

**BOOKS
FOR
CHILDREN
OF SMALL
CITIES
AND
TOWNS**

Politics of Small Scales

*Digital, Economic, Social, & Aesthetic
Transformations of Contemporary
Presses*

21-22 May 2026

KU Leuven (Belgium)

*Convened by JOANA ROQUÉ PESQUER
and NÚRIA CODINA I SOLÀ*

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COLLAB

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2. Nefise Kahraman “*Publishing in the Margins: Translating Turkish Literature and the Politics of Diasporic Publishing in Canada*”
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DAY 2

[22-05-26]

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 12. Jeremiah Felix Nwachukwu “*Translating Memory Across Scales: Digital Platforms and Postmemory of the Nigerian Civil War*”

13:00 – 14:00/ Lunch Break

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15:15– 15:45/ Coffee Break

15:45 – 16:15/ Final Remarks by Organizers

Additional Information

VENUE: Verbeeckzaal (06.A011) of the STUK House for Dance, Image and Sound (*breaks: STUK café*). Address: Naamsestraat 96, 3000 Leuven.

LUNCH: vegetarian and vegan buffet available in the STUK Café. *Price for non-presenters: 16€.*

MEDIA: Photos and/or videos may be taken during the symposium and shared via the COLLAB team’s website, newsletter, and social media. We will ask for your consent before taking photos or videos.

INTRODUCTION

This interdisciplinary workshop seeks to explore the digital, economic, aesthetic, and social dimensions of contemporary small presses. Drawing on the concept of ‘politics of scale’ in human geography and political theory, which examines how social, economic, and political power is produced, contested, and reorganized across different scales (Smith, 1984), the present workshop complicates notions of ‘smallness’ by comparing how the work of small presses changes across geopolitical locations, especially when the economic infrastructures, digital dynamics, and social meanings of literary production are incorporated in the analysis.

Previous scholarship in the sociology of literature, as well as in cultural, literary, and publishing studies, has often defined scale in terms of polarity: small-scale local independent publishing as opposed to large-scale global conglomerate publishing (Thompson, 2012). While mapping the literary market in macro-scales or poles is needed to capture the contrast between business models and practices, it does not account for the intersection of bigger and smaller scales depending on geographical, commercial, editorial, or digital networks. A good example can be found in the international orientation and local engagements of many contemporary small presses, which question national discourses from sites that are not the global capitals typically associated with literary production and transnational circulation. However, given the differences between contexts where small presses operate, as well as between presses themselves, smallness should not be taken as an all-encompassing category but rather as a multi-scalar concept in itself that can also be used and appropriated to many ends.

This multi-scalar perspective becomes key to understanding the interactions and relational spaces between big and small in a contemporary context marked by shared challenges such as the dominance of English in global literary relations (Mufti, 2016) and concurrent forms of multimodal storytelling beyond the printed book (Mantzaris, 2024). It also foregrounds small presses as sites with their own potentialities and limitations, examining, for instance, struggles over the infrastructures of scale as they thematize global challenges such as migration or climate change, and cultivate

experimental literary or authorship forms, as well as solidarity-based economic models in the face of precarity, postdigitality, and technological transformation (Seita, 2017). Understanding scale as a spatial and temporal concept that is socially constructed also has the potential to analyze movement across scales from a historical perspective, such as how local and transnational solidarities in publishing initiatives have been created and sustained (Mathieu et al., 2012), or how self-financing and print-on-demand models reveal broader tendencies and inequalities regarding patronage and digital economic systems.

This cross-disciplinary, scalar approach is also aimed at considering the contemporary social engagements of small presses as they make use of these digital tools and more collaborative business models to position themselves politically and socially in the market. Continuing a longer and larger historical trajectory of small press activism, catalogues of contemporary small presses can feature literature that is underrepresented, has been out of print, or is, due to the former, deemed commercially unviable. This includes literature in translation that promotes works by emerging or established writers from marginalized communities, following principles of bibliodiversity and social engagement. By doing so, some small presses defend their ‘smallness’ as a political choice, ensuring progressive and intersectional values of ecogism, feminism, and anti-racism (Cura, 2022). Alongside their publishing practices, they also make use of digital platforms to organize and create spaces of resistance against white supremacist, colonial, and capitalist systems and in favor of freedom of speech such as the global solidarity collective Publishers for Palestine, which is made up of 639 independent and small presses around the world (as of September 13, 2025). Such explicit positionings, however, are not without risk in contexts of censorship, surveillance, or political oppression, leading committed publishers, authors, or translators to work in exile or adapt their editorial and scalar politics.

Bringing these dynamics together, the workshop will focus on the intersections of four main topics:

1/DIGITALITY/POSTDIGITALITY

What forms of cultural or political agency emerge when small presses negotiate digital

infrastructures, and how do these reconfigure power across scales?

How can the politics of scale help us rethink postdigitality in small press publishing, in contexts where digital and material practices are inseparably entangled?

How do small presses negotiate the contradictions of autonomy and dependency as they operate within larger digital, cyber, or algorithmic systems and global market scales?

2/ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURES

What alternative or hybrid economic models (non-profit, cooperative) and print-on-demand (crowdfunding, presale, subscription-based) are small presses developing to support their work, and how are they shaping concepts such as value, sustainability, or solidarity?

In what ways do the economic and labor infrastructures of small presses reveal how scale is produced, contested, and sustained in cultural economies?

To what extent does funding or the market act as a form of structural constraint that shapes editorial politics, and how do presses theorize or resist these constraints through practice?

