashes of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, a communal trepidation that inevitably led to a renegotiation of queer relationships and whose social stigma is yet to be entirely exorcized. For what it’s worth, in those times of crisis, the community was quick to strategize and actively campaign for improvements in the departments of health and law. At the same time, cultural output in the form of literature and drama, among other fields, produced numerous testimonies of tragedy and trauma, but also healing and resilience. These testimonies that have shaped American queer history alongside other topics and narratives that pose novel challenges for today’s communities are what the LGBTQ+ Studies Network seeks to explore further with a roundtable discussion that will also focus on the character and objectives of the Network.

¹ HRC’s detailed survey: <https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/files/documents/COVID-Vaccines-Brief-030821.pdf?mtime=20210308082122&focal=none>.

- **Name:** Isabel Marqués López

Title: Writing Rape after the #MeToo Movement: Resilience, Resistance and Community in Post-2017 Rape Memoirs

Abstract: This presentation explores the pursuit of wellness after sexual trauma in two memoirs published by rape survivors after the #MeToo movement: Lucia Osborne-Crowley's *I Choose Elena* (2019) and Catriona Morton's *The Way We Survive* (2021). It has long been argued that testimony has both therapeutic and political implications. Through the act of storytelling, survivors can restore their sense of agency by constructing a story that helps them reintegrate themselves in a sympathetic community (Henke); additionally, those affected by structural forms of violence can contest the dominant narratives that perpetuate abuse, ultimately vindicating political recognition for their communities (Herman). As a public testimonial moment, the #MeToo movement has provided survivors of sexual violence with a public space to narrate their experience, against the "double victimization" implied in the stigma of doubt and victim-blaming (Gilmore). Although mainstream media discourses on #MeToo often privilege individualist narratives of violence and personal retaliation (Rottenberg), the movement has encouraged a collectivist, survivor-centred approach, in line with the original project of its founder Tarana Burke. In mobilizing solidarity and empathy towards survivors (Page and Arcy), #MeToo has also interrogated prevailing depictions of rape as an extraordinary, self-shattering event, focusing on the ordinary, conflicted process of healing, and the impact of contingent experiences of violence and pain (Serisier). In this sense, a number of post-#MeToo memoirs, in the manner of "autopathographies," explore personal experiences of recovery and resilience, considering the aftermath of trauma and the pursuit of wellness as two constitutive parts of the survivor's life (Couser). As I argue, Osborne-Crowley and Morton contest conventional narratives of victimhood by addressing the everyday aspects of survival and examining the impact of experiences of aggression and illness derived from trauma. In so doing, they advocate resilience, solidarity, and care, in response to the inadequate interventions of cultural, medical, and judicial institutions.

- **Name:** Kalliopi Fragkouli

Title: Writing Correspondence as a Means of Healing and Reconciliation in Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019)

Abstract: Published in 2019, Ocean Vuong's novel delves into the efforts of a young Asian American man, named Little Dog, to make amends with his mother by writing a letter to her and revealing hidden truths about their turbulent relationship, his sexuality, and the dysfunctionality of their family. Coming from the epicenter of the Vietnam war, his familial environment is flawed by his grandmother's PTSD, and his mother's frustration deriving from racial discrimination in America, which is often targeted towards her shy, defenseless, and frequently victimized by bullies at school son. Since his Vietnamese mother cannot read English, it is clearly understood that Little Dog writes this letter more as a journal in order to heal, come to terms with, and reflect on

several past experiences himself. As Michele Weldon claims in her book *Writing to Save Your Life*, "[t]he therapy of writing is not only medicine for the soul but also a microscope to analyze intellectually and creatively your role in the world" (2). Little Dog believes that "the past [is] never a fixed and dormant landscape but one that is re-seen" (28), and, in his letter, he attempts to revisit, relive, and re-imagine his life in order to move past his personal crises, including his struggle for self-acceptance, his mother's abusive behavior, the sudden death of his first love and sexual partner, Trevor, as well as the loss of his beloved, yet mentally ill, grandmother. In my paper, I aim to present Little Dog's process of healing, and his efforts to accept his ethnic and sexual identity, as he tries to pinpoint the moments that briefly brightened his life and convinced him that, after all, life is actually worth living.

