

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

International Conference

Multiculturality, Morality, and Public Affairs in the Digital Age

15–16 June 2026

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest

Amphitheatre Mircea Florian

Organised by

The Council for Research and Values in Philosophy, Washington D.C.
University of Bucharest, Faculty of Philosophy
The UNESCO Chair in Interculturality, Good Governance and Sustainable
Development

DAY 1

 Monday, 15 June 2026

1. Welcome Address & Opening Ceremony

Opening Ceremony

Viorel Vizureanu, Dean, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest

Bill Barbieri, Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

Hu Yeping, Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

Mihaela Pop, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest

Oana Șerban, Ph.D. Lecturer, Faculty of Philosophy & UNESCO Chair in Interculturality, Good Governance and Sustainable Development, University of Bucharest

10:00 – 11:30 Plenary Session I | Moral Pluralism and Interculturality in the Digital Age

Chair: Professor Dr. William Barbieri

PLENARY SESSION I

2. João Vila-Chã

Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Italy

The Other in the Algorithm: Trust, Recognition, and Moral Community in a Multicultural Digital Age

The digital age presents multiculturalism with a paradox philosophy has not yet fully confronted: the very technologies that promise to amplify cultural diversity and accelerate intercultural encounter simultaneously threaten the moral foundations on which genuine multicultural community rests. This paper argues that the paradox cannot be resolved at the level of policy or institutional design alone. It requires a philosophical diagnosis reaching down to the anthropological and ethical roots of the problem.

The argument proceeds through three interconnected reflections. The first draws on Emmanuel Levinas's ethics of the face and asks what becomes of the encounter with the Other when it is digitally mediated. Digital platforms do not merely change the form of intercultural encounter; they systematically immunize the self from the ethical summons that the Other's face imposes, thereby weakening the moral infrastructure on which multicultural solidarity depends. The second reflection draws on Martin Buber's distinction between I-Thou and I-It relations to analyse what surveillance capitalism does to the multicultural public sphere. The third moment turns to the political conditions of multicultural moral community, arguing that authentic multiculturalism requires a political body capable of sustaining the normative framework within which different cultures can recognise one another as equals.

The paper concludes by proposing that the resources for responding to this challenge are to be found in the personalist and phenomenological tradition: in Levinas's ethics of infinite responsibility, Buber's philosophy of genuine meeting, and Romano Guardini's warning about the emergence of the un-human. The digital age does not make these resources obsolete; it makes them urgent.

3. Jesper Garsdal

Docent (Senior Associate Professor), Sustainability, Social Innovation and Education; Coordinator of PROFILVIN, Denmark

The Three Gates – Self-Biography, Myth, and Intercultural Self-Critique, Exemplified through a Philosophy of Aging

Contemporary aging is often reduced to biomedical decline, neglecting its role as a vital phase of Individuation. This paper reclaims aging, first, as an underexplored dimension of social pedagogy (Natorp) and cultural philosophy (Cassirer), viewing the life course not as functional decay but as a change of the

individual's symbolic universe through the integration of unconscious dimensions of communal meaning (Gemeinschaft). Second, this notion of Gemeinschaft prompts reflection on the relationship between cultural meaning and morality. Third, the various implications of this notion of Gemeinschaft and individuation are explored in relation to intercultural dialogue.

The presentation moves beyond traditional gerontology by synthesizing autobiography and depth psychology. Drawing on Susan Rowland's work on (auto)biographical personal myths in Jungian literary theory, the presentation explores aging through the lens of the "personal myth." From this starting point, the perspective is broadened: Goethe's *Stirb und Werde* and C.G. Jung's notion of individuation — along with the possibility of a "prospective Gemeinschaft" arising from the integration of an unconscious communal dimension — are considered as possible openings of culture.

The final part applies this framework to intercultural philosophy, taking Raimon Panikkar's diatopical hermeneutics as its starting point, seeking homeomorphic equivalents of the aging process through which the transition between life and death is reinterpreted via diverse cultural symbols of *Stirb und Werde*.

4. Mark M Michalski

PhD, The CUA, Wash, DC

Phenomenon of AI and Phenomenon of Man: Will Transcending Technological Mediation Change Our Lives for the better?

The proliferation of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, agents, neural networks with machine learning has ushered in profound transformations in the way we live. AI affects and effects the way we act, react, believe, behave, cooperate, communicate, and understand the world and ourselves the way we never did before. Chat GPT vs Grok vs Gemini vs Claude vs Perplexity are just a small sample of growing cohort of tools. Will they help or hinder in our human development? Rather than merely weighing AI in terms of technical efficiency, or economic impact, a phenomenological approach prompts us to ask: How does the lived-experience of human beings change under the formation of AI-mediated worlds?

Phenomenology, rooted primarily in the work of Edmund Husserl, Max Schiller, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Martin Heidegger as preeminent thought leaders, concerns itself with how phenomena appear to consciousness. Moreover, it asks how subjectivity is structured by being-in-the-world, and how technologies mediate our lifeworld. How the science of values is being used in studying ethics. How do we see the phenomenology of values as a broad field that Husserl neglected and how is it necessary to mean basic care. Drawing on scholarship that applies phenomenology to AI and technology more broadly, this paper explores three dimensions of change: (1) the mediated embodiment of cognition, (2) the reshaping of our lifeworld, and (3) the ethical-existential implications of AI. for human subjectivity and value. Throughout, the focus remains on how things feel, how they are experienced, rather than only what they do.