3/SOCIAL COMMITMENTS

How do contemporary small press practices and social engagements reflect a politics of scale?

How do small presses foster political and literary communities, and how might these communities be understood as counter-publics or sites of cultural resistance?

How are small presses contributing to or resisting marketing trends that capitalize on social justice movements at multiple scales?

4/AESTHETICS

In what ways can the aesthetic practices of small presses be understood as theorizing scale in practice, linking the micro-material object to broader political and cultural structures?

How does the practice of translation in small press publishing unsettle dominant linguistic and cultural hierarchies, allowing texts to “jump scale” and reconfigure transnational literary circulation?

How does the meaning of texts change across publishing formats, media, and infrastructures?

5/FORMAT

This workshop invites scholars, practitioners, and publishers to engage in critical discussion on any of these questions, as well as the interdisciplinary methodological approaches employed to study them. To stimulate as much interaction as possible, the workshop will be based on pre-circulated papers of up to 3000 words. Depending on the number of submissions, participants might be asked to act as respondents to other pre-circulated papers.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Marialena Avgerinou, Anna Sofia Churchill, Núria Codina Solà, Joana Roqué Pesquer, Sonja Faaren Ruud.

The symposium is part of the ERC Starting Grant project COLLAB, which looks at Collaborative Practices of Making Literature in Contexts of Migration and Displacement (PI Núria Codina Solà). The COLLAB project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme (*grant agreement n° 101076847*). Views and opinions expressed on this website are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Council. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

SOURCES Cura, Faye. "Press(ing)work: The Labor Economics of Feminist Small Press Publishing in the Philippines." *Writing Women*. / Mantzaris, Thomas. 2024. *Multimodal Poetics in Contemporary Fiction: Design and Experimentation in North and Central American Texts*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. / Mathieu, Paula, Steve Parks, and Tiffany Rousculp. 2012. *Circulating Communities: The Tactics and Strategies of Community Publishing*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. / Mufti, Aamir R. 2016. *Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literatures*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. / Seita, Sophie. 2017. "Thinking the Unprintable in Contemporary Post-Digital Publishing." *The Journal of Modern Periodical Studies* 11 (1): 144–151. / Smith, Neil. 1984. *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. / Thompson, John B. 2012. *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Polity Press.

KEYNOTE LECTURE

D-M WITHERS

Lurid Editions: Insights from a Small-Scale, Experimental Publishing Practice

'Small press publishing makes visible the complexities of contemporary modes of production and its own ambiguous relation to them,'[1] write Georgina Colby, Kaja Marczewska, and Leigh Wilson in the introduction to their 2020 edited collection on *The Contemporary Small Press*. In my keynote, I will use my own small press practice with Lurid Editions, a publisher of rediscovered queer literature from the twentieth century, to reflect on its own complex positioning within contemporary modes of production. Lurid Editions is a micro-publisher, publishing no more than two *'glowing, flaring, lurid, loud,'* *'vivid, flaunting, tearaway'* books per year.[2] Lurid Editions is sustained and subsidised, albeit in unquantified financial ways, through my role as Lecturer in Publishing at the University of Exeter, through my salary, and most recently with public funding from Arts Council England. As a publisher we assume an *'Odysshape'*, to invoke the title of The Raincoats' brilliant, off-beat album (1981). Simply put, we don't neatly fit in. On paper commensurate with business-leaning agendas that dominate the contemporary university, Lurid Editions' minimal monetary returns nonetheless render it suspect as a recognisable industry practice. Positioned firmly at – but not always locking into – the channels of the commercial publishing industry, the books by published by Lurid Editions are formulated with intention to probe and pass into mainstream circulation, a posture that far exceeds our size and status. As a mode of academic research, Lurid is an experimental practice that seeks to understand how much impact a publisher the scale and size of Lurid Editions can have, with the critical act of publishing intimately imbricated with the production of knowledge about how the industry functions, across different scales and sites of activity (from marketing, distribution, sales, production, editorial, publicity, administration, organisation), with each published book generating a different set of insights.[3] Throughout the keynote, I will presents some of these points of learning and place them in dialogue with debates about the survivability of diverse publishing initiatives within the current, conglomerate-dominated organisation of contemporary publishing industries.

SOURCES [1] G. Colby et al. 2020. 'Introduction: Making Publishing Visible' in G. Colby et al (eds.), *The Contemporary Small Press*, Palgrave, 12. [2] Derek Jarman. 1993. *Chroma*. Vintage. [3] Leigh Wilson. 2020. 'Acts of Judgement and the Small Press: Learning from F.R. Leavis, in G. Colby et al (eds.), *The Contemporary Small Press*, Palgrave, 231.

BIOGRAPHIC NOTE D-M Withers is a Lecturer in Publishing at the University of Exeter (UK) and director of *Lurid Editions*; a publishing research practice centred on rediscovered queer works from the twentieth century archive. D-M has previously published on histories of feminist publishing, including books and articles on *Virago Press* and *Honno: the Welsh Women's Press — Virago Reprints and Modern Classics: the Timely Business of Feminist Publishing* came out with CUP in 2021. An avid reader of archives and listener to (and collector of) oral histories, D-M's current research focuses on histories of publishing in the second half of the twentieth century, addressing questions of generational and industrial change, entrepreneurship and precarity.

