



CALL FOR PAPERS: CAPTIVE MINDS

Norms, Normativities and the Forms of Tragic Protest
in Literature and Cultural Practice

23rd International Conference of the Institute
of English Cultures and Literatures University of Silesia in Katowice,
September 20–23rd, 2018,
Szczyrk, Poland



Although generally resented and deemed unfavourable for individuals, societies and nations, Murti-Bing was a Mongolian philosopher who had succeeded in producing an organic means of transporting a “philosophy of life.” This Murti-Bing “philosophy of life,” which constituted the strength of the Sino-Mongolian army, was contained in pills in an extremely condensed form. A man who used these pills changed completely. He became serene and happy. The problems he had struggled with until then suddenly appeared to be

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superficial and unimportant. He smiled indulgently at those who continued to worry about them. Most affected were all questions pertaining to unsolvable ontological difficulties. A man who swallowed Murti-Bing pills became impervious to any metaphysical concerns. [...] More and more people took the Murti-Bing cure, and their resultant calm contrasted sharply with the nervousness of their environment. [...] [O]nce tormented by philosophical “insatiety,” now entered the service of the new society. Instead of writing the dissonant music of former days, they composed marches and odes. Instead of painting abstractions as before, they turned out socially useful pictures. But since they could not rid themselves completely of their former personalities, they became schizophrenics.

(Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*)

In a world transforming faster than ever before, a Murti-Bing pill would do wonders to those who painfully discover that their

heretofore professed philosophy of life has unexpectedly become a burden: an obstacle standing in the way to “serenity and happiness.” In fact, the miraculous power of the pill is simple: whatever norms gain on momentum at a given moment of time, they immediately become one’s own. With serenity and happiness at stake, the choice not to take the pill is a choice between one’s own “insatiable,” unique self and one’s peace of mind, the tranquility of life and liberty not to judge success in life by the gauge of satisfaction. In a world transforming faster than ever, in which the Murti-Bing pills are available without prescription and advertised in all official media, the refusal to blend into the woodwork for the sake of the comfort of being “impervious to any metaphysical concerns” is nothing short of a tragic choice.

Therefore, the 2018 edition of the International Conference of the Institute of English Cultures and Literatures of the University of Silesia in Katowice aims at addressing one of the most elusive, albeit simultaneously most tangible aspects of our experience of being in the world. As a foundation and a product of grand narratives, norms apply to any and every aspect of individual, communal and social life. They regulate our behaviors, determine directions in the evolution of arts and philosophical ideas, condition intra- and cross-cultural understanding, organize hierarchies. Yet—when transformed into laws—norms become appropriated by dominant discourses becoming “truths.” Those in control of language always construe them as “universal” and, as such, “transparent.” Those once tormented by philosophical “insatiety,” sharply aware of this, face a choice: a pill-induced schizophrenia which must eventually come, or even more catastrophic consequences of the tragic protest, which are most likely to ensue. Oppressive normativity and protest have always gone hand in hand. The 2018 International Conference of the Institute of English Cultures and Literatures, in a sense, is a product of the refusal to take the Murti-Bing pill.

We invite papers representing a wide range of research traditions and methodological positions; possible approaches may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- normativity and forms of protest in literature
 - the terror of convention
 - literature as a medium of protest

- literature as a vehicle of norm
- tragedy and protest
- protester as a tragic figure
- imprimatur, conspiracy and the dangers of literature
- nonconformity and the norm
- tropes of protest

- normativity and forms of protest in philosophy
 - the ethics of protest/the ethics of normativity
 - the aesthetics of protest
 - the ontology and epistemology of a norm
 - the ethics of civil, political and religious (dis)obedience
 - the metaphysics of a tragic protest
 - deconstructions as a norm/deconstructions as a form of protest
 - humanism, posthumanism and transforming normativity

- normativity and forms of protest in political discourses and law
 - democracy and norm
 - democracy and rebellion
 - the legality of protests
 - the EU between centripetal and centrifugal forces
 - power, manipulation, justification
 - legal genocide and normativity of the political doctrine
 - regulating guns, regulating uterus: normativity and protest
 - the ethics of whistleblowing

- normativity and forms of protest in cultural practice
 - ethnic normativities
 - nationality and normativisms
 - the fear of the alien and oppressive normativity
 - normativism of race, class and gender
 - normativism of race, class and gender
 - oppressive normativism and forms of resistance
 - (neo)colonial designs and local resistance movements
 - the birth of 21st century neonazism
 - rebellious religions/rebelions against religion
 - cultures and countercultures
 - rebels without a cause
 - intimate rebellions

- normativity and forms of protest in fine arts, music, cinema and new media
 - the semiology of the norm
 - the semiology of protest
 - protest and the systems of non-verbal representation
 - normativity and forms of protest in popular culture

- anthroponormativity and forms of protest posthumanist protest
 - biopolitics and rhetorics of oppositional consciousness
 - biopower and (non-normative) sovereignties
 - (tragic) forms of ecological protest
 - animals and animalities
 - Tsawalk and indigenous struggles against normativities

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