12:00 – 14:00 Plenary Session II | Religion and Multiculturalism: Spirituality, Recognition, and Faith

Chair: Professor Dr. João Vila-Chã

PLENARY SESSION II

5. Tone Svetelj

Director, Minor in Philosophy & Liberal Studies Program; Beacon Program Coordinator, Hellenic College Holy Cross, USA

Between Pluralism and Fragmentation: Multiculturalism, Moral Order, and Gnostic Consciousness in the Digital Age

This presentation offers a philosophical analysis of the contemporary interplay between multiculturalism, morality, and public life in the context of the digital age, interpreted through the lenses of the culture of fear, modern Gnosticism, and the rise of intellectual and spiritual narcissism.

The paper argues that a new form of multiculturalism, while rhetorically grounded in solidarity and tolerance, can foster a reductive moral logic that equates recognition with the immediate extension of identical rights and privileges, independent of historical, cultural, or institutional mediation. Such an approach risks transforming solidarity into abstraction and tolerance into a non-critical affirmation, thereby weakening the ethical and political conditions necessary for genuine coexistence.

These dynamics are intensified by digital media environments that amplify fear, accelerate identity formation, and reinforce self-referential modes of reasoning. Consequently, without a renewed philosophical grounding of morality capable of integrating plurality with responsibility, multicultural discourse risks ethical incoherence and social fragmentation. In response, the paper proposes a recovery of intellectual humility and a relational understanding of human existence as conditions for a more substantive and sustainable form of multicultural coexistence.

6. Mohamed Ahmed Suleiman

Associate Professor, Medieval Christianity and Theology, Sohag University, Egypt; Visiting Associate Professor, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

The Christian-Islamic Discourse: From Multiculturalism to Coexistence and Interreligious Dialogue

This research focuses on Christian-Islamic discourse within the context of cultural pluralism and diverse civilizational and social backgrounds. The aim is to explore how dialogue can overcome the religious and cultural changes resulting from this pluralism, considering the various religious beliefs and civilizational background.

To understand and analyse this subject, we should consider the ethical base of religion which allows us to understand the ethical principles upon which religion is based on, which are usually common to all religions. Besides that, the cultural background and social context are considered the most influential factors in shaping religious identity according to social requirements and needs. From this point, I can suppose that social faith and the worship of tradition is considered also a civilizational reference point that plays the most influential role in shaping the rituals and practices upon which religion is based. In many societies, it leads to religion being influenced by social traditions.

Another crucial axis should be referred here, which are the ethics of the cross and the ethics of the sword. I use this expression as a symbolic representation with philosophical significance, it is illustrating the ethical basis for the spread of religion in Christianity and Islam, and how a society can be transformed from a firmly established religious belief to a new religious belief that opposes the inherited faith.

One more thing, I would focus here on «Religion with multiple sects and one faith», This is a factor that cannot be ignored, not only in conflicts between religions, but also in conflicts within the same religion. From this point arises a unique concept that can explain religious differences and the philosophical understanding of religious coherence. This is a stage where philosophy plays a prominent role in understanding religious tenets from a rational perspective.

This research tries also to show the role of religious dialogue in bridging the gap between religions. This is the stage where intellectuals and religious figures alike resort to establishing rational foundations based on accepting the other, regardless of whether one believes in their religious beliefs or not.

The philosophical role and theological argument show the role of philosophy and the use of rational arguments in understanding religious issues which cannot be neglected in any way, given that theological belief is fundamentally based on the use of rational arguments and evidence, which are essentially philosophical proofs. Besides that, egocentrism and religious tolerance are the crucial stage that must be overcome in religious dialogue by abandoning egocentrism and attempting to read the other carefully to understand them as a human being, not as someone with a different religious belief.

The conclusion of the paper aims to social integration despite ideological differences, so that accepting others becomes a means of building society, not a means of creating conflict within communities.

7. Bogdana Todorova

Institute for Scientific Studies in Culture (ISSK BAS), Bulgaria

An Ambassador of Peace: Following in the Footsteps of Augustine and the Ethics of Sufism

In April 2026, Pope Leo XIV made a historic visit to Algeria, where he condemned the ongoing violations of international law and neocolonial tendencies. The choice of Algeria references the 19th century, when European colonial rule in Muslim countries began to gain momentum. At that time, only the Sufi orders — often perceived by Europeans as monastic brotherhoods — proved to be the sole local organizations left untouched by the establishment of colonial rule. In Algeria, Emir Abd al-Qadir oversaw the publication of the most important Arabic Sufi texts. Their ethical principles of solidarity, tolerance, and love resonate with full force in today's crisis-ridden world.

For the Pope, the concept of "sadaqa" (charity) in Islam is not merely an act of mercy or giving away one's surplus, but a radical form of justice. His call is to build a society based on the principles of justice and solidarity. In this study, the concept of Sufism as a normative ethical framework will be examined in greater detail.