PANEL 1: TRANSNATIONAL AND TRANSLATED SCALES

TIM GROENLAND & MICHAELA KRÁLOVÁ
Contemporary Translated Literature in Ireland: Scale, Circulation, and Hierarchy

This paper will examine the publication of translated literature by Irish publishers during a ten-year period (2016-2025), showing how increased activity is being driven by small publishers and examining the implications for Irish literary production. Our data - collected from sources such as publishers, prize lists, and library services - presents a list of all translated books published into English or Irish by Irish publishers during this period, and spans a range of genres including literary fiction, poetry, and children's books, as well as different sizes and types of publisher. These titles are produced by Irish presses, often in collaboration with Irish translators and editors, and marketed to Irish readers. Drawing on recent data-driven research into culture industries as well as from literary-sociological scholarship on publishing, we examine this data for revealing patterns (the prevalence of particular publishers, languages, genres) and for what it might tell us about the deeper structures of Irish publishing (related to, for example, funding, translation, and distribution). Of particular interest to us is the presence of newer Irish publishers such as Bullaun Press (who are dedicated to publishing translations) and

Skein Press, whose publishing programmes are driven by a mix of social and aesthetic commitments. The latter, for example, have made a turn towards publishing translated work, going so far as to launch a series dedicated to bringing writing in endangered and minoritised languages to a larger audience. This development parallels Irish-language initiatives such as the introduction of a dedicated prize for translations into Irish as well as a wider turn towards translation in Anglophone publishing. Drawing on these examples, we ask how practices of translation in small press publishing might unsettle dominant linguistic and cultural hierarchies, allowing texts to “jump scale” and reconfigure transnational literary circulation.

BIOGRAPHIC NOTES *Tim Groenland is a Science Foundation Ireland/Irish Research Council Pathway Fellow in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin, Ireland, where he is PI on the project “The Publishing Infrastructures of Contemporary Anglophone Literature.” His book *The Art of Editing: Raymond Carver and David Foster Wallace* was published in 2019 by Bloomsbury Academic. He recently co-edited a special issue of *Post45* with Evan Brier on “Editing American Literature” (2024), and his work is published or forthcoming in venues including *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, *Contemporary Women’s Writing*, and *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*. *Michaela Králová is a Research Ireland-funded PhD candidate at the School of English, Drama and Film in University College Dublin, working with Dr Tim Groenland’s project “The Publishing Infrastructures of Contemporary Anglophone Literature.” She previously completed her M.Phil. at the Trinity Centre for Literary and Cultural Translation, Trinity College Dublin. Her PhD thesis focuses on contemporary Irish literature in translation. Her critical reviews and translations have been published in the Trinity Journal of Literary Translation, Full Stop Magazine, and the Czech literary journal iLiteratura.**

NEFISE KAHRAMAN

Publishing in the Margins: Translating Turkish Literature and the Politics of Diasporic Publishing in Canada

This paper examines Translation Attached, a Toronto-based independent publishing house dedicated to translating Turkish literature into English, as a case study through which to rethink the “politics of scale” in contemporary small-press publishing. Drawing on the

workshop's call to interrogate how smallness operates across digital, economic, social, and aesthetic dimensions, it considers how Translation Attached both embodies and complicates the category of the small press within Canada's multicultural and multilingual literary field. Founded by three translators as an outgrowth of a university-based workshop, Translation Attached situates itself between local and transnational scales, rooted in Toronto's Turkish diaspora while reaching wider English-speaking audiences through print-on-demand and digital distribution. Its publications, including *Stories of Exile* by Refik Halid Karay and *Ghoulyabânî* by Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, illustrate how translation functions as a form of smallpress activism that amplifies marginalized literary traditions while cultivating diasporic and cross-cultural solidarities. Engaging with the workshop's broader questions, this paper explores how small presses like Translation Attached negotiate the contradictions of autonomy and dependency as they operate within larger publishing and algorithmic systems. It also considers how their collaborative and non-profit structures challenge dominant economic infrastructures by fostering alternative forms of value, sustainability, and community. By situating Translation Attached within the postdigital landscape of smallscale publishing, the paper contributes to understanding how independent presses mediate between local engagements and global networks, translating not only texts but also cultural imaginaries across scales of belonging and power.

BIOGRAPHIC NOTE *Nefise Kahraman is a literary scholar and translator with a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Toronto and a BA in Translation Studies from Boğaziçi University, Istanbul. She is a founding member of Translation Attached, a Toronto-based independent publishing house dedicated to bringing literature from Turkey to English-speaking audiences. www.translationattached.com*

KIN-LONGTONG

Rescaling Counterpublics: The Transnationalization of Hong Kong Independent Publishing Community

This paper examines how Hong Kong's independent publishing community has reconfigured itself in response to intensified authoritarian repression following the 2019 protests and the enactment of the National Security Law. Drawing on 45 interviews with

writers, publishers, and booksellers across diasporic sites—including Taiwan and the United Kingdom, among others—it explores how cultural practitioners have navigated political displacement through the creation of dispersed infrastructures, informal networks, and alternative publishing practices. Rather than treating transnational dispersal as mere rupture, the article conceptualizes it as spatial rescaling of counterpublics, whereby publishing becomes a medium for sustaining dissent, preserving political memory, and reimagining belonging. It highlights the uneven geographies of this rescaling—shaped by affective distance, classed access to resources, and infrastructural precarity—while attending to the frictions that confront cultural workers who endure and connect across borders. In doing so, the article contributes to broader debates on infrastructure, cultural resistance, and the spatial politics of counterpublics under conditions of global autocratization.