- **Names:** Panteleimon Tsiokos

Title: Of Historical Amnesia and National (un)Wellness in Octavia E. Butler's *Kindred* (1979)

Abstract: Throughout history, there has been serious critique on the formation of the United States as an erasure of the raw facts of slavery. Additionally, heated discussion over what constituted American history seems to continue well into the 21st century, with a series of scholars pursuing the study of African American historical sources to create more inclusive models of memory. It is for this reason that Octavia E. Butler sets her story during the bicentennial celebration of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence of the United States, in 1976, to suggest that the nation should review its history in order to resolve its continuous racial strife. In my paper, I will explore how the erasure and/or misrepresentation of U.S. past has been convenient for white Americans and severely hurtful for African Americans, resulting in a well-constructed societal unwellness. In my exploration, I will discuss how Butler's narrative testifies to the diachronic struggle of African Americans for self-identification and social justice impacts the black collective psyche and how this struggle is the derivative of national systematic and systemic violence against people of color. Lastly, I will conclude that *Kindred* does not constitute yet another documentation, and critique, of the U.S. history but serves as a literary and historical, reparative attempt for American wellness.

- **Name:** Chadha Brahem

Title: From Self to Cultural Recovery: The Power of Stories in Leslie Silko's Testimonial Writings

Abstract: As a native American activist and writer, Leslie Marmon Silko has produced a set of testimonial narratives in which she exposes her most significant memories and her people's traumatic experiences. Through her stories, Silko calls for the reclamation of the Native American land and heritage. She speaks against the Euro-American

settler's oppression and exploitation of her people. Silko chooses to testify for the voiceless and the subaltern. By telling the stories of survival, Silko commemorates the victims and revives the Laguna Pueblo language, myths, and ceremonies. Therefore, this presentation aims to study Silko's stylistic, thematic, and linguistic techniques used to criticize the colonial discourse in her *Storyteller* and *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*. The present work attempts to examine the lived experiences of Silko, as an eyewitness, through the stories she tells. It is through an exploration of Silko's resistant narrative acts that the study of the passage from self to cultural recovery will take place. There will be an exploration of the ways Silko seeks internal and communal recovery. First, I will examine what makes the works under study testimonial writings. Second, I will highlight Silko's metafictional and self-conscious writing that makes her testimonies a counter-narrative. I will explore the way Silko critically challenges grand-narratives, revisits, and deconstructs them from her own perspective. Finally, because Silko seems in a constant quest for grasping and exposing her ambivalent and fluid identity, I suggest scrutinizing her stories as mirrors of the self. Stories represent unlimited sources of self-knowledge and cultural heritage. They contribute to identity formation and identification, and, therefore, cultural recovery. That is why I will conclude with Silko's quest for self-identification through a comparative reading between her recovering self and her empowered yellow woman characters.

▪ **Name:** Maria (Mariza) Tzouni

Title: Don't Keep Your Distance: Challenges and Opportunities in Pursuing a PhD Degree from Home

Abstract: The decision to apply for, undertake, and finally submit and defend a PhD is challenging in itself; one that any aspiring young scholar should contemplate carefully before engaging in PhD studies. The task might become even more complicated when the PhD candidate is based away from their affiliated institution. The thought of being away from your mentors, the convenience that the libraries procure, and the welcoming ambience one might be experiencing when found among faculty members and/or other fellow candidates and academic friends often overwhelms PhD candidates and may even deter some from pursuing their dream. However scary the first stages might be, things are not that bad when compared to the gains a scholar accumulates in the long run. In this roundtable, the purpose is to initiate a discussion among candidates, PhD holders, and early-career researchers that will allow young scholars to perceive distant-PhD research as a fertile ground of new opportunities. Initially, practical information will be provided on mentorship, organizing space, time, and material, maintaining psychological, mental, and physical balance, prioritizing health and well-being in times of crisis/es, in order for this quest to be become as uncomplicated as possible. Next, young scholars will be invited to share their own views on the matter, especially when dealing with a reality that, owing to the COVID-19

pandemic, has rendered distant-learning and distant-researching inevitable for some of us. More specifically, they will be able to share their concerns as deriving both from personal and social experiences; comment on the challenges that might emerge during the studies as well as on the opportunities presented; and offer vital suggestions as to how PhD research can flourish in this demanding context.