Algeria also holds a special place in the heart of Pope Leo XIV, as it is the birthplace of St. Augustine — "an important bridge in interreligious dialogue." Augustine was particularly concerned with the problem of moral evil, and the explanation for it lies in the existence of free will. The main focus of the research is on the dialogue among cultures and religions, transmission of philosophical ideas and ethical theories, and morality as a framework of values and norms for individuals and communities.

8. İlham Mammadzada

Director, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, Azerbaijan

On the Philosophy and Epistemology of Research on Multiculturalism

The issues surrounding multiculturalism remain highly relevant worldwide. Yet, in our view, existing research on the topic is often flawed: within each culture, distinct bodies of knowledge and, simultaneously, misconceptions have developed, hindering both understanding and the practical application of insights about multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is frequently perceived merely as established ethnic diversity, while researchers often show little interest in its future evolution or the historical reasons underlying changes in its conceptualization and models. We argue that the root of this limitation lies in the near-complete neglect of philosophical and epistemological inquiry. Moreover, the role and significance of colonial discourse in shaping multiculturalism have not been sufficiently examined, nor has there been a thorough analysis of how this differs from the sovereign discourse of contemporary identity.

In Azerbaijan, multiculturalism is predominantly approached from a historical perspective — that is, past understandings are projected into the present. This indicates the necessity of justifying multiple analytical approaches to multiculturalism. Unlike a purely historical account, it is essential to articulate a methodology and epistemology for studying multiculturalism. The goal of our research is not merely to describe a model of multiculturalism, but to analyse the philosophical and epistemological foundations necessary for its rigorous study.

**15:00 – 18:00 Plenary Session III | The Challenges of AI in a Multicultural World:
Uprootedness, Disconnectedness, and the Public Sphere**

Chair: Dr. Hu Yeping, Dr. Ștefan Bârză

PLENARY SESSION III

9. Ghizlan Elalaoui

Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Moulay Ismail University, Meknes, Morocco

Educating for the Global Village: Intercultural Communication Competence, Moral Plurality, and Education in the Digital Age

In an increasingly interconnected and digitally mediated world, education has become a deeply ethical and intercultural practice. The digital age has intensified contact across cultural, religious, linguistic, and moral boundaries, making intercultural encounters not only frequent but unavoidable. Contemporary classrooms, both physical and virtual, reflect a growing diversity of worldviews, placing teachers in a central position in managing cultural difference, navigating moral plurality, and fostering social cohesion.

This paper argues that the development of Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) among teachers and students is essential for addressing cultural stereotypes, negotiating moral diversity, and promoting mutual social acceptance in pluralistic societies shaped by digital communication. The study is theoretically grounded in Kramsch's notion of the "Third Place," which conceptualises intercultural communication as a symbolic space where individuals mediate between cultures rather than adhere rigidly to a single cultural or moral framework.

Methodologically, the paper adopts a qualitative, classroom-based approach informed by reflective pedagogy, conducted in Moroccan universities. The findings suggest that when teachers intentionally cultivate the "Third Place" through digitally mediated intercultural encounters, classrooms can become spaces where moral plurality is acknowledged and explored constructively. The paper concludes by discussing implications for teacher education and professional development in the digital age.

10. Samira Dadashova

Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences

Is Multiculturalism Becoming Artificial in the Age of Artificial Intelligence?

Today, as low social development and persistent conflict affect many countries and migration rates continue to rise year by year, the significance of cultural differences becomes more pronounced, underscoring the relevance of multiculturalism as a policy of dialogue and ethical coexistence. Multiculturalism and the culture of dialogue are therefore inevitably embedded in the essence of sustainable development.

At the global level, multiculturalism often loses its practical grounding and risks becoming an abstract moral ideal, lacking enforceable mechanisms of recognition and responsibility — particularly in the context of AI. This raises the central question of this paper: whether global multiculturalism remains a moral project or has become primarily a technical one.

AI has already been actively intervening in social processes: algorithms moderate content, influence labour migration, and shape the "visibility" of cultures. Cultural norms and values are standardised through global platforms, but without true understanding. AI systems replace dialogical interpretation with data processing, transforming cultural identities into measurable patterns and categories. This process gives rise to what may be described as artificial multiculturalism — which simulates recognition without understanding and promotes diversity without encounter. Cultural plurality becomes a technical variable rather than a moral relationship.

11. Nora Dobre

PhD in Sociology, Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj; UNESCO Chair Alumna; HR Country Lead, Genpact, Romania

Employer Branding, Public Affairs, and the Digital Construction of Organizational Identity in Multicultural Societies

In an era where organisational reputation is increasingly constructed and contested in digital public spaces, the intersection of employer branding, public affairs, and multicultural identity has become a strategic imperative for multinational firms. This paper explores how organisations operating across multicultural environments navigate the digital public sphere to build coherent organisational identities while remaining authentic to diverse local cultures.