BIOGRAPHIC NOTE *Kin-long Tong is a Lecturer in the Department of Information Studies at University College London. His research examines knowledge and cultural production under conditions of constraint, with particular attention to zines, independent publishing, and alternative archival practices. His work has been published in journals including Theory, Culture & Society, Cultural Sociology, Journal of Cultural Economy, Journal of Visual Culture, and Journal of Librarianship and Information Science.*

PANEL 2: REFIGURING SMALLNESS

CAROLINE WINTERSGILL

Cultural Value, New Audiences and the Small (Nation) Press: Independent Publishing in Wales

Operating in the shadow of a monolithic neighbour (Klamet 2020), Wales is a bilingual nation with no large publishers or ‘Big Five’ representation, yet it supports a rich independent publishing ecosystem publishing in two languages. This paper explores how the small presses of Wales understand, articulate and contest notions of cultural value, and what that means in terms of the value they offer to authors, readers and other stakeholders. The paper draws on qualitative interviews with representatives of presses including Seren, Calon (the trade imprint of University of Wales Press), Honno (the Welsh women’s press) and Welsh language publisher YLolfa. English language publishers grapple with the challenges of scale required by publishing in a dominant

world language from a peripheral small nation; Welsh presses face the contrasting problem of a captive but limited audience of varying degrees of fluency. An ever more strained cultural funding budget seeks to protect the industry from these different forms of ‘market failure’, while facilitating projects of cultural significance but limited economic viability, enabling translation between the two languages and funding advances to retain major Welsh authors. Though collaboration between publishers is evident with, for example a national distribution centre and eBook store, such challenges may lead to tensions, expressed recently in differing views of how to represent the diverse voices of a modern Wales and reach new audiences. The paper speaks to core themes of the symposium, especially around economic infrastructures and social commitments. The politics of scale is highly relevant to Welsh publishing, with a clear contrast between established publishing houses (e.g. Seren; Parthian) which literary audiences may understand as custodians of cultural value, but which would be defined in business terms as SMEs (*see Markou & Squires 2021*); and new micro-enterprises, including literary magazine Folding Rock and Lucent Dreaming, funded by a Welsh government ‘New Audiences’ grant.

SOURCES Klamet, A. (2020) ‘Publishing in the Shadow of Larger Neighbours: Opportunities and Challenges of Digitisation for Small Publishing Houses in Austria and Scotland’ *Knygotyra* (75)
 Squires, C. & Markou, H. (2021) ‘An Ecosystem Model of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Publisher “Tiers”: Publishers, Size, Sustainability and Cultural Policy’ *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 37 (3)

BIOGRAPHIC NOTE *Dr Caroline Wintersgill is Senior Lecturer in Publishing Studies at the University of Stirling. Before absconding to academia in 2015, Caroline worked in the publishing industry for 25 years as a commissioning editor for both small independent presses and larger commercial publishers. Her recent publications include a chapter on the ‘Institutions of Fiction’ for The Cambridge Companion to British Fiction: 1980–2018, edited by Peter Boxall. She is presently writing a long book on Endings in Contemporary Fiction and a short book on Editing Practices at the Small Press. Caroline has been a trustee of the Books Council of Wales since 2021.*

OLIVIA HELLEWELL

No!Press: A parallel reality in a 'small' publishing sphere?

This paper will contribute practice-based and theoretical reflections on the case of No!Press (*est. Slovenia 2024*), with particular focus on the social and aesthetic dimensions of this contemporary small press. No!Press has published eight titles to date: works of literary fiction and creative non-fiction; four titles written and published in Slovene, and four translations from other European languages into Slovene. In its online presentation, the press introduces itself and its ethos with the concept of a parallel reality: Years of experience in the book and cultural spheres have taught us that the system cannot be changed from within: but we believe that with quality work and with the building of community it is possible to establish a parallel reality in which books can take their place, along with their readers, above all, without having to accept compromises which are at odds with the literature we represent (*No!Press, n.d.; my translation*). Whilst considering the example of No!Press against the set of critical questions outlined for discussion, the paper will reflect on the establishment of a contemporary small press within the specific conditions of Slovenia's own so-called 'small' literary sphere (*Hellewell 2020; 2026*). For example: To what extent does the construction of a 'parallel reality' undermine polarity-based definitions of scale (*c.f. Thompson 2012*)? Can this 'parallel reality' circumvent what others might perceive to be the challenges inherent within Slovenia's so-called 'small' or 'peripheral' literary sphere? To what degree does No!Press perceive its work as a response to existing models of literary production in Slovenia? Does it work against, or in response to, perceived cultural hierarchies? How do agents (authors, translators) perceive the introduction of No!Press and what reflections can they offer with regard to working with an independent press in a small literary sphere (in comparison with larger publishing houses in a small publishing sphere)? Whilst acknowledging the early stages of No!Press' establishment, this paper contributes reflections on this standout development in the Slovene literary sphere, with the aim of furthering understandings of 'smallness' and asking whether parallel realities can be built outside of a politics of scale.

SOURCES Hellewell, Olivia. *Supplying Literary Translation: Slovene Literature and Routes into*

Translation for Small European Literatures. Routledge, forthcoming 2026. — ‘Creative Autonomy and Institutional Support in Contemporary Slovene Literature’. In Chitnis et al. (eds.), *Translating the literatures of small European nations*. Liverpool University Press (2020). 109-25. No!Press. ‘O založbi’. Last accessed 10.12.2025. Available at: <<https://no-press.eu/pages/o-zalozbi>>. Thompson, John B. *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century*. 2nd ed. Polity Press, 2012.

