



VIA
PANORAMICA

Revista de Estudios Anglo-Americanos
A Journal of Anglo-American Studies

ANGLO-AMERICAN STUDIES

VARIA SECTION

CETAPS' Winter Doctoral Symposium

(THIRD EDITION)

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The third edition of the Winter Doctoral Symposium took place on the 10th and 11th of November 2025, at NOVA-FCSH (Lisbon), continuing a tradition established in the previous two editions of bringing together doctoral candidates and early-career researchers working within the scope of English-language literatures and cultures. Conceived as a peer-led initiative, the yearly Winter Doctoral Symposium intends not only to provide a platform for early-career researchers to present their work, but also to provide opportunities for CETAPS' junior researchers to organize academic events and build international networks within a supportive and welcoming environment. The 2025 edition remained faithful to this mission by offering a two-day programme that included five thematic panels, two keynote lectures, and several informal moments designed to promote dialogue and productive exchange among participants.

The 2025 edition of the Winter Doctoral Symposium followed a peer-led structure designed to promote both academic and organizational skill development. Instead of the traditional division between an Organizing Committee and a Scientific Committee, the event was coordinated by a team of Organizers (in alphabetical order, Ana Brígida Paiva, Beatriz de Almeida Santos, Catarina Moura, Gonçalo Santos, Miguel Oliveira, and Rui Mateus), in charge of logistics, communication, and overall event management; complementing their work, a group of Peer Mentors (in alphabetical order, Alice Carletto, Carlotta Pisano, Francisco Simãozinho Martins, Inês Vaz, and Mariana Cruz) took on exclusively academic responsibilities, namely approving proposals, curating thematic

162 panels and providing support and constructive feedback to presenters during the symposium.

The 2025 edition also had the support of volunteer Student Helpers (in alphabetical order, Ana Sofia Santos, Chiara Cataldo, Oktawia Firlej, and Rui Daniel Ramos), ranging from undergraduate to master's and doctoral students. Their assistance with registration, materials, and on-site logistics contributed to the smooth running of the event and provided valuable hands-on experience in the backstage work of academic event organization. According to Ana Sofia, the symposium also served as a "great networking experience", where the smooth coordination of the organizing team allowed the student helpers to engage meaningfully with researchers in different stages of their academic careers. By involving students in the "backstage" work, the symposium also allows peer-to-peer mentorship and practical skill-building within CETAPS and NOVA-FCSH.

The Winter Doctoral Symposium follows a rotational organizational model that encourages mentors and organizers to transition into new roles across editions, ensuring continuity while creating ongoing opportunities for professional development. The symposium also intends to integrate any interested early-career researchers connected to CETAPS, welcoming participants and team members across postgraduate programmes and universities. Additionally, to facilitate communication during the two days of the symposium, organizers create a temporary WhatsApp group every year, which is used by participants to share essential information, last-minute notices, photos, and resources, as well as to encourage informal networking. After the event concludes, participants are invited to join a larger, permanent WDS WhatsApp network (active since 2023), which brings together participants from all editions and serves as an ongoing community space where members share calls for papers, promote upcoming events, and continue developing the connections made during the symposium.

The 2025 edition of the Winter Doctoral Symposium saw significant international participation, with both first-time presenters and returning contributors. Presenters from Romania, Türkiye, Belgium, South Africa, Croatia, the Czech Republic, and different Portuguese institutions contributed to the event's interdisciplinary dimension, the increasing number of returning participants testifying to the growing visibility and continuity of the symposium.

Following the opening remarks made by Professor Gabriela Gândara Terenas (Executive Coordinator of the Department of Modern Languages, Cultures and Literatures at NOVA FCSH and Board Member of CETAPS), the first day of the third edition of the Winter Doctoral Symposium opened with a panel entitled “Translating Journeys”, chaired by Organizer Ana Brígida Paiva, exploring the intersections between translation and literary history. Adriana Dragomir from the University of Craiova compared different Romanian translations of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, highlighting the cultural and linguistic negotiations involved in rendering Rushdie’s cultural references and linguistic hybridity. Her colleague, Madalina Gabriela Valcu, also from the University of Craiova, examined the multiple translation trajectories of Edgar Allan Poe in Romania through a polysystemic perspective. The panel concluded with a presentation by Günes Yamanoglu, of Erzincan Binali Yildirim University, currently a visiting PhD researcher at the University of Lisbon, who outlined the historical development of translation in Türkiye and considered its cultural role during the Republican era.