- **Names:** Anna Gkouva, Ourania Zygouri, and Chara Triantafyllidou

Title: Smooth Sailing Through a Postgraduate Thesis? Why Not?

Abstract: The purpose of this workshop is to provide advisory assistance to (prospective) postgraduate students who are in the process of writing their dissertation or who will need to write a dissertation in the near future. In recent years, and especially during the ongoing global pandemic, there have been multiple discussions regarding the emotional component of writing a thesis on academic social media, e.g. Twitter and Facebook groups. The main narrative in this context is that thesis writing causes negative feelings, such as distress, disappointment, and self-doubt (impostor syndrome). In order to crowdsource anonymous responses on this matter, we have deployed a survey on PollEverywhere and we will present and discuss our findings along with the relevant literature.

Therefore, this workshop aims at fulfilling four main objectives:

- To present crowdsourcing findings on the emotions and perceptions of the thesis writing process.
- To guide students in their selection of sources on the basis of scientific criteria.
- To assist students in organizing their bibliography.
- To encourage students to achieve a work and life balance by managing their sources and literature review.

The workshop will be divided into two sections, the pre-downloading and the post-downloading stage. It will introduce useful tools and applications that facilitate the thesis writing process, ranging from reference managers to automatically updated bibliography search engines. Our approach, since it comes from our experience as postgraduate students, will primarily be supportive and will mainly aim at relieving the students from stress and confusion they may experience during the—admittedly chaotic—process of compiling a literature review. Therefore, the workshop will be followed by a discussion where young scholars will be given the space to share their concerns and struggles and discuss them in the setting of an informal focus group.

Biographical Notes

Despoina N. Feleki is Postdoctoral Researcher in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, and appointed School Educator. She completed her MA studies in European Literature and Culture and her PhD in Contemporary American Literature and Culture (AUTH). As a Fulbright Scholar, she has been awarded educational and travel grants. Feleki teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses and organizes workshops on fiction and pedagogy, focusing on the intersections between textuality and digitality, and on how these affect literary and educational practices. Her research interests include Contemporary Anglophone Literature, World Literature, Popular Culture, Fandom, and Videogame Studies. Feleki is a member of the Multimodal Reading and Research Group (AUTH), served as the Young Scholar Representative of the Hellenic Association for American Studies (HELAAS) (2014–18) and is currently its Treasurer (2019–23). Her monograph, *Stephen King in the New Millennium: Gothic Mediations on New Writing Materialities*, was out by Cambridge Scholars Publishing in 2018. She is the co-editor of the Special Issue of the HELAAS *ExNa* journal “Popular Culture in a New Media Age: Trends and Transitions” (2020). Other published articles appear in *WiN*, *GRAMMA: Journal of Theory and Criticism: Digital Literary Production and the Humanities* (AUTH), *Writing Technologies* (Nottingham Trent University), and *Authorship* (University of Ghent).

Zafiris Nikitas teaches theatre at the Theatre Department of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and holds a PhD in Theatre Studies. He studied Law and Theatre at the Aristotle University completing graduate and postgraduate studies in both disciplines. His scientific interests focus on the “cultural poetics” of American and European Theatre, as well as Minority Theatre. For his dissertation, he received an Excellence Grant by the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation after being ranked first in Humanities at the Aristotle University. He has published articles in international and Greek peer-reviewed journals, and he has participated in multiple conferences organized by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Frei Universität Berlin, Sapienza Università di Roma, etc. He takes part in the research project “Audience Research in Performances of Ancient Drama.” His first monograph, *Representing the Nation: The Dramaturgy of Jannis Kambysis*, is under publication. Lastly, he has published three literature books and one translation in collaboration with the Professor of Aristotle University and recipient of the Award of Academy of Athens for 2021 Dimitrios Z. Nikitas.