BIOGRAPHIC NOTE *Olivia Hellewell is Assistant Professor in Spanish and Translation Studies at the University of Nottingham. A former ESRC Post-doctoral Research Fellow, her research interests are focused on sociological approaches to translation, particularly in the small-nation context of Slovenia; international book fairs and publishing dynamics, literary translation practice and less translated languages and literatures. These research interests are complemented by a commitment to the creative practice of literary translation, with published translations of novels, short stories, children’s literature and essays from Slovene into English. She is currently guest-editing a forthcoming Special Issue for Target (Vol. 39, 2027), along with Olga Castro (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; University of Warwick) and Laura Linares (University College Cork), on ‘The changing landscape of literary translation and/as soft power in the 21st century’. Her first monograph, *Supplying Literary Translation: Slovene Literature and Routes into Translation for ‘Small’ European Literatures* is forthcoming with Routledge in 2026.*

PANEL 3: SPATIAL, ECONOMIC, & SCALAR ASSEMBLAGES

JOANA ROQUÉ PESQUER

“#It’sNotThatRadical”: Solidarity Economies and the Politics of Scale in Jande Editorial

This paper examines the rise of crowdfunding as a meso-level infrastructure shaping contemporary literary production in Spain, particularly in Catalonia. Over the past two decades, platforms such as Kickstarter, Verkami, and Goteo, alongside subscription-based and pre-order systems, have reorganized how books are financed, selected, and circulated, shifting publishing from a model based primarily on editorial gatekeeping to one increasingly dependent on distributed forms of financial participation and readership engagement. This transformation does not simply create new funding options but restructures the conditions under which literary projects become viable.

To understand how these meso-level infra-

structures operate in practice, the paper turns to the micro-level case of Jande Editorial, a co-operative press founded in Barcelona in 2024 after a successful crowdfunding campaign. The press currently combines subscription-based funding with public translation grants from Catalan and Spanish institutions. Framed through the slogan “#It’sNotThatRadical,” Jande positions the publication of migrant and racialized authors in Catalan not as an exceptional intervention but as part of what the literary present should have already normalized, even if it is one of the only publishers (locally and nationally) to do so. Its catalogue includes both first-time local authors such as Fàtima Saheb and Youssef El Maimouni and internationally translated writers including Zadie Smith and Mariama Bâ, showing how literary production simultaneously moves across local, institutional, and transnational scales.

By moving between meso-level funding and micro-level publishing practices, the paper demonstrates how questions of language, circulation, and literary recognition are materially shaped by these funding and distribution infrastructures within the contemporary Catalan literary scene.

BIOGRAPHIC NOTE Joana Roqué Pesquer is a PhD candidate on the COLLAB project at the Department of Translation Studies, KU Leuven. Her PhD focuses on solidarity-based economies as they shape contemporary transnational literature published by small presses in Spain and the UK. She holds a BA in Liberal Arts from the Autonomous University in Barcelona (UAB) and was awarded the Voltaire Foundation bursary to undertake an MSc in Digital Scholarship from the University of Oxford, where she also trained as an intern in the Bodleian Special Collections and the CERL Provenance Digital Archive. Her key areas of interest include sociocultural and material history of books, publishing studies more broadly, and their intersection with sociology and digital humanities.

GAIL CHESTER

Being an Independent Scholar on the Semi-Periphery

Throughout my career I have always worked on the semi-periphery, at the conjunction of commerce, culture, and politics. Having been involved with all aspects of this conference, I aim to use my experiences as a practitioner to elaborate on its themes. The most obvious limitation of working in small publishing spaces is the difficulty of being able to fund one’s am-

bitions, yet, provided we have access to some money, we enjoy the benefit of having more room to manoeuvre than we would if constrained in the straitjacket of larger spaces. My presentation examines 50 years' involvement in the radical and small press booktrade, especially feminist publishing, starting in 1973, when I joined the Women's Report collective – a voluntary group which published a bimonthly feminist news magazine, taking charge of every aspect of the process. I then helped found Publications Distribution Co-op, which handled radical periodicals, pamphlets and books, thus fostering the growth of radical bookshops and radical self-publishing. I went on to Pluto Press, a small socialist publisher which, like many, depended on the mostly inherited wealth of its founders. In 1980 I founded Ultra Violet Enterprises, which was started to meet the need for promotion amongst radical publishers, but soon extended to advising on the whole publishing process. Other career highlights include working for the first International Feminist Bookfair (Chester, 2025); teaching publishing at various academic institutions; helping to start Magi Publications, which published dual-language children's books; doing half a PhD in Book History; serving on the board of Housmans Peace Bookshop; and publishing several academic articles on radical book history, most recently in the small Belgian journal DiGeSt. These experiences have led me to consider the detrimental effect of multinational journal publishers on the academic ecosystem, and believe this should be included when examining the politics of small spaces (Beigel et al., 2025).