Photograph 1/Jéssica Bispo

After a brief coffee break, the audience reconvened for the first keynote lecture, delivered by Jéssica Bispo from NOVA-FCSH (also a previous Winter Doctoral Symposium Organizer) and chaired by Peer Mentor Inês Vaz. Bispo's talk, "Representing Victorian London's East End in a Neo-Victorian Video Game Adaptation of Lewis Carroll's Alice Novels", focused on the subject of her doctoral research and examined how Victorian cultural imaginaries can be reinterpreted through contemporary media. During Q&A, Jéssica shared her PhD journey, as she had recently passed her viva and has since started lecturing at NOVA FCSH. As a past member of the Winter Doctoral Symposium's organizing and scientific committees, Jéssica reflects on the symposium's evolution into "a well-established platform that fosters genuine academic exchange, networking and community building". She believes the symposium's "intellectual diversity" and "growing sense of shared purpose among early-career researchers" are the qualities that truly set it apart from other academic gatherings. For Jéssica, the transition from organizer to keynote was a "formative moment" in her academic career. Jéssica also highlighted "sharing innovative research, fostering collaboration, and strengthening the sense of community within our field" as some of the symposium's strong suits.



Photograph 2 Panel



Following a lunch break, the afternoon session resumed with a panel on “Alternative Futures, Apocalyptic Realities”, chaired by Organizer Beatriz de Almeida Santos. In this panel, returning participant Noémie Mil-Homens Cavaco from UC Louvain examined postgrowth imaginaries in Jenny Offill’s *Weather*, highlighting the novel’s engagement with ecological anxiety.



Photograph 3 Noémie Mil-Homens Cavaco

Leon Bomela Loombe, Postdoctoral Fellow from the University of Cape Town, explored the narrative possibilities of ethnographic fiction in representations of artificial intelligence, while returning participant Patrícia Sá, from the University of Lisbon, reflected on the emotional landscapes and ambivalent representations of forests in J. R. R. Tolkien’s Middle Earth. As returning speakers, PhD Candidates Noémie and Patrícia both viewed the symposium as a welcoming event, with Noémie acknowledging the support and

166 interest shown in her research and stating that this event motivated her to continue her thesis work. Patrícia also stressed the importance of student-led events in building peer networks, especially given the “isolating patterns of research” often found at the doctoral and post-doctoral levels, highlighting the added value of the networking session in this year’s programme.



Photograph 4 Patrícia Sá

Similarly, Leon Bomela Loombe found the event pivotal as he transitioned from postdoctoral work into independent publication. Leon described the symposium as a “rigorous academic platform and a space of affirmation”, praising the “atmosphere of intellectual generosity” that encouraged him to situate his research within broader global dialogues. According to Leon, the environment was uniquely suited for early-career

scholars to take intellectual risks; he noted that the diversity of the presentations allowed participants to “reconsider the boundaries between literature, culture, translation and technology”, ultimately reaffirming the necessity of interdisciplinary spaces that empower emerging researchers. Following the symposium, this collaboration continued as Leon presented an online guest lecture on May 14, 2026. Moderated by symposium Organizer Ana Brígida Paiva, the lecture focused on his research and upcoming Bloomsbury publication regarding Afrofuturism, artificial intelligence, and postcolonial imaginaries.



Photograph 5 Leon Bomela

The first day of the symposium concluded with a second coffee break, followed by an informal networking moment, which provided space for participants to exchange ideas, learn about publication opportunities within CETAPS’s range of publications – including *VIA PANORAMICA*, the *Journal of Anglo-Portuguese Studies* (REAP/JAPS), and *Translation Matters* –, and further strengthen emerging connections in a more relaxed setting. This activity was designed around playful academic collaboration: participants

placed their names in a bag and were paired randomly, with each pair invited to invent a creative joint paper title that combined their research interests. This academic “speed dating” exercise successfully sparked conversations that continued during the conference dinner, strengthening connections and new potential collaborations.