Using M&A integration experiences as a primary lens, the paper examines how internal communication strategies during organisational transitions either reinforce or undermine cultural pluralism within the workforce. It argues that public affairs in the digital age can no longer be treated as an external-facing function alone: employee voice, digital culture narratives, and internal multicultural dialogue have become inseparable from how organisations are perceived publicly. The paper draws on field experience in HR and

communications management during M&A processes to propose a model of culturally responsive public affairs — one that treats workforce cultural diversity not as a compliance variable, but as a strategic asset in shaping public trust and organisational legitimacy.

12. Ouidad Infi

Université Moulay Ismail de Meknès, Morocco

Navigating Dual Moral Selves: Ethical and Consumer Tensions in a Multicultural Digital Age

In the digital age, individuals inhabit a complex moral landscape shaped by multiple, often competing, cultural and social discourses. Morality operates simultaneously at macro and micro levels: societal, institutional, and individual. Sustainability, as a normative and ethical concern, is communicated through diverse channels, including religious teachings emphasising stewardship and responsibility, as well as media and digital platforms promoting consumerism and efficiency. Individuals navigating these layered discourses embody dual moral selves: an ethical self oriented toward long-term responsibility and ecological awareness, and a consumer self guided by immediacy, desire, and market logic.

This paper explores the philosophical dimensions of this tension, emphasising how language and discourse mediate moral understanding and sustainable practice. Drawing on insights from ecolinguistics, philosophy of ethics, and critical media studies, the study argues that the digital age both complicates and enables the cultivation of moral responsibility, highlighting the need for reflective engagement with the values embedded in educational and communicative practices.

13. Gail Presbey

Professor & Chair, Department of Philosophy, University of Detroit Mercy, USA

Pride, Humility and Ethnocentrism in the Process of Learning Multicultural Perspectives in Philosophy

As Bryan van Norden, the author of *Taking Back Philosophy* explains in his 2016 book, it is important to be fair and open-minded when learning about the philosophies of different eras and cultures. One should not fall into unfair presumptions that others, for example, those from the "East" are too mystical to be rational. A close look would help us to notice the logical rigor of many Buddhist and Confucian philosophies. With this epistemological humility, one can have a better and broader view of reality.

But along with humility comes pride for some who had earlier been unfairly marginalized. So pride has a place, too. But pride always comes with dangers. Van Norden cautions readers to beware of national leaders who want to create and promote a national philosophy. The goal may be to sing the praises of the achievements of the nation's forebears, but it can result in a distortion of the role and function of philosophy in any society. The paper explores van Norden's insights while describing how the insights are experienced and applied in a U.S. philosophy classroom.

14. Constantin Stoenescu

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest, Romania

Cultural Neighborhoods, Interculturality and the New ICTs

Using Wimmer's classification of relations between cultures (centre of influence, cultural diffusion, mutual influence and complete mutual influence), this paper draws attention to the possible configuration of a culturally dilemmatic situation, in the sense that any culture aspires to universality, but intercultural dialogue leads to the recognition of differences and the awareness of cultural particularism.

New information and communication technologies (ICTs) have changed neighbourhood cultural relations and the perception of space and time, so that distances have been annihilated as a possibility to find

information about something, and we can find out in real time what is happening in the "global village." But what are the effects on a human level, of interpersonal communication? We discover a lot of cultural differences between us. The question that Goodman has been formulating since the 1960s makes sense: "What are the differences between us? Can we be friends?" Therefore, the revised question is how we can remain moral agents using new technologies and social networks.

DAY 2

Tuesday, 16 June 2026

09:00 – 11:00 Plenary Session IV | The Future of Philosophy in the Age of AI: New Paradigms of Critical Thinking, Identity, and Sensitivity

Chair: Dr. Emanuel Sălăgean

PLENARY SESSION IV

15. Victoria Chirică

Doctoral School in Philosophy, University of Bucharest, Romania

How Authenticity Became Performative: Digital Media and the Nihilistic Fate of an Ethical Ideal

This paper offers a philosophical genealogy of the process through which authenticity — emerging in modern thought through problems of sincerity, self-relation, and inwardness — has been reconstructed as a performative model under conditions of late capitalism and digital mediation. Drawing on Somogy Varga's diagnosis of the paradox of authenticity in *Authenticity as an Ethical Ideal* (2013), and on Nietzsche's analysis of passive nihilism, the argument unfolds in three stages.

First, the paper traces the transformation of authenticity from a set of implicit philosophical concerns associated with self-relation, self-transformation, and the assumption of finitude into a dominant cultural ideal of late modernity. Digital media are not neutral channels for the dissemination of this ideal, but constitutive factors that reshape its meaning. Second, the paper argues that Varga's paradox expresses a deeper philosophical structure: Nietzschean passive nihilism. On this reading, the performative model of authenticity appears as a cultural manifestation of the exhaustion of value-creating power. Third, the algorithmic metric loop is identified as the mechanism through which digital infrastructures radicalise this condition — generating a formative feedback loop that displaces the subject's own capacity for self-relation.

The paper concludes that recovering the critical force of authenticity under digital conditions requires rethinking authenticity as axiological integrity: the sustained capacity to posit, maintain, revise, and defend hierarchies of value under conditions of metric mediation.