BIOGRAPHIC NOTE *Gail Chester has been continuously involved in feminist activism and the radical booktrade since the 1970s. She is widely published in mainstream, radical and academic publications, and has edited six political anthologies. In 1981 she co-authored Rolling Our Own: Women as Printers, Publishers, and Distributors, the first book on this subject in Britain. Among her academic articles is 'Sex, Race, and Class: A century of the radical, alternative and minority book trade in Britain', in The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, volume 7, 2019. Other academic articles cover topics such as feminist publishing since the 1940s, the anthology as a medium for feminist debate, the publishing history of In Other Words: Writing as a Feminist, a book she co-edited. She helped set up HOWL: History of Women's Liberation, which is gathering material from the WLM and encouraging grassroots groups and individuals to produce reflective material for its website <https://howl-uk.org/>.*

AHMAD MAKIA

Hyperpublishing

Beyond the duality of small-scale and industrial publishing, hyperpublishing proposes an expansive approach that houses and assembles multiple disciplines, scales, media, languages, authorships and materialities. It rejects the tradition of disciplining and marketing books as a fixed and finite format. “Hyper” is a condition of discontinuous simultaneity.. It does not attempt to purify knowledge into a monolithic container. Instead, it appreciates the contemporary condition of split and porous attention. It publishes for “one-handed reading” with shifting tasks and foci. Situated beyond the hierarchy of scales and disciplines, it refuses to compartmentalize the varied forms of labor and roles that constitute publishing practices. Editorial work, writing, self-publishing, institutional commissions, ISBN-granting, speculative experiments, DIY collaborations and design labor coexist with equal visibility. Hyperpublishing understands them as mutually sustaining. It does not construct the notion of an integral independence, but instead reveals subversive and solitary practices in shared precarity. Each mode and scale enables the other. The practice acknowledges the strategies of institutional network objects: printed artifacts that operate within a long-term transaction beyond immediate cycles of supply and demand. Catalogues or research volumes accrue value through their roles in extended chains of exchange and archives. Hyperpublishing highlights these as sites of agency where print proves structurally persistent. Hybrid attention-economies similarly reveal how fetish values are resurging as their constructed scarcity provides an antidote to overstimulation. Printed matter is both consumed as visual data and desired as totemic objects. Hyperpublishing embraces viral rituals like ASMR Dubai chocolate as publishing practices with accelerated circulation and decentralized co-creation through the adaptation in memes or trend-based self-expression. As a composite and non-definite position, hyperpublishing liberates the book as a solemn product. It offers a theory in which both publications and practice become a hypermarket of methods and possibilities for experimental assemblages of knowledge production.

BIOGRAPHIC NOTE Ahmad Makia is a geographer, writer and book broker. He works with deep-time and materialist philosophies, environmental

and spatial practices, gender and identity, Islamic literature and history, speculation and hyperreality. His publishing practice HYPERHOUSE liberates book making from the market tradition of solemn objects by creating totemic assemblages. He has contributed to zines, magazines, exhibition catalogues, and academic journals, and presented work at the Porto Design Biennial (2023), Lahore Biennial (2013), Oslo Architecture Triennial (2016), and Lisbon Architecture Triennial (2014). He has lectured at Para Site, Hong Kong (2025), NYU Abu Dhabi (2025), New Furturism Rotterdam (2020), Art Jameel Dubai (2018), National University of Singapore (2017), CA2M Madrid (2017), American University of Kuwait (2017), Strelka Institute Moscow (2016), Studio X - Amman / GSAPP (2015), and others.

PANEL 4: DIGITALITY AND EDITORIAL POWER

MARÍA HERRERA

Epistemic Violence and Cultural Capital: Feminist Digital Practices Against Identity Erasure

This study examines how feminist digital practices and contemporary women's writing challenge epistemic hierarchies and the commodification of culture in a globalized world. Drawing on Sara Ahmed's *The Politics of Emotion* (2004), Rosi Braidotti's *The Posthuman* (2013), and Olga Castro's *Feminist Translation Studies* (2017), it explores how affect, translation, and posthuman ethics redefine the politics of scale in feminist cultural production. Focusing on *Drift* (Caroline Bergvall, 2014), an experimental poetic project addressing Mediterranean refugee deaths during the Lampedusa shipwreck, as well as on other contemporary authors who use digital formats to address rape culture and violence against women and girls (VAWG), this research argues that these practices resist cultural homogenization and commodification. Western norms and market-driven cultural economies often devalue and superficialize art and intellectual work, transforming delicate social issues — such as VAWG — into consumable cultural products. However, Bergvall's digital experimentalism strategically mobilizes the aesthetics and authority of high culture to reach elite audiences while amplifying issues typically addressed within “low culture” or marginalized performative spaces, such as healing performances and grassroots projects engaging with trauma and violence. Through her multilingual use of English, Old Norse, and Mediterranean languages, Bergvall also evokes the cultural diversity and

human richness lost at sea, reclaiming multilingualism as an ethical and aesthetic strategy of resistance against erasure. These multilingual and translational practices not only resist linguistic homogenization but also expose how translation operates as a site of negotiation between cultural hierarchies and power scales. By analyzing these works through the politics of scale, this study situates feminist digital and performative practices as counter-hegemonic forms of knowledge production. They resist extractivist and elitist models, promote anti-elitism and accessibility, and challenge the uneven distribution of cultural capital. Ultimately, they articulate a democratizing shift in the circulation of knowledge, affect, and political agency across global cultural networks.

