

*Book of Abstracts  
and Bionotes*

*Invisible Disabilities*



**The second edition of the International Workshop  
“Not dis-abled. Just differently abled.”**

**Galați, 26-27 November, 2024**

## *Book of Abstracts*

### *Plenaries*

**Anamaria Ciubară**, Professor Dr. Habil., "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați,  
*Characteristics of the Depressive Syndrome in Children and in Adolescents*  
[*Particularități ale sindromului depresiv la copii și adolescenți*]

This article explores the unique characteristics, causes, and implications of the depressive syndrome in children and adolescents, highlighting its prevalence and underdiagnosis.

Depression, a significant contributor to mortality among youth aged 10-25, often goes unrecognized due to varied symptoms influenced by age and cognitive-affective maturity. Beyond traditional risk factors like genetics and parental influence, modern socio-economic and political changes exacerbate the issue, with stressors such as parental separation, school pressures, exposure to violence, and parental migration for work abroad significantly impacting young people. Symptoms manifest differently from those in adults, including persistent sadness, irritability, social withdrawal, appetite and sleep changes, somatic complaints, and suicidal ideation.

Anxiety often accompanies depression, further disrupting education, relationships, and overall well-being, while increasing the likelihood of substance abuse and mental health struggles into adulthood. Adolescents in Eastern Europe face heightened vulnerability due to economic challenges and limited mental health resources, and phenomena like the "Blue Whale Challenge" underscore the exploitation of their psychological fragility.

Effective intervention requires interdisciplinary collaboration between psychiatrists, psychologists, educators, and families, focusing on early detection, robust prevention programs, and addressing socio-economic vulnerabilities. The paper emphasizes the critical need for community awareness and structured support systems to prevent long-term consequences, calling for strategies that not only treat depression but also reduce its socio-cultural triggers, fostering healthier environments for children and adolescents.

**Keywords:** *depression, adolescents, symptoms, prevention, interdisciplinary*

**Ionuț Croitoru**, Independent researcher, *Living with a stammer*

For most people, public speaking is terrifying. For someone like me, who stammers, that fear is not reserved for the stage—it happens every time I speak. Since I was five years old, stammering has been shaping how I experience the world, creating challenges in everything, from simple conversations to professional interactions. But it has also taught me resilience and shaped who I am today.

In this presentation, I will share my journey of navigating life with a stammer. As a child, I faced bullying and shied away from opportunities to speak, retreating into video games and music for comfort. For years, I have seen my stammer as an obstacle, something to hide. But in my thirties, I decided it was time for a change. Therapy, introspection, and a commitment to pushing myself outside my comfort zone helped me accept my stammer and use it as a source of strength.

Now, as a husband, father, manager, and author, I have come to see stammering not as a limitation, but as part of my identity. My story is about small, deliberate steps—from starting conversations I used to avoid to taking up kickboxing and writing a book. Through this journey, I have realized the power of owning our differences.

This talk is not just about stammering; it is about understanding invisible disabilities and creating a world where everyone feels seen and included. I hope my story encourages others to embrace their challenges and rewrite their narratives.

**Keywords:** *stammer, fear, bullying, comfort zone, identity*

**Mioara Grigoraș**, Psychologist/ Psychotherapist, PhD Candidate, “Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați, *Body language in anxiety and depression [Limbaajul corpului în anxietate și depresie]*

In today’s context, affective disorders such as anxiety, depression, and stress are increasingly prevalent due to declining social cohesion, unrealistic expectations, negative news, and other social factors. These conditions have biological roots and are influenced by stress and genetics. Anxiety and depression are seen as two sides of the same coin, anxiety being a response to stress, while depression involves persistent sadness and a loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities.

Stress and negative emotions manifest in both the mind and the body, which are inseparable. Healing requires somatic approaches, such as working with bodily sensations, as the body “communicates” through experiences, not words, thus somatic therapies and Polyvagal Theory provide effective solutions for restoring psychological balance.

Although anxiety and depressive disorders are challenging, they can also serve as opportunities for personal growth, aligning with Shakespeare’s wisdom, which emphasizes the importance of expressing pain for healing.

