



Technical University of Cluj-Napoca  
North University Centre of Baia Mare  
Faculty of Humanities

&

Asociația Pentru Studii de Limbi și Literaturi Moderne



**Keynote Speakers:**

**Michael HEYMAN**

Professor, Berklee College of Music, USA

Keynote address on:

*And, lo, Nonsense Shall Save the World:*  
*Alan Watts, Anushka Ravishankar, and*  
*the Nonsense of One*

**Bootheina MAJOU**

Associate Professor, ITLS, University of Carthage, Tunis

Keynote address on:

*Inside 'the Magic Bag': The Idiot, the Fool, and*  
*the Sage in Arkon Daraul's Children's Literature*

**Björn SUNDMARK**

Professor of English, Dept of Culture,  
Languages and Media, Malmö University, Sweden

Keynote address on:

*Jabberwocky in Transpiranto: Nonsense and Translation*

**Adrian OȚOIU**

Associate Professor of English and American  
Literature, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca,  
North University Centre of Baia Mare

Keynote address on:

*Old Language for New Ears: Literalisation*  
*as Resetting in KidLit*

**Baia Mare, 21-24 May, 2026**

**Official Opening**

21 May, 2026

9:30 AM – Library Conference Room

Faculty of Humanities

The 4<sup>th</sup> International  
Conference on Literature  
for Children and Young Adults

**“Nonsense  
and the Absurd  
in Children’s  
and YA Literature”**



programme

# PROGRAMME

of the 4th International Conference  
on Children and Young Adults' Literature

## “Nonsense and the Absurd in Children’s and YA Literature”

21-24 May, 2026

Baia Mare, Romania

### Thursday, 21 May 2026 – Baia Mare

09:00 - 09:30 **Registration** – Entrance Hall, Library Conference Room,  
Faculty of Humanities, 76 Victoriei Street, Baia Mare

09:30 - 09:45 **Official Opening – Library Conference Room**

**Anamaria FĂLĂUȘ**

Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare,  
Technical University of Cluj-Napoca

**Ioan-Beniamin POP**

Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare,  
Technical University of Cluj-Napoca

**Ramona DEMARCSEK**

Head of the Department of Philology and Cultural Studies,  
Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca

**Ligia TOMOIAGĂ**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

09:45 - 10:45 **Plenary Session – Library Conference Room**

**Michael HEYMAN**

Professor, Berklee College of Music, USA

**Title:** *And, Io, Nonsense Shall Save the World: Alan Watts, Anushka Ravishankar, and the Nonsense of One*

10:45 - 11:00 Coffee Break – Entrance hall, Library Conference Room

11:00 - 13:00 **Panel – Library Conference Room**

**Moderator:** Snizhana HOLYK

**Speakers:**

**Peter ARNDS**

Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

**Title:** *Donkey, Fools, and other Nonsense: On Speciesism in Asinine Literature*

**Kevin SHORTSLEEVE**

Christopher Newport University, USA

**Title:** *Nonsense and the American Revolution*

**Ligia TOMOIAGĂ**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *The Absurd as a Matter of Fact in Louis Sachar's Sideways Stories from Wayside School*

**Snizhana HOLYK**

Uzhhorod National University, Ukraine

**Title:** *Grotesque, Comic, or Resistant? Literary Depictions of Ageing in Children's Books*

**Anabella COSTACHE, Madalina CHITEZ, Caroline FISCHER, Roxana ROGOBETE, Ionela MANDA**

CODHUS research centre / Faculty of Letters, History, Philosophy and Theology, West University of Timisoara / Romania; ALTER research centre / Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour (UPPA) / France

**Title:** *When Nature Speaks Nonsense: Ecolinguistic Awareness Strategies in YA Literature*

**Horea NAȘCU**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *No Waiting for godotian Ever: "Question the Status Quo?"*

13:15 - 15:00 Lunch - Cafeteria, Faculty of Humanities

15:00 - 16:00 **Plenary Session – Library Conference Room**

**Bootheina MAJOU**

Associate Professor, Institut Supérieur des Langues de Tunis, University of Carthage, Tunis

**Title:** *Inside 'the Magic Bag': The Idiot, the Fool, and the Sage in Arkon Daraul's Children's Literature*

16:00 - 16:15 Coffee Break - Entrance Hall, Library Conference Room

## Parallel Panels

16:15 - 18:00 **Panel 1 – Library Conference Room**

**Moderator:** Maryna VARDANIAN

### Speakers:

**Adela CHINDRIȘ, Mădălina CHITEZ, Roxana ROGOBETE**

CODHUS research centre / Faculty of Letters, History, Philosophy and  
Theology / West University of Timisoara, Romania

**Title:** *From Teddies to Tears: The Hidden Pessimism of  
Romanian Children's Literature*

**Maryna VARDANIAN**

Kryvyi Rih State Pedagogical University, Ukraine

**Title:** *Translating Folklore Nonsense: Ukrainian Absurd Tales  
for Young Audiences Across Media and Languages*

**Aleksandra MARKIEWICZ**

University of Wrocław, Poland

**Title:** *"Art Is Everything": Absurdity, Play and Avant-Garde in  
Ted van Lieshout's Informational Picture Books*

**Tanja SCHANGIN**

Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg

**Title:** *Danse Macabre with Bikes and Pastries: 'Camp'  
Aesthetics and the Carnavalesque of Personified Death in  
Contemporary Picture Books*