16. Constantinos Athanasopoulos

FHEA, Open University, UK

The AI as a Threat to the Humanities and Arts Education: Some Preliminary Thoughts

My presentation will discuss the fascination with AI in Humanities and Arts education in UK Universities (having as an example recent developments in the Open University UK). I will discuss the dangers of this fascination and the problems this creates for the university educational process. I will outline the severe ethical and political dilemmas that the use of AI in education create for the present and the future of the Humanities and Arts in Europe. My work will also discuss key theories in the philosophy of communication and culture (like the prophetic work of Jean Baudrillard and others) and how they can be applied in the case of AI use in the Humanities and Arts university education.

17. Oluwaseun Adeola Anifowose (online)

Department of Philosophy, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

Shaping Moral Narratives in Multicultural Societies amidst the Challenges of the Digital Age

In an increasingly interconnected world, multicultural societies are pivotal in shaping moral narratives that inform public policies. Digital platforms have amplified diverse voices, enabling marginalised perspectives to influence mainstream discourses. Drawing on Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action and

Anthony Appiah's idea of cosmopolitanism, this paper argues that multicultural societies leverage digital platforms to negotiate moral values, challenge dominant narratives, and re-define public policy priorities.

This study reveals how multicultural voices shape moral narratives on issues like rights, religious freedom, and environmental justice in societies of the Global South, especially in Africa. Digital platforms enable a dialectical process of moral reasoning, reflecting both local cultural contexts and global human rights norms. However, this process raises critical questions about power, representation, and the ethics of digital communication.

The paper examines the implications for policy-makers and scholars of understanding multicultural moral narratives for inclusive governance in the digital age. By centring marginalised voices and fostering deliberative digital spaces, policy-makers and scholars can harness multicultural insights to craft equitable policies for their local and global societies. Ultimately, this research underscores the transformative potential of multicultural societies in shaping global moral narratives and advancing justice in public affairs.

18. Amit Mishra (online)

Dept. of Political Science, Central Institute of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath

Development of Multiculturalism in India in the Age of Digitalization

India has been a country of immensely diverse cultures. Though they have been grouped into two or three main races but they speak different languages in different states. One thing which binds them is a common cultural and civilizational history since the ancient times. With changing times, when digitalization has crept into every aspect of the country's urban and rural life making life consumerist and mechanical day by day. The present generation of growing children and youths need to know the essence and sanctity of India's multicultural ethos and rich past. Towards fulfilling this goal, digital techniques are being used increasingly. This paper speaks of the development of multiculturalism in India in the age of digitalization. It would start with identifying the problems in the way of healthy multiculturalism in India today. Second, it tells of how digitalization can help in developing multicultural amity in the nation and cap communal unrest in sensitive pockets of the country. Third, it assesses how effective digital techniques have been since the last 25 years in bridging various linguistic groups and cultures in the nation. The methodology used is qualitative and analytical and it would employ a combination of primary documents and mainly secondary sources.

19. Mihaela Pop

Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest, Romania

Interculturality and Intermediality in Art: Artistic Reinterpreted Myths

The purpose of this contribution is to make evident some aspects of the actual condition of art that succeeds in communicating between various cultures and various media. On one side, contemporary art is the result of a long cultural tradition of a collectivity belonging to a geographical area; on the other, it combines new ways of expression either specific for a single art (for instance painting) or a mixture of multimedia which makes possible a kind of inter-mediality. This inter-mediality, however, does not place itself only at the level of the instrumental process of artistic production but also at the level of artistic creativity, as the new result seems to be a product of the interstitium (the interval) between two or more cultures and techniques.

These aspects are debated using a famous European literary myth — Don Quijote — articulated in two very different artistic solutions: Genia Cheff's recent exhibition in Barcelona, Viva Don Quijote!, and some Japanese comics and video games based on Quixote. From a semiotic perspective, the paper unveils the new kind of "mythologies" built up nowadays upon old cultural myths, following Roland Barthes' theory as it appears in the above-mentioned Japanese productions. The intention is to unveil the difficulties of cultural communication among cultures and, on the other hand, the opportunities of new ways of communication offered by new media during this digital age.

12:00 – 14:30 Advanced Junior Researchers Panel | Cosmopolitanism and Globalization: Plural Identities, Social Atomization, and Cultural Approaches

Chair: Professor Emeritus Mihaela Pop

ADVANCED JUNIOR RESEARCHERS PANEL

20. Alexandra Bica

Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest, Romania

"...and next time we see you, you will be a serious Americanah": Some Notes on Identity Displacements in a Multicultural Context

This paper proposes an analysis of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's book *Americanah* through the lens of the identity shifts and transformations undergone by the protagonist, Ifemelu. Being a Nigerian settled in the United States, Ifemelu's story underscores the complexities of becoming accustomed with a foreign culture and environment. The theoretical framework integrates the concept of narrative identity with the philosophy of the self, specifically drawing upon Paul Ricœur's essays from *Oneself as Another*.

