

NARRATIVE 2024



Acknowledgements

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Thanks also to the Narrative Society for providing the opportunity to host this event.

Finally, we want to thank all the delegates for attending this event, sharing your research, and participating in discussion. This has been a labour of care and love for our disciplines and for scholarly debate: we are honoured to have been able to do this.

Stacy Gillis & Chiara Pellegrini
Narrative 2024 Conference Organisers

Welcome to Narrative 2024

It is an honour to be at the helm of the International Society for the Study of Narrative this year. I've been attending ISSN conferences for a long time, and continue to be amazed at the expanding richness and diversity of the work that people are doing. This year's conference panels feature topics ranging from refugee studies to music, trans narratives, large language models, and many other fascinating aspects and applications of narrative. I wish I could multiply (or divide) myself and attend every one of them. A heartfelt thank you to the organisers, Stacy Gillis and Chiara Pellegrini, for their superb work.

We aspire to build a sense of community that extends even beyond our annual conference. Two important committees, the Sustainability Committee and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, are seeking new members. The Graduate Student and Contingent Faculty Caucus, the Mentorship Program, and the exciting new Narrative for Social Justice Initiative all offer additional ways to stay involved. Please volunteer! Contact information can be found elsewhere in this program.

Finally, it is my hope to begin an ISSN pedagogy initiative. The aim is to think together about how we *teach* narrative theory and to assemble and share resources, including syllabi. I warmly invite you to join Gretchen Busl, Emma McNamara, Brian McAllister, Jim Phelan, and myself as we get this off the ground in the coming year. We think the process will be a fun way to work together, and we hope that the result will be useful to our members as well as to our students.

On behalf of the Executive Council, thank you for coming to Narrative 2024, and we hope to hear from you and see you at many future Narrative conferences!

Yoon Sun Lee
President, International Society for the Study of Narrative
Wellesley College

International Society for the Study of Narrative

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Graduate Student and Contingent Faculty Caucus

Chair: Ella Mingazova, University of Liège

Vice-Chair: Emma McNamara, The Ohio State University

The GCC is a community within the ISSN that supports and represents the interests of graduate students, early career scholars, and other scholars with unstable or precarious employment status. The caucus aims to provide a wide range of professional activities and resources for its membership, and is led by elected representatives who work closely with (but are independent of) the ISSN executive council. The Caucus's initiatives include but are not limited to: identifying the diverse needs of members; providing a space for members to discuss professional interests, raise concerns, and seek advocacy; Establishing mentorship relationships within the ISSN; providing professionalisation opportunities; assisting new scholars in integrating into the field of narrative studies. All ISSN members who identify as graduate students or as "contingent-employment scholars" (scholars with little or no institutional support, or who hold short-term or other unstable appointments at academic institutions) are de facto members of the Caucus. We welcome members of all backgrounds, nationalities, and beliefs. All members are invited to participate in our group's email listserv and in our meeting at the annual conference.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

Co-Chairs: Gretchen Busl, Texas Woman's University; Helen Davis, Wilkes University

Committee Members: Michael Hannon, Erin James, Cody Mejeur, Aaron Oforlea, Rebekah Slodounik.

Since its inception in the 1980s, the ISSN has expanded from being a primarily Anglo-American group of scholars interested in narrative literature to a far more international society dedicated to the study of narrative as a transmedial and transcultural phenomenon. The ISSN embraces this development and is dedicated to supporting diversity both in the spread of topics it attends to and in its membership. Diversity for us is multi-faceted and intersectional, and includes race, ethnicity, sex/gender, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, nationality, language, economic status, age, career level, and other aspects

of identity. It is important to us that the society, the listserv, and particularly the conference are inclusive spaces that are welcoming to all members. We also recognise the need to continue expanding the scope of narrative theory, and that such growth can only happen if we welcome scholars with diverse experiences and theoretical approaches. The purpose of the committee is to promote this huge and ongoing task by identifying tangible areas for improvement and offering concrete suggestions. Contact: helen.davis@wilkes.edu.

Sustainability Committee

Chair: Brian McAllister

Committee Members: Eric Morel, Erin James, Carolin Gebauer, Aaron Oforlea, Joelle Moses, Fahimeh Berenji, Victoria Pöhl.

The Sustainability Committee makes recommendations to the Executive Council regarding the environmental impact of the Society and its conference. This includes also examining how issues of sustainability intertwine with other initiatives of the Society, including diversity and inclusion. Questions that this committee considers include: How can the Society best balance serving its full membership and promoting a net-positive environmental impact? How do sustainability concerns offer up new models for the annual Narrative conference and the membership perks of the Society? How can foregrounding sustainability help us think creatively about the future health of the Society? Contact: bmcallister@aus.edu.

Narrative for Social Justice Initiative (N4SJ) Initiative

In response to the on-going effects of structural inequities in our communities, the *Narrative for Social Justice* (N4SJ) Initiative was founded by the DEI Committee and members of ISSN to make our community more welcoming, diverse, and committed to social justice. We understand social justice as a community-based and self-reflexive set of practices committed to addressing inequities, biases, and oppressive discrimination in order to build more inclusive and empowering futures for all. The N4SJ Initiative is dedicated to creating a more just and equitable academic community through research, teaching, and dialogue about social justice using digital tools and public scholarship. Situated in a well-regarded field of literary scholarship, the ISSN and N4SJ seek to prepare scholars to handle society's challenges by promoting a deeper understanding about the role of narrative in historical and contemporary cultures, addressing inequities within and outside the academic community, and building bridges between rigorous research and community engagement to achieve more equitable futures. Our primary interest in this context lies in exploring how narratives of any kind, be they fictional or non-fictional, can challenge discourses circulating in the public sphere that fuel inequities and social injustice. To these ends, N4SJ is currently comprised of several social media teams working on a podcast, video content, and establishing a web presence on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. We welcome proposals and suggestions for other work that would fit with the N4SJ Initiative, and invite interested ISSN members to get involved. Contact: gbusl@twu.edu.

Mentorship Program

The Graduate Student and Contingent Faculty Caucus and the DEI Committee run a mentorship program that connects graduate students, early-career researchers and scholars who hold short-term appointments with senior researchers. The program encourages forms of community, support, and professional opportunity and to promote the sharing and building of knowledge and skills, both for the mentee and the mentor. For more information about any of our initiatives, visit our website www.thenarrativesociety.org/

Narrative Society Awards

The Wayne C. Booth Award: Monika Fludernik

This award recognises outstanding scholar-teachers who have made sustained contributions to narrative studies over the course of their careers. Monika Fludernik is a scholar whose work is as prolific as it is insightful, original, and capacious. She has contributed major research to fields that include narrative and narrative theory, linguistic approaches to literature, law and literature, postcolonial studies, eighteenth-century aesthetics, and American literature. Her book *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (Routledge, 1996), which won the Barbara Perkins and George Perkins Prize in 1998, offers up a root and branch reformulation of classical narratology from the perspective of sociolinguistics and cognitive theory. In this ground-breaking reconceptualisation of narrativity, Fludernik uses the notion of experientiality to develop a general model that applies to all narratives. But in this book and beyond, she never loses sight of the specificity of individual narratives, periods, or genres. Her research has also attended to narratives in connection with the experiences of the marginalized and oppressed, in prison or postcolonial narratives, for example. Upon its publication, critics celebrated *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* as 'tak[ing] narratology by the scruff and giving it a vigorous shaking', such that 'no one will come away from this book feeling under-nourished'.

Fludernik continues to shake up narrative studies, publishing widely and brilliantly on topics as varied as you/we narration, cognitive narratology, fictionality, and narrative factuality. She has made vital, ongoing contributions to the study of free indirect discourse as a linguistic phenomenon from medieval literature to contemporary fiction, offering a pragmatic framework for identifying alterity that is nonetheless grounded in rigorous grammatical analysis. Her most recent work—funded by a German Research Foundation Reinhard-Koselleck grant—elaborates the field of diachronic narratology, which considers the evolution of narrative genres in English-language texts from late Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. Forthcoming issues of *Narrative* and *Language and Literature*, edited by Fludernik, focus on this topic. Her work has influenced scholars working in a range of fields from the history of the novel to current social media practices. Fludernik currently holds an endowed chair position as Professor of English at the University of Freiburg, where she also directed the graduate program, "Factual and Fictional Narration." She has held a position at the University of Vienna and fellowships at Harvard, the National Humanities Center (Research Triangle Park, NC), Oxford (All Souls; Christ Church), Paris (the Institut d'Etudes Avancées), and Freiburg's own Centre for Advanced Studies, FRIAS. She currently serves on the editorial boards of *Style* and *Language and Literature*, among other journals, and de Gruyter's *Narratologia: Contributions to Narrative* book series.

The Barbara Perkins and George Perkins Prize

Established in 1994, the Perkins Prize honours Barbara Perkins and George Perkins, the founders of *The Journal of Narrative Technique* and the Society itself. The prize, awarded to the book making the most significant contribution to the study of narrative in a given year, provides \$1,000 plus a contribution of \$500 toward the winning author's expenses for attending the Narrative Conference at which the award will be presented. The 2024 Perkins Prize committee consists of Paul Dawson, Natalya Bekhta, and Virginia Pignagnoli. They have chosen Marco Caracciolo's book, *Slow Narrative and Nonhuman Materialities* (Nebraska, 2022) for this prize. *Slow Narrative and Nonhuman Materialities* provides a significant exploration of contemporary narratives of the ecological crisis by focusing on slowness as a distinctive quality of narrative and its embodied reception to envision the interconnectedness of human communities and the nonhuman world. Caracciolo makes an outstanding contribution to the study of narrative through an innovative and sophisticated investigation of the challenge that climate

as a complex nonlinear system poses to the human apprehension of environmental emergency. Moving beyond existing storytelling models, he focuses on the interactions between formal strategies and the audience's affective experience, demonstrating how slow narrative produces an embodied engagement with textual form beyond the teleological drive for closure.

The powerful insight this book puts forth is indeed the call for an attunement towards slowness not only as narrative pace but as a mode of attention able to oppose the fast logics of nature exploitation. Instead of a hierarchical and instrumentalizing way of perceiving the nonhuman world, the focus on slowness advocated in this book works through defamiliarizing strategies that produce a thick state of absorption revealing our material entanglement with the environment. Caracciolo's proposal to address the nonlinearity of climate change includes analysis of a broad range of literary, visual, and video game narratives. The committee was impressed by his thorough investigation of the stylistic devices that create slowness and by the suitability of this approach to the ethical challenges of engaging with the nonhuman world. The theoretical model presented is well-versed in current debates in narrative theory and literary criticism, but enriches these through interdisciplinary encounters with concepts from psychology, anthropology, material ecocriticism, and philosophy of mind.

Honourable Mention: The study of narrative has been grappling with the question of how narratives can help us grasp the scale of the unfolding climate catastrophe and whether they can provide answers to why humankind seems incapable of adequate action in response. Much of this has focussed on how narrative fiction can motivate us to take such action. Peter Friederici's *Beyond Climate Breakdown: Envisioning New Stories of Radical Hope* (MIT, 2022) offers a fresh contribution by looking beyond literary fiction to discuss the broad influence in the public sphere of narrative as a cultural script, a structuring pattern of thought, and a strategic perspective on events. It offers its carefully optimistic answers in a polemical and rhetorically persuasive style that challenges the conventions of scholarly prose as it challenges how we think about narrative and its uses. Friederici's ambition is to offer new ways of thinking and talking about climate breakdown by analysing the pervasiveness of narrative in relation to a variety of available symbolic forms in the cultural field. He draws attention to the role of genre in the debate about storytelling responses to climate; or, more precisely, to the role of symbolic modalities (metaphorical, tragic and comic) that can reorient set conventions of public discourse dominated by the narrative mode. He offers unconventional interpretations of familiar discourses, comparing charts of economic growth to the graph of narrative progression to draw attention to how this dominant way of thinking is part of the problem. He tests the evasiveness of language itself, the inertia encoded in phrases such as greenhouse effect, global warming, and climate change, proposing "climate breakdown" as the most apt and urgent signifier. It is a compelling intervention in debates about climate and narrative.

The James Phelan Prize for Best Essay in *Narrative*

The award designates the outstanding essay in each volume of the Society's journal, *Narrative*. The Award is named in honour of James Phelan, who has served as editor of the journal since 1992. The judging committee, consisting of Marco Caracciolo, Cody Mejeur, and Merja Polvinen, has awarded the prize to Chloë Kitzinger for "Disrupted Lines: The Illegitimately Born Narrator in Dostoevsky and Hurston" (May 2023). Developing a bold comparative approach that brings into dialogue nineteenth-century Russian literature and the Harlem Renaissance, her essay centres on illegitimacy as a key trope for novelistic narration. Through the careful close reading of fiction by Fyodor Dostoevsky and Zora Neale Hurston, it argues that illegitimately born first-person narrators function as a powerful narrative device that questions authorial control and works towards a utopian vision of literature's embedding

in society. Attentive to the authors' socio-cultural positioning as well as style and narrative form, Kitzinger's discussion showcases the potential of a transnational and contextualist narratology.

Honourable Mention: Matthew Martello for the essay “Dramatic Poetry as Rhetorical Form: The Case of Sarah Piatt’s ‘Mock Diamonds,’” which advances the debate on narrative and poetry by engaging the significance of hybrid (dramatic and poetic) forms (January 2023).

The Alan Nadel Prize for Best Essay by a Graduate Student

All graduate students who present papers at the conference are invited to compete for the Alan Nadel Prize for best essay by a graduate student. The winner will receive a copy of a Perkins Prize-winning book of his, her, or their choice and will be encouraged to expand the winning paper for consideration by *Narrative*. In addition, the 2024 winner will be eligible for \$500 toward expenses to attend the 2024 conference. The 2023 judges, Brian J. McAllister and Divya Dwivedi, have decided to award the Alan Nadel Prize to Michael Hannan, who presented his essay, “Psychoanalyzing the Ironic Distance in Unreliable Narration: Kazuo Ishiguro’s *The Remains of the Day* and the Suppression of Unwanted Thoughts,” at the 2023 conference.

Honourable Mention: Jocelyn Sears, “Who Are ‘We’? A (Tentative) Typology of We-Narrators”; Patrick Sui, “Can Computational Methods Excavate Plot? A Sentiment Approach”; Carlos R. Tkacz, “Model Collisions: Predictive Processing, Futurisms, and Speculative Fiction”.

To be considered for this year, submit papers electronically as attachments (Word or PDF) to gebauer@uni-wuppertal.de and michelle.wang@ntu.edu.sg. Please title the subject of your email “2024 Nadel Prize.” Papers must be received by June 1, 2024. Papers must be unrevised conference presentations and no longer than 2500 words. While formatting changes, correction of typos, and the addition of a Works Cited page are expected, changes to the substance of the argument are not acceptable. The idea is to reward the work presented at the conference rather than the work done after the conference.

Keynotes

We are delighted to host best-selling author **Ann Cleeves** as our first keynote speaker. Cleeves is a novelist based in the North East of England. She has written over thirty novels and has won multiple awards, including the Duncan Lawrie Dagger Award and Iceland Noir's Honorary Award for Services to the Art of Crime Fiction. In 2017, she was presented with the Diamond Dagger of the Crime Writers' Association, the highest honour in British crime writing. Cleeves was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Sunderland in 2014 and one by Newcastle University in 2022. Cleeves' books have been translated into twenty languages and she is a bestseller in Scandinavia and Germany. Her Vera Stanhope series has been adapted into an ITV television series starring Brenda Blethyn as the titular detective. With thirteen seasons and counting, *Vera* features numerous episodes set in the Newcastle and Northumberland area. In 2022, Cleeves was awarded an OBE for services to reading and libraries.

Professor **Jennifer Richards** is honouring us with our second keynote address. Richards is the English (2001) Chair in the Faculty of English at Cambridge University, and a former Head of English Literature, Language and Linguistics at Newcastle University. She is the Chair of The English Association's Higher Education Committee, and works with the Institute for English Studies and University English advocating for the Arts and Humanities. Richards is a sixteenth-century specialist and works on the history of reading, the history of rhetoric and the history of the book, with a focus on the physical voice. She is currently co-leading a Leverhulme Trust-funded Research Project (2022-25) exploring emotions and bees with software engineers, digital humanists, literary scholars, musicians, musicologists, bio-environmental scientists, *Bee-ing Human*. She also leads *The Thomas Nashe Project*, which is producing a new critical edition of the works of Thomas Nashe (Oxford UP), alongside additional resources helping to animate the study of Nashe's writing.

To conclude the conference proceedings, award-winning television producer and screen writer **John Yorke** will provide our final keynote. A Newcastle University graduate, Yorke has been Head of Channel 4 Drama (2003–2005), controller of BBC drama production (2006-2012) and MD of Company Pictures (2013-2015). He is the author of *Into the Woods: How Stories Work and Why We Tell Them* (2014), a screenwriting guide that proposes a five-act structure to film and television narrative. Yorke has worked on some of the most widely viewed and critically acclaimed British television series, from *EastEnders* to *Shameless*, *Life on Mars* and *Wolf Hall*. He is the founder and leader of John Yorke Story and of the BBC Studios Writers' Academy. He has trained some of the most successful and prolific screenwriters working today, who have created or gone on to write for shows including *The Crown*, *Killing Eve* and *Doctor Who*.

Programme at a Glance

Wednesday, 17th April	
From 8.00	Registration
9.00-10.30	Session One
10.45-12.15	Session Two
12.30-13.30	Contemporary Narrative Panel 1
13.30-14.30	Buffet Lunch
14.30-16.00	Session Three
16.15-17.45	Session Four
18.00-19.00	Keynote One: Ann Cleeves
19.00-20.00	Wine Reception
Thursday, 18th April	
From 8.00	Registration
8.30-10.00	Session Five
10.15-11.45	Session Six
12.00-13.30	Pedagogy Lunch
13.30-15.00	Contemporary Narrative Panel 2
15.15-16.45	Session Seven
17.00-18.00	Keynote Two: Jennifer Richards
From 19.00	Conference Dinner
Friday, 19th April	
From 8.00	Registration
8.30-10.00	Session Eight
10.15-11.45	Session Nine
12.00-13.30	Session Ten
13.30-14.30	DEI Lunch
14.30-16.00	Session Eleven
16.15-17.45	Session Twelve
18.00-19.00	Keynote Three: John Yorke
19.00-20.00	Closing Wine Reception

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17TH

SESSION ONE (9.00-10.30)

1-A) The Archive of Childhood - Room 1.16 (Hybrid)

Chair: Emma-Louise Silva (University of Antwerp)

- Andrea Davidson (University of Antwerp), "Author-Editor Dialogue at Bodley Head and Groundwood Books: Reconstructing Conversations behind Early Young Adult Novels"
- Helen King (Newcastle University), "Narratives of Collaboration in Children's Literary Archives"
- Emma-Louise Silva (University of Antwerp), "Exploring the Paper Traces of Memory and Imagination in Children's Literature"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/83470948104>

1-B) Narrative Ethics and Novelistic Aesthetics - Room 1.17 (Hybrid)

Chair: Dorothy Hale (University of California, Berkeley)

- Dorothy Hale (University of California, Berkeley), "Damon Galgut's *The Promise* and the Novel's New Ethical Aesthetic"
- Madigan Haley (The College of the Holy Cross), "Fictions of Re-Collection, Ethics of the Self"
- David James (University of Birmingham), "Policing Empathy: Sentimental Aesthetics and the Ethics of Prosecution"
- Nancy Ruttenburg (Stanford University), "Consider the Lie"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/84137811059>

1-C) Widening the Circle: The Outer Edges of Narrative Loops - Room 1.18 (Hybrid)

Chair: Wibke Schniedermann (Ghent University)

- Ciarán Kavanagh (Ghent University), "Science Fiction: Genre as Narrative Loop"
- Melanie Kreitler (Giessen University), "The Morality of Gameplay: Game Loops and Player Engagement"
- Rae Muhlstock (University of Albany) and Sean Yeager (Ohio State University), "Visualising the Labyrinthine Loops of Baran bo Odar and Jantje Friese's *Dark*"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/82766512437>

1-D) Narrative and the Life Course - Room 2.14

Chair: Jake Jewusiak (Newcastle University)

- James Inkster (Newcastle University), "'to the second generation': Intergenerational Narratives and Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*"
- Jake Jewusiak (Newcastle University), "Orientalising the Life Course: The Role of Age in Benjamin Disraeli's Imperial Narrative"
- Zuzanna Zarebska (University of Lisbon), "Narratives of Atonement and Self-Discovery in Charlotte Wood's *Stone Yard Devotional*"

1-E) Empathy and Storytelling - Room 2.15

Chair: Simona Adinolfi (Ghent University)

- Ghufuran Fadhil (University of Victoria), "The Role of Storytelling in Shaping and Empowering the Immigrant Community"
- Andrea Macrae (Oxford Brookes University), "Picturebook Refugees"

- Katrina Wong (University of York), "'Rooms within rooms': Banality and Narrative Empathy in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*"

1-F) Transmedial Aesthetics - Room 2.16

Chair: Megan Hardiman (Newcastle University)

- Carolien Van Nerom (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), "Narrative Setting in Operas by Philip Glass"
- Zoltan Varga (Western Norway University of Applied Sciences), "Music and Narrative: The Case of Utopia"
- W. Michelle Wang (Nanyang Technological University), "Foreshadowing and an 'Aesthetics of Indirection'"

1-G) Reading Virginia Woolf – Room G.06

Chair: Emma Short (Durham University)

- Danae Arteaga (University of York), "Archetypal Images in the Modernist Text and Cartomancy: Comparing the Process of Narrative Structuration in Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* and in Tarot Reading"
- Kelly A. Marsh (Mississippi State University), "The Progression of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and the Ethics of Narrating Simultaneity"
- Lilian Rácz (Eötvös Loránd University), "Music in Time: Anisochrony, Prose Poetics and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*"

1-H) Silence and the Unnarratable – Room G.56

Chair: Gerald Prince (University of Pennsylvania)

- Phyllis Koehler (University of Cambridge), "The Nullified Heroine: Narrating Beyond the Limits of Verbalisation in Sigmund Freud, Josef Breuer, Heinrich von Kleist, and Pauline Réage"
- Leri Price (Heriot-Watt University), "[long pause]: Silences, Absences and Omissions in Narratives of Home"
- Ellen Stenstrom (Indiana University at Bloomington), "How to Narrate the Unnarratable: Reconsidering the Realism in Reflexivity"

1-I) Narratives and Secrecy – Room G.41

Chair: Yoon Sun Lee (Wellesley College)

- Penny Fielding (University of Edinburgh), "Narrative, Time and Secrecy in Cold War Spy Fiction"
- Yoon Sun Lee (Wellesley College), "Loud Secrets"
- Vanessa Smith (University of Sydney), "Case Notes: Secret Archives in Wilkie Collins' *Armadale*"
- Cedric Tolliver (University of Oklahoma), "Narrative Secrets and Alarming Truths in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*"

SESSION TWO (10.45-12.15)

2-A) Theorising Narrative - Room 1.16 (Hybrid)

Chair: Daniel Aureliano Newman (University of Toronto)

- Daria Baryshikova (Aachen University), "Metaphorical Conceptualisation of Self Exploration in B.S. Johnson's *Trawl*"
- Joanna Jeziorska-Haładaj (University of Warsaw), "Second Person Biographies"
- Valery Timofeev (Independent), "Transtextuality as Dynamic Process in Iris Murdoch's *The Black Prince*"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/83470948104>

2-B) Narrative Invention - Room 1.17 (Hybrid)

Chair: Gretchen Busl (Texas Woman's University)

- Marlene Allen Ahmed (United Arab Emirates University), "Walter Mosley's *Blue Light* as a Blues-Science-Fiction Narrative"
- Mengni Kang (Macau University of Science and Technology), "Supernatural Beings as Natural: A Relational Model of the Unnatural in Vietnamese-American Narratives"
- Penny Yeung (Rutgers University), "Double Voicing and Writing Historicity in Dung Kai Cheung's *Atlas*"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/84137811059>

2-C) *Kishōtenketsu* and other Non-Western Narrative Structures - Room 1.18 (Hybrid)

Chair: Richard Walsh (University of York)

- Francesca Arnavas (University of Tartu), "Hayao Miyazaki's Hybrid Worlds and Their Riddle-Stories: Western Tropes and *Kishōtenketsu*"
- Mattia Bellini (University of Tartu), "Narratives and Complexity: Exploring Cross-Cultural Narrative Structures and Their Cognitive Effects"
- Terra Gasque (Georgia Institute of Technology), "When a Twist is not the Twist: *Kishōtenketsu*, Normative Drives, and Queer Experiences"
- Hartmut Koenitz (Södertörn University), "Non-Western Narratives and the Question of Productive Structure"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/82766512437>

2-D) Theorising Character – Room 2.14

Chair: Yoon Sun Lee (Wellesley College)

- Ryohei Hashimoto (University of York), "Predictive Processing in Literary Characterisation and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*"
- Joanna Lipson Freed (Oakland University), "The Politics of Characterisation and Credibility in Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche's Fiction"
- Kunwar Nitin Pratap Gurjar (Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi), "Towards a Dalit Narratology"

2-E) Co-Construction and Identity - Room 2.15

Chair: Zuzanna Zarebska (University of Lisbon)

- Alanoud Alenizi (Newcastle University), "Crafting Philanthropic Identities: Fundraisers as Narrative Architects"

- Jamie Chen (University of Iowa), "Focalising Reading: Marginal Literacy in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*"
- Virginia Pignagnoli (University of Turin), "Co-Construction and Narrative Politics in Post-Postmodernist Fiction"

2-F) Econarratology - Room 2.16

Chair: Jon Heggund (Washington State University)

- Lamyk Bekius (University of Antwerp), "Nanogenetic (Eco)Narratology: Examining the Writing Process of a Narrative of Environmental Collapse"
- Dennin Ellis (Ohio State University), "Who Speaks For The Trees? How Pop Culture Navigates Global Warming"
- Hongri Wang (Shanghai Jiao Tong University), "Scaling Up the Capitalocene: Paratexts, Storyworld, and Climate Change in Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140*"

2-G) Transforming the Past - Room G.06

Chair: Susan Lanser (Brandeis University)

- Roger Edholm (Mid Sweden University), "The Rhetoric of Epistolary: Contemporary Uses of the Epistolary Occasion"
- Jessica Jumpertz (RWTH Aachen University), "'As if there can be no story unless we crawl and weep': Metafictional Comments on Storytelling in Greek Rewritings"
- Erin Temple (Ohio State University), "*Penny Dreadful(s)*: (Neo)-Victorian Transmedia Storyworlds"

2-H) Experiencing Gameplay - Room G.56

Chair: Helen King (Newcastle University)

- Joey Isaac Jenkins (Newcastle University), "'To assume a wild shape': The Queering Presence of the Beast in *Dungeons & Dragons* Roleplay and Media"
- Anna Ishchenko (Linnaeus University), "Poetic Gameplay and Narrative Experience in *Kentucky Route Zero*"
- Katja Warstat-Willms (RWTH Aachen University), "Meta Much? Embodied Perspectives on Metafictional Devices in Contemporary Commercial Video Games"

2-I) Gendered Politics and Social Media Storytelling - Room G.41

Chair: Ruth Page (University of Birmingham)

- Maxine Ali (King's College London) "Digital Wellness Culture and Conspiratorial Storytelling"
- Shelley Lawson (Curtin University Dubai), "The Story Types of the #MeToo Movement and Their Relation to Credibility"
- Ruth Page (University of Birmingham), "A Narrative Typology for Memetic Retellings: The Trending Sounds of TikTok"

CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE PANEL (12.30-13.30)

Room G.41

Chair: James Phelan (Ohio State University)

- Carolin Gebauer (University of Wuppertal), "Narrative Mobility Studies: Towards a New Research Paradigm"
- Alexandra Valint (University of Southern Mississippi), "Multiple Narrators and Disability Narratology"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/5506311519>

BUFFET LUNCH (13.30-14.30)

SESSION THREE (14.30-16.00)

3-A) Health and Narrative - Room 1.16 (Hybrid)

Chair: Chen Edelsburg (Tel Aviv University)

- Shan Ruan (Ohio State University), "Narrative and Modern Productivity: De-Compartmentalisation as Alternative Self-Care for Dementia Patients and Caregivers"
- Anneli Silvén Hagström (Stockholm University) and Ylva Spånberger Weitz (Södertörn University), "Young People's Narrated Experiences of Growing Up with Parents' Addiction Problems"
- Gunther Martens (Ghent University) and Liselotte Van der Gucht (Ghent University), "Mind the Gap? Neurodiversity in Memoirs and Literary Fiction"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/83470948104>

3-B) Decolonial Body Narratives - Room 1.17 (Hybrid)

Chair: Nicole McCleese (Michigan State University)

- Rutuja Deshmukh (Michigan State University), "Translating Region, Imagining Nation: Negotiating Modernity in V Shantaram's *Bilinguals*"
- Alex Kinnaman (Michigan State University), "Great Lakes Native Law, Literature, and Narratology Across the US / Canada Border"
- Nicole McCleese (Michigan State University), "Lac du Flambeau Elders' Non-Fiction Narratives"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/84137811059>

3-C) Maximalism and Multiplication - Room 1.18 (Hybrid)

Chair: Yonina Hoffman (United States Merchant Marine Academy)

- Benjamin Bergholtz (Louisiana Tech University), "Swallowing a World: Maximalism, Globalisation, and Narrative Theory"
- Yonina Hoffman (United States Merchant Marine Academy), "Narrative Space and the Ending of William Gaddis's *The Recognitions*"
- Mattie Jacobs (University of Wisconsin-Madison), "Can We Read a Robot Writer's Mind? Collaborative Authorship, the WGA strikes, and AI in the Writers' Room"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/82766512437>

3-D) Subjectivity and Voice - Room 2.14

Chair: Megan Stephens (University of Sheffield)

- Autumn Doucette (University of Victoria), "Against the River's Current: Interconscious Narratives in Nicole Krauss' *Great House*"
- Gopika Gurudas (University of Queensland IIT Delhi Academy of Research), "Narrative Resistance and Social Justice in Indigenous Australian Literature"
- Haidamteu Zeme (Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi), "Siting Narratives: Language, Writing-Voice and the Politics of Orality"

3-E) Lifewriting, Autofiction, Autotheory - Room 2.15

Chair: Stefan Kjerkegaard (Aarhus University)

- Max Casey (Free University Amsterdam), "'It is hard to convey': Flat Affect in Illness Autotheory and the Subversion of Inscrutability"
- Chi-Chieh Huang (Örebro University), "Life-Writing in Contemporary Digital Games"
- Massimiliano Manni (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore), "In-Betweenness and Anglophone Autofiction"

3-F) Narrative Identity - Room 2.16

Chair: Christiana Gregoriou (University of Leeds)

- Nadia Georgiou (Sheffield Hallam University), "Translating the Mothership: Jane Austen and Transmedia Worldbuilding"
- Niclas Johansson (Mälardalen University), "Culture and Narrative Identity: The Challenge and Opportunity of Migration Literature"
- Chris Little (Newcastle University), "Far-Right Transmedial Worlds: Tommy Robinson and the Fall/Rise Archetype"

3-G) Voicing the Non-Human - Room G.06

Chair: Ralph J. Poole (University of Salzburg)

- Michal Roth (Tel Aviv University), "Slaves and Animals as Non-Subjects in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*"
- Liam Sewell (Swansea University), "Complicated Objects: It-Narrators that Surpass Simple 'Objecthood'"
- Katie Unwin (University of Cambridge), "Gnawing at Narrative: 'Literary Animals' and the Unpalatable Truth in Sam Savage's *Firmin*"

3-H) Multimodal Corporeality - Room G.56

Chair: Melba Cuddy-Keane (University of Toronto)

- Simon Grennan (University of Chester), "The Body as Idea: Narrative Drawing, Mind, and Categories of Knowledge"
- Diána Mosza (Eötvös Loránd University), "Difficulties of Storytelling: Perception and Corporeality in Géza Ottlik's *A School at the Frontier*"
- Deborah Ward (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), "Wearing the Suit: A Feminist Narratological Analysis of Cathy Marston's Narrative Ballet"

3-I) The 2024 Wayne C. Booth Award: In Honour of Monika Fludernik - Room G.41

Chair: Erin James (University of Idaho)

- Jan Alber (Giessen University), "Diachronic Narratology"
- Marco Caracciolo (Ghent University), "Cognitive Narratology"
- Divya Dwivedi (Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi), "Postcolonial Narratology"
- Violeta Sotirova (University of Nottingham), "Free Indirect Discourse"
- Denise Wong (Giessen University), "You/We Narration"

SESSION FOUR (16.15-17.45)

4-A) Race and Narrative - Room 1.16 (Hybrid)

Chair: Greta Olson (Giessen University)

- Antonio J. Ferraro (Ohio State University), "The Assumptual Dynamics of Race in Toni Morrison and James Alan McPherson"
- Erin Minnick (Morgan State University), "Getting 'Passed' Race: An Abstract Antagonist in Charles Chesnutt's *The House behind the Cedars*"
- Brian Richardson (University of Maryland), "Postcolonial and African-American Plot Trajectories"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/83470948104>

4-B) Embodied Pedagogies: Co-Created Narratives and Gamified Learning - Room 1.17 (Hybrid)

Chair: Courtney Hopf (New York University, London)

- Vanessa Arnaud (California State University, Sacramento), "Truths Tangled in Misinformation: Exploring Co-Creative Narratives in a Gamified World Set in Pre-Revolutionary France"
- Paul Dahlgren (Georgia Southwestern State University), "Roleplaying Narratology: Teaching the History of Theory with Reacting-Style Pedagogy"
- Courtney Hopf (New York University, London), "Theorising Pedagogical Role-Playing as Narratives of Collective Experience"
- Maureen Quigley (University of Missouri, St. Louis), "Playing the Plague: Medieval Chronicles, Counterfactual Narratives and Games"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/84137811059>

4-C) Visual Forms - Room 1.18 (Hybrid)

Chair: Megan Hardiman (Newcastle University)

- Pratiksha Ashok (UC Louvain), "Netflix True-Crime Docuseries and the Personification of Legal Story-Telling"
- Giorgio Busi Rizzi (Ghent University), "Linear, Tabular, Gappy, Networked: Comics Reading Revisited"
- Jennifer Umezina (Morgan State University), "'My Name is Irete': Meaning-Making in Feminist Graphic Narratives"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/82766512437>

4-D) Fictionality Across History - Room 2.14

Chair: Wanlin Li (Peking University)

- Greger Andersson (Örebro University), "The Book of Jonah as a Narrative Fictional Argument"
- Melina Ghasseminejad (University of Antwerp), "The Power of Perception: The Influence of Fictionality on the Creation of Storyworld Possible Selves"
- Ville Hämäläinen (Tampere University), "Disavowing Fiction, Avowing Fictionality: Søren Kierkegaard and the Use of Fictional Prefaces"

4-E) Patterns and Absences - Room 2.15

Chair: Carolin Gebauer (University of Wuppertal)

- Anne Holm (Linnaeus University), "Shaping Memory Through Lyric Narration"
- Richard Müller (Czech Academy of Sciences), "The Issue of Repetitiveness in Franz Kafka"

- Jasmina Pasic (Northumbria University), "The Pragmatics of Narrative Gaps in J.D. Salinger's *Nine Stories*"

4-F) Harlem Renaissance Fiction - Room 2.16

Chair: Ben Robbins (University of Innsbruck)

- Evan Chaloupka (Franklin University), "Envisioning Interiority, Environment and Disability in Jean Toomer's 'Kabnis'"
- Marc Farrior (Southern Utah University), "Afrofuturism, Homescaping, and the Harlem Renaissance"
- Maisie Wiltshire-Gordon (University of California, Berkeley), "Ambivalent Heteroglossia and Nella Larsen's *Passing*"

4-G) Game Worlds - Room G.06

Chair: Theresa Krampe (University of Tübingen)

- Daniel Punday (Mississippi State University), "Infrastructure in Video Games"
- Roz Tuplin (Independent), "Jobs from Hell: The Games Industry and the Culture of Work in Roguelike Videogames"
- Daehyun Won (Texas A&M University), "Exploring and Teaching War Propaganda in Digital Games Narrative"

4-H) Setting and Stillness - Room G.56

Chair: Ruth Connolly (Newcastle University)

- Birte Christ (Giessen University), "Narrative Uneventfulness: Solitary Confinement in Film and Television"
- Emma Short (Durham University), "The Hotel Narrative"
- Richard Walsh (University of York), "Visual Representation and Implicit Temporality"

4-I) Reading Trauma - Room G.41

Chair: Nora Parr (University of Birmingham)

- Franziska Hartung (Newcastle University), "Fiction and Wellbeing"
- Sonya Isaak (Paul Valéry University), "Rhetorical Narratives of Trauma: 9/11 Discourse in Print Media and Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*"
- Josie Kochendorfer (Indiana University of Pennsylvania), "Don't Get Too Close: Fragmented Narrative and Trauma Theory"

KEYNOTE ONE (18.00-19.00)

Room G.41

Ann Cleeves, "The Human Geography of Crime"

Chair: Dr Ruth Connolly (Senior Lecturer in Renaissance Literature, Newcastle University)

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/5506311519>

WINE RECEPTION (19.00-20.00)

Opening Remarks: Professor Nigel Harkness

(Pro-Vice-Chancellor – Humanities and Social Sciences, Newcastle University)

THURSDAY, APRIL 18th

SESSION FIVE (8.30-10.00)

5-A) Counter-Narratives in Fiction & Fictional Counter-Narratives - Room 1.16 (Hybrid)

Chair: *Matti Hyvärinen (Tampere University)*

- Per Krogh Hansen (University of Southern Denmark), "Generation Storytelling: Master and Counter-Narrative in Douglas Coupland's *Generation X*"
- Matti Hyvärinen (Tampere University), "Intersectional Positioning and Counter-Narratives in Viet Than Nguyen's *The Committed*"
- Sylvie Patron (Université Paris Cité), "Master and Counter-Narratives in Fiction: A Case Study from Ahmadou Kourouma's *The Suns of Independence*"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/82660132534>

5-B) Framing: Towards an Interdisciplinary Approach - Room 1.17 (Hybrid)

Chair: *Sara Nocerino (University of Naples Federico II)*

- Sara Nocerino (University of Naples Federico II), "Framing? One Exercise in Comparative Semiotics and a Few (Open) Conclusions"
- Antonio Perrone (University of Naples Federico II), "'Framing' in a Topoi Collection"
- Eric Louis Russell (University of California, Davis) and Piergiorgio Trevisan (University of Trieste), "Layering in Frames, Frames in Layers: Dreaming of Naples"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/86193093972>

5-C) Narrative Politics and Social Justice - Room 1.18 (Hybrid)

Chair: *Greta Olson (Giessen University)*

- Stefan Iversen (Aarhus University), "Deepfakes as Narrative Contestation"
- Irene Kacandes (Dartmouth College), "Co-Witnessing through Paramemoir: Hazel Carby's *Imperial Intimacies* and Ivan Jablonka's *Histoire des grands-parents que je n'ai jamais eus*"
- Greta Olson (Giessen University), "Claiming Rights in Memes: Narratives and Images of Migration"
- Wibke Schniedermann (Ghent University), "History Repeating or a Threat to the Status Quo: Narrative Formulas in Travon Free and Martin Desmon Roe's *Two Distant Strangers*"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/82362518849>

5-D) Metafictional Reflections - Room 2.14

Chair: *Massimiliano Manni (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore)*

- Caleb Hays (Ohio State University), "Metafiction and the Death of the Narrative Audience"
- Mariia Pshenychna (V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University), "Postmodern Pantextual Worldview and Self-Reflexive Narration in J.M. Coetzee"
- Magdalena Sawa (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin) and Joanna Klara Teske (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin), "Metamodernist Metafiction"

5-E) Power and Community Narratives - Room 2.15

Chair: *Ada Cheng (Dominican University)*

- Rahul Kumar (Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi), "Contesting Stigmatisation: Representations of Human Sacrifice in Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe"
- Niyati Shah (Pandit Deendayal Energy University), "Budhan: A Study of a People's Theatre"

- Anat Shapiro (Aarhus University), "Oppressive Directionality in The Book of Jonah: The Textual Dynamics of Space and Agency"

5-F) Reality, Fiction, and Narrative: The Effects of Ontological Ambiguity - Room 2.16

Chair: Alice Bell (Sheffield Hallam University)

- Jan Alber (Giessen University), "Disruptive Narratives: Theoretical Conceptualisation and Case Studies"
- Alice Bell (Sheffield Hallam University), "'It makes you feel more of a part of it': Situated Digital Fiction and Ontological Resonance"
- Jarmila Mildorf (Paderborn University), "Fictional Contamination and Literary Complexity in Conversational Storytelling: A Family Story"

5-G) Narrating Palestine - Room G.06

Chair: Susan Lanser (Brandeis University)

- Baraah Abed Elhai (Bar-Ilan University), "The Art of Life-Unwriting: Narrative Refusals in Etan Rum's *A Woman Is No Man*"
- Joseph Farag (University of Minnesota), "Al-Awdah and its Discontents: Narratives of Return in Palestinian Literature"
- Nora Parr (University of Birmingham), "Finding a Language for Crisis and Inequality: Lessons from Two Novels on Palestine"
- Sondos Shehadeh (Al-Quds Bard College), "Children's Literature, Trauma, and Narrative Form"

5-H) Embodied Narrative Theories - Room G.56

Chair: Suzanne Keen (Scripps College)

- Ellen Esrock (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute), "Embodied Feeling of the Text: A Proposal for Narrative Transomatization"
- Suzanne Keen (Scripps College) "Narrative Empathy as Animator of the Inanimate"
- Hannah Wojciehowski (University of Texas, Austin), "How Stories Make Us Feel: Part 2"

5-I) Narrative Theory and Algorithmic Indeterminacy - Room G.41

Chair: Marco Caracciolo (Ghent University)

- Marco Caracciolo (Ghent University), "Objects and Algorithmic Uncertainty in Video Game Narrative"
- Cody Mejeur (University of Buffalo, SUNY), "Queer Play, Trans Emergence: Narrative as Experimental, Algorithmic System"
- Laura Piippo (Tampere University) and Hanna-Riikka Roine (Tampere University), "Making Narratives of Democracy Appear and Matter: Algorithms as Organisational Logic"
- Esko Suoranta (Tampere University) "Interpretations of the Great Common Task: Black Box Demoi in Hannu Rajaniemi's SF"

SESSION SIX (10.15-11.45)

6-A) Narratives of Disappointment, Disappointing Narratives - Room 1.16 (Hybrid)

Chair: Steven Willemsen (University of Groningen)

- Sjoerd-Jeroen Moenandar (University of Groningen), "Drummond's Disappointing Posture: Ethos and Plot in Two Rock Memoirs"

- Gerald Prince (University of Pennsylvania), "Narratorial Disappointment and Diegetic Narrations in Marcel Proust's *Recherche*"
- Emily Anderson (Knox College), "Disappointment is Coming: Failing Fans in HBO's *Game of Thrones*"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/82660132534>

6-B) Clickbait Narratology: Literary Devices for Journalistic Tellability - Room 1.17 (Hybrid)

Chair: *Samuli Björninen (Aarhus University)*

- Elise Kraatila (Tampere University), "Building the Permacrisis: Dystopian Worlds in Future-Oriented Journalism"
- Markus Laukkanen (Tampere University), "Rhetoric of Authority: The Implied Author of HBO's *Game of Thrones* in Online Media Discourse"
- Riikka Pirinen (Tampere University), "Literary Epiphany in Clickbait Journalism: Ethical Challenges of Personal Stories"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/86193093972>

6-C) Fiction, Nonfiction, and Something in Between - Room 1.18 (Hybrid)

Chair: *Hannah Kim (University of Arizona)*

- Hannah Kim (University of Arizona), "Fabrication, Expectation and the Fiction-Nonfiction Distinction"
- Mengchen Lang (Shanghai Jiao Tong University), "Beyond Self-Exploration: Elaborating a Rhetorical Approach to Autofiction through Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You*"
- Susan Lanser (Brandeis University), "Resisting Fiction(ality)"
- Yu Wang (Monash University), "Fictions and Fictional Elements in Holocaust Representation: A Rhetorical Approach"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/82362518849>

6-D) The Unnatural and the Conventional - Room 2.14

Chair: *Bartosz Lutostański (University of Warsaw)*

- Bartosz Lutostański (University of Warsaw), "Memeability: A Double-Narrativisation Communication Process on Instagram"
- Bartosz Stoppel (University of Silesia), "Towards Embodied Defamiliarisation: Immersion, Predictive Processing and Anna Kavan's *Ice*"
- Annjeaneatte Wiese (University of Colorado, Boulder), "Revisiting Mimesis: Toward a More Inclusive Narratology"

6-E) Possible Selves - Room 2.15

Chair: *Shannon Rose Quist (Independent)*

- María-Ángeles Martínez (University of Alcalá), "MAXQDA, Storyworld Possible Selves and Narrative Progression"
- Shannon Rose Quist (Independent), "Phantom Worlds in Fictional Narratives"
- Shannon Tovey (Kennesaw State University), "Narrative Theory and Pre-Service Teachers' Engagement in Planned Teaching Practices"

6-F) Teen Narratives - Room 2.16

Chair: Joey Isaac Jenkins (Newcastle University)

- Emma K. McNamara (Ohio State University), "Collisions and Fractures: Dual Narration in Young Adult Romance"
- Anneke Schewe (Kiel University) and Melissa Schuh (Kiel University), "'Bury your queer tropes': Serial Character Development, Queer Representation, and the Coming-of-Age Narrative in *Heartstopper*"

6-G) Re-Imagining the Gothic - Room G.06

Chair: Stacy Gillis (Newcastle University)

- Mona Alkhudaydi (University of Nottingham), "Exploring Anxiety in the Imperial Gothic Genre"
- Tong Liu (Stanford University), "From Gothic to Pastoral: An Exercise in Plausible Intertextuality"
- Rachel McCoy (Ohio State University), "Counting the Days: Affective Speculation in *Dracula Daily*"

6-H) Narratives and Higher Education - Room G.56

Chair: Virginia Pignagnoli (University of Turin)

- Malcah Efron (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), "Expertise and the Realism Effect in Academic Fictions"
- Katherine Parsons (University of Birmingham), "Searching for Narrative: Stuart Hall, Information-Seeking and the Narrativisation of Research"
- Adelina Yankova (Columbia University), "Stories from the College Newsroom: How Organisational Narratives Shape Institutional Memory"

6-I) Narrative and the Public Faces of Science - Room G.41

Chair: J Hughes (University of Toronto)

- Erin James (University of Idaho) and Nick Koenig (University of Idaho), "Public Science, Narrative Theory, and Tree Ring Education"
- Shannon Lambert (Ghent University), "Webs of Affect: Citizen Science, Narrative, and the Joy of Discovery"
- Daniel Aureliano Newman (University of Toronto), "Discordant Narration and Fraudulent Science: A Mutually Illuminating Connection"

PEDAGOGY LUNCH (12.00-13.30)

Room G.56

(If you have registered, find a brown bag with your name in the foyer).