**Keywords:** *psycho-emotional health, body wisdom, Polyvagal Theory*

**Esther Heymans**, Fulbright ETA, West University of Timișoara, *We Will Always Be Here: An appeal for a radical language shift regarding disabled individuals in Academia*

Disability studies are often conflated with the study of concern for disabled individuals. In doing so, disability studies frequently create a *disabled other*, who emerges when spaces spend the majority of their time talking about people with disabilities, without ever assuming that they could be talking to a disabled person.

This presentation identifies the language used in academic spaces that is involved in othering disabled individuals. After defining the *disabled other*, this presentation proposes a radical language shift and shows the importance of continual

cultural awareness, based upon a realization that people with disabilities have always been involved in academia and always will be. By analyzing autoethnographies of disabled academics – qualitative research – and lived experience, the presenter argues for the inclusion of disabled academics in this culture shift.

The aim is to show the consistent impact over time of disabled academics and to highlight the potential value loss if they continue to be undervalued. As a result, attendees will gain knowledge about everyday language shifts designed to make their individual classrooms and workspaces more accessible. They will also be introduced to the idea of mutual aid and universal access for disabled individuals and shown how those concepts can be of use in an academic setting.

Finally, attendees will be invited to think more critically about the spaces that they occupy and the body/minds they occupy those spaces with. This increased culture shift will go a long way towards promoting disability equality in academic spaces.

**Keywords:** *disability in higher education, language use, disability inclusion, invisible disabilities, disability policy*

**Sandrina Mindu**, Assistant Professor, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, *I exist only if... I'm perfect! How much and how does perfectionism "disable" us? [Exist doar dacă... sunt perfect! Cât și cum ne "dizabilizează" perfecționismul?]*

Imperfect does not mean inadequate. Despite what we think, most perfectionists are not motivated by the pursuit of perfection, but by the avoidance of failure. Whether we are perfectionists in our relationships or in our projects, this trait can fool us, because it hides our need for control that actually compensates for our fear of being vulnerable, of not being valued, accepted, loved except under "conditions" of perfection.

Unrealistic expectations, emotional detachment, defensiveness, all-or-nothing thinking, procrastination, difficulty relaxing, inability to make quick decisions, are all indicators of perfectionism that we do not think about when we consider that this trait brings us psychological growth. The topic is an invitation for reflection from the perspective of the educational process and its actors.

**Keywords:** *perfectionism, disability, perfectionism, fear of failure, control and vulnerability, psychological growth, unrealistic expectations*

## *Contributions*

**Daniela-Aura Bogdan**, Assistant Professor, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați", *How to Write About Disabilities? A Style Guide for Journalists and Breaches of Professional Ethics*

In a world where words shape perceptions and can either open or close doors, journalists hold immense responsibility when writing about disabilities. The work *How to Write About Disabilities? A Style Guide for Journalists and Breaches of Professional Ethics* aims to serve as a moral and stylistic compass, offering stories, examples, and lessons to help media professionals adjust the lens through which they view and describe the world.

In its first section, the guide invites readers to discover how simple, respectful, and person-centered language can transform articles into messages of inclusion. In the second section, it unveils common pitfalls, such as sensationalism or victimization, which distort reality and perpetuate biases. Through a blend of case studies, ethical principles, and examples of best practices, this work becomes a story about how we can change the world - word by word - starting with the responsibility of writing accurately about those whom society often overlooks.

**Keywords:** *disabilities, inclusion, ethics, representation, sensationalism, respectful language, stereotypes*

**Adela Catană**, Assistant Professor, Ferdinand I Military Technical Academy, Bucharest, *The Social Construction of (Dis)ability: Key Insights*

This article aims to explore the way in which (dis)ability is socially constructed and to provide a coherent theoretical framework intended to support further analyses. It begins with a discussion regarding the (mis)use of ambiguous labels such as health, disease, illness, sickness, impairment, disability, disorder, handicap, and malady, and emphasizes the significance of their accurate comprehension.

It continues with an introduction of the fundamental theories that pertain to the medical field as well as medical sociology, which support the construction of disability. Special focus is placed on disabilities that do not have natural causes and are generated by a wide range of social factors, including war wounds.

