



Literature Of(f) Limits:
Pluriversal Cosmologies
and Relational Identities
in Present-Day Writing in English

<https://limlit.unizar.es/about/>

Second Call for Papers

**19th International Conference on Contemporary Narratives in English
The Relational Turn in the Literary Anglosphere:
Writing Connection and Interdependence**

**May 21-23, 2025
University of Zaragoza (Spain)**

Plenary Speakers:

Joan Anim-Addo (Goldsmiths University, UK)
Rosario Arias (University of Málaga, Spain)
Gordon Henry (Michigan State University, USA)
John McLeod (Leeds University, UK)

The past few decades are witnessing the demise of the myth of human autonomy, self-sufficiency and self-referentiality graphically and beautifully represented by Leonardo Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man. This iconic image of western civilisation—a naked male figure inside a protective bubble—has not withstood the test of findings in the hard and soft sciences that depict human beings as a complex node of relations. His normative masculinity has been contested by feminism and the prevalent focus on intersectionality to define identity, and his cool aloofness has also been shattered by the inescapable reality of human dependence on the environment made manifest by recent ecological developments. It is clear that we are in urgent need of updated icons for our contemporary times, icons that reconsider the limits of the traditional western conception of the subject. Whichever symbols eventually come to be representative of the current age, there is hardly any doubt that its defining quality will be relationality. This is the key value that characterizes the current phase of Transmodernity, our way of referring to this era's socio-cultural paradigm, prompted by recent crises such as the climate emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic, non-stop migratory flows or protracted and new armed conflicts. Relationality is also the only possible response to other systemic risks and insidious forms of trauma caused by sexism, homophobia, violence against women, racism, xenophobia, aporophobia, the threats of new technologies and the long-lasting effects of colonialism.

This emphasis on relationality unveils porosity where we used to see limits, and it helps us see and value the interdependence of the various dimensions of the human being and the

radical interconnection of existence. This is a way to give due visibility and attention to the change in mentality we observe, for example, in the recent emphasis on humility, vulnerability, or empathy behind the call for an ethics that includes not only the human but the more-than-human. We are now more open to appreciating and learning from the Indigenous values and ways of being in the world, thus delving into the still needed revision of western-centric attitudes. We are also ready to learn from pre-modern values as well as to relate to the world as an enchanted space and access its subtler realms, pointing to a new ecological enlightenment.

These developments crystallise in emerging horizons such as the ethics of care, consideration and attention, based on an embodied phenomenology, and articulated as a challenge to domination, objectification, or extractivism; the concept of Education 5.0, which goes beyond the focus on new technologies to vindicate the importance of the humanities and soft skills; degrowth theory, with its focus on models of cooperation to counter competition, and its call to seriously listen to the voices of women, young people and nature. All this goes in line with the work of thinkers such as Emmanuel Levinas, Carol Gilligan, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Riane Eisler, Giorgio Agamben, Achille Mbembe, Judith Butler, Glen Coulthard and Leanne Simpson, David Mowaljarlai, Val Plumwood, Enrique Dussel, Walter Mignolo, Marc Luyckx Ghisi, or Rosi Braidotti. Such focus promotes the critical dialogue between important areas of research, namely, Ethics, Trauma, Memory, Resilience, Gender and Queer Studies, Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies, Ecocriticism, Indigenous Studies, Crip Theory and Disability Studies, Age Studies, Vulnerability Studies, New Materialisms, Transmodern feminism, Migration Studies, Posthumanist Studies, among some of the most encompassing and outstanding.

As firm believers in the pivotal role of literature in detecting and recording these changes as well as in its power to promote transformation, we invite contributions on these and related topics:

- Relationality and literary form (networked fictions, the fragmented novel, limit-case autobiographies, Aboriginal/Indigenous realism, African/Indigenous futurism, short story cycles, generic hybridity, cli fi, feminist dystopias, ordinary life narratives, etc.).
- Relationality and theory (pluriversal cosmologies, transmodern feminism, material feminism, multidirectional memories, epistemic arrogance and its discontents, ecocriticism, storied places, thing theory, etc.).
- Relationality and the human (vulnerability, narratives of care, emotional truth, affective knowledge, implicated subjects, etc.).
- Relationality and the more-than-human (Indigenous place-thought, climate hope, eco-anxiety, spatial traumas, the geography of perception, food studies, the reenchantment of reality, etc.).

Paper proposals should be between 300 and 400 words. Please submit proposals, along with a bionote of around 150 words to the conference organizers at limlitconference2025@gmail.com. The deadline for abstract submission is 31 October, 2024. Notifications of acceptance will be sent out by 20 December, 2024.

The conference is one of the activities of the research project “Literature Of(f) Limits: Pluriversal Cosmologies and Relational Identities in Present-Day Writing in English (LimLit)” (PID2021-124841NB-I00), which is part of the research group “Contemporary Narrative in English” (H03_23R) at the Department of English and German Studies of the University of Zaragoza, Spain.

Conference chairs:

Bárbara Arizti Martín barizti@unizar.es

Silvia Martínez Falquina smfalqui@unizar.es