



CFP - IV SELGYC POSTGRADUATE AND EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS CONFERENCE

(Im)possible worlds: past, present, future

University of Valladolid, 10-11th February 2022

The creation of alternative worlds, along with both the utopian and dystopian imagination, are cultural constants that have historically found their way through different genres and media. The proliferation of narratives that reimagine, deconstruct or destabilise the pillars of our societies have acquired renewed intensity in contemporary products, in view of the uncertainty crises—environmental, sanitary, demographic, energetic, political—that are currently troubling humanity. Writing on his early twentieth-century text on utopias, Lewis Mumford discusses how the utopian force has often been based on an acute awareness of the anxieties of the present day. Even if this idea is arguably contemporary, the second component that Mumford attributes to the utopian imagination sounds slightly less relevant, namely, that the human adventure has just begun. The optimistic feeling of future projection does not seem to be present amid the concerns of generations that see, appallingly, how their future wanes—literally and metaphorically. This is not only about an alleged inability to imagine the possibility of a dignified life in a context of extreme precarity, but also about a new consciousness that cannot seem to envision a future at all. Philosopher Marina Garcés has commented upon this state of affairs, coining the idea of the "posthumous condition" to define “our time as the time of everything ending”. To a varying degree, the feeling of a certain—or a radical—unease in view of a present often perceived as problematic, has paved the way for a multitude of cultural manifestations that imagine alternative worlds as a way of thinking about our condition.

This conference welcomes proposals that explore the cultural manifestations of these concerns, both in their contemporary as well as their historical dimension. Beyond classic references like Thomas More’s 1516 *Utopia* or Jules Verne’s voyages, along with the well-established canon of authoritarian dystopias, numerous voices—both from the global South and North—have experimented with speculative genres in order to channel the anxieties, desires and concerns that are endemic to their cultural specificity. From Claire Vaye Watkins’ exploration of a dried-up California in *Gold Fame Citrus* to the segregated

societies that Rita Indiana or Junot Díaz have imagined in a Dominican Republic devastated by environmental catastrophe, along with Colson Whitehead's zombies infected with paralysing memories in *Zone One*, both traditional and more recent genres have managed to offer a glimpse into such issues. Likewise, films that range from the now classic *Star Wars* to the French *La Horde* (Yannick Dahan, Benjamin Rocher, 2009) have resorted to alternative worlds or fantastic creatures to reflect upon past, present and future. The IV Postgraduate and Early Career Researchers SELGyC Conference aims to explore how alternative worlds are present in literatures and media from different canons and eras, and wishes to offer an opportunity to share ideas and concerns that affect the new generation of researchers in comparative studies. We encourage researchers that have not yet achieved their PhD degree, or that have done so in the past three academic years, to send their original proposals. Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- The creation of alternative worlds in new media
- Utopia, dystopia, heterotopia, retrotopia
- Fictional constructions of alternative worlds
- Sci-Fi
- Cli-Fi
- Speculative Fiction
- Apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction
- Genre fiction
- Literary theory of the relevant genres
- Space studies in sci-fi and speculative fiction
- Pop culture and alternative worlds
- Patriarchal dystopias
- Technocracies
- Reimagining past aesthetic traditions: neo-gothic, new magical realism...

We also offer the opportunity to share and present different initiatives that early career researchers may be carrying out outside of the strictly academic format of conference presentations, i.e. (academic) blogs, creative initiatives, associations, etc. with the aim to promote and support the activities that are being done in the margins of traditional formats.

Submissions

An abstract of 300 words for both paper proposal submissions (12-15 min) and early career researchers' initiatives (10 min) must be sent to ivencuentroselgyc@gmail.com **before December 3rd 2021**. Please fill in the **form** available [at the SELGyC website](#) in order to submit your proposal. Proposals in Spanish and English are welcome. Notification of acceptance by the organising committee should be expected by early January 2022.

Proposals are welcome from students and researchers who have not passed their viva yet or who have obtained their PhD degree in the last three academic years. Undergraduate and postgraduate students are also welcome. Concerns about the eligibility for participation can be addressed at ivencuentroselgyc@gmail.com.

Registration

There are three ways to participate in the conference:

1. Paper presentation by SELGyC members: FREE.

Those participants who are not yet members of SELGyC must join the association by following the instructions they will find on the website <http://www.selgyc.com/index.php/es/services/inscripciones>. Postgraduate and early career researchers of SELGyC pay a reduced annual fee of 30 euros (SELGyC members only) or 40 euros (which allows them to become full members of both SELGyC and ICLA —International Comparative Literature Association). Besides participating in the Conference, as a new member of SELGyC you will:

- Be included in our mailing list to receive news about activities organized at a national or an international level in the field of comparative literature, as well as to disseminate information about your own activities and projects.
- Enjoy special discounts on the participation in conferences and other events.
- Receive the annual journal 1616 (ICLA partners will also receive the online newsletter Recherche littéraire / Literary Research).

2. Paper presentation (non-members of SELGyC): 25 euros.

In this case, participants in the Conference must deposit 25 euros using the Paypal link found at the SELGyC website (see section “Inscripciones”).

3. As an attendee: FREE. Attendance certificate: 5 euros.

Attendance is completely free of charge. Those who wish to receive an attendance certificate must register as “attendees” using the registration form found in the SELGyC website and attend at least 80% of the sessions, and make a payment of 5 euros through Paypal (see section “Inscripciones”).

Team

Organising Committee

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Sponsored by:

Sociedad Española de Literatura General y Comparada (SELGYC)

Universidad de Valladolid (Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Departamento de Filología Inglesa)

Venue

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Valladolid

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