BIOGRAPHIC NOTE *I am a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bielefeld and Jyväskylä (Germany and Finland, respectively) in Gender Studies, Digital Humanities, Comparative Literature, and Medical Humanities, with an interdisciplinary and transnational profile. Since completing my International Double PhD in Languages and Cultures (Summa Cum Laude, Universidad de Jaén, Università degli Studi di Siena and Université Bordeaux-Montaigne), my work has focused on gendered medical violence, bridging cultural analysis and healthcare policy across Europe. My career has unfolded across seven European countries (Spain, Italy, UK, France, Germany, Finland and Sweden), always guided by a question: how can women's silenced pain be transformed into knowledge and effective change? My research aligns with the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025, the Istanbul Convention, and Horizon Europe Cluster 2 (Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society). My broader interests include VAWG, Contemporary Anglophone and Hispanophone Literature, and Digital Performance, approached through intersectionality, plurilingualism, and prevention practice.*

CAMILLE DASSELEER

"5 secrets to Self-Publishing Your Book" New Editorial Practices and the Reframing of Literary Autonomy

In this paper, I propose to analyse new editorial practices that involve digital platforms in order to interrogate what implications they can have on Bourdieu's now traditional notion of "*autonomous literary field*". More specifically, I will focus on the case of Spanish-Argentine writer and digital artist Belén Gache (1960), who started her career as a novelist published by important publishing houses (Sudamerica-

na, Planeta) before dedicating herself almost exclusively to the “niche” discipline of digital experimental literature and switching definitively to a self-publishing practice. I argue that Gache’s work is exemplary of the tensions between artistic autonomy and creative freedom that constitute the contemporary literary field, while also being a unique case in terms of artistic intentions. On the one hand, she works with an explicit ethics of Open Access. The majority of her literary creations and digital artworks are freely available on her website <https://belen-gache.net/>, that serves as an archive where most of her texts can be downloaded as PDFs. On the other hand, she did not completely waive the book-object and its traditional function of material dissemination of literature, as I will show through the example of her last publication “50 secretos para escribir un poema”: Gache decided to dispense with the conventional publishing intermediaries, and replaced them by Amazon’s Kindle Print on Demand. Her books are published under her own “publishing house stamp” (“sello editorial”), Sociedad Lunar (<https://sociedadlunar.org/index.html>), that exclusively publishes Gache’s books, and some of Gustavo Romano, her husband, also a digital artist. Gache explains that they created Sociedad Lunar “siguiendo la tradición de las Small Presses de los años 60 y 70, surgidas de la denominada ‘revolución del mimeógrafo’, es decir, pequeñas editoriales que buscaban circuitos alternativos a los de las editoriales hegemónicas” (*Comunicación personal*, 2025). I propose to analyse the paradoxes that see the light when such rhetorical appropriation of the politics of small presses is used as a legitimising strategy that conflicts the actual dynamics of Amazon’s economic hegemony.

BIOGRAPHIC NOTE *Camille Dasseleer is a PhD candidate and Teaching assistant in Spanish and Latin American Literatures at the Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium. She will defend her dissertation in May 2026. Her investigation focuses on the connections between Transmediality, Politics and Multilingualism in a corpus of contemporary poetry created by artists born in Latin America. She has been an invited teacher at the Universidad Católica Argentina in Buenos Aires, and at the Universidad La Gran Colombia in Bogotá. She has published multiple peer-reviewed papers on digital literature, decolonial arts and experimental poetry.*

PANEL 5: MEDIA, MEMORY, SCALE

DIPAK BARKHADE

Himmati Mehariya: Mapping the Politics of Smallness Among Khabar Lahariya's Dalit Women Reporters

The politics of small scales in this paper is informed by rural women reporters in north India. The rural women reporters reframe the “local” in relation to the community, the region, and the nation. They treat these spaces in a survival context. They dare to speak as women from Dalit, formerly “untouchable” castes. Many of these women reporters are school or college dropouts. Through association with Khabar Lahariya, a print and digital women’s media organization, they mark the socio-economic transformation of their lives in both personal and public spaces. Khabar Lahariya works in synergy with elite-class feminists who hold experience in the women’s movement with a focus on gender and education rights. The Dalit women reporters cover everyday issues affecting socio-economically marginalized communities. They redefine the “smallness” of Khabar Lahariya in two ways: by challenging caste, class and gender hierarchies and by articulating a new category of himmati mehariya (courageous women) for the formation of their identity as reporters and writers. They share an ethic of courage and care for the welfare of people on the margins. The essay uses this case of voluntary ethics shared among Dalit women, and their enactment of a reporter’s identity, as a foundation for reflecting on the idea of “smallness”. It asks how these women redefine media practices and create their own public sphere as emerging writers in the local Bundeli and Hindi languages. Drawing on interviews, news coverage, reports, surveys and a documentary film, the essay argues that the Dalit women reporters internationalize the notion of the “local”. They contribute new insights to debates in world literature. They de-orientalize India’s literary renaissance by reshaping the representation of Dalit women in the Hindi public sphere. They retain cultural nuances of their caste identity while engaging with the modern changes shaped by global forces.

BIOGRAPHIC NOTE *Dipak Barkhade currently teaches English in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at ITM SLS Baroda University, Gujarat, India. He received his PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Hyderabad, Telangana, India in 2023. Dipak belongs to an ethno-lin-*

guistic minority within the Dalit community, and his writing is shaped by his upbringing in western India. His research focuses on the politics of language and identity in central and western India. He recently published his article, "Locating Multilingualism of Bundeli Chamars in Indian Literature," in the Journal of World Literature edited by David Damrosch and Delia Ungureanu. His one-act play, "The Dream of a Child" was published in Sahitya Akademi's journal, Indian Literature in 2023. He is interested in exploring Dalit and Adivasi literature within the trans-regional and cross-cultural context.