The last part of this article offers an analysis of 'ableism', or the discrimination in favour of able-bodied people. Various examples from cultural and literary studies are used to enrich this paper. In conclusion, this article highlights the importance of a proper understanding of disability and urges for a universal consensus regarding its definition and application.

**Keywords:** *ableism, disability, health, social construction, socially caused disabilities*

**Gabriela Debita**, Junior Lecturer, PhD Candidate, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați; **Irina Anca Cighir**, PhD Candidate, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați; **Iulia-Veronica Cocu**, Associate Professor, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați; **Ana-Maria**



**Moga**, Junior Lecturer, PhD Candidate, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați; **Lidia-Mihaela Necula**, Assistant Professor, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, *Unseen, Not Unheard: Empowering Education for Invisible Disabilities – A Workshop*

*Unseen, Not Unheard: Empowering Education for Invisible Disabilities* is a dynamic and interactive workshop designed to equip educators with the knowledge, tools, and strategies to support students with invisible disabilities effectively. These hidden challenges – ranging from learning disabilities and mental health conditions to chronic illnesses and sensory impairments – can significantly impact a student's academic journey and social experience.

Through engaging discussions, practical activities, and case studies, participants will gain insight into recognizing the signs of invisible disabilities, fostering an inclusive classroom environment, and implementing adaptive teaching methods. The workshop also emphasizes the importance of empathy, communication, and collaboration in addressing the unique needs of each student while promoting their confidence and academic success.

By the end of the session, attendees will leave with actionable strategies to create a more inclusive educational space where all students, seen and unseen, can thrive.

**Keywords:** *invisible disabilities, inclusive education, empathy in teaching, adaptive strategies, student support*

**Iulia-Corina Dobrotă**, Associate Professor, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, *Conceptual Metaphors of Disability*

Conceptual metaphors are a way of understanding abstract or complex concepts by mapping them onto more concrete and familiar experiences. When it comes to disability, several conceptual metaphors have been identified in language and discourse to help people make sense of the concept of disability.

Here are some of the main perspectives that shape conceptual metaphors related to disability: disability as a medical condition, disability as a burden, disability as a social injustice, disability as a cost, disability as an enemy, disability as a journey, disability as diversity, disability as identity, disability as embodiment, disability as a social construct.

These conceptual metaphors influence the way people think and talk about disability, shaping societal attitudes and policies, so it is extremely important to be aware of these metaphors and their implications to promote a more inclusive and equitable understanding of disability. The choice of metaphor can have a significant impact on how individuals with disabilities are perceived and treated in society.

**Keywords:** *conceptual metaphors, disability, society*

**Oana-Maria Ghiban**, BA Student, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, *Not dis-abled. Just differently-abled*

As everyone knows, a visually impaired person is one who can partially see or has no visual perception at all. It is obvious. When a typical person, wrongly called normal by the majority, sees a white cane wearer, they point the concrete aspects. They assume

they saw a person who can barely see, if at all, who uses that tool to walk and manage around. That should be it, right? At first glance, yes, but there is a lot more to it than many people would imagine. For those who take regular contact with disability, things will never stop here.

Nowadays, our world is dominated by the idea of extreme individualism, often pushed to the boundaries of a disfunctional social interaction. Busy with our own problems, staring at the phone or simply living just for ourselves, sometimes we can hardly see *the other* next to us. Empathy is a popular word, but we act almost the opposite way when presented with a certain situation. To help, you must understand, to understand, you must care.

In this case, many notable differences can be listed, even between people with the same degree of impairment, let alone the fact that sight loss conditions are very diverse. Thus, it would be quite unfair and ignorant of us if we were to place everyone with such disabilities under the general and undocumented label of blindness. Every visually impaired person is unique, a thing to be known by anyone, at least from the human perspective.

Despite the things that might tell each one of us apart from the rest, we all share an important trait. We are not disabled, we are just differently abled. When people let us be ourselves and open gates, we show them the light we hold inside. Equal efforts are key for healthy development.