George Vasilikaris holds a BA in English Language and Literature from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, where he also pursued his postgraduate studies, obtaining an MA in Translation and Conference Interpreting. Fascinated by intricate storytelling, he always wanted to find a way to implement his passion for video games in his studies and research the endless possibilities they provide, as well as their immense impact on pop-culture. A literature enthusiast, video game critic, localization specialist, and avid gamer, who would like to find a way to combine all his interests and bring games to the forefront of academic studies.

Stavroula (Stave) Vergopoulou is a PhD candidate in the Department of Translation and Intercultural Studies at the School of English, AUTH. Her PhD research, which addresses translation, gender, and advertising, is funded by the Board of Greek State Scholarships Foundation (IKY). Vergopoulou earned her BA (Hons) in English Language and Literature from AUTH and her MA in Translation from Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, graduating with high honors on both occasions. For her postgraduate studies, she received a scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). From 2018 to 2020, she also taught in undergraduate courses at the School of English, AUTH.

Isabel Fernandes (PhD–1988; Habilitation–2007) has recently retired from her position as Full Professor from the Department of English Studies, School of Arts and Humanities, University of Lisbon. She created and coordinates the international and interdisciplinary Programme on Narrative & Medicine since 2009, known as Project in Medical Humanities, from 2018 onwards. She is PI (Principal Investigator) of SHARE – Saúde e Humanidades Actuando em REde/Health and Humanities Acting Together, funded by FCT (June 2018–June 2021). She has published extensively in the fields of her expertise, namely, English Literature, Narratology, Inter-art Studies, and, more recently, Narrative Medicine. Among her more recent publications are the following books: *Olhar a Escrita: Para uma Introdução ao Estudo da Literatura na Universidade* (2005), *Critical Dialogues: Slow Readings of English Literary Texts* (2011), *Literatura: a (in)disciplina na intersecção dos saberes e das artes* (2011). She coordinated and coedited the following volumes: *Creative Dialogues: Narrative and Medicine* (2015) and *Contar (com) a Medicina* (first published in 2015; revised and extended editions in 2016 and 2018).

Aikaterini Delikonstantinidou holds a PhD in Theatre Studies from the School of English, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She has recently completed her postdoctoral research, which focuses on applications of myth-based digital theatre in adult education settings at the Department of Theatre Studies, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. She works as adjunct lecturer at the Department of English Language and Literature in the same institution. Her first monograph, *Latinx Reception of Greek Tragic Myth: Healing and Radical Politics* was published by Peter Lang in 2020. Her research interests include theatre and performing arts, myth's (multi/transmedia) reception, education, and the digital paradigm.

Anthony Castet is an associate professor of American studies at Tours University. He is a specialist in LGBTQ+ issues in the fields of history, politics, and civil rights. His research focuses on contemporary culture wars and their impact on American democracy; the legal treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans; same-sex parenting; and the intersections between politics, religion, and civil rights, especially with respect to LGBTQ+ Americans.

Constantine Chatzipapatheodoridis, Fulbright alumnus, holds a doctorate degree from the School of English, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. His fields of research activity include LGBTQ+ Studies, Performance Studies, and Visual Arts Studies. His first publication, titled *The Music Diva Spectacle: Camp, Female Performer and Queer Audiences in the Arena Tour Show* (Intellect, 2021), focuses on the praxis of camp in

contemporary music diva spectacles. He is currently studying and practicing art at the School of Visual and Applied Arts, Aristotle University.

Isabel Marqués López is a predoctoral researcher at the Complutense University of Madrid. Her areas of interest include contemporary U.S. American (non)fiction, 21st century women's writing, autobiography theory and affect theory. She holds a Bachelor's degree in English Studies and a Master's degree in Advanced Studies in Literature and Film in English, both from the University of Zaragoza. She is currently working on a PhD thesis on narratives and testimonies of sexual harassment after the #MeToo movement in U.S. literature and media, including works by Chanel Miller, Myriam Gurba, Carmen Aguirre, and Siri Hustvedt. Her doctoral research is funded by a Research Fellowship from the Spanish Ministry of Education.