Chair: Sarah Graham (Dean of Education, Newcastle University)

- Josie Crawley (Otago Polytechnic), "Children's Picture Books: A Narrative Space for Health Students' Learning"
- James Gerrard (Newcastle University), "Breaking the Cycle? Corpus Linguistics and Student Perceptions of Feedback"
- David Gibson (Dublin City University), "Teacher Education and Complicity: A Narrative Pedagogical Response"
- Marina Lambrou (Kingston University), "Teaching Mind Style Through Literature and Art to Creative Writing Students"

CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE PANEL (13.30-15.00)

Room G.41

Chair: James Phelan (Ohio State University)

- Marco Bernini (Durham University), "Fiction and the Permeable Mind: On Characters' *Emersivity* and Thin Ontologies"
- Rachel Carroll (Teesside University), "Sewing in a Hostile Environment: Materialising Clothing Poverty in Black British Women's Writing"
- Agnes Woolley (Birkbeck, University of London), "Unsettling Aesthetics: Recent Refugee Filmmaking"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/5506311519>

SESSION SEVEN (15.15-16.45)

7-A) Travel and Movement - Room 1.16 (Hybrid)

Chair: Agnes Woolley (Birkbeck, University of London)

- Carol Colatrella (Georgia Institute of Technology), "Dislocation and Travel in Lisa Ko's *The Leavers* and Jessica Au's *Cold Enough for Snow*"
- Adwoa A. Opoku-Agyemang (Johns Hopkins University), "'I laughed too': Travel Humour in African Novels"
- Gioia Panzarella (University of Warwick), "Co-Authoring a Migration Story: Negotiations and Power Dynamics in Literature and Television"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/82660132534>

7-B) The Strangeness of Franz Kafka - Room 1.17 (Hybrid)

Chair: Eyal Segal (Independent)

- Bohumil Fořt (Masaryk University), "(Lack of) Completeness and Coherence in Franz Kafka's Worlds"
- Lorna Martens (University of Virginia), "Franz Kafka as Play Dough Artist: Rolling Out, Cutting Up, Compacting"
- Pedro Ponce (St. Lawrence University), "Staging Franz Kafka: The Theatrical Frame in His Fictions"
- Eyal Segal (Independent), "Franz Kafka's Experimentation with First-Person Narration During 1916-17"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/86193093972>

7-C) Realism and Mimesis - Room 1.18 (Hybrid)

Chair: Malcah Effron (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

- Carra Glatt (Bar-Ilan University), "Literary Realisms: Redefining the Genres of the Novel"
- Thomas Preston (Middlebury College), "Affective, Embodied Narratology: A Return to Mimesis"
- Changcai Wang (Southwest Jiaotong University), "Anti-Narrative-Causality: Redefining Unnatural Narrative"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/82362518849>

7-D) Rupture and Crisis - Room 2.14

Chair: Philip Deans (Newcastle University)

- Tero Eljas Vanhanen (University of Helsinki), "Narratology of Shock: Affectivity and Transgression in Extreme Fiction"
- Christine Schwanecke (University of Graz), "Theorising 'Crisis Narratives' and their Positive Cultural Impact"
- Lawrence K. Stanley (Brown University), "Deictic Crisis: Nonfiction Narrative in an Era of Instabilities"

7-E) Forms in Time - Room 2.15

Chair: Nicole McCleese (Michigan State University)

- Samuli Björninen (Aarhus University), "Rhetoric of Factuality in Historiographic and Travel Narratives of Early Modern England"
- Mark M. Freed (Central Michigan University), "Inscribing Unreal Time: Asynchronous Temporalities in Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*"
- Ryan Siemers (Southern Utah University), "Confessional Forms in Daniel Defoe, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau"

7-F) Blackness and Narration - Room 2.16

Chair: Maia Almeida-Amir (Newcastle University)

- Matthias Klestil (University of Klagenfurt), "Versional Narrative in African-American Literature: Kiese Laymon's *Long Division* and Percival Everett's *Telephone*"
- James McBride (New York University), "The Paradox of Confession: William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, Racism and Black Lives Matter"
- Megan Medeiros (James Madison University), "Podcasting with Purpose: Black Digital Humanities and Narrative Theory"

7-G) Trans/Queer Spaces, Orientations, and Movements - Room G.06

Chair: Cody Mejeur (University of Buffalo, SUNY)

- Gabriel Fiandero (University of Wisconsin-Madison), "Spatialising Trans Narratology and Methods through Edie Fake's *Memory Palaces*"
- Ellen McCallum (Michigan State University), "Narratives of Queer Landscapes"
- Ben Robbins (University of Innsbruck), "'She's just that international': An Intersectional Reading of the Modernist Queer Exile Narrative"

7-H) Fictionality I: Fiction and Factuality - Room G.56

Chair: Sarah Copland (MacEwan University)

- Jeppe Barnwell (Copenhagen University), "Fiction and Factual Form: Analysing Fictional Documentarism in George Perec's '243 Postcards'"
- Dunja Dušanić (University of Belgrade), "Fictionality in Non-Fiction: The Rhetoric of Witnessing in Literary Testimony"
- Henrik Zetterberg-Nielsen (Aarhus University), "Judging Fictional Arguments"
- Simona Zetterberg-Nielsen (Aarhus University), "The Rise of Scientific Fiction"

7-1) The Postcolonial Bildungsroman: Narratives of Youth and the Postcolony - Room G.41

Chair: Arnab Dutta Roy (Florida Gulf Coast University)

- Ericka Hoagland (Stephen F. Austin State University), "Tales of Disassembly and Reassembly: Theorising the Posthuman SF Bildungsroman"
- Simone Puleo (Central Connecticut State University), "'Sono un crocevia': Igiaba Scego's *La mia casa è dove sono* as Diaspora Bildungsroman"
- Arnab Dutta Roy (Florida Gulf Coast University), "From Modernising Tradition to Traditionalising Modernity: U.R. Ananthamurthy's *Samskara* as Postcolonial Bildungsroman"
- Paul Ugor (Waterloo University), "Nature Writing as Literary Archive: Mbolo Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were* as Legal Testimony"

KEYNOTE TWO (17.00-18.00)

Room G.41

Jennifer Richards (University of Cambridge), "Narrative and the Arts and Humanities"

Chair: Matthew Grenby (Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, Newcastle University)

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/5506311519>

CONFERENCE DINNER (19.00)

FRIDAY, APRIL 19th

SESSION EIGHT (8.30-10.00)

8-A) Telling and Re-Telling - Room 1.16 (Hybrid)

Chair: Marina Lambrou (Kingston University)

- Raphaël Baroni (University of Lausanne), "Narratology at School: Theory, Applications and Implications"
- Nove Chüzho (Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi), "'Telling' a Customary Victimisation of Women in the Work of Monalisa Changkija"
- Duru Başak Uğurlu (Hacettepe University), "Weaving a Life by Leaving Behind: From Ernestine Leibovici to Eren Eyüboğlu"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/81027636274>

8-B) Postdigital Approaches to Narrative - Room 1.17 (Hybrid)

Chair: Siebe Bluijs (Tilburg University)

- Siebe Bluijs (Tilburg University), "The 'Dual Voice' of AI Narratives: The Case of *Air Age Blueprint*"
- Nuette Heyns (North-West University), "Postdigital Re-Evaluation of Narrative Structure"
- Ruben Vanden Berghe (Ghent University), "What Is So Unnatural About Technology? A Postdigital Perspective on Print Novel Representations of Technology"
- Inge van de Ven (Tilburg University), "Who Do You Trust in the Postdigital Age? Unreliable Narration in Online Hybrid Discourses"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/88516815296>

8-C) Perspectives on Character - Room 1.18 (Hybrid)

Chair: Diána Mosza (Eötvös Loránd University)

- Matthew Martello (University of Virginia), "Portraiture and Poetic Form"
- Peri Mirza (University of York), "Barricaded Selves: Characterological Ethics in Rachel Cusk's *Outline Trilogy*"
- Tereza Pořízková (Masaryk University), "Czech Structuralists on Literary Character"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/86835321936>

8-D) Narrative and Lyric Encounters - Room 2.14

Chair: Brian J. McAllister (American University of Sharjah)

- Lasse Raaby Gammelgaard (Aarhus University), "Narrative Lyrics about Melancholia in the Songwriting of Townes van Zandt"
- Stefan Kjerkegaard (Aarhus University), "What Difference Does It Make Who Is Speaking: From Lyrical Subject to.... Lyrical Selfie?"
- Brian J. McAllister (American University of Sharjah), "Emergence and Rhetorical Hybridity in Contemporary Opera"

8-E) Cross-Cultural Narratives - Room 2.15

Chair: Arnab Dutta Roy (Florida Gulf Coast University)

- Melanie Hyo-In Han (University of Surrey), "Narratives of Transnational Korea: Migration, Identity, and Cultural Resilience in Cathy Park Hong's Poetry"

- Shiqing Liang (University College London), "(Re)Constructing Personal and Public Narratives in Cultural Documentaries Through Translation"
- Elaine Mok (National University of Singapore), "Speaking of Devils: Kristang Horror Folklore and Creole Revitalisation"

8-F) Early Modern Narratives - Room 2.16

Chair: Ruth Connolly (Newcastle University)

- Monika Fludernik (University of Freiburg), "Narrative Structure from Late Middle English to Early Modern English"
- Rahel Orgis (University Library Berne) and Sebastian Straßburg (University of Freiburg), 'Doubling the Representation of Consciousness in Early Modern Pastoral Romance"
- Magdalena Szpindler (University of Warsaw), "Cultural Negotiations Through Narrative in Mongolian Culture from the Early Modern Period"

8-G) Narratives in/of the Digital, Contemporary Culture and Affect I - Room G.06

Chair: Torsa Ghosal (California State University, Sacramento)

- Simona Adinolfi (Ghent University), "'The author as a disembodied head': Reconsidering the Implied Author on Instagram"
- Dorothee Birke (University of Innsbruck), "The Crying Reader on Social Media"
- Marco Tognini (University of Milan), "The Truth of Disgust: Moral and (Un)Social Emotions on Goodreads"

8-H) LLMs, Authors and Readers - Room G.56

Chair: Sean Yeager (Ohio State University)

- Claudia Carroll (Washington University in St. Louis), "LLMs and Machine-Learning Methods for the Study of Narrative"
- Tuuli Hongisto (University of Helsinki), "Advertising with AI: Descriptions of Authorship in Works Published by Amazon"
- Digidem Sezen (University for the Creative Arts), "LLMs as Creative Partners in Tabletop Role-Playing Game Writing"

8-I) Bodies in the Anthropocene - Room G.41

Chair: Erin James (University of Idaho)

- Sarah France (Newcastle University), "Consumptive Ecologies: Becoming Edible in the Anthropocene"
- Jon Hegglund (Washington State University), "Subject, Species, Character: Toward an Ecohumanist Narratology"
- Orin Posner (Tel Aviv University), "Chronotopes of Maintenance: Sustainable Cities in Climate Fiction and Science Fiction"

SESSION NINE (10.15-11.45)

9-A) Afterwardsness: Time, Trauma, and Narrative Order - Room 1.16 (Hybrid)

Chair: Stacy Gillis (Newcastle University)

- Ally Barber (Southern Methodist University), "'Telling our own stories': Narration and Trauma in Emma Pérez's *Forgetting the Alamo*"

- Elijah Hook (Southern Methodist University), "'First, I got myself born': Systems of Abuse and Narrative Inevitability in Barbara Kingsolver's *Demon Copperhead*"
- Ian Shaughnessy (Southern Methodist University), "'It's a Love Story': Ghostly Realisations of Trauma and Memory in Mike Flanagan's *Bly Manor*"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/81027636274>

9-B) Ancient Narrative Forms and Contemporary Narrative Theory - Room 1.17 (Hybrid)

Chair: Genevieve Liveley (University of Bristol)

- Lisa Hau (University of Glasgow), "Immersion and Trauma in Xenophon's *Anabasis*"
- Genevieve Liveley (University of Bristol), "*Felicis quondam*: Nostalgia and Narrative in Roman Elegy"
- Natalie Swain (Acadia University), "Meet Innertextuality: Braiding beyond Comics in Latin Elegy"
- Cecilia Thirlway (University of Bristol), "Revisiting the Neo-Aristotelians"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/88516815296>

9-C) Queer Subjectivities - Room 1.18 (Hybrid)

Chair: Chiara Pellegrini (Newcastle University)

- Lena Mattheis (University of Surrey), "Nonbinary Pronouns and Gender-Transgressive Narration in Rae Spoon's *Green Glass Ghosts* and Sara Taylor's *The Lauras*"
- Bianca Schüller (Giessen University), "Queerness of Non-Human Characters in Neil Gaiman's *Good Omens* and Greta Gerwig's *Barbie*"
- Mahima Verma (Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi), "Queer Shame and the Narrative Gaze in Garth Greenwall's *What Belongs to You*"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/86835321936>

9-D) Narrative Structures - Room 2.14

Chair: Pedro Ponce (St. Lawrence University)

- Tatiana Crombeen (Leiden University), "A Neolithic Tale: Vladimir Propp's Folklore Structure and the Mesolithic-Neolithic Transition"
- Cassandra Falke (The Arctic University of Norway), "Scarcity, Waste and Plenty: Narrating Structures of Economic Inequality"
- Megan Stephens (University of Sheffield), "Narrating Death, Structuring Life"

9-E) The 'I' and the 'You' - Room 2.15

Chair: Brian McHale (Ohio State University)

- Chen Edelsburg (Tel Aviv University), "Interpellation and Narration: The Second Person Address and the Postmodern Turn"
- Anna Kuutsa (Tampere University), "You and Zero Person in Dialogue Narration"
- Pia Masiero (University of Venice, Ca' Foscari), "The 'I' and its (Literary) Affordances"

9-F) Fictionality II: Fiction and Belief - Room 2.16

Chair: Lisa Zunshine (University of Kentucky)

- Sarah Copland (MacEwan University) "Counterfactual History, Audience Beliefs, and Reader Responses: Bernardine Evaristo's *Blonde Roots*"
- James Phelan (Ohio State University), "Rhetorical Reading, Tacit Knowledge, and the Distinction of Fiction: Roddy Doyle's 'Worms'"

- Lisa Zunshine (University of Kentucky), "How to Make Us Believe Us Something that We Know Cannot be True"

9-G) Narrative Theoretical Approaches to Hidden Identities in Fiction and Drama - Room G.06

Chair: Howard Sklar (University of Helsinki)

- Howard Sklar (University of Helsinki) "'To a Gentile I'm a Jew': Degrees of Hiddenness in Tom Stoppard's *Leopoldstadt*"
- Sue Vice (University of Sheffield), "Retrieving the Jewish Presence in British Golden Age Detective Fiction"
- Sara Whiteley (University of Sheffield), "Blurred Identities in the Work of Kazuo Ishiguro"

9-H) Engaging Readers - Room G.56

Chair: Richard Müller (Czech Academy of Sciences)

- J Hughes (University of Toronto), "'Into the Hands of Curious, Engaged Readers': *McSweeney's* and the Experimental Narrative"
- Essi Varis (University of Helsinki), "Reading Zen: Considering Literature as a Practice of Mindful Attention"
- Tory Young (Anglia Ruskin University), "Expanding Immersion: Literary Form and Therapeutic Reading"

9-I) Confounding Narratives - Room G.41

Chair: Faye Halpern (University of Calgary)

- Elizabeth Alsop (City University of New York), "Confounding Gestures, Expository Compensations: Prestige TV and the Trauma Backstory"
- Faye Halpern (University of Calgary) "Here, Kitty, Kitty: Crypto-Interpretive Impossibility, Pedagogical Horror, and Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Black Cat'"
- Gary Weissman (University of Cincinnati), "Speculative Narration: Accounting for the Confounding in Golden Age Science Fiction"

SESSION TEN (12.00-13.30)

10-A) Change and Cultural Resistance (Hybrid)- Room 1.16 (Hybrid)

Chair: Kunwar Nitin Pratap Gurjar (Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi)

- Amaris Brown (Tufts University), "The Queer Revolutionary Subject and the Captive Maternal"
- Florence Laldinpui (Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi), "From Oral to Digital: Narrativising Death and Mizo Funerary Customs"
- Carlos Tkacz (University of Nevada), "Slipping Futures: Native Slipstream, Predictive Processing and Stephen Graham Jones's *The Only Good Indians*"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/81027636274>

10-B) Power and Reliability - Room 1.17 (Hybrid)

Chair: Maia Almeida-Amir (Newcastle University)

- Elias Gbadamosi (Colorado State University), "The Digital Pulpit: YouTube Discourse and Evangelical Influence in the 2024 US Presidential Elections"
- Michael Hannan (University of Wollongong), "Narrative Unreliability and Impossible Worlds: Kazuo Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans* and the Double Ironic Gap"

- Saman Javaherian (Independent), "Unreliable Narration and Falsified Dialogues in Persian Popular Romances"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/88516815296>

10-C) Transmedial Fictionality - Room 1.18 (Hybrid)

Chair: Bartosz Lutostański (University of Warsaw)

- Erica Haugtvedt (South Dakota School of Mines and Technology), "'I Know Victoria's Secret': Branding, Narrative, and Transmedia Character"
- Josh Mishaw (Ohio State University), "From Homer (Simpson) to (Bully) Scaramouche: Chatbots and Fictional Characters"
- Patrick Sui (McGill University), "Narrativity, Fictionality and AI Hallucinations"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/86835321936>

10-D) Perspective and Unreliability - Room 2.14

Chair: Kelly A. Marsh (Mississippi State University)

- Gabriele D'Amato (University of L'Aquila and Ghent University), "Pseudo-Multiperspectivity in First-Person Omniscient Narratives"
- Luca Diani (University of L'Aquila), "Nostalgic Narrators and Unreliability in Analeptic Narratives"
- Katherine Weese (Hampden-Sydney College), "Denarration and Narrative Reliability in Kate Atkinson's *A God in Ruins*"

10-E) Cognitive Approaches - Room 2.15

Chair: Wanlin Li (Peking University)

- Melba Cuddy-Keane (University of Toronto), "Sensory Storyminds and Cognitive Plots: Reading Childhood Memory and Indigenous Experience"
- Wanlin Li (Peking University), "Two Faces of Narrativity in Natural Narratology: Dual Experiencing Subjects in Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly*"
- Martin Riedelsheimer (Augsburg University), "Narrative Infinity: Conceptual and Aesthetic Preconditions"

10-F) Roundtable: From Dissertation to Book - Room 2.16

Chair: Emma K. McNamara (Ohio State University)

James Phelan (Ohio State University), Marco Caracciolo (Ghent University), Faye Halpern (University of Calgary) & Daniel Aureliano Newman (University of Toronto)

10-G) Health and Ethics - Room G.06

Chair: David Gibson (Dublin City University)

- Melissa Guadrón (Ohio State University), "The Doctor is in [The Machine]: Narrative Problem Solving with Generated AI Therapists"
- Monika Kaup (University of Washington), "Reckoning with Uncertainty: Narrative as Practical Judgement"
- Tracy Moniz (Mount Saint Vincent University), "Written Narratives and Health Professions Education"

10-H) Fun, Games and Good Cheer - Room G.56

Chair: Esko Suoranta (Tampere University)

- Lars Bernaerts (Ghent University), "The Sophistication of Simplicity: Experimental Minimalist Narratives as Ludic Textuality"
- Karin Kukkonen (University of Oslo), "Playing Narration: The Game of the Novel in Early-Modern France"
- Merja Polvinen (University of Helsinki), "Readerly Engagement with (De)Composition"

10-I) Narratives in/of the Digital, Contemporary Culture and Affect II - Room G.41

Chair: Dorothee Birke (University of Innsbruck)

- Torsa Ghosal (California State University, Sacramento), "Sentimentality and Fictionality in AI-generated Immigration Narratives"
- Hyesu Park (Bellevue College), "Korean 'Bad Taste' Webtoon and the Consumption of Negative Feelings"
- Denise Wong (Giessen University), "Intermediality in the Post-Digital Novel"

Respondent: Jan Alber (Giessen University)

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION LUNCH (13.30-14.30)

Room G.06

Chair: Gretchen Busl (Texas Woman's University)

(If you have registered, find a brown bag with your name in the foyer).

SESSION ELEVEN (14.30-16.00)

11-A) Strange Times/Strange Spaces: Alternate Spatial & Temporal Zones in SF - Room 1.16 (Hybrid)

Chair: Hilary Duffield (University of Trier)

- Brian McHale (Ohio State University), "Thinking with Paraspace"
- John Plotz (Brandeis University), "'I was obliged to tell them...their world was merely a moon': SF's Lunar Affordances"
- Jaak Tomberg (University of Tartu), "The Present as the Past of a Utopian Future in Epp Annus's *Tere, Alexander!*"
- Hilary Duffield (University of Trier), "Anthropocene Consciousness and Time Loops in Narratives of Anthropogenic Environmental Disaster"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/81027636274>

11-B) Trans/Queer Affects, Desires, and Communities - Room 1.17 (Hybrid)

Chair: Cody Mejeur (University of Buffalo, SUNY)

- Brendan McNeely (University of Wisconsin-Madison), "'The Company You Keep': *Final Fantasy XIV*, Queer Publics, and the Limits of Representation"
- Ellen Peel (San Francisco State University), "Unknowable (Trans?) Desire in Honoré de Balzac's *Sarrasine* and David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*"
- Ralph J. Poole (University of Salzburg), "Trans Heimatfilm: Johannes Maria Schmitt's *Neubau* as Narrative of Resilience"
- Evangeline Thurston Wilder (University of Wisconsin-Madison), "'Keep the Sister Love Flame Burning': Rage, Love, and Survival in Kai Cheng Thom's *Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars*"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/88516815296>

11-C) Digital Narratives - Room 1.18 (Hybrid)

Chair: Roz Tuplin (Independent)

- Himadri Agarwal (University of Maryland), "'Don't tell me what to do': Intrigue and Immersion in Games"
- Corinne Bancroft (with Emma Ainsworth and Rowan Watts) (University of Victoria), "Visualising Braided Narratives"
- Audrey Halley (University of Indiana at Bloomington), "Myths, Stories and Video Games: Narrative Relevancy in the Age of Interactive Media"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/86835321936>

11-D) Reading Irish Literature - Room 2.14

Chair: Annjeaneatte Wiese (University of Colorado, Boulder)

- Audrey Holt (Yale University), "Remapping Worlds: Narrative Dynamics as Conceptual Space"
- Sarah J. Link (University of Wuppertal), "Narratives That Count: Enumerations in Anna Burns' *Milkman*"
- Mikelyn Rochford (University of York), "Irish Literary Tradition Beyond Unnatural Narrative and Flann O'Brien"

11-E) Memory and History - Room 2.15

Chair: Paul Ugor (Waterloo University)

- Philip Deans (Newcastle University), "Stimulating the Mind, Soothing the Soul: Representing War at the Imperial War Museum in 1940"
- Nanny Jolma (Tampere University), "Literary Means of Thematising Memory in Oral History Narratives"
- Olivia Sutherland (University of Oxford), "'an unwinding of America': Pastiche, Counterfactual and Narrative Pedagogy in Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad*"

11-F) Narrative Literacy in Historiography, Education and Reading & Viewing - Room 2.16

Chair: Sjoerd-Jeroen Moenandar (University of Groningen)

- Silvana Beerends-Pavlovic (Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences), "Narrative as Skill: Development of Narrative Literacy for (Future) Storytelling Professionals"
- Steven Willemsen (University of Groningen), "Who's Afraid of Ambiguities and Open Endings? Preferences for Narrative Complexity and Tolerance for Ambiguity"
- Ruben Zeeman (Central European University), "Experimental Historiography: Towards a Narrative Literacy of Historical Testimony and Time"

11-G) Victorian Narratives - Room G.06

Chair: Claudia Carroll (Washington University in St. Louis)

- Geoffrey A. Baker (Yale-NUS College), "The Tense of Circumstance: Temporality and Evidence in the Nineteenth-Century Law Report and Novels by Mary Shelley and Elizabeth Gaskell"
- Gregory Brennen (University of Tampa), "Serial Imagination and George Eliot's *Middlemarch*"
- Joshua Parker (University of Salzburg), "Narrativising Networks: Victorian to Present-Day Stories of Infrastructure"

11-H) Playful Narrative across Media - Room G.56

Chair: Jan-Noël Thon (Osnabrück University)

- Jan-Noël Thon (Osnabrück University), "Playful Narrative across Media"

- Kieron Brown (Osnabrück University), "Playful Design in Daniel Benmergui's *Storyteller*"
- Theresa Krampe (University of Tübingen), "Playing with Games: Playfulness as a Hallmark of Metareferential Videogames"

11-I) Metanarrativity, Narrative Agency, and Narrative Medicine - Room G.41

Chair: *Hanna Meretoja (University of Turku)*

- Laura Mazzoli Smith (Durham University), "Metanarrativity, Epistemic Uncertainty and Critical Narrative-based Learning"
- Hanna Meretoja (University of Turku), "Metanarrativity and the Potential of Narrative Medicine to Strengthen Narrative Agency"
- Danielle Spencer (Columbia University), "Narrative Medicine in the Metacene"

SESSION TWELVE (16.15-17.45)

12-A) Character - Room 1.16 (Hybrid)

Chair: *Martin Riedelsheimer (Augsburg University)*

- Glenn Deer (University of British Columbia), "Narratives of Situational Enslavement: Reading Kazuo Ishiguro"
- Kayla Goldblatt (Ohio State University), "Characters as Surrogates"
- Evan Thomas (South Dakota School of Mines and Technology), "'People Don't Change!': AMC's *Better Call Saul*, Serial Character and the Feminist Ethics of Care"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/81027636274>

12-B) The Human in the Pre-Modern - Room 1.17 (Hybrid)

Chair: *Marco Caracciolo (Ghent University)*

- Alice Gaber (University of Wisconsin-Madison), "Before the Anthropocene: Sophocles' *Antigone* as Environmental Narrative"
- Mustafa Roker (Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah University), "'Should we not prostrate before you like the camel?': Narrative Techniques in Prophetic Hagiography"
- P.J. Zaborowski (University of Iowa), "'Herde we nevere swylke mervayle!': Witnessing and Testifying in *Richard Coeur de Lyon*"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/88516815296>

12-C) Trans/Queer Narrative Forms, Embodiments, and Positionalities - Room 1.18 (Hybrid)

Chair: *Cody Mejeur (University of Buffalo, SUNY)*

- Evan Martens (University of California, Davis), "Queering Narratives: Playing with the Ethnicised Body in Mithu Sanyal's *Identitti*"
- Joonas Sääntti (University of Jyväskylä), "Metanarration as an Aesthetic Problem in Trans Narratives"
- Sven Van den Bossche (University of Antwerp), "Beyond Subversion: Narrating Alternative Models for Trans Embodiment in Dutch Literary Fiction"
- Ivo Zender (University of Bielefeld), "Authenticity and Realness in Contemporary Transgender Fiction"

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/86835321936>

12-D) Experimental and Multimodal Narratives - Room 2.14

Chair: Inge van de Ven (Tilburg University)

- Gretchen Busl (Texas Woman's University), "Multimodality, Non-Discursive Rhetoric, and Narrativity"
- Grzegorz Maziarczyk (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin), "Happy New World: Consciousness, Technology and Affect in Nicola Barker's *H(A)PPY*"
- Spencer Morrison (University of Groningen), "Drone Art and Demos: Jena Osman's *Public Figures*"

12-E) Music Across Media - Room 2.15

Chair: Carolien Van Nerom (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

- Ivan Delazari (Nazarbayev University), "Tellability across Media: Music, Drama, Comics"
- Gala Patenkovic (University of Michigan), "Sound of Music as Sound of Unity: Musicality as Politics in Zeina Abirached's *Oriental Piano*"
- Joel Wheeler (University of Victoria), "The Multivocal Messages of Tommy Orange's *There There* and its Companion Playlist"

12-F) Narratives and Practices: Points of Empowerment, Points of Disruption - Room 2.16

Chair: Ada Cheng (Dominican University)

- Danielle Bainbridge (Northwestern University), "Lessons for Engagement: Digital Storytelling and Remote Learning"
- Ada Cheng (Dominican University), "Storytelling as a Path for Inquiry, Dialogue, and Transformation"
- Anthony Dunbar (Dominican University), "Power, Self-Efficacy, and CRiT"

12-G) Legality and Transgression - Room G.06

Chair: Monika Fludernik (University of Freiburg)

- Deborah de Muijnck (Giessen University), "The Embodied Nature of Literary Scandals: Narrative Empathy and the Case of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Grey*"
- Annie Kim (University of Virginia), "Focalisation and Narrative Time in Judicial Narratives of Police-Qualified Immunity"
- Rebecca Shaw (University of Leeds), "Legal Storytelling and the Dismantling of Legal Masterplots"

12-H) Narrativising Memory - Room G.56

Chair: Dorothee Birke (University of Innsbruck)

- Niamh Gordon (University of Glasgow), "Writing the White Cart Water: Stacked Narratives of Grief and Motherhood"
- Christiana Gregoriou (University of Leeds), "Language and Life Narrativisation in World War Two Memoirs"
- Matthew Richardson (North Tyneside Council), "Jewish Histories, Queer Jewish Futures: Heritage, Memory, Selfhood"

12-I) Narrating Crime - Room G.41

Chair: Ruth Connolly (Newcastle University)

- Adva Balsam (College of Management Academic Studies), "Documentary Cinema as Psychosocial Mediation: Suspended Shame in the Collective Perpetrators Genre"

- Anna Kirsch (Durham University), "Narrative as Moral Technology in Ecological Crime Fiction"
- Vaibhav Parel (Newcastle University), "Recuperating History? Crime, History and Politics in South Asian Diasporic Crime Fiction"

KEYNOTE THREE (18.00-19.00)

Room G.41

John Yorke, "Screenwriting and Narratology: Worlds Apart?"

Chair: Linda Anderson (Professor Emerita in English Literature, Newcastle University)

Zoom Link: <https://newcastleuniversity.zoom.us/j/5506311519>

CLOSING WINE RECEPTION (19.00-20.00)

Opening Remarks: Professor Chris Day

(Vice-Chancellor and President, Newcastle University)

Abstracts

Papers in each panel are listed alphabetically by speaker's last name (unless otherwise requested).

SESSION 1A – THE ARCHIVE OF CHILDHOOD

Andrea Davidson

University of Antwerp

Author-Editor Dialogue at Bodley Head and Groundwood Books: Reconstructing Conversations behind Early Young Adult Novels

The work that editors and publishing houses do throughout the creation process of literary works remains understudied and at risk of being undervalued by critics, as well as by the publishing industry. In the creation of Young Adult (YA) literature, the editorial process is one of collaboration with the author as, together, editor(s) and author construct a book to fit the genre conventions for YA. Using literary genetic criticism, which reconstructs the creation process and component parts of a work of literature out of archival materials, I investigate the extent to which correspondence and other forms of dialogue between author and editors influenced the genesis of two early YA novels. This methodological approach is new to genetic criticism, which traditionally reads literary texts as emerging solely from an author rather than from collaborations between authors and editors (and other stakeholders in the creative process). The two novels under study are Aidan Chambers' *Dance On My Grave* and Shirley Sterling's *My Name Is Seepetza*. My selection of these works reflects two different but comparable national contexts for literary publishing in English. The rationale for comparing the work of Chambers' editor at the British publishing house Bodley Head (Margaret Clark), and Sterling's editors at the English-Canadian publishing house Groundwood Books (Patricia Aldana and Shelley Tanaka), lies in the similarity and contemporaneity of Chambers' and Aldana's efforts to produce culturally and/or inclusive YA literature in English. My comparison of Chambers' and Aldana's parallel literary careers constitutes a larger study: in this paper I focus on the dialogic approach that both of them took to working together with authors and editors to create YA literature. To reconstruct it, I draw on archival sources from Seven Stories, the National Centre for Children's Books, and Groundwood's archives in the Osborne Collection of the Toronto Public Library.

Helen King

Newcastle University

Narratives of Collaboration in Children's Literary Archives

This paper explores the ways that adult authors collaborate with children in order to craft a child's narrative perspective, using the work of children's author Beverley Naidoo, and her novel *No Turning Back*, as a case study. The type of adult-child collaboration that I explore here may be more common than current scholarship suggests, especially as archival records of such collaborations are so rare. Naidoo's rich archive therefore provides an opportunity for what Victoria Ford-Smith has called a 'recuperation of the tradition of adult-child collaborations'. A South African author who, from a position of exile in the UK, engaged often with apartheid in her children's fiction, Naidoo was able to return to South Africa to research *No Turning Back* for the first time. This short novel about street children in Johannesburg at the end of apartheid was the result of a collaborative process that then became the model for all of Naidoo's subsequent novels. Naidoo's archive documents the extensive workshops with South African children that informed *No Turning Back*. As well as shaping the narrative itself, these collaborations reveal themselves in the novel in a variety of textual and paratextual ways. The poetry of street children featured in the novel's foreword, the incorporation of real leaflets and song lyrics into the text, and citations in the acknowledgements, demonstrate how these collaborations were central

to Naidoo's construction of her child protagonist's focalising perspective. This archival evidence highlights the value of children's input in adult-authored texts, positioning children as co-producers of children's literature. Furthermore, it points to the ways that the idea of the child co-producer may be mobilised by children's authors in creating narratives of authenticity around their representations of marginalised children.

Emma-Louise Silva

University of Antwerp

Exploring the Paper Traces of Memory and Imagination in Children's Literature

Karen Sánchez-Eppler draws comparisons between the study of writing materials in archives and the study of childhood, pointing out that 'in many ways, for each of us, childhood is the archive, a treasure box of the formative and the forgotten'. This is especially so for adult authors who draw on their experiences of childhood to write stories for young readers. For such authors, imaginatively drawing on memories plays a prominent role in the creative process. Whereas connections between memories and narratives have featured in literary studies and children's literature studies, the unfolding of negotiations between memory and imagination while authors create narratives is underexplored. While positioning itself in the field of cognitive literary studies and the archival study of creative writing processes, this paper will generate insights on the reconstructive approach to memory, which considers episodic remembering as imagining the past. By transposing the study of writing processes, or genetic criticism, to children's literature, I explore notes, mindmaps, drafts, typescripts, and proofs in the archives of Roald Dahl, David Almond, and Jacqueline Woodson to chart how these authors imaginatively incorporate memories of their youth into their life writing for young readers. Drawing on a multidisciplinary framework that spans authorship studies, cognitive studies, and memory studies, this analysis examines how negotiations of memory and imagination unfold on paper during the writing processes for Dahl's *Boy*, Almond's *Counting Stars*, and Woodson's *Brown Girl Dreaming*. The wider goals of this study are to inform understandings of the narrative genesis of authors' works, while drawing on the manifestations of their literary creativity to broaden knowledge regarding memory and imagination.

SESSION 1B – NARRATIVE ETHICS AND NOVELISTIC AESTHETICS

Dorothy Hale

University of California, Berkeley

Damon Galgut's *The Promise* and the Novel's New Ethical Aesthetic

Awarding the 2021 Booker Prize to Damon Galgut's *The Promise*, the judges praised the novel's 'unusual narrative style that balances Faulknerian exuberance with Nabokovian precision, pushes boundaries, and is a testament to the flourishing of the novel in the 21st century'. I argue that, with more critical precision, we can better understand Faulkner's primary importance for Galgut—and thereby appreciate how "the unusual narrative style" of *The Promise* carries forward a novelistic aesthetics of alterity, inaugurated by twentieth-century modernists and flourishing in our contemporary moment. *The Promise's* strong intertextual relationship with *As I Lay Dying* and *The Sound and the Fury* positions its multiperspectivalism in relation to Faulkner's experiments with stream of consciousness and interior monologue. Faulkner developed these narrative innovations to better represent fictional characters as autonomous individuals with, in his words, a 'free will' apart from their author. But the very success of Faulkner's method drew attention to characters—such as Dilsey Gibson and Caddy Compson—who had been denied minds of their own. Through its differential and asymmetric rendering of characterological consciousness, *The Promise* makes explicit the ideological differences and personal failures that 'other' people within a shared community. The novel also depicts

the interpersonal encounters that can allow for mutuality—fleeting or enduring—across social difference. But Galgut’s stylistic innovations also call attention to the ethics of the novelist’s relationship to his characters: what narrative style best honours the difference between his own subject position and that of the social lives, different from his own, which he strives to know from the “inside”? Galgut thus joins a cohort that includes Ian McEwan, J.M. Coetzee, Bernardine Evaristo, Katsu Ishiguro, Richard Russo and Zadie Smith, all of whom reach back to modernist innovators to update the novelistic aesthetics of alterity for our contemporary moment.

Madigan Haley

The College of the Holy Cross

Fictions of Re-Collection, Ethics of the Self

This paper reconsiders the ethics of a mode of re-collection that has become prominent in international fiction since the 1990s. This contemporary novelistic aesthetic is focused on narrating the process of historical re-collection, which is figured, first, as the assemblage of diverse historical materials and, second, as the act of historical reflection, which is undertaken by a narrator who resembles the author. W.G. Sebald’s work has come to exemplify this mode of re-collection, which has been understood as an ethics of witnessing that attends to the violent history of modernity after its conclusion in a post-modern era. Situating Sebald alongside other writers, this paper proposes an alternative account of the historical context and ethical import of this mode of fictional re-collection. First, I identify a similar aesthetic in Taiwanese writer Wu He’s *The Remains of Life* and South Korean writer Han Kang’s *Human Acts*. In both these novels, the re-collection of atrocity is presented obliquely as an engagement with how the past lives on in the present, after the process of liberalization within the so-called “Four Asian Tigers.” Alongside their work, Sebald’s appears less *sui generis* than as the generic prototype for critical reflection on the historicity of “miracle” societies, just as the ‘miracle on the Rhine’ was a prototype for the post-1989 economic miracles, which led Francis Fukuyama to posit an end of history in a global order of capitalist nation-states. Second, I turn to Sebald’s work, showing how it suggests that the loss of historical subjectivity that occurred in post-war Germany was being repeated at a wider scale in the 1990s. Within this context, fictional re-collection can be understood as an ethics of the self, practiced through writing and reading, which aims to reanimate the capacities of historical subjectivity, specifically, the capacity to relate one’s historicity.

David James

University of Birmingham

Policing Empathy: Sentimental Aesthetics and the Ethics of Prosecution

Literary studies has become adept at policing empathy. Today it is a critical virtue to endorse fictions that solicit disaffection and other forms of unfeeling as ethically and aesthetically superior to those works that engender identification. This prosecutorial stance complements a wider indictment of sentimental aesthetics in contemporary writing. For Namwali Serpell, empathy is largely palliative: identification with characters’ suffering offers a soothing distraction from the more urgent labour of enacting real-world change. Glenda Carpio assumes that ‘immigrant literature depends on a model of reading founded on empathy’, to warn that ‘empathy can easily slip into a projection of readers’ feelings and even into outright condescension’. These familiar prosecutions of empathy depend on conspicuous generalizations both about the capacities of fiction and about the susceptibilities of (presumably lay) readers. Furthermore, critiques of empathy, I argue, presuppose that non-professional readers pretend to ‘know’ the feelings of another person in all their historical and ontological particularity; such critiques thereby also, paradoxically, rest on the premise that the vigilant critic, sceptical of empathy’s value, can somehow know how general readers of an affectively immersive novel are likely to respond (in consoled, acquiescent, or otherwise insufficiently proactive

ways). In so doing, we critics ‘shoe up our own special status’, as Faye Halpern has shrewdly observed, ‘as uniquely excellent readers’. Policing empathy in this way—tacitly reinforcing our own superiority as vigilant interpreters of what makes emotion politically useful in fiction—is ethically questionable. And this paper brings Serpell’s own fiction, in the shape of *The Furrows*, into conversation with Valeria Luiselli’s *Lost Children Archive*, in order to examine the way contemporary fiction subjects empathy to deliberative reflection with a force that may even answer back to the piety of assuming that empathic involvement inevitably compromises the work of combating inequality and injustice.

Nancy Ruttenburg

Stanford University

Consider the Lie

In this paper I propose that the lie constitutes a distinctive narrative discourse. Insofar as it tracks the derivation of truth from untruth and untruth from truth, the lie is indispensable to the novel, generating its extensive networks of character, plot and counterplot. As a narrative form, the lie can be so intricate and so subtly ambiguated that it seems right to claim that it possesses its own aesthetic, and even—counterintuitively—its own ethics. We can see this most clearly in unmotivated lies, those told solely for the pleasure of fabrication. Originating in nothing and intending nothing, the unmotivated lie works in narrative as a singularly generative nothingness. My paper has two parts. The first presents a brief reading of one of Dostoevsky’s most exuberant liars, General Ivolgin in *The Idiot*. I supplement that with a description of J. M. Coetzee’s concept of self-abstraction in *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life*. In the second part, in an effort to unpack the oxymoronic “generative nothingness,” I parse Brian Rotman’s discussion of the semiotics of zero in *Signifying Nothing* and Kenneth Burke’s work in *The Rhetoric of Religion* on the linguistic invention of the negative.

SESSION 1C – THE OUTER EDGES OF NARRATIVE LOOPS

Ciarán Kavanagh

Ghent University

Science Fiction: Genre as Narrative Loop

The primordial soup theory posits that life on Earth arose from a “soup” of various matters that, over time, give rise to the basic organic compounds from which life sprung. Earth’s incredibly varied life forms thus date back to a common stock. Writers and critics of science and speculative fiction (SF) have described the beginnings of the genre through this metaphor. The primordial soup here is anglophone SF’s pulp era, beginning with *Amazing Stories* in 1926. Through repetitions of generally basic plots, characters, and tropes, a genre coalesced. Renewed academic interest in SF’s pulp era is partially based on the ability to examine this “soup”: both the building blocks themselves, and the process of their complexifying. This meta-narrative of genre understands SF in both a cyclical and evolutionary way. It gives the genre a starting point, more or less, and a direction, but sees its movement as a cycle as it revisits, re-uses and re-combines its primordial elements. It is, indeed, a definition of genre. As my current research focuses on, SF’s self-reflection is a practice of repeated revolution, but more a turn of the wheel than a revolt against it. Roger Luckhurst has characterised this as “the many deaths of science fiction”, describing this cycle as one of death and rebirth. This paper playfully strains the boundaries of cyclicity by examining genre itself as a kind of loop narrative. To anchor this theory to reality, I also look at the oeuvre of Kim Stanley Robinson, and how it has changed across one of these cycles. In particular, I look to certain diegetic changes that Robinson makes to the universe he establishes across his texts— “retconnings”, perhaps—that he implements in response to shifting generic and cultural winds. It understands these changes as a kind of timeloop, where the formal features of SF allow Robinson to redo a story.

Melanie Kreidler

Giessen University

The Morality of Gameplay: Game Loops and Player Engagement

Time loop narratives have an intriguing moral component: characters caught in a loop usually have to adjust their behaviour according to a moral higher power to overcome temporal recursiveness. Especially in movies and TV shows, looping narrative elements or structures make characters adopt the principle of “trial and error” until they find the (morally) “right” path. This mode of reflecting on one’s actions seems to be reversed in videogames featuring a loop, as only few of them lead players to reflect on the morality of their in-game actions. Following a cognitive approach to players’ moral (dis)engagement, this paper asks which kinds of game loops can bring about a reflective stance in which players question a game’s or their own morality system. In the context of this paper, loops are broadly defined as the repetition of a particular action, sequence, or narrative element as an essential part of a videogame. Three types of game loops can be derived from this definition. First, games such as *The Legend of Zelda: Majora’s Mask*, *The Forgotten City*, and *Twelve Minutes* base their gameplay on a temporal loop that resets after a certain amount of time, morally disengaging players to strategically find the “right” course of events before the clock runs out. Second, and particularly popular in horror games, games like *P.T.* or *ROT-Purgatory Hill* combine a repetitive gameplay experience with a temporal loop that puts players in the same mental state as characters that has them engage with character-based moral dilemmas. Third, games such as *Papers, Please* and *Darkest Dungeon II* offer a gaming experience in which players are repeatedly confronted with similar situations, which can have them face player-based moral dilemmas.

Rae Muhlstöck

University of Albany

Sean Yeager

Ohio State University

Visualising the Labyrinthine Loops of Baran bo Odar and Jantje Friese’s *Dark*

‘We trust that time is linear,’ read the first lines of the German TV show *Dark*, created by Baran bo Odar and Jantje Friese and distributed worldwide by Netflix. ‘That it proceeds eternally, uniformly. Into infinity. But the distinction between the past, present and future is nothing but an illusion’ (1.1 “Secrets”). A web of labyrinthine connections flashes behind these words, yet the show withholds interpretive context from viewers until its third and final season. We are told that ‘Yesterday and tomorrow are not consecutive, they are connected in a never-ending circle,’ and indeed, *Dark* embodies this by weaving time itself into a labyrinth. The show channels Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Eternal Return*, twisting it around the fact that labyrinths ‘describe both the linearity and the architecture of space and time’ (Doob). So rather than a perfect circle, repetition in the labyrinth occurs with difference. Directions are shifted and reversed. And as viewers approach the narrative’s glowing centre, once-stable concepts begin to blur: Minotaur into mirror; discovery into inquiry; and end into beginning. In short, *Dark* uses ‘all the temporal resources of narrative fiction as a complement to the resources of a reasoned argument’, ultimately tying these threads into a Gordian knot (Currie). We explore *Dark*’s temporal contours through the use of a “time map,” a graph which plots fabula against syuzhet (Nelles and Williams). Our goal is not to conquer the labyrinth, to concretize its Protean walls into ‘knowledge’. Instead, we are simply following Ariadne’s thread, curious where it might lead.

SESSION 1D – NARRATIVE AND THE LIFE COURSE

James Inkster

Newcastle University

“to the second generation’: Intergenerational Narratives and Samuel Butler’s *The Way of All Flesh*

This paper examines how Samuel Butler’s *The Way of All Flesh*, demonstrates the ethical and ecological significance of intergenerational narratives. In *Underland*, Robert Macfarlane borrows a question from the immunologist Jonas Salk, and asks ‘Are we being good ancestors?’. The adjective “good”, operating in a moral and qualitative sense, is arguably a critically neglected aspect of intergenerational relationships. When critics explore the links between the generations, we often seem to take our cue from Sigmund Freud or William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* or Philip Larkin’s “This Be The Verse”, and to centre on the problems we inherit from our forebears. We look at our badly behaving or badly treated ancestors, and we are understandably upset by what they have done or what they have endured, and we are afraid of what we might ourselves re-enact. But while it provides us with negative exemplars, this emphasis on the damaging and the traumatic does little to outline its opposite: it fails to display the behaviours that might constitute a good intergenerational relationship – a careful narrative joining people together over time. This paper redresses that balance. It studies how Butler reconfigures the fictional autobiography – a subgenre of the novel that usually follows just one narrative – and uses it to tell two tales simultaneously: his (auto)biographical book presents the biography of a troubled young man within the autobiography of his aged godfather, and it shows how they help each other to survive symbiotically. This paper finds that with its mutually-supportive intergenerational structure, *The Way of All Flesh* invites us to reconsider how we write our own diachronic narratives – the stories that we script between the past, the present and the future of our species – and encourages us to tilt them in a better direction.

Jake Jewusiak

Newcastle University

Orientalising the Life Course: The Role of Age in Benjamin Disraeli’s Imperial Narrative

‘I grieve to say my hair grows very badly,” Benjamin Disraeli complained in a letter to Sara Austen in 1830, “and I think more grey, which ... occasions me more anguish than even the prospect of death.’ Afflicted with a nervous illness in his early twenties, Disraeli’s premature aging seemed to mark his arrival at the final stage of life at the age of 26. As Disraeli grieved his hair, he also saved money for a tour of the Mediterranean and Near East between May 1830 and October 1831, where he loosely followed Byron’s travels through Spain, Malta, Greece, Constantinople, Palestine, and Egypt. Where scholars usually frame Disraeli’s *Grand Tour* as a search for identity (Ković) or as inspiring his later foreign policy (Katz), I will suggest that his travels set the terms for his relation to the East for the rest of his life, a relation which always bore the trace of his insecurities about premature aging and the possibility of rejuvenation. Disraeli drew on his travels abroad for *Tancred; or, the New Crusade* (1847), the third volume of his “Young England” trilogy. In the novel’s triangulation of the British Empire, the nationalist Young Syria movement, and the declining Ottoman Empire, the extremes of tradition and revolution, conservation and progress, secular capitalism and divine inspiration, take the form of a symbolic negotiation between the states of youth and older age. I argue that *Tancred* grafts the narrative arc of progress onto the racialised aging of its Jewish characters and the sacred antiquity of the Palestinian soil as twinned manifestations against the ruin of time. *Tancred* turns to the East to forge a symbolic connection between growing older and the imperial value of endurance, giving narrative shape to a grand empire that spans time as well as place.

Zuzanna Zarebska

University of Lisbon

Narratives of Atonement and Self-Discovery in Charlotte Wood's *Stone Yard Devotional*

Stone Yard Devotional tells the story of a woman who leaves her marriage and her established yet failed life to live in a religious community of nuns on the inhospitable planes of Monaro in Australia. While using varied narrative techniques of introspection, reminiscence and re-storying, three separate events divide the minimal plot on the stark Monaro planes in dialogue with the past while the narrator pursues a cloistered existence of non-religious service. This paper examines the narrative elements and stories that *Stone Yard Devotional* augments to reinforce its role of a major voice in service of Australian literature. I will look at the genre of Reifungsroman and the philosophical concepts of responsibility towards oneself and others, of experience of grief, reverence and faith. Furthermore, I analyse the temporal frame of the novel, its Dickensian tastes and the incorporation of the motif of animal vs human life and their relationship to the environment seen as, paraphrasing Kathleen Woodward, a model of natural continuity. As I will argue, healing and regeneration become possible due to the main character's maturation process on the forlorn Australiana planes, facilitated by reminiscence, re-storying and most importantly an insight into human vulnerability and at the same time into the strength of human spirit. The narrative framework in *Stone Yard Devotional* provides time and space for facing the fundamental questions about human existence inevitably leading to death and the internal disquiet that the narrator and the author herself have been dealing with since childhood.

SESSION 1E – EMPATHY AND STORYTELLING

Ghufran Fadhil

University of Victoria

The Role of Storytelling in Shaping and Empowering the Immigrant Community

Suzanne Keen's *Empathy and the Novel* has played a pivotal role in shaping the approach of literary scholars towards understanding empathy's role in literary experiences. While Keen posits that reading itself can be an empathetic act, she remains sceptical about the potential of literature to generate altruism directly. Keen highlights the novel's significance as a "safe space", allowing readers to engage in empathy within the confines of fiction without the necessity for real-world action: "Fictional worlds provide a safe zone for readers' feeling empathy without a resultant demand on real world action". However, an alternative perspective emerges from my own experience, suggesting that literature possesses the capacity to effect meaningful change in its readers. I argue that the exposure to the stories of others with similar experiences can foster empathy, provide a sense of community, and facilitate a deeper understanding of the immigrant experience. Immigrant narratives can serve as a powerful tool for healing immigrants from their traumas. In this paper, I explore how *What We All Long For* by Dionne Brand, in the context of the immigrant experience, can be used as a powerful tool for healing and personal growth. Inspired by Gloria Anzaldua's creative methodology, this paper adopts her innovative methodology of using scholarly analysis and personal narrative to explore the healing power of immigrant narratives: I have accumulated my personal encounters as an immigrant.

Andrea Macrae

Oxford Brookes University

Picturebook Refugees

Literary representations of refugee experiences have been criticised for colonial tropes such as decontextualising crises; pathologising home countries; perpetuating the White Savior Industrial Complex; speaking about, for and on behalf of refugees; and constructing the refugee, via passive victimhood, deserving innocence, and gratitude, as a vehicle for edifying empathetic identification with

the marginalised other. With the added risks of one-dimensional storytelling, extreme oversimplification, and visual stereotyping, a subgenre of refugee-themed picturebooks for very young children has recently arisen, often explicitly created for the prosocial pedagogical benefit of more privileged readers. Using Francesca Sanna's *The Journey* as an illustrative case study, this paper investigates the scope for and challenges of instrumentalised thematization of refugee experiences within the unique semiotic and interpretative dynamics of picturebooks. Through discussion of complex word-image interactions, of physical and formal conventions and constraints, and of writing for novice and naïve reception within a mediated (typically adult-child) co-reading context, this paper explores the intersections and implications of multimodal narratological affordances and ethical tensions in young children's picturebooks about refugee experiences.

Katrina Wong

University of York

'Rooms within rooms': Banality and Narrative Empathy in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*

This paper adopts a rhetorical understanding of narrative unreliability to explore how authors elicit readers' empathic engagement with character narrators like Klara in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun*. James Phelan identified 'naïve defamiliarization' as one of his six subtypes of bonding unreliability, taking *Huckleberry Finn* as his example. Phelan argues that defamiliarization occurs when "the freshness of [Huck's] perspective" inadvertently "acknowledges and closes the perceptual distance between him and the authorial audience. However, as Adam Parkes and Clare Connors observe, while Ishiguro's Klara is presented as a *tabula rasa*, her narration is most obviously characterised by "banality" in both form and content. The novel's pronounced banality raises questions regarding the bonding effects of Klara's unreliability, given that the freshness of perspective invoked by Phelan seems inapplicable. Is the conspicuous banality of Klara's naïve perspective, and of the events she narrates, compatible with readers' empathic alignment? Focusing on Klara's simplistic, bland narration, this paper examines how Ishiguro deploys "banality" as a device to present Klara as inhumanly human, creating a tension with the potential for readers' positive alignment with her naïve unreliability. By considering Klara as a literary representation of both a non-human and a human, I consider how readers can form empathic engagement with non-human characters – through mechanisms of defamiliarization and recognition. I then suggest that readers' affective alignment with non-human characters in turn variegates the hegemonic understanding of "human". In *Klara and the Sun*, I suggest, Ishiguro problematizes the distinction between the human and non-human in order to confront one of the pressing socio-cultural concerns of the times: the constriction of empathic engagement by a tendency towards unwarranted restrictiveness of categorical identifiers.

SESSION 1F – TRANSMEDIAL AESTHETICS

Carolien Van Nerom

Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Narrative Setting in Operas by Philip Glass

In its early days, minimalist operas by American composer Philip Glass were often received as non-narrative (Ashby; Gann; Mertens). Since its early beginnings, however, researchers have shown that minimalist music has narrative potential, although narrativity is exuded in inconvenient (Pymm), or demanding ways. In this paper, my focus is on how the evocation of setting is a trigger for narrativity. Specifically, I draw on Monika Fludernik's concept of experientiality to show how the music in minimalist operas evokes an experienced setting, which in turn is the key to its being a strong marker for narrativity. As such, I show how experienced time and space is a more workable concept for the study of musical narratives, in contrast to structuralist models of time and space, which are heavily

reliant on verbal-media-expressions of narrative. In this paper, I compare two types of operas. The first opera is based on a comparatively straightforward, narrative text that is highly specific in its setting, namely *The Perfect American*, based on the eponymous novel by Peter Stephan Jungk. It is a fictionalised rendering of Walt Disney's life. The second opera is based on a comparatively more complex narrative text, namely *In the Penal Colony* by Franz Kafka. This absurd tale offers an insight in the penal malpractices in a distant colony. In this case, the setting is rather less developed. The comparison between the two reveals that the music in each case evokes experienced setting. Both experienced time and space are equally important in the operas. The difference, however, is that Glass returns to more recognizable and traditional musical structures in the opera based on the straightforward text, whereas he maintains a purely minimalist approach in the opera based on the complex text.

Zoltan Varga

Western Norway University of Applied Sciences

Music and Narrative: The Case of Utopia

The stories we tell about music, with music, and through music mark three ways in which the medium may interact with narrative. But whose stories are these? Adorno's famous comment on Mahler's music distributes the storytelling to the creative and the perceptive ends of musical meaning-making, while at the same time dismissing an inherent musical narrativity: 'It is not that music wants to narrate, but that the composer wants to make music in the way that others narrate.' Conversely, Michael Klein argues that music is indeed 'adept at signifying expressive states whose arrangement follows a narrative logic.' However, such expressive states and logic inherent in music imply a consciousness, a way of thinking, that is attributed to the musical work. Such anthropomorphisations of music clearly stem from the listening subject, who projects their own state or intent onto the musical sound. In these instances, music is often experienced as an 'expression of the desire for a better way of being or living', which is Ruth Levitas' definition of utopia. This paper shows how such an entanglement of music with utopianism keeps the duality of More's term open, allowing music to take the listener either to a "good place" or "no place". I will look at the examples of bossa nova and Lhasa de Sela's "I'm Going In" to explore these two possible narrative directions of music as utopia.

W. Michelle Wang

Nanyang Technological University

Foreshadowing and an 'Aesthetics of Indirection'

Characteristics such as concealment, hiddenness, and covertness have long been prized in many aspects of Chinese literature and the arts. This paper proposes that the notion of suggestive concealment—in relation to the aesthetic principle of fu-bi [伏笔]—can enrich our understandings of foreshadowing and narrative progression, expanding existing critical methodologies for discussing television aesthetics. Using a comparative analysis of the Chinese web novel and its televisual adaptation, *Love like the Galaxy*, as a case study, the paper examines how qualities such as hiddenness, gap-filling, and patterning shape what has been termed "an aesthetics of indirection" in the Chinese narrative arts.

SESSION 1G – READING VIRGINIA WOOLF

Danae Arteaga

University of York

Archetypal Images in the Modernist Text and Cartomancy: Comparing the Process of Narrative Structuration in Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* and in Tarot Reading

In *The Pleasure of the Text*, Roland Barthes suggests that the writerly modernist text rejects the cohesion of the laws of structuralist narratology in order to disperse meaning and remain ambiguous. Thus, narrative structure changes from being a fundamental component modelling and framing the text to a feature that emerges from the ambiguity of the semiotic system of the text. Narrative no longer prioritizes plot and internalizes the phenomena outside of its frame: instead, it becomes an emergent phenomenon that prioritizes theme and externalizes meaning with a flickering motion. I propose that narrative in the high modernist text is part of a process of structuration instead of a structure with an externalising function that retains the sense of form while not modelling or closing the text's meaning. The externalising function is achieved through two notions of image and archetype, one described by Northrop Frye in connection to poetry, and one that links the Jungian archetype to tarot reading. Like the externalising feature in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, the cards in tarot provide a form with meanings that move back and forth between an internalised unconsciousness and an externalised consciousness, and that generate multiple narrative plots out of a theme provided by the image. By comparing the processes of narrative structuration in these semiotic systems, I show that the narrative plot, as a result of rather than as the cause of the system, attempts to disperse the fictional frame to produce an awareness of consciousness in the reader and a momentary understanding of the complex organization of semiotic systems.

Kelly A. Marsh

Mississippi State University

The Progression of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and the Ethics of Narrating Simultaneity

Narrative theorists including Kathy Mezei and Molly Hite find in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* an undermining of traditional narrative authority in favour of ambiguity and indeterminacy, which, they argue, engage readers in ethical considerations of gender inequity in particular and of egalitarianism more broadly. However, close attention to what James Phelan calls the novel's 'progression', that is, the 'synthesis of textual and readerly dynamics' from the narrative's beginning to its end, reveals that Woolf envisions egalitarianism less through indeterminacy than through simultaneity. Rather than leaving readers undecided between possibilities, Woolf insists on the coexistence of multiple, often contrasting, sometimes seemingly mutually exclusive, experiences, ideas, and affective responses. That simultaneity is central in *Mrs. Dalloway* is evident when multiple characters share an experience (such as observing an airplane), and also when clock chimes signal that we are learning of the different experiences of characters in various parts of London occurring at the same time (one dressing for a party, another committing suicide). Simultaneity also characterizes each individual's experience: Clarissa's feelings of romantic intimacy with Peter and Sally coexist with her marriage to Richard, and, as James Tatum observes, Septimus continues to experience war-time trauma 'in hellish simultaneity' with the present moment. Readers and characters alike are alerted to the simultaneous existence of multiple narratives, especially by recurring references to Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and *Othello*, plays with similar plots but contrasting endings. Like the characters, readers are likely to have simultaneous opposing affective responses throughout. The progression of *Mrs. Dalloway*, quite different from those of the Victorian texts in which Helena Michie identifies previous attempts at the simultaneity effect, confronts the constraints of linearity and demonstrates that narratives of simultaneity can guide readers to ethical awareness of the coexistence of the past and the present and the persistence of social inequalities.

Lilian Rác

Eötvös Loránd University

Music in Time: Anisochrony, Prose Poetics and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*

This paper offers a detailed analysis of anisochronies in *To the Lighthouse* in order to show that Virginia Woolf's modernist novel owes its lyricism, among other things, to a specific treatment of time in the narrative. The novel has been subject to thorough narratological analysis with regard to its use of perspective (Levenson) and its treatment of time (Sheehan), and my paper wishes to explore further the correlation between time and prose poetics in the novel, using the framework of classical narratology. It shows that some of Gérard Genette's concepts—anisochronies, speed, novel tempo—may be used effectively to explain key aspects of Woolf's much noted lyricism. Genette originally introduces the concept of anisochrony in *Narrative Discourse* to argue that time is not simply the definitive subject matter of Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* but is at the very heart of Proust's mode of storytelling. Genette often refers to a rhythmicity of prose that is created as a result of this storytelling technique. Woolf's admiration for Proust's narrative genius and her own deep interest in creating words in, and through, music is undeniable. This paper examines the musical temporality in the prose poetics of *To the Lighthouse* through a careful analysis of the symbiotic relationship between narrative temporality and musicality, observable in her novels from *To the Lighthouse* to *The Waves*.

SESSION 1H – SILENCE AND THE UNNARRATABLE

Phyllis Koehler

University of Cambridge

The Nullified Heroine: Narrating Beyond the Limits of Verbalisation in Sigmund Freud, Josef Breuer, Heinrich von Kleist, and Pauline Réage

Heinrich von Kleist's novella *Die Marquise von O*, Freud and Breuer's case study of Anna O., and Pauline Réage's novel *Histoire d'O* all stage intersections of multiple taboos, most notably sex and violence. The response to these discourses is often silence. Similarly, the protagonists of the three texts are, paradoxically, marked by their absence: the letter O, or maybe the cipher Zero, stands for a gap in signification inhabited by all those for whom a story on their own terms seems out of reach. I am interested in how these texts' collapses in and of representation, emerging from narratives of traumatic re-organisations of experience, restage language's breakdown in language. We scream before we speak: the events around which these texts circle (rape, "hysteria", sadism/masochism) are defined by the ways in which they may bring about a regression towards states preceding the verbal, towards the sounds a human makes before language is learned. While paying attention to the potentials emerging in narratives that put their own powers of transmission into question, I also want to show how such a perspective, in spite of potential efforts to convey the horrors and iniquities of violence, often concurs with a masculinist viewpoint that conceives of violence as a phenomenon that can only be feared, not fought. To what degree can actions and experiences be said to exist in politically useful ways if they are not narratable? I argue that feminist criticism that wants to take seriously the stories of the nullified heroine must stage meaning and mattering, sensing and making sense in relations of mutual dependence. How then can we read experiences of marginalisation not within the logics of an aspiration towards an idealised victimhood acknowledged by the law, but as a call for multiform expansions of our critical imagination?