**Keywords:** *visually impaired, disabled, empathy, individualism*

**Ștefania Luparu, Andreea Popovici, George Corcoz**, BA Students, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, *Shadows that Linger: Unveiling Trauma and Resilience in "A Little Life"*

The project delves into the exploration of mental health challenges - such as PTSD, anxiety, depression, and self-harm - through the perspective of Jude St. Francis, a central figure in Hanya Yanagihara's *A Little Life*. It examines the enduring impact of Jude's harrowing childhood experiences, which continue to shape his adult life. This poignant narrative offers a profoundly realistic portrayal of a life marked by trauma, reminding us that not all stories conclude with a happy ending, and that life's complexities often defy conventional notions of beauty.

**Keywords:** *mental health, challenge, trauma, psychological impact*

**Lidia-Mihaela Necula**, Assistant Professor, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, *Of Stagers, Stammers, and the Invisible Other: David Lodge, Therapy*

This article examines the multifaceted portrayal of invisible disabilities in David Lodge's novel *Therapy*. Through the protagonist Laurence Passmore's struggles with a mysterious knee ailment and pervasive existential angst, Lodge interrogates the intersection of physical discomfort, mental health, and social invisibility. By analyzing Passmore's physical "stagers" and psychological "stammers," this study highlights how Lodge humorously yet sensitively depicts the challenges of living with conditions that lack clear visibility or societal acknowledgment.

The paper also explores the concept of the *Invisible Other* - a metaphorical representation of how individuals with invisible disabilities are alienated, misinterpreted, or dismissed by their peers and by themselves. Through close readings of key scenes and

character interactions, the article argues that Lodge critiques cultural norms surrounding health and identity while advocating for greater empathy and understanding. Ultimately, *Therapy* emerges as a rich text for examining how humor, narrative, and character development intersect to shed light on the overlooked realities of invisible disabilities in contemporary literature.

**Keywords:** *invisible disabilities, staggers and stammers, mental health, alienation, social invisibility*

**Adrian-Paul Nedelcuță**, Junior Lecturer, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, *Introduction in the Actor's Art. Regaining One's Senses [Introducere în arta actorului. Redobândirea simțurilor]*

*Introduction to the Actor's Art: Regaining One's Senses* offers a unique workshop experience that explores the transformative power of acting techniques to reconnect with sensory awareness and expression. Tailored to include individuals with invisible disabilities – such as anxiety, sensory processing disorders, or chronic conditions – this workshop blends creative practices with therapeutic benefits.

Participants will engage in exercises that sharpen sensory perception, enhance body awareness, and foster emotional expression in a safe, inclusive environment. Through improvisation, role-playing, and mindful movement, the workshop encourages self-discovery, confidence building, and the rediscovery of physical and emotional presence.

By embracing the actor's craft, attendees will gain practical tools to overcome internal barriers, communicate effectively, and find new ways to navigate their unique challenges. This session celebrates the intersection of art and self-healing, empowering participants to reclaim their senses and express themselves authentically.

**Keywords:** *actor's art, sensory awareness, invisible disabilities, creative expression, self-healing through art*

**Adora-Ioana Paraschivescu**, PhD Candidate, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, *Unseen, Unheard, Disabled: The Silent Toll of Domestic Abuse*

Domestic abuse is an enormity of modern society, an issue that often leaves signs invisible to the naked eye. These psychological, emotional, and mental consequences are all forms of invisible disabilities that profoundly affect a survivor's life.

Unlike physical disabilities that are often more apparent, the aftermath of domestic abuse remains hidden, making it harder for the victim to access recognition, empathy or support. Drawing on examples from fictional writings and psychological insights, my essay intends to explore how domestic abuse can be seen as an invisible disability and how it impacts the quality of life.

This type of abuse encompasses not only physical violence that leaves undoubtedly visible scars, but also emotional manipulation, financial control, and psychological terror. While physical injuries might heal, the psychological damage such as depression, anxiety, and dissociation PTSD can persist for years, rendering those who underwent it unable to fully engage in daily life or form healthy relationships. These psychological impacts align with the definition of disability under frameworks such as



the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which recognizes these as impairments that limit major life activities.

Fictional literature often portrays the complexities of the consequences of an abusive relation. In *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, Celie endures years of physical and emotional abuse from her husband, Albert. While her physical scars fade, the psychological damage manifests as a profound sense of worthlessness and fear. Celie's gradual journey to reclaim her identity and independence illustrates how deeply abuse can disable a person's self-perception and agency.