The analysis examines the influence of digital media on identity formation and the socio-cultural positioning of multicultural individuals. Ifemelu's blog and online narratives serve as critical views for encountering the Other, but alterity itself, prior to direct experience, is often mediated or rendered as a fiction constructed through idealised representations, cultural myths, and media. Adichie's novel extends beyond Ifemelu's settlement in the United States to interrogate the intersections of language, religion, education and morality. Ultimately, Adichie's novel proves that fiction functions as a domain of lived experience. As Paul Ricœur posits, the narrative organisation of such events seeks not only to derive meaning but also to facilitate a positioning of the self within the world — a world defined by fluid moral and cultural shifts.

21. Emanuel Sălăgean

Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest, Romania

Adventus University of Cernica, Romania

The Responsibility of Knowledge in the Digital Public Sphere: Between Truth, Power, and Manipulation

The transformations brought about by globalisation and digitalisation have generated an unprecedented explosion of information and expanded access to knowledge. However, this apparent progress conceals a fundamental paradox: the increase in the quantity of information does not automatically lead to an increase in truth or understanding. An exclusive focus on knowledge in its technical and scientific sense can produce new forms of vulnerability in the digital public sphere, manifested through disinformation, manipulation, and polarisation.

The central question of this paper is: how is the responsibility of knowledge transformed in a digital public sphere where information is algorithmically filtered and used as an instrument of influence? The paper adopts a philosophical and interdisciplinary approach, integrating epistemological, ethical, and hermeneutical perspectives. The study draws on the premise that, while in the past knowledge was culturally mediated, today it is technologically mediated through algorithms, digital platforms, and artificial intelligence systems, which function as epistemic actors.

The findings indicate that the transformation of knowledge into a filtered informational flow leads to a redefinition of the relationship between truth, power, and communication. The paper argues that digital ethics cannot be grounded solely in rules or norms, but requires the rehabilitation of wisdom as a form of practical discernment — essential for sustaining authentic dialogue in a complex multicultural and technological context.

22. Eva Ivan Heintz

The Transcultural Superstyle in the Era of Digitalization and AI

The 21 century is unanimously regarded as the digital era. Generations are now classified according to the way reality is recorded, stored and interpreted: Millennials are those who grew up in the analogue era and witnessed the shift to the digital one. Gen Z refers to people who were born immersed in the digital era; they have no memory whatsoever of the analogue world. Gen Alpha consists of those who are growing up alongside the rise of AI, which, as it stands, seems to be the crown jewel of the digital era.

From a socio-cultural point of view, I argue that the digital era is characterised by a *transcultural superstyle*, that presides over art, literature, lifestyle and beliefs. This framework shapes not only the way we create and experience artefacts, but also how we attribute value, understand and ultimately give meaning to the world we live in, participating in a continuous reevaluation of all values (Nietzsche).

Digital technology encourages both the editing and the creation of different representations and artworks, as well as their infinite reproduction, rendering reality itself increasingly questionable. Furthermore, the mere existence of AI leads one to question whether an image or text is real at all, altered, edited, manipulated, whether it is a product of human mind or if it is artificially generated. This aligns with Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality and his ideas regarding simulacra and simulation, in which AI-generated content becomes a self-referential construct.

A generalised sense of distrust begins to take shape, while at the same time there emerges an enthusiasm that we have finally found (or, better, created for ourselves) that one good friend who seems to know it all. But the „mind” of AI is singular. It seems that each one of us has the same friend. Even when programmed to simulate different types of personalities, it remains one. Consequently, its creations tend to be similar, contributing to a growing process of worldwide standardisation. This particular process fosters a transcultural super style, that, under the influence of AI, leads to the homogenisation of cultural expressions across digital spaces. From a Deleuzian point of view, on this ground, the differences fade away, leaving room for repetitive patterns.

The implications are ambivalent. While the *transcultural superstyle* democratizes access to culture and fosters creative hybridity, it also risks diminishing authenticity and depth, echoing concerns raised by Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno. Ultimately, the digital era should not be seen as a doom era, but rather as a transformative horizon that calls for active and responsible engagement. Artificial intelligence should not be restrained out of fear of its potential risks; rather, it must be continuously developed and responsibly integrated in our culture.

23. Diana Ghinea

Faculty of Sociology and Philosophy, West University of Timișoara, Romania

Kantian Cosmopolitan Right and the Challenges of Multiculturalism

Immanuel Kant's account of cosmopolitan right, formulated as a limited right to hospitality, offers a normative framework for thinking about cross-border encounters between culturally diverse agents. It grounds a minimal claim any person has, as a visitor, not to be treated with hostility when arriving peacefully on foreign soil, while stopping short of a full right to settlement or membership.

This article examines how that idea of cosmopolitanism can be mobilised to illuminate contemporary debates on multiculturalism, especially the tension between universal moral personhood and the particularity of cultural identities, practices, and claims to recognition. By juxtaposing systematic reconstructions of Kant's political philosophy with recent critical discussions of hospitality, migration, and colonial legacies, the paper asks whether Kantian cosmopolitanism can underwrite a robust multicultural order or whether its inherent limits reproduce patterns of exclusion.

The analysis argues that, suitably revised, Kant's conception of cosmopolitan right can still serve as a critical standard for evaluating current policies toward foreigners, refugees, and cultural minorities, while also exposing where contemporary practices fall short of the cosmopolitan ideal.