Kalliopi Fragkouli is a PhD candidate at the National Kapodistrian University of Athens. She holds a degree from the School of English Language and Literature of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2015). She completed her MA in English and American Studies at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2018). She has focused on African American fiction, particularly on Toni Morrison's works, shedding light on black feminism and beauty standards. She has done research on African American poetry, focusing on the works of Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, and Paul Laurence Dunbar, and touched upon the issues of slavery, torture, lack of freedom, and sense of belonging. Her research interests include Contemporary American Literature, American Ethnic and Minority Literature, African American Novelists, Feminist Theory, as well as Race and Gender Studies.

Panteleimon Tsiokos is a PhD candidate at the University of Western Ontario, Canada. He holds a BA (Hons, cum laude) in English Language and Literature and an MA in English and American Studies from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. His research interests include issues of identity, immigration, assimilation, and acculturation and their representations in 20th- and 21st-century ethnic, minority, folk, African American, and Indigenous literatures/oratures of North America.

Chadha Brahem is a PhD Student at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. She holds an MA Degree in English Language, Civilization, and Literature from the University of Sousse, Tunisia. She received an ERASMUS scholarship to pursue her second year of the MA in English and American Studies at Aristotle University Thessaloniki, Greece (2016–17). Her research interests include Cultural Politics, Postcolonial studies, Gender studies, along with the examination of various forms of narratives ranging from literature and theatre to films and paintings. She had various teaching experiences in Italy 2014, Turkey 2015, Tunisia 2017–18, and Hungary 2020/21.

Maria (Mariza) Tzouni is a PhD Candidate in the Department of American Literature and Culture in the School of English, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, and a freelance English tutor. She received her BA and MA degrees from the same institution. She has presented her research work in both national and international conferences, her papers have been published in academic volumes and journals, while her poems have been published in anthologies and online blogs. Her fields of interest include Neo-

burlesque Performance, Performance Art, Theater Studies, Feminism and Gender Studies, Ethnic Studies, Popular Culture Studies, and Audience Studies.

Anna Gkouva holds a BA Honors in English Language and Literature and an MA in English and American Studies from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. She is currently teaching English as a foreign language in a private language school, and she is also a lecturer in the Department of English Literature of DEI College, Greece. Her research interests examine the emotional and affective dimensions and representations of the body in Performing Arts.

Ourania Zygouri received a partial academic scholarship of excellence by the School of English, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki to pursue a MA in English and American Studies (2017) and holds a BA Honors in English Language and Literature from the same institution (2016). A holder of CELTA certificate, she works as an EFL and ESP tutor specializing in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. Her research interests examine issues of gender and sexuality in literary, visual, and scenic arts.

Chara Triantafyllidou is a first-year PhD Student and Gates Scholar at the University of Cambridge. She holds an MPhil with Distinction in Applied Linguistics from Trinity College Dublin (2020) and a 1st-class BA Honors in English Language and Literature from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2018). She is a Student Mentor at PHYLIS AUTH, a Tutor at The Brilliant Club, and a Teacher of Modern Greek as a Foreign Language at Trinity College Dublin. Her research explores the role of prosodic skills and socioeconomic status in reading comprehension.

Elli Veneti is a freelance actress currently attending a 2-year acting programme at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She holds a BA in English Language and Literature from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. In the past few years, she has performed, among others, at the Municipal theatre of Veroia, National Theatre of Northern Greece, Stage@Leeds, and she had leading roles in short films in the U.K. Her acting educational background includes workshops with Oxford School of Drama, RCS, NTNG, Athens Conservatoire Summer School, and private tutoring in Greece and U.K. She has also been trained as a contemporary dance performer at Vis Motrix studio in Thessaloniki and at Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds. Her interests in performing mostly revolve around exploring the human psyche in times of duress with focus on human resilience and the import of hope.

Antonia Troullakis is currently working on her thesis to receive a BA Honours from the School of English, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. She started teaching English to adults voluntarily in the Municipality of Thessaloniki during her 3rd year of studies, while since 2021 she has turned her focus to pronunciation and speaking skills. She has been performing as voice actress since 2020 for accessibility causes in two nonprofit electronic magazines, "The Translation Project" and "AUTHors," while being an editor and a founding member of the former as well. Having participated in several educational and creative university projects, she is interested in performing arts and podcast narratives for educational purposes.

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