**Keywords:** *domestic abuse, emotional manipulation, psychological damage, learned helplessness, invisible trauma*

**Vicențiu Pușcașu**, Assistant Professor, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, *Bridging the Gap: Cultural Mediation, Accessibility and Disability in Contemporary Romanian Art*

Building upon the comprehensive contribution of Anna Millet-Gallant (*The Disabled Body in Contemporary Art*) and corroborating the methodological and doctrinal aspects stipulated in Claire Bishop's work (*Participation*), this presentation investigates the praxeological dimension of the curatorial discipline, in order to establish an introductory study dedicated to making contemporary artistic collections accessible to audiences with disabilities.

Grounding the research in Lev Vygotsky's theories on cultural reception differences of disadvantaged social groups, my investigation will explore the challenges posed by the cultural mediation of artistic artworks and exhibitions to audiences with physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities. The hypothesis I state asserts that there is a cleavage in the interpretative and/or perceptual possibilities of artistic corpora, as well as in the means of valorization employed in the curatorial process, which predispose disabled individuals to alienation and deprivation.

Although there are numerous prior studies focused on the means and techniques for improving non-inclusive curatorial paradigms (J. French, J. Rugg, P. O'Neil, et al.), the adaptation of these concepts within the Romanian context has gained traction only recently. Moreover, the subject of cultural mediation enjoys interest primarily in the institutional register (museums, galleries, universities, etc.) and less so in the collective consciousness or in the sphere of public policies. The research project initiated by this study will aggregate a collection of theories and perspectives contributing to the integration of various categories of audiences discriminated against, complementing the Romanian curatorial toolkit and the local contemporary conceptions of cultural-artistic mediation. Additionally, the material will question the viability of transferring and implementing these notions on the artistic and institutional spectrum of Galați.

**Keywords:** *cultural mediation, contemporary art, disability, curatorship, inclusive exhibition*

**Simona-Mirela Rusu**, PhD Candidate, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, *Translating Pain, Concealing Disability: The Art of Medical Translation for Hidden Conditions*

The paper focuses on the nuanced challenges of medical translation, particularly for conditions that are not visibly apparent. The work likely explores how pain and hidden

disabilities are represented in medical language and communication, emphasizing the translator's role in bridging the gap between clinical terminology and the lived experiences of patients. It may also delve into the ethical and linguistic strategies employed to convey the realities of invisible disabilities while addressing the potential for their inadvertent marginalization or concealment in medical discourse.

**Keywords:** *medical translation, invisible disabilities, medical language*

**Hande Tekdemir**, Associate Professor, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, *The Disabled Bodies of the Empire: Discordant and Ambivalent Voices in Wilkie Collins' 'The Moonstone'*

As an early example of detective fiction, Wilkie Collins' 1868 novel *The Moonstone* was initially serialized in Dickens' journal *All the Year Round*. While the main goal of the narrative is to unearth the mysterious theft of the precious gem after its being brought to England from India, the series of testimonies by multiple narrators also shed light on the history of British colonization. In contemporary scholarship on Wilkie Collins' oeuvre, there is still no consensus regarding the portrayal of English imperialism in his fiction: Does Collins approve of the atrocities committed by the English in India, or does he provide a subtle criticism of the imperial policy?

In this paper, I would like to address this question by examining discourses on ableism and disability in *The Moonstone*. Posed against the 'abled' masculine bodies of the English who are given power and agency through their narrating positions, I would like to draw attention to the marginalization of two female disabled bodies in the representation of Rosanna and Limping Lucy, which are later complemented with the emasculated biracial figure of Ezra Jennings. On the one hand, this paper will elaborate on the ableist assumptions in *The Moonstone* as an extension of the disciplinary power of the Victorian novel form to categorize nineteenth century subjects. On the other hand, I would like to examine the spectral appearance of disabled characters as producing "cracks" within the biopolitical structure of the Victorian novel, leading to what I would like to call discordant and ambivalent voices that disturb the "conformist" form of the Victorian novel. All three disabled/unable characters are subversive in the novel: albeit briefly, they talk back, look back, strike back at certain key scenes; hence, they resist the disciplinary mechanism.