Leri Price

Heriot-Watt University

[long pause]: Silences, Absences and Omissions in Narratives of Home

Narrative researchers in the social sciences have shown growing interest in differentiating the concept of “narrative” from “story”, positioning narrative as an ongoing, dialogic process of reflection and meaning-making. Current scholarship nevertheless often relies on storytelling as a means of constructing narrative, and although it is acknowledged that this relies on what is verbalised (as opposed to what is left out), there has been little work to date that wrestles with the problem of these omissions. Drawing on Gordon’s concept of haunting and Weller’s anthropology of the unknowable, this paper presents findings from multilingual ethnographic research with Syrian women in Scotland on the subject of home and explores the absences, silences, and ambiguities that shape their narrative practice. In this case, silences and ambiguities occur not only during the act of narration, but as part of the act of translation from Arabic to English. The paper suggests ways in which narrative scholars can co-construct narratives without relying solely on what has been spoken out loud, how to creatively and sensitively engage with these missing pieces, and how to make space for these absences to ‘speak’ within the narrative without straying into speculation. In particular, the paper argues that instead of seeing silence as a negative space, narrative researchers can add richer layers of analysis by theorising silence (including narrative silence) as a dynamic site of co-creation in its own right.

Ellen Stenstrom

Indiana University at Bloomington

How to Narrate the Unnarratable: Reconsidering the Realism in Reflexivity

In literature, pain and trauma have long existed beyond the capabilities of narrative. Elaine Scarry, for example, has famously written about pain being resistant to language, and Cathy Caruth understands unspeakability, or the inability to process an event, as key to its traumatic nature. Simultaneously though, the inexpressibility of pain and trauma have evidently not prevented writers throughout history from attempting to represent them anyway. What makes this paradox possible? Not infrequently, a narrator explicitly, reflexively, describes the process of struggling to narrate (and often, metafictionally, to write about) the very event which they are presently narrating. They might reference the frustration of trying to find the right words, recall details, or craft a text intended for publication. The war veteran narrators of Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five* and O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*, for example, describe the torturous difficulty of writing their retrospective “war stories.” The narrators of Plath’s *The Bell Jar* and Wallace’s “Good Old Neon” explicate the act of grasping for the right words and the desperation they feel in attempting to convey their mental distress. Existing theorizations of the self-aware literalised writing process, especially of narratives which embrace ontological slippage between story world and discourse, have been read almost exclusively in light of postmodernism and poststructuralism as antirealist self-critique, satire, and destruction of narrative representation. This paper, however, reframes such literature as operating for a very different purpose. Drawing on Prince and Warhol’s theorizations of the unnarratable and disnarration, as well as Wiese’s reexaminations of experimental features in contemporary literature, I argue that by foregrounding and explicating the process of struggling to compose a narrative, these texts actually do manage to voice what would otherwise remain unspeakable. Narratively representing an experience through a foregrounded consciousness in this way perhaps actually brings the narratee closer to understanding the experience itself than traditional realism might have. This strategy is one of several (in my larger project) which have been predominantly understood as antirealist, antimimetic, or simply antinarrative, but which I claim might be the very mechanisms which allow experiences like trauma to be represented in powerful and even mimetic ways. By too quickly relying on the long-held belief that suffering is beyond mimetic

representation (or even beyond language), we give ourselves an excuse not to listen deeply and take the witness seriously.

SESSION 1I – NARRATIVES AND SECRECY

Penny Fielding

University of Edinburgh

Narrative, Time and Secrecy in Cold War Spy Fiction

My paper explores the relations of fictional emplotment and historical secrecy in British spy novels of the 1960s and 1970s. As spy novelists started in the 1960s to reassess the relation of the Cold War to the Second World War, their work posed questions of time, narrative and narratability. This was a time of things that were coming to an end (the Empire), things that could not end or imagine a position of narration (the nuclear arms race), and things that existed in a state of deferral, return circulation and secrecy (Cold War espionage). I look at how the characterisation of temporality is a way of reading Cold War historicism through the narrative structures and plots of espionage fiction. Spy novels often mirror the narrative patterns of secret services. John Le Carré's *The Honourable Schoolboy*, for example, is structured by an immensely complex instance of the intelligence service phrase, "walking back the cat", or analysing what we now know against what we might have been led to expect in a past of disinformation of mistaken perceptions. Other forms of narrative temporality explore the relation of secret acts in the Cold War present to historical decisions made in the war-time past, and address the question of what can be revealed and at what time. The structure of Le Carré's *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* follows a continual deferral of a bureaucracy in which the present is not the inevitable telos of the past, nor is it a stable platform from which to predict the future (what Derrida calls the future anterior). My paper considers how the affordances of espionage in fiction construct a secret world that speaks to larger questions of historical accountability.

Yoon Sun Lee

Wellesley College

Loud Secrets

A secret is defined by the conditions of its utterance (who you are allowed and not allowed to tell it to) and by its imagined consequences (what will happen if you tell it to the wrong person). Thus, the very structure of the secret is strongly linked with narrative on both the discourse and the story level. As highly conditioned utterance, on one level, and as the elaborate spinning-out of consequences on the other, narratives can be imagined to be secrets themselves. But can narratives actually tell their secrets? What does happen when someone breaks that secrecy? This paper turns to Mikhail Bakhtin's theorisation of the novel and Viet Thanh Nguyen's *The Sympathizer*, to examine the complexities that arise when a narrative appears simultaneously to tell a secret and to exhibit a secret as a type of reified speech or story-thing. That novel shows us the narrator telling a secret (a confession, made under duress). But by drawing attention to its reified, forced nature, the novel seems to assert, paradoxically, that there is, and that there is not another secret, one that can never be narrated. This paper will use secrecy, then, to think about the rhetorical model of narrative.

Vanessa Smith

University of Sydney

Case Notes: Secret Archives in Wilkie Collins' *Armadale*

The plot of Wilkie Collins' *Armadale* unfolds, as many have noted, via an archive of generically varied sources: ledgers, newspaper reports, diary entries, docketts, that patchwork together an intricate plot of doubling and disguise. Together these documents assist in unravelling the identities and interrelated

histories of fortunate, impervious Alan Armadale, the mysterious Midwinter, a bundle of nerves, and the complexly criminal Lydia Gwilt, a mistress of disguise and forgery. The novel seems to conform neatly to a fundamental precept of sensation narrative theory: that detection and reading are co-implicated. Two of the novel's records, however, fail to obey this axiom: the dream record that Midwinter makes of Armadale's apparently predictive dreams, and Lydia Gwilt's diary. Both these secretive and perilous texts steer the novel away from the imperatives of narrative resolution and scientific detection, establishing a proto-psychoanalytic counter-archive of traumwerk and compulsive self-disclosure. Both muddy rather than solve the novel's sensational plot, and are documents which paradoxically round out character by documenting its breakdown. In these embedded archival sources detective case becomes case study.

Cedric Tolliver

University of Oklahoma

Narrative Secrets and Alarming Truths in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*

One of the animating riddles in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* is the deathbed confession of the narrator's grandfather that he has had to live as "a spy in the enemy's country" ever since surrendering his gun during Reconstruction. The adults are so alarmed by his parting words that they rush the children from the room and warn them to forget what they had heard. Those words remain a secret only mentioned within the family circle up until the moment the narrator relays them in the course of his narrative. What special relationship does the grandfather establish with his descendants in revealing this secret? And by extension how does this troubling truth inform the narrator's relationship to his readers, even though the narrator confesses to never being "sure of what he meant"? Is this opening toward interpretation the very condition of narrative? This paper considers this moment in Ellison's text as revealing something about secrecy and indeterminacy in African American literature specifically but also in narratives more generally.

SESSION 2A – THEORISING NARRATIVE

Daria Baryshikova

Aachen University

Metaphorical Conceptualisation of Self Exploration in B.S. Johnson's *Trawl*

This paper investigates the processes of metaphorical dynamics in the presentation of narrator's introspection through his experience of environmental affordances. According to the theory of enactive cognition, mental processes are related to active bodily experiences, intersubjective interaction, and sensorimotor coupling with the environments. I explore how B.S. Johnson represents mind processes in his novel *Trawl* with help of the "sea" metaphor. The paper conceptualises character's reflections as experiences generated by the movements towards and through the sea. Johnson, who claimed that 'telling stories is telling lies', needed 'real experiential truths' to construct a novel, in which a narrator trawls through his own memories to deepen his sense of self, to overcome a life crisis. The central themes of the *Trawl* were supposed to be isolation, lost love, and childhood as an evacuee. In this autobiographical narrative, the sea, as an environment with which the narrator engages, may afford various cognitive actions. Methodologically, I build on Merja Polvinen's ideas on what does it mean to think of narrative as enacted cognitive environments and on Terence Cave's conceptualisation of the processes of creating and making use of cognitive affordances. I analyse narrative form in *Trawl*, its plot structures (memory works, descriptions, retrospections, and flashbacks), thematic centres, the role of perceptual experiences (of the sea, and of processes of self-examination), and the style of writing in relation to the construction of its fictional world.

Joanna Jeziorska-Haładyj

University of Warsaw

Second Person Biographies

The paper tackles the problem of second person biographies, considered as a case of unusual genre variation. I am particularly interested in the status of the protagonists, who become silent addressees listening to the story of their own lives, often subordinated to the interpretative activity of the narrators. This relationship raises certain ethical issues, related to narrating vicarious experience. My opening case study is the sixteenth-century Polish narrative poem “Pamiętka wszystkimi cnotami hojnie obdarzonemu Janowi Baptyście, hrabi na Tęczynie” by Jan Kochanowski, a Renaissance author often referred to as the founding father of Polish poetry. This epic poem contains elements of an epicedium and a panegyric, but above all it is an early biographical account of an adventurous, tragic life of a young nobleman, addressed to himself shortly after his premature death. This early example shows that second person non-fiction is not a modern experiment. However, the status of the narrator can be compared to his much later counterparts – although he is of course a teller representing his times in terms of style and literary convention. In the second part of my paper, I refer to contemporary examples, including Michèle Sarde’s *Vous, Marguerite Yourcenar*, a biography of the author of *Hadrian’s Memoirs*. The second person narrative feigns an intimate dialogue with the protagonist, while giving an arbitrary and doubtful reinterpretation of biographical data, often polemical to Yourcenar’s own first-person life writing. The second person is accompanied by other mechanisms of fictionalisation, blurring the line between the biography and the biographical novel. My aim is to propose a model of the relationship between the narrator and the protagonist in second person biographies.

Valery Timofeev

Independent

Transtextuality as Dynamic Process in Iris Murdoch’s *The Black Prince*

When we speak of two or more texts that collide using Genette’s transtextuality system, we speak metaphorically in most cases. We do not have two or more texts that collide. We have one narrative (*i.e.* one text and what might be called the reader’s awareness, knowledge, mental representation, etc. of the texts quoted, alluded to, parodied, imitated, retold). Whatever term we choose to name the reader’s account of Text it should allow us to define it as a dynamic process, being a subject of change within the dynamical unfolding of the narrative. Staying in tune with the way Genette defines, or rather redefines, and extends his system of transtextuality by engaging the most convincing literary examples, I use *The Black Prince* by Iris Murdoch to study its textual transcendence by describing its transtextuality in the making (*i.e.* within the dynamical unfolding of the narrative). The approach advanced in the paper – the Generative Narratology Framework introduced by the author in *Emerging Vectors of Narratology* – helps reconstruct the transtextuality of *The Black Prince* as a process in its narrative progression, constructing a hypothetical version of the way the creative process was organised in terms of monitoring, regulating, and controlling the narrative progression in terms of emergence the reader’s awareness of the fact that some other text or texts are to be identified and taken into account, to the moment when the reader starts using their new knowledge (mental representation of identified text) to understand its impact on the meaning of the text they are reading.

SESSION 2B – NARRATIVE INVENTION

Marlene Allen Ahmed

United Arab Emirates University

Walter Mosley's *Blue Light* as a Blues-Science-Fiction Narrative

When Walter Mosley published his first work of science fiction, *Blue Light*, in 1998, some critics were confused by Mosely's decision to veer from the critically and commercially Easy Rawlins detective series to venture into science fiction writing. While some critics praised his prose writing and the transcendentalist theme of the text, others were puzzled by *Blue Light*, for it seem to be clearly identifiable as either a science fiction or African American literary narrative. These confused critics seem to misunderstand *Blue Light* and Mosley's authorial intentions with the novel, which provides a highly original reading experience. The purpose of this presentation, therefore, will be to use narratology theory to highlight the brilliance of the work, which I read as an intermedial, interdisciplinary hybrid narrative that lies at the intersection of the African American and science fiction literary traditions, creating a work that I call a "blues-science-fiction narrative." Throughout the novel, Mosley inserts clues to readers familiar with blues musical tradition as well as science fiction to show them how to read the novel this way. He does so in three important ways: through his characterization of the novel's protagonist Chance Foote and the "Blues," a group of humans who are transformed into metahumans after being struck by blue light originating from Neptune; through his incorporation of blues music aesthetics throughout the novel; and through his use of scientific theories about the effects of blue-coloured light on human consciousness as the novel's metaphor for humanity's potential to transcend the limitations of our bodies. Examining *Blue Light* using narratology theory, thus, honours the originality of Mosley's groundbreaking novel and illustrates how and why Mosley is one of the most talented writers to emerge in the latter twentieth century.

Mengni Kang

Macau University of Science and Technology

Supernatural Beings as Natural: A Relational Model of the Unnatural in Vietnamese-American Narratives

Taking Violet Kupersmith's *The Frangipani Hotel* and Viet Thanh Nguyen's "Black-Eyed Women" for example, this paper draws on rhetorical poetics, particularly Ellen Peel's relational model of the unnatural, to explore how unnatural narratology can better accommodate texts from unfamiliar cultures. It shows that the inspection of the authorial audience enables a more precise and rigorous examination of the unnatural in cross-cultural situations. I first follow the existing definitions of the unnatural and analyse the antimimesis of the two texts: both the incarnated deity in *The Frangipani Hotel* and the ghost in "Black-Eyed Women" defy mimetic rules and can be explained by invoking generic frames. I then consider the role of the authorial audience in determining the unnatural and make a re-assessment of the texts' unnatural property; I argue that both texts are intended to be mimetic as their authorial audiences are posited to subscribe to a non-secular worldview that sees spirits and other superhuman beings as a natural existence. The paper lastly focuses on rhetorical purposes; for both works, an indigenous understanding of supernatural elements helps to voice a unique and authentic Vietnamese experience. The paper contends that unnatural narratology should take on board different understandings of the unnatural. The concept of the authorial audience allows us to move beyond textual elements and locate the unnatural in the relation of these elements to the intended reader; the investigation into the dynamic between the narrative and the authorial audience also illuminates different shades of a so-called unnatural phenomenon and how its antimimesis can be inflected varyingly in specific contexts. For minoritised writers like Kupersmith and Nguyen, imposing the label "unnatural" may dismiss the cultural specificities in which their writings are rooted, and the

consideration of the authorial audience prompts actual readers to be more reflective of their cultural bias and treat narratives from other cultures more respectfully and ethically.

Penny Yeung

Rutgers University

Double Voicing and Writing Historicity in Dung Kai Cheung's *Atlas*

Thinking about change is at the heart of Hong Kong writer Dung Kai-Cheung's celebrated novel, *Atlas: The Archaeology of an Imaginary City*, a text composed on the eve of Hong Kong's handover from British colonial to Chinese rule. Interrogating its own impulse to record and document at this monumental watershed, *Atlas* attempts to locate "Hong Kong" through engaging with a variety of maps, constituting within its covers an unruly archive of verbal maps that have perplexed many a critic with its ambiguous suspension between fact and fiction. This paper teases apart the mechanism engendering *Atlas*'s genre-bending nature by turning to the terms provided by structuralist narratology—namely, the story-discourse distinction. I argue that *Atlas*'s anti-referential aesthetics can be read as a collapse of the story-discourse binary and the emergence of "double voicing," wherein the text merges the voices of author-historian and fictional character, and thus blending maps based on inter-semiotic translations of historical artifacts and maps that are pseudo translations. But rather than devolving into a nihilistic stance towards historiography or contenting itself with bracketing the referent, the irony engendered through double voicing reintroduces the excluded "signified" undergirding historical discourse. My reading demonstrates how analysis through a lens of diachronic narratology discloses how *Atlas* anticipates and models change, by positing history in terms of historicity.

SESSION 2C – KISHŌTENKETSU AND OTHER NON-WESTERN NARRATIVE STRUCTURES

Francesca Arnavas

University of Tartu

Hayao Miyazaki's Hybrid Worlds and Their Riddle-Stories: Western Tropes and *Kishōtenketsu*

'Fairy tales begin with conflict because we all begin our lives with conflict', famously stated Jack Zipes. Indeed, many western narratives incorporate conflicts as important drives in their developments: the wide-spread narrative motif of the "Hero's Journey" (Campbell; Vogler) is built on the hero's encountering with, and overcoming of, conflictual situations. The narrative relevance of conflicts, and the meaning itself of what a conflict is, is less universal than the (apparent) pervasiveness of the "Hero's Journey" story structure may lead us to think. Non-Western narratives may offer novel ways of looking at narrative constructions and at the role of conflicts in them. This paper focuses in particular on the example of the East Asian *Kishōtenketsu*, a narrative structure implying a story development that does not necessarily revolve around conflicts, but that interprets potential clashes more as contrasts that can be somehow harmonised. An especially interesting case study can be found in the filmography of Hayao Miyazaki, where it is possible to detect, on the one hand, the widespread presence of Western fairy-tale tropes, including the Hero's Journey model, and, on the other hand, a plot strongly influenced by the *Kishōtenketsu*. In this paper, I argue that Miyazaki's stories represent conflictual situations in a less dichotomous way than in the Western tradition, and conflicts in his movies are depicted in the forms of open riddles, implying an interrogative attitude, a playful and flexible state of mind. I address in particular the content and structure of *Spirited Away*, *My Neighbour Totoro*, and *Arrietty*, that I find representative of Miyazaki's way of constructing stories. These movies represent a complex fairy tale world characterised by a non-Manichean essence in which Miyazaki achieves a fluid combination of various styles and languages, even apparently conflicting ones, in a non-conflictual way, suggesting a many-sided, protean world open to different inspirations and influences.

Mattia Bellini

University of Tartu

Narratives and Complexity: Exploring Cross-Cultural Narrative Structures and Their Cognitive Effects

Complex is a narrative that poses an above-average cognitive challenge to its audience (Grishakova and Poulaki; Kiss and Willemsen). Increasingly more products feature complex or puzzle narratives, including TV series, movies, and video games, showing that narrative complexity is also a source of enjoyment. Concurrently, the study of the complexity of narratives and of the effects it has on audiences is a growing trend in cognitive narratology. Several studies investigate the specificities of complex narratives, focusing in particular on the disruption of time and of cause-effect relationships, the use of cruxes, the multiplicity of storylines, plots, or perspectives, the presence of intermediality, of seriality, and the use of metalepsis. What receives significantly less attention is the employment of narrative structures and tropes that are not commonly found in the target audiences' cultural milieu, and to which spectators are therefore not accustomed, like the Aboriginal non-linear stories or the repetitive and participatory African folktales. The Japanese *Kishōtenketsu* is also a particularly telling example, for two main reasons, namely because it is sufficiently unusual for Western audiences to be cognitively challenging, and because Japanese culture and narratives (particularly in the form of movies and video games) experience sufficient popularity to be easily available to Western audiences. Comparative research in cognitive psychology (Nisbett) shows that, in general, the Japanese mindset tends towards collectivism, *i.e.* the recognition of the situatedness of an individual and their decision within an environment, while the American mindset is generally more oriented towards individualism and finding personal motivations behind actions. The complexity coming from the meeting of diverse narrative structures is therefore sprouting from the encounter of different thought structures. The exposition to different worldviews can potentially provide new enriching interpretative perspectives on different situations and events, while being compelling and interesting for audiences.

Terra Gasque

Georgia Institute of Technology

When a Twist is not the Twist: *Kishōtenketsu*, Normative Drives, and Queer Experiences

Kishōtenketsu (起承轉結) is a Japanese narrative framework initially founded in classical Chinese poetic tradition (*qǐchéngzhuǎnhé*, or 起承轉合). This framework is divided into 4 parts: Introduction (Ki, 起), Development (Sho, 承), Twist (Ten, 轉), and Conclusion (Ketsu, 結). However, the "Twist" of the Ten act has a different usage in Japanese language than in Western language. This confusion of context has led to western researchers forcing their cultural perception of twist onto *Kishōtenketsu*, radically changing the narrative potential of the framework. Within a Western context, twists are often framed in relation to detective fiction as a revelation of information previously hinted at, but entirely ontological to the presented narrative. In the Japanese context, twist has no limitations on information provided, which means that the twist of the Ten can include information that do not necessarily follow the previously established narrative elements. The shift in the concept of twist from Japanese into Western framing has led to a misaligning of the *Kishōtenketsu* narrative form with the traditional Western Aristotelian 3/5 act narratives, where the Ten is reduced from an act in the story to a mere climax point. Through exposing the distinct cultural definitions of twist, this discussion will examine how the Asian traditional *Kishōtenketsu* framework provides a narrative structure by which queer, minority, and outsider narratives can be represented within Western culture, specifically thanks to the Ten ability to include non-sequitur information within a narrative experience. These non-sequitur moments can be framed through the lens of Mark Fisher's *Weird and Eerie* as a method to both destabilise traditional notions of culture and bring to light worlds unobserved, or ignored aspects of said cultures. Through the original context of *Kishōtenketsu* and the use of Fisher's lexicon, these

unique outsider perspectives avoid the risk of Neo-Liberal assimilation and the very cultural drive for narrative assimilation and syncretisation, which warped the Ten in the first place.

Hartmut Koenitz

Södertörn University

Non-Western Narratives and the Question of Productive Structure

The limitations of structuralist approaches towards narrative were critically reflected by scholars such as Barthes, Kristeva, Lacan and Foucault. Yet, a structuralist approach to narrative is still heavily employed by narrative designers, also due to the increasing demand for stories of the general audience, concretising in the success of TV-series portals, narrative-driven video games, but also (with more problematic implications) journalism and science communication. These professional areas have turned to early and stereotyped models such as the “Hero’s Journey” (Campbell), a so-called “Aristotelian tension arc” (Mateas and Stern), and other variants of a ‘three-act story model’ (Field). Seemingly long overcome in the academic sphere, these models retain a strong influence for example in narrative design for video games, where designers who apply other models risk losing clients (Walk). Eurocentric, misogynistic, and colonial models of narrative continue to dominate a considerable part of narrative production, a situation I have previously described as “narrative fundamentalism” (Koenitz). Poststructuralist concepts have taken little hold in narrative production outside avant-garde forms. It is in this context I call for an effort to create structural descriptions of non-Eurocentric narrative aimed at enabling usage by practitioners in narrative production. I also highlight the need for an operational but more nuanced narrative model, that could inform and guide narrative designers while avoiding the simplifications of long-criticised structuralist constructions, and instead informed of current views of narratology. Some initial steps in this regard have been taken (Koenitz *et al.*; Silva *et al.*), but more work is needed in order to decolonialize narrative production and enable more complex representations of postmodern, postdigital and posthuman reality.

SESSION 2D – THEORISING CHARACTER

Ryohei Hashimoto

University of York

Predictive Processing in Literary Characterisation and Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*

Arguments are still ongoing regarding approaches to literary characters. In recent years, studies on characters have focused more on the reader’s cognition. A predominant view within the field is that fictional characters are generated as mental representations by the reader, which is generated through the interaction between top-down processing based on the reader’s social, literary, and emotional presuppositions and bottom-up processing based on the input of character-relevant textual information. In this view, mental representations are updated by new input information as the reading progresses. However, the problem with this influential model is that its emphasis is upon the notional product of this cognitive process, the character as fictional being, rather than the cognitive dynamism of the process of characterisation in reading. My main argument is that the trajectory of the reader’s cognitive processes continually forms characters. In exploring how this process of interpretative characterisation, I will refer to the framework of predictive processing, which has become increasingly influential in cognitive science and neuroscience. Simply put, predictive processing is a framework based on the principle that human brains are predicting machines, which continuously work in the direction of minimising the errors that arise through contact with the world. Using this framework, I demonstrate how the cognitive processes of the reader’s prediction, prediction error, and modification work in the process of character formation. As a case study, I will read Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* to test the validity of my argument. This research will not only provide a foundation for a character theory that

better reflects the nature of the reader's cognitive dynamism but will also advance the debate on cognition and fictional beings, which is a relatively unexamined premise of the dialogue between narrative theory and cognitive science.

Joanna Lipson Freed

Oakland University

The Politics of Characterisation and Credibility in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Fiction

Contemporary diasporic writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is quick to remind us of her roots in genre fiction, frequently citing the Mills and Boon romances of her childhood as a significant literary influence. This allegiance, I contend, is made visible in her approach to characterization: in Adichie's fictional worlds, three-dimensional characters frequently rub shoulders with sketches, archetypes, and burlesques, whose hyperlegibility supports the kind of readerly pleasure most often associated with genre fiction. At the same time, however, the metatextual evaluation of character is often a key dimension of Adichie's narrative ethics: readers are asked to distinguish between credible characters and stereotypical ones, with the outcome serving as an implicit or explicit litmus of their prejudice. In this paper, I trace the way these two interpretive paradigms intersect in the short story "Jumping Monkey Hill." Set at a writer's retreat and focalised through the perspective of aspiring author Ujunwa, the story hinges on the question of what makes an African story believable, and the inability of a literary gatekeeper like Edward to recognize the authenticity of Ujunwa's largely autobiographical fiction is held up as a clear ethical failure. Yet reading "Jumping Monkey Hill" according to Ujunwa's interpretive paradigm renders problematic many of Adichie's own authorial choices—such as identifying the other workshop participants only by nationality, or using Edward's physical traits as indicators of his character. By inviting readers to apply "authenticity" as interpretive framework to a storyworld that cannot fully support it, I argue, "Jumping Monkey Hill" efficiently produces the very kind of readerly failure it dramatizes. I consider this failure in light of Adichie's own public rhetoric about literature's power to combat cultural stereotypes: although genre is rarely a part of this discussion, "Jumping Monkey Hill" suggests that it is critical to the ethical evaluations she calls for.

Kunwar Nitin Pratap Gurjar

Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi

Towards a Dalit Narratology

Dalit literature is an enormous body of literature with a global presence written by the historically oppressed castes. The study of this literature has largely been sociological in nature, and literary-aesthetic appreciation of this literature remains highly insufficient. My doctoral thesis, therefore, is an attempt to open up a dominantly narratological approach to study Dalit literature, something which has not been attempted yet. Dalit writers came under attack for purportedly exaggerating and falsifying information in their narratives. Therefore, my doctoral thesis took unreliability as the entry point for not only building a narratology of the unreliable in Dalit literature but also for establishing a more comprehensive case for Dalit narratology itself. This paper is divided into two components, one of which carries the narratological concepts and strategies central to what can be called Dalit narratology. "Caste Inducing Moments in Plot" (CIMPs) and "Narrative Decontextualisation" are the two concepts I discuss along with their functions and features for narratives involving the caste question. The other component of the paper discusses concepts such as "Non-Mimetic Character Inconsistencies" (NMCI) and "Character Consistency Principle" (CCP) both of which are interrelated concepts with implications on narrative progression and readerly dynamics. The latter part contributes to the theoretical understanding of characters within the classical narratology. Through these concepts, I highlight how the conception of Dalit narratology can help not only in reinvigorating literary studies of Dalit narratives

but also expanding the scope of applied narratology. The paper bridges theoretical gaps between narratology, critical theory, and cultural analysis.

SESSION 2E – CO-CONSTRUCTION AND IDENTITY

Alanoud Alenizi

Newcastle University

Crafting Philanthropic Identities: Fundraisers as Narrative Architects

In the realm of higher education philanthropy, narratives wield transformative power, not only in facilitating the solicitation of donations from philanthropic agents but also in constructing the very identities they embody. This paper explores the intricate interplay between professional fundraisers, narratives, and the co-construction of philanthropic identities. Focusing on the analysis of press releases, I elucidate how fundraisers, through their crafted narratives, co-construct the identities of philanthropic agents. I argue that narratives as textual artifacts go beyond mere descriptive representation; they actively contribute to the construction of identities. Diverging from mere passivity, these narratives take on an active and transformative role in shaping and presenting philanthropic identities. This understanding extends the well-established notion that narratives are instrumental in identity construction emphasising the dynamic and active influence of language within the context of higher education fundraising. Drawing on Erving Goffman's narrative frame analysis, the examination of the textual and rhetorical elements of press releases illuminates the dynamics and mechanisms through which fundraisers craft philanthropic identities. In exploring these dynamics, I inquire into the broader societal implications of these crafted narratives, exploring how they contribute to the creation, sustenance, and maintenance of myths and legacies associated with the philanthropic identities. Ultimately, this research contributes to a nuanced understanding of the role narratives play in crafting identities, shaping perceptions, and perpetuating philanthropic legacies in the context of higher education fundraising.

Jamie Chen

University of Iowa

Focalising Reading: Marginal Literacy in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*

Considering postcolonial narratology's future, Mieke Bal emphasizes the role that focalisation plays, observing that '[t]he common question [for the relationship between mainstream and postcolonial narratology] is what the look of a represented...figure does to the imagination of the reader'. While poststructuralist theorists and postmodern writers have taken up the first half of Bal's formulation ('the look of a represented figure'), the second half ('what it does to the imagination of the reader') is the focus of this paper. Having divided his formative years between three continents (Asia, Europe, North America), Michael Ondaatje is intimately familiar with the gap between embodied experience and academic analysis. He creates characters who are unable to parse what is happening, despite their academic capabilities, but are hyper-aware of their own cultural illiteracy, or marginal literacy. His readers are given access to internally focalised sections alongside externally focalised sections, so that their own marginal literacy is on an accelerated track as they attempt to learn from the characters' successes and failures in interpretation. In *Anil's Ghost*, forensic anthropologist Anil returns to a civil-war ridden Sri Lanka to investigate the organised campaigns of murder happening in the country. Ondaatje's novel positions Anil's narration alongside document excerpts, including a list of citizen names with the time and place of their "disappearances" between 1989 and 1990. These excerpts materially mimic documents that are real proceeding the acknowledgment of their fictionality, forcing the reader to reckon with the horror of their aesthetic references. I propose that these excerpts highlight focalisation in narration: the excerpts are framed by Anil's incomprehension, which is in turn

framed by the reader's own marginal literacy. *Anil's Ghost* effectively compels the reader to create an archive from each reading—an archive that points to the political tensions inherent in how readers collect and communicate narratives.

Virginia Pignagnoli

University of Turin

Co-Construction and Narrative Politics in Post-Postmodernist Fiction

Susan Lanser calls attention to the way 'nonfictionality gets signaled in a work of fiction—that is, what leads a reader to draw historical knowledge from make-believe, performing a kind of ontological crossover'. Ontological crossovers attend to the role fiction holds when it comes to the creation of change from the storyworld to the actual world or, as Lanser puts it, 'to shape not only a possible past but an actual future'. Building on Lanser's insights and recent rhetorical approaches to fictionality (Gammelgaard *et al.*), this paper explores the political turn (*cf.* Alber and Bell; Caracciolo and Ameal) in post-postmodernist fiction through a co-constructive analysis of Weike Wang's *Joan Is Okay* and Tess Gunty's *The Rabbit Hutch*. Within rhetorical approaches to narrative, the emerging theory of co-construction provides a fruitful framework to discuss actual world/storyworld ontological crossovers in narrative communication. With its focus on the importance of narrative communication as a means for change, co-construction theory is indeed devoted to the understanding of how 'the process of co-building a particular narrative storyworld (re)constructs authors' and audiences' ideas of reality' (Efron, McMurry, and Pignagnoli). Rather than solely signalling the transgression of narrative levels through metaleptic devices, post-postmodernist fiction employs instances of nonfictionality that invite socially situated co-constructions committed to storyworld truths meant to resonate both through and beyond the text. As I show, Wang's and Gunty's narration foregrounds the (nonfictional) unnarrated (Prince; Warhol), the (nonfictional) negative plotting (Lanser), and the (nonfictional) grand narratives these novels are countering. These negative blueprints redirect attention towards the reconstructive situated efforts of the audience, which, in turn, enable the political dimension of the narratives to be co-built.

SESSION 2F – ECONARRATOLOGY

Lamyk Bekius

University of Antwerp

Nanogenetic (Eco)Narratology: Examining the Writing Process of a Narrative of Environmental Collapse

Genetic criticism explores the dynamics of the creative writing process through material traces, such as notes, drafts, versions, and manuscripts. Genetic narratology thus introduces different versions to the study of narratives. The rise of home computers from the 1980s onwards, and authors adopting them to write their novels, creates uncertainty for this specific type of narrative analysis, as the digital writing environment complicates the concept of version. This paper discusses a method that scholars can use – in collaboration with living authors – to provide a solution to this problem: the use of keystroke logging to log the writing process from the first character typed to the last revision. Keystroke logging data offer a wealth of possibilities for genetic criticism and can enrich genetic narratology by bringing an enhanced temporal dimension to the analysis, including the author's movement through the text and the sequence of text production and revision (nanogenesis). To investigate the use of keystroke logging for genetic narratology, this paper focuses on the creation of the story "Mondini", written by the Flemish author David Troch. The story is set in a world after environmental collapse and its writing process was logged with the keystroke logger Inputlog. The keystroke logging data of this narrative, which deals with the effects of climate crisis, therefore allows for the study of the writing

process from an econarratological perspective. This paper will look at the visible dynamics of writing as Troch integrated details of narrative space into his story and will explore the 'principle of minimal departure' in the writing process. Marie-Laure Ryan's 'principle of minimal departure' suggests that readers project their knowledge of the real world onto the world represented by the text. In addition, as this paper will show, it could also be used as a framework for understanding authorial decisions.

Dennin Ellis

Ohio State University

Who Speaks For The Trees? How Pop Culture Navigates Global Warming

I examine how pop culture navigates the problems of tellability, entitlement, ethics and empathy regarding narratives centred on the environment. As global warming grows to be a greater and greater existential threat, narratives of the environment have become more prominent within mass media. Such texts include the films *Don't Look Up*, imagining a hypothetical extinction event in the form of a rogue comet, and *How to Blow Up a Pipeline* (based on a nonfiction book), in which a group of activists plan and carry out violent attacks in the name of environmental justice. The very nature of the global warming crisis precludes direct tellability, as many of the means through which narratives are made are not available to those who would tell the story firsthand (plant life, animals, etc.). As such, global warming narratives are subject to the limits of human communication, resulting in narratives that focus on the effects of global warming on humankind rather than plant and animal life, and as many people (especially in the Global North) are insulated from these effects, these anthropocentric narratives are not always taken seriously (even as, with the passage of time, global warming encroaches on the Global North). Framing global warming narratives in anthropocentric terms creates a number of issues. As different populations are affected differently, there is the question of who is entitled to tell whose story; who/how the perspective of plant and animal life is included and told; and what parties are deserving of ethical treatment and empathy.

Hongri Wang

Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Scaling Up the Capitalocene: Paratexts, Storyworld, and Climate Change in Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140*

In response to the ongoing debate over the Anthropocenic temporality and narrative time, econarratology seeks to forge chains between the storyworld and extranarrative contexts. This paper argues that paratexts, acting as a liminal zone that mediates between the inside and the outside of the text, are well-suited to come to terms with the scale effect of climate change by expanding the parameters of the storyworld to scale up narrative time and space and complicating the collectivity of author-text-reader interaction. Using *New York 2140* as a case study, this paper illustrates how the interplay between the core text and the paratext can register an omniscient spatio-temporal profile into the novel and create a multi-layered storyworld where capitalocenic worldbuilding is formally replicated and simultaneously deconstructed.

SESSION 2G – TRANSFORMING THE PAST

Roger Edholm

Mid Sweden University

The Rhetoric of Epistolarity: Contemporary Uses of the Epistolary Occasion

The term "epistolary fiction" has historically been synonymous with novels written in the form of letters and it is often associated with narrative literature from the eighteenth century. In a contemporary context, however, the notion of epistolarity has been extended to include what is considered new and

medialised epistolary modes, such as fictions written in the form of e-mails, text messages, tweets, etc. Although the research on epistolarity is extensive and varied, there is a recurring focus on defining the generic features that sets epistolary fiction apart from other novelistic genres. Epistolary fiction is thus generally considered a genre defined, in particular, by its formal features or structural components, that is, by imitating letters or different contemporary equivalents to the epistolary mode (e.g. Altman; Löschnigg and Schuk). This paper argues that it can be problematic to view epistolarity in generic and structural terms in relation to contemporary literature. It proposes a rhetorical approach to epistolarity that emphasizes the authorial uses of various epistolary occasions in narrative literature. The traditional view of epistolary fiction as a genre defined by certain structural features is concerned with the classifications of individual works and this paper argues that the generic label of epistolary fiction can obscure how epistolarity is employed in specific literary works, as well as how this resource works together with other rhetorical resources, such as dialogue, narrative progression, etc. The alternative approach is therefore presented as a means for examining the uses of epistolarity in contemporary works of fiction, exemplified by Sam Lipsyte's *Homeland*, a novel that challenges established assumptions about epistolary fiction.

Jessica Jumpertz

RWTH Aachen University

'As if there can be no story unless we crawl and weep': Metafictional Comments on Storytelling in Greek Rewritings

Rewriting Greek mythology has unmistakably become a trend in literature in the last couple of years. Several of these rewritings especially choose female characters from Greek myths to tell the stories out of their perspective. These narrators do not only take the opportunity to finally tell their perspective on events and use their own voice, but they also comment on the upholding of patriarchy through the focus on male perspectives in storytelling. As such, the homodiegetic narrators of, for example, Jessie Burton's *Medusa* and Madeline Miller's *Circe* add metafictional comments on storytelling processes and address them to the narratee, thereby creating an awareness for the power of storytelling and perspective in upholding social structures and power dynamics in the readers of these novels. Rewritings cannot only be conceptualised as a revision of the prior text but also as 'writing back to the original text' (Rebei), thereby criticising the transmission of ideologies in the original text. This paper examines the usage of metafictional comments in different rewritings of Greek myths and their critique of storytelling practices, thereby drawing conclusions about intertextual references and the transmission of said critique to the storytelling practices of the original texts. For example, when Circe tells the narratee in the eponymous novel how her story is changed by poets and adds 'as if there can be no story unless we crawl and weep', she does not only address the future of her story, but also comments on a change from private to public narration, which supports the patriarchal order. By this claim, her narration not only criticizes but also reframes the original Greek myth in which the male perspective is usually foregrounded.

Erin Temple

Ohio State University

***Penny Dreadful(s)*: (Neo)-Victorian Transmedia Storyworlds**

My paper brings together discourses in transmedia, adaptation studies, and (neo)-Victorian studies to investigate the storyworlds of the television series *Penny Dreadful* and the podcast *The Tales from the Penny Blood*. Both twenty-first-century projects reimagine elements of Victorian sensation fiction, and I use them here as case studies to speak to repeated questions in transmedia studies. What is the difference between transmedia and adaptation? Can elements of narrative benefit from the tools of transmedia even when the narratives under discussion are not creating a unified, coherent transmedia

experience? Neo-Victorian scholars use terms like palimpsestic, layered, or haunted to describe the relationship between Victorian and neo-Victorian fiction. The neo-Victorian genre, and these narratives specifically, create an interesting case for adaptation and transmedia given that their storyworlds are so connected and intertwined with the fiction they engage with. The television series *Penny Dreadful* brings together characters from well-known gothic and sensation novels of the nineteenth century. At the same time, this series and the subsequent graphic novels evoke and adapt the storyworlds of the Penny Dreadfuls or Penny Bloods, a Victorian fiction genre, so-named for the cheapness of their periodical printing production. This example satisfies the more rigid definitions for transmedia as creating one coherent narrative experience across media, but it also helps show that even Tales from the Penny Bloods and the storyworlds generated in these podcast episodes can benefit from a dialogue between transmedia and adaptation studies, as it does similar things in reworking and reimagining Victorian fiction. At stake in this paper is the need for a more productive dialogue between transmedia and adaptation. Scholars tend to limit adaptation in defining transmedia as something more than or beyond adaptation. While these distinctions are valuable, adaptation is both a “product and a process,” and these processes are quite closely intertwined.

SESSION 2H – EXPERIENCING GAMEPLAY

Joey Isaac Jenkins

Newcastle University

‘To assume a wild shape’: The Queering Presence of the Beast in *Dungeons & Dragons* Roleplay and Media

The ongoing cultural renaissance of *Dungeons & Dragons* has drawn renewed attention to its history as a space in which player-curated queer narratives are able to emerge and develop. While its early iterations (1976-1999) contribute to a decades-long legacy of homo- and transphobia (Berge; Stenros and Sihvonen; Stokes), the queer possibilities of tabletop roleplaying games (TTRPGs) and their related media have since been recognised. The shared narrative fantasies of *Dungeons & Dragons* are grounded in the game’s role-based system of ‘Class’, which allows players to adopt and inhabit a character based on a choice of pre-established archetypes. Among these, the Druid class has long been defined by its keystone feature – Wild Shape – which allows the player character (PC) to assume an increasingly varied number of animal forms. As *Dungeons & Dragons* has departed from the homophobic logics which underpin its early editions, Wild Shape has become an increasingly and often dramatically visible inflection point for discourses around queerness and queer presence in the TTRPG space. At the same time, I suggest, Wild Shape also has a wildly queering effect on the narrative happening that occurs during play at the tabletop. This paper contends with what it means to ‘assume a Wild Shape’ in the narrative context of tabletop roleplaying, and confronts the celebratory and paranoiac cultural responses to Wild Shape both as an aspect of play and in relation recent transmedial adaptations of *Dungeons & Dragons*. It exposes the extent to which Wild Shape represents a queerness which troubles the ‘rules as written’ (RAW), not only in a ludic, mechanical sense but in broader sub-cultural and cultural contexts.

Anna Ishchenko

Linnaeus University

Poetic Gameplay and Narrative Experience in *Kentucky Route Zero*

The concept of poetic gameplay accounts for video games in which the rejection of the ludic is a creative choice made to evoke reflections on the affordances of the medium (Mitchell). In this paper, I take this argument further to look at the ways the poetic gameplay does not only foreground the medium but affects the narrative and experience of it, using *Kentucky Route Zero*, an adventure video game about

the journey across American otherworld, as a case study. I look to Marco Caracciolo' and adopt concepts such as experientiality, narrative interests, and narration: I examine how *KRZ*'s poetic gameplay brings about the evocation of certain cognitive effects and interpretative strategies. *KRZ* does not present choices to the player that would have any bearing on the progression of the game. Instead, these choices matter to the player and player only. *KRZ* destabilises the sense of goal-oriented progression, central for adventure video games, by constantly entangling temporalities and rejecting the premises of the plot. Characters, although controllable, are not avatars, embodied stand-ins for the player, but entities with their own agency whose motivations remain ambiguous. The absence of the main character prevents the emergence of the dominant perspective. *KRZ* thus rejects hierarchical structures common for more conventional forms of storytelling.

Katja Warstat-Willms

RWTH Aachen University

Meta Much? Embodied Perspectives on Metafictional Devices in Contemporary Commercial Video Games

I argue that contemporary video games use metafictional not only to foster consumers' engagement with the narrative, but that they also allow gamers to inhabit a self-reflective state of mind regarding their experiences. The current trend in speculative fiction to use metafictional devices in the fashion of postmodern narratives to pierce the aesthetic illusion and foster a mode of self-reflection of the fictional status while also promoting reader engagement in the form of immersive reading experiences (Caracciolo and Ulstein), can also be observed in commercial video games. In contrast to novels that align with this trend, for example by Jeff VanderMeer, commercial games are designed to address larger, if not even global, audiences, hence their influence is indisputable and it is imperative to discuss them not only in regard to their entertaining properties, but also regarding their potential for eliciting critical readings. I will illuminate how the video game *The Last of Us Part 2* makes use of implicit interactional metalepsis as a central device of video games to support an immersive gameplay while at the same time fostering an awareness of gamers' interrelatedness with the kinetic and narrative aspects of the game. Metafiction and its anti-mimetic effects are understood to be key concepts of video games (Ensslin and Bell) and gamers appear to overall accept explicit metareferences when playing. Interactional metalepsis, which is used to transgress 'the boundaries between a fictional world and the real world' (Kukkonen and Klimek), seems changed in narrative-focused adventure games like *The Last of Us Part 2*, switching from a more explicit style that culminates in metafictional video games such as *The Stanley Parable* to a more unconventional and implicit use that stresses the interrelation of game-worlds and gamers' lived realities.

SESSION 21 – GENDERED POLITICS AND SOCIAL MEDIA STORYTELLING

Maxine Ali

King's College London

Digital Wellness Culture and Conspiratorial Storytelling

Storytelling constitutes a main communicative genre through which conspiracy theories are spread (Bangerter *et al.*). It is perhaps unsurprising then that, as 'the predominant narrative environment for contemporary storytellers' (Mäkelä and Meretoja), social media provides fertile ground for the transmission, circulation and amplification of conspiratorial narratives. In this paper, I examine instances of conspiratorial storytelling within digital wellness cultures on Instagram. Extending from Muirhead and Rosenblum's notion of "new conspiracism" – conspiracy without the theory – I utilise a discourse-analytic approach to illustrate the ways in which digital wellness entrepreneurs tap into a conspiratorial register (Agha) within everyday online storytelling practices, facilitating an authentic self-

presentation through positioning the self as a ‘free-thinking’ and ‘truth-speaking’ autonomous individualist. Data for this work comprises 4954 Instagram posts and stories collated from the accounts of ten female digital wellness entrepreneurs, shared between September 2021 and June 2023, as well as observational field notes and ethnographic interviews with five wellness entrepreneurs conducted as part of an ongoing doctoral research project exploring their discursive construction and social negotiation of “authenticity”. Drawing on feminist and multimodal critical discourse analytic perspectives, the paper highlights the gendered dimensions of conspiratorial storytelling in digital wellness spheres, tracing the dispersion and naturalisation of “post-truth” repertoires through a distinctly feminised rhetoric of spiritual connection and embodied intuition.

Shelley Lawson

Curtin University Dubai

The Story Types of the #MeToo Movement and Their Relation to Credibility

Victims of sexual misconduct often struggle with not being believed whether they tell their story to law enforcement, a close confidante or interactants on social media. Even so, credibility research tends to focus on news, corporate, political or advertising credibility, and rarely on personal misconduct stories told in online contexts, while the narrative literature investigates related issues like instrumental storytelling, authenticity or fictionality, without focusing solely on credibility. Research into the #MeToo movement, by contrast, has covered a range of credibility-related topics such as changing legal views of misconduct stories, reduced discrediting, credibility discounting, increased belief in rape myths, and delegitimation of the movement, but there is still little to suggest which kinds of stories might be the most credible. This study addresses this gap by offering a diachronic overview of misconduct story types (N = 703) occurring on Twitter during the first week and subsequent year of the #MeToo Movement (15th October 2017 – 25th October 2018) with the aim of showing how these might affect credibility judgments. Drawing on Georgakopoulou’s small story framework, results show two broad categories of story: Week 1 was dominated by retrospective accounts of misconduct by or about private individuals, in the form of brief story references or fuller prototypical narrations sometimes told to prove a point, whereas the subsequent year saw far more complexly constructed breaking news stories and projections concerning public figures. Although credibility judgments were infrequent throughout, they were significantly more likely to follow breaking news stories and less likely to follow untold stories, while other story types showed no significant differences. Therefore, in the politically-motivated context of #MeToo, the untold story seems the most credible of all: it resists narration or over-manipulation, and remains truer to raw experience.

Ruth Page

University of Birmingham

A Narrative Typology for Memetic Retellings: The Trending Sounds of TikTok

This paper sets out a narrative framework for analysing the evolving memetic cultures of TikTok, building on the model of shared stories (Page). The analysis shows how video memes employ templatable micro-plots of personal transformation within the tale-world, how the tellership within the comment threads and response videos create distinctive affective publics (Papacharissi, 2016) and are positioned within broader gendered storylines and viral exemplum (Mäkelä). I use this to develop a typology of memetic retellings based on rescripting (Georgakopoulou and Giaxoglou) and refooting (Goffman). This comprises: (1) “interlaced rescripting”, which connects complementary micro-plots within a shared affective trajectory and social storyline; (2) “aggregated rescripting”, which draws together disparate micro-plots with ambiguous affective trajectories that have multiple, non-aligned stances towards a larger social storyline; (3) “reversed rescripting”, in which micro-plots form counter trends that reverse the affective trajectory of the originating meme collection and critique dominant

storylines; (4) “grafted rescripting”, in which micro-plots are implanted into new contexts which are refooted to change the authority relations between tellers. The paper analyses 300 videos from four trending sounds sampled in 2022-23 (including contemporary music, mash ups and television clips), using this to explore the ongoing gendered politics in TikTok, especially in relation to appearance pressure.

SESSION 3A – HEALTH AND NARRATIVE

Shan Ruan

Ohio State University

Narrative and Modern Productivity: De-Compartmentalisation as Alternative Self-Care for Dementia Patients and Caregivers

Javier Pinto-Garay, Germán Scalzo and Carlos Rodríguez Lluesma review Alisdair MacIntyre’s notion of modern productivity’s obsession in “compartmentalization” and proposes two alternatives using narrative as a means of de-compartmentalization, namely “craftsmanship” and “collegiality”. The concepts correspond with rhetorical narrative theory’s notion of the shaping of resource/raw materials by author for rhetorical purposes as well as narrative medicine’s endorsement of “intersubjectivity” in care-exchanging situations. Dementia patients and caregivers inevitably encounter challenges of productivity in everyday life as well as in professional settings. How can rhetorical narrative theory and narrative medicine help with the application of craftsmanship and collegiality to creatively counteract the narrative of compartmentalization to boost productivity alternatively for dementia patients and their caregivers against the master narrative of modern productivity idolising “compartmentalization”? This paper addresses how narrative can be of help when time-blocking, one-thing-at-a-time and fixed-commitment calendar do not work as well for dementia patients and their caregivers as for others.

Anneli Silvén Hagström

Stockholm University

Ylva Spånberger Weitz

Södertörn University

Young People’s Narrated Experiences of Growing Up with Parents’ Addiction Problems

Children who grow up in an environment of substance abuse are at risk of developing mental ill health and own substance abuse – and even of dying at a young age. The current study aims to go behind these risks and examine what young people who grow up with addictive parents tell about their childhood experiences. Drawing on a narrative theoretical framework, narration is understood as a meaning-making and self-forming process, which is socio-culturally sensitive and have real inter-relational consequences. From a narrative approach it is explored how children of addictive parents through youth and early adulthood make sense of their parents’ addiction, how their self-image has been shaped in light of their childhood experiences, and how their relationship with the addictive parent is negotiated. Of particular interest is to identify possible turning points in these narrative processes and to explore their significance. Narrative analyses will be conducted on a longitudinal interview material consisting of interviews with 19 young people (12 women and 7 men) who grew up with at least one parent suffering from alcohol addiction. The participants attended a support group for children of parents with alcohol addiction in the early 1990s and were subsequently interviewed on 2–3 occasions between their teenage years and adulthood.

Gunther Martens

Ghent University

Liselotte Van der Gucht

Ghent University

Mind the Gap? Neurodiversity in Memoirs and Literary Fiction

Literary life writings or memoirs have been gaining popularity, ultimately leading to a ‘memoir boom’ (Couser). A subgenre of the memoir is the “some body memoir” (or disability memoir), in which life with a particular, often atypical body, is described. Although memoirs and novels are formally different genres, they share many narrative techniques. We propose that fictional texts, when read by means of the conceptual apparatus of neurophenomenology, may provide insights into experiences of neurodiversity in ways that rival and supplement thematic memoirs inspired by autobiographical experiences. Especially experimental narrative forms allow the reader to access experiences that may otherwise remain too distant, too unfamiliar. In doing so, fictional texts can also be shown to remedy the well-known shortcomings of the subgenre of the “mom-moir”. This type of memoir focuses on the perspective of the caregiver and tends to reproduce neurotypical norms, as part of the sentimental ‘saviour complex plot’ (Carlson). Whereas some texts explicitly address topics like disability and neurodiversity, we argue that implicit narrative negotiations of neurodiversity (e.g. Nabokov’s *The Luzhin Defence* or Kafka’s *Die Verwandlung*), can contribute to our understanding of certain conditions in ways akin to self-empowering neurodiversity memoirs like Hannah Gadsby’s *Ten Steps to Nanette*. But with reading between the lines comes the risk of ‘symptomatic reading’ (Yergeau). While linking narrative texts with the framework of Medical Humanities still tends to elicit objections of anachronism, we wish to take up recent suggestions (Hogan; Zunshine) that it is actually ecologically valid to discuss neurodiversity also in epistemologically independent texts (i.e. texts removed in space and/or time) because they contain processes that say something about the human condition, ‘usually in a heightened or more salient form than we would encounter in everyday life’ (Hogan). This methodological question links up with broader debates on epistemic injustice in representation and the validity of single case studies within psychological research. Reading not only older mom-moirs and newer memoirs, but also literary narratives through a neurodiversity lens adds to our current understanding of those texts, and shifts our perspectives on cognitive differences. As such, narrative representation may ultimately facilitate a first-hand (albeit simulated) experience of neurodiversity’s rich texture and impact.

SESSION 3B – DECOLONIAL BODY NARRATIVES

Rutuja Deshmukh

Michigan State University

Translating Region, Imagining Nation: Negotiating Modernity in V Shantaram’s *Bilinguals*

Shantaram Rajaram Vankudre (known as V Shantaram) is a director of Prabhat films, founded by him in 1929 in Kolhapur along with V G Damle and S Fatehlal. Fondly known as Annasaheb in Kolhapur, his career is emblematic of notions of nationhood, identity and spectatorial quality of projection of Marathi-ness within discursive practices of Marathi Film Industry. But more importantly his career is also symptomatic of coming of sound in India. His first talkie *Ayodhecha Raja* is made just after the first talkie *Alam Aara* in India, thus making him a pioneer of sound film in Marathi cinema. He started making bilinguals almost immediately after this: his first bilingual film (in Marathi and Hindi) was *Amrit Manthan*. In this paper I will look at the three bilinguals of Shantaram, that are also social melodrama. As a material product, cinema reveals the location and nature of its sound track(s), the technology used to produce them, the apparatus necessary for reproduction, and the physical relationship between

loudspeakers, spectators, and their physical surroundings. Natâsa Durovičová discusses the Hollywood multilinguals that involved reshooting the entire “original” film with actors fluent in the relevant language, similar to Shantaram’s bilinguals. The multilinguals would still remain as fascinating traces of the complexity and turbulence brought about by the transition to sound, bearing testimony to the full range of sound track options. This highlights American cinema’s relationship to the non-“American”-speaking world as other arrangements between language, economy and power. In examining the Marathi and Hindi versions of these films, I explore the national and regional aesthetics and registers of language in order to understand the ecologies and sexual economies within the two entities. Modernity in different parts of the world and especially in ex-colonial societies, has reinforced the need to study social and cultural practices especially those of middle-class along with political, social and structural changes. In a comparative study of Shantaram’s three bilingual social melodramas, I trace these social and cultural practices and their manifestations in the regional and the nation. I bring forth the nuances between the nation (state) and the regional nationhood in Maharashtra to track the idea of nationhood and identity and the project of modernity. I argue that Shantaram’s bilinguals are not just linguistic translation but a certain kind of cultural translation that reflects the particular region of the ‘origin’ of the film vis-à-vis the imagination of the nation.