The second day of the Winter Doctoral Symposium began with the panel “Anglo-Portuguese Intersections”, chaired by Peer Mentor Francisco Martins. This session focused on cultural and historical points of contact between Portuguese and Anglophone contexts. Maria João Brito from NOVA-FCSH examined female scientist characters in contemporary historical fiction, explaining how Portuguese and Anglophone narratives represent women working in scientific and technological fields. Ana Rita Brettes, also from NOVA-FCSH, presented a case study on Lisbon during the Second World War, drawing on the work of Neill Lochery and Margarida Magalhães Ramalho to examine the city’s literary and historiographical portrayals.

After a mid-morning coffee break, the symposium continued with the panel “(De)Constructing Identities”, chaired by Peer Mentor Mariana Cruz. This panel included a paper by Francisco Simãozinho Martins from NOVA-FCSH, who examined questions of sexuality, paratext, and the figure of the hare in *Willobie His Auisa*. Lourenço de Almeida Duarte, also from NOVA-FCSH, analyzed themes of ageing and shadow in the work of António Lobo Antunes, and Marina Tomas, from the University of Osijek, explored representations of otherness, haunting, and isolation in the contemporary Irish drama of Conor McPherson and Martin McDonagh.

After lunch, the second keynote lecture was delivered by Joana Caetano from the University of Porto (CETAPS/FLUP), chaired by Organizer Rui Mateus. In her lecture “Ursula K. Le Guin’s Hainish Ethics and Poetics”, Caetano examined ethical frameworks, world-building practices, and speculative imaginaries in Le Guin’s work, exploring the intersections between literary creativity and social philosophy. Beyond her presentation, Caetano – who serves as the executive editor of the journal *VIA PANORAMICA* – pointed out the connection between the symposium’s goals and the journal’s mission, as both are CETAPS initiatives dedicated to providing a platform for emerging researchers to publish and discuss their work. Building on this shared purpose, Caetano noted that witnessing the growth of early-career academics is “a purpose as personal as it is professional”, stating:

It is in safe and enriching spaces like these that [students] find the tools and the company to test their ideas and evolve as scholars. These are the types of initiatives that we should continue to promote.

In this sense, by promoting “learning and curiosity”, both the Winter Doctoral Symposium and *VIA PANORAMICA* function as complementary pillars within CETAPS, encouraging young scholars to take their first steps in formal academic publication.

The final panel of the symposium, “Multimedial and Intermedial Storytelling”, chaired by Peer Mentor Alice Carletto, brought together two presentations that considered the aesthetic and institutional dimensions of contemporary drama. Derya Alim, from the West University of Timișoara, reflected on award-giving tendencies in the Pulitzer Prize for Drama between 2010 and 2024, while Nela Hachlerová, from Masaryk University, examined intermedial aesthetics in the experimental plays of Sam Shepard. Beyond the academic exchange, participant Derya Alim noted that the symposium provided a much-needed emotional boost for early-career researchers. She described the event as a “wonderful experience” that helped counter the typical “anxiety, stress, and perfectionism” of doctoral work. According to Derya, the combination of formal panels, networking events and informal dinner conversations “reminded me why I fell in love with this lifestyle and this field”. This inspiration has already translated into concrete action, with Derya currently collaborating with Organizers Ana Brígida Paiva and Beatriz de Almeida Santos to organize initiatives that intersect their shared research interests.