Borrowing from Victorian disability scholars such as Martha Stoddard Holmes' *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture* and Clare Walker Gore's *Plotting Disability in the Nineteenth-Century Novel*, my ultimate goal in this paper is to incite discussion on how ableism intersects with discourses on gender and imperialism in Wilkie Collins' work.

**Keywords:** *British colonization, disability, disabled characters, Victorian novel*

## *Bionotes*

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Daniela-Aura Bogdan is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Literature, Linguistics and Journalism at the Faculty of Letters, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați. She has a PhD in Philology, her doctoral thesis concerning Literature and Advertising Discourse. She has almost 20 years of experience in media (radio, TV and newspaper) and her area of expertise is connected to Photojournalism, Radio & TV-media production, Television Genres, Advertising & Creativity, Critical thinking. Her research areas of interest and specializations are philology, book marketing, media history, advertising, media genres, digital media.

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Adela Catană has a PhD in Philology from the University of Bucharest and is currently working as a Senior Lecturer for the Commission of Foreign Languages of the Ferdinand I Military Technical Academy, in Bucharest, Romania. During her career, she has been a visiting scholar at several institutions such as the University of Glasgow, UK, Free University, Germany, Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium and New Bulgarian University, Bulgaria. Her academic interests include, among others, British and North-American studies, Utopianism, military culture, gender studies, and have been materialised in numerous papers presented in national and international conferences, and published by various IDB indexed journals. She is also the author of *Social Concepts in Contemporary Utopian Discourse* (ArsDocendi, 2018).

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Anamaria Ciubară is a primary psychiatrist, head of department at the "Elisabeta Doamna" Psychiatry Hospital in Galați, and a university professor in the Department of Psychiatry at "Dunărea de Jos" University, the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy. She also serves as an editor for the *American Journal of Psychiatry and Neuroscience* and collaborates with the Medlife clinics in Galați and Helicomed in Iași.

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Iulia Cocu is an Associate Professor at the English Department of the Faculty of Letters, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, Romania. She was awarded a PhD in English stylistics in 2012 by "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, Romania, for the PhD dissertation *Black Humour: A Stylistic Approach*, which was published in 2013. The research she has conducted up to the present has materialized in over thirty articles and book reviews. Moreover, she authored 3 books and co-authored 4. Her research interests include linguistic stylistics, teaching English for Specific Purposes, language learning strategies, lexicology, English for Professional Communication, English for Computer Science. She is a member of ESSE and RSEAS.

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George is a 19-year-old student at the Faculty of Letters, majoring in Romanian-English. An athletic individual, he combines his passion for sports with a love for reading, particularly books that explore the world of athletics and physical achievement.

**CROITORU, Ionuț**, Independent researcher, [ionut.coritoru84@gmail.com](mailto:ionut.coritoru84@gmail.com)

Ionuț Croitoru is a Quality Assurance Manager and Agile practitioner with a passion for operational excellence and team leadership. A proud alumnus of "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, he holds a BA in English and French (2007) and an MA in English Translation (2009). His educational background has been instrumental in fostering his collaborative approach to managing globally distributed teams.

Currently working in the video game industry, Ionuț has over a decade of experience in optimizing processes, ensuring compliance, and driving innovation in quality assurance. Beyond his professional life, he is an author, a husband, and a father, constantly seeking growth and connection.

As someone who has navigated life with a stammer since childhood, Ionuț shares his journey of overcoming challenges and embracing his identity, aiming to inspire others to see the strength in their differences and foster a more inclusive world.

**DEBITA, Gabriela**, Junior Lecturer, PhD Candidate, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați,  
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Gabriela Debita is a PhD Candidate in English and American Literature and an adjunct instructor at "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, Romania. She holds a BA in English Literature from the State University of New York and an MA in English Literature from the University of Ottawa. Her doctoral thesis, entitled *Textual Heterotopias in the Fiction of Ursula K. Le Guin and Sofia Samatar*, explores both in-text heterotopic spaces and the literary text as a heterotopia. Her research interests focus on contemporary American fantasy and science fiction female writers. She has published several book chapters and articles and has given a substantial number of conference talks on Ursula K. Le Guin, Nnedi Okorafor, Sofia Samatar, and other fantasy and speculative fiction writers.

