

## **Call for papers : “Microscopic Imaginaries in 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Literature” (Paris, 24/11/23)**

When Ronald Ross discovered the protozoan responsible for malaria in 1897, he wrote a poem addressing “million-murdering Death” whose “cunning seeds” he had found. Ross’s poem remains famous, but how has his hope that art and science would walk “hand in hand” fared in the following centuries? Over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, microscopy was revolutionised by UV, phase contrast, and electron technology. The circulation of microscopic images increased exponentially with the arrival of television, internet and digital photography. While visualisations of atomic physics were influential for modernist writers, genetic engineering and microbial agency have become key ingredients of 21<sup>st</sup>-century crime fiction and science fiction, as well as inspirations for ecopoetry, molecular poetics and experiments in living poetry. This symposium aims to identify the microscopic imaginaries that appeared over this period, and the turning points that structured literature’s engagement with microscopy. We welcome proposals for 20-minute papers in English, on any written literary genre, particularly around the following topics:

- the epistemic dimensions of literary form
- the aesthetics of scale
- the role of literature in changing scopic regimes
- ethical and political dimensions of microscopic imaginaries
- conceptual shifts provoked by microscopic perspectives, around notions such as community, agency, subject, or environment
- relations between microscopic imaginaries and movements such as modernism, naturalism or new materialism
- authorial postures and reader expectations created by microscopic perspectives
- relations between scientific imagination, popular science imagination and literary imagination
- how scientific and literary discourses have shaped each other over this period

Proposals should be sent in Word or PDF documents by the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2023 to the organisers: [liliane.campos@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr](mailto:liliane.campos@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr), [caroline.pollentier@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr](mailto:caroline.pollentier@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr), [sarah.montin@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr](mailto:sarah.montin@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr) and [sarah.bouttier@polytechnique.edu](mailto:sarah.bouttier@polytechnique.edu)

Answers will be sent out by the 9<sup>th</sup> of June. The symposium will be held at the Sorbonne Nouvelle, Maison de la Recherche, 4 rue des Irlandais, in Paris. A second symposium will be organized in 2024 on microscopic imaginaries in theatre and performance: a separate call for papers will be issued for that event.