

## Overview Team

**WINNY ANG** Youth psychiatrist with MSc in transcultural psychiatry, academic at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Antwerp, and author of, among other works, *Oneindig Ver*, *Treinen verdwalen niet*, and *Hier*

**MARCO BERNINI** Associate professor of cognitive literary studies at the English Studies Department, founding director of the Narrative and Cognition Lab at IMH, and associate fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies at Durham University

**MARTIN DESSEILLES** Psychiatrist, psychotherapist, and full professor of psychiatric neuroscience at the University of Namur

**MONICA DHAR** Clinical psychologist at the University Centre for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Antwerp, associate professor at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Antwerp, and expert in developmental cognitive psychology

**WENDY ERSKINE** Author of, among other works, *Sweet Home*, *Dance Move* and *The Benefactors*

**PATRICK MCGUINNESS** Full professor of French and comparative literature at Oxford University and author of, among other works, *Other People's Countries: A Journey into Memory*

**AMAYA MIQUELAJAUREGUI GRAF** Spearhead research manager for neuroscience at the University of Antwerp

**LAURA OTIS** Professor Emerita of English at Emory University, guest scholar at the Leibniz Center for Literary and Cultural Research, and author of, among other works, *Rethinking Thought* and *Banned Emotions*

**EMMA-LOUISE SILVA** Founder of the Neuroliterary Lifespan Lab, assistant professor of English literature and literary theory at the University of Namur

**EMILY TROSCIANKO** Coach, writer, and researcher in cognitive and health humanities, co-author of *Consciousness: An Introduction*

**MARKUS WERKLE-BERGNER** Developmental cognitive neuroscientist at the Center for Lifespan Psychology, Max Planck Institute for Human Development Berlin

## Team

**Emma-Louise Silva (Founder)**

**Winnie Ang**

**Marco Bernini**

**Martin Desseilles**

**Monica Dhar**

**Wendy Erskine**

**Patrick McGuinness**

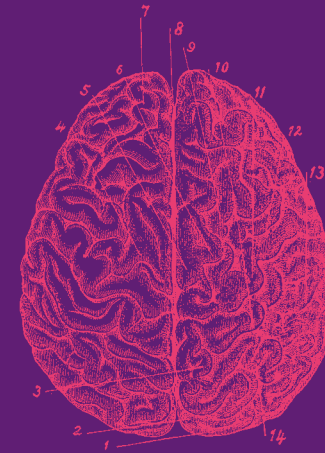
**Amaya Miquelajauregui Graf**

**Laura Otis**

**Emily Troscianko**

**Markus Werkle-Bergner**

# Neuroliterary Lifespan Lab

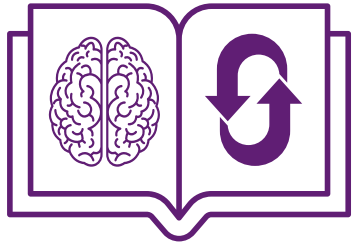


[www.neuroliterary-lifespan-lab.be](http://www.neuroliterary-lifespan-lab.be)



**Think Tank<sup>1</sup>**  
**21–22.05.2026**  
**Université de Namur (BE)**

# Neuroliterary Lifespan Lab<sup>1</sup>



The Neuroliterary Lifespan Lab aims to broaden knowledge regarding how memory works across the lifespan, prompting progress in neuroscientific and literary disciplines by means of a first-of-its-kind neuroliterary lens. The lab's think tanks host researchers from the fields of developmental cognitive neuroscience, youth and adult psychiatry and psychology, cognitive literary studies, and health humanities, along with authors who write fiction, children's literature, memoir, and life writing, among other forms, with some forms showing overlap or being defined in contested ways.

Together, we'll examine the cross-domain interest of the workings of memory and detail recall ranging from childhood to (old) adulthood, highlighting the importance of literary creativity and composition not only for memory capacities but also for creative agency in an age when AI is taking the writing process out of so many people's hands and minds.

For authors who revisit past experiences in their writings, drawing on memories plays a prominent role in the creative process. Examinations of archival writing material in the field of cognitive literary studies have charted how authors remember across drafts, elaborately writing in their fifties and sixties about challenging childhood and teenage experiences, for example. These drafts demonstrate the authors' striking skills for remembering details across the lifespan. However, researchers studying memory and ageing have argued that whereas our recollections of general knowledge and facts show relatively little decline during the ageing process, our recollections of specific personal experiences linked to their spatiotemporal contexts are affected by age-related changes. Yet recollections of such past personal experiences are often essential for storytelling spanning decades.

Can fMRI and EEG technologies uncover whether, and if so, why and how authors have heightened capabilities when it comes to detail recall across the lifespan? Do authors' intense engagements with their thoughts and memories in drafts, on paper and on screens, prompt intricate recall and the reactivation of perhaps previously dormant neural pathways? Do note-taking and draft-writing processes aid in remembering details from the past? Could such cognitive and affective engagements and processes have a therapeutic impact in clinical contexts, in relation to nervous-system regulation and post-traumatic healing, for example?

The Neuroliterary Lifespan Lab hopes to generate insights into the theoretical implications and potential scientific outcomes of the network of interdisciplinary connections between literature, the brain, and detailed memory spanning the life course.

## PROGRAMME

### THURSDAY 21 MAY

#### Cable Car and Citadelle Think Tank 10:00-13:30

- 10:00 meeting point lobby B&B Hotel Namur
- 15-minute walk to cable cars
- 1-minute descriptions in cable cars
- Walk from the Citadelle to La Brasserie de la Confluence
- 12:00-13:00 lunch at La Brasserie de la Confluence
- 15-minute walk to Creative Lab TRAKK

#### Neuroliterary Think Tank 13:30-evening

- Welcome by Emma-Louise
- 10-minute presentations & 10-minute Q&A reflections  
13:45 Patrick 14:05 Emily 14:25 Monica 14:45 Marco
- Break  
15:30 Amaya 15:50 Laura 16:10 Martin 16:30 Wendy
- 15-minute walk from Creative Lab TRAKK to Botanical by Alfonso
- Drinks at Botanical by Alfonso
- 10-minute walk to Brasserie François
- 19:00 Dinner at Brasserie François, hosted by Martin Desseilles, with many thanks to the University of Namur's Department of Psychology

### FRIDAY 22 MAY

#### Neuroliterary Lifespan Think Tank 09:45-13:00

- 09:45 meeting point lobby B&B Hotel Namur
- 10-minute walk to Salle Saintraint, Coworkingnamur
- 5-minute presentations on lifespan memory item  
Winny, Patrick, Amaya, Wendy, Martin, Emily, Monica, Laura, Marco, Emma-Louise
- 11:45-12:45 Lunch in Salle Saintraint by Terrible Kid
- 10-minute walk to Creative Lab TRAKK

#### Neuroliterary Lifespan Lab Think Tank 13:00-15:00

- Roundtable
- 20-minute walk from Creative Lab TRAKK to Namur Train Station or B&B Hotel Namur