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Corina Dobrotă, Associate Professor, PhD at the Faculty of Letters, Department of English, has been teaching mainly English for Specialized Purposes, as well as Translation Theory and Practice, Syntax, Morphology, Semantics and Pragmatics to students in Philology, Engineering, Law, Arts and Economics for nearly two decades. Her PhD was defended at the Faculty of Letters of Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania in 2007, with a contrastive study (English-Romanian) regarding specialized metaphor. She has authored two monographies, several chapters in collective volumes, and almost 90 scientific articles published in national and international proceedings, mainly focusing on translation and translatology, as well as English for Economics and Legal English.

**GHIBAN, Oana-Maria**, BA student, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, [oanamaria.g5@gmail.com](mailto:oanamaria.g5@gmail.com)

Oana is a vibrant 20-year-old student from Galați, whose journey of resilience and determination is nothing short of inspiring. Her story began when her parents noticed issues with her right eye at just six months old. After two years of relentless medical tests and an unfortunate surgery, Oana lost her sight completely.

Yet, this challenge didn't define her - it fueled her strength and shaped her into a true warrior. Refusing to let her condition hold her back, she embraced life with unwavering courage, seamlessly integrating herself into the community. Oana graduated high school with commendable grades and is now pursuing her passion for modern languages at the Faculty of Letters at Dunărea de Jos University.

An avid reader and writer, Oana has a deep love for uncovering the meaning in every word. Her dreams are as bold as her spirit - she aims to become a skilled translator or an inspiring teacher, making her mark in the world with the power of language and her indomitable will.

**GRIGORAȘ, Mioara**, Psychologist/ Psychotherapist, PhD Candidate, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, [grigoras\\_mioara@yahoo.com](mailto:grigoras_mioara@yahoo.com)

Mioara Grigoraș is a clinical psychologist, psychological counsellor, and psychotherapist, accredited by the Romanian College of Psychologists, with over 17 years of experience in the field. She graduated from the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași (2006), and from the Master's program "Psychological Assessment and Recovery Psychotherapies", Petre Andrei University, Iași (2008).

She also completed the postgraduate courses "Experiential and Unification Psychotherapy centred on adult-child-couple-family" from the Romanian Society of Experiential Psychotherapy and the training course for trainers accredited by CNFPA. She is currently a psychologist in an individual psychology office, lecturer/psychologist at the Centre for European Studies and Consultancy, collaborates with various NGOs and institutions in Galați. She is also involved in various projects and events with psychological themes, and she participated in psycho-educational conferences/projects in the country and abroad.



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Esther Heymans is a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant currently lecturing at West University of Timișoara. She is a graduate of St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, USA. Her previous research includes: "*Beyond the Ramp: an inquiry into the attitudes, assumptions, and understanding toward disability in higher education.*" This research was presented at the Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity among other places. Esther is continually involved in disability advocacy, and her current research is focused on the ways that ableist language shapes sociopolitical lines across a culture. While working in Romania, she hopes that her two dogs, Socrates and Loki, are proud.

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Ștefania is a 19-year-old student at the Faculty of Letters, majoring in Romanian-English. An avid reader, she particularly enjoys exploring fan fiction. Her hobbies include photography, outdoor walks, and visiting the cinema, reflecting her love for creativity and storytelling in various forms.

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Dr. Lidia Mihaela Necula is an Assistant Professor at "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, where she has been shaping minds and inspiring students since 2003. Her academic journey reached a significant milestone in 2010 with the successful public defense of her PhD thesis, *David Lodge: Novel Wor(l)ds and Media(ted) Communication*. This accomplishment earned her the esteemed Doctoral Title in Philology and laid the foundation for her diverse scholarly pursuits.