24. Oana Șerban

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest

A Biopolitical Approach to Sustainable Heritage: Reconnecting Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Age of AI

This paper proposes a biopolitical reading of sustainable heritage as a framework for understanding how artificial intelligence tools can — and must — mediate the reconnection between tangible and intangible cultural heritage in contexts of forced displacement. Existing multicultural frameworks, including those enshrined in UNESCO conventions, operate on a foundational assumption that cultural diversity is best preserved through the parallel recognition of distinct heritage traditions. Yet this paper identifies a structural gap at the heart of that paradigm: it treats tangible and intangible heritage as complementary but separable registers, failing to account for the biopolitical rupture that occurs when a community is violently severed from the physical sites that anchor its living cultural practices. In conditions of displacement, multiculturalism's promise of recognition becomes structurally incoherent — it acknowledges the existence of a heritage while remaining blind to the destruction of the conditions that make that heritage transmissible. Drawing on empirical findings from the VERIS project (*Voices of Palmyra: Engaging (In)tangible Memorial Heritage in Social Innovation for Refugee Inclusion*, CIVIS Open Lab), the paper argues that the destruction of built heritage is not merely a loss of material patrimony, but a biopolitical event: it severs the embodied practices, narrative continuities, and communal meanings that constitute viable social existence for displaced populations. Current multicultural policy instruments — designed for the governance of coexisting communities within stable territorial and institutional frameworks — possess no adequate tools for this condition. They can protect heritage in place; they cannot reconstitute the relationship between a community and a heritage that exists only in ruins, in memory, and in the body.

The AI-driven reconstruction of destroyed monuments — exemplified by the diachronic digital modelling of the Temple of Baalshamin — opens a new chapter in heritage governance. Yet virtual reconstruction, however precise, risks reproducing and even deepening the gap that multicultural frameworks leave unaddressed, unless it is deliberately reconnected with intangible heritage practices. In the VERIS methodology, immersive VR environments were paired with embodied transmission practices — embroidery workshops in which Syrian participants revived ornamental motifs from destroyed sites — creating what the paper terms a corrective biopolitical loop: the monument re-enters the symbolic universe of those who carried it across displacement. This pairing is not incidental; it is the methodological answer to a theoretical deficit in multicultural heritage governance.

The paper examines four mechanisms through which AI-assisted heritage projects either address or foreclose this deficit: identity continuity and moral repair, biopolitical resilience, intercultural dialogue, and the risk of instrumentalization — whereby cultural projects produce visibility for displaced communities without transforming the structural conditions of their precarity. This last mechanism points to the most acute gap in existing multicultural frameworks: their tendency to treat cultural recognition as a substitute for, rather than a condition of, political and legal inclusion.

The paper concludes that sustainable heritage in the Age of AI demands not merely a technical ethics of digitisation, but a reframing of multicultural governance itself — one capable of holding together the monument and its living community, the archive and the hand, the stone reconstructed on screen and the people still bearing its trace.

* The work on this lecture has been carried through two funded research projects: The Open Lab CIVIS Project VERIS – *Voices of Palmyra: Engaging (In)tangible Memorial Heritage in Social Innovation for Refugee Inclusion*, respectively SMOC – *Sustainable Management in Cultural Organizations*, Grant Agreement No. 10508/25.10.2024, within the framework of the Research and Development Project Fund “Grants for Enhancing Institutional Performance and Competences in Priority Areas,” University of Bucharest.

12:00 – 14:30 Doctoral Students Panel | A Multicultural Social Contract: Soft Power, Resilience, and Creativity

Chair: Dr. Gail Presby

DOCTORAL STUDENTS PANEL

25. Andreea Nechifor

Doctoral School in Philosophy, University of Bucharest, Romania

Applicability of Religious Principles in the Modern Corporate Environment: A Particular Regard to the Young Generation in Romanian Post-Communism

In these dynamic times of the corporate landscape, businesses face a multitude of challenges related to ethics, inclusivity, and employee well-being. The modern workplace is shaped by a diverse and dynamic workforce, with a significant emphasis on the values and expectations of the young generation. One central issue that warrants exploration is the applicability of religious principles within this contemporary corporate environment, particularly as they pertain to the conduct of the young workforce.

The primary problem under consideration revolves around the extent to which religious principles, often deeply rooted in moral and ethical values, can be effectively integrated into the day-to-day operations of businesses. This paper investigates to what extent ethical, moral and spiritual principles, enshrined in various religious traditions, can influence the configuration of a corporate framework characterised by ethical responsibility and moral conscience. From a philosophical perspective, this approach can be put into dialogue with Aristotle's virtue ethics, which emphasises the role of character formation and the practice of virtues in community life, but also with Immanuel Kant's reflections on moral duty and respect for human dignity.

The research aims to provide practical recommendations for the incorporation of religious principles in the modern corporate environment while addressing the question of their acceptance and application by the young workforce.

26. Cristian Cătălin Florea

National School of Political and Administrative Sciences, Doctoral School, Romania

Moral Credibility Across Cultures: UNICEF and Influencer-Led Humanitarian Communication in the Digital Age

In the digital age, humanitarian communication is increasingly structured through collaborations between global organisations and culturally diverse influencers who mediate distant suffering for fragmented audiences. This paper examines how moral credibility is constructed across cultural contexts through influencer-led communication, drawing on UNICEF as an empirical case, with a focus on Senegal, Ivory Coast, and South Africa.