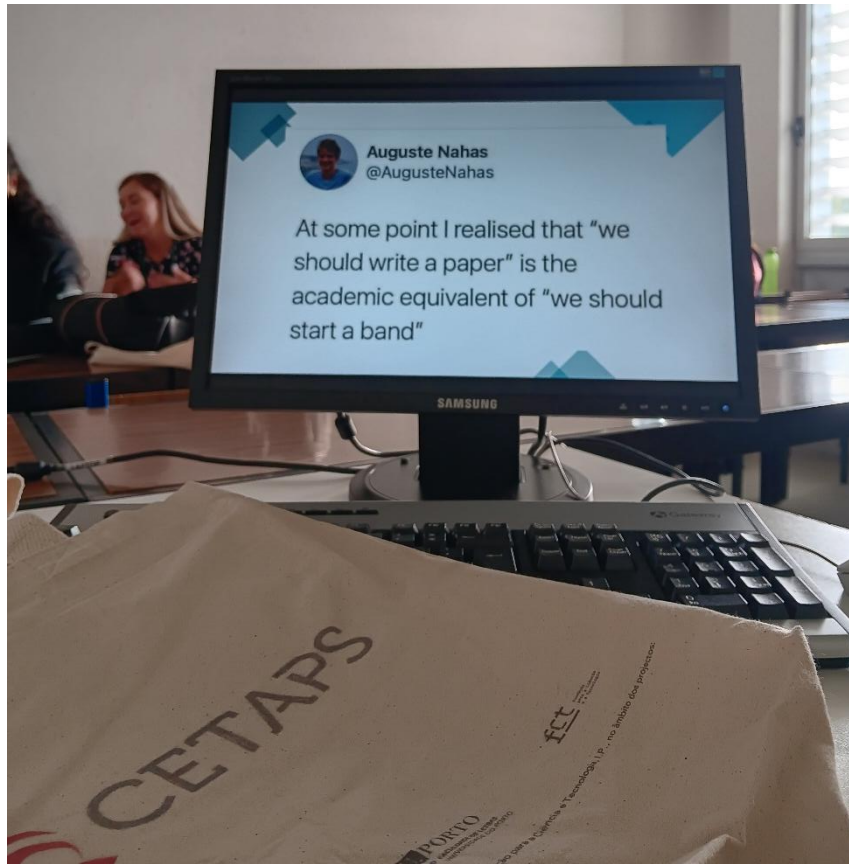
The symposium concluded with brief closing remarks summarizing the event and expressing appreciation for the contributions of participants, keynote speakers, Peer Mentors and the organizing team (including Student Helpers). Across all three editions of the symposium, most participants have highlighted the event’s peer-led organizational structure as a central factor in its continued success. The fact that the Winter Doctoral Symposium is organized by fellow early-career researchers contributed to an atmosphere that participants consistently described as collegial and supportive, reinforced by clear communication channels and structured opportunities for informal interaction.

The third edition of the Winter Doctoral Symposium thus successfully fulfilled its ongoing mission of creating a space where emerging scholars can present their research, develop professional skills, and engage in meaningful conversation across disciplinary boundaries. The quality of the presentations, the responsiveness of the audience, the

170 enthusiasm of returning presenters, and the strong commitment demonstrated by the organizing team and Peer Mentors reaffirm the relevance of this annual event within the research community at CETAPS, NOVA-FCSH and beyond.

The symposium's impact is perhaps best measured by its longevity. As Pedro Mora-Ramírez (Universidad de Sevilla), an attendee of the inaugural 2023 edition, notes, the Winter Doctoral Symposium is not merely a “one-off academic event”, but rather the beginning of “ongoing collaboration, friendship, and intellectual growth”. An important factor in this continued engagement has been the symposium's WhatsApp group, which has evolved into a resource for sharing information about academic events. Jennifer Tubbs (Texas Tech University), who joined the community during the second edition in 2024, emphasizes that this community continues to provide value long after the closing remarks, noting that she still uses the group regularly to track calls for papers and keep in touch with peers. In fact, the professional synergy fostered here has led to tangible academic outcomes: Jennifer is currently revising a paper for a journal edited by a fellow attendee, a testament to the “rewarding extension of the connections formed at the symposium”.

As CETAPS' Winter Doctoral Symposium looks toward future editions, the latest 2025 edition stands as a testament to the continued growth of a vibrant and internationally engaged community of doctoral and early-career researchers. Looking ahead, we hope to welcome new CETAPS postgraduate students into the team (whether as Organizers or Peer Mentors), ensuring that future editions remain a collaborative and evolving space for emerging scholars.



Photograph 6 Networking

HOW TO CITE

Paiva, Ana Brígida, and Beatriz de Almeida Santos (2026). "CETAPS' Winter Doctoral Symposium (THIRD EDITION)". *VIA PANORAMICA: Revista de Estudos Anglo-Americanos*, vol. 15, n.º 1, 2026, pp. 161-171. Web: <http://ojs.letras.up.pt/>. DOI: https://doi.org/10.21747/2182-9934/via15_1v3



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