**Dan Horațiu POPESCU**

Independent Scholar, Emanuel University Oradea

**Title:** *Reading with Grandchildren: the Benign Absurd in  
"Winnie the Pooh"*

16:15 - 18:00 **Panel 2 – Room B2**

**Moderator:** Ramona DEMARCSEK, Ioan-Beniamin POP

### Speakers:

**Daniela-Carmen STOICA, Ilir SHYTA (online)**

Fan S. Noli University of Korçë, Albania

**Title:** *The Role of Absurdity in Petro Marko's Novel "Fantazma  
dhe Plani 3+4"*

**Raluca Roxana VOSTINAR**

Learning Together

**Title:** *Making Sense of the Absurd: Rethinking Marin Sorescu's  
Literature in a Functionally Illiterate World*

**Diana Marusia TIFRAC (SEMENIUC)**

Valea Vişeuului Secondary School

**Title:** *Nonsense and Absurd in "A Series Of Unfortunate Events" by Lemony Snicket*

**Vladyslav VARDANIAN**

Kryvyi Rih State Pedagogical University, Ukraine

**Title:** *From Folktale Heroes to Modern Sports Legends: Absurdity in Ukrainian Children's Literature*

**Ioan-Beniamin POP**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *Modality, Hypotheticality, and Counterfactual Girlhood: Subjunctive Structures and the Grammar of Rebellious Femininity in Children's and Adolescent Literature*

**Ramona DEMARCSEK**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *The Grotesque Logic of Fear in Neil Gaiman's "Coraline"*

**Friday, 22 May 2026**

09:30 - 10:30 **Plenary Session – Library Conference Room**

**Björn SUNDMARK**

Professor of English, Department of Culture, Languages and Media, Malmö University, Sweden

**Title:** *Jabberwocky in Transpiranto: Nonsense and Translation*

**Parallel Panels**

10:30 - 11:45 **Panel 1 – Library Conference Room**

**Moderator:** Luminița TODEA

**Speakers:**

**Chrysiida PSARRI**

Malmö University, Sweden

**Title:** *"Helt Wonkers and Bilibonkers": Jabberwocky Translations by Young English Language Learners*

**Anamaria FĂLĂUȘ**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *Nonsense, Temporality, and Ontological Instability in "Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children"*

**Andreea Ioana PETRUȚIU**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *The Floor Is the Ceiling: Deconstructing Domestic Authority through Literary Nonsense*

**Manuela VARGA**

UMFST "George Emil Palade" Târgu Mures

**Title:** *Alternative Worlds of Fantasy Literature*

**Luminița TODEA**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *Rewriting Fairy Tales: Female Agency and Humour in Roald Dahl's "Revolting Rhymes"*

**Andrei Alexandru ACHIM**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *Absurd Humour in George Herriman's Comic Strip "Krazy Kat"*

10:30 - 11:45

**Panel 2 – Room B2**

**Moderator:** Bianca KOPOSCIUC

**Speakers:****Bianca KOPOSCIUC**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *Disguised Suicide and the Logic of the Absurd in Hans Christian Andersen's Tales*

**Elisabetta MARINO (online)**

University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy

**Title:** *Embracing Diversity in "Rootabaga Stories" (1922) by Carl Sandburg*

**Aanya MEHTA (online)**

University of Delhi

**Title:** *Identifying Sense in the Nonsense of Lewis Carroll*

**Eivind KARLSSON (online)**

Oslo Metropolitan University

**Title:** *The Elephant Gospel - the Uses of Nonsense in a Borderline Religious Children's Book*

**Ana-Daniela FARCAȘ**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *The Absurd in Popular Mythology, Communicating Behavioral Patterns to Younger Generations*

**Lisa MATEI** (*online*)

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *Nonsense and Fairy Tale Logic in Charles Perrault's "Cinderella": A Study of Adaptation and Music in Film*

**Ioan-Claudiu FARCAȘ**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *Constructing Non-Existent Cultures and Synthetic Imaginaries Through AI-Generated Illustrations*

**Teodora ȚUGUI-CARABA**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *When Stories Refuse to Make Sense: Narrative Logic and the Function of Nonsense in Michael Ende's Children's Literature*

11:45 - 12:00 Coffee Break - Entrance Hall, Library Conference Room

12:00 - 13:00 **Plenary Session – Library Conference Room**

**Adrian OȚOIU**

Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Humanities, Baia Mare

**Title:** *Old Language for New Ears: Literalisation as Resetting in KidLit*

**Book Launch:**

***Ușa secretă. De ce sunt cărțile pentru copii un lucru foarte serios***

*(The Secret Door. Why Children's Books Are a Very Serious Thing)*

by Mac Barnett, ART Publishing House

translated by **Adrian OȚOIU**

13:00 - 13:15 **Closing Remarks** - Library Conference Room

**CULTURAL EVENT PROGRAMME**

22 May	14:00	<i>Departure from the university</i>
	15:30 - 17:00	<i>Trip to Petrova, Maramureș</i>
	18:30	<i>Official Dinner, Petrova, Maramureș</i>
23 May	<i>Petrova village, Maramureș-visits to cultural and traditional sites</i>	
24 May	08:00	<i>Breakfast</i>
	09:30	<i>Departure to Baia Mare</i>

The 4th International Conference on Children and Young Adults' Literature

**NONSENSE AND THE ABSURD  
IN CHILDREN'S AND YA LITERATURE**

Baia Mare, 21-24 May, 2026

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TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA  
NORTH UNIVERSITY CENTRE OF BAI A MARE

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

76 Victoriei St., Baia Mare, Romania  
<https://litere.utcluj.ro>