Dr. Necula's academic interests span a rich tapestry of fields, reflecting her intellectual curiosity and interdisciplinary approach. From delving into the evocative worlds of Romantic

poetry and Victorian literature – core subjects of her lectures and seminars for BA students – to exploring the intersections of artistic forms, literary representations, and intercultural dialogue, she brings a fresh perspective to the classroom. Her expertise extends to the MA program *Literature, Film and Cultural Representations*, where she teaches courses on literary conventions and filmic architectures, or on artistic forms and their literary representation, but also on the nuanced dynamics of British cultural spaces.

Beyond teaching, Dr. Necula serves as the *Editorial Secretary of Cultural Intertexts*, a highly regarded academic journal indexed in CEEOL, DOAJ, EBSCO, ERIH PLUS, INDEX COPERNICUS, PROQUEST, and OPEN AIRE. As a member of the Editorial Board, she joins her efforts with her colleagues' to ensure that the publication remains a vital platform for scholarly discourse and innovation. Dr. Necula also ventured into fiction with the publication of her postmodern romance novel, *Dragonfly Wings (Aripi de libelulă)*, in 2015 and when she is not immersed in the worlds of literature and academia, she enjoys crafting her own stories, continuing to explore the boundless possibilities of the written word.

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Adrian Paul Nedelcuță is a multifaceted performer and academic who bridges the worlds of the theatre, dance, and education. As an accomplished actor and ballet dancer, he is currently affiliated with the National Opera and Operetta Theatre "Nae Leonard" in Galați, where he brings dynamic performances to the stage. Adrian holds a BA degree in Performing Arts – Acting from "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați and an MA in Choreography from the prestigious UNATC Bucharest. He further advanced his expertise with a PhD in Theatre from UNAGE Iași, delving into the depths of performance theory and practice.

In addition to his artistic endeavours, Adrian is a Junior Lecturer at "Dunărea de Jos" University, where he inspires the next generation of performers by sharing his passion and knowledge of the performing arts. His work exemplifies the harmonious blend of creative expression and scholarly inquiry.

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Adora Paraschivescu has been teaching English as a Foreign Language since 2005. She earned a BA in Food Industry Engineering in 1998, followed by a bachelor's degree in German from "Ștefan cel Mare" University of Suceava in 2020. In 2021, she successfully passed her tenure exam for teaching foreign languages in primary and secondary schools. In 2021, Adora-Ioana Paraschivescu commenced courses for her MD, and upon graduating in 2023, she enrolled in the PhD program at the Doctoral School of Humanist Sciences at "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați. Her research focus for the PhD is on Figurative Language in Clothing Aesthetic Description.

Currently, she conducts courses for BA students at the Faculty of Engineering, specializing in English for Specific Purposes – Engineering. Additionally, she teaches both English and German at two Secondary Schools. Her areas of expertise and interest include teaching, foreign languages, translation and interpretation, universal literature, filmic representation, and English for Specific Purposes.

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Mirela Simona Rusu, born in 1980, is a dedicated English teacher and educational leader from Galați, known for her passion for children, peace, and self-discovery. With over two decades of experience, she began her career teaching in rural areas, where she cultivated a profound respect for simplicity and unconditional love for all beings. Since 2014, she has been transforming classrooms and communities at one of Galați's top schools, where she currently serves as deputy director, a role she has held since 2020.

Simona integrates innovative approaches like the Outward Mindset as an Arbinger facilitator and collaborates with the SuperTeach organization to champion education's transformative power. A lifelong learner, she holds a Bachelor's degree from "Dunărea de Jos" University and is pursuing a PhD. Her philosophy, "The meaning of life is to give life meaning," reflects her commitment to inspiring personal and collective growth.

Balancing her professional achievements with a fulfilling family life alongside her husband Claudiu, daughter Olivia, and pet Sasha, Simona views life as a journey of self-discovery, guided by love and purpose. She continues to foster harmony, sincerity, and respect in all aspects of her life and work, leaving a lasting impact on those she touches.

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Hande Tekdemir is an Associate Professor of English. She has worked at the Western Languages and Literatures Department of Bogazici University, Turkey between 2009-2024. Her research interests include Victorian literature, urban theory and trauma studies. She has published on Walter Benjamin, Edgar Allan Poe, Karen Tei Yamashita and Latife Tekin, along with a number of articles on nineteenth-century travelogues on Constantinople. She is currently based in Bucharest, Romania.