



MLA 2024: ANS Panel to Explore DEI Concepts through Literary Onomastics

Panelists have been selected for the ANS panel at the 2024 Modern Language Association Conference to be held from January 4-7, 2024 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The panel, titled “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Names and Naming in Literature”, features a range of literary genres from diverse cultures and time periods and includes works written for adults and youth.

Rowshan Chowdhury, a doctoral candidate and Teaching Associate in the Department of English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, will present “Naming ‘Mutiny’: Equatorial Rebellions and Mark Twain’s *Following the Equator*”. Chowdhury explores the ways in which Twain named anticolonial conflicts in India in his late nineteenth-century travelogue and how those names—and those of other writers—shaped readers’ perceptions of the people involved.

Serkan Görkemli, associate Professor of English at the University of Connecticut, Stamford, will present “Naming Queerness in Writing Fiction set in Türkiye”. Görkemli uses his own work to illustrate how “competing practices of naming and labeling are central to the queer Turkish experience” and are “essentially an act of place-making for those who are different”.

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Anne Anderson

I. M. Nick, President of the German Society for Forensic Linguistics, will present “What if the World is Like Misfits Like Us: Calling Out Name-Calling in James Howe’s *The Misfits*”. Nick considers the harm caused by verbal abuse and explores how middle-school students in Howe’s award-winning work “use their shared difference as a source of empowering camaraderie” to “take on their school’s abusive culture of name-calling”.

The call for papers noted that “narrative works can create scenes that make space for us to consider deeply the essence of the ideas encased in the labels [DEI]” and invited submissions exploring ways in which “literary components of narrative fiction and non-fiction works address DEI concepts through names of characters (charactonyms), places (toponyms), institutions, and events as well as through depictions of socio-cultural, religious, ideological, personal, and political practices of naming, renaming, and unnamings”. We are very pleased with the response and look forward to a rich conversation in Pittsburgh.