JEREMIAH FELIX NWACHUKWU

Translating Memory Across Scales: Digital Platforms and Postmemory of the Nigerian Civil War

In recent years, memoirs by key actors of the 1967–1970 civil war have begun circulating widely through blogs, news sites and social media. These digital platforms (often modest in scale but expansive in reach) have become new sites of memory transmission, engaging younger Nigerians who did not live through the war. Scholarship on the Nigerian Civil War has traditionally focused on printed memoirs and formal publishing channels. In addition, despite the proliferation of digital remixes of these memoirs, little attention has been paid to how such platforms mediate remembrance and interpretation among postwar generations. This gap leaves unexplored how small-scale digital interactions shape collective memory and emotional inheritance in contemporary Nigeria. This study examines how inherited memories are interpreted, reshaped and emotionally negotiated in online spaces. Drawing on Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory and Neil Smith's politics of scale, it explores how social media platforms such as X, Facebook, and YouTube function as grassroots presses that translate war stories across generational, cultural and technological boundaries. Here, translation is understood not only in linguistic terms but also as a broader process of mediation, between past and present, print and digital, personal and collective. Using digital ethnography, content analysis and online interviews, the research reveals how humour, empathy and critique animate the retelling of war narratives, *transforming remembrance into a dynamic, multi-scalar practice. These small digital spaces emerge as active sites of cultural negotiation, where Nigerians reimagine memory, belonging and justice in the postdigital age.*

BIOGRAPHIC NOTE *J. Felix Nwachukwu is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Modern Languages at Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. He specialises in French and translation, with scholarly interests spanning linguistics, literature, and cultural memory. He holds a PhD in Translation Studies from Stellenbosch University, South Africa, and participated in the 26th CETRA Summer School at KU Leuven in 2014. His research focuses on translation process studies and has recently expanded to examine the intersections of translation, identity, postmemory, and the mediation of trauma across languages and media. In addition to his academic work, he has served as Acting Head of Department and played a key role in establishing the department where he works. His scholarship brings African perspectives to global conversations on translation, digital culture and memory studies.*

PANEL 6: HISTORICIZING THE SMALL PRESS

ASHA ROGERS

Scales and Methods of Print Decolonization: Birmingham's Third World Publications

This paper historicises discussions about contemporary small press activism by introducing the co-operative English book distributor Third World Publications (TWP) and its significant intervention in large-scale debates about inequality in global publishing and communication during the period of late decolonization in the 1970s and 1980s. As a book distributor that connected print materials with readers, TWP is an example of a rare, understudied, yet crucial organism. More importantly, TWP's interpretation of this function meant it not only supplied a national ecology of bookshops (green, leftist, feminist, and others) but sought to introduce books published in countries in the global South to readers in the North. In doing so, TWP worked to increase the viability of African authors placing their work with publishers on the continent and bring the structures and economics of the colonial book trade into question by disrupting the unidirectional flow of print materials from North to South. Print decolonization was, in other words, as much a practical question of publishing infrastructure as of literary and linguistic practice. By representing print activism at the small-scale and at the structural level of global communications, TWP poses methodological challenges to the tendency to either focus on the micro (the material book, the prose writing of individual authors) or the macro (forces of political economy).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE *Dr Asha Rogers is Associate Professor of Contemporary Postcolonial Literature at the University of Birmingham and author of State Sponsored Literature: Britain and Cultural Diversity after 1945 (OUP, 2020), which studies the state as a cultural actor and a major condition of post-WWII literature and won the 2021 University English Prize. She is currently undertaking a British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship for the project 'Eng. Lit. after Empire: decolonizing the curriculum at decolonization, 1965-1985'.*

DEVANJAN KHUNTIA

Small Presses and the Making of An Alternative Public Sphere: Re-Scaling Religion and Subaltern Voice through Mahima Dharma in Odisha

This paper examines how small presses in the state of Odisha in India contributed to the creation of an alternative public sphere by disseminating the teachings of Mahima Dharma, a 19th century new religious movement that emerged among subaltern communities. Mahima Dharma articulated a radical critique of Brahmanical religion, caste hierarchy and ritual domination, proposing instead an egalitarian spirituality centred on the formless Alekh Brahma (single god) and denouncing anthropomorphised god. While the movement faced significant resistance from upper caste elites both in colonial and post independent India, its ideological reach expanded across Odisha and beyond. This expansion cannot be understood solely through doctrinal appeal or itinerant ascetics rather it was crucially enabled through the material and intellectual infrastructures of small presses. Local bookstores and neighbourhood presses often operating outside the mainstream publishing circuits, played a decisive role in circulating Mahima Dharma's teachings. These publications typically low cost, limited-run and locally distributed, did not aspire to commercial success. Instead, they cultivated focused reading communities and readership, enabling subaltern publics to access religious philosophy, biographies of saints, hymns and polemic tracts that challenged dominant caste-Hindu narratives. Through these modest publications, small presses generated a counter archive that contested both the epistemic authority of Brahmanical ideology and commercial logic of large publishing houses. Drawing on the workshop's theme of 'politics of small scales', the paper argues that these presses rescaled religious discourses by embedding dissenting spiritual knowledge within everyday reading practices. They forged a micro public

sphere that expanded the intellectual and political space available to marginalized groups. By foregrounding the scalar practices of small presses, this study offers a new perspective on how regional religious movements produce alternative forms of cultural authority beyond the reach of mainstream publishing.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE *Dr Devanjan Khuntia teaches Sociology of Media, Urban Sociology, Crime and Deviance and Gender. His primary research frameworks are based on the complex relationships between neo-liberal global market economy, formation of social spaces, political economy of news media in contemporary India and its role in shaping public consciousness.*

COLOPHON

This booklet of abstracts has been published on occasion of *POLITICS OF SMALL SCALES, DIGITAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, & AESTHETIC TRANSFORMATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY PRESSES*

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