

# AICED-19

## THE 19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST LITERATURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES SECTION

### CALL FOR PAPERS

The English Department of the University of Bucharest invites proposals for the Literature and Cultural Studies section of its 19<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference:

### ***Birth, Death, and Rebirth: (Re-)Generation as Text***

Dates: 8–10 June, 2017

Venue: The Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures,  
Str. Pitar Mos 7–13, Bucharest, Romania

Confirmed keynote speakers:

**Prof. Vera M. Kutzinski** (Vanderbilt University, Nashville)

**Prof. Thomas Leitch** (University of Delaware, Newark)

**Dr Chris Louttit** (Radboud University, Nijmegen)

**Prof. Nicolas Tredell** (University of Sussex & Palgrave Macmillan)

**Dr Daniela Zaharia** (University of Bucharest)

The implacable power of birth and death to set limits to human life has been challenged from the earliest times by myth, ritual, literature, and the other arts. Religions have elaborated cosmogonies and eschatologies, told of the births of gods and saviours, and promised various forms of afterlife—the survival of the discarnate soul, metempsychosis and reincarnation, or the phoenix-like rebirth of the regenerated body. The human reluctance to accept the natural finality of death has given rise not only to utopias but also to dystopias of immortality (vampires and zombies).

Applied metaphorically to literary and cultural trends and texts, the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth perpetuates itself, with each cultural age and form marking the death of the previous one, yet always reinventing it with renewed energy. Cultural deaths have been announced many times—from Nietzsche's death of God to Roland Barthes' death of the author, from Eliot's *Waste Land* and Beckett's post-war death of values to the death of the individual and Stephen Frosh's identity crisis, from the post-Holocaust death of language to the post-Cold War death of cultural expression. Yet, from the death of theatre and excessive minimalism to the renewed physical energies of intercultural theatre, from John Barth's successive proclamations of a literature of exhaustion and a literature of replenishment, from the much proclaimed death of the novel followed by its reinvention through storytelling, crises have been surpassed and various forms of text have been regenerated. Whether this has involved genre crossovers, mixtures, adaptations, reinterpretations, hybridizations, etc., there has always been something more to say. Announced deaths have always been followed by their "posts," which are actually attempts at regeneration and new life.

Another dimension of birth, death, and rebirth that we propose to investigate is the cultural logic that governs our contemporary media landscape. We inhabit an age of (re-)generation and retelling, where adaptation has become the most profitable practice in the popular media, and a growing vocabulary has emerged to define the possibilities afforded by this development—

“sequel” and “prequel”, “reboot” and “soft reboot”, etc.—entering the parlance of consumers, critics, and academics, as well as industry insiders. Following the work of scholars such as Deborah Cartmell, Linda Hutcheon, Thomas Leitch, and Julie Sanders, we hope the conference will help to illuminate the various contemporary media practices that can be brought under the heading of “adaptation”.

We invite papers addressing, but not limited to, the following topics:

- The symbolism of birth, death, and rebirth in mythology, literature, the arts, cultural studies, and the media
- Challenging birth, death, rebirth, and sexuality in a gendered perspective
- Birth, death, rebirth and the Christian/eschatological dimension in literature and cultural studies
- Birth, death, and rebirth in popular culture and science fiction: vampires, zombies, and paranormal phenomena
- Reconceptualizations of birth, death, and rebirth in philosophy: echoes in literature and cultural studies
- The dance of death, memento mori, etc.: old commonplaces revisited
- Literary and cultural responses to violent death through war and terrorism
- Death and mystery: crime fiction
- Textual deaths and rebirths: from deconstruction to reconstruction and the performance of culture, from exhaustion to replenishment
- The death and rebirth of genres and forms: the novel between formal experiment and the return of storytelling
- The rebirth/regeneration of the text through rewriting, adaptation, appropriation and remediation
- Hybridization as new life
- Birth, death, rebirth and memory studies
- The role of popular transmedia franchises in the adaptation of old texts
- Adaptations combining a variety of source texts and traditions;
- Neo-Victorian or steampunk rewritings of canonical texts and the ideologies that informed them
- Historical fantasy retellings of foundational characters and events

Conference presentations should be in English, and will be allocated 20 minutes each, plus 10 minutes for discussion. Prospective participants are invited to submit abstracts of up to 200 words. Proposals should be in .doc or .docx format, and should also include name and institutional affiliation, a short bio (no more than 100 words), and e-mail address. Proposals for panel discussions (to be organized by the participant) will also be considered.

We look forward in particular to hosting a panel organized by the Romanian Studies Association of America, applying a Romanian Studies perspective to aspects of the conference theme.

A selection of papers from the conference will be published in *University of Bucharest Review* (ISSN 2069–8658; listed on Scopus, EBSCO (Literary Reference Centre Plus), CEEOL, and Ulrichsweb; CNCS category B). See the guidelines for contributors at <http://ubr.rev.unibuc.ro>.

Deadline for proposals: **19 March 2017**

Please send proposals (and enquiries) to [conf.eng.litcult@lils.unibuc.ro](mailto:conf.eng.litcult@lils.unibuc.ro)

The conference fee of **50 euro** (or **200 lei** if paid in Romanian currency) is payable in cash on registration, and covers lunches and refreshments during the conference, but not evening meals.

For further details and updates, see:

<https://acedbucharest.wordpress.com> and  
[http://www.unibuc.ro/depts/limbi/literatura\\_engleza/conferinta.php](http://www.unibuc.ro/depts/limbi/literatura_engleza/conferinta.php) .

(Enquiries regarding the Linguistics section of the conference, which will be running at the same time as the Literature and Cultural Studies section, should be sent to [conf.eng.ling@lils.unibuc.ro](mailto:conf.eng.ling@lils.unibuc.ro).)

We look forward to welcoming you in Bucharest.

Organizing Committee:

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