Building on scholarship on the mediation of suffering, digital authenticity, and the construction of social reality in the digital age, the paper conceptualises humanitarian communication as a process of moral mediation in which legitimacy is co-produced by institutions, influencers, and networked publics. It further engages with theories of parasocial interaction and platformisation to argue that influencers function not merely as communication channels, but as culturally situated intermediaries whose perceived authenticity, reliability, and symbolic capital shape audience trust and engagement.

The analysis suggests that humanitarian communication is undergoing a structural shift toward a decentralised and platform-mediated model of moral authority. The paper challenges the assumption that locally embedded influencers are inherently more effective in humanitarian communication, arguing instead that different forms of moral credibility are strategically activated across cultural, temporal, and platform-specific contexts.

27. Dan Andrei Năfureanu

Doctoral School in Philosophy, University of Bucharest, Romania

Hate Speech and Far-Right Propaganda in the Age of A.I.

The Internet is widely understood as a tool that bridges any geographical and cultural gap between its users, with people being able to connect, share information, and engage in discourse no matter what their cultural and geographical backgrounds are. Within this system of cybernetic dialogue, the issue of hate speech arises whenever different social groups interact while under the impression of certain types of prejudices (race, ethnicity, gender, religion).

These prejudices that arise within these types of dialogue can also be political and be exploited as such. Various groups, parties, or firms exploit different facets of capital and employ various forms of manipulation under the pretext of politics. Nevertheless, the political interests of private and public groups — such as radical factions, political parties, national administrations, or various firms and corporations — are well at play in a social dynamic that stretches issues such as regulations, laws, morality, algorithms, artificial intelligence, and outright discrimination.

This paper considers the issue of online hate speech and its connections to wider technologies such as A.I., examining the morality of this landscape and the power relations at play between the safety and human rights of individuals and minorities, the propaganda and ideologies of far-right groups and parties, and the new emerging technologies. The overarching question is: what is to be done to protect democracy, dialogue, multiculturalism, and human rights under these new realities of the 21st century?

28. Ioana Ciocoiu

Doctoral School in Philosophy, University of Bucharest, Romania

Digital Art in Public Discourse: Aesthetic Pluralism, Subcultures and Weak Thought

This paper examines the impact of technology on the dissemination of philosophical ideas through contemporary digital art practices, as part of an ongoing PhD research regarding the hermeneutics of Romanian digital art. Drawing on Gianni Vattimo's concept of *pensiero debole* (weak thought), the paper employs a postmodern hermeneutical methodology to argue that the integration of technology in artistic practices — both as medium and instrument — generates a form of digital culture in which narratives of technological enhancement and transhumanism reveal their own structural fragility.

The paper focuses on how digital art transforms perception and aesthetic judgement. As technological mediation increasingly structures sensory experience, aesthetic judgement becomes entangled within algorithmic processes, raising questions regarding agency and authorship. The global circulation of digitally produced images also contributes to the emergence of transnational subcultures — such as vaporwave, dark academia, or soft apocalypse — which reflect new forms of multicultural identity and collective taste shaped by digital environments.

The paper aims to contribute to current debates on the ethical and cultural implications of technological mediation within plural and digitally interconnected societies. Digital art becomes a site of multicultural negotiation, a space of aesthetic pluralism, supported by case studies from Romanian digital art, such as works by Eurosadbog and Marta Mattioli.

29. Andreea Ioana Popa

Doctoral School in History, University of Bucharest, Romania

Online versus On Stage Multiculturalism: The Limits of Music Diplomacy in the Digital Era – George Enescu International Competition and Festival

With a first edition in 1958, the festival named after one of the most famous Romanian composers, George Enescu, has become a cultural product inside the music diplomacy sphere. Starting as a state-sponsored event and being used by the Romanian Communist Party as an instrument of propaganda, the festival has

transformed over the years, slowly turning — especially during the last decade — into a hybrid model of cultural diplomacy.

The aim of this research is to compare one of the first editions of the festival, organised during the Communist period, and the 2025 edition, with the purpose of highlighting the differences between the two in terms of multiculturalism. After the digital ecosystem became part of our lives and the need to be present on Social Media turned out to be mandatory, a new question arose: are we able to maintain the same multicultural layer online as on stage, or are we going to shift towards a more homogenous approach in order to obtain the desired visibility and "reach"?

The paper proposes an analysis of the changes seen by the festival, with a focus on the transformations brought by the Digital Age and their impact on the event from a cultural diplomacy perspective. By showing the dynamic created between the multiculturalism of the physical events and their digital representations, the paper opens a debate on the limits of music diplomacy in the digital era, showcasing the tension between the advantage of obtaining global outreach and the flattening sometimes imposed by the algorithmic system.

30. Closing Ceremony

João Vila-Chã, Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

Mihaela Pop, Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest

Oana Șerban, PhD. Lecturer, Faculty of Philosophy & UNESCO Chair in Interculturality,
Good Governance and Sustainable Development, University of Bucharest