Alex Kinnaman

Michigan State University

Great Lakes Native Law, Literature, and Narratology Across the US / Canada Border

Today, the Great Lakes mark a shared point of geopolitical concern between the US and Canada, as well as the region around which the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe, Chippewa, Odawa, Potawatomi, Algonquin, Saukteaux, Nipissing, Mississauga, etc.), and Haudenosaunee (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca, and Tuscarora), linguistic and cultural grouping of First Nations are organised. The Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Peoples are at once connected territorially, linguistically, and culturally by the Great Lakes, and separated by the US / Canada border. In this paper I increase understanding of the legal history of Canadian settler-colonialism and its influence upon Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee literature, from the other side of the Great Lakes. While a consciousness of the US / Canada border forms the impetus for this project, ultimately, in this paper I work towards the goal of thinking beyond the border. By developing an understanding of the function of formative Canadian Indigenous law, and its manifestation in the literature of Canadian Aboriginals across the border, I ask: how can we read the history and presence of Canadian settler-colonialism through the voices of Native writers (in distinction from settler voices)? Also, how are such manifestations and responses themselves inflected by an Anishinaabe / Haudenosaunee narratology which is rooted in the oral tradition and enmeshed in land-based indigenous knowledges of the Great Lakes region’s ecology? Through a focus on the Great Lakes, I think about regional forms of Native People’s cultural exchange and circulation beyond the border, as well as the particular material conditions of Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee cultural production under the Canadian settler-state in distinction to the US settler-state.

Nicole McCleese

Michigan State University

Lac du Flambeau Elders’ Non-Fiction Narratives

After Project Narrative in 2023, I designed an *Intro to Literature* course on grief narratives using community engaged pedagogy for teaching literary studies. Students learned close reading for grief narratives in flash fiction and narrative theory from a socio-linguistic scholar, William Labov on oral grief narratives after unexpected loss of a loved one and then applied them to course readings of proleptic mourning in Natalie Diaz’s poetry, Toni Morrison’s short story, published with a new

introduction by Zadie Smith, Recitatif 2022, and by comparing grief in two novels, Louise Erdrich's *Future Home of the Living God* and Tommy Orange's *There There*. Orange's novel features a fictional literary representation of a mass shooting and was planned before the traumatic campus violence in Feb of 2023. Research on grief narrative became a shared story of campus mourning. In this paper, I consider a new body of Lac du Flambeau elder narratives. My analysis of narratives of uncontrollable grief in a chapter about Native American Novels: I research non-fiction narratives of reservation life for the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Ojibweg Indians in the Great Lakes Region.

SESSION 3C – MAXIMALISM AND MULTIPLICATION

Benjamin Bergholtz

Louisiana Tech University

Swallowing a World: Maximalism, Globalisation, and Narrative Theory

This two-part presentation examines intersections of narrative theory, global literature, and the increasingly global genre of fiction known as the “maximalist novel.” I argue that maximalism is an aesthetic response to globalization and a global phenomenon in its own right: produced all over the world, maximalist novels represent, formally reproduce, and ultimately invite reflection upon the effects of globalization. Considering how novelists such as Zadie Smith, Marlon James, and Namwali Serpell simultaneously map and formally mimic globalization's most intransigent problems (e.g. the rebirth of fundamentalism, the commodification of violence, information overload), I reimagine the political significance of a genre that is often described as unnecessarily erudite and exclusively American. The second half of my talk considers questions raised in the first with more attention to narrative theory and structure. If the maximalist novel is an aesthetic response to globalisation, as I argue, then what sorts of narrative tools do maximalist novelists create to illustrate and embody globalisation's effects? What organising principles, rhythmic alternations (Hoffman), and braided structures (Bancroft) do they employ to make the complexity of globalisation legible to readers? How do they use length, pacing, and plotting to illustrate globalization's lengthy temporal development and its sweeping, spatial scope? To ground these questions in a specific example, I conclude with a discussion of the multigenerational, multi-familial plot of Serpell's *The Old Drift*, building on recent work on character (Phelan). Organised around three families brutalised by globalisation's gendered and geographical inequities, *The Old Drift's* repetitive, even redundant plot underscores the degree to which globalization has circumscribed Zambian women's parameters of possibility for nearly 200 years.

Yonina Hoffman

United States Merchant Marine Academy

Narrative Space and the Ending of William Gaddis's *The Recognitions*

Building on recent work in diachronic narratology (Hühn, Pier and Schmid) and on narrative space and geographic narratology (Prince), this paper responds to a question Jan Alber posed me last year: what is the history of maximalism or encyclopedism? Taking up Bergholtz's linkage of globalization and maximalism, in this talk I read William Gaddis's *The Recognitions* as encyclopedic through its construction of global space. How does the encyclopedic novel's relation to the “world/globe” change over time and how does this impact its form? My goals are to examine the development of global commitments within the “encyclopedic novel” genre, and ask what this global reach does to narrative structure and meaning. My overall claim is that *The Recognitions* advances the encyclopedic novel form beyond Joyce's *Ulysses* by expanding its scope of attention to the globe, and that this engagement with the globe is important to interpreting the ethics, values, and concepts of Gaddis' novel. The global content is connected to an encyclopedic impulse, but also a late modernist one: Gaddis's travellers give us multiple ideas about transformation, including an ambivalence about the value of modernist exile.

Gaddis's double ending of *The Recognitions* demonstrates that the self-exiled artist may transform himself, but that such self-transformation also risks self-destruction. In creating a global maximalism, then, and positioning multiple failed artist characters within it, Gaddis responds to and ironizes modernist wandering, treating character movement ambivalently: traveling characters are more likely to be destroyed by multiplying global spaces (violent, crumbling) than to achieve *bildung* in them.

Mattie Jacobs

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Can We Read a Robot Writer's Mind? Collaborative Authorship, the WGA strikes, and AI in the Writers' Room

Debates during recent WGA strikes have centered around AI in the writers' room, foregrounding the complexity of authorial credit in film and television. Two problems are prominent in the debates over AI and collaborative authorship: (1) determining authorial credit, both legal and creative, for group work; and (2) audience's determining of authorial intention through the cognitive work of mind-reading. Strike coverage has focused on production companies' desire to incorporate AI into the media-making process, against writer resistance to another incursion into their creative and collaborative space. AI troublingly multiplies authorship and disrupts audience mind-reading with its nonhuman agency. This paper addresses the AI debate discourse in terms of public narrative and cognitive narratology, following Dawson and Mäkelä on public instances of narrative discourses. The AI debate discourse is an instance of narrative theorising done in public: how to incorporate new and future AI tools into writers' rooms, into scriptwriting, even into proposals and pitches, and how and what to give credit for. It is also a new negotiation of collaborative authorship, beyond the unified implied author of collaborative media – radio (Hilmes), film auteur (Sarris), prestige television “showrunner” (Mittel). Audiences desire a single vision of an author to make sense of cohesive artistic purpose behind a work of art, but computational media disrupt narrative fundamentals (Rikka-Roine). As Lisa Zunshine has outlined, the mind of the author is one part of the mind-reading balancing act done while engaging with a text. I suggest the public debate about AI art illuminates an audience's desire for cognitively complex media and for “mind-reading,” which helps build a model of authorial intentionality. AI, as another author in the writers' room, disrupts the collaborative “myth” of the single author and also the ability of the viewer to make legible authorial intentionality.

SESSION 3D – SUBJECTIVITY AND VOICE

Autumn Doucette

University of Victoria

Against the River's Current: Interconscious Narratives in Nicole Krauss' *Great House*

Narrative theorists have previously identified many forms of narrative strategy and structure, including—among many more—the parallel narrative (O'Neill), the embedded narrative (Nelles), and the braided narrative (Bancroft). While this theoretical framework is undoubtedly useful, none of these narrative schemas explicitly acknowledge the ways in which the unconscious mind constructs and projects narratives of its own. This paper argues that these unconscious narrative interjections—often manifesting as dreamscapes or other psychological imaginings—can (and often do) stand on their own as a subset of the braided narrative. I choose to call this the interconscious narrative—a documentary strategy that splits a single character's narrative arc into two parallel lines: the conscious line and the unconscious line. Drawing upon Nicole Krauss's *Great House*, Bancroft's “The Braided Narrative,” and Jungian psychoanalysis, this study posits the interconscious narrative as yet another strategy through which multinarratives can be written, read, and understood. In other words, recognition of the interconscious narrative is recognition of the smaller narratives—the dreams, the behaviours fuelled

by latent trauma, the more general stories of the mind—that lie dormant throughout Krauss’s already interwoven chapters. Identifying and understanding this undercurrent allows readers to form a better understanding of not only the possibilities through which multinarratives can assemble and intertwine, but also how the unconscious mind can inform, influence, and lie parallel to a character’s conscious life.

Gopika Gurudas

University of Queensland IIT Delhi Academy of Research

Narrative Resistance and Social Justice in Indigenous Australian Literature

Exploring the power of literary narratives as a means of resistance, this paper delves into the repercussions of settler-colonial violence on Indigenous Australian society, highlighting how Indigenous authors use such narratives to resist the lasting impacts of such violence in contemporary Australian society. An analysis of Alexis Wright’s *The Swan Book* and Melissa Lucashenko’s *Mullumbimby*, is conducted within the context of Post-Mabo fiction, a genre emerging after the Mabo and Others v/s Queensland (1992) case that invalidated the terra nullius doctrine, acknowledging Indigenous people as Australia’s original legal occupants. *The Swan Book* presents a futuristic narrative addressing indigenous rights amidst a world transformed by climate change, while *Mullumbimby* follows the story of Jo Breen, a Goorie woman. Both novels delve into the ongoing impact of settler colonialism in Australia, scrutinising Australian interventionist policies, such as the Native Title Act, which are often disguised by a paternalistic narrative of care but ultimately lack a genuine intent to reconcile with the indigenous peoples. Against the continuing colonisation of the Indigenous peoples in Australia, I understand these novels to be instances of narrative resistance. In *The Swan Book*, I comprehend this narrative resistance to function through the tropes of “silence” and “untranslatability”. The trope of silence is employed in the novel at the level of narration and plot as the author deliberately withholds explanations of key plot events and translations of the Waanyi words in the novel. In stark contrast, narrative resistance in *Mullumbimby* is foregrounded through translations of the Goorie words, reflecting the author’s desire to be forthcoming while levelling a critique of the Mabo decision.

Haidamteu Zeme

Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi

Siting Narratives: Language, Writing-Voice and the Politics of Orality

The paper examines language, particularly its everyday instantiations, and representations within the context of indigeneity in the North-eastern regions of India. It considers how communities centred around ‘non-textual’ systems of knowledge engage in the processes of archiving, narrativising, and remembering histories. Theorisations of language to some extent, have been influenced by standards and assumptions of Indo-European languages ranging from Western metaphysical pre-conditions of single origins, monotheism, identity structures, dichotomy between speech and writing, to a pan-Indian glorification of Sanskrit language as superior in comparison to the bhashas or “regional languages” (Devy; Choudhuri). Such theoretical approaches prevent us from examining and engaging with communities highly reliant on the aural and sonorous dimensions of languages. Although in recent years, anglophone literature has become representational of voices “emerging” from the Northeast, their circulation in recent decades has relied primarily on print distribution and mastery of a global language. In such a setting, my paper seeks alternatives to narrativising a writing-voice that encapsulates paradoxes evident in “minor literatures” (e.g. Kafka’s possibility and impossibility of writing in German as stated by Deleuze and Guattari). It explores the possibility of local peoples, small place (Kincaid), and regional experiences, memoirs, memories, and politics -- being the launching pad for generating newer perspectives. Specific instances from the regions that deterritorialise hegemonic fixities are Rani Gaidinliu’s cryptic lines, Yahooi’s new hieroglyphic script, and Haisoyi Ndang’s “Naga

alphanumeric" invention, etc. They evidence a language experimenting through the simple, political act of narrating from within. The placement of orature as a "site" holding potential for democratising parochial structures of thoughts open up conversations about the birth of writing, 'unconscious translating' (Devy), and archiving.

SESSION 3E – LIFEWRITING, AUTOFICTION AND AUTO THEORY

Max Casey

Free University Amsterdam

'It is hard to convey': Flat Affect in Illness Autotheory and the Subversion of Inscrutability

This paper discusses the importance of flat affect as a writing style to contemporary illness autotheory. Previous generations of medical scholars and activists have argued that encouraging patients to narrate their experience within a coherent, linear framework is both individually beneficial and also a key pathway to social justice, as it allows ill subjects to achieve recognition in the public sphere (Charon). Underpinning such arguments however is a privileging of certain narrative modes (linear, recovery centered) and of certain affective modes (melodrama, sentimentality) which render narratives of structural precarity into ones of individual flourishing. The recovery movement historically has privileged narratives that elide the structural effects of medical capitalism so that, as Lauren Berlant described it, 'the ethical imperative toward social transformation is replaced by a passive and vaguely civic-minded ideal of compassion'. Since Anne Boyer's *The Undying* however, autotheory has become a popular approach within illness writing that attempts to undermine the centrality within that genre of the 'self-made hero' (Fernandez) constructed through 'neo-liberal self-management' (Boyer). In this paper, I analyse the use of flat affect in Esmé Weijung Wang's autotheory memoir, *The Collected Schizophrenias*, to show how this style subverts the narrative and social expectations of the illness memoir and the "misery memoir", where archetypally 'suffering produces meaning' (Kunkel). This paper also relates flat affect to Vivian Huang's articulation of "Oriental Inscrutability", where the West's inability to recognize Asian subjects' pain leads to the refusal of affect becoming a subversive aesthetic tool for those populations. My paper demonstrates how flat affect can become a vital formal strategy for undermining the relationship of melodramatic narrative modes and affective truth in illness memoir, and show the impact this style has for the genre's claims towards social justice and recognition.

Chi-Chieh Huang

Örebro University

Life-Writing in Contemporary Digital Games

In current times of digital fragmentation, there is a pressing need to understand how lives are lived in virtual/physical hybridity. One site of investigation that is a fruitful starting point for acquiring this understanding is immersion and, specifically, the symbiotic relationship between players and player characters in contemporary digital games. In this paper, I showcase an experiential narrative model and consider how the model seeks to describe people's generation of narratives about their experiences in game environments by considering relevant frameworks in narratology and media studies tackling subjectivity and experientiality in digital games. I argue that there is a need to combine studies on subjective representations of scripted characters, or how the perspectives of these characters are constructed, with studies on player subjectivity to holistically account for what one may call perspectives in contemporary digital games. I also explore how these experiential narratives can be conceptualised as people's life narratives in game environments. I argue that grappling with how we inscribe our digital lives is just as important as past examinations of how we inscribe our lives in the digital, e.g. how digital blog entries are used for self-representation. This paper initiates discussions

towards acquiring a better understanding concerning how our lives are changing in a time when digital technology becomes growingly integral to our being.

Massimiliano Manni

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

In-Betweenness and Anglophone Autofiction

The more autofiction is talked about, the more its identity and status are taken as a given. In English-language criticism especially, which has now jumped on the autofictional bandwagon, the need to define homegrown autofiction is conspicuously eluded, with scholars preferring to gesture towards an impenetrable undergrowth of imported theories whose relevance often remains uninterrogated. How can scholars of English-language literature conquer the consequent habit of merely engaging with autofiction as a 'liminal position' (Worthington), thus approaching it only in negative or hybrid terms? How does the growing corpus of autofiction in English serve to enhance the notion and foster its development, as well as opportunistically benefit from its heritage? Building on a wide range of autofictional works by Anglo-American authors, I propose a model that accounts for the generic, narratological and aesthetic ambiguity of a form that, I argue, is now redrawing literary borders. Using the model, I show that autofiction occurs as a spectrum, ranging from works that mostly problematise genre to works that mostly problematise ontology. Cutting across these two polarities, moreover, is a tendency towards greater or lesser self-consciousness, the outcome of a move away from postmodernism that, while not dismissing its metafictional awareness of literary manipulation, repurposes it to reconstructive, sincerity-oriented ends. Examples by Jeannette Winterson, Bret Easton Ellis, Sheila Heti and Paul Auster will illustrate autofiction's positioning between the extremes, respectively, of autobiography proper and the autobiographical novel, and of postmodernist metafiction and the private journal. Ultimately, staking out a place for autofiction in the literary system helps to guide readers past the impasse of reversible generic attribution, but it also lays the groundwork for more nuanced debates on the specificity of each individual work within the spectrum.

SESSION 3F – NARRATIVE IDENTITY

Nadia Georgiou

Sheffield Hallam University

Translating the Mothership: Jane Austen and Transmedia Worldbuilding

The twenty-first century has witnessed a proliferation of fiction which has expanded, modified and/or transposed Jane Austen's storyworlds and characters onto other media, creating new and interrelated content that adds depth and layers to her novels. While some issues around transmedia worldbuilding using the Austen storyworld have been discussed (Brennan; Russo; Walton) the question of how these alterations and transpositions impact translation remains underexplored. Translation is understood here both as a hermeneutical tool, designating the interpretation of a narrative, but also as the process of decoding a text in language A and reencoding it in language B. Taking *Pride and Prejudice* as a case in point, this paper discusses some of the varied media texts that have been produced, including the novels *Longbourn*, *The Other Bennett Sister* and *Unequal Affections*, the film *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2016), the TV miniseries *Death comes to Pemberley* and the musical play *Pride and Prejudice* (*sort of)*. Through the functions of expansion, modification, transposition, and quotation (Ryan), transmedia worldbuilding takes place, in which the experiences of Austen's secondary characters are explored, the structure of the story is reinvented or relocated to a different space or time, while the transmedially related texts borrow elements from each other. At the same time, these playful alterations to the initial text act as critical commentary that tackles issues of social class and gender inequality among others urging us to reexamine Austen's nineteenth-century narrative in the light of

twenty-first-century sensibilities. The paper traces the ethical inputs introduced by transmedia worldbuilding on Austen's initial story and reflects on potential ways to include such experimentation and criticality into texts appearing in translation.

Niclas Johansson

Mälardalen University

Culture and Narrative Identity: The Challenge and Opportunity of Migration Literature

Prominent theories of narrative identity, such as those of Jerome Bruner, Paul John Eakin and Jens Brockmeier, generally emphasize the importance of culture for the construction of individual narrative identity. Culture is seen as providing the patterns for life narratives and thereby as offering a grammar or typology for narrative identities. The view of culture implied in such theories often tacitly assume that cultures are coherent, homogeneous and interculturally delimited wholes. Such a view, however, is squarely at odds with much recent theory of culture – both by post-colonial theorists of hybridity such as Homi K. Bhabha and Stuart Hall and globalist theorists of transculturality such as Wolfgang Welsch – which argues that cultures are heterogeneous and fluid constructions with permeable borders and that the plurality of cultures must be thought of in terms of cultural difference rather than cultural diversity. The emergence of a growing field of migration literature, and particularly personal narratives of migration – whether fictional or autobiographical – highlights this tension between narrative identity and postcolonial cultural theory, as they display the construction of narrative identity across shifting cultural backgrounds. In this paper, I use Swedish-Eritrean writer Sami Said's autobiographically-informed novel *Väldigt sällan fin* to show how migration literature that thematises cross-cultural relations both exposes conceptual discrepancies between the dominant modes of theorising culture and narrative identity respectively, and provides fresh perspectives on how they can be thought together. Said's novel emphasises the importance of culture in providing scaffolding for narrative identity, but also shows that cultural patterns for narrative identity do not emerge from a pre-existing and impersonal cultural framework: they are the ever-shifting results of the individual's efforts to interpret his situation according to inherited models and against the backdrop of cultural difference.

Chris Little

Newcastle University

Far-Right Transmedial Worlds: Tommy Robinson and the Fall/Rise Archetype

The far right is increasingly using the affordances of participatory media to rebrand themselves as citizen journalists and courageous truth tellers. Existing research has examined their personal branding (Lewis; Leidig), alternative media (Holt; Baele *et al.*) and narratives of imperilment (Marcks and Pawelz). This paper conceptualises this techno-discursive landscapes as a 'transmedial narrative world' (Tosca and Klastrup) and offers a critical examination of its affective storytelling practices. Drawing on the Discourse-Mythological Approach (Kelsey), it analyses representations of 'Tommy Robinson' (a.k.a. Stephen Yaxley-Lennon) as a populist, anti-establishment "working-class hero". In a series of interconnected case studies, analysis shows how the persona of Robinson functions as a narrative vehicle for far-right ideology through mediated stories about resistance and oppression. The paper shows how far-right alternative media represents Robinson as a selfless 'hero' who endures persecution in his quest to reveal the 'truth', and how these stories stir the emotions of audiences that are angered and inspired by the causes that he claims to represent. The paper examines the 'Fall and Rise' archetype in these narratives – a plot structure that is central to hero narratives and the political mythologies of populist, far-right and fascist ideologies. It shows how the embodied immediacy of Robinson's narratives are linked to broader far-right narratives of decline and loss (e.g. fall of the West, white populations, free speech, 'our way of life' etc.) and the need to resist and fight back. It introduces the idea of "fractal resonance" to describe the recursive shape, texture and direction of Fall and Rise

narratives in far-right transmedial worlds. By critically analysing the intertextual and interdiscursive landscape of these transmedia stories, the case studies show how these narratives operate within and beyond far-right media.

SESSION 3G – VOICING THE NON-HUMAN

Michal Roth

Tel Aviv University

Slaves and Animals as Non-Subjects in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

I propose a reading of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* that integrates Animal Studies and Political\Feminist narratology theories. Throughout the novel the enslavement of the slaves is intricately intertwined with the subjugation of animals within the animal industry. This connection becomes evident through various animal motifs, implicit character references, descriptions of their history, relationships with each other, and the practices employed by the masters in their treatment of the enslaved individuals. In several ways, the novel presents the contrast between the subjectivity of human beings and that of animals in society, with the latter often appearing to have more freedom. It becomes apparent that this thematic choice is intended to expose and emphasize the degradation of the lives of slaves during this period. The utilisation of the inferior status of animals serves to enhance the impact of the narrative, bringing the reader to a point where the horrors of enslavement are undeniable. I suggest a reading that offers a different interpretation, one that may be subtly embedded between the lines. This perspective encourages a deeper understanding not only of the horrors wrought by slavery but also of its parallel—the atrocities committed against animals. Within this interpretation of the novel, readers are prompted to empathise with the lives of animals amid this grim comparison. This is not a competition for recognition but a call for inclusion. The perspective I present in this paper allows a departure from the comparative narrative that frequently takes for granted the suffering of animals as an obvious fact. Instead, it encourages recognition of their real and palpable pain, which occurs continuously worldwide. The novel succeeds in dismantling the rigid categories of man-beast and subject-object. It is an alternative narrative to the anthropocentric super-story, with rhizomatic sub-stories in which nonhuman voices are also given a chance to be heard.

Liam Sewell

Swansea University

Complicated Objects: It-Narrators that Surpass Simple "Objecthood"

Object narratives found popularity in the eighteenth century through their ability to give a voice to the voiceless and the exploited. Objects and the objectified share a kinship, but the notion of an object narrator becomes complicated when it-narrators are not quite as simple as the inanimate artefacts that house them. Drawing on Bill Brown's Thing Theory, specifically his differentiation of objects and things, I explore three main examples of object narrators as that exceed straightforward 'objecthood'. In the first instance, I examine Chris Flynn's *Mammoth*, in which a 13,000-year-old mammoth skeleton tells the story of how it came to find itself in New York in 2007. Secondly, I explore Erdağ Göknar's 2001 translation of Orhan Pamuk's *My Name is Red*, in which several nonhuman narrators take their turn to tell the story, including several human-made artworks and the most abstract, the colour red. Finally, I discuss Ursula K. Le Guin's short story, "The Direction of the Road", which is told through the perspective of an old oak tree that sits beside the road and, over hundreds of years, observes how the landscape changes around it. In each of these examples, the narrators in question have something more to them than their being just objects, acting as what Brown would refer to as "things". I evaluate whether these "complicated objects" are awarded the same narrative benefits as their simple it-narrator counterparts and consider comparisons with other "complicated objects" such as clothing,

artificial intelligence, animals and possessed artefacts. Lastly, I conclude that there is no one rule for the mechanics of it-narrators and that each example, no matter how “complicated”, must have its own specialised considerations to function with narrative authority.

Katie Unwin

University of Cambridge

Gnawing at Narrative: ‘Literary Animals’ and the Unpalatable Truth in Sam Savage’s *Firmin*

The truth is hard to swallow...Set in a fictionalised Boston Massachusetts, Sam Savage’s *Firmin* explores how animal narrative focalisation, with its perspectival position outside of human society looking in, is uniquely positioned to demand reflection on totalising “anthropocentric fantasies”: a good life, globalisation without conflict and equitable cities for all. Born in a copy of Finnegans Wake in the basement of a book shop, Savage’s rodent narrator literally eats his way through the Western literary canon from *Don Quixote* to *Alice in Wonderland* and learns about the stories that frame Western thought, meal by meal, page by page. When faced with the reality of the city, however, where humans are treated like rats, Firmin realises just how cruel his beloved narratives can be. Through the people he meets and the words he chews up in his novels, in the newspaper and on notices of eviction around the city, Firmin learns that narrative is often a tool of manipulation, legitimising who gets to live and die. In thematising language, literature and the macro vs. micro narratives of politics, Savage’s nonhuman narrator takes the power and function of words to task. Who benefits from the framing narratives and “fantasies” that make up the human experience? What if someone’s story does not or cannot fit said narratives? Who is allowed to thrive and who is left to struggle to survive?

SESSION 3H – MULTIMODAL CORPOREALITY

Simon Grennan

University of Chester

The Body as Idea: Narrative Drawing, Mind, and Categories of Knowledge

Gilles Deleuze describes how the painter Francis Bacon used the word “graph” to describe his conception of the function of marks made by the body – that of clearing away existing ideas of image, representation, depiction and function. In this conception, the mark is a phenomenal impression that is not itself a trace of either an immanent mind or an originating body, but rather remains of itself, distinct and unmotivated, relative to other, imagined motivations or categories of knowledge. This paper examines the implications of a bias in theorisations of narrative drawing towards *graphiation* (Philippe Marion’s visual remediation of utterance) as indexing a distinct, phenomenal, originating body (a graphiatuer), that motivates inner capabilities to think and act. The paper interrogates the idea that the acts of phenomenal bodies divulge thought or represent knowledge. Currently, narrative models of drawing theorising relationships between subjects often develop an idea of *graphiation* akin to Robert Luzar’s summary of theories of drawing as cognition, as a ‘kind of performative activity, expressing and revealing a mind-bestowing concept unfolding between the hand and imprints/figures on the page’. The paper discusses how drawn marks are theorised as making an activity manifest, and how agency might be considered as the appearance of a subject, charting various iterations and characteristics of ideas of ‘thinking through drawing’, and returning to the radical system proposed by Bacon, in which mark is not trace and the phenomenal body is not an origin but a para-phenomenon, a concept or a category of knowledge.

Diána Mosza

Eötvös Loránd University

Difficulties of Storytelling: Perception and Corporeality in Géza Ottlik's *A School at the Frontier*

In *School at the Frontier*, the most translated Hungarian novel, the main narrator (an autodiegetic voice) tells the story of their childhood in a military school by commenting a manuscript written by his friend (a heterodiegetic voice). This style of storytelling is preceded by three framing chapters that situate the act of storytelling in a conversation with another friend. Both the framing and the dynamic raise several doubts on tellability and the power of language. The whole novel spreads rather in space than in time and develops its scenes by showing rather than telling. Although the question of reliability is (explicitly) mentioned, the ineffability of some sensations and experiences requires other ways of communication that crosses the borders of the capacity of verbal storytelling. Even though *School at the Frontier* remains a monomodal artwork, the power of visuality supports the efficacy of storytelling by embedded ekphrases and by citing famous paintings. The aspects of corporeal perception and communication also play a major role in the novel's decryption. I argue we need to consider both the visual and the corporeal elements that reveal hidden messages on the compound structure of power, freedom, and morality. I reveal the connection between the deficiency of verbal communication and the poetics of visual and corporeal narrative gestures in the novel.

Deborah Ward

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Wearing the Suit: A Feminist Narratological Analysis of Cathy Marston's Narrative Ballet

South African Can Themba's *The Suit* has been the subject of several theatre productions including the internationally acclaimed adaptation by Peter Brook. Leading female choreographer and newly appointed director of Ballet Zurich, Cathy Marston, created a one-act ballet of the story in 2018. A common approach used by Marston is to position a prominent female role within the story as the main protagonist. In doing so she frequently offers a new reading of the original text using a balletic language to reimagine the text as a narrative ballet. Whilst ballet is historically recognised as a discipline for storytelling there is minimal academic research into the methods and approaches used when analysing ballet's narratives considering feminist narrative/literary theory. Drawing on Astrid Bernkopf's work, this paper offers a narratological analysis of *The Suit* to determine Marston's approach to writing women through her narrative ballets. Examining this balletic adaptation using a feminist narratological lens encourages an insight into the significance of narrative ballet as a medium for adapting original texts and revisits Bernkopf's query into the lack of dance-specific theory.

SESSION 4A – RACE AND NARRATIVE

Antonio J. Ferraro

Ohio State University

The Assumptive Dynamics of Race in Toni Morrison and James Alan McPherson

One of the most pressing concerns for narrative theory is the relationship between narrative form and the crises of social life, or the complex overlaps between what Susan Lanser and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan term the 'politics of textual forms and the textual forms of politics'. Theorists have wrestled with the relationship between form and politics by proposing, like Lanser and Rimmon-Kenan, that political circumstances shape formal possibilities or, like Lisa Zunshine and other cognitive narratologists, that literature provides a testing ground in which to practice and reflect upon our mental habits and biases. This paper enters this ongoing discussion by focusing on fiction that highlights the role of interpretive assumptions in both literary and social contexts. Rather than emphasising formal possibilities or

cognitive scripts, this paper highlights how two short stories – “Recitatif” by Toni Morrison and “Problems of Art” by James Alan McPherson – prompt readers to participate in and develop suspicions about interpretive assumptions. Through their management of what I term “assumptive dynamics,” both authors force readers to confront how literature and social life are impossible without assumptions and yet made impossible by those assumptions. They do not simply critique social life through their formal choices, nor do they provide a cognitive simulation of it. Instead, they provide a nuanced and ambiguous refraction of it, refusing to allow readers to understand narrative form as equivalent to social life while also resisting the temptation to theorize social life and narrative form as fundamentally and interpretively distinct. Like the assumptions made by their characters and readers, I argue that social life and narrative form are always escaping finalization in Morrison and McPherson, and as a result their stories draw our attention to how the dynamics of narrative form and of our shared world are always being assumed into existence.

Erin Minnick

Morgan State University

Getting ‘Passed’ Race: An Abstract Antagonist in Charles Chesnutt’s *The House behind the Cedars*

Antagonists are traditionally perceived as people who oppose or act hostilely against someone or something. We want to view all antagonists as villains as they exist in nineteenth-century Sentimental or Romantic literature; we want to see a sorcerer, a warmonger, or a power-hungry king. However, this exaggerated adversary tends to be absent in American Realist literature. What is the likelihood that the everyday person will encounter a villain who vehemently attempts to thwart their every move? Instead of this unlikely villainy, American Realist authors emphasized what was probable; they portrayed as much truth of contemporary life as was feasible through their usage of descriptive and evocative detail. The genre’s emphasis on verisimilitude is underscored by the probability of scenarios within the storylines. Despite Charles W. Chesnutt’s specific parallels to Sentimentalism in *The House behind the Cedars*, the same probabilities that exclude exaggerated antagonists in Realism apply. Chesnutt examines the fate of two siblings whose African-American ancestry sealed their fate in their hometown of Patesville, N.C. John and Rena Walden (Warwick)’s light skin, as a result of their mixed-race ancestry, allows them to depart their town and pass as white in South Carolina, but as the story unravels, so do their lives. Rena especially suffers a tragic fate; however, the narrative lacks a traditional villain. I argue that the white racism of the Reconstruction era itself becomes the specific antagonising force within the novel. John’s and Rena’s decisions to “pass” as white in an overtly racist society creates a storyline in which racism acts as an abstract antagonist, a force that actively opposes and even demonizes the characters within *The House behind the Cedars*. The lack of a traditional or exaggerated adversary aligns distinctly with the goals of American Realism.

Brian Richardson

University of Maryland

Postcolonial and African-American Plot Trajectories

This talk explores how a number of postcolonial and African American authors have interrogated and extended the traditional concept of plot. Concerning the length of the fabula, these authors radically expand the parameters of what is conventionally thought to constitute a story rather than limiting themselves to telling the story of an individual, a couple, or a family. Patrick Chamoiseau’s *Texaco* (1992) traces the history of a Caribbean community for over 150 years. Other postcolonial novels go still further back. My paper explores the deconstruction of beginnings and origins, including those in Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, the story of Saleem Sinai, whose narrative begins thirty-one years (and 150 pages) before his birth is narrated and which, as Gaura Narayan explains, foregrounds the arbitrariness and fictionality of official accounts beginnings as it stresses the hybridity of people,

communities, and nation state. On the other end of the narrative, one frequently finds a resistance to traditional forms of closure and a desire to write “beyond the ending.” *Midnight’s Children*, being yoked to modern Indian history, cannot end any more than history can cease, despite the fact that the narrator-protagonist feels himself about to explode in the novel’s final pages. The sense of continuity between the events of a fictional narrative and the trajectory of history frequently produces such anti-closural gestures, as I will discuss by noting the refusal of resolution in several works. Taken together, these examples suggest some of the ways that postcolonial and African American authors reconfigure traditional forms of emplotment to achieve distinct ideological effects.

**SESSION 4B – EMBODIED PEDAGOGIES:
CO-CREATED NARRATIVES AND GAMIFIED LEARNING**

Vanessa Arnaud

California State University, Sacramento

Truths Tangled in Misinformation: Exploring Co-Creative Narratives in a Gamified World set in Pre-Revolutionary France

In today’s complex information landscape marked by polarised viewpoints and deliberate misinformation, the erosion of public trust poses significant challenges for constructive dialogue and societal cohesion. This paper delves into the immersive world of a “Reacting to the Past” game called *The Diamond Necklace Affair: Gossip, Misinformation & Marie Antoinette’s Public Image (1785-6)*, which centres on a captivating scandal that tarnished the queen’s reputation on the eve of the French Revolution. By immersing players in diverse primary accounts, including trial briefs, underground pamphlets, and memoirs, the game offers an experiential understanding of the complexities in disseminating and interpreting information. This firsthand encounter fosters a nuanced comprehension of the dangers of misinformation and disinformation. Drawing on both theoretical frameworks and empirical data, the paper critically examines the intricate interplay between narrative construction and historical accuracy within the gamified world. It emphasises the importance of cultivating critical thinking skills and historical consciousness among players, enabling them to develop a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in co-creative narratives. The collaborative storytelling process, drawing from primary sources that present a multitude of “facts,” underscores the ongoing relevance in comprehending information distortions and their influence on perspectives. Through the gamified experience, students gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of information, including the challenges inherent in uncovering the truth. Ultimately, this paper underscores the significance of deriving insights from the interplay between co-creative narratives and the immersive exploration of historical misinformation, highlighting its ongoing relevance in understanding historical inaccuracies and their impact on modern viewpoints today.

Paul Dahlgren

Georgia Southwestern State University

Roleplaying Narratology: Teaching the History of Theory with Reacting-Style Pedagogy

This paper explores the narrative affordances of roleplaying pedagogy in teaching the history of literary theory. After giving a brief overview of “Reacting to the Past” and the research into this style of pedagogy, I discuss the development of *Skirmishes in the Culture War*, a roleplaying game I am developing about literary theory in the 1990s. *Skirmishes* asks students to take the role of professors in the English department at Syracuse University in the 1990s where they debate issues about their program such as the teaching of the canon, the role of theory in the program, and the purpose of an English major. Included in the game are sessions where students draw on the theoretical backgrounds of their characters to interpret literary texts (three of the forty possible characters are narratologists

of different persuasions). I argue that because roleplaying creates narrative forms that are not found in traditional textbooks, such as ergodic form, multiple forms of focalisation, and narrative bleed (a complex form of empathy described by LARPerS), it is better able to demonstrate to students what the importance and value of different perspectives in theory.

Courtney Hopf

New York University, London

Theorising Pedagogical Role-Playing as Narratives of Collective Experience

Eva von Contzen and Maximilian Alders suggest the term ‘collective experience’ as a broader way to conceive of ‘the wide range of collectivist representations in historically and generically diverse narratives’. This paper suggests that we might appropriate such ideas fruitfully for developing a narratologically-focused understanding of co-created role-playing narratives. I outline how the “Reacting to the Past” pedagogy is used in a freshmen-level rhetoric and composition course as a means to improving students’ writing and presentation skills, rhetorical and persuasive techniques, and understanding of concepts such as narratological framing. After outlining some of the ways in which narratology has thus far been brought to bear on questions of role-play, pedagogy, and gamification, I will suggest that the “Reacting” technique offers a unique perspective through which to theorize the processes at work in open-ended narratives. Students engaged in a “Reacting” game are not “re-enacting” the past; instead, they are assigned roles as historical figures and seek to achieve that character’s goals in a debate-based setting that does not necessarily follow the events as they happened in the historical record. As such, these games are akin to improvisational live performance. Jan Alber has noted that ‘we can gain access to live performances by approaching them as narratives, i.e., by trying to identify the central human experience that they seek to convey’, and it is this element of ‘central human experience’ that role-playing pedagogies bring to education that is often otherwise absent. Ultimately, I point toward the opportunities that arise from this intersection of historical record and creative embodiment.

Maureen Quigley

University of Missouri, St. Louis

Playing the Plague: Medieval Chronicles, Counterfactual Narratives and Games

In this presentation, I consider the successes and failures of teaching the medieval chronicle tradition by taking a gamified approach to the plague of the fourteenth century. In his *Etymologies*, Isidore of Seville called history ‘true things that were done’. This definition of history as an evidentiary recounting of ‘true things’ was as challenging in the seventh century as it remains today, yet still holds its primacy. Contemporary storytelling of history, though, has such an over-abundance of multi-media streams that students may find themselves relying on formats of information gathering that most appeal to their sense of engagement. Gamified approaches to teaching history have been around for decades, but the conflation of medieval and contemporary storytelling around public health created a unique opportunity to approach the topic in new ways. The story of the contemporary international experience of Covid-19 was defined (and continues to be defined) against a background of conflicting narratives, ill-paced communications, and pre-existing/prejudicial understanding. In 2021, students who were enrolled in a joint History/Art History class called *Crusades and Plagues* built a story arc of the plague through multi-media and multiple narrative approaches, deriving from three games. Before reading traditional primary documentation of the 14th-century plague, students played the “Reacting to the Past” role play game *1349: Plague Comes to Norwich*, the tabletop social deduction game *Bristol 1350*, and the contemporary mobile game, *Plague, Inc.* None of these games led to conclusions that were “true things;” however, students produced a counterfactual narrative of the historical plague that provided insights into their own lived experience.

SESSION 4C – VISUAL FORMS

Pratiksha Ashok

UC Louvain

Netflix True-Crime Docuseries and the Personification of Legal Story-Telling

The reality of slow-paced legal drudgery, dumpy police stations and courtrooms, decades of waiting, and the misery of victims is witnessed only by legal professionals in crime cases. Viewers of true-crime docuseries are provided with a fast-paced one-hour-long, four to eight-part mini-series with a gripping and thrilling narrative. I studied 50 English-language true crime documentaries on Netflix and examines the legal storytelling narrative of these true crime documentaries. This narration style has often been used by Youtubers like Mr .Beast, who introduce their entire plotline at the beginning of the story. Viewers of true crime documentaries are aware of the abominable actions, but what is depicted are the nuances of the case, which may not have been known. Another element of the narration is the timeline. In reality, cases are linear, where there is the investigation and interrogation of suspects, whereas, in these docuseries, there is a back-and-forth between pieces of evidence found in the investigation and their use in the trial. This timeline, though it is not accurate, works to carry the narrative forward. Another element of storytelling is the helpline or pleas for help. Often there are elements of the crime that remain to be addressed. I examined these true crime docuseries for outlets provided to viewers, for example, helpline options for suicide prevention, reporting sexual abuse or pleas for coming forward with information to identify unidentified victims. The final element of the narrative of true crime documentaries is often referred to as “where are they now”? True-crime documentaries often end with the current state of the case, whether the convicted are in prison or set to be released. This narrative element brings to light other aspects of the legal system, such as the consequences of attempted murder or calling for a memorial for victims.

Giorgio Busi Rizzi

Ghent University

Linear, Tabular, Gappy, Networked: Comics Reading Revisited

This paper challenges the widespread belief that comics reading fundamentally rests on closure. While linear reading is certainly the first level of comics meaning-making, I contend that comics’ meaning always depends on a network of entangled elements and codes (semantic and visual, and both diegetic and extra-diegetic). This process rests on the comics’ foundational incompleteness that, reintegrating reader-response theories within comics studies, concerns all the different gaps (narrative, visual, and verbal) and tensions that the intricacy of the network engenders. I assert that an excessive focus on closure leads to a narrow understanding of comics that highlight their sequential mechanisms, posits linearity as its sovereign reading protocol and fetishizes the gutter (the inter-iconic space) as the material locus where the processes of cognitive completion and emotional projection take place. As such, it implies a narrow model of comic that only fits a socio-culturally and historically restricted corpus. Through an analysis of less prototypical comics – earlier, experimental, abstract, and digital – I maintain instead that the medium has always displayed hybrid meaning-making strategies, replicating itself on different medial supports and remediating forms, protocols and conventions that readers were familiar with (Bolter and Grusin). I suggest that the network of semiotic and plastic (dis)similarities that comics braid and the holistic perception that its reading calls for (Groensteen; Mikkonen; Postema) establish concurrent non-linear reading paths, where elements are multi-layered and interconnected (see Cohn). Finally, it recognizes that these processes may have different intensities and effects, which can only be disentangled and understood by looking at specific comics.

Jennifer Umezinwa

Morgan State University

'My Name is Irete': Meaning-Making in Feminist Graphic Narratives

In his comic book, *Irete Bidemi*, Michael Balogun deconstructs the traditional gender roles ascribed to young females, particularly of African descent, by exploring the possibilities of a female protagonist who is a college student by day and a crime-fighting superhero by night. Buchi Emecheta's *Joys of Motherhood* chronicles the life of a Nigerian woman. Nnu Ego is subject to the centrality of childbearing in the Igbo culture and the shifting postcolonial ideals that oppose traditional values of the Igbo tribe. This paper explores how visual and verbal components are employed in both narratives to create contextual meaning using Kress and van Leeuwen's Multimodal (social semiotic) Discourse Analysis. Tradition, community obligation, and courage are part of the fundamental themes in children's narratives and children's graphic narratives that are emphasised in both books. While most African nineteenth- and twentieth-century narratives about children portray female characters in traits associated with femininity as disability, male superhero characters are portrayed as powerful, strong, physically built, and overly masculine. Emecheta and Balogun challenge the traditional African female character archetype by examining gender roles socially, and culturally. Although Nnu Ego and Bidemi represents utopian imaginations that redefine women's impact in their communities, their mental health and academic pursuits are impacted negatively. I argue that in both narratives, Nnu Ego and Bidemi experience trauma, anxiety, and pain marked by pressure to save their family, friends, and community that results in ADHD and impacts their mental health and education.

SESSION 4D – FICTIONALITY ACROSS HISTORY

Greger Andersson

Örebro University

The Book of Jonah as a Narrative Fictional Argument

I discuss the distinction between narratives with different purposes in the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament (OT), and how readers' appreciation of a narrative's purpose might affect their interpretation of it. My prime example is the Book of Jonah and the suggestion that it constitutes a fictional narrative argument. This appears to be a common assumption among present-day scholars, who therefore mainly discuss how the book has been composed and its message. However, some conservative scholars claim that Jonah is not fictional. Yet they still tend to assume that the narrative should be considered, if we use James Phelan's distinctions, as thematic rather than mimetic. I examine how the appreciation of the narrative's purpose as a narrative argument and the different opinions about its fictionality might affect its interpretation. My suggestion is that if readers assume that the Book of Jonah constitutes a fictional narrative argument, they will interpret it from an external perspective and focus on what they take to be the authors' intended message.

Melina Ghasseminejad

University of Antwerp

The Power of Perception: The Influence of Fictionality on the Creation of Storyworld Possible Selves

This paper discusses the results of an experiment examining whether fictionality affects narrative engagement using storyworld possible selves (SPSs) as a framework. Based on a previous pilot study indicating that perceived fictionality affects the activation of the types of possible selves, the current study replicated the experiment with proposed adjustments. Twenty-four participants were given fragments from James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*, chosen for its unique history in that it was initially

marketed as a memoir before it was revealed that significant parts of the novel were fabricated. The participants were divided into three groups: one group was informed that the passages were fiction, another group was told they were non-fiction, and the remaining group served as the control group. By explicitly stating the fictionality of the text for the test groups, it was possible to influence the participants' perception of the text artificially. After reading the fragments, the participants were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. One notable finding was the influence of familiarity with the subject matter on creating SPSs. Most participants perceived the text as fiction; and follow-up questions revealed that some participants characterised the text as autofiction. Additionally, several participants believed that the text was based on actual events or that the author was well-informed and conversed with individuals who struggle(d) with substance abuse. This study sheds light on the intricate relationship between the perception of fictionality, familiarity with the subject matter and the construction of possible selves.

Ville Hämäläinen

Tampere University

Disavowing Fiction, Avowing Fictionality: Søren Kierkegaard and the Use of Fictional Prefaces

Søren Kierkegaard's fragmentary novel, *Stadier paa Livets Vei*, contains three main narrative parts, which are accompanied by seven prefaces (albeit none of them is titled as such). These prefaces have in common that they claim the following text to be a found manuscript. Kierkegaard depicts his pseudonyms fishing a diary from the lake bottom or stealing each other's manuscripts. The vivid manner contradicts Kierkegaard's general criticism of fiction as too imaginative storytelling. In this paper, I examine how the disavowal prefaces perplex the fictionality in theoretical and literary-historical terms. Due to the emphasis on their uninventive origin, the prefaces may be defined as pseudofactual prefaces. In previous centuries, those were mostly used to preserve the moral value of the text (Paige; S. Zetterberg-Nielsen; Williams). The prefaces in the Stages align with many of Genette's classifications, most prominently, disavowing preface, for it inclines toward fiction with its fictional disavowal of the text. Classifying the preface does not explain the ambiguous fictional status of the prefaces. Having shortly discussed some of the classical definitions (fiction as a lie, referentiality, and the "as if" illusion) and their insufficiency, I will apply Simona and Henrik Zetterberg-Nielsen's definition of 'fictionality as intentionally signaled, communicated invention', as it shifts the attention to the purpose behind the prefatorial practice. Kierkegaard was arguably aware of the prefatorial tradition and knew that applying the previous century's device hardly resulted in the suspension of disbelief. By contrast, Kierkegaard signals his prefaces' inventive status. Kierkegaard, nevertheless, shares the same ethos with earlier pseudofactual prefacers that unveiling the fictionality may harm the text's credibility. Finally, this paper contributes to the ongoing debate on fictionality and literary history by discussing Kierkegaard, who uses fictionality against fiction but takes the truth and literariness seriously.

SESSION 4E – PATTERNS AND ABSENCES

Anne Holm

Linnaeus University

Shaping Memory Through Lyric Narration

This paper presents a cognitive stylistic approach to lyricality in narration and proposes that lyric narration may be a useful category in analysing the depiction of memories. Taking Werner Wolf's idea of the lyric as a cognitive frame as a starting point, the paper outlines characteristics of lyric narration and zooms in on linguistic features that contribute to a sense that eventfulness is being backgrounded. Since the narration of memories often involves a strong spatial element – the retrieval of autobiographical memories has been linked with scenes (Rubin et al.) – the discussion takes up the

concept of the scope of noun phrases (Langacker) in narrated memories. According to Ronald Langacker's Cognitive Grammar, an expression's scope is its coverage in a domain as it is apprehended. A noun phrase in lyric narration may add descriptive specificity through its immediate scope, but also activate aspects of the same domain beyond this immediate scope. This can be paralleled with how a scene may evoke a past experience. I argue that paying attention to such aspects of language processing provides a bottom-up way to structure the notion of lyricality in narration.

Richard Müller

Czech Academy of Sciences

The Issue of Repetitiveness in Franz Kafka

The paper asks what repetition entails in the work of Franz Kafka and how its ambivalent nature contributes to his (and our) understanding of writing. Provisionally, we can distinguish three different planes of repetition, or repetitiveness: as a 'method' of production; as a representation technique; and as a symptom of the characters' situations. First, there are different versions of the same text, equivalent in terms of finality, but perhaps also a certain existential rhythm (as exemplified by Kafka's famous "schedules"). I suggest that a comparative reading of Heinrich von Kleist's *Michael Kohlhaas*, a novella that Kafka held close to heart, might provide an insight into this feature of 'productivity'. Then there are minor textual recurrences (as in his "breakthrough" story, "The Judgement") and the question whether they are possibly related to an analogy in technical reproduction. Are they part of an experimental narrative method? Finally, repetitive characters' situations might create certain patterns and beg the question of their complex reading effects. Is there a 'sense' to repetition in Kafka and can these provisional distinctions help us understand it? How should their entanglement be described?

Jasmina Pasic

Northumbria University

The Pragmatics of Narrative Gaps in J.D. Salinger's *Nine Stories*

This talk considers narrative gaps in J.D. Salinger's *Nine Stories*. Narrative gaps can be broadly defined to cover various kinds of perceived absences in a literary text's narrative. Scholars have proposed narrower definitions that separate gaps into categories based on criteria such as the types of information they omit and the authorial motivations behind these omissions. Gerald Prince proposes several categories including the 'nonnarrated' and 'disnarrated'. Donald Hardy, on the other hand, suggests separate categories for gaps, ellipses, and textual indeterminacies. Some parts of Salinger's stories are compatible with these existing categories. Other parts of the texts, however, appear not to be so straightforward, their effects sometimes suggesting a degree of overlap across proposed categories and others not seeming to fit within an existing category. Work in pragmatic literary stylistics has used various pragmatic theories to explain the effects of absences in literary texts as implicitly communicated content that is inferred. Siobhan Chapman's study explores how a Sayers novel indirectly communicates two of its general themes by applying a neo-Gricean account of inference. Ruth Rosaler applies ideas on inference from relevance theory to explain implicit content in Victorian literary narratives as the effect of salient gaps. Building on these studies, I consider how claims about inference made by pragmatic theories can be applied in studying the effects of gaps in *Nine Stories* and the implications of this approach for existing proposals about categories of gaps.

SESSION 4F – HARLEM RENAISSANCE FICTION

Evan Chaloupka

Franklin University

Envisioning Interiority, Environment and Disability in Jean Toomer's 'Kabnis'

Explaining the relationship between disability and narrative in Harlem Renaissance fiction presents significant challenges. As Jess Waggoner has observed, Black writers often 'sought to avoid the association of the black body and mind with pathology' given the racist rhetoric that surrounded social conversations of Black health contemporary to them. Yet, as Stephen Knadler has observed, some writers leveraged the health anxieties that proceeded from social conversations to open up an 'improvisational cripistemology' that 'values the so-called disabled and discrepant ways of being, relating to, and experiencing the world'. Drawing on the implications of Knadler's notion of 'so-called' disability, this paper demonstrates how "Kabnis," the final story in Jean Toomer's *Cane*, uses narratorial vision to facilitate the reader's appreciation of the connection between characters labelled cognitively "queer" and the space of the storyworld they inhabit. In contrast to other modernist writers, Toomer is only partially concerned with the representation of disabled subjectivity. While he allows readers intimate access to cognitively queer interiority, he far more frequently invites them to consider how the presented disabled identities in the story are outward manifestations of cognitive trauma wrought by the social environment of the South. The narrator of "Kabnis" envisions the world through an aperture that radically scales images in and out, detaching and aligning with character viewpoints over the course of these movements. These oscillations prevent the reader from neglecting the social elements that disable characters with whom they feel a passing closeness to as the story progresses. This reading of "Kabnis" provides a model to appreciate literature produced in social conditions that might limit the direct representation of disabled interior.

Marc Farris

Southern Utah University

Afrofuturism, Homescaping, and the Harlem Renaissance

I consider recent scholarship by Isaiah Lavender III, Ytasha Womack, Christel Temple, and others to begin a narratological inquiry where I suggest that literary Afrofuturism is deeply indebted to configurations of home that are established during the Harlem Renaissance and solidified in the short form. Crucial to my argument is Jessie Fauset's reflection on the condition of pain and a sickness of returning home that plagues the Black experience. It is through her short fiction, and that of W.E.B. Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, and others that a cultural mythology develops around what I term "homescaping," where in the Black community it becomes necessary to cultivate a concept and instance of home that specifically attends to perpetual displacement and social disruption. Through these literary efforts by Black writers during the Harlem Renaissance, and in particular their short works, I argue that a notion of home takes root in the Black experience and is sustained through a cultural mythology that then transcends generations. Through this reading of home, the development of Black speculative fiction into and across contemporary literary Afrofuturism can be read as an effort to imagine the condition of home as a stable site for Black experience and identity that both attempts to overcome its historically inherent instability while sustaining the cultural mythology that preserves meaning for the community.

Maisie Wiltshire-Gordon

University of California, Berkeley

Ambivalent Heteroglossia and Nella Larsen's *Passing*

I argue that Nella Larsen's *Passing* makes use of heteroglossia as Mikhail Bakhtin describes it—but the novel provides a crucial counterpoint to the ethical and political stakes that Bakhtin attributes to

heteroglossia. Bakhtin sees assembled discourses as marking the possibility of democracy: voices create a unity even as they remain distinct. When a novelist gathers discourses together, the assemblage forms an artistic whole and functions as a crucial counter-force to ideological centralization. The different discourses in *Passing* are not as overtly marked as in the work of writers such as Zora Neale Hurston. Nonetheless, social identity plays out on linguistic ground: Larsen's depictions of "passing" depend more on discursive choices than any visual signal of race. But *Passing's* heteroglossia does not produce the resistance to power or possibility of collaboration that Bakhtin describes, either at the character level or within the text as a whole. Heteroglossia assembles distinct forms of discourse, but those discourses impose strict limits. When Irene and Clare pass as white, they do so by operating within that discourse, even as they use it for their own ends. Larsen's heteroglossia shows speaking as a perpetual balancing act, foregrounding discursive boundaries and the devastating consequences of failing to operate within them. Further, while these diverse voices might resist the centralization that worries Bakhtin, power continues to operate locally. Assembling discourses does not ensure their equality. In the novel as a whole, *Passing's* profound ambiguities defy any meaningful unity that its gathered voices might offer. The novel does not resolve into either optimism or pessimism, pairing glimmers of hope with violence that harshly extinguishes it. Characters resist their roles by double voicing the discourses they operate within, but this doesn't produce stability, certainty, or belonging. Larsen's heteroglossia illuminates divisions with life-or-death stakes, resistance with no promise of relief.

SESSION 4G – GAME WORLDS

Daniel Punday

Mississippi State University

Infrastructure in Video Games

Theorising infrastructure has emerged as an important project across a wide variety of fields, given the way that contemporary technology has changed such systems. When we thought about infrastructure fifty years ago, large national undertakings are the most likely to come to mind; today, global corporations like Google and Facebook provide essential communication infrastructures. It makes intuitive sense that changing infrastructural conditions would influence the stories we tell, from the ability to quickly navigate the globe in *Around the World in Eighty Days* to the ubiquitous communication made possible by cell phones in contemporary novels. Likewise, infrastructure influences our encounter with narrative itself; the epistolary novel is only possible once a postal system is common, for example. Video games offer a particularly rich field for thinking about the relationship between narrative and infrastructure. The infrastructures that exist in the fictional worlds of these games define the experience of play in a very direct way: how players are instantiated in the game, how they move around the play space, the resources that are available, and so on. And those infrastructures in turn very directly define the nature of the fictional world. In contrast to literary fiction, where infrastructures might remain on the periphery of some stories, by virtue of the centrality of player interaction video games are inherently infrastructural. For this reason, they make a particular compelling place to sketch the relationship between infrastructure and narrative. I discuss a variety of commercial video games, both mainstream and somewhat niche, that use infrastructure in different ways: *Control*, *Wolfenstein*, *Fallout*, *This War of Mine*, *Exocolonist*, *Cyberpunk*, and *Frostpunk*. I will sketch some features of infrastructure in these games, and speculate on how they can be extended to a larger theory of infrastructure in narrative.

Roz Tuplin

Independent

Jobs from Hell: The Games Industry and the Culture of Work in Roguelike Videogames

The video games industry is infamous for its “crunch culture”. Workers in this fast growing and highly profitable sector are routinely subjected to long hours, uncompensated overtime and immense pressure to deliver, resulting in poor health, low self worth and the collapse of work-life boundaries. This paper examines how two games – *Hades* and *Going Under* – address the working culture around the medium itself, both in their narratives and in the echo of those narratives that occurs within the two games’ “roguelike” mechanics. While the dialogue directly tackles issues of overwork, exploitation and burnout in a high-pressure environment, the “roguelike” system invites the player to actively mirror the repetitive grind of the characters, raising uncomfortable questions about what it is to work and play, and how our identities are inexorably tied with productivity and achievement within a system designed for failure. Looking at both in-game narrative and gameplay as narrative itself, this paper explores how the two games portray worker alienation, parody and critique manipulative employers, and ultimately propose very different solutions to the cycle of exploitation.

Daehyun Won

Texas A&M University

Exploring and Teaching War Propaganda in Digital Games Narrative

Amid the current of the turbulent age, the truth is nowhere. To meet governmental desires and agential demands between power dynamics, enormous legacy and social media deliver modified facts and try to conceal the manipulated political goals through war propaganda, being oppressed or willingly by various forms of authority. This happens worldwide, even in democratic countries. This war propaganda artifice is made of various rhetorical forms, and narrative is a frequently used genre to stir the intended audiences’ emotional reactions. In digital games, as one of the vital digital narrative mediums and a mirror of reality through defamiliarization, players can find, access, and easily be compromised by the war propaganda elements. The elements are plotted by game designers, who create the fictional governmental authority and agencies 1) to promote the support of national-level totalism and warfare or 2) to imitate the actual world’s wars and war propaganda to evoke the public’s awakening and critical thinking in terms of governmental artifice. In both cases, which substantially or metaphorically resemble our reality, the virtual war propaganda is more dramatically and greatly amplified due to their multimodally and interactively playable structures within intensive, immersive realistic warfare settings. This is to say, players are easily affected by the propaganda’s narrative pleasure regardless it is moral or immoral, with or without knowing about the true nature of hidden messages. Through exploring realistically-depicted war propaganda in various games such as the *Bioshock* series (patriotic and heroic), and the *Call of Duty* series (sociological propaganda), the paper will shed light on digital propaganda as well as actual world’s war propaganda’s true nature and the propagandistic messages made by various authority figures or societal majority. With the explorations, this paper also provides a brief insight into how to teach critical, sensitive, and objective views and reasoning toward propaganda in reality in a college narrative class, in order to achieve capabilities to employ our autonomous civil rights.

SESSION 4H – SETTING AND STILLNESS

Birte Christ

Giessen University

Narrative Uneventfulness: Solitary Confinement in Film and Television

As Monika Fludernik details, narrative that represents imprisonment faces the challenge of telling a story about uneventfulness – a narrative that threatens to be boring instead of engaging. Conventional prison narratives thus regularly focus on friendships, gang wars, interaction with visitors, escapes plans, and so on, to create a plot. In the case of narrating solitary confinement, the challenge of how to represent the pains of uneventfulness is even more acute: solitary confinement is characterised by complete plotlessness and by the presence of only a single body enclosed in an unchanging architectural space. I explore contemporary TV series and films that attempt to narrate solitary confinement. In doing so, they find forms to narrate the torture that prisoners experience in solitary, and thus a narrative form that may function to rouse audiences to take a stand towards the practice of solitary confinement, and endorse or critique it. I suggest that there are at least three distinct strategies of narrating the uneventfulness of solitary: 1) a manipulation of narrated and narrating time in TV series to create structures to vicariously experience the uneventfulness of solitary (*e.g. Orange Is the New Black, US, and Time*); 2) the use of distorted camera perspectives in order to create a narrative structure to vicariously experience temporal and geographical disorientation as experienced by prisoners (*Rectify, US, When They See Us*), and 3) the attempt to create a visual narrative from the POV of the prisoner (*Bronson, Brawl in Cell Block 99*). This paper works towards eventually creating a typology of narrative forms of solitary confinement, and questions how far visual media's social justice work depends on distinct narrative forms.

Emma Short

Durham University

The Hotel Narrative

The hotel is much more than the average literary setting or background, and to regard it solely as such would be to drastically underestimate its significance. Following Wesley Kort's assertion that too often place and space are relegated to a lesser, more passive role by the term "setting", I here posit the hotel as a literary space which can decisively shape the form, structure, and possibilities of narrative. The hotel's inherent mobility prevents it from being relegated to mere background, and the movement and transience by which this space is characterised marks it as a space which is always already 'active, meaningful, and primary' (Kort). In this paper, I delineate what I term the hotel narrative. I explore how the hotel necessarily shapes narrative form and structure through the movement along its corridors from room to room, creating an episodic structure well suited to genre fiction such as the detective or mystery novel, as exemplified by Arnold Bennett's *The Grand Babylon Hotel*. I argue further that the space of the hotel also has a definite, if less immediately apparent, effect on the narrative structure of modernist works such as Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier* (through the role and significance of the narrator, John Dowell, whose transitory hotel existence shapes his own fractured narration. I argue that the hotel's inherent impermanence constructs it as a space in which moments of transition regularly occur, either propelling the narrative forward, or, alternatively, engendering moments of crisis for those characters who reside within. I posit the hotel narrative as fragmented and often non-linear, and maintain that, while criticism has tended to identify these qualities as defining features of modernist literature, this analysis of the hotel narrative reveals experiments with narrative and form to be widespread across literature of the early twentieth century.

Richard Walsh

University of York

Visual Representation and Implicit Temporality

Pictorial narrativity is generally characterised with respect to benchmarks derived from verbal narratives, with a tendency to foreground its deficiencies; and indeed to the extent that still images are considered narrative at all they tend to be granted that status largely by virtue of a supplementary effort of narrative sense-making undertaken by the viewer, the medium of which is itself tacitly linguistic. I question the assumptions about narrative upon which such views are predicated, by examining the narrative power of images in the context of a more foundational conception of narrative as a mode of cognition, one by no means subordinate to language. I reconsider, from a specifically narrative perspective, the semiotic capacity of visual representation, which is to say, the basic conditions of the communicative force of iconic signs. Doing so will allow me to develop a line of thought about the function of the implicit in narrative form, and to show how the implicit is intrinsic to the very possibility of narrative's dual temporality – a feature I take to be constitutive of narrative as such. The argument concerns narrative in the single still image, but it will be helpful to situate this case between that of, on the one hand, non-narrative images, and on the other, narratives of sequential images. My discussion will be illustrated by appeal to Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, as an example of graphic narrative that is itself particularly interested in still images, notably photographs and maps, as well as in the relation between the literary and the graphic, between verbal and visual modes of narrative representation.

SESSION 4I – READING TRAUMA

Franziska Hartung

Newcastle University

Fiction and Wellbeing

Stories help individuals to process distressing thoughts and feelings in a safe space without confrontation of personal traumatic events. Bibliotherapy has become a promising low-cost non-invasive wellbeing intervention. In this 6-week online intervention study, we compared the effectiveness of bibliotherapy (BG) and creative writing (CWG) as group-based interventions and a control group (CG) completing the bibliotherapy intervention without group meetings. We hypothesised that every group would experience improvement in wellbeing. BG and CG participants were randomly allocated to a trauma or non-trauma reading list from which they chose a book. CWG participants chose a journal. BG and CWG met weekly for one-hour Zoom meetings that followed a semi-structured discussion. BG discussed the experiences while reading while the CWG did writing exercises together followed by a group discussion. The CG completed the discussions via weekly questionnaires. Before and after the intervention, wellbeing was assessed with questionnaires assessing quality of life (QoL), depression, anxiety, resilience, optimism, and life satisfaction via a Qualtrics survey. Almost every participant reported a sense of improvement after the intervention with prominent themes being escapism, learning, reflection, and catharsis. The questionnaire data confirms improvement in wellbeing for every group. The CWG showed improvement in life satisfaction and QoL. The BG showed improvement in resilience and state optimism. The most improvement was shown in the CG with reduced depression and anxiety, and improvement in health satisfaction, state optimism, and QoL. Non-trauma fiction seems to have more benefits for wellbeing than trauma fiction regarding resilience, QoL, health and life satisfaction, suggesting that escapism is more important for wellbeing than trauma processing. The findings confirm that reading and writing have positive effects on wellbeing and are promising tools for public health, highlighting the need for access for vulnerable populations such as children, prisoners, and refugees.

Sonya Isaak

Paul Valéry University

Rhetorical Narratives of Trauma: 9/11 Discourse in Print Media and Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*

The events of September 11, 2001, constitute a significant turning point in contemporary history, challenging both journalistic and literary narratives to capture the complexities of this traumatic moment. This paper explores the rhetoric employed in print media and literature when addressing the 9/11 attacks, with a specific focus on Don DeLillo's novel, *Falling Man*. This interdisciplinary analysis delves into the intersection of narratology, trauma theory, and rhetoric studies to investigate how narratives are constructed to convey the experiences and aftermath of 9/11. By comparing and contrasting the rhetorical strategies used in print media coverage with those in DeLillo's novel, I reveal the distinctive ways in which each medium approaches the task of representing trauma and its enduring impact on society. In the context of print media, I examine the language, imagery, and narrative framing used in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, considering how newspapers and magazines grappled with the need to convey the enormity of the event while adhering to the principles of journalistic objectivity. *Falling Man* presents a unique literary perspective on the 9/11 experience. I analyse how DeLillo's narrative strategies, including shifting perspectives, non-linear timelines, and character development, capture the emotional and psychological dimensions of trauma while addressing the challenges of representation and memory. This paper sheds light on the role of rhetoric in shaping the cultural memory of 9/11 and the ways in which narratives in print media and literature reflect and respond to this pivotal moment in history. By examining the distinct choices made in constructing these narratives, I contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities of representation and rhetoric in the face of traumatic events, including similar terrorist attacks.

Josie Kochendorfer

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Don't Get Too Close: Fragmented Narrative and Trauma Theory

Cathy Caruth posits that traumatic events alter us in ways that make it difficult to express our experiences through conventional language and traditional narrative structures. Memories of trauma come to us in recollections, dreams, flashbacks, and triggers. Trauma, as Caruth suggests, is a deferred and recurring experience that haunts us – it is not in the traumatic event itself but in how the event changes us and how we must live with it. Using fragmented form, writers are able to create an accurate narrative representation of living with one's trauma. Following Jane Alison, we can understand these patterns as ways for writers to create new, embodied experiences for readers. *Memorial Drive* by Natasha Trethewey and *In the Dream House* by Carmen Maria Machado resembles Alison's narrative pattern of an explosion. There is a powerful centre, as Alison notes. A mother murdered or a deeply toxic relationship. Each fragmentation in these narratives is an attempt to get closer to that core or to pull away desperately. In fragments, narratives are allowed to move freely around one's lived history in relation to one's trauma in a way that more closely resembles how one reconciles with one's own wounds. This paper is concerned with fragmented memoirs as representative of living through trauma. It is in this way that writers are able to enhance their stories, leading us to a more honest, emotional truth in memoir writing.

**SESSION 5A – COUNTER-NARRATIVES IN
FICTION AND FICTIONAL COUNTER-NARRATIVES**

Per Krogh Hansen

University of Southern Denmark

Generation Storytelling: Master and Counter-Narrative in Douglas Coupland's *Generation X*

The concept of master and counter-narrative originates in sociology and identity research. Molly Andrews explained counter-narratives as 'the stories which people tell and live which offer resistance, either implicitly or explicitly, to dominant cultural narratives' – the latter being defined as "master narratives". Christine A. Stanley has argued that a master narrative is 'a script that specifies and controls how some social processes are carried out'. As Andrews states: 'The power of master narratives derives from their internalization [...] we become the stories we know, and the master narrative is reproduced'. This is also the reason, as Matti Hyvärinen has argued, why master narratives often are implied and only find form as the backdrop of the counter-narratives. Despite it never has been formulated in this terminology, it seems evident that explicating and questioning master narratives and thematising the ridge between master narratives and the "non-conforming" individual's or group's conflicts with them, is a main concern for a vast majority of novelistic fiction. This paper considers an example of a "generational novel" (novels giving voice to a younger generation and thematising the gap between generations). My example will be the Douglas Coupland's *Generation X. Tales for an Accelerated Culture*, which, due to its thematic focus on storytelling, offers room for reflections on master and counter-narratives of postmodernity as well as Lyotardian *grands* and *petits récits*. The paper concludes by discussing the relation between social and fictional takes on master and counter-narratives and the methodological differences this demands.

Matti Hyvärinen

Tampere University

Intersectional Positioning and Counter-Narratives in Viet Than Nguyen's *The Committed*

The concept of counter-narratives encourages the study of narratives in contest, more generally the social life of narratives. The question, in social research, has been: who decides about and recognizes the existence of resistance, the researcher or the narrators themselves? When we move from non-fiction to fiction, the issue of marking something as counter-narrative becomes even more complicated, and should probably be understood in terms of gradience, as a matter of degree. Such novels as Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* or Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* are such counter-narratives as dominant ideas and stories of progress that they seem not to need to signal their role as counter-narratives. Julian Barnes's *Elizabeth Finch* offers a more marked counter-narrative to Christianity, its success and cultural effect. The novel not only contains Finch's essay and story of Julian the Apostate (aka Flavius Claudius Julians), the fierce counter-narrative to monotheism, but also recounts the outraged reaction of the British tabloid media to Elizabeth Finch's lecture on the topic, thus framing the story as counter-narrative. In Viet Than Nguyen's *The Committed*, the counter-narration is marked and foregrounded with the help of constant, intersectional positioning in the monologues and dialogues of its nearly nameless main character, the Crazy Bastard. The novel generates counter-narratives to French colonialism in Vietnam, to the Vietnamese revolution, and to the story of the "liberation of Vietnam" by the Communists, to mention only a few. In doing so, the novel builds a whole narrative contest (Phelan), which also includes a version of the master narrative of the benevolent French colonialism of Vietnam, as well as a counter-narrative of Kampuchea, resisting Vietnamese invasion and the purges by Ho Chi Minh.

Sylvie Patron

Université Paris Cité

Master and Counter-Narratives in Fiction: A Case Study from Ahmadou Kourouma's *The Suns of Independence*

This paper questions the forms of the presence of master- and counter-narratives in fiction from the case of the first novel of the Ivorian writer Ahmadou Kourouma, *Les Soleils des Indépendances*. It focuses particularly on chapter of the novel that narrates, in the form of nocturnal memories, the genital excision and rape of Salimata, and on the recurrence of some elements of this story in the following chapters, which I re-read in the perspective of master- and counter-narratives. "Counter-narratives only makes sense in relation to something else, that which they are countering" (Andrews and Bamberg): I explore this relationship of countering in the narrative of excision narrated in the future tense by Salimata's mother, representing all the mothers of the village and more globally the cultural norm and tradition in the patriarchal African society (reported in direct discourse and also implicitly present in the inner narrative of Salimata), as opposed to the account of Salimata's excision and rape as she remembers them nocturnally (in passages of point-of-view narrative). I compare the master- and counter-narrative of excision from the perspective of narrativity and tellability, confirming that, as suggested by Matti Hyvärinen, '[c]ounter-narratives always provide [...] more tellability and individuality compared to master-narratives'. I ask what fiction—an invented storyworld, characters, plot, etc.—can bring to the construction and strength of counter-narratives. Overall, I show that the methodological framework of master- and counter-narratives allows in some cases to specify what is loosely called, in literary studies, the "message" of a narrative fiction.

SESSION 5B – FRAMING: TOWARDS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Sara Nocerino

University of Naples Federico II

Framing? One Exercise in Comparative Semiotics and a Few (Open) Conclusions

In the wake of the horizontal interest in framing that emerged in different disciplines, I question whether a common definition of what framing devices are from a morphological perspective is possible, and whether they perform a shared function within cultures and societies. I structure my talk in two parts. First, I comparatively discuss the morphological evolution of two of the most blatant framing devices employed in Western cultures to encode reality: frames of paintings – extensively investigated by art semiotics – and narrative frames in novellas/short story collections. I show how these devices exhibit a plastic morphology, but they can also be shown to perform a steady meta-representative function. I discuss them as the materialisation of the rules of production and reception of meanings according to cultural artifacts become 'legible spaces' (de Certeau) in a given semiosphere. I will broaden my perspective by taking advantage of the interdisciplinary composition of the panel itself: I draw some wider theoretical conclusions on framing devices' function(s) within societies and cultures. In tune with the dialogical spirit of the panel, I imagine this second part of my talk as an "under construction" space to reflect upon a topic that, variously analysed in different disciplines, seems to revolve around the same question: how do we build reality?

Antonio Perrone

University of Naples Federico II

'Framing' in a Topoi Collection

My paper tests the concept of framing through the *Libro degli emblemi* by Andrea Alciato. More specifically, I will focus on the Paduan edition (1621) which appears as deeply influential on the Renaissance, Baroque, and even XX-century culture. Indeed, through an articulated structure – 212

theme-organised emblems, each accompanied by an epigram and followed, at the end of each section, by a Latin editorial comment – this early modern age best-seller shapes as a summa of Italian and European humanistic knowledge. Most importantly, not only does it represent a visual collection of topoi that shaped the Cinquecento's and Seicento's imagination; but through its analysis, it is even possible to identify the signs of the graphic and editorial turn in which literature will be involved in the following centuries, especially in the twentieth. Through the analysis of a selection of emblems, I highlight what it means to “frame” in a volume where, in the absence of a text (understood as a set of words), the images provide the logical-conceptual unity of each section. Firstly, I will deepen the relationship between the icastic (related to the icons) and the diegetic (related to the epigrams) functions. Secondly, I will examine non-authorial elements – such as the Latin comment and the paratext – to show how they serve an active role in engaging the user in the framing process of the book and its emblems.

Eric Louis Russell

University of California, Davis

Piergiorgio Trevisan

University of Trieste

Layering in Frames, Frames in Layers: Dreaming of Naples

We examine a travel documentary program focusing on Naples and the Amalfi Coast. Drawing upon Appraisal Theory and multimedia discourse analysis, we examine three key components: one traditionally linguistic, one visuo-linguistic, and one meta-linguistic. We argue that the framing of Naples and Amalfi has as its ultimate teleos their neoliberal commodification. We trace how the authors of the episode call upon prior frames concerning Naples' danger and Amalfi's rurality, reshaping these into expressions of authenticity to be consumed by viewers. In this sense, framing involves layers that function not to complexify or provide depth to an object, but to further simplify it by inserting it into a globalised discursive order. This, we argue, is yet another manifestation of banal globalisation, a superficial recognition of difference that frames objects not as holistic linguacultural landscapes, but one that reduces these to products.

SESSION 5C – NARRATIVE POLITICS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Stefan Iversen

Aarhus University

Deepfakes as Narrative Contestation

Deepfakes have, since their online inception in 2017, given rise to substantial scholarly and vernacular debates. Defined as ‘manipulated or synthetic audio or visual media that seem authentic, and which feature people that appear to say or do something they have never said or done, produced using artificial intelligence techniques’ (EPRS), deepfakes have been met with reactions from alarmist (Schick) to more tempered (Jacobson and Simpson). Among the key points of contentions are the societal, personal and political consequences of manipulated media. In this paper, I start out from the double assumption that narrative theory may help understand how deepfakes function, and that deepfakes may help understand aspects of how narratives operate in the contemporary public spheres. Setting out to investigate the phenomenology of the visual deepfake, I argue that radical narrative incongruity is instrumental to the affective and deliberative impact of deepfakes and that this insight could inform the debates about the ideological and political pitfalls and potentials of the deepfake as an aesthetic form, including how it relates to issues of social justice or lack thereof. Drawing on recent work of narratives in conflict under headings such as ‘narrative contestation’ (Hyvärinen), ‘narrative dynamics’ (Sommer), ‘counter-narratives’ (Lueg and Lundholt) and ‘interlocking narratives’ (Iversen and Pers), I

read visual deepfakes as incongruous combinations of textual and paratextual narratives. The suggestion is that the deepfake lives off of clashes between a synthetic media's textual storyline where someone appears to do something and an already existing contextually situated storylines about the person in question. These incongruous combinations have the potential to upend and disrupt in harmful ways but they have also been employed against oppression, unfairness and inequality. I read examples of the latter, looking at deepfakes in NGO campaigning.

Irene Kacandes

Dartmouth College

Co-Witnessing through Paramemoir: Hazel Carby's *Imperial Intimacies* and Ivan Jablonka's *Histoire des grands-parents que je n'ai jamais eus*

In this paper I demonstrate the political efficacy, the co-witnessing (Kacandes), of the lifewriting subgenre paramemoir (Kacandes). I first coined the term co-witnessing in my *Talk Fiction*, to explain the reader's role as a response to literary texts that were performing trauma. I have since developed the term by considering its use in non-fictional forms including journalism, life-writing and documentary film. I define such "co-witnessing" as testifying to trauma and resilience when one is oneself not the target of violence nor its principal victim. If the targeted victim has survived, the role of the co-witness might be careful listening and then passing on the victim's story. In cases where an individual or group victim has not survived, the role of the co-witness involves careful research to reconstruct the particular historical and cultural circumstances in which the violence took place. While all historical events, including genocides, are unique by virtue of the passing of time, some structures and series of aggression and disenfranchisements will bear similarities. This paper illustrates the political and ethical import of co-witnessing in two recent experimental works of life writing: cultural studies scholar Hazel Carby's examination of imperialism, slavery, racism, and elitism as these forces shaped her own life, that of her parents, and her ancestors; and historian Ivan Jablonka's reconstruction of his Jewish grandparents' marginalization, arrest, deportation and murder. In both these texts, the authors co-witness to individuals who cannot witness to their own traumatisation because they are deceased, but also who did not leave much of a paper trail. The authors' actions of locating and interpreting documents are supplemented by consulting the life stories of individuals whose experiences may have been similar and for whom more documentation exists, as well as imaginatively reconstructing and/or pointing to what can never be known.

Greta Olson

Giessen University

Claiming Rights in Memes: Narratives and Images of Migration

My paper explores how human rights claims are being debated in memes and posts relating to migration. I take the Instagram post "Five rich men get lost on a luxury adventure - Multi-million dollar international rescue operation" (2023) as a case in point. The meme juxtaposes two images with matching captions. One half of the meme pictures the submersible Titan. Captions note the media hype surrounding the vast operation to find its five passengers after contact with them was lost in June 2023. The other side of the meme features an aerial photo of the unnamed fishing boat that sank off the coast of Greece during the same week in June. At least seven hundred and fifty migrants were onboard the small boat. Hundreds of still unnamed people drowned, many among them children. The caption "750 Missing Migrants" is followed by a sub-caption in which a common sentiment regarding the need to secure Europe from migration is summarised in "Tighten the Borders." Images of the two vessels are arranged so as to demonstrate their visual similarities. This visual metaphor makes an appeal to human rights discourse by asserting the equal worthiness of all the human beings that were involved in the nearly simultaneous sea disasters. In subsequent posts, both violently anti-immigration sentiments and

criticisms about how the Mediterranean has become a mass grave for people in flight were expressed as well as resentments about current income disparities, as in the comment “eat the rich.” Social media exchanges about human rights and other social-legal issues are multi-authored, open-ended, and created in real time, mixing narrative and tropic elements. I explore the affects related to these exchanges and their formal elements as well as their influence on efforts to achieve social justice. Simultaneously, I look at social media discussions about whether “narrative” is now used to denote an inauthentic and manipulative, “political”, depiction of events.

Wibke Schniedermann

Ghent University

History Repeating or a Threat to the Status Quo: Narrative Formulas in Travon Free and Martin Desmon Roe’s *Two Distant Strangers*

The assumption of whiteness in scenarios and stories that imagine time travel is evident in popular storytelling. As Sherronda J. Brown and others have pointed out, the restorative and, ultimately, conservative outline of most time travel plots in popular fiction prohibits “successful” Black time travelers. Brown’s call for Black time travellers ‘to be a threat to the status quo’ meets long-established production standards and audience expectations that hamper efforts to address this imbalance. Narrative forms play a key role among those storytelling conventions that is too often overlooked. This paper explores the racial-ideological undercurrents of the involuntary time loop (ITL) formula. It specifically looks at narrative form and other established formal elements such as typical plot lines, character constellations, and visual editing. The case study of a film that subverts the ITL formula precisely by following it reveals the racial—and specifically anti-Black—blind spots built into the trope. Travon Free’s short film *Two Distant Strangers* incorporates most of the ITL template’s conventional features and condenses them into a 32-minute film about police violence against Black Americans. Free’s film, I argue, exploits the potential of bringing Black stories and contexts to bear upon popular narrative forms that were not envisaged for them. The paper aims at understanding the specific ways in which narrative conventions prescribe certain stories and characters while contributing to the exclusion of others.

SESSION 5D – METAFICTIONAL REFLECTIONS

Caleb Hays

Ohio State University

Metafiction and the Death of the Narrative Audience

In this paper, I explore the strange and estranging experience of reading metafiction; how do certain metafictional and anti-mimetic narratives produce their desired effects? I investigate this issue through the lens of rhetorical narratology, with special attention to the relation between its model of audiences (as originally proposed by Peter J. Rabinowitz and revised over time by James Phelan and others) and its concern with the mimetic, thematic, and synthetic components of readerly interest (as developed most prominently by Phelan). I suggest that a key to the power of many metafiction is how they first prompt flesh and blood readers to become immersed in the narrative audience and then effectively remove that audience position. I call this removal the death of the narrative audience. Put differently, these texts cue the flesh and blood reader to the mimetic qualities of the narrative before wilfully effacing that position; this effacement, or the death of the narrative audience, then foregrounds the synthetic orientation of the authorial audience. In discussions of metafiction, rhetorical approaches tend to paint the narrative audience as either gullible—always naively accepting the happenings of any given storyworld—or worse, absent from the flesh and blood reader’s experience of the text. Following Phelan’s principle that rhetorical narratology ‘always has the “Construction in Progress” sign out, even as it remains open for business 24/7’, I look to amend the treatment of the narrative audience in

synthetically dominant texts. I look to Margaret Atwood's short story "Happy Endings" to update Phelan's attentive analysis of the text before turning to Julio Cortázar's short story "Continuity of Parks": this will provide a useful update to rhetorical narratology's treatment of metafictional texts but also explain the powerful and sometimes bewildering experience of reading metafiction.

Mariia Pshenychna

V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University

Postmodern Pantextual Worldview and Self-Reflexive Narration in J.M. Coetzee

The socio-cultural changes of the twentieth-twenty-first centuries have led to a profound reassessment of self-consciousness and traditional cultural codes. A new human worldview has significantly changed, the main features of which are plurality, chaos, and unreliability: contemporary writers often assign a place in their works to their creativity and to a certain narrative "Self", focusing on the creative process. This leads to a self-reflective modus of narration, which in contemporary texts can have at least two meanings: 1) literary self-reflection (the reflection by literature on its own ontological status, mechanisms of the creative process); 2) as an introspective orientation, the writers' addressing to themselves, the comprehending themselves as writing subjects, not devoid of quite definite socio-cultural outlines. In postmodernist novels the protagonists are often creative individuals, mostly writers who are particularly experiencing the historical and cultural events of the modern world, which they are trying to comprehend through their work, reflecting on the nature of creativity. Biographical facts are distorted in favour of literary principles, which leads to an experimental genre synthesis by combining documentary and novel techniques. In this paper, I consider the self-reflexive modus of narration in J.M. Coetzee's novels and distinguish the concepts of "self-reflexion", "self-reflexivity", and "metafiction", which have often been muddled in contemporary literary discourse. I identify textual manifestations of writerly self-awareness within the text, along with the textual mechanisms through which literary self-reflection materialises. This underscores the intricate interplay between "self" and text in a rapidly evolving literary landscape.

Magdalena Sawa

John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

Joanna Klara Teske

John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

Metamodernist Metafiction

We examine the new meaning and shape of metafiction which the strategy acquires in metamodernist fiction. In our view, the meaning of metafiction in postmodernism is ultimately related to social constructivism. Art (the novel included) exposes its own artefactual character and thus helps the reader realize that the world in which we live is to a large extent (to an extent of which we previously were not fully aware) socially constructed (Waugh; Hutcheon). Metamodernism adopts new sensibility – a sensibility of hope, acceptance and commitment (in the place of postmodern apathy, despair and cynicism) but does not relinquish the postmodern view of things, social constructivism included. At the same time it is open to new cultural phenomena such as postsecularism or ecological awareness, and ideas such as human relationality or care ethics. In metamodernist works of fiction (Ali Smith's *Hotel World*, Mark Danielewski's *House of Leaves* or Elif Batuman's *Either Or*), metafiction, though present, is transformed. It is this metamodernist metafiction we want to examine – its shape (gentility, in some cases even implicitness), dominant themes (reflection on sincerity/awareness), rhetorical/heuristic function (appeal to the reader's effort of reconstruction) and function (defence against naivety). The world, though "fictional," is what we have, we accept it as if it were good enough – this idea might be the essence of the new style, implicit also in the metamodernist use of metafiction. This simplified view of things we would like to present in its complexity.

SESSION 5E – POWER AND COMMUNITY NARRATIVES

Rahul Kumar

Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi

Contesting Stigmatisation: Representations of Human Sacrifice in Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe

African writers such as Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe often emphasise their connectedness and responsibility towards their own communities. In both their works, the fate or destiny of the community is an important theme. Their concern with social justice is most apparent when we look at their representations of human sacrifice associated in colonial discourses with their communities and several parts of Africa and Latin America. I analyse the different narrative techniques and devices that are used in the representations of human sacrifice in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*. I argue that these representations are very different from the dominant representations of human sacrifice in colonial discourses. Both Achebe and Soyinka are seen as reliable representatives of their own communities as well as of Nigerian and African Literature. Both address the issue of stigmatization of their communities in pervasive colonial accounts of human sacrifice. It is curious that in Achebe's novel the human sacrifice of Ikefuna ordained by the oracle is almost always referred to as a "killing" or "murder" by the critics whereas in the case of Soyinka's play Elsin's failed attempt at sacrificing himself is always interpreted as "sacrifice" or "ritual suicide". This is noteworthy because they are both sacrifices ordained by tradition. I suggest that such responses are encouraged by the implied author in the implied reader. Such a comparative analysis brings to the fore contrasting attitudes towards tradition and modernity, and it is only by paying close attention to the formal and technical devices used that we could come to a better understanding of some of the most obscure, contentious and ideological aspects of the texts.

Niyati Shah

Pandit Deendayal Energy University

Budhan: A Study of a People's Theatre

Located in Ahmedabad, in the state of Gujarat, India, Budhan Theatre is a democratic, creative organization established in 1998. It works closely with the Chhara community, which was notified as criminal by the British colonial powers in 1871, and though denotified in 1952, they were reclassified by the independent Indian nation as "habitual offenders" in 1959. The autobiographical narratives by senior actors of Budhan Theatre, *Budhan Bolta Hai* and *Kahani Meri Tumhari* are presented as both narratives and performances: these artifacts reflect the powerful relationships between the actors' life experiences as they struggle to construct their identity as artistes, defy the stigma of being 'born criminal', and craft the performance of their everyday life. Through the narrative and its performance, Budhan does not merely reconstruct the past in the present; its effort is, by performing the past and the present, to generate social awareness of, and better futures for, the Chhara community. In this paper, I examine how these stories are a conversation within oneself and with the community at large; how they create and represent tensions between the self and a socially and historically constructed identity; between the community and the state, and how, what emerges may be read as significant documents of the social history of the Chhara community.

Anat Shapiro

Aarhus University

Oppressive Directionality in The Book of Jonah: The Textual Dynamics of Space and Agency

The Book of Jonah tells the story of a human prophet fleeing from his god Yahweh and the prophetic duty. In four short chapters, the narrative sends its rebellious protagonist across land and sea, city and

wilderness, where he encounters strange peoples, creatures, and supernatural forces of nature – while attempting to escape an all-seeing, all-knowing, omnipresent, and omnipotent deity, finally failing miserably in this attempt. Readers have taken this fantastic, exciting tale as a satire or parody, reading Jonah as a ridiculous, absurd figure of a biblical prophet. A spatial reading of the book, however, reveals a more sinister, less humorous story. Read through the lens of directionality, movement, and space in the literary design of the text, Jonah's confrontation with Yahweh emerges as a desperate attempt at resistance to power and the preservation of agency against oppression. In this paper, I focus on the literary function of directionality and movement to demonstrate some of the ways in which the narrative employs these notions to construct the futility of resistance to Yahweh as a symbol of authoritative power. Actant movements across space, directional markers, and the geography of the story-world reveal a dynamic of power and oppression that are represented through spatial control, freedom of movement, surveillance, and positionality. Tracing the protagonist's trajectories and examining the literary design of space in the narrative not only allows for a more exhaustive reading of the story itself, but also demonstrates the value of employing narratological tools for the interpretation of biblical texts. Examining the narrative design of the text shows that spatial representation has a mimetic function that heightens audience identification and is conducive for the construction of complex notions and experiences, like dynamics of power and inter-human dynamics in general.

SESSION 5F – REALITY, FICTION, AND NARRATIVE:
THE EFFECTS OF ONTOLOGICAL AMBIGUITY

Jan Alber

Giessen University

Disruptive Narratives: Theoretical Conceptualisation and Case Studies

In this paper, I delineate a new research paradigm that involves the analysis of disruptive narratives. The term covers conspiracy narratives; stories spread in the context of disinformation campaigns and by populists; and narratives that call for radical changes of our life styles. Some of these stories propose largely invented (or fictional) ideas, while others are clearly fact-based but still involve a certain degree of fictionalisation. What all disruptive narratives have in common is their potential to shock: they try to present radically alternative events and thus urge their recipients to challenge established authorities. I begin by conceptualising disruptive narratives. More specifically, I look at the following features: they involve a low degree of narrativity; they operate on the basis of a simple distinction between “good” and “evil” characters; they focus on experience and foreground feelings of suffering, hopelessness, or despair; they involve a specific kind of emplotment that leads to moralising judgments; they make claims about reality; they involve disruption as a theme; they seek to institutionalize political counter-power; and they contain fictional elements which aim at the construction of monophonic narratives. I then present two case studies: a conspiracy narrative and a story told by “Extinction Rebellion” (XR).

Alice Bell

Sheffield Hallam University

‘It makes you feel more of a part of it’: Situated Digital Fiction and Ontological Resonance

Digital fictions are written and read from a computer and require that the reader interacts with the text. This paper explores the way that digital fictions that are set in and make use of actual world locations generate ontological ambiguity. I begin by analysing examples of digital fiction installations, locative fiction, and ambient literature. Focussing on the cognitive effects of these texts, I examine the way that readers talk about their experiences using empirical data. I theorise the textual features that can lead to readers' experiences by developing Anexka Kuzmičová's concept of 'environmental propping'. I conclude that digital fictions that make use of actual world locations can generate

ontological resonance in which bi-directional ontological transfers take place during and after reading. I argue that while such ontologically ambiguous experiences can occur across media, interactive digital narratives are more likely to lead readers to experience ontological resonance because of the ontological permeability between real and fictional worlds that digital media facilitates, a state brought about by a contemporary postdigital (Jordan) context.

Jarmila Mildorf

Paderborn University

Fictional Contamination and Literary Complexity in Conversational Storytelling: A Family Story

Storytellers in conversational contexts often render original speech situations seemingly verbatim (Tannen); they include other people as ‘characters’ in their narratives and assign thoughts and emotions to them; they may even tell another person’s story (Norrick), regardless of whether they were first-hand witnesses to that person’s experiences or not. Furthermore, conversational stories are often embellished and dramatised by means of perspectival shifts (Graumann and Kallmeyer), creative language use (Carter), or by taking recourse to existing story templates. Although these linguistic and narrative-structural features should raise questions concerning the epistemic status of what is told (Filutowska; Norrick), narratives using them are usually accepted by listeners because their reference to the real world is taken for granted. This is also why such narratives remain largely overlooked in fictionality studies. I argue that it is precisely such features in conversational narratives which, if they are used more extensively, make these stories resemble generic fiction. Being based on the same underlying storytelling parameters (Herman), both literary and conversational narratives share a potential for fictionalization or what I call fictional contamination. It is mostly culturally determined pragmatic constraints and generic expectations that prevent conversational stories from becoming more fully fictionalised. However, because storytellers aim to involve listeners and to tell an interesting story, their stories’ fictionalising potential may become more visible, if not actualised. In analysing a conversational story told as part of an interview for a podcast on medical doctors’ experiences, I demonstrate the concept of fictional contamination in a family narrative that conjures up (re-)imagined moments in the teller’s parents’ life and enlivens those moments through direct speech, references to cultural story templates and a complex construction of multiply embedded story trajectories.

SESSION 5G – NARRATING PALESTINE

Baraah Abed Elhai

Bar-Ilan University

The Art of Life-Unwriting: Narrative Refusals in Etaf Rum’s *A Woman Is No Man*

This paper underlines the marriage of content and form in Etaf Rum’s semi-autobiographical debut novel *A Woman Is No Man*. Unveiling the mechanisms of oppression in the lives of Isra and her daughter Deya, Rum creates a claustrophobic diegetic world by utilising a narrative style that hinges on what Robyn Warhol calls the unnarratable. The novel focuses on the Hadid family, whose lives are entrenched in narrative refusals wrought by a traumatic and inexpressible past. Throughout the story, Palestine overshadows Brooklyn, which, despite being the primary setting of the novel, remains unacted. The novel constructs Isra’s story through what I call the unplotting of her life, exposing the gaps between the events she contemplates and the improbability of their fulfilment. A reconstruction of Isra’s life becomes possible, however, through her daughter Deya, whose narrative voice emerges out of Isra’s death and opens the scope for narrating the unnarratable. In a struggle to frustrate the unwriting of her life through marriage, Deya fills the gaps in memory that characterize her relationship with Isra. Through this process, Deya amplifies Isra’s narrative by uncovering the complicity of other characters in cancelling Isra. Deya also extricates Isra’s voice of agony as expressed in letters that her

grandmother Fareeda has hidden and suppressed. A version of Palestinian history excavated by Deya also surfaces through Fareeda, allowing us not only a glimpse into a suppressed Palestinian life but a venture into a Palestinian lacuna. Yet Palestine ultimately emerges from this novel as the epitome of the unnarratable.

Joseph Farag

University of Minnesota

Al-Awdah and its Discontents: Narratives of Return in Palestinian Literature

The concept of Al-Awdah is sacrosanct in the Palestinian popular consciousness. It signifies the culmination of the Palestinian liberation project wherein those Palestinians made stateless and displaced since 1948, or who remained but chafe under the overt repression and covert contradictions of becoming citizens of the state of Israel, will finally be reunited with one another and their lost Palestinian homeland to enjoy the autonomy and self-determination that they have for so long been denied. Against a triumphalist narrative of return, however, Palestinian literature has long offered a far more circumspect view of the possibility of return through narratives of disappointing homecomings that fail to live up to characters' expectations. Perhaps the most iconic narrative of Palestinian return is Ghassan Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa*. Set in the wake of the stunning defeat of 1967 and the subsequent rise of Palestinian armed resistance, Kanafani's novel offers a profoundly ambivalent perspective on Palestinian return, simultaneously offering the possibility of return through armed confrontation with Israel while remaining keenly aware of militancy's limitations. Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns* shifts the dilemma of return from that of Palestinian confrontation with Israel to internal Palestinian corruption and internecine Palestinian conflict as a primary fetter to return. Sayed Kashua's *Track Changes*, meanwhile, offers a narrative of profound estrangement from the very concept of home. As Maurice Ebileeni asks, 'in the absence of a chronotopical Palestine, where will future Palestinians return to, and for what end, when the idea of 'homeland' fails to house the notion of "home"?' Through the lens of these novels spanning distinct generations and exilic contexts, this paper examines how Palestinian literary works have attempted to grapple with the im/possibility of Palestinian return.

Nora Parr

University of Birmingham

Finding a Language for Crisis and Inequality: Lessons from Two Novels on Palestine

This paper looks to two novels about Palestine's Nakba for the answer to a pressing question: how do we talk about Palestine in a way that can accommodate both crisis (immediate) and inequality (persistent)? In current discourse, the two are treated as almost mutually exclusive, so that occupation and decolonization are not accounted for in discussions of resistance and "response". As we see today, despite the excellent work on decolonisation theory and the harms it has been able to make visible—as well as the possible repair of these harms—there remains a fundamental disconnect between our understanding and ability to talk about the relationship between crisis and inequality. This is true in different ways across Arabic and English, and for different reasons. Arabic literature and media, I suggest, take this position for granted. A brief look at Palestinian fiction in Arabic shows how the immediate and persistent are understood as parallel and overlapping harms. Palestinian Literature in English, which has by and large adopted a western discursive frame, has largely been unable to represent both crisis and inequality. Against this background, I suggest that two intersectional novels—which for different reasons cross between Arabic and English discursive landscapes—offer insights into how we might better address the context of immediate and persistent harm. *Road to Beersheba* by British Socialist Ethel Manin, and *Tafasil Thanawi* by the Palestinian writer Adania Shibli both portray

crisis in its *longue durée*, and from within the Palestinian experience and across international contexts. This has implications for teaching, research, and activism, which the paper explores.

Sondos Shehadeh

Al-Quds Bard College

Children's Literature, Trauma, and Narrative Form

Children's literature that tackles trauma generally adopts Sigmund Freud's and Cathy Caruth's conceptual framework, which characterise in terms of a past event. Scholars working within that framework have emphasised the value of witnessing a past event in representing trauma to children, but they have disagreed about the extent to which children's books should portray the pain of a traumatic experience and about ways of balancing hope with the representation of a painful past. This view of trauma, however, overlooks situations in which trauma is ongoing –that is, situations that have a current impact on the child reader who is living through the traumatic events. I ask what role children's literature can play in a context of ongoing suffering in settings such as Palestine, and what narrative forms, modes, and practices might effectively come into play in these works. Drawing on a selection of Palestinian fiction written for children, I ask how authors conceptualise trauma when they are writing for children who are living it on a daily basis. I explore in particular the functions of fictionality and play in Palestinian children's literature that deals with trauma and more broadly consider the potential of fictional narratives to help mitigate children's experiences in ongoing political conflicts and colonial settler contexts. I argue that Palestinian children's literature speaks back to trauma theory itself, providing a valuable source for interrogating its assumptions. I conclude by showing what trauma studies, and even psychoanalysis more generally, can learn from depictions of traumatic events in narrative literature written for Palestinian children.

SESSION 5H – EMBODIED NARRATIVE THEORIES

Ellen Esrock

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Embodied Feeling of the Text: A Proposal for Narrative Transomatisation

Under the paradigm of embodiment, with its invigoration of William James' claim that the emotions are 'sensations of bodily change' and its elevation of emotion as a force intrinsic to cognition, researchers across disciplines have been investigating how our bodily selves contribute to our co-making of the world. Narratologists are exploring the embodied dimensions of reading that 'transport' (Green) readers into characters and storyworlds. This movement from self into other is often ascribed to the emotion of empathy, whose complexities and significance to literature has been brought into interdisciplinary focus by Suzanne Keen. For those who draw from the neurosciences, empathy is generally modelled with reference to the brain's mirroring systems. According to neuroscientist Vittorio Gallese, in perception and imagination these mirroring systems generate 'embodied simulations', which reuse our own experiences to give us intersubjective access to what is other. Gallese and Hannah Wojciehowski have productively explored the literary implications of emotions and embodied simulations. I argue that while the model of embodied simulation adopted by narratologists explains key dimensions of empathic reading, the model leads us to ignore other ways we use the body in co-making. I propose the concept of transomatisations: through a transomatisation we attend to something that is not our own body – *i.e.* something perceived or imagined – while permitting an emotion-driven feeling of our body to function as a "non-imitative" stand-in for some property of it. In narratives, a bodily process like breathing or muscular tension might stand-in for a formal property of sound or white space on a page, a character's gesture, a text's pervasive atmosphere, even an inanimate object or abstract symbol.

Suzanne Keen

Scripps College

Narrative Empathy as Animator of the Inanimate

I focus on readers' co-creative and empathy-experiencing role in relation to multiple potential targets involved in narrative communication, not only characters. I extend the promising direction of Hannah Wojciehowski and Vittorio Gallese's proposal for an embodied narratology, arguing that readers' co-creative, empathic responses are stimulated not only by characters, but also by narrators, narratees, implied readers and authors, who call upon readers' intercorporeal engagement, inviting transportation and empathy. Driven by *Einfühlung* for inanimate representations or projections of the text, enhanced by the affective charge of narrativity (Sternberg) and transmuted through transomatization (Esrock), empathic responses may be attributed to simultaneous (or rapidly interchanging) invitations: an immersive fictional world and its compelling existents; the entrancing voice of the narrator; the impulsions of narrativity's curiosity, surprise, and suspense; foregrounding through style and narrative technique; and the reader's self-recognition in one or more of the roles of narrative communication. I illustrate the possibilities for multiple overlapping stimuli of aesthetic emotion by discussing Nathaniel Hawthorne's story "Feathertop: A Moralized Legend". Though Hawthorne would not have known the word empathy, he depicts it and its strategic manipulation by a maker. His story makes vivid the imaginative transactions among authors, narrators, narratees, readers, and characters, and suggests the animating powers and responsibilities that inhere in each position as creativity passes along from maker to beholder through the spell of the text. Without their participation, the scarecrow Feathertop would be just a jumble of cast-off bits and bobs stuffed in clothing; with it, he becomes a character whose lifelikeness lays bare the uncanny quality of all fictional characters and other textually-mediated features that combine to evoke readers' empathy.

Hannah Wojciehowski

University of Texas, Austin

How Stories Make Us Feel: Part 2

In "How Stories Make Us Feel" I and Vittorio Gallese combined insights from literary theory and neuroscience in order to develop an embodied cognitive narratology. We proposed a theory of liberated Embodied Simulation, a process enabling a more direct and less cognitively mediated access to the world of narrated others and mediating our capacity to share the meaning of their actions, basic motor intentions, feelings, and emotions, thus grounding our identification with and connectedness to narrated characters. When reading a novel, looking at a visual art work, or attending a theatrical play or a movie, our embodied simulation becomes liberated--that is, it is freed from the burden of modelling our actual presence in daily life. We look at art from a safe distance from which our being open to the world is magnified. In a sense, to appreciate art means leaving the world behind in order to grasp it more fully. Through an immersive state in which our attention is focused on the narrated virtual world, we can fully deploy our simulative resources, letting our defensive guard against daily reality slip for a while. Much has happened in the twelve-plus since that essay was published. I discuss discoveries in cognitive and social neuroscience relating to our inquiry that have occurred in the meantime, and discuss critiques of Mirror Neuron research, while making a case for their original argument bolstered by new evidence. I also discuss problems in embodied cognitive narratology that remain to be solved.

SESSION 51 – NARRATIVE THEORY AND ALGORITHMIC INDETERMINACY

Marco Caracciolo

Ghent University

Objects and Algorithmic Uncertainty in Video Game Narrative

Narrative, as suggested by Monika Fludernik and others, displays an ‘anthropomorphic bias’ on the level of characters, setting, and plot. However, engagement with computational technologies can put pressure on this built-in anthropomorphism. As Ed Finn argues, the defining trait of contemporary algorithmic culture is significant uncertainty—*i.e.* unpredictability—in how a computational, algorithmic system will respond to our input. I explore how algorithmic uncertainty emerges in the video game medium, challenges narrative’s anthropomorphism, and fosters instead object-oriented thinking. I consider the trial-and-error approach typically called for by classic point-and-click adventure games (for instance, the *Monkey Island* series). These games’ puzzles tend to accept one solution only, but some of these solutions are so unintuitive and absurd that players are forced to try unlikely combinations of items in their inventory to advance the narrative. We end up combining objects or using them on the environment in seemingly random ways—and sometimes, surprisingly, this leads to a narratively successful interaction. This is a simple example of how algorithmic unpredictability results in object-oriented thinking, but recent puzzle games put this mechanic to much more sophisticated uses. I examine two games in which the players’ trial-and-error manipulations of the medium serve as the main catalyst of narrative progression: *Immortality* and *The Case of the Golden Idol*, both formally innovative games in which a multi-layered narrative reveals its mysteries only if players learn to accept and wield algorithmic unpredictability.

Cody Mejeur

University of Buffalo, SUNY

Queer Play, Trans Emergence: Narrative as Experimental, Algorithmic System

I examine a foundational dream of narrative in digital media, the holodeck: fully immersive, adaptable, responsive, interactive, algorithmic stories that change based on user input. Scholars and designers like Chris Crawford have experimented with algorithms, design, and programming to bring us closer to the holodeck, but it remains elusive for many reasons. I argue that the dream of the holodeck is a misleading one because fully interactive, totalising algorithmic narratives (even if they are possible) are ultimately empty and inhuman ones that fail to realize the meaning-making potentials of either computers or their human users. Instead, I look to the glitches, failures, and “productive indeterminacies” that LGBTQ game players and creators have co-opted, hacked, and transformed to tell their own stories. Queer/trans games like *Curtain* and *Dys4ia* show us how narrative is an algorithmic, semiotic system that makes emergent meaning through play and experimentation defined by its limitations and its inherent potential queerness.

Laura Piippo

Tampere University

Hanna-Riikka Roine

Tampere University

Making Narratives of Democracy Appear and Matter: Algorithms as Organisational Logic

As theorists from a variety of disciplines have pointed out, imagination is a skill needed to both create and uphold capacities which are crucial to the functioning of democracy. For their part, narratives and different ways of narration are central to both constructing and performing imaginative work. Today, algorithmic technologies and narrative form are increasingly entangled with each other, and this has significant implications for the ways in which democratic imaginations come to appear and matter in

the cultural sphere. We focus on the relationship between narration and democracy in digital environments, taking our cue from the idea that the principles behind algorithmic operations are never neutral. They affect human capacity for sense-making, guiding us, for instance, to approach the world as data that can be modelled in many alternative ways. Although digital platforms have been identified as elementary in conveying our experiences to others in narrative form and thus have a capacity to imagine different aspects of democracy and its preconditions, narratologists have not sufficiently engaged such algorithmic effects. We discuss algorithms as organisational logic, producing the conditions through which data on digital platforms are put into forms of meaningfulness. For narrative theory, this means asking what kind of logics make narratives, as patterns of meaning, appear and matter on these platforms in relation to, for instance, imagining the conditions, processes, and possible future forms of democracy.

Esko Suoranta

Tampere University

Interpretations of the Great Common Task: Black Box Demoi in Hannu Rajaniemi's SF

I analyse Hannu Rajaniemi's Jean Le Flambeur trilogy to connect recursive narrative structures to conceptualisations of posthuman societal configurations. Through an allegorical reading with cognitive narratology theories, especially that of literary affordance, Rajaniemi's work can be seen to obliquely approach "disfigurations" of democracy (Urbinati), especially technocracy and spectator participation. This is especially evident in the novels' disjunctions between anthropocentric focalisation and the unknowable posthuman conglomerations whose inner, social, and political lives are, at the same time, an unfathomable black box and a central agent in the major developments of plot and the storyworld. The novels foreground the necessary plurality inherent to systems that strive for democracy as it comes across in various interpretations of "the Great Common Task" – the preservation of past minds into afterlife singularities – that occupies the trilogy's posthuman factions. I chart such tensions and raises the question of how a speculative posthuman far-future can loop back and map out onto the very present to interrogate potentials of democratic imagination.

SESSION 6A – NARRATIVES OF DISAPPOINTMENT, DISAPPOINTING NARRATIVES

Sjoerd-Jeroen Moenandar

University of Groningen

Drummond's Disappointing Posture: Ethos and Plot in Two Rock Memoirs

In this paper I analyse the posture and accompanying ethos (Korthals Altes) Bill Drummond constructs for himself, as well as the reading strategies he teases out, in his two memoirs, *45* and *17*. Drummond is most famous for being one half of the KLF, a British pop sensation from the early 1990s, and his spectacular exit from the music industry in 1992, that saw him shooting blanks from an automatic rifle at the audience of that year's BRIT Awards and burning £1 million at the island of Jura. I argue that in his memoirs, he emplots his life into a narrative of disappointment, going from the dizzying heights of chart-topping pop phenomenon to a man who has run out of creative ideas, haunted by a notorious past he cannot escape. An important element in the ensuing posture of the rock 'n roll refugee who has escaped the clutches of the music industry, is his disappointed admirers. They take the form of people he meets in his memoirs, of a reader he seems to be addressing at times, or, at other times, of someone he seems to expect the reader to be aware of. Drummond presents himself as relishing these admirers' disillusionment, for instance by staging comebacks that are deliberately designed to fail. Through the supposed disillusionment of his fans and a music press that used to adore him, Drummond, the picaresque outsider, can show how the real disappointment is the typical aging rockstar who, unlike him, does keep trying to remain relevant once their original creativity has run its course.

Gerald Prince

University of Pennsylvania

Narratorial Disappointment and Diegetic Narrations in Marcel Proust's *Recherche*

There are many characters in Marcel Proust's *Recherche* who narrate mini-stories and who are explicitly designated as narrating. Some of them are important characters (Oriane, Odette, Swann) and some are little more than extras (M. de Bréauté, the dowager countess d'Argencourt). Some narrate more frequently than others and some prove to be effective (or ineffective) narrators. Whatever their source or value, the mini-narratives narrated in the diegesis fulfil a number of functions (information, characterization, thematisation, evaluation). Above all, through their negative, disappointing attributes, they serve as a counterpoint to the narrational qualities of the novel's homodiegetic narrator and help to specify his attitude toward the narrative form itself.

Emily Anderson

Knox College

Disappointment is Coming: Failing Fans in HBO's *Game of Thrones*

When HBO's *Game of Thrones* premiered in 2011, critics and audiences alike praised its cinematic storytelling. When it concluded in 2019, however, its fans were furiously disappointed: narrative arcs were abandoned; characters acted without motivation; major tensions went unresolved or were resolved in a matter of minutes. There was a failure, they claimed, in the storytelling. Disappointment with the end of a particular series is not unique; it is not even unusual. Many series, especially episodic ones such as *Game of Thrones*, develop and capitalize on a massive fanbase, one with an aesthetic and value-driven investment in the narrative. This investment raises the stakes for viewers, and when a series fails to deliver, they are deeply, personally dissatisfied. I argue that reader-oriented analysis can and should consider an audience's investment in a narrative and take seriously fans' rejection of a seemingly flawed narrative framework.

**SESSION 6B – CLICKBAIT NARRATOLOGY:
LITERARY DEVICES FOR JOURNALISTIC TELLABILITY**

Elise Kraatila

Tampere University

Building the Permacrisis: Dystopian Worlds in Future-Oriented Journalism

The paper looks into English and Finnish language news media in order to identify and analyse cases of 'speculative journalism', by which I mean narrative journalism (Vanoost) that uses devices of dystopian fiction to narrativise future threats. With our current media environment characterised by the Collins Dictionaries Word of the Year 2022, 'permacrisis', future-oriented stories about possibly looming catastrophes – environmental disasters, wars, new pandemics – abound in news media. Such stories tend to construct speculative 'what if' scenarios, aiming to construct epistemic access (Elgin) to an unknowable future by means of thought experiments. Their ostensible aim is to promote the audience's futures literacy, helping them anticipate and 'use' the future (Poli) to inform action in the present – but they may also appeal and contribute to an atmosphere of dread, amounting to little more than fearmongering clickbait. This paper focuses on ways in which this kind of future-oriented journalistic storytelling deploys devices of speculative fiction – particularly dystopian fiction. Such devices include various genre conventions and imagery, but the main interest of this paper is the genre's means for evocative and immersive world-building. In dystopian fiction, as in science fiction more generally (Suvin; McHale), a fictional storyworld becomes a model for rethinking the present through estrangement. Epistemically speaking, it functions as a heuristic device (Grishakova et al.) for

imaginative exploration of future possibilities as well as present phenomena. But what happens when such speculative world-building practices are employed in narrative nonfiction, and in texts that claim – either explicitly or by assumption – to bear direct informative relevance (Walsh) meant to inform the reader’s decision-making? How does the rhetoric of science-fictional world-building affect the meaning communicated by journalistic narratives, and what kind of relationship with our present reality does it suggest?

Markus Laukkanen

Tampere University

Rhetoric of Authority: The Implied Author of HBO’s *Game of Thrones* in Online Media Discourse

This paper explores the ways in which the rhetorical function of authorship (*i.e.* the implied author) has changed in the age of the internet, as well as some of the ways these changes are exploited by engagement-hungry online media. Narratives undergo ‘context collapse’ (Marwick and Boyd) as a result of sharing and resharing on online platforms. Creators lose influence when the original contexts of texts are replaced by new ones by the act of sharing. Rather than residing with the original creator of social media posts, ‘narrative authority’ emerges from the process of viral sharing: from the story logic of social media itself (Dawson and Mäkelä). Because of support from institutional authorities like publishers, traditional works of fiction are resistant to total context collapse. However, the new contexts created by sharing still act as sources of narrative authority alternative to the author’s norms, enabling the co-opting of the meanings of texts. I approach this rhetoric of authority through a case study: is HBO’s TV series *Game of Thrones*, thematically, about anthropogenic climate change, or is it not? In the context of internet-age media culture, the question is debated by participatory audiences and the online media. This negotiation centres around appeals to the true intentions of George R. R. Martin, the author of the work. The relationship between interpretation and the author’s intention is, of course, one of the great questions in the study of literature. The participants in this online debate, largely in line with narrative theory, tend to take as a given that Martin’s own words cannot necessarily be trusted in this matter. The arguments usually take the form of narration, analysis, or investigation rather than relying on citing sources. Ad-monetised online media initiates, mediates and reports these arguments to manufacture user engagement.

Riikka Pirinen

Tampere University

Literary Epiphany in Clickbait Journalism: Ethical Challenges of Personal Stories

This paper explores the ways in which literary epiphany, a sudden change-making revelation or enlightenment of a character, has changed over time and travelled from literary to contemporary media texts. The focus of the paper is particularly on this shift from fictional to non-fictional discourses and on the ethical challenges that arise when epiphany becomes a device for real-life stories in the new storytelling environments of contemporary media. In narrative theory, epiphany is often regarded as an element of plot that pertains to the story dynamics and narrative progression, and moreover, as a representation of a character’s experience, prompts readerly identification with the character (Warhol and Shuman). As a plot device and structural element epiphany has been widely discussed in studies of modernism and the short story (Patea; Tan). Indeed, short stories often intertwine around one meaningful event, and epiphanies often serve as the narrative climax (Beja). Thus, epiphany engages with tellability as it can be a reason for telling a particular story. By analysing examples from journalistic texts in Finnish and English, the paper investigates how particularly narrative journalism has adopted epiphany into its repertoire of narrative devices, and how these real-life narratives – that are often otherwise weak in their tellability – utilize epiphanies to obtain more clicks and to stand out from the endless stream of online news. These kinds of journalistic uses of epiphany cause ethical challenges

because they combine commercial purposes, moral positioning, and political engagement with touching personal stories. By exploring epiphany in contemporary journalism via concepts of narrative theory I suggest new theoretical approaches both to media narratives and particularly to their strength to shape audiences' moral opinions, and to status of epiphany in narrative theory.

SESSION 6C – FICTION, NONFICTION, AND SOMETHING IN BETWEEN

Hannah Kim

University of Arizona

Fabrication, Expectation and the Fiction-Nonfiction Distinction

Philosophers and literary theorists have been looking for essential features of fiction that might help us understand just what fictionality is. Harry Deutsch argues fabrication – making, dreaming, or inventing something ‘out of whole cloth’ or ‘thin air’ – is necessary and sufficient for something to be fictional. Deutsch’s fabrication account has been unpopular, but I argue that the benefits of newer developments that offer functional or rhetorical approaches to fiction can be combined with Deutsch’s account. I explore how these share the insight that fictionality is about managing expectations. The natural next question, then, is: what expectation does fiction set up? The answer, I argue, is ‘fabrication.’ Works of fiction are expected to involve fabricated content. The fiction-nonfiction distinction does not arise unless consumers must decide how to engage with a work, and this is why lyric poetry or comedy tends not to elicit the category question. Whether a work includes fabricated content is an important factor in determining how to engage with it, and our reading and critical practices closely track this consideration. I ultimately suggest that fictionality should be understood not in terms of what the work is like or what the creator did, but what expectations the work invites from the consumer.

Mengchen Lang

Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Beyond Self-Exploration: Elaborating a Rhetorical Approach to Autofiction through Meena Kandasamy’s *When I Hit You*

Siddharth Srikanth draws on the rhetorical approach to fictionality to propose a renewed definition of autofiction, which provides a meaningful intervention into two major issues in current autofiction studies. First, emphasizing the interaction between fictionality and nonfictionality, it goes beyond the thematic focus on self-exploration, which occupies a central place in most conceptions of autofiction but has restricted the scope of critical analysis. Second, it points to a theoretically-informed way of interpreting autofictions, which is still lacking in existing scholarship. Building on Srikanth’s ideas, I explore the possibility of drawing on rhetorical fictionality theory to renew autofiction studies. I propose a slightly revised definition of autofiction as ‘a kind of literary narrative that unsettles any clear hierarchical relation between global fictionality/nonfictionality and local nonfictionality/fictionality’, which better conveys the transgressive quality of the genre. I then elaborate a rhetorical approach to autofiction in the form of a series of guiding questions: How does a given work trouble the hierarchical relation between fictionality and nonfictionality, and which of the two rhetorical resources is more contested? Where or how is each resource deployed most conspicuously, and what communicative effects do they each elicit? How do key passages invite different readings by making readers oscillate between two communicative pacts? How do self-conscious representations of (non)fictionality inform our reading? I apply this approach to Meena Kandasamy’s *When I Hit You*, arguing that Kandasamy problematizes her use of fictionality despite labelling the book as a “novel,” thus presenting it as autofiction. I will then show how, through a combination of metafictional reflections and (para)textual

play, Kandasamy highlights fictionality as both a critique of and a partial antidote to the dilemmas surrounding the narration of domestic abuse in a deeply misogynist environment.

Susan Lanser

Brandeis University

Resisting Fiction(ality)

It is ironic – and little recognised – that from the moment the novel was “rising” in the mid-eighteenth century, some readers were refusing to accept the new fictions as (merely) fictional; even as writers like Samuel Richardson proclaimed their novels to be ‘a new species of writing’, they were acknowledging that their fictions were ‘grounded in fact’. Moreover, this resistance to the fictionality of manifest fictions actually intensified later in the century as readers faced the challenge of figuring out whether what they were reading was or was not “true.” Attempts to extract factual nuggets from fictional forms continued to characterize and sometimes bedevil reading practices in the eighteenth century and beyond. I argue that the fact/fiction divide has never solidified and that theorising “fictionality” is fraught with assumptions that are not supported by empirical evidence from ordinary readers deeply invested in historicity. I ask what we can learn from both historical and contemporary resistances to fictionality and to consider the textual forms and cultural conditions that seem to lure readers across what many theorists would argue is an ontological line. I propose that in some contexts the fiction-nonfiction dichotomy may have been – and may still be – less important to readers than criteria of relevance. I intervene in larger conversations about fictionality that have been burgeoning in narrative studies, and to question the narratological (over)use of “fictionality” as the screen for a broad set of theoretical (and mostly transhistorical) claims about how writers write and readers read.

Yu Wang

Monash University

Fictions and Fictional Elements in Holocaust Representation: A Rhetorical Approach

In the tradition of Holocaust representation established in the 1970s to 1990s, fiction has long been considered inferior to non-fiction, such as diaries, memoirs, and testimonies. Efforts to defend fiction within the field have been primarily centred on what non-fiction cannot possibly achieve. Scholars and critics have argued that fiction gives voice to victims at the scene of their death or madness, which by nature could not be fully testified by a witness (Horowitz). In doing so, fictional texts draw our attention to mass destruction as the core of the Holocaust as opposed to the optimistic story of mass survival in survivor memoirs and testimonies (Langer). Although the approach has successfully carved out a space for fiction in the field, it has some notable restrictions. First, it limits the potential of fiction to areas that non-fiction cannot reach, situating fiction in a disadvantaged position in representing a vast majority of non-extreme experiences, including hiding, immigrating, and everyday survival. Second, the theory fails to explain why survivor-writers who could have gone either way chose fiction instead of non-fiction to testify to their experience of the genocide. Finally, the deeply rooted dichotomy between fiction and non-fiction in categorising Holocaust literature has not been updated to address the increase of hybrid genres in the field in the past two decades, as the descendants of survivors took over their parents to become the main articulators of the genocide. In response to these issues, I take an alternative, rhetorical approach to examine the persisting value of fiction in representing the Holocaust. Looking at three self-identified memoirs with a significant portion of fabricated elements, I ask how, in an area predominated by a desire for “real stories,” different authors with divergent purposes used fiction to manage expectations and to communicate their intended messages.

SESSION 6D – THE UNNATURAL AND THE CONVENTIONAL

Bartosz Lutostański

University of Warsaw

Memeability: A Double-Narrativisation Communication Process on Instagram

This paper presents some conclusions from a qualitative and quantitative analyses of the media content on one of the most popular and influential Instagram profiles (1.2m followers) in Poland: *Make Life Harder* (MLH). During January-March and October-December 2023, I gathered the most frequently-recurring content published on the *MLH* profile with a view to exploring the means of narrativising social and political events in Poland at those times. The key conclusion of my analyses, and a general hypothesis under investigation in my ongoing research, is that memes undergo a process of ‘double narrativization’; we make sense of them as stand-alone narratives and as individual narrative units in a meme series. The notions of ‘each meme is a narrative’ and ‘meme series is a narrative’ frequently overlap and thus constitute an intricate digital communication paradigm. As a result, memes require significant media competence including the knowledge of them as techno-cultural phenomena and the awareness of the social media ecosystem (consisting, for instance, in their multimedia, multimodal, and interactive components).

Bartosz Stopel

University of Silesia

Towards Embodied Defamiliarisation: Immersion, Predictive Processing and Anna Kavan’s *Ice*

In an attempt to further develop debates at the intersection of cognitive and unnatural narratology, I argue in favour of a framework for capturing immersion-defamiliarisation interaction in narratives that addresses the possibility of defamiliarisation being an embodied phenomenon which implies that it does not adversely affect immersion. I argue that when framing scalar models of immersion-defamiliarisation axis in embodied predictive processing and in psychology of art, defamiliarisation can in some cases take an embodied, intuitive or primed form without obstructing immersion. I posit that immersion requires some degree of defamiliarisation in the first place, that stylistic features (far from being transparent) can mitigate defamiliarisation effects in unnatural narratives and sustain immersion because of emotional charge, and that reflective or critical attitudes associated with defamiliarisation can take a form of intuitions and sensations, remaining embodied rather than distanced and cerebral. I illustrate my points analysing Anna Kavan’s avant-garde novel *Ice* which is both a staple of unnatural narratives and unusual for its immersive capacities.

Annjeaneatte Wiese

University of Colorado, Boulder

Revisiting Mimesis: Toward a More Inclusive Narratology

Classical narratology still holds sway over our definitions of narrative and, consequently, what gets counted as narrative outliers. Even as calls go out for new definitions, the results are often framed as counterpoints to convention: antimimetic, unnatural, antinarrative. But in so doing, they also frame certain ways of being as real and others as demanding either naturalization or wholly new categories to be understood. I explore the implications of this framing, especially in terms of what is deemed culturally intelligible. More specifically, I explore the larger implications of the ways we talk about unconventional narratives (with grateful recognition of those who started this conversation before me). Typically these categories prompt certain assumptions. For example, to talk of a narrative as unconventional is to presume that agreed-upon prototypes exist (to say nothing of whether they are sufficient or effective). A corresponding supposition frequently follows: that unconventional narratives somehow go against not just prototypical but also mimetic storytelling—that which imitates and is congruent with our sense of what life is like. This postulation elicits numerous questions. What version

of life gets to count as official human experience, such that a narrative might represent it in a way that feels conventional or verisimilar? What aspects of lived experience are, by contrast, deemed unintelligible, such that they must be represented in an antimimetic form or risk awkward and often ideologically driven measures to naturalize them? How does the unnatural deal with culturally defined “impossibilities” that are nonetheless real for those who live them? I reckon with the assumptions about mimesis that are built into our narratological categories and models in order to explore how narrative theory might instead adopt a more inclusive approach.

SESSION 6E – POSSIBLE SELVES

María-Ángeles Martínez

University of Alcalá

MAXQDA, Storyworld Possible Selves and Narrative Progression

The language of narratives contains an assortment of linguistic expressions which require a hybrid mental referent, inclusive of an internal and an external perspectiviser, for referential disambiguation. Among them are the inclusive, doubly-deictic “you”, and passive constructions without an explicit experiencing entity. These suggest that storyworld possible selves, conceived as blends of an intra- and an extra-diegetic perspectivizer, are conceptual entities present in readers’ mental representations of the fictional world. These linguistic expressions occasionally co-occur in the form of SPS nodes, or clusters of SPS markers of different sorts, packed in short stretches of narrative prose. These nodes are particularly frequent at narrative beginnings, as if to facilitate readers’ shifts into the deictic centre occupied by the focaliser. However, the presence and distribution of SPS nodes in full novels has not been previously investigated. I share ongoing research into the distribution and narrative function of SPS nodes in full novels in English. In the analysis, the SPS nodes in two novels – F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* and Henry James’s *The Turn of the Screw* – are identified and graphically visualised using the software MAXQDA, with a focus on their relationship with and potential contributions to narrative progression. The research hypothesis is that the presence of SPS nodes at certain narrative points signals key themes and episodes whose narrative significance requires readers’ close perspectival alignment with the internal perspectiviser. The visualised data confirms this hypothesis, and further suggests that different novels rely on different SPS anchoring mechanisms, as if the kind of embodied and emotional involvement encouraged in readers for enhanced narrative experiencing also differed.

Shannon Rose Quist

Independent

Phantom Worlds in Fictional Narratives

Building on Marie-Laure Ryan’s conceptualization of possible world narratives, I propose a new subcategory of possible worlds which I term phantom worlds. Like other possible world narratives, a phantom world narrative depicts a character manipulating possibilities with their own cognition to create ‘what is for them a second-order, and for us a third-order, system of reality’ (Ryan). However, in addition to the ontological shift of worlds within a singular narrative, phantom world narratives incorporate additional features including: 1) the embodiment of a desired but unachievable past reality; 2) temporality movements between past possibilities and present realities in a non-linear fashion; and, 3) an acute focus on grief, regret, loss, and unfulfilled desire. These counterfactual fictions hinge on a character’s traumatic history and, much like ghosts, surface to alert both the character and the reader of the emotional impact this could-have-been scenario has made on the character’s development. As readers blend their own self-concepts with the alternate worlds of the character, they engage in the creation of their own phantom worlds. I mainly focus on phantom worlds as they appear

in fictional narratives, but nonfiction phantom world narratives also introduce aspects of fiction through the narrator's constructed fantasy. Whether encoded in a fictional or nonfictional text, the act of writing down these phantom worlds captures a cognitive coping mechanism in action. This is important because phantom world narratives focus on not only the fantasy of what could have happened, but how this unachievable past possibility has negatively impacted the character. Phantom world narratives highlight both the traumatic history of the character and the coping mechanism they have built to manage it. I demonstrate how phantom worlds work and discuss the intersections of relevant discourse.

Shannon Tovey

Kennesaw State University

Narrative Theory and Pre-Service Teachers' Engagement in Planned Teaching Practices

The purpose of this study is to explore preservice teachers' enthusiasm for reading and planned classroom literacy practice after reading literature about teachers and participating in activities designed to deepen their responses. Teachers who are enthusiastic about literature inspire that same enthusiasm in their students (Applegate and Applegate; Wigfield) and are more likely to use instructional practices that contribute to their students' enjoyment and understanding of literature (McKool and Gespass; Ruddell and Linrau). However, only about half of preservice teachers consider themselves enthusiastic readers (Applegate and Applegate). In order to improve children's engagement in literature, then, we must begin with the teacher, but there is little guidance of how to do so. My research crosses interdisciplinary boundaries to apply a theory of narrative, rather than more commonly used theories in teacher education, to this problem. Storyworld Possible Selves theory (Markus and Nurius; Martinez) provides guidance for engaging pre-service teachers in reading by blending with characters like and unlike the future selves they hoped to become. In my project, qualitative research techniques were applied to participants' written and visual responses to literature in order to develop a categorical system to determine the degree of their metaphorical matching with story characters. Data indicated that these experiences resulted in high levels of transformative reading (Miall and Kuiken) that seemed to improve attitudes toward reading by those teachers identified as lukewarm and reluctant readers at the beginning of the study, as well as knowledge of and commitment toward using literature response practices by nearly every participant. Contributions toward Storyworld Possible Selves theory include subcategories of metaphorical matching and indications that scaffolded cognitive processing opportunities may be needed for some readers to experience self-modifying reading experiences.

SESSION 6F – TEEN NARRATIVES

Emma K. McNamara

Ohio State University

Collisions and Fractures: Dual Narration in Young Adult Romance

Dual narration romance novels became popular in YA literature in the twenty-first century. Given that YA literature is about highlighting first experiences—first kiss, first relationship, first time realising friends can be mean, etc.—dual narration narratives work as a teaching tool to present different perspectives on, and reactions about, the same events. These narrative reports are what Jim Phelan calls interpretative and evaluative in that teens do the best they can with the information they think they know. Most dual narration young adult contemporary realistic romance narratives are written in a back-and-forth style, indicating that the narrators are non-competitive and have shared intents. Additionally, in romance narratives, underreported parallel narration teases out a will they/ won't they slow burn, resulting in a satisfying conclusion for the reader. Dual narration romance narratives invite

readers to see that romance and relationships are wanted by all characters, which subverts the stereotype that girls are love-crazy and boys are not. Dual narration clearly proclaims that each love interest was there, was present, and was an experiencing character. While historically multinarrator novels allowed women characters to have a voice, in twenty-first-century YA romance, dual narration allows a boy love interest to have a voice, as they are generally not the character through which the narrative is focalised. It is clear that consumers want romance narratives to be focalised through both love interests. Alternating perspectives greatly contributed to *Normal People's* success—indeed, Connell is just as important to the narrative as Marianne is. My paper provides a clearer understanding of the popularity of dual narration in YA contemporary realistic romance, as well as the narratological impact of dual narration's structures on the implied reader.

Anneke Schewe

Kiel University

Melissa Schuh

Kiel University

'Bury your queer tropes': Serial Character Development, Queer Representation, and the Coming-of-Age Narrative in *Heartstopper*

We explore the Netflix series' *Heartstopper's* commitment to complex storytelling on the basis of its multi-dimensional characterizations. Whilst queer representation in film has historically often culminated in a tragic fate, leading to well-known tropes and phrases, such as "bury your gays", *Heartstopper* differs from many previous explorations of queerness on screen. In an implicit rebuttal of queer fatalism, it offers a multitude of character developments that refrain from relying on shock value and tragic sensationalisation for dramatic effect, dispensing with the stereotypical effects of showing queer suffering to generate empathy and yet, ultimately, discouragement. The show represents queerness that exhibits multiplicity, as diverse kinds of queerness are represented, and non-exceptionality as well as intersectionality. Furthermore, the singularity of token representation is challenged by several characters sharing or identifying with various kinds of queerness. Significantly, none of the characters' developments and characterizations are limited to their queerness and related storylines. By connecting *Heartstopper's* narrative techniques in developing its characters to queer studies and genre theory related to the Bildungsroman and romance, we investigate the potential of intersecting queer storytelling with established (usually heteronormatively coded) genre clues. Using concepts of serial narration, demonstrate the unique possibilities of representing complex queer diversity on screen in a serial structure. As *Heartstopper* is a TV adaptation of a popular graphic novel series, we also discuss the distinct capabilities of each medium by the example of characters and story lines that exist only in the TV adaptation.

SESSION 6G – RE-IMAGINING THE GOTHIC

Mona Alkhudaydi

University of Nottingham

Exploring Anxiety in the Imperial Gothic Genre

The upsurge in Gothic writing at the end of the nineteenth century coincides with the widest expanse of the British empire, suggesting a sub-genre of Imperial Gothic. My research sets out the stylistic characteristics of this genre while recognising that the social and cultural situation around its production is key to this account. In order to explore emotions such as fear, anxiety, and empathy, and values that inform the narrative, an integrated cognitive stylistics is required. In particular, I draw on stylistics and approaches within cognitive poetics and narratology more broadly. In this paper, I explore anxiety as a cognitive stylistic phenomenon of Imperial Gothic: the analysis reveals a lack of certainty

combined with a future-oriented ending expressed by either an explicit temporal reference to the future or by a broad focus and diffused spatial gaze. This textual pattern – which I broadly term “apprehension” – perhaps reflects especially later historical anxiety about the future, and is key to an understanding of Imperial Gothic itself.

Tong Liu

Stanford University

From Gothic to Pastoral: An Exercise in Plausible Intertextuality

I argue that Evelyn Waugh’s *Brideshead Revisited* is a pastoral rewriting of Daphne du Maurier’s gothic *Rebecca*, in addition to a male rewriting of a female text, and a homoerotic rewriting of a heteronormative one. The relationship between these two texts’ generic identities both proves to be intimate – at once diachronically and synchronically – and the analytical source of other important differences. These differences are starkly exposed, and in being exposed also illuminate each other, precisely because of the cross-pollinated affinities that form their background, which allows me to animate plausible intertextuality as a mode of knowledge. If we follow Jacques Derrida, for example, in recognising a more than etymological interchangeability between genre and gender, there is no avoiding seeing how the gyno-dominated gothic and andro-dominated pastoral give different gendered expressions to class mobility. *Rebecca*’s gothic and *Brideshead*’s pastoral share comparable structures of feelings up to a point: they both have nostalgia as the primary affect and mystery as the secondary one. Mystery, however, in *Rebecca* appears as the uncanny and in *Brideshead* appears as the holy, which gives different meanings to the ascendancy of the country house as a twentieth-century chronotope, and it is in witnessing how nostalgia founders on the one but not the other that we come to see the laws of heterogeneity and homogeneity silently governing each genre. On the level of genre-theoretical discovery, because this intertextuality exists on the double axis of, on the one hand, genre and mode, and, on the other, verse and prose, it affords us the opportunity to use the novel as a measure against which to assess the history of genre-mode convertibility – the identity crisis that the pastoral novel suffers makes it a post-mode genre, whereas the gothic novel is a pre-mode genre.

Rachel McCoy

Ohio State University

Counting the Days: Affective Speculation in *Dracula Daily*

With any novel, there are three kinds of time in play: story time, discourse time, and reading time. The first two, and the relationship between them, have been thoroughly explored in narrative theory. But reading time, since it is such a personal and variable concept, has not received the same attention. However, the internet phenomenon of *Dracula Daily*—each day subscribers receive an email containing the events of *Dracula* that were recorded on that date—has created not only a shared reading pace but also a shared response space. This reading pace aligns reading time with story time, so that readers experience events alongside characters over the course of six months (May to November); this change also effects the order of telling since events that happen to different characters in different chapters periodically take place on the same day. *Dracula Daily* offers the opportunity to study the affect of slow reading time in addition to what happens when readers already know that *Dracula* is a vampire. Building on Caroline Levine’s argument that suspense was not a passive experience for Victorian readers, but a ‘stimulus to active speculation’, I argue that *Dracula Daily* is fostering a similar, although more specific, phenomenon today. That is, readers are experiencing affective suspense—speculation about characters’ feelings and beliefs (rather than their knowledge)—and are creating a community based on this experience. In this presentation, I examine the new printed edition and #*DraculaDaily* on social media to demonstrate how this slow, knowing reading creates a space for readers to engage in

affective speculation, where the focus is not on what characters do or know, but rather on what they feel and believe.

SESSION 6H – NARRATIVES AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Malcah Efron

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Expertise and the Realism Effect in Academic Fictions

The realism effect describes the moments in fiction narratives that persuade readers to treat them as facts about the actual world, *i.e.* referential details, rather than merely descriptors of the storyworld, *i.e.* representational details, or Roland Barthes's reality effect. The realism effect is influenced by an audience member's positionality. For example, someone aware that Scranton, PA exists could experience a realism effect when watching *The Office* (USA), whereas someone who is not would experience Barthes's reality effect. Thus, the audience member's positioning relative to the subject material affects the nature (or even perception) of the realism effect. The question becomes, though, how does someone from Scranton experience the realism of *The Office* (USA)? For example, I have argued that, in the context of medical dramas, non- or emerging- experts are more likely to perceive a realism effect, whereas experts either perceive a reality effect or fantasy. Academic fiction often has high appeal among academic actual audiences: this distinction raises the question as to the importance of the expertise of the authorial audience. I argue that authors and authorial audiences are crucial components to understanding the effectiveness of these details to drawing audiences in. By considering academic fictions such as David Lodge's *Changing Places*, Juliet Lapidos's *Talent*, and Netflix's *The Chair*, I explore how an expert author and an expert authorial audience can shape expert and lay perceptions of reality and realism effects, thus nuancing the realism effect as details that teach audiences.

Katherine Parsons

University of Birmingham

Searching for Narrative: Stuart Hall, Information-Seeking and the Narrativisation of Research

Digital "search" processes increasingly shape a modern understanding of information-seeking in digital cultures, promising everything from immediate access to knowledge through the vast scope of the Internet search engine to the heightened discoverability of documents using search bars. This paper works towards a conjunctural analysis of modern "search" processes which takes into account the normalisation of "search" as a metaphor for information-seeking and the evolution of digital search from pre-digital methods of information-seeking. I take as a case study the index cards used by Hall in the 1960s to organise his research as a student, which have recently been deposited in the Stuart Hall Archive at the University of Birmingham. The material nature of the index cards and their practical use as a means of documenting research allows for analysis of recent, pre-digital methods of information-seeking. This paper considers how – as materials relating to the research methods, influences and interests of a visionary scholar whose work in cultural studies remains tremendously influential – the index cards might be used to narrativize Hall's research. This paper therefore considers the narrativisation of research, investigating both the narrativisation work that research does (*i.e.* how different methods of information-seeking contribute to a particular understanding of a subject) and also how narratives are constructed about research (*i.e.* how we describe and understand research processes).

Adelina Yankova

Columbia University

Stories from the College Newsroom: How Organisational Narratives Shape Institutional Memory

I explore how organisational narratives shape the experience of college newspaper journalists. Specifically, I examine the roles college journalists see themselves playing in the context of their campuses, the extent to which institutional memory exists in college newsrooms, and the stories that come to define the papers' identities. College newsrooms contend with frequent, systemic personnel turnover, which poses challenges to preserving institutional knowledge. In this context, I examine the narratives considered most important by college journalists and interrogate how stories help maintain organizational memory. My work draws on scholars like Julian Orr, Rick Iedema, Christine Jorm, Martin Lum, Francesca Polletta and, most notably, sociologist and organizational researcher Charlotte Linde. Using Linde's study on the importance of non-participant narratives to developing and maintaining individual and group identity within an institution, I map my findings onto the three types of narratives she found most frequently repeated within organizations: origin stories, stories about turning points, and stories of triumph. In-depth interviews with thirteen college newspaper editors throughout the United States revealed that news stories, whether old or recent, that led to actionable change or otherwise set the newspaper apart as the sole source of certain information are considered to be the most salient by college journalists. Interviewees discussed stories of triumph and failure with a sense of collective responsibility rather than the doing of one specific journalist; they used the pronouns 'they' and 'we' interchangeably when referring to non-participant narratives, demonstrating the ability of institutional stories to transcend time and shape individual and organizational identity. The newsroom itself appeared as a central locus for transmitting the papers' collective memories through social ritual. However, the shift to digital-only production has significantly curtailed journalists' newsroom presence and the opportunities for teaching and sharing non-participant narratives, threatening the maintenance of institutional memory.

SESSION 6I – NARRATIVES AND THE PUBLIC FACES OF SCIENCE

Erin James

University of Idaho

Nick Koenig

University of Idaho

Public Science, Narrative Theory, and Tree Ring Education

This paper, co-written by a narrative theorist and a dendrochronologist, places narrative theory in conversation with more-than-human plants. We flesh out this pairing in three sections. First, we explore how dendrochronologists can apply narratology in the field to make their science more accessible to the public, focusing especially on how concepts such as time, narrative agency, and the unnarratable can enrich and challenge existing dendrochronological models and methodologies. Second, we query how the use of narrative theory in public-facing science suggests new ideas for applied narratology. Finally, we sketch out how teachers of both narrative theory and tree ring science can apply these ideas in their pedagogies to make both subjects inclusive and better able to respond to the urgency of our climate crisis.

Shannon Lambert

Ghent University

Webs of Affect: Citizen Science, Narrative, and the Joy of Discovery

Marsh Explorer is an online citizen science project which asks participants to sift through a series of marshland images and use coloured markings to identify snails, crabs, and burrows. The exercise

requires patience and the rewards of observation are not always certain: 'A lot of times, there will be a lot of vegetation but no snails, crabs, or burrows,' warns the website. Yet, research on this form of citizen science suggests that the uncertainty of success actually increases volunteer satisfaction and engagement — in other words, the slow pace of the exercise and the delayed/ indefinite reward results in a degree of joy or satisfaction. The *Marsh Explorer Talk* section allows volunteers to discuss and dispel uncertainties surrounding their categorisations with other participants, which deepens the experience of satisfaction as volunteers move from uncertainty to (partial) certainty and from individual to collective affect. I use narratological work on 'corroborative' (Morel) and 'embedded' (Jenkins) narratives to read *Marsh Explorer* as a space of informational exploration where participants slowly accumulate, modify, and confirm fragments of knowledge. I argue that the affective experience that emerges from the platform's ludic form follows an emotional arc found in both science and (literary) narrative. In mapping *Marsh Explorer's* webs of affect, I investigate how corroborative and embedded forms of narration help us to navigate the frustrations and joys of discovery across the factual and fictional, across science and story.

Daniel Aureliano Newman

University of Toronto

Discordant Narration and Fraudulent Science: A Mutually Illuminating Connection

Of all the forms of scientific disinformation, few are as potentially damaging as fraudulent studies published in legitimate scientific forums. The most notorious of these is probably Andrew Wakefield's *Lancet* article suggesting a causal link between the MRR vaccine and autism, a paper with continued traction among Anti-Vaxxers despite its retraction and its lead author's exposure for scientific malpractice and conflicts of interest. I interpret them as a limit case of unreliable narration. Using confirmed cases of scientific fraud and more complex cases (e.g. Exxon's public suppression of its own scientific studies of fossil fuels and climate change), I argue that reading these texts through the lens of unreliable narration can clarify understanding of scientific disinformation, and intervene in some enduring debates in narrative theory. Scientific articles boast features that enable us to delineate, with unparalleled confidence, various positions in the communicative model of narrative. Most notably, they allow unparalleled confidence in distinguishing between flesh-and-blood author(s), implied author and narrator. The notion of scientific consensus, though hardly unproblematic, provides a clear normative basis for rhetorical readings of science that is missing or at least fuzzier in other narrative forms. Scientific studies are thus ideal for relitigating some of the enduring debates about unreliable narration: how can we determine the "norms" of the implied author—and is the implied author a necessary concept? Is unreliability entirely subjective? I adumbrate reading strategies for describing scientific fraud and guarding against disinformation that mimics or parasitically exploits the ethos of legitimate science.

SESSION 7A – NARRATIVES AND THE PUBLIC FACES OF SCIENCE

Carol Colatrella

Georgia Institute of Technology

Dislocation and Travel in Lisa Ko's *The Leavers* and Jessica Au's *Cold Enough for Snow*

Award-winning novels respectively from the U.S. and Australia, Lisa Ko's *The Leavers* and Jessica Au's *Cold Enough for Snow* blend memories and experiences from narrators of different generations to represent the human costs of immigration and the recuperative powers of voluntary travel. Formal structures in these works encourage reader sympathy for characters navigating marginalization related to socioeconomic circumstances, political decisions, and cultural dislocations. Both novels rely on internal monologue to promote equity for individuals and social groups. *The Leavers* describes an

undocumented immigrant mother from China (Peilan/Polly) and her U.S.-born son (Deming/Daniel) who endure the consequences of U.S. laws and public policies related to immigration, including detention, deportation, and adoption. Limiting exposition and dialogue, Ko elaborates interior lives: anxieties, hopes, fears, emotions, and speculations. Polly and Daniel suffer racial prejudice and anxieties due to her detention and his transracial adoption. Modes of represented consciousness promote sympathy for mother and son who value liberty, freedom, and equality even as they recognize that their experiences fail to meet democratic ideals. Written without chapter numbers or titles, *Cold Enough for Snow* takes shape as the internal monologue of an adult daughter who travels to Japan with her mother, an immigrant from Hong Kong. The writer-daughter planned the journey to see cultural sites and artworks, and she shares memories, present observations, and future events with ideas about creativity and relationships. Au's representations of individual consciousness and descriptions of physical settings reference nuances of mother-daughter communications reflecting different histories. At the end of the trip, the daughter realizes that her mother resisted sharing her own past experiences, instead purchasing well-chosen gifts for family members. Ending like *The Leavers*, *Cold Enough for Snow* acknowledges that mother and child bond in acknowledging that their different histories do not prevent them from moving forward.

Adwoa A. Opoku-Agyemang

Johns Hopkins University

'I laughed too': Travel Humour in African Novels

Separated by half a century and unlike in several regards, Camara Laye's *Le regard du roi* and Ike Oguine's *A Squatter's Tale* are two African novels brought together by their complementary approaches to the cross-cultural travel narrative. Uniting their very different protagonists and narrative styles is an ambivalence toward colonial and postcolonial tropes about home and abroad, which their storylines simultaneously mine and disavow. This paper teases out the fact that underneath their storytelling, which often appears tuned to other things, is an intent to make the reader laugh. First, I discuss the tendency of stories about travel, from colonial centre to periphery and vice versa, to lead up to some discovery, whether geographical and cultural or personal and moral. A lot of travel humour is prompted by the learning curve leading up to that discovery. I then show how Laye and Oguine push the boundaries of the trope of cultural discovery. In complementary ways, their humour blurs their reader's reference points, tests clichés about travel and migration and confuses the butt of the joke. Much of the amusement of Laye's text lies in the protagonist's disorientation as he wades through an unabashedly strange plot. For Oguine's part, it is in the narrator's chronic dismissiveness of a plot, characters and themes that, at the turn of the twenty-first century, have become commonplace. Tongue-in-cheek, the humour of these texts hinges on the recognition of global power dynamics even as it challenges the basis of that recognition.

Gioia Panzarella

University of Warwick

Co-Authoring a Migration Story: Negotiations and Power Dynamics in Literature and Television

This paper explores features of collaboration and the power dynamics between the writers of co-written literary texts. I focus on the case of contemporary translingual writers with a migration background and the complex writing process they encounter when working with professional cowriters, such as journalists and non-fiction writers. I am interested in unpacking elements of negotiations between the two parties, for example, in terms of whose story the book tells and whose words the book employs. In order to discuss this specific type of co-writing relationship within the discourse on public perceptions of stories of migration, I consider not only the text itself, but also its dissemination through television. I argue that looking at performative elements of events where the

book is presented to wider audiences help us uncover some key issues to investigate (co-)authorship. As a case study, I discuss the collaboration between Enaiatollah Akbari and Fabio Geda. Geda authored *In mare ci sono I coccodrilli*, which is a biographical account of Akbari's childhood, his escape from Afghanistan and, after years of moving around, his obtaining of refugee status in Italy. The book received attention from the press and has been translated in a number of languages. Ten years later, Akbari and Geda wrote the sequel *Storia di un figlio*, this time as co-authors. First, I analyse key passages of the two books where instances of collaborations become visible. Second, I use some examples of the dissemination of the first book to unpack some elements of the writing relationship between Akbari and Geda, including a TV interview on public television. I propose that considering co-authorship offers insights into the complex relationship between migration and literature and keeps at the centre the public dissemination aspect of literary production by translingual writers.

SESSION 7B – THE STRANGENESS OF FRANZ KAFKA

Bohumil Fořt

Masaryk University

(Lack of) Completeness and Coherence in Franz Kafka's Worlds

The problematic nature of completeness and coherence in Franz Kafka's literary worlds may be viewed as a key to the understanding of his unique narrative style. Literary narratives often grapple with the challenge of withholding information from the reader in diverse ways, which are influenced by a complex interplay of internal and external factors: the former factors stem from the inherent nature of fiction, whereas the latter are shaped by the author's aesthetic intentions, norms, and values. Kafka's fictional worlds are no exception to this dynamics – indeed, they push it to an extreme. They are riddled with gaps, which are not mere oversights but rather integral components of their structural and aesthetic makeup. These gaps can manifest themselves at various levels and facets of the narrative, encompassing its very fabric – actions, characters, and settings. Using as examples such works as *The Trial*, *The Castle*, and some short stories, this paper examines the repercussions of such informational gaps on our comprehension of Kafka's literary realms and their constituent parts: the enigmatic characters that populate them, the haunting and often surreal settings, and the labyrinthine plots that guide us through these worlds. By dissecting the interplay of gaps and information, we can gain a deeper insight into the complex and unusual types of completeness and coherence that Kafka creates in his works.

Lorna Martens

University of Virginia

Franz Kafka as Play Dough Artist: Rolling Out, Cutting Up, Compacting

This paper looks at two complementary techniques of Kafka's. The first involves dividing up what is normally thought of as one, dispersing one thing into several, or otherwise stretching things out through repetition, mirroring, or echoing. The second involves the reverse action: condensing disparate things into one through various means such as amphibologies, puns, and composites. Both techniques pervade Kafka's mature work. Works to be discussed include "The Judgment" and *The Trial*, among others.

Pedro Ponce

St. Lawrence University

Staging Franz Kafka: The Theatrical Frame in His Fictions

This paper considers Kafka's relationship to the theatre, as seen in those fictions which evoke writing for the stage. As Christine W. Sizemore has observed, 'One of the most fascinating and yet

discomforting aspects of Franz Kafka's fiction lies in its attack on the reader's sense of reality'. Central to this attack is how narrative discourse in Kafka is "staged," figuratively as well as formally, framing the actions of his characters as performances before an audience. The scenic unfolding of his narratives gives them the vividness of real time, while the theatrical framing emphasizes the performative qualities of the real. In those fictions where audiences themselves are characters – "A Hunger Artist" and "A Report to an Academy" – this staging of reality on the page especially implicates the reader's lived reality outside of the text. By considering how Kafka frames his narratives as performances, this paper explores a layer of the author's style that reveals his particular craft in representing the strange, as well as his ambivalent relationship to modern audiences craving spectacle. In addition, his unique staging of narrative anticipates the metafictional turn in postmodernist fiction.

Eyal Segal

Independent

Franz Kafka's Experimentation with First-Person Narration (1916-17)

Franz Kafka's first-person stories raise some interesting narratological issues concerning the perspectival relations between narrating- and experiencing-self, the use of the present tense, and narrative closure. I am focusing on texts written during the period mentioned in the paper's title, since this is when first-person narration became a major mode of writing for the mature Kafka. His poetic "breakthrough," which occurred some years earlier during late 1912-early 1913, involved a turning away from first-person to third-person narration – focalised through the main character – in works such as "The Judgment," "The Metamorphosis," his first novel-fragment *Amerika*, or – a couple of years later – *The Trial*. During late 1916-early 1917, when Kafka turned to a sustained exploration of first-person narration, he mostly eschewed standard retrospective storytelling in favour of experimenting with present-tense narration – and this in two distinct modes. One is the narration of a rapid chain of events leading to catastrophe, producing a sense of immediate "presentness" with almost no retrospective dimension (e.g., in "A Country Doctor" or "The Bucket Rider"); the other is a description of a habitual and essentially static state, typically focusing on some enigmatic object of contemplation (whether individual, as Odradek in "The Cares of a Family Man," or collective, as the invading barbarians in "An Old Manuscript"). Both modes, in addition to the role they played in the development of Kafka's poetics, have become an important part of the (post)modernist repertoire of first-person storytelling techniques.

SESSION 7C – REALISM AND MIMESIS

Carra Glatt

Bar-Ilan University

Literary Realisms: Redefining the Genres of the Novel

In the long critical history of literary realism, two leading views have emerged: that it was a vitally important artistic movement, and that it may not have existed at all. At its most expansive, the definition of realism has been stretched to include almost any traditionally-plotted novel without obviously disqualifying features, and some with such features; George Levine's realist tradition includes *Frankenstein*, while Harry Shaw's encompasses the historical romances of Sir Walter Scott. At its most restrictive, it has been limited to a small subset of canonical, mid-nineteenth-century British novels dedicated to the advancement of a historically particular aesthetic philosophy; Jesse Rosenthal puts the number of realist novelists at no more than twenty-six. I propose a division of the genre of "realism" into two categories: mimetic and narrative realism. The former, characterised by detailed description of non-epic life, describes the representative mode inaugurated, in the English-language world, by Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding and widely adopted across the genres of British and American

literature. The latter category is rather defined by plot structures that reflect the possibilities and limitations of actual life—a dynamic often associated with, but not limited to, the Victorian multiplot novel. A more widespread recognition and adoption of this subdivision of the broad category of realism, I argue, will both help to refine the sense and scope of this crucial but often imprecisely used generic classification and productively expand our understanding of realism to a wider category of narrative types.

Thomas Preston

Middlebury College

Affective, Embodied Narratology: A Return to Mimesis

What is the place of “affect” and the “body” in narratological analysis? These concepts have appeared in studies since the affective and cognitive turns in the late 1990s/early 2000s, however scholarship rightly states that they remain undertheorised within narratology. Writing in the context of the cognitive sciences, Vittorio Gallese and Hannah Wojciehowski present ‘mirror neurons’ as the root of a reader’s cognitive ‘embodied simulations’ of a text. Such neural processes, they argue, demonstrate humans to be hardwired for empathy, pointing towards a ‘common’. Building on these insights while at the same time arguing for a stronger narratological focus, others have Marco Caracciolo, Cécile Guedon, Karin Kukkonen, and Sabine Müller attend to space, time, rhythm and voice in their applications of mirror neurons to narrative. They demonstrate that narrative can both flow with and disrupt embodied simulation. On the subject of affective narratology, Patrick Hogan retheorises focalisation affectively, arguing that more attention should be paid to the ‘sensory perception’ and ‘interest’ of a given narrator when ascertaining the limits of their knowledge. In my paper, I critique these approaches and offer my own contribution to how “affect” and “embodiment” can further narratological analysis. My contention is twofold: first, narratology rooted in cognitive sciences provides insight into the reader’s body, but not into the bodies of narrative; second, Hogan’s undertheorisation of ‘affect’ limits the insight that can be gained from affect’s interaction with narration. Through a treatment of Brigitte Reimann’s *Franziska Linkerhand*, I argue that applying affect and embodiment to Uri Margolin’s notion of ‘second-order characterization’ yields a richer understanding of Gerard Genette’s ‘mimetic levels’. I demonstrate the centrality of affect in enhancing the structural study of narrative, by arguing how narrators operate through affect and through the body.

Changcai Wang

Southwest Jiaotong University

Anti-Narrative-Causality: Redefining Unnatural Narrative

In response to the controversy over the various definitions of unnatural narrative, I propose a new definition of unnatural narrative, which attributes the characteristics of unnatural narrative to “anti-narrative causality”. According to this definition, a narrative is unnatural to some extent if it is deemed by the reader to be a deliberate departure from or to challenge or subvert narrative causality, no matter if it occurs at the level of the story or the level of discourse. Considering the text’s characteristics, author’s purpose, and reader’s reception, this new definition seems to be clear and flexible and in tune with the reader’s strange feeling of the unnatural, which integrates several previous definitions while avoiding some challenges. Narrative causality and anti-narrative causality take on various forms in diverse narrative genres. All narratives can be placed in a spectrum with strong narrative causality and strong anti-narrative causality at both ends according to variant degrees of unnaturalness. Ideally, the author deliberately presents anti-narrative-causality in an unnatural narrative, from which readers can identify the anti-narrative causality. In a non-ideal situation, there will be two kinds of dislocation: one is that the reader discovers the anti-narrative causality from the narrative and attributes it to the author’s intentional arrangement, but the author did not intentionally set it. In the other non-ideal

situation, an author sets up elements with anti-narrative-causality in the narrative, but a reader regards it as mistakes resulting from carelessness and ignores them, and still establishes narrative causality. Once the authorial intention of anti-causality is removed as an error, the text loses its unnaturalness in the eyes of the reader, whereas in cases where the real author does not intend it, unnaturalness exists for the reader even if the reader mistakenly sees anti-causality as an intentional arrangement of the author.

SESSION 7D – RUPTURE AND CRISIS

Tero Eljas Vanhanen

University of Helsinki

Narratology of Shock: Affectivity and Transgression in Extreme Fiction

Narrative fiction that aims for shock value exhibits two conflicting tendencies: it aims to be disturbing and repelling while simultaneously sparking readers' fascination and drawing them closer. This dynamic is particularly fundamental for a subset of transgressive fiction we could call extreme fiction, ranging from prewar surrealist provocations (e.g. Guillaume Apollinaire, Georges Bataille) to seedy 1970s exploitation and horror paperbacks (e.g. Richard Allen, James Herbert) to post-punk influenced serial killer smashes from the 1980s and 1990s (e.g. Bret Easton Ellis, Dennis Cooper) and beyond (e.g. Jonathan Littell or Agustina Bazterrica). These kinds of works embrace this contradiction through shocking representation of sadistic violence and sexual transgression that lures readers in precisely by being so nauseatingly repelling. It is the paradox of tragedy on steroids. I analyse common affective narrative strategies that extreme fiction uses to simultaneously repel and fascinate readers. Combining methods from rhetorical and affective narratology with cognitive aesthetics, I examine how affective responses from readers are encoded into texts that often prefigure their reception by real readers. Drawing on several case studies, I argue that we can distinguish four principal categories of narrative shock tactics typical in extreme fiction: 1) mimetic strategies of representing disturbing and violent scenes; 2) identificatory strategies of making readers empathize or identify with characters—both victims and perpetrators; 3) alethic strategies of seemingly weakening the boundaries between the fictional world and reality; and 4) transgressive strategies of challenging the moral views of readers. My analysis suggests that extreme fiction is anti-aesthetic by nature: through shock tactics, transgression of moral norms, and extreme themes it aims for strangely enjoyable displeasure and distaste in readers. I argue that extreme fiction forms a limit case of literature, which requires new narratological and aesthetic theorising to make full sense of it.

Christine Schwanecke

University of Graz

Theorising “Crisis Narratives” and their Positive Cultural Impact

I theorise the notoriously difficult relationship between narratives and their cultural impact, focusing on “crisis narratives”. Just as crisis in medicine marks ‘the point in the course of a disease at which a decisive change occurs’ (Runciman and Merry), “crisis narratives” in fictional and non-fictional discourse mark a critical turning point to an unforeseeable future which will either lead to deterioration or improvement. As Reinhart Koselleck has noted, modern usage of the term ‘crisis’ has mainly negative connotations: “‘Crisis’ is often used interchangeably with “unrest,” “conflict,” “revolution,” and to describe vaguely disturbing moods or situations’. Instead of viewing crisis as a turning point that is likely to result in devastation, I enquire into the potentially positive effects of crises, examining the role narratives can play in overcoming critical periods. Byung-Chul Han argues that narrative has been in crisis ever since the advent of the information age: storytelling has become ‘storyselling’; it is used in adverts and has lost its world-changing power by submitting to the hegemonic laws of economy,

actuality, and abbreviation. The postmodern world, the world of fake news and divided societies, thus, lacks the longing, vision, and future that used to mark narratives, as community-building and world-making entities. Han makes a forceful plea not to forget the healing powers of narrative. Not least this is why my paper turns to cognitive and cultural narratology to analyse both factual and fictional narratives and their impact on crisis perception. It theorises the ways in which positive outcomes of crises and narrativity's healing potential participate in developing individual, communal, and cultural resilience and assesses narratives' potential to foster favourable outcomes of crises and build positive futures.

Lawrence K. Stanley

Brown University

Deictic Crisis: Nonfiction Narrative in an Era of Instabilities

In his study of Elizabeth Rush's nonfiction narrative *Rising*, Killian Quigley traces the ways it navigates the complexities facing writers of eco-narratives: working first-hand experiences with the technicalities of climate change to form cognitive structures capacious enough to engage with feelings and facts. The actualities of low-lying coastal land—the littoral regions—gradually going underwater and erasing coastal towns and cultures open up study of narrative structures, ones capable of managing the kind of 'deictic crisis [...] that disrupts the remembered', (Quigley) when the instability of the semiotic referent threatens the words we need to talk about anything, threatens to sever word-thing relations along with our ability to tell the stories we need to tell in order to understand and interpret how much is at stake, beyond the reductive Things are bad and things will get worse, much worse. The subject takes us to the core of narrative-making and to concepts of narrative. How then to construct structures flexible enough to manage past and present and future with nearly simultaneously immediacy, when the future of something is indeterminate and when the past must be reckoned with but is not enough to foretell the future? Lyrical and analytical, nonfiction narratives begin to address the question. They interest the referential, affective, and conative; they negotiate within the world of actualities to imagine and to project beyond that world; they draw on literary notions of inventing the world being inhabited while being invented; they enact the instability of the indeterminate subject and the instability of human cognition. This paper is a work in progress to figure out the "future tense narration" in nonfiction discourse, 'when', as Uri Margolin says, 'the ontological collapses into the epistemological'.

SESSION 7E – FORMS IN TIME

Samuli Björninen

Aarhus University

Rhetoric of Factuality in Historiographic and Travel Narratives of Early Modern England

Narrative genres that scholars have called 'factual' (Fludernik) or 'nonfictional' (Nielsen, Phelan and Walsh) have been theorised extensively in recent years, but their historical or diachronic study still occupies a more marginal position in the field. As scholars of the early modern period leading up to the Enlightenment have shown, this era gives rise to both to the distinction between the fictional and nonfictional and to several conceptions of "fact" that inform differentiation between textual genres during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In charting out these developments, my paper partakes in the broadly "chrononarratological" project envisioned for narrative theory today (Birke *et al.*). More particularly, I look into cases from seventeenth and eighteenth-century historiography and travel narratives to analyse the rhetorical means they use to argue for their own factuality. Many of the strategies are still recognisable to us, but the focus on the early modern period highlights how the rhetorical innovations around factual narratives are connected to broader negotiations about

empiricism and rationalism, observation as a scientific method, and the continuum from experience to experiment. As historiography deals with contingent facts that are, at best, indirectly observable, it becomes an outlier of the scientific revolution. However, during the early modern period the genre devises new ways to legitimise its claims, for instance by reference to other narrative accounts and by fashioning apparatuses for documenting source materials. In contrast, travel accounts construct their factual rhetoric from experiential observations, while both declaring allegiance to the experimental ideals of empiricist science and expressing methodological doubts. The comparison between the two genres shows that the heterogeneous realm of the factual narrative only gradually coalesces into the generic assemblage that theorists often take for granted today in their discussions of fictional and factual narrative genres.

Mark M. Freed

Central Michigan University

Inscribing Unreal Time: Asynchronous Temporalities in Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*

Responding to a January 1931 letter inquiring about his treatment of time in *The Man Without Qualities*, Robert Musil acknowledges that Part I abandons the dimension of time in the sense that linearity, before/after, and causality do not structure the events that make up its action. At the same time, written over the course of decades and first published in 1930, the novel is set in 1913-1914 and has at least the nominal structure of historical fiction, offering a representation and thereby post facto understanding of the pre-war Europe that led to the catastrophe of World War One and collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire that serve as signifiers of the pathology of modernity. The specificity of the novel's historical setting —beginning on “a fine day in August 1913”— thus remains a condition of its capacity to be thematic with respect to modernity. Abandoned on the one hand, decisively organising on the other, time in *The Man Without Qualities* operates according to two distinct temporalities. While the novel's *histoire* follows an *Erzählungszeit* (narrative time), its *récit* remains connected to *Wirklichkeitszeit* (real, historical time). These asynchronous temporalities are precisely balanced on the fulcrum of Musil's claim not to have written a historical novel, operationalising that claim while paradoxically undermining it. Disentangling the temporal relation of the *histoire* to the *récit* in *The Man Without Qualities* allows us to approach the more general problem, also posed by Musil: how narrative time relates to real time at all. This presentation offers observations that, falling short of definitive answers, cast light on the intricacies of these two questions: how time operates in Musil's novel, and how Musil's negotiation of narrative time and real time enables the effort to “write modernity.”

Ryan Siemers

Southern Utah University

Confessional Forms in Daniel Defoe, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Historians of the novel—Ian Watt, Michael McKeon, Franco Moretti, and others—see the form as fundamentally secular. In Watt's landmark analysis, the trio of Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, and Henry Fielding bequeath to the novel its formal and psychological realism and its penchant for self-reflexive satire, respectively, but they do not grant the novel any true investment in religion. Defoe's religious practice, according to Watt, was ‘mechanical’, mere ‘Sunday religion’. Watt's assessment, though not without its dissenters, has become a commonplace. Contrary to this commonplace, I want to sketch a history of the novel that traces an intersection with the sacrament of penance (ritual confession) and its Protestant varieties, especially its written varieties: diaries, journals, and published spiritual autobiographies. In place of Watt's trio of authors, I propose to consider Daniel Defoe, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Fyodor Dostoevsky. In *Moll Flanders*, Defoe gives us a Protestant subject who, despite not being required to do so, confesses emotionally to a minister in Newgate Prison in her approach to conversion, and who likens her prison confession to an abridged version of the text of the

novel *Moll Flanders*. In his *Confessions*, Rousseau invents the entirely unique (and largely secular) individual. This individual, however, invests tremendous energy in the project of confessing himself in expectation of emotional release akin to that felt by Moll Flanders in her prison confession. And Dostoevsky, in satirising Rousseau in *Notes from Underground*, draws out the problematic nature of Rousseau's unique individual as one who cannot stop confessing because he has no firm foundation on which to ground the truth of his confession. Through these three authors, we see the emergence of what Georg Lukács called the 'problematic individual', the 'seeker' protagonist of the novel. But this protagonist, rather than overcome religion entirely, continues to be shaped in unintended ways by a confessional legacy.

SESSION 7F – BLACKNESS AND NARRATION

Matthias Klestil

University of Klagenfurt

Versional Narrative in African-American Literature: Kiese Laymon's *Long Division* and Percival Everett's *Telephone*

While narratives that tell their stories in more than one version are a growing presence in contemporary fiction and film, and find increasing attention in narrative theory, *e.g.* as 'reflexive double narratives' (Frangipane), 'future narratives' (Bode and Dietrich), or multi-narratives, there are few attempts so far to consider questions of race or ethnicity in relation to such forms of narrative. I explore what I call versional narration in contemporary African American fiction and examines how experimenting with telling stories in more than one version functions in such texts and in relation to their often-central socio-political contexts and comments. I focus on two texts, (the revised version of) Kiese Laymon's debut novel *Long Division* and Percival Everett's *Telephone*. In both cases, the writers experiment with the idea of narrative as versional and present forms of versional narration. On the one hand, Laymon's speculative novel, featuring two covers on both the front and the back and inviting readers to begin reading from both sides, involves several temporal levels and versions of its main character to address questions of social justice and resilience in new ways. On the other hand, Everett's *Telephone* is a novel with three different versions, each with a slightly different plot. Through its unusual form of versioning, I argue, the text thereby philosophises on questions of the status of narrative as versional, human communication, and authorship. Analysing such texts ultimately not only helps extend the corpus and further explore multi-version narratives, but also aims to interlink productively with fields such as critical race narratology (Donahue) and, by introducing and theorising the notion of versional narration, unnatural narratology.

James McBride

New York University

The Paradox of Confession: William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, Racism and Black Lives Matter

In theory, confession is a narrative of truth-telling. Yet, as a genre of legal discourse, confession paradoxically does no such thing. In law, confession as truth-telling unwrites itself, inscribing in the confessant's consciousness, even her flesh, the truth of the interrogator. It has long been so in Western legal traditions: in the Athenian courts where the testimony of slaves was admissible only under torture; in late medieval ecclesial courts where *conversos*, placed on the rack, confessed heresy to Inquisitors; in continental civil law courts where torture was employed to elicit confessions to fulfil the standard of certainty to sustain convictions; and even in police stations, where the Reid technique is widely used to coerce confessions from the innocent, like the Central Park Five. The 1831 Virginia slave rebellion produced the most famous of American confessions. Written as an alleged authentic

transcription, *The Confessions of Nat Turner* buried the confessant's truth under that of the slave master, a reversal which the author William Styron tried to correct with his novel by the same name. Yet, despite its endorsement by the likes of James Baldwin, Styron's work was attacked by African-American critics, and in 2015, the Black filmmaker William Porter reimagined it in *The Birth of a Nation*. This paper examines the impossibility of both anamnestic and anagnoretic truth in the narrative genre of confession, be it in prose or film. In America, racism recognizes neither, for the word of African-Americans is not accepted without verification. Black Lives Matter not because of the testimony of African-Americans but because video of the ubiquitous smartphone authenticates in court what is otherwise not believed.

Megan Medeiros

James Madison University

Podcasting with Purpose: Black Digital Humanities and Narrative Theory

More and more scholarship is engaging with podcasts these days, from university created podcasts to scholarship surrounding podcasts. As many Black Studies scholars and archivists have theorised and discussed, however, just because you can do it, does not mean you should. In this paper, I explore podcasting through a narrative theory and Black digital humanities lens, asking what is ethical to share and discuss and what is better left unarchived. Using rhetorical narrative theory practices, I analyse the stories being shared and how they are being shared: the implications behind audience and purpose, medium and intention that shape what is being said and hint at how and where it should be shared. I argue that podcasting is an up and coming medium of scholarship and discussion of theory, but in thinking so, I make the case for the creation of "best practices" for podcasting from a DEI perspective with a narrative theory focus; how can we make podcasting on scholarship more accessible to all without infringing upon the rights and privacy of others.

SESSION 7G – TRANS/QUEER SPACES, ORIENTATIONS, AND MOVEMENTS

Gabriel Fiandero

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Spatialising Trans Narratology and Methods through Edie Fake's *Memory Palaces*

This paper takes seriously the provocations of Edie Fake's abstract architectural comic *Memory Palaces* to extrapolate multiple methods inspired and required by its strange call for a visual trans narratology. I present a spatialised framework for considering our present work in trans narratology, inspired by the comic's individualization of lost queer spaces. Reflecting on the lost, formerly queer spaces in Chicago, Fake's comic is comprised of ten architectural façades, each of which reimagine these historic spaces anew—now comprised of forms and containers that might hold queer memories. While the façades functions in concert, Fake surprisingly maintains that the comic 'has a narrative to it', exceeding the comic's lack of narrative codes or impulses. As a result, narratological methods proliferate in the text when we take his claim seriously, and I trace three failed methods for reading its narrative alongside three potential inroads: other architectural comics like *Le Cage* and *Building Stories*, Saidiya Hartman's process of 'fabulation', and the visual queer semiotics of Keith Haring's 'comprehensible' art. Ultimately, I argue that these reading methods fail because the comic rejects interpretation and instead foregrounds trans methodology as a continual process that pushes to clarify and reinvent trans forms of life. In addition, as the work repeatedly articulates queer space as lost and only accessible through abstract forms—mirroring the disappearance of queer and trans spaces, even as they proliferate through cultural and digital space—I argue that Fake reframes trans narratology as an inherently spatial

problem. Methods of interpretation and narrativisation begin to form an individualised connection to queer and trans identity that was once a spatialised and communal relationship.

Ellen McCallum

Michigan State University

Narratives of Queer Landscapes

Can a landscape tell a queer story? This question is central to Jane Campion's *The Power of the Dog*, a film widely bruted to be another gay Western in the genre of *Brokeback Mountain*. I argue that while both of these films recount LGBTQ+ stories and engage with queer ecologies, their centring of the human limits the queer power of the landscape that holds these narratives. Turning to Alize Zorlutuna's queer theory of landscape representation in her visual art, I show how a more embodied approach to narrative landscapes brings out the queer stories that inhabit the limits between the human and nonhuman. I will consider how Zorlutuna's queer theory of landscape helps us read the edgy experiments of Renee Gladman's *Prose Architecture* – a book of drawings that explore the boundary between writing and drawing, queering scale and orientation – or the spatial stories in other films, such as Lucretia Martel's *Zama* and Jenni Olsen's *Royal Road*, both of which interrogate Spanish colonisation in the Americas through queer vantages on the landscape. The latter two films provide a compelling feminist counterpoint to the masculinist settler colonialism of the first two films, while Gladman's work offers an intermediary text for thinking and queering the visual and narrative relations within a landscape that the latter two films lay out in a more decolonial vein. Through this dimension, the queer power of landscape's narrative becomes realised.

Ben Robbins

University of Innsbruck

'She's just that international': An Intersectional Reading of the Modernist Queer Exile Narrative

I examine narratives of sexual exile produced by writers from the modernist communities of Paris and Berlin in the 1920s and 1930s, with a particular focus on the fiction of two US-American queer exile writers: Djuna Barnes and Robert McAlmon. These writers' fictions demonstrated how marginalised figures and sexual minorities often endure coerced movement. Such movement, I argue, generates discursive forms that are marked by indirection. Indirection has been identified as a narrative strategy through which oppressed social groups have chosen to articulate their sense of alienation in ways that obstruct the reader's relationship to expressions of anger or frustration (Hedin; Fulmer). Similarly, techniques of indirection in queer exile literature are used to manage readerly reception of the struggles of mobile minorities through techniques of displacement and encoding. In addition to patterns of indirection, my comparative analyses will show how Barnes and McAlmon circulated common narrative types across their queer exile texts. Most strikingly, the authors incorporated a similar exile character type based on a real-life figure named Daniel A. Mahoney, a gay Irish American man with whom both authors were acquainted in Paris. In McAlmon's "Miss Knight" and Barnes's *Nightwood*, Mahoney appears as a mobile, gender-fluid character who acts as both raconteur and confessor to fellow queer exiles. I pursue an intersectional approach to these portrayals, employing what Zara Dinnen and Robyn Warhol call a 'situated' narratology, which is concerned with 'narrative manifestations of intersections and assemblages of identity categories'. By doing so, I demonstrate how queer, trans, national, and class identities inform both the relative mobility of characters and the structures of exile narratives themselves.

SESSION 7H – FICTIONALITY I: FICTION AND FACTUALITY

Jeppe Barnwell

Copenhagen University

Fiction and Factual Form: Analysing Fictional Documentarism in George Perec's '243 Postcards'

"Fictional documentarism" is my term for an understudied genre of texts that emerged in the early twentieth century and flourished from the middle of that century onwards. Fictional documentarism is fiction that takes the form of police reports, auction catalogues, job applications, ebay listings, holiday postcards, bank statements, and more. The texts mimic or in other ways play with everyday non-fictional documents understood in a broad sense. Yet they are all fictional insofar as they signal themselves as invented (Gjerlevsen and Nielsen). The paper asks how we should analyse fiction that mimics non-fiction or, in this case, non-fictional documents, and which challenges these texts pose to the ways we comprehend fictionality. I will define the genre and distinguish it from the (epistolary) document novel (Paige), and the *document humain* (de Goncourt) of the previous centuries. I analyse George Perec's "Two Hundred and Forty-Three Postcards in Real Colour" (orig. 1978). This text distinguishes itself markedly from the epistolary novel, as it is less about the holidays narrated on the postcards than it is about the act of documentation. Taken individually, each of Perec's postcards could possibly be mistaken for being authentic. Conceived as a whole, however, the text, by its repetitions and its overall composition, differs clearly from what we would expect from a collection of actual postcards. I argue that the text serves as a humorous hyperbole of the rose-coloured ways we tend to document our holidays and our lives. Furthermore, I argue that this indirect questioning of the act of documentation actually entails a form of ethics.

Dunja Dušanić

University of Belgrade

Fictionality in Non-Fiction: The Rhetoric of Witnessing in Literary Testimony

Like other non-fictional narratives, literary testimonies (*i.e.* narratives that make aesthetic use of eyewitness testimony) sometimes include instances of 'local fictionality' (Nielsen *et al.*) for rhetorical purposes. These can have a wide range of implications, including ethical ones (Phelan), and, depending on generic and contextual factors, may impact our reading in various ways. In literary testimony, unlike traditional genres, such as autobiography, this impact often extends beyond the syntactic and semantic levels of the text to affect its pragmatic framework, leading to vague, shifting, or otherwise ambiguous 'pacts' (Lejeune) between the author and readers. To explore the interpretative and ethical consequences of this ambiguity, I will analyse Svetlana Alexievich's use of testimony in *Tsinkovye malchiki*. Since it first appeared in book form in 1990, Alexievich's collection of interviews with the survivors of the Soviet–Afghan war has been the subject of controversy, both in post-Soviet Belarus, where the author was charged with falsifying the witnesses' statements and outside the Soviet sphere, where her creative use of testimony was repeatedly described as witness tampering (Ackerman and Lemarchand; Pinkham; Myers). Alexievich dismissed the formal accusations as insubstantial and presented them as personal attacks motivated by political pressures and ideological blindness. From a theoretical point of view, they are of great interest, for they illuminate key aspects of Alexievich's creative strategy and provide a valuable source for studying the rhetorical effects of fictionality.

Henrik Zetterberg-Nielsen

Aarhus University

Judging Fictional Arguments

How and why can overtly invented stories about non-actual states of affairs work as persuasive arguments to change beliefs and opinions in and about the real world, and how do audiences engage with those arguments? My hypothesis is that the rhetorical principle that narratives are purposive

communications helps explain that (a) authors shape narrative sequences, of action and of telling, partly in the service of arguments, (b) that audiences read in part to discern those arguments and (c) that they then evaluate them. Saying that *The Birth of a Nation* makes the argument that African Americans are unintelligent and sexually unhinged or that *Argo* makes the argument that Middle Eastern cultures are less coherent and more violent and chaotic than Western ones amounts to contextual, interpretative judgments. I explore how an interpretative process can determine the what and the how of argument(s) made in a fictional text by means of fictionality. The results lead to the proposal that readers make (potentially agonistic) judgments about fictional arguments and about the arguments' ethical deficiency or recommendability in a way that supplements the ethical judgment suggested by Jim Phelan by stressing the specificity of both the single words and the phrase "fictional arguments".

Simona Zetterberg-Nielsen

Aarhus University

The Rise of Scientific Fiction

In the wake of Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel*, scholars have celebrated a specific group of English bourgeoisie novels – such as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* – as the world's first novels. Pushing back against this tradition, I claim that the first fictions were, in fact, not about the bourgeoisie but about science, and that this thematic interest is no coincidence. I argue that rhetorical fictionality theory allows a new view on early fiction, which shows that fictionality rather than realism is the defining feature of the novel. This approach has implications for the canon of early novels as it broadens the horizon for what types of fiction are included in the construct of the rise of the novel, and it pushes the beginning of the rise backwards in time. Studying fictional works that have been overlooked in the construction of the history of the novel as Margaret Lucas Cavendish's *The Description of a New World* and Daniel Defoe's *The Consolidator*, the paper explores why science became a significant topos in the first fictional novels. I argue that these novels represent scientific theories by means of fiction and demonstrates how the genre developed as an overtly fictional form by reflecting on the new scientific concept of truth.

SESSION 71 – THE POSTCOLONIAL BILDUNGSROMAN: NARRATIVES OF YOUTH AND THE POSTCOLONY

Ericka Hoagland

Stephen F. Austin State University

Tales of Disassembly and Reassembly: Theorising the Posthuman SF Bildungsroman

The posthuman worlds of the SF bildungsromane of Nnedi Okorafor and Martha Wells speak to Donna Haraway's impassioned call to 'change the story', to 'learn somehow to narrate – to think – outside the prick tale of Humans in History'. In her Binti trilogy, Okorafor presents her seventeen-year-old Himba protagonist, Binti, a mathematical genius whose development is profoundly shaped on the hand by an escalating conflict between an honour-bound alien race, the Meduse, and pompous, violent human group the Khoush, that threatens her own people; and on the other, Binti experiences a series of radical physical transformations that require her to repeatedly rewrite her own story and her sense of self. The disarming title character of Wells' Murderbot series is a sentient and principled SecUnit whose maturation process is forged from the violence and political intrigue that defines its work as a contracted security agent, and given deeper meaning by the bonds with humans it rather grudgingly accepts. Both series highlight several questions and concerns that this paper explores, starting with Davin Heckman's fundamental questions: 'what does the protagonist of the Posthuman Bildungsroman learn' and 'what does this process of discovery and its conclusion tell us about the current state of

Western culture?’ Likewise, and to borrow from Jennifer A. Wager-Lawlor, what ‘ideological teleologies of [the] classical bildungsroman’ does the posthuman SF bildungsroman disrupt, destabilise, or otherwise dismantle? And how can Haraway’s theory of tentacularity help to further clarify the generative and urgent tales of the human and not-quite-human charted by the posthuman SF bildungsroman?

Simone Puleo

Central Connecticut State University

‘Sono un crocevia’: Igiaba Scego’s *La mia casa è dove sono* as Diaspora Bildungsroman

Since the 1980s, when Italy began to appear as a destination site for global migration, the Italian literary landscape has been redefined by the emergence of what cultural historians have called a ‘postcolonial paradigm’ (Comberiati; Lombardi-Diop and Romeo). Italian postcolonial literary production has garnered a great deal of scholarly attention in Italy and abroad, fuelled by authors such as Pap Khouma, Mohamed Bouchane, Ubax Christina Ali Farah, Amara Lakhous, and Igiaba Scego. Their works often treat issues including the relationship between individual and state, national belonging, and identity formation—topics that have been historically associated both with the bildungsroman as a literary genre and postcolonial studies as an academic field of inquiry. I read Scego’s novelistic autobiography *La mia casa è dove sono* as a diaspora bildungsroman—a term coined to describe how the bildungsroman is adapted to discuss diaspora experience. Adopting the coming-of-age story as a narrative framework, Scego—an Italian-born daughter of Somali political refugees—traces connections between the legacy of Italian colonialism and her experience as a second-generation immigrant in contemporary Italy. Writing in Italian, she addresses a readership that was (and still is) ignorant of—and/or apathetic to—the nation’s colonial past and the government’s dehumanising treatment of migrants, refugees, and the broader diasporic community. As a diaspora bildungsroman, *La mia casa è dove sono* acts, not as a testament to the assimilation of Somali immigrants into Italian society, but as a narrative testimony to coming-of-age in a contentious middle space between cultures, ‘un crocevia’, or a crossroads, as Scego declares.

Arnab Dutta Roy

Florida Gulf Coast University

From Modernising Tradition to Traditionalising Modernity: U.R. Ananthamurthy’s *Samskara* as Postcolonial Bildungsroman

The twentieth century is witness to a revival of interest in the bildungsroman as writers, especially from post-colonies in the Global South, turn to it to reflect on concerns of history, culture, and social life in a postcolonial setting. Scholars however disagree regarding the nature of these reworkings. Some see them as a continuation of the original European model established by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Charles Dickens, and other European writers (Slaughter). Others find such associations Eurocentric and call for more local standards of evaluation (Paranjape). I examine this debate by looking closely at a version of the postcolonial bildungsroman proposed by the Kannada writer U.R. Ananthamurthy in his novel *Samskara*. The novel follows an orthodox Brahmin priest from Karnataka who, disillusioned by the corruption and moral decay in his community, embarks on a pilgrimage to rediscover his identity in the rapidly modernising world of twentieth-century India. Ananthamurthy’s bildungsroman, while retaining some structural similarities, departs from European models in fundamental ways. The motif of the hero’s journey, for instance, is flipped. The novel tracks the hero’s growing discontentment with his community leading to a sense of communal alienation, thus inverting the European journey-trajectory that typically follows the hero’s movement towards social integration. It also deviates from the generic Western rags-to-riches storyline that compliments that hero’s road to social integration. Instead, it adopts the narrative structure of the niti-shastra, a set of pre-colonial Hindu texts that teach

about the wise conduct of life. Such readings not only facilitate fresh ways of understanding the relationship between the western and the postcolonial models, but they also allow new insights into understanding how South Asian authors utilize the bildungsroman to rediscover precolonial and classical works through modernity.

Paul Ugor

Waterloo University

Nature Writing as Literary Archive: Mbolu Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were* as Legal Testimony

Set in the 1980s in an unspecified African country, Mbolu Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were* is a captivating narrative of one community's harrowing experience with the rapaciousness and duplicity of American petro-imperialism. Told from the perspective of children turned revolutionaries, the novel documents four decades of the struggles of a fictional African village of Kosawa with the calamitous consequences of the relentless extractive activities of an American oil company, Pexton. Enabled by the local chief (Woja Beki) and the nation's dictator (His Excellency), Pexton operates with impunity in Kosawa, poisoning the land, the bodies of water, and the local inhabitants with noxious chemicals and gases, causing numerous chemical injuries and high infant mortality rate in the community. Drawing and building on recent scholarship in the field of postcolonial ecocriticism, disaster studies, and memory studies, I examine how Mbue's novel bears witness to the malevolent complicity between American petro-imperialism and postcolonial autocracy. I demonstrate how the novel functions an imaginative testimonial by African children to the relentless corporate violence, widespread endangerment, cruel treatment, and blatant denial of compensation or medical treatment for victims of human-induced ecological disaster in Africa. I argue that Mbue's novel is a literary testimonial to America's petro-violence in Africa and suggest that the politics of the text as an eco-bildungsroman is that it relies heavily on the voices of children to forge an environmentally sensitive narrative that unmasks the imperceptible evidence of the malicious extractive activities of multinational oil corporations in Africa.

SESSION 8A – TELLING AND RE-TELLING

Raphaël Baroni

University of Lausanne

Narratology at School: Theory, Applications and Implications

Based on a field study conducted in four French-speaking countries (France, Switzerland, Belgium and Canada), I assess the place that narratology occupies in the teaching of literature today. I also show that the concepts taught have remained virtually unchanged over the last fifty years, despite recurring difficulties linked to the definition, transmission and use of certain notions. Taking the case of the narrative perspective, I show how a detour via applied narratology could serve as a basis for a reconceptualization of certain notions that are the subject of debate in the field of narrative theory. The transmission of narratology in schools could provide a kind of reality check for notions developed in an essentially hypothetico-deductive framework, whose heuristic value is not always taken seriously enough, and whose descriptive power is rarely measured with empirical devices. I conclude by arguing for a better dialogue between narratology, didactics and teaching.

Nove Chüzho

Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi

"Telling" a Customary Victimisation of Women in the Work of Monalisa Changkija

The investigation of the "customary" comes with a dual connotation (as practice and law), grounded in tribal customs and jurisprudence. These practices and laws of the Nagas, a group of tribes inhabiting

northeastern India and northwestern Myanmar, are disseminated through the oral tradition. This tradition, mainly in the form of folklore, folksong, and storytelling, is preserved and practiced over time. Despite such reverence, certain aspects of customary practice and law are evidenced as experiences and narratives of gender injustice/s, and has given rise to what Monalisa Changkija called the 'customary victimization' of Naga women. Changkija's poetry and essays reflect her own articulations and experiences at play, and moves along a trajectory of a shared narrative, that is, the Naga women. Her writings can be read as narratives of world/life-making, taking a constructivist approach of poetic narrative. At the same time, there is a technique of re-telling a tradition in Changkija with assertions of its destruction, for a world/life-making to be affected. Such constructions entail the problematics and the politics of the "customary" alongside the positioning of women, and the changes that need to be affected for gender justice to emerge within the patriarchal and androcentric Naga context. Changkija makes her protestations through a type of narration that is essentially experiential, the tellings of an oral tradition that victimises women in the name of customary practice and customary law.

Duru Başak Uğurlu

Hacettepe University

Weaving a Life by Leaving Behind: From Ernestine Leibovici to Eren Eyüboğlu

Narrative as a state of knowing requires us both to reach back to the past and to question by establishing a connection with the present moment, on the other hand, it brings us the opportunity to learn by oscillating in a spiral understanding of time for the bridges we will build towards the future. In this narrative enquiry, as both a researcher and a mourner for a shadowed life that I can only realise with the passage of time, I am immersed in the life narrative of Ernestine Leibovici, a woman artist who tried to make a place for herself as an immigrant in a male-dominated art environment. The name Eren Eyüboğlu was given to her by her partner Bedri Rahmi, and I follow her as a ghost figure waiting to be better understood today. My main question is how Eren, surrounded by male-dominated discourses, created the narrative of her own voice by leaning on her 'lines, colours and stains'. The sources on which the study is based are her letters, newspaper interviews, the things said about her and some works about her, a retrospective work which includes the people whose paths she crossed in her life, family collections and the works in different forms left by the woman artist I pursued all over the cities I stepped into.

SESSION 8B – POSTDIGITAL APPROACHES TO NARRATIVE

Siebe Bluijs

Tilburg University

The 'Dual Voice' of AI Narratives: The Case of *Air Age Blueprint*

Drawing on narrative theory, this paper interrogates the notion of narrative voice of/in AI-written texts and considers how this concept relates to processes of anthropomorphization. Ever since Gérard Genette used 'voice' in his *Narrative Discourse* to refer to the story's narrating instance – the one 'who speaks' – the concept has been a much-debated topic within the field of narrative theory. The narratological discussion on voice gains new relevance in the age of computer-generated texts, I argue, considering that the rhetorical construct of voice is an integral part of Large Language Models (LLMs). LLMs, such as GPT-3, allow users to generate texts about any topic in any voice they please. The fact that these programs use the first-person singular contributes to the impression that these interfaces have a voice of their own. To investigate the rhetorical strategy and metaphorical richness of the concept of voice in AI-generated texts, I offer a reading of *Air Age Blueprint*, a novel-length narrative that was authored by K Allado-McDowell in collaboration with GPT-3. The narrative voice of this work can be understood as both multifaceted and singular. On the one hand, the reader can distinguish

different voices: the text that was produced by the human author K Allado-McDowell is set in a serified typeface, while GPT-3's text is set in a non-serified font. On the other hand, both voices "speak as one" – grammatically speaking. They tell a story that is part autofiction, science fiction, cybernetic theory and travelogue. Considering that *Air Age Blueprint* complicates the voice's presumed relation to notions of subjectivity, identity, and authorship, it allows for a critical understanding of the rhetorical construct of voice in the age of AI.

Nuette Heyns

North-West University

Postdigital Re-Evaluation of Narrative Structure

Twenty-first-century technology plays a crucial role not only in promoting books but also as a topic intertwined in stories to help writers' work relate to a broader audience. This is of course a natural occurrence of any age, where the technological advances of the time are reflected in literature. Similar to how authors like Thomas Hardy were influenced by the Industrial Revolution, or Mary Shelley by electricity, the fourth Industrial Revolution are influencing today's writers. We can see in our daily lives how our time management is changing due to social media and electronic applications. It is then reasonable to expect that this change will reflect in literary texts and requires a re-evaluation of key narratological concepts. Gerald Prince defines a narrative as the representation of real or fictive situations and events in a time sequence. Here, time plays an important role in understanding a narrative. Gérard Genette also based his definition of scene on time. He states that 'scene, most often in dialogue, realises conventionally the equality of time between narrative and story'. Albin Zehe *et al.* (2021) further clarifies what a scene is: 'narrative units, where each unit has a coherent and stable structure in respect to time, place, character constellation and plot'. According to both definitions, the narrative scene ends when the place or time of the event changes. Seeing as the passage of time determines the narrative structure, we hypothesize that the addition of social media and digital applications affects time and therefore narrative structure. I propose a scene segmentation task to research this hypothesis. The goal of scene segmentation is to identify the border of a segment and classify the segment as either 'scene' or 'non-scene'. This task aids in structure, plot and content-based analyses of a text. I compare the traditional murder mystery genre with recent changes seen by the addition of social media and other technologies. In texts like *Knives Out* and *Only Murders In The Building*, you see a murder mystery but social media plays a big role in solving the mystery. Here we see a clear change in the structure that the genre follows. Writers have also been introducing online chats between characters. On the surface, online chats seem similar to dialogue. Both provide the transcript of conversations between characters. Characters are of course no longer in the same location or even time during this conversation, two of the requirements for a scene are thus changing. We also see characters searching for older conversations on their phones. This provides a plot tool that means a character can access past conversations without having a flashback, or stage a memory-recall (Watson). This changes the structure in which the narrative plot unfolds and how it is perceived.

Ruben Vanden Berghe

Ghent University

What Is So Unnatural About Technology? A Postdigital Perspective on Print Novel Representations of Technology

Taking into account the 'hybridisation of both the digital and the non-digital domains' (Jordan), this paper broadens the narratological application of the postdigital and test its merits as a reading strategy for the print-based novel. More specifically, I shed a new light on defamiliarising narrative structures and features that are usually correlated with unnatural reading strategies (Alber). The postdigital constitutes the often times estranging blurring of the virtual and the real, just as it comprises the stifling

speed at which people have to familiarise themselves with the latest innovations, rendering them banal quickly (Dinnen). Similarly, fictional representations of new media technologies might range from so-called realistic depictions of online life to speculative or flat-out fantastical digital applications. This paper offers a better understanding of how the print novel imagines both “possible” and “impossible” technologies. To investigate how these fictional technologies might enhance our understanding of natural and unnatural narrative, I offer a reading of two recent novels that stage a fictional AI character: the solar-powered ‘Artificial Friend’ Klara in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Klara and the Sun* and Ada, the algorithmically produced simulacrum of nineteenth-century mathematician Ada Lovelace, in Amalie Smith’s *Thread Ripper*. Following the example set by Lars Bernaerts and Brian Richardson, I suggest a ‘postdigital reading strategy’ according to the dialects of the mimetic and antimimetic. I suggest that readers might attribute a novel’s unnatural features to a mimetic rendering of the interwoven whole of technological, sociocultural and epistemological shifts that make out the postdigital constellation (Berry and Dieter). In doing so, I contribute to the field of unnatural narratology by investigating the ‘texture’ of fictional representations of our postdigital experiences.

Inge van de Ven

Tilburg University

Who Do You Trust in the Postdigital Age? Unreliable Narration in Online Hybrid Discourses

In the postdigital age, it is not just the boundaries between the digital and any possible “outside” to it that become increasingly harder to draw. As we are well aware, the same thing is often said about the boundaries between fact and fiction. Narratology offers a toolkit for the detection and interpretation of unreliable narration. Today, we are astutely aware that questions and problems surrounding the reliability of stories are to be found everywhere, not just in narrative fiction. How do we calibrate dis/trust when it comes to an abundance of information, given our limited resources of time and attention? I investigate the possibilities of adapting narratological theories and typologies in such a way as to make them productive for non-fictional discourses, for instance on online discussion forums. I consider how we can reconceptualise notions like reliability and unreliability, trust and distrust, vigilance and suspicion for the postdigital age. Among the tools and theories I use are the short stories paradigm (Georgakopoulou) and James Phelan’s distinction between defective and unreliable narration. As a case study, I look at the role that trust plays in online discussions of the infamous defamation trial of Johnny Depp versus Amber Heard on the subreddit *r/justiceforJohnnyDepp*. I reflect on how these online readers and viewers decide what stories and voices to trust, and how they adapt their strategies of reading and interpretation accordingly, and what role attention allocation and modulation play in these hermeneutic and cognitive processes.

SESSION 8C – PERSPECTIVES ON CHARACTER

Matthew Martello

University of Virginia

Portraiture and Poetic Form

Poems by generic definition lend themselves to strategies of characterisation that are not so readily available to prose narratives. Although studies of character and studies of poetic form have both proliferated in recent decades, they have operated on the mutual assumption that neither has much to learn from the other. The few character theorists who have worked poems into their expositions have tended to treat them (to recycle a decade-old complaint from Brian McHale) as ‘honorary short stories’—ignoring what is most “poetic” about them, namely the material qualities of their language. Poetic theorists, meanwhile, are always confronting the spectre of character in the figures of “voice” and “speaker” and “persona,” but they too have often placed these in opposition to meter and rhyme

and other defining features of the textual surface—as if to consider such “synthetic” phenomena were necessarily to ignore the “mimetic” interests of characterization. This is wrong—or so I contend by demonstrating three ways that poetic form can contribute to the representation of character. These three ways map more or less cleanly onto the three categories of sign theorised by the fin de siècle American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. There is (1) an iconic variant, where the poem bears some formal or qualitative resemblance to the character it depicts, as when the repetition of a single rhyme imitates the stubborn single-mindedness of its speaker; (2) a symbolic variant, where the poem employs a conventional form so as to appropriate its characterological associations, as when blank verse continues to attach a Shakespearean stateliness to later users; and (3) an indexical variant, where the form of the poem points toward the preference that accounts for its selection, as when the recurrence of tightly-wound couplets indicates a general fetish for constraint. For practical purposes I draw my examples from a single collection of contemporary dramatic monologues (that most character-centric genre of poem): Patience Agbabi’s *Telling Tales*. I approach this limited corpus from a theoretical perspective that is broadly rhetorical, concerned with poetic form as a resource for communicating aspects of character; with the hope that the implications of the argument will extend beyond of either of these necessary biases.

Peri Mirza

University of York

Barricaded Selves: Characterological Ethics in Rachel Cusk’s *Outline Trilogy*

Rachel Cusk has been perceived as an inward-facing (even narcissistic) author, unconcerned with issues of social justice. But since her *Outline* trilogy she has demonstrated an attunement to structural inequalities, not only in gendered terms but also exhibiting sensitivity to questions of cultural appropriation and white cultural privilege. For instance, her rationale for claiming that character ‘no longer exists’ is couched in the language of ethics and morality. Unlike novelists who locate the ethical value of fiction in encounters with characterological otherness (Dorothy Hale), Cusk has expressed a conviction that novels which offer access to the interiority of others via a third-person narrator are morally problematic for suggesting that the minds of others are inhabitable. She has said that, by representing others via their speech only, she manages to avoid issues of appropriation. Cusk has also exhibited concern about ‘taking up space’ as an author with considerable privilege along identity and cultural lines. To justify the existence of her novel *Second Place*, she claims that, by drawing upon lost writing and figures from the past – in this case, Mable Dodge Luhan’s memoir *Lorenzo in Taos* – she believes she can contribute something of value to the cultural landscape. While Cusk fails to meaningfully engage with questions of social justice beyond gender in these novels (often her statements promise more than what her fiction delivers), I argue that her model of a barricaded selfhood promotes a more ethical mode of reading, in a less ‘rapacious’ (Serpell) or emotionally colonising way than reading for identification can so often encourage.

Tereza Pořízková

Masaryk University

Czech Structuralists on Literary Character

The literary character has been always considered as one of the most significant and core elements of epic literature work. This paper gives an overall view of the phenomenon in Czech narratology and breaks down the most influential theories regarding literary characters, their role, and their impact on literature. Special attention is paid to the approach of Czech structuralists, who have made a significant mark in the theory of literature. Taking into account the most relevant theoreticians and their work, the presentation covers the approach of Jan Mukařovský, Felix Vodička, Miroslav Červenka, Milan Jankovič, and Karel Hausenblas. The conclusion marks the development of approaching the topic as

well as describes the common aspects and the nuances between their conceptions. Furthermore, the paper retraces the legacy of the mentioned Czech theoreticians and describes the way they have influenced perceiving and interpreting characters in Czech narratology today.

SESSION 8D – NARRATIVE AND LYRIC ENCOUNTERS

Lasse Raaby Gammelgaard

Aarhus University

Narrative Lyrics about Melancholia in the Songwriting of Townes van Zandt

This paper contributes to two ongoing debates within narrative theory. I draw on insights from the health humanities and narrative medicine, to think about the field of music and narrative. I examine the ways in which melancholia, depression and mortality can find unique expressions in songs, taking the songwriting of Townes van Zandt as a case study. Van Zandt, who released 10 studio albums during his life, suffered from alcoholism and drug addiction and was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, the medical treatment for which added to his exacerbated health. His songs address topics like melancholia and depression, unhappy relationships, and the hardships of poverty in various ways, using both humour/irony and pathos. I create a dialogue between a literary language and clinical psychopathology and ask how the affordances of songs as a combination of lyrics and music create an outlet for communication experiences of melancholia. I examine how the brevity of language in the lines, the verses and the choruses make the songs primed for exploiting narrative gaps, narrative surprises and rhetorical aphorisms and punch lines. Finally, I analyse the particular rhetorical effects created by rendering the text of lyrics as music. Both language and music are temporal media, but what happens to the text, when it is rendered as music? How do musical measures and rhythms, a fixed tempo, a major or a minor tonality etc. affect the content of the texts?

Stefan Kjerkegaard

Aarhus University

What Difference Does It Make Who Is Speaking: From Lyrical Subject to.... Lyrical Selfie?

Michel Foucault, maybe ironically, challenged conventional notions of authorship by posing the question, 'What difference does it make who is speaking?' Today however, this question (un-ironically) resonates more profoundly than ever, perhaps particularly in the realm of lyrical poetry. Traditionally, the lyrical subject embodies an introspective, often undisclosed, self-discourse, offering a window into emotions and experiences that at the same time seems to be both personal and impersonal. Yet, as we navigate the digital age, the concept of the lyrical has undergone a profound transformation. The contemporary poetic voice seems to be intricately entwined with identity, not least the identity of its author, simplifying this introspective self-discourse with autobiographical material and often turning the lyrical speaker into a mere witness. While Jonathan Culler primarily concerned himself with the potential risk of treating lyric poetry as narratives and blurring the line between the lyrical subject and character, my focus lies in exploring the consequences of exclusively regarding the lyrical subject as autobiographical.

Brian J. McAllister

American University of Sharjah

Emergence and Rhetorical Hybridity in Contemporary Opera

I explore tensions between the rhetorical modes of lyric and narrative that reveal emergent possibilities within the radically hybrid form of contemporary opera. For Alessandra Campana, opera's inherent hybridity involves 'a contamination of music and theatre, music and word, singing and acting, showing and telling'. In this sense, opera's formal hybridisation of musical and theatrical forms coincides with

its rhetorical hybridity of concerns with lyric (or being) and narration (or happening). Contemporary, experimental opera often exploits the complexities implicit in this rhetorical interchange. In works like Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach* or Steve Reich's *Three Tales*, interplay between what Jim Phelan calls lyric and narrative rhetorical modes creates a flickering indeterminacy, in which purpose moves between reflections on conditions of being and the recounting of events. Unlike other rhetorically hybrid instances, which tend to prioritise one or the other side of this hybridity, these experimental operas resist prioritising either mode, exploiting rhetorical indeterminacy for thematic effect. My primary case study is the opera *Tomorrow, in a Year*, a collaboration between electronic musicians The Knife, Mt. Sims, and Planningtorock and the Danish performance group Hotel Pro Forma. Initially performed to mark the 150th anniversary of the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of the Species*, the opera's libretto incorporates decontextualised excerpts from Darwin's text, tying these passages to moments in his biography. These excerpts, alongside musical and choreographic structures, enact different narrative and lyric scales: the human scale of Darwin's biographical narrative juxtaposed with the planetary scale. This interaction between rhetorical modes and radically disparate scales of space and time provides the means by which the opera explores conditions of emergence that underlie the processes of natural selection.

SESSION 8E – CROSS-CULTURAL NARRATIVES

Melanie Hyo-In Han

University of Surrey

Narratives of Transnational Korea: Migration, Identity, and Cultural Resilience in Cathy Park Hong's Poetry

This paper explores "Transnational Korea", critically examining the intricate narratives that emerge within the Korean diaspora, with a specific focus on migration, identity, and cultural resilience. I demonstrate how storytelling and narrative construction can address complex issues such as cultural dislocation, identity fragmentation, and linguistic challenges in the transnational Korean community by introducing the poetry of Cathy Park Hong, whose work utilizes innovative poetic forms and thematic explorations of identity and language. Employing close textual analysis and drawing upon McAllister's ideas on visual poetry and narrative theories, I examine how Hong navigates linguistic boundaries and incorporates a spectrum of languages, including Korean, English, and Konglish, to showcase the impact that language choice and multilingual competence can have on the portrayal of emotional struggles and triumphs of transnational Koreans in negotiating dual cultural identities. I highlight the pivotal role of narratives in shaping the construction and understanding of experiences that transcend geographical, cultural, and linguistic borders. Through an in-depth analysis of Hong's poetry and its connection to the narratives of "Transnational Korea," I provide valuable insights into the multifaceted experiences of the Korean diaspora but also underscores the broader significance of literature and narrative in exploring cultural dislocation, identity reconstruction, and other complex socio-cultural phenomena. Through this paper, I encourage others to reevaluate poetry as a powerful mode of self-expression and deeper cross-cultural understanding.

Shiqing Liang

University College London

(Re)Constructing Personal and Public Narratives in Cultural Documentaries Through Translation

The number of China-themed documentaries made by English-language media corporations has surged since China's opening in 1978. These documentaries open a window not only for global audiences to learn about Chinese society, history and culture, but also for Chinese audiences to know how foreigners understand and tell Chinese stories, especially when the documentaries are introduced back to China

in their Chinese-translated versions. The multimodal translation of documentaries can provide an excellent site for exploring topics regarding narrative construction and reconstruction. Eiliana Franco claims it is essentially a 'false belief' to consider documentary translation as a straightforward factual activity. Recent studies have begun to discuss the ideological manipulation of some translation and narrative elements in documentaries. However, the active and performative role played by translators in the process of reconstructing narratives through translation, from personal ones to meta ones, have not been widely discussed in the study of narrative. Based on the theoretical framework of translation as re-narration, my analysis of two China-themed British documentaries *The Story of China* and *China's Greatest Poet: Du Fu* (and their Chinese-translated versions) investigates how personal and public narratives are constructed and reconstructed through the mediation role of translators.

Elaine Mok

National University of Singapore

Speaking of Devils: Kristang Horror Folklore and Creole Revitalisation

This paper compares the narrative discourses of two Kristang supernatural folktales, "Churikati" and "Diabu di Mar". Ethnic and supernatural constructions intersect but are rarely examined linguistically, let alone in the creole-indigenous context of Kristang, which refers to the Portuguese-Eurasian ethnolinguistic group and their language. Significant populations reside in Melaka and Singapore, but their heritage language is critically endangered. What narrative roles do Kristang supernatural stories fulfil against the backdrop of linguistic endangerment and ethnic minoritisation? "Churikati", told by Kristang language teacher Sara Santa Maria, refers to an imp who steals children. Meanwhile, retired fisherman Martin Theseira shares "Diabu di Mar", a story describing a sea-dwelling spirit known for drowning fishermen. William Labov's narrative analysis and Erving Goffman's conceptions of self offer frameworks for interpreting the stories' structural organisation vis-à-vis the overarching prevalence of Southeast Asian horror stories. The Kristang storytellers re-negotiate home as an ever-shifting territorial concept, in resistance against the homeless and baseless label of the Other. While Kristang is overlooked in official discourses, these horror narratives evince a subversive process of creole identity construction that is distinctly adaptive and agentive, an approach which informs and inflects ongoing revitalisation efforts.

SESSION 8F – EARLY MODERN NARRATIVE

Monika Fludernik

University of Freiburg

Narrative Structure from Late Middle English to Early Modern English

Summarising preliminary results from a project on narrative structure between 1300 and 1700, this paper outlines phases of simultaneous and stacked developments in several genres of English narrative. The genres that have been analysed in the project are: Middle English verse romance, Middle English prose romance; Middle English verse legends; Middle English and early modern prose legends; the fabliau; early modern low-style prose; historiography from the Middle Ages through the early modern period; the early modern romance; letters; and epic poetry. I illustrate how exactly episodic narrative gets (partially) outphased and in which genres this happens in which specific ways. I also speak to continuities and discontinuities in narrative strategies and linguistic realisations within genres and from one century or period to the other.

Rahel Orgis

University Library Berne

Sebastian Straßburg

University of Freiburg

Doubling the Representation of Consciousness in Early Modern Pastoral Romance

Detailed representation of characters' consciousness is considered one of the hallmarks of the novel and at times invoked as a value criterion that sets the novel apart from early modern romance. Yet, the romance genre affords complex representations of consciousness too, achieved typically through narrative techniques, such as psychonarration, direct speech and bodily signs. Focusing on pastoral romance, this paper provides insight into the textual strategies used at the end of the sixteenth century by Robert Greene and Philip Sidney and also traces how these strategies were continued, imitated and developed further in the seventeenth century by Mary Wroth. In particular, the paper investigates how narrative techniques to represent consciousness are used in conjunction with each other. This doubling of techniques can serve a variety of functions. It can for example reinforce characters' emotional states of mind in terms of intensity or depth. By contrast, it also allows for the representation of dissimulation and psychological conflict. This suggests the difficulty of reading someone else's mind correctly based on speech and external signs and raises the question of how trustworthy manifestations of consciousness are. The combination of narrative techniques may hence also add narratorial interpretive guidance for the reader to the representation of a character's mind. Early modern romance thus not only abounds in representations of consciousness, but its authors also skilfully combine narrative techniques to thematise the complexity of expressing and interpreting another's mind.

Magdalena Szpindler

University of Warsaw

Cultural Negotiations Through Narrative in Mongolian Culture from the Early Modern Period

Mongolians have had a long-standing literary tradition going back to the thirteenth century. Between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, it was heavily influenced by Buddhist literature of Indian and Tibetan provenance, and to a lesser extent by Chinese literature. I look at the chosen narratives that gained importance and popularity during that time to see what strategies were used to make them coexist and influence one another. On one hand, ideas related to Chingis Khan were promoted by means of the stories. On the other hand, ideas related to Buddhism and Confucianism were spread by storytellers. Different strategies were used depending on the type of audience. Some of the stories were popularised by Mongolian authorities to educate and propagate certain ideas. Finally, what happened to these narratives in the twentieth century and the new literary form of the novel.

SESSION 8G – NARRATIVES OF/IN THE DIGITAL, CONTEMPORARY CULTURE AND AFFECT I

Simona Adinolfi

Ghent University

'The author as a disembodied head': Reconsidering the Implied Author on Instagram

The presence of literary authors on social media undoubtedly affects how they are perceived and often contributes to blurring the boundary between their private life and their works in the eyes of their readers. Unclear boundaries can also be observed in post-postmodernist works, in which the difference between fiction and non-fiction in genres such as autofiction signals a willingness to foreground the subjective vision of truth and reality (Pignagnoli). I propose that the much-debated concept of the implied author can become a useful tool to examine stories shared on social media platforms. I present a model for the analysis of literary authors' Instagram posts. Drawing on Simone Murray's analysis of the digital literary sphere, and focusing on the importance of social media's functions of

disintermediation and real-time interactivity, I first argue for a distinction between the literary persona (of the author present at public events, literature festivals etc.), and the implied author (with its presence on social media). I move on to the debate on the concept of the implied author in narrative theory, mainly drawing on James Phelan's use of the concept for nonfictional narratives. Then, keeping in mind the analysis of social media as "small stories" (Georgakopoulou), and drawing on the analysis of Instagram feeds (Pignagnoli), I analyse Instagram posts by literary authors (Kamila Shamsie, Hari Kunzru, Neil Gaiman, Siri Hustvedt) with a model that envisions the presence of a digital implied author. I define the digital implied author as a cognitive assemblage (N. Katherine Hayles) of the flesh-and-blood-author orchestrating the post (combining the image and the caption, the visualising I and the narrating I) and Instagram itself as author (Eisenlauer) which imposes the frame and the layout of the post.

Dorothee Birke

University of Innsbruck

The Crying Reader on Social Media

Since Robyn Warhol's plea for narrative studies to pay more attention to readers' emotional responses, studies of affect and emotion have found a central place in literary studies and are also becoming established in narrative studies specifically. My paper offers an analysis of the ambivalent ways in which affective responses to fictional narrative are represented and negotiated on "bookish" social media platforms such as BookTube and Booktok. It has become something of a commonplace that readers on bookish social media emphasize readerly affect over analytic or critical readings, and that this can be seen as typical of the 'feels culture' (Stein) prevalent in digital media. I argue that while the self-fashioning of the crying reader may at first sight look like a development specific to a digital media environment, it should also be considered in the light of a long tradition that had its heyday in the eighteenth century with its celebration of sentimental reading. In my comparison of eighteenth- and twenty-first-century readers who cry I will ask, firstly, what narrative elements elicit the strongest affective responses and secondly, what aspects of the acts of "crying about narrative" are valorised or depreciated in their (self-)representations.

Marco Tognini

University of Milan

The Truth of Disgust: Moral and (Un)Social Emotions on Goodreads

In our contemporary mediascape online book talks are constantly growing. In this digital literary sphere, people can create online communities and can share their opinions about books they read. Nowadays everyone is a critic. This can offer new opportunities for researchers to observe some patterns of interpretation of 'common readers' in a phenomenological way (Felski). Previous studies have shown that emotions are a prominent feature of Goodreads and Amazon reviews (e.g. Driscoll and Rehberg Sedo; Milota). Taking this as a starting point, I examine the role of emotions in Goodreads and Amazon's reviews of the novel *Le ripetizioni*, written by the Italian author Giulio Mozzi. Disgust is a prominent emotion in the online reception of this work. Using a metahermeneutic method (Korthals Altes), I show how this is linked to moral issues. Following Mario Barenghi's reflection, I claim that disgust occurs because readers cannot experience negative empathy (Ercolino) and are unable to comprehend disgust within an overall interpretive framework. I suggest that sociability on Goodreads can often be described as a form of "unsociable sociability".

SESSION 8H – LLMs, AUTHORS AND READERS

Claudia Carroll

Washington University in St. Louis

LLMs and Machine-Learning Methods for the Study of Narrative

This paper proposes novel methods for the quantitative study of narrative style in written texts using recent developments in AI and machine learning. While the emergence of AI tools for the study of language, particularly in the form of Large Language Models, has had a major impact on research across fields in the last few years, research at the intersection of computation and narrative has largely focused on traditional qualitative analysis of narratives generated by computational or digital tools (such as video games), rather than potential applications of AI for the study of non-digital texts. I present two case studies for the application of machine learning (or AI) methods to cognitive narratology. In the first case study, I demonstrate the utility of LLMs like GPT4 and BERT for the identification of passages of fiction that engage Theory of Mind. Theory of Mind has remained central to research in cognitive narratology and is regularly cited as a central mechanism by which fiction improves reader cognition. By assessing the capacity of LLMs to identify passages of fiction that either represent or engage Theory of Mind (through the representation of embedded mental states) for further analysis, this case study will demonstrate potential uses of AI tools for narrative studies. In the second case study, I present the results of quantitative experiments using machine learning neural networks to model and predict passages of text that engage reader social cognition. This second case study demonstrates the potential of AI methods for the empirical study of narrative style's effect on audience psychology. I demonstrate direct applications of state-of-the-art AI technology to the analysis of narrative texts, and also by suggesting new methods of research at the intersection of cognitive science, narrative theory and computer science.

Tuuli Hongisto

University of Helsinki

Advertising with AI: Descriptions of Authorship in Works Published by Amazon

Computer-generated literature has risen prominently into public discussion as large language models (LLMs) have become available for mainstream use. With the boom of LLMs, a great number of works of literature co-authored by ChatGPT have been published on the Amazon platform, many of them advertised as the first works of their kind written by "artificial intelligence". I examine how the authorship of these works is characterised: How is ChatGPT mentioned in relation to the human author? What level of agency is ascribed to ChatGPT? How is the process of writing the text described? My research material consists of a corpus of paratexts of over 160 books in the category of "Literature & Fiction" on Amazon, where ChatGPT has been named as one of the authors. These paratexts include titles, descriptions, book covers and technical details of the works, such as page count, that are available on Amazon. The works represent a wide range of genres, from children's literature to sci-fi and sonnets. From the descriptions and other paratexts of these works, patterns such as the anthropomorphisation of ChatGPT, juxtaposition of "the human" and "the machine" authors, as well as the popularity of imitation and pastiche, emerge. Although computer-generated literature is perhaps discussed more than ever before and text-generation programs are more widely available to the general public, LLMs are only the last development in the tradition of text generation with digital computers, which dates back to the 1950s. I also examine how the usage of ChatGPT in writing relates to the history of electronic literature and procedural literature more widely.

Digdem Sezen

University for the Creative Arts

LLMs as Creative Partners in Tabletop Role-Playing Game Writing

Tabletop role-playing games (TRPGs) are collaborative storytelling experiences that combine imagination, problem-solving, and social interaction. They give players the opportunity to explore new worlds, inhabit diverse characters, and embark on adventures. TRPGs are run by players called Game Masters (GMs), who are responsible for creating adventures, guiding the story, controlling non-player characters (NPCs), and facilitating the game mechanics. Other players are expected to create and control their own characters (PCs) within the GMs' world. These activities are core components of TRPG experiences and have procedural aspects embedded in game systems, such as character generators mixing randomness with pre-determined character trait through dice rolls and tables. While GMs are free to develop their own story components within game systems, pre-generated story components, such as adventure and character packs have been part of the TRPG culture since its early days. They provide GMs structure, challenges, and narrative hooks native to game systems. Following the widespread release of OpenAI's Large Language Model (LLM) GPT-3 and later ChatGPT in early 2023, game scholars, TRPG creators, and player communities started to explore the possibilities of utilising LLMs in TRPG generation and play, as an alternative to traditional pre-generated narrative game components. Combining narrative and procedural aspects of TRPGs, LLMs are expected to be effective as storytelling companions and computational support in worldbuilding, adventure generation, NPC and PC generation, and dialog creation. As in many other areas, this had led to discussions on how LLMs can be used as tools to augment rather than replace human game writers, leading to the ban of LLMs as "primary authors" in narrative-oriented game products by major TRPG marketplaces in late 2023. I investigate the current trends in utilising LLMs as assistive tools for writing and experiencing TRPGs. Focusing on emerging LLM-aided practices in game writing based on new product categories and community generations, I evaluate the proposed and current role of LLMs in developing the storytelling aspects of TRPGs. The offerings of contemporary AI-aided TRPG writing will be compared with traditional GM roles and functions of pre-generated TRPG content. I aim to identify best practices and limitations for the effective utilization of LLMs into the TRPG writing, while maintaining the creative agency and expertise of human game writers.

SESSION 81 – BODIES IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Sarah France

Newcastle University

Consumptive Ecologies: Becoming Edible in the Anthropocene

The language of consumption often emerges when discussing negative human impact on the planet: unfettered consumption of resources or land, overconsumption of material goods, or literal consumption of nonhuman beings. Yet the human subject is often positioned as unconsumable, owing to dominant ideologies which situate the human subject as separate from and superior to the fallible materiality of the natural world: a point seen in the linguistic classification of human "flesh" vs. animal "meat". Human flesh being considered edible generally only emerges in narratives exploring extreme food scarcity or societal collapse, such as post-apocalyptic narratives which feature cannibalism as a sign of extreme social breakdown, envisioning individualistic capitalistic consumption taken to its extreme. Yet how might a reframing of the human 'becoming edible' be used as a provocation to rethink dominant attitudes surrounding human/nonhuman relationships? How might it help to query binaries of human/nonhuman, meat/flesh, consumed/consumer? I examine Kathryn Harlan's "Becoming Fungal", where the protagonist's body begins sprouting edible mushrooms, and Matt Bell's *Appleseed*, where human bodies exist in a cycle of matter that is recycled and regenerated into

something consumable by human and nonhuman beings. The idea of becoming edible is reclaimed and reformed, presenting an inversion of consumptive capitalist practices. These narratives explore a model of the human body as being made of organic, consumable matter, pushing human bodies past the threshold of edibility and showing them as being part of a cycle of life, death, consumption, decomposition, and “life” again. I argue that these approaches reflect the importance of recognising the human as being situated amidst the wider nonhuman world: deposing humanity from the top of the food chain, considering the human not as eternal consumers but as reciprocal intra-active agents, and foregrounding sustainability rather than extreme consumption.

Jon Heggland

Washington State University

Subject, Species, Character: Toward an Ecohumanist Narratology

My paper takes up the vexed question of the human in econarratology, proposing that narrative – with its constitutive ‘anthropomorphic bias’ (Fludernik) instead offers a more productive template to analyse the rifts, gaps, and negations within the human. I respond to recent econarratological work by David Herman, Erin James, and Marco Caracciolo by reading narrative as a terrain for modelling the contradictory necessity of the human as we imagine possible stories for a collective planetary future. In particular, I examine the rift in the human by noting its two valences as individual subject on the one hand and as collective species on the other. Where narrative has long been adept at exploring the former (through the centrality of psychologically complex characters), the representation of human-as-species has only recently become common (especially in the genres of dystopian, post-apocalyptic, and ecological fiction). Rather than see these dimensions as consonant, I examine them as an unresolvable dialectic explored by and through many narratives of the Anthropocene. I read Nnedi Okorafor’s *Lagoon* as an example that puts this dialectical relationship front and centre rather than repressing it in the name of a stable social-symbolic order. In narratives such as Okorafor’s the humanity of the species is forged through the collective lack and contradiction of individual subjects, rather than in spite of such failures. This approach points toward a reframing of human subjectivity not as force of categorical domination and repression but as a necessity – albeit a flawed and broken one – in confronting the polyresins of the Anthropocene.

Orin Posner

Tel Aviv University

Chronotopes of Maintenance: Sustainable Cities in Climate Fiction and Science Fiction

I examine how urban climate-fiction and science-fiction narratives construct what I call the chronotope of maintenance: a continuous present in which characters face environmental risks that they constantly work to manage, rendering time and space active. The climate-fiction texts I analyse focus on the work of architectural and social maintenance through which the climate crisis is mitigated: reusing old buildings as well as building and caring for communities. Through the centring of maintenance, these narratives reconfigure climate-fiction’s chronotope of risk into a chronotope of maintenance, emerging as literary sites of endurance and hope. As a genre, climate fiction’s depictions of the climatically-changed planet have largely moved away from portrayals of apocalyptic destruction towards depictions of risk societies (Heise; Johns-Putra; Bracke), or chronotopes of risk: anticipatory temporality for future environmental disasters within a precarious, dangerous space. The texts I discuss offer a more hopeful approach through focus on characters’ maintenance and care work; the narrative thus overlays the space-time of risk with personal and communal agency, and produces a narrative time of maintenance. Katherine Kruger defines the narrative time of maintenance as slow-paced, fragmentary, and based on waiting, implying a connection to the future – a time frame especially fitting for depictions of climate change. As a hyperobject ‘massively distributed in time and space relative to humans’ (Morton), climate

change and the 'slow violence' that it enacts are often unintelligible (Nixon). Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140* renders climate change not only representable, but manageable: the long, polyphonic narrative centres characters' unexceptional, everyday maintenance of both their architectural and social spaces within a partially-flooded and socially-stratified New York City. The new, science-fictional architecture/technology of the novel is sidelined in favour of focus on communal, urban maintenance work: actively sustaining the present and shaping the future. The result is a chronotope in which time moves in accordance with human action, allowing the climatically-changed city – and its people – to persist.

SESSION 9A – AFTERWARDSNESS: TIME, TRAUMA, AND NARRATIVE ORDER

Ally Barber

Southern Methodist University

'Telling our own stories': Narration and Trauma in Emma Pérez's *Forgetting the Alamo*

Emma Pérez argues for a reimagining of history that seeks to uncover the voices that have been silenced by heteropatriarchal colonial forces. Her novel *Forgetting the Alamo, or Blood Memory* is an explicit attempt to enact the decolonial imaginary. By focusing on the experiences of a Chicana lesbian cowgirl seeking justice in the wake of the Battle of San Jacinto, Pérez brings to light marginalised voices hidden beneath the horrific violence of this valorised period of Texas history. Micaela Campos's voice is extremely clear throughout the novel; she explicitly figures the telling of her story as an empowering act, a means of creating a legacy that will live on far after she dies. I consider the function and purpose of Micaela's position as both character and narrator in the (re)memory of her traumatic experiences. She functions as both an autodiegetic narrator or Character-I telling the events that she is experiencing in the narrative discourse, and as the temporally removed Narrator-I who looks at her past experiences more critically and circumspectly. The moments where Micaela as Narrator-I makes herself known to the audience to explain or warn about future traumatic events invests the narrative discourse with the sense that the Character-I's trauma is inevitable or unavoidable: the Narrator-I knows what is coming and is unable to stop it. The separation between Micaela as Narrator-I and Character-I reveals the extent to which traumatic events effectively narrativise lived experience retroactively, imbuing certain events with additional significance due to the knowledge of what comes later.

Elijah Hook

Southern Methodist University

'First, I got myself born': Systems of Abuse and Narrative Inevitability in Barbara Kingsolver's *Demon Copperhead*

Barbara Kingsolver's *Demon Copperhead* is a considerably risky narrative undertaking. Not only is it a retelling of Charles Dickens's most personal novel, it is also an intimate exploration of the traumas and abuses of a child growing up in rural Appalachia. Told in the first-person, the novel's narrator, Damon Fields (alias Demon Copperhead), recounts his life from birth to early adulthood; and it is a life marked by poverty, addiction, death, and neglect. The risk of telling such a story, especially for someone of Kingsolver's position, lies in voyeuristic tendencies to indulge in the traumas of others; however, the story is widely regarded as a triumph. The narrative avoids such voyeurism through its unlikely approach to its own chronology. Through her manipulation of diegetic time, Kingsolver disrupts the reader's engagement with *Demon*'s trauma and imbues the narrative with a sense of inevitability: *Demon*'s story was always set before him, just as it is always set before the reader. This sense of narrative inevitability allows the novel to avoid the pitfalls of rags-to-riches plot lines and trauma porn, and instead repurposes Dickens's novel as a potentially recuperative lament for the lives lost to systemic abuses in rural Appalachia.

Ian Shaughnessy

Southern Methodist University

It's a Love Story': Ghostly Realisations of Trauma and Memory in Mike Flanagan's *Bly Manor*

In Mike Flanagan's television miniseries, *The Haunting of Bly Manor*, a multifaceted narrative web exposes many hard truths about trauma, memory, and storytelling. A pseudo-adaptation of Henry James's 1898 novella *The Turn of the Screw*, *Bly Manor* borrows the complex and ambiguous narrative structure of James's original ghost story (such as a frame narrative, a primary narrative, and multiple secondary narratives within the primary narrative) to explore the deep, monstrous complexities of trauma and its disorienting and haunting effects on trauma survivors in a contemporary setting. This paper contributes to the burgeoning field of queer narratology, combining methodological frameworks from James Phelan, Cathy Caruth, and Adrienne Rich, arguing that the conflation of *Bly Manor*'s diegetic narrator, extradiegetic narrator, and metadiegetic narrators reveals how survivors of traumatic events fabricate, exaggerate, or even negate the details of their traumatic experiences when relegated through narrative praxis. As Dani and Jamie's experiences within a homophobic society highlight, trauma causes fractured memories that are often recreated in ways that are often more digestible for the survivor, which makes their storytelling a more comfortable experience for both them and their audience. Still, trauma is often a collective experience, and the multiple metadiegetic narrators that exist within Jamie's extradiegetic narration work to shape a collective understanding of the importance of sharing trauma to heal from its ghostly symptoms. As Flanagan reminds his audience in the show's final moments, *The Haunting of Bly Manor* is not simply a ghost story, "It's a love story," and Jamie's story reminds us that witnessing someone's trauma through storytelling is a privilege that impacts not only Jamie's audience, but Flanagan's as well.

**SESSION 9B – ANCIENT NARRATIVE FORMS
AND CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE THEORY**

Lisa Hau

University of Glasgow

Immersion and Trauma in Xenophon's *Anabasis*

The ancient Athenian author Xenophon was famous in antiquity for his *charis*, his "charming" or "enjoyable" writing style. His most famous work was the autobiographical *Anabasis*, the account of how 10,000 Greek mercenaries were left in the lurch surrounded by enemies in central Persia when Cyrus, the pretender to the throne they had been fighting for, was killed, and how they made their way back to Greece against all odds, partly under Xenophon's leadership. I apply the narratological theory of immersion, pioneered originally by Marie-Laure Ryan, to Xenophon's *Anabasis*. I begin with an analysis of his account of the climactic battle where Cyrus was killed, showing how Xenophon achieves a high degree of spatial and temporal immersion, but only limited emotional immersion. This will be noted as an oddity considering Xenophon's own participation in the battle and its importance for his future life, and we will proceed to search for emotionally immersive passages in the rest of the *Anabasis*. I show that Xenophon only aims for emotional immersion in passages of joy and relief and avoids emotional immersion in passages of danger and violence. I suggest that this avoidance may be an expression of his personal trauma and that this trauma may also be the reason he decided to write the work in the third person, something that has often puzzled scholars.

Genevieve Liveley

University of Bristol

Felicitis quondam: Nostalgia and Narrative in Roman Elegy

Roman elegy often seems infused with ‘nostalgia for an idealised past when life was simple, gods wooden and men honest’ (Lee). Yet, this sustained and pervasive mood of nostalgia is ostensibly at odds with the highly sophisticated and innovative ways in which the Latin elegists narrate their proclaimed desire for “the good old days” and for simple old-fashioned pleasures. There is a clear tension in Roman elegy between the nostalgic sentiment(al) and its expression. This paper explores this tension and the potential for storytelling that it opens up. Illustrated with close readings of selected elegies, it argues that the foregrounding of nostalgia and its tropes provides the opportunity for ancient elegists to compress an extraordinary (quasi-epic) temporal range into their short-form elegiac narratives. Focusing upon the corpus Tibullianum, it argues that the poet-narrator’s self-conscious representation of nostalgia qua nostalgia, as literary construct, as fantasy and fiction, opens up a dynamic and polytropic storyworld that takes us to many different places and multiple time zones. It demonstrates that Tibullus’ “reflective” nostalgia, his proto-Proustian use of analepsis and iterative narration, his canny deployment of well-worn “nostalgic” storyworld figures and tropes (including, especially, his identification with the storytelling nostalgist Odysseus), allows for an extraordinary “little Odyssey” to be compressed into just 94 lines of poetry. Drawing upon the typologies and narrative poetics of nostalgia as formulated by Svetlana Boym and Gérard Genette, I demonstrate that nostalgia as device provides an ideal vehicle for the kind of chronological complexity—the deployment of anachronies, analepses, and iterative narration—that invites us to rethink the narrative dynamics and storytelling potential not only of Tibullus’ poetry but of the elegiac genre itself.

Natalie Swain

Acadia University

Meet Innertextuality: Braiding beyond Comics in Latin Elegy

Thierry Groensteen discusses the complex ‘multistage multiframe’ that makes up comics. With groups of panels (multiframes, such as the three-panel strip, a page, a double page, an issue, etc.) operating on several levels (the multistage), Groensteen breaks comics free of linear sequence, instead discussing them as a series of nested units (the ‘multistage multiframe’). Along with this perspective shift, Groensteen made note of a function of the medium that functions outside of sequence: comics braiding: ‘Braiding can sometimes be likened to the more common procedure of quotation’. Functionally, braiding thus reflects a kind of internal intertextuality – or, as I call it here innertextuality – where individual images outside linear sequence work together to create a meaning that supplements the sequentially-created narrative. In Latin elegy, too, we find similar nested sites of meaning. Unlike units of panels, in Latin elegy these units are comprised of an individual poem, an individual poem along with the poems immediately preceding and following it (making a triad similar to the three-panel strip, or as they would appear on a papyrus scroll during reading), a book of elegiac poetry, and an entire collection of elegiac poetry. While elsewhere I have demonstrated that a comics-based methodology can bring out new readings of Latin elegy by reading elegiac poems in sequence, here I will examine the ‘multistage multiframe’ of Latin elegy, demonstrating that in this ancient genre we find a mechanism analogous with comics braiding. Using Book One of Ovid’s *Amores* as my test case, I demonstrate that individual motifs within this ancient poetic genre – in this case, the *puella*’s (girlfriend) hair – operate similarly to comics braiding to develop a meaning that supplements the linear elegiac narrative.

Cecilia Thirlway

University of Bristol

Revisiting the Neo-Aristotelians

A number of schools of narrative thought lay claim to origins in the ancient world, for example drawing on the works of Aristotle and Plato for foundational concepts, philosophies and methodologies. One such case in point, the Chicago School of Neo-Aristotelians, was born explicitly from a 'strong temperamental affinity' (Crane) with the works of Aristotle. Indeed, the work of the first generation of Chicago School scholars at times so closely reproduced Aristotelian thought that 'it can be difficult to distinguish the reception from the original' (Liveley). A key aspect of this school of thought focuses on the *a posteriori*, inductive approach to research, taking audience affect and effect as the starting point from which to investigate the narrative dynamics of the text, and is sometimes characterised as emerging in deliberate opposition to the *a priori* – or Platonic – approach of the New Criticism (Trowbridge; Crane). Subsequent waves of scholarship have 'deepened, extended and revised the project of that first generation' to produce current rhetorical theories of narrative, which view narrative as a deliberate communication fraught with purpose (Phelan). I explore to what extent current rhetorical-narrative theory continues to incorporate the ideas, concepts and philosophies of Aristotle, even as explicit references to his work have faded away. It will achieve this aim through a close reading of selected elements of *Aristotle's Poetics and Rhetoric* through the lenses of the latest scholarship in rhetorical-narrative theory.

SESSION 9C – QUEER SUBJECTIVITIES

Lena Mattheis

University of Surrey

Nonbinary Pronouns and Gender-Transgressive Narration in Rae Spoon's *Green Glass Ghosts* and Sara Taylor's *The Lauras*

Queer, trans and nonbinary texts do not fit into normative narrative structures. Our stories burst out of generic seams, our poetry cannot be contained within straight structures, and our protagonists do not conform to the gendered expectations attached to the 'he' or 'she' of a traditional third-person point of view. Queerly reshaped pronouns, forms and narrative strategies are therefore flourishing in contemporary non-binary, trans and queer narratives. From singular "they" to "it" to neopronouns to the collective voice of "we", gender-transgressing narratives mark themselves as such through narratorial perspective, queer(ed) and trans(ed) pronoun use and other(ed) elements of form. I explore queer pronoun use in contemporary narratives to better understand how queer points of view affect other elements of form. I am interested in how gender-nonconforming protagonists queer and trans language, structure and narrative voice and what the implications of transgressive pronouns and formal strategies might be. An unassuming, functional part of speech, pronouns do not, at first glance, seem to do much apart from standing in for a noun, person, or entity more relevant than themselves. The impact queer pronouns have in non-binary, trans, and queer literature, however, is immense. *Green Glass Ghosts* by Rae Spoon, for example, uses generic singular they to create a uniquely queer and trans point of view and reshape language and narrative convention in a gender-transgressive way. *The Lauras* by Sara Taylor has a first-person homodiegetic narrator whose gender is first undisclosed and then emerges as nonbinary through the novel's careful rejection of gender and genre conventions. Using these two texts as examples, I explore some of the exciting narrative perspectives queer, trans and nonbinary pronouns have to offer.

Bianca Schüller

Giessen University

Queerness of Non-Human Characters in Neil Gaiman's *Good Omens* and Greta Gerwig's *Barbie*

Both the utter lack and the prescriptive forms of queer representation in narrative ultimately risk dehumanising the very subjects it nominally seeks to liberate. In fiction, these practices of dehumanisation can have far-reaching consequences as 'it is within the sphere of popular culture that many people probably learn what they do know about sex and sexuality, because even in contemporary American culture there is still a great reticence to talk about it openly' (Benshoff and Griffin). I examine queer representation in the television series *Good Omens* and the feature film *Barbie*. Both narratives are not only contemporary and popular narratives, which highlights their degree of influence, but they also serve as retellings of previous narratives surrounding their characters, with *Good Omens* reimagining biblical stories and *Barbie* diverging from her traditional representations in advertisements and popular culture. As a result, both narratives actively engage with and rewrite what have become folk narratives, emphasising the need to rethink traditional patterns. Using queer and cognitive narratology, I show how *Good Omens* and *Barbie* gesture towards new ways of queer representation. Moreover, with reference to Donna Haraway's often-cited question, 'Why should our bodies end at the skin, or include at best other beings encapsulated by skin?', I draw a specific focus to relations between queerness and ideas of (non/human) bodies (Hird and Giffney), examining how they are expressed in contemporary fiction.

Mahima Verma

Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi

Queer Shame and the Narrative Gaze in Garth Greenwell's *What Belongs To You*

This paper examines queer literary encounters with shame through a narrative analysis of American author Garth Greenwell's *What Belongs to You*. As both a deeply individual and social emotion which involves visibility and exposure of the self (Levinas) before another as spectator, shame is conceptually tied to the visual metaphor of "the gaze" or "the look". Moreover, shame narratives, such as those recounting the experience of marginalization vis-à-vis race, caste, gender, and/or sexuality, often involve an analeptic return to the scene of shame that animates the characters' negotiations with identity. Keeping in mind the underlying ocular structure immanent to the experience of shame, the temporality of its telling, the recursive force of the emotion, and its crucial relationship to identity, fundamental aspects of narrative such as order, frequency, mood, and voice facilitate inquiry into the literary representation of shame. If shame involves essentially an assessment of the self; an experience of looking at oneself through the eyes of others, this paper foregrounds the narrative construction of gaze, and the interaction or entangling of gazes in specific relations of power and judgment regarding sexuality and its social marginalization. I analyse the textual operation of this narrative gaze—what in narratology is referred to as focalization—in narratives of queer shame to show how it works to orient the shamed subject/focaliser to the objectifying and evaluating gaze, whether real or imagined, of other characters whose spectatorial presence generate shame. I highlight how the narrative gaze in Greenwell's text gives rise to not singular but multiple literary and narrative orientations which attests to the simultaneous activation of different subjectivities within a single instance of shame.

SESSION 9D – NARRATIVE STRUCTURES

Tatiana Crombeen

Leiden University

A Neolithic Tale: Vladimir Propp's Folklore Structure and the Mesolithic-Neolithic Transition

Richard Bradley's *The Significance of Monuments* considers a phenomenon which can best be described as 'becoming Neolithic'. The idea of 'becoming Neolithic' comprehends an alteration from a Mesolithic mindset to a Neolithic mindset, of which the latter implies a different attitude towards the natural world, eventually making agriculture possible. The Neolithic, as a result of an internal shift in the human mind, is an interesting approach to understanding the emergence and spread of agriculture, which was often explained as the inevitable outcome of environmental change. Offering another explanation for the adoption of farming, the narrative stays the same nonetheless: that of a hero (humans) finding a solution (farming) to a pressing matter, in which the pressing matter is the topic of a long-standing debate. I address Bradley's view on the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition. Inspired by the work of Misia Landau, I apply Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* to Bradley's work in order to answer the question as to what extent the structure of the fairy tale compares to the structure of the ideal success story, which in our Western European culture is that of the adoption of farming. I focus specifically on the various functions of the Dramatis Personae, which in this case is the West-European hunter-gatherer who encounters farmers coming from the East, and explain the transitions as presented by Bradley using these functions.

Cassandra Falke

The Arctic University of Norway

Scarcity, Waste and Plenty: Narrating Structures of Economic Inequality

This paper creates a taxonomy for narratives of economic inequality that are focalised through poor characters, using examples of nineteenth-century and contemporary literature, as these are both contexts of rapid economic growth. My focus will be less on the ways that narratives drive economic change (Schiller) and more on the ways narratives of impoverishment focused on scarcity, waste or plenty imply different causes for inequality in capitalist systems. Narratives of scarcity attribute inequality to greed and self-protectiveness; a focus on waste blames consumerist logic we live within more than control. Plenty focuses on adequacy for all rather than acquisition. Motivating this paper is a concern for the challenges of narrating inequality. As a dominant cause of structural violence, inequality is responsible for an enormous number of preventable deaths (Lee), often among a society's most vulnerable people – children, elders, the disabled people, and the displaced. But narrating structural violence faces many of the same challenges eloquently described by Rob Nixon in his writing on slow violence. Inequality performs its violence at a grindingly slow pace, there are few villains and heroes, and systems perpetuating inequality are often so vast and interconnected that they seem inevitable. Moreover, inequality is a depersonalised structure of relations that individual characters inhabit but cannot fairly be made to represent. All these factors make inequality a challenging issue to narrate. Rather than analyse rags-to-riches stories or 'dissensual bildungsroman' (Slaughter) emplotment, I examine isolated scenes that defamiliarize sedimented norms of inequality with snapshot-like efficiency (Oliver Twist's 'Please, sir, I want some more,'/ 'The master was a fat, healthy man...'). Globalised narratives of waste are now complementing localised narratives of scarcity, which have historically dominated anglophone representations of poverty. Narratives of plenty, sometimes derided as nostalgic, come mostly from working-class writers and I argue deserve more attention.

Megan Stephens

University of Sheffield

Narrating Death, Structuring Life

Todd May notes that death, unlike the closing of a narrative, does not bring meaning to a life through its status as an ending. A narrative's ending traditionally brings a sense of completeness to the work, potentially recasting what has come before, whereas death interrupts life and prevents completion. This paper considers the paradox that this distinction creates for narrative representations of death and their relationship to closure. I draw on Boaz Hagin's discussion of the narrative difficulties surrounding the 'mid-story' death to consider the distinctions between representations of death across different character types. A death in the middle of a causally driven narrative can carry weight, but it cannot 'overwhelm the remaining individuals [...] to the point of paralysis' if the story is to continue, and of course 'the character most clearly affected by the death—the individual who dies—is also the one who, being dead, is no longer directly an active agent in the story' (Hagin). This necessarily defines the type of character who can die midway through a narrative as one without whom the story can continue—usually a minor character. In contrast, a protagonist's active influence on narrative events functions in a way as a protection against death—at least until the narrative is mostly complete. I focus on examples from contemporary fantastic film and television, paying attention to the genre's staples of heroic figures and danger-based adventures, to explore how the narrative requirements surrounding death introduce or limit the possibility of completed meaning for a character's life which May argues that death in reality denies.

SESSION 9E – THE “I” AND THE “YOU”

Chen Edelsburg

Tel Aviv University

Interpellation and Narration: The Second Person Address and the Postmodern Turn

I integrate theories of subjectivity into narrative thought about reading processes, while taking into account a diverse range of readers and subject positions. While reader-response usually addresses the literary text in isolation from the specific subject reading it (the reader is usually a theoretical construct rather than a flesh-and-blood human), I aspire to form a theoretical language that can address the interaction between the specific reader and the array of theoretical recipients of the text (narratee, implied reader, narrative audience, etc.). To accomplish this aim, I introduce a psycho-Marxist perspective of interpellation to methodologies of narratology, in order to provide a more detailed analysis of the implications of the second-person address on the specific reader. This conceptual framework allows for an examination of the reader's ambivalent struggle for a sense of subjectivation vis-à-vis the author, as well as a better grasp of the ideological meanings of the address to the reader – a topic that has been overlooked in traditional reader-response theory. I focus on Slavoj Žižek's perception of the subject as what materializes when ideology fails, by forming symptoms. These failures can be traced to different stages in the three-act process of interpellation. Conceptualising these failed interpellations allows me to propose different types of narration, constructing various kinds of gendered subjectivations.

Anna Kuutsa

Tampere University

You and Zero Person in Dialogue Narration

Personal pronouns have gained interest in narrative studies to some extent: especially you-narration (Fludernik; Richardson; Mildorf) and we-narration (Lanser; Bekhta; Fludernik) have been topical in the recent studies in narratology. However, the research has mainly focused on the effects different

pronouns have with the narrator's discourse. The impacts of the varying personal pronouns in direct speech presentations have not yet been fully discussed in the field of narratology and the studies of dialogue narration. I present example analyses which portray the possibilities of personal pronouns you and (a Finnish speciality) zero person used in direct speech presentations. I analyse the various effects these personal pronouns can have in relation to 1) normative thinking versus individual voice, as well as 2) constructing and deconstructing a portrayal of a fictional collective. I use definitions from linguistic approach that has studied the functions of personal pronouns. However, unlike linguistic studies which strive to define certain functions for linguistic patterns, my viewpoint is rooted with the Proteus principle (Sternberg) that has been fundamental in narrative analysis: same forms can function differently in different texts, and there is no fixed artistic function that would require a certain form. My target material is the dialogue prose of Maria Jotuni, whose works have radically renewed the modes of dialogue narration in the Finnish literature history; thematically, her fiction portrays the questions of marriage, love affairs and life stories of female characters from various societal backgrounds. I read the dialogue narration in relation to the societal context of the time of the writing and regard them as comments to the debates concerning women's role in the society.

Pia Masiero

University of Venice, Ca' Foscari

The 'I' and its (Literary) Affordances

Much has been written on what Franz Stanzel defined first-person narrative situation. The (fictionally) autobiographical implications of the employment of the "I" have been explored extensively after Dorrit Cohn's *Transparent Minds* and have found special traction thanks to the conversation on embodiment and situatedness and autofiction. I reflect on the uniqueness of this pronoun with special attention to its literary affordances. Émile Benveniste writes that 'a unique but mobile sign, I, which can be assumed by each speaker on the condition that he refers each time only to the instance of his own discourse. This sign is thus linked to the exercise of language and announces the speaker as speaker.' What does this 'exercise of language' in a fictional context? As readers we the "I" is the essential frame around which a unique life takes shape. We furthermore know that the actualization of a given life cannot but depend on the piling up of details that allow the reader to individualize the speaking-I. Our semantic memory and our experiential repertoires are activated when the "I" becomes more and more characterised. Leaving this well-known process on the background, I explore what lies in store for the reader before this (characterisation) happens. What are the implications of the unique referential organization of the first-person pronoun ('Each "I" has its own reference and corresponds each time to a unique being who is set up as such', writes Benveniste)? My hypothesis, which will be tested through a reading of the beginning of *Infinite Jest*, is that the "I" is a cognitive and emotional organiser and as such is one of the most powerful affordances of literary texts.

SESSION 9F – FICTIONALITY II: FICTION AND BELIEF

Sarah Copland

MacEwan University

Counterfactual History, Audience Beliefs, and Reader Responses: Bernardine Evaristo's *Blonde Roots*

Using Bernardine Evaristo's *Blonde Roots* as a case study and rhetorical narratology as my methodology, I demonstrate that understanding the novel's real-world or extratextual impact is only possible if we recognize fictionality as its core feature. The novel, based on Evaristo's short story 'ohtakemehomelord.com', inverts the historical reality of the transatlantic slave trade, depicting a counterfactual storyworld in which Africans are the slave traders and owners, and Europeans the slaves. In rhetorical narratology's model of audiences, the narrative audience (the observer position in

the storyworld that actual readers take on) is nested within the authorial audience (the author's implied target audience that actual readers seek to enter). In constructing her counterfactual storyworld, Evaristo makes this nesting complicated and crucial to her purposes because the beliefs of the narrative audience in that storyworld are incompatible with the beliefs—and knowledge—of the authorial audience about that world's fictionality. Attending to these two audiences' differing beliefs and knowledge in relation to specific aspects of the narrative (*e.g.* time, space, narrator, character, progression, paratext, and ethics) reveals the wide range of purposes for which fictionality is employed (and effects fictionality achieves) in this generic narrative fiction. Seeking points of entry through all three locations in the rhetorical triangle (authorial intention, text, and reader response), I compare one rhetorical reader's close attention to the fictionality of specific resources of narration that serve to defamiliarise deeply entrenched racist beliefs with Evaristo's statements of authorial intention and lay reader reviews from Amazon and Goodreads.

James Phelan

Ohio State University

Rhetorical Reading, Tacit Knowledge, and the Distinction of Fiction: Roddy Doyle's "Worms"

I reflect on how a rhetorical theory of fictionality can help us understand why radically open endings can be successful in fiction when they would be unsatisfactory in nonfiction. In "Worms," Roddy Doyle displays commitments to the mimetic illusion and the plot dynamics of instability-complication-resolution, as he recounts the experiences of a married couple in Dublin during the Covid-19 pandemic. Then, however, Doyle abandons these commitments and ends the story on a cliffhanger, as one partner waits for the other to respond to a crucially important question. Strikingly, however, this move does not, as most approaches to plot would predict, ruin the story but instead adds to the story's affective and ethical power. I contend that Doyle's move is effective because it brilliantly relies on the tacit knowledge and its accompanying beliefs that authors and audiences share in what I call the Zone of Generic Fiction (ZGF). I also contend that narrative theory has not yet done justice to the importance of this tacit knowledge, despite rhetorical theory's useful distinction between narrative audiences who believe that fictional characters and events are real and authorial audiences who retain an awareness of their invention. This tacit knowledge includes the shared understandings that (1) fictional characters are simultaneously synthetic constructs; and (2) authors shape their narratives for purposes that go beyond bringing about satisfactory resolutions to the characters' fates. This tacit knowledge means that individual readers can fill in the gaps in Doyle's ending in their own ways, even as Doyle can refuse to privilege any one of those ways. Recognising the importance of this tacit knowledge and its accompanying beliefs also helps explain why Doyle's cliffhanger would not work if he were writing nonfiction.

Lisa Zunshine

University of Kentucky

How to Make Us Believe Us Something that We Know Cannot be True

Drawing on nail-biting scenes of cross-examination of defendants, I suggest that the genre of courtroom drama exploits the fundamental cognitive instability of the concept of belief. For instance, in Billy Wilder's *Witness for the Prosecution*, a man named Leonard Vole, who is a shiftless good-for-nothing, cultivates the affections of an older rich woman. Then, after she changes her will to leave him the bulk of her money, she is found murdered. All the evidence points to him; 'the facts in this case', as the prosecutor puts it, 'are simple'; yet the man's brilliant lawyer, the jury members, and we as viewers are somehow made to think that Vole may be innocent. The question that I answer in my talk, with help from cognitive science, is this: how does the movie make us believe something that we on some level know cannot be true?

**SESSION 9G – NARRATIVE THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO
HIDDEN IDENTITIES IN FICTION AND DRAMA**

Howard Sklar

University of Helsinki

'To a Gentile I'm a Jew': Degrees of Hiddenness in Tom Stoppard's *Leopoldstadt*

Tom Stoppard's *Leopoldstadt* is an anomaly in his body of work, in that it deals directly with an identity that, until he was over fifty, he did not know that he possessed: his Jewishness, which had been hidden from him by his parents when they fled Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia in 1939. Indeed, *Leopoldstadt*, in an important sense, is a play about degrees of hiddenness. In an early moment of the play, more than thirty years before the rise of Nazism in Austria, Ludwig tells Herman, 'I'm an unbeliever, I don't observe Jewish customs except as a souvenir of family ties. But to a gentile I'm a Jew. There isn't a gentile anywhere who at one moment or another hasn't thought 'Jew!'". Ludwig and Hermann represent a passive form of that hiddenness, in that they do not actively deny their Jewishness, but – in Ludwig's case, through secularism, and in Hermann's case, through marriage to a Catholic – effectively make their Jewish identities less apparent to others. Their positions echo the approaches to identity adopted by the other characters in the play – some less hidden, and some more decisively concealed. I show how, through the play's narrative progression (Phelan; Sternberg), ambiguous characterisation (Margolin; Phelan and Rabinowitz; Polvinen and Sklar), and linguistic subtleties – particularly in the ways that identity is named (Baker; Schreier; Memmi) – Stoppard reveals the tensions that the characters experience as they navigate the degree to which they choose, or are forced, to be hidden. I demonstrate how these narrative devices, in turn, communicate rhetorically and performatively (Phelan; Breger; Sklar) with both real and implied audiences, positioning them to respond to the ethical demands of the characters' predicament and ultimate plight.

Sue Vice

University of Sheffield

Retrieving the Jewish Presence in British Golden Age Detective Fiction

The representation of Jewish characters in Golden Age British detective fiction marks a paradox. Such figures are omnipresent, in works by writers ranging from Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers and Georgette Heyer to E.C.R. Lorac, Anne Meredith, Ngaio Marsh and Anthony Berkeley. Yet critically they are either overlooked or assumed simply to take the form of 'unthinking' caricatures, rationalised as arising from their authors' era. Neither the variety of the Jewish figures' roles, as victims, suspects, villains and social commentators, nor the ethical range of their depiction, has been fully acknowledged. I claim rather that the Jewish presence is an indispensable element of these novels' generic and narrative construction. The details of the Jewish characters' lives, including clothing, professions, utterances and how they are perceived by the non-Jewish characters, are central to the novels' social context and "reality effect". The Jewish characters underpin the construction of suspense, investigation and provision of clues as crucial to detective fiction's double temporality, the event versus the inquest (Brooks). I therefore argue that the representation of Jewish characters in Golden Age detective fiction is a diverse instance of what Bryan Cheyette calls the 'semitic discourse' within British society. Retrieving the occluded significance of Jewish characters reveals a perspective on the history of the Jews in Britain and beyond, including that of the Second World War. I focus on representative examples showing the wide spectrum of such imagery: Dorothy Sayers' *Whose Body*, Raymond Postgate's *Verdict of Twelve*, Ngaio Marsh's *Death and the Dancing Footman*, Patricia Wentworth's *The Key*, and Cyril Hare's *An English Murder*, to conclude that, even more significantly, such retrieval shows Jewish life's foundational role for British culture.

Sara Whiteley

University of Sheffield

Blurred Identities in the Work of Kazuo Ishiguro

Kazuo Ishiguro is famed for the indirectness of his communication. Critical accounts of his works continually emphasise that their meanings are subtle, hidden, gestural; reside beneath the surface and emerge in negative from gaps (Lewis; Rushdie; Shaffer; Sloane; Wong). In narratology, Ishiguro's indirectness has been analysed most extensively in relation to the use of unreliable first-person narration (Phelan; Wall). Though existing criticism describes Ishiguro's style well, it often fails to characterise the conceptual mechanics behind these hidden meanings. I take a cognitive approach to Ishiguro's style, examining the interanimation of several linguistic and conceptual features in the creation of his indirectness. It pays particular attention to those diffuse meanings which are associations in the minds of readers, evoked but not constrained by the representations of the text, and which are situated in the dynamic progression of the act of reading. Focusing on Ishiguro's first novel, *A Pale View of Hills*, the paper considers the blurred and hidden identities of "the woman" and "the little girl" who reappear as referents throughout the text, as a key with which to unlock several underexamined aspects of Ishiguro's indirect style. My discussion includes the role of ambience in the novel's meanings, that is the 'halo of associations' and 'aura of possibilities' which are subliminally accumulated across a reading of a text and which impact its felt effect (Stockwell). I also examine the cognitive effects of negation in the creation of conflicting mental representations and signification 'beyond the semantic confines of the text' (Gavins) and the role of dialogue in creating meanings which are unstated in the narration (Phelan).

SESSION 9H – ENGAGING READERS

J Hughes

University of Toronto

'Into the Hands of Curious, Engaged Readers': *McSweeney's* and the Experimental Narrative

There is often a conceptual and temporal boundary placed between the author and the reader of a book: the author created what the reader now receives, or labours to receive. However, some literary works—especially many artists' books and works of experimental narrative—complicate or even dismantle such a boundary. Using the experimental and materially-diverse contemporary literary journal *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* as my primary focus, I investigate confluences of narrative, paratextual, and material choices that invite (or provoke) readers to actively co-create reading experiences. In exploring how *McSweeney's* encourages multivalent, creative, and collaborative reading, I take a similar methodology by integrating critical lenses from experimental narrative and artists' book studies. The communicative model of narrative (Chatman) offers a generative way to view *McSweeney's* editorial voice(s) in their shifting modes of address to the reader, though lacks space to consider the embodied and co-creative actions that contribute to *McSweeney's* spectrum of narrator-reader relationships. In addition to the many visual and material considerations artists' books scholarship can bring to narrative study, the formal self-reflexivity of artists' books (Drucker) offers fresh dimensions for the study of metafictional elements in works of experimental narrative. Through the inclusion of frameworks from artists' book scholarship, my readings of *McSweeney's* offer strategies for including more of the multisensory, metamedial, creative, and embodied elements of reading in our study of narrator/reader positions and participatory reading in works of experimental narrative.

Essi Varis

University of Helsinki

Reading Zen: Considering Literature as a Practice of Mindful Attention

If there is a question that all literary scholars should ask at some point in their careers, it is surely this: what are we, as human beings and as societies, meant to learn from poetry, fiction, and literary education? Do we teach our students to cite quotes, names, publication dates, and other declarative information from memory - if only to prove their level of learning? Or would we be better off asking them to stand on their desks, hoping they would acquire procedural skills for observing and curating their views on the world? I discuss the film *Dead Poets Society* against the framework of 4E cognitive theories, which understand cognition as profoundly embodied, action-oriented, and extended into various tools and environments. I highlight the protagonist John Keating's understanding of literature as a metacognitive practice, which has some interesting similarities - but also notable differences - with meditation practices. Both reading and meditation are practices of directing and sustaining attention, a crucial bottleneck underlying cognitive action: the meditator returns their attention to their chosen object of focus - typically their own breathing - over and over again, and if the reader wants to see the textual design unfold into narration or meaning, they must guide their attention through it. I suggest, with the support of *Dead Poets Society* and numerous poets inspired by mindfulness or zen meditation, that this type of sustained attention, especially when practiced repeatedly, can sensitize the practitioner to the kind of embodied and experiential understanding that is, paradoxically, beyond words. In meditative practices, this understanding is typically related to the ephemerality of every breath, thought, and life. The question is: what kind of metacognitive, silent understanding we live into our bodies through the practice of literature?

Tory Young

Anglia Ruskin University

Expanding Immersion: Literary Form and Therapeutic Reading

In the UK, bibliotherapy is growing: there are practitioners' courses at Exeter College; Ella Berthoud runs a service at the School of Life; libraries curate collections of books dealing with specific health and personal issues. Broadly speaking the practice takes two forms: individuals are guided towards books which can advise, educate and comfort; or groups undertake sessions in which literature is mined for consoling or motivational passages. I call these two reading strategies immersion and fragmentation. For immersive practice, bibliotherapy research draws on the neuroscientific tenet that 'imagining an act engages the same motor and sensory programmes in the brain that are involved in doing it' (Doig), so that literature enables the safe exploration of 'an inexhaustible source of life experiences' (Davis). This practice tends to value canonical and often realist fictional examples. Fragmentation, on the other hand, extracts and isolates literary statements from their sources, so that participants might reflect on their personal connections to a 'single line' (Tukhareli). If immersive practice tends to reinforce the canon, fragmentation disregards the form of the work as a whole. I propose alternative strategies for therapeutic reading based on my own experiences of teaching 'difficult' and non-canonical texts, arguing that therapeutic connection derives from processes of puzzling, deciphering and decoding as well as realistic immersion or personal identification.

SESSION 9I – CONFOUNDING NARRATIVES

Elizabeth Alsop

City University of New York

Confounding Gestures, Expository Compensations: Prestige TV and the Trauma Backstory

Drawing on Jason Mittell's concept of narrative complexity, I theorise a trend in recent prestige series toward more superficial gestures of 'confounding.' I look at the television series *Mrs. Davis*, co-created by Damon Lindelof and Tara Hernandez, a show that appears at once deeply committed to confusing audiences—through bizarre imagery, multiplying subplots, and consistent anachronies—even as it simultaneously engages in acts of cognitive hand-holding. In particular, I focus on the "trauma backstory" as an exemplary instance of the kind of explanatory mechanism that has become a ubiquitous feature of prestige series, and which showrunners may feel increasingly compelled to offer viewers. I explore the apparent tension between the desire to confound—primarily, for the purpose of cultural legitimation—and the pressure to offset interpretive difficulty by offering expository compensations. I conclude by considering this tension as reflective of what will likely be a growing conflict between creative ambition and commercial pressures in the post-Peak TV landscape.

Faye Halpern

University of Calgary

Here, Kitty, Kitty: Crypto-Interpretive Impossibility, Pedagogical Horror, and Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Black Cat'

I consider how Edgar Allan Poe constructed "The Black Cat" to entrap readers into answering the question of the ontological status of the titular character. Poe cleverly blocks readers from either deciding on this question or giving up their efforts to do so, a trap that ensnared both myself and my students. I show how we can examine Poe's trap to uncover how "crypto-interpretive impossibility" functions as a resource that authors can use to generate a never-ending conversation about their narratives. Poe, it turns out, pioneered not just the detective story but the watercooler conversation by activating a tension between authors and readers over narrative closure. Authors want to generate buzz about their creations, and Poe, perpetually on the edge of penury, wanted to generate a way for that conversation to never end.

Gary Weissman

University of Cincinnati

Speculative Narration: Accounting for the Confounding in Golden Age Science Fiction

I discuss golden age science fiction as a genre marked by the "reasoned" explanations it provides for otherwise confounding events and phenomena. I look at how SF writers utilised what I call speculative narration to lend "scientific" credibility to their imaginings. In speculative narration, fantastical elements are addressed by a character who seeks to explain the seemingly impossible. In speaking or "thinking aloud" about what might be the case, this character (whose speculations are never wrong) essentially serves as a science fiction writer within the story, accounting for the fantastic by applying logical reasoning. To illustrate, I begin with a story I read as a child in a comic book first published in 1949. I remembered the story, about a bottomless pocket in an otherwise ordinary suit coat, as a horror tale that ends with the haunting image of a man plummeting into the abyss of the pocket's pitch-black depths. Revisiting the comic now, I find a tale not of horror but of science fiction, featuring as it does two physicists who theorise the nature and purpose of the bottomless pocket. As in all speculative narration, their reasoned guesswork provides interpretive closure in place of unknowability. Following this example, I discuss various forms of speculative narration (thought report, character dialogue, heterodiegetic narration) in golden age SF by Ray Bradbury, John Wyndham, and Fredric Brown.

Speculative narration, I argue, guided readers in how to read this newly popular genre while making a case for its legitimacy and relevance in the atomic age.

SESSION 10A – CHANGE AND CULTURAL RESISTANCE

Amaris Brown

Tufts University

The Queer Revolutionary Subject and the Captive Maternal

Building on the work of black feminist political theorists, this paper searches for a narrative that emerges out of abjection. Returning to the widely publicised conversation between James Baldwin and Nikki Giovanni, I wrestle with the despondency of the queer revolutionary subject. Emblematic figures of the post-civil rights era, Baldwin and Giovanni’s conversation hinges upon black familial romance as a revolutionary ideal. In attempting to define the psychosocial relation between Baldwin and Giovanni—at times as friends, at times as lovers—this paper considers how black maternal abjection cannot be disappeared under the guise of love nor protection.

Florence Laldinpui

Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi

From Oral to Digital: Narrativising Death and Mizo Funerary Customs

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mizos, a “tribal” community in northeast India, witnessed digital narrativisations of death accompanied by online funerary customs. What is at stake when embodied and oral narratives are transcribed into digital and textual forms? By focusing on *vuina* (Mizo funerary programmes) on social media, this paper analyses digital interventions in traditional narrativizations of death (*zualko* or ‘death announcement’, singing of *khawhar hla* or ‘songs of lamentation’, and beating of the drum). Mizo identity resides in practice. The formative elements of Mizo identity are located in their embodied funerary and burial customs that internalize social values and preserve cultural memory (Pachau). In light of certain customs and modes of transmission specific to indigenous and “tribal” communities, I question what it means for a “non-Mizo” or an “outsider” to access, to watch, to like/dislike, to share, to comment, or to participate online? The movement of death narratives from the locality or community level to the global level has ethical repercussions and poses a threat to indigenous epistemologies. The advancement in digital technologies that enabled the narrativisation of death in textual and codified languages also creates a tension between embodied and disembodied expressions of grief and bereavement. This paper questions the legitimacy surrounding oral, textual, and digital epistemologies and narratives.

Carlos Tkacz

University of Nevada

Slipping Futures: Native Slipstream, Predictive Processing and Stephen Graham Jones’s *The Only Good Indians*

Native Slipstream, a term first used by Gerald Vizenor, is a narrative technique that that ‘infuses stories with time travel, alternate realities and multiverses, and alternative histories’, allowing narratives to explore ‘time as pasts, presents, and futures that flow together like currents in a navigable stream’ and that offer ‘nonlinear thinking about space-time’ (Dillion). Stephen Graham Jones’s (Blackfeet) *The Only Good Indians* deploys this technique in order to resolve the injustices of settler colonialism in the past and present through the projection of parts of the narrative into the future. In order to understand how the narrative achieves this end, I connect Native Slipstream, in *The Only Good Indians*, to the cognitive philosophy theory Predictive Processing. According to the Predictive Processing framework, we each of us have in our minds a model of the world built by but separate from our experiences that

we use to efficiently understand our perceptions of the world as they come in. This model is predictive, meaning that, when it can, the mind makes conclusions about the world often before it has complete sensory data to support the conclusion. This process in turn feeds the model: if the prediction is correct, then the model is strengthened; if incorrect, it is adjusted (Clark 25-27). By putting Native Slipstream and Predictive Processing into conversation together, I argue that Jones is able to slip seamlessly through various timelines without the usual narrative markers meant to moor a reader in a specific line of diachronic and narrative causality. Through this slipstream, Jones reveals hidden possibilities within the models of the world the narrative embodies and creates, thereby disrupting the calcification of the injustices of settler colonialism in possible futures and leaving space for alterity and possibility.

SESSION 10B – POWER AND RELIABILITY

Elias Gbadamosi

Colorado State University

The Digital Pulpit: YouTube Discourse and Evangelical Influence in the 2024 US Presidential Elections

Against the backdrop of the widespread politicisation of religion, divergent political ideologies have emerged and sprouted from the theories of religious thought. Evangelical Christianity, in particular, is considered one of the biggest, most visible, and most influential denominations of the Christian faith in the United States. To explore the intricate relationship between politics and evangelicalism in the United States and how that is evolving in the run-up to the forthcoming 2024 US presidential elections, I focus on examining the YouTube speeches/preaching of two prominent conservative evangelical clergymen spearheading the “Pastors for Trump” movement – Pastors Jackson Lahmeyer and Sean Feucht – and the accompanying comments to fathom the (re)conception of politics in evangelicalism as the 2024 presidential election approaches. I examine how these leading evangelical personalities are (re)defining the role of the evangelical church in American politics, the role of individual evangelical Christians in politics, and ultimately how conservative policies, evangelical hegemony, and race are developing in the lead-up to the upcoming 2024 United States presidential elections, particularly within the purview Trumpism. I combine small stories research method (Georgakopoulou) and critical technocultural discourse analysis (Andre Brock). The critical technocultural discourse analysis method will be employed to analyse the complex interplay between technology, culture, and language with a view toward casting a critical eye on analysing the preachers’ videos to understand how power and ideology are constructed on digital platforms and how the affordances of technology, notably YouTube, affect the construction of power and the diffusion of ideology online. I consider the small iterative and dialogical constructions of the larger narratives in the speeches/preaching (the comments accompanying the videos) to give valuable insights into how people construct and convey their understanding of politics and evangelicalism.

Michael Hannan

University of Wollongong

Narrative Unreliability and Impossible Worlds: Kazuo Ishiguro’s *When We Were Orphans* and the Double Ironic Gap

Narratologists remain divided on whether the principles of unreliable narration can or should be applied to the impossible worlds found in contemporary unnatural narration. Many concur with Vera Nünning, who claims that the ‘internal and external contradictions’ in impossible worlds impair the reader’s ability to ‘create a coherent mental model of the fictional world’. Without this coherence, Nünning argues, attempting to determine whether a narrator is reliable or not becomes an unproductive enterprise. Few scholars, however, have investigated the issue in depth by applying

either rhetorical or cognitive models to unnatural narrators who lie, deceive, or otherwise tell less or other than the whole truth in the style of an unreliable narrator. I focus on the dramatic irony of narrative unreliability, considering how it might be reconfigured in order for an implied author and reader to continue communicating behind the narrator's back within a non-realist storyworld. I examine Christopher Banks in Kazuo Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans*, a conventional first-person unreliable narrator who gradually transforms into an unnatural narrator as trauma-driven psychosis increasingly distorts his perspective. Employing theories of unreliability and literary irony, I analyse the textual signals that indicate Banks' unreliability, with particular attention to how they manifest within the impossible narrative landscape of his psychosis in the novel's second half. I argue that this second half demonstrates a 'double ironic gap', between both discourse/story and storyworld/extratextual world, which allows the novel to function simultaneously as an unreliable and unnatural narration. In blurring the boundaries between these two forms of narration, my paper contributes to broader discussions on making sense of narrators who tell less or other than the whole truth within storyworlds that problematize the nature of truth on multiple levels.

Saman Javaherian

Independent

Unreliable Narration and Falsified Dialogues in Persian Popular Romances

This study explores the unique narratological features found in Persian popular romances, which are old tales recounted by professional itinerant storytellers known as *Naqqāl*. One intriguing aspect of these stories is the presence of an unconventional form of unreliable narration. Unreliable narration is often depicted as a secretive collaboration between the author and reader, hidden from the narrator. While narratologists have primarily focused on unreliability in homodiegetic narration, this study uncovers its manifestation in heterodiegetic narration, where a considerable distance exists between the narrator and the implied author. Unreliable narration does not necessarily involve distorting facts; rather, it can occur on three different layers: reporting, interpreting, and evaluating. The case of falsified dialogues within Persian popular romances represents a peculiar form of unreliable narration. Here, the *Naqqāl* modifies the characters' dialogues and subtly signals the audience to grasp the underlying irony. For instance, in "The Story of Hussein Kurd Shabestari", after the protagonist rapes and kills the antagonist's mother, the antagonist is portrayed as mourning deeply. However, the *Naqqāl* fabricates an inner monologue for the antagonist, where he expresses satisfaction that his mother had enjoyed her final sexual encounter. This distorted narrative element may be repulsive by today's standards, but it likely elicited humour and amusement among the original listeners. The audience understood that the character would not genuinely utter such words, yet they relished in the antagonist's humiliation. While it is common for narrators to accurately report events but be unreliable in their evaluations, this case presents the opposite scenario. The narrator proves reliable in assessing the events but deliberately unreliable in reporting them. This establishes a notable separation between the *Naqqāl*'s voice as the narrator, who misrepresents the facts, and "the implied" *Naqqāl*, who subtly implies the narrator's unreliability. I reveal an instance of heterodiegetic unreliable narration, deviating from the typical manifestation of unreliable narrators in popular discourse.

SESSION 10C – TRANSMEDIAL FICTIONALITY

Erica Haugtvedt

South Dakota School of Mines and Technology

'I Know Victoria's Secret': Branding, Narrative, and Transmedia Character

In 2022, Jax released the song, "Victoria's Secret" with the chorus: 'I know Victoria's secret / And, girl, you wouldn't believe / She's an old man who lives in Ohio / Making money off of girls like me'.

The chorus concludes, 'Victoria was made up by a dude'. That dude was Leslie Wexner, who sold his majority stake in Victoria's Secret in 2021. A Hulu documentary series, *Victoria's Secret: Angels and Demons*, explores the history of the lingerie brand, its cultural effects, and Wexner's relationship with Jeffrey Epstein. Wexner, the richest man in Ohio, purchased Victoria's Secret in 1982. After having read advice on using narrative as a means of brand inspiration and management from Sidney Lumet's *Making Movies*, Wexner invented the fictional Victoria Stuart White, a 36 year old English lady whose tastes would distinguish Wexner's lingerie from more pedestrian, "trashier" retailers. Victoria is one of many Western characters who serve to anchor brand narratives, and her use dramatises how ideas about the Victorian period, respectability, and femininity influenced the development of a multi-billion dollar company. More than this, though, brand characters such as Victoria urge us to reconsider how characterisation and fictionality functions in the world. Lukas R.A. Wilde attends to the Japanese theory of *kyara* characterization, proposing that flexible and image-based *kyara* are more fundamental conceptions of (transmedia) character than the fully rounded-out Western conceptualizations of "traditional" realist character. I explore the example of Wexner's Victoria by comparing a number of different theoretical approaches to character--including Jim Phelan's mimetic, thematic, and synthetic dimensions of character -- focusing on how the context of branding as transmedia narrative transforms our sense of fictional character as a resource.

Josh Mishaw

Ohio State University

From Homer (Simpson) to (Bully) Scaramouche: Chatbots and Fictional Characters

The emergence of large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT has provoked a number of epistemological, ethical, and legal questions about how we conceive of authors and texts. Less frequently raised is the question of how LLMs might affect we how think about the narrative resource of character(s): another application of LLMs is their ability to 'roleplay' as fictional characters, such as through the popular chatbot site, *character.ai*. I suggest that such user-created chatbots both reshape and reveal how actual audiences interact with characters. Specifically, the individualised potential for chatbot creation and conversation both presents new considerations for existing theories of character and highlights a fundamentally human desire to play with the things we like beyond their original contexts: a desire evident in both fiction and fanfiction created long before the advent of LLMs. I begin by briefly situating chatbots in relation to salient features of Jim Phelan's account of the mimetic, thematic, and synthetic components of character as well as Matthew Grizzard and Allison Eden's recent overview of character as entailing audiences' appraisal, affiliation, and assessment. Since, unlike Phelan's original objects of study, chatbot characters are inspired by rather than present in stable progressions, the dynamic and mediated nature of chatbots suggests that any character could be transformed like "transmedia characters" such as Batman or Sherlock Holmes through contact with actual audiences. Observing chatbot trends like the myriad types of bots made for the Genshin Impact character Scaramouche, I then turn to the underlying motives of play, attachment, and customization that chatbots seem to bring to the fore: a trend we can already observe in alternate universe fanfiction or non-canon episodes of ongoing television series like *The Simpsons'* "Treehouse of Horror" episodes. This emerging technology can therefore enrich our conversations about existing relationships among characters, authors, and audiences.

Patrick Sui

McGill University

Narrativity, Fictionality and AI Hallucinations

Although large language models (LLMs) have recently surged in popularity, their tendency to hallucinate still poses one of its most pertinent limitations. Contrary to most AI researchers' view that

hallucinations are decidedly negative and need to be removed whenever possible, this paper employs narrative theory to explore their humanistic affordances. LLM hallucinations often take the form of confabulation, a psychological phenomenon that describes a human tendency to invent a plausible story to make up for the lack of coherence when they only have access to insufficient information. In other words, hallucinations occur when LLMs compensate for a lack of narrativity in what would otherwise be a factual piece of generated text with missing key components or causal links. Drawing from 1) the cognitive case for the use of fictionality (Zunshine, Vermeule) and 2) the rhetorical account of fictionality (Walsh; Phelan) as speech acts vital to all forms of communication beyond fictional texts, this paper argues that hallucinations as a form of narrativity are not a category of text to be discarded a priori; instead, they make LLMs more like humans – if the goal of natural language processing is to perfectly emulate human language, then hallucinations offer a fitting textual site for the critical comparisons between model and human behaviour. I support this claim with an empirical experiment that measures and compares the degrees of narrativity (Piper) between large corpora of hallucinated generations, non-hallucinated generations, and the original human-written input.

SESSION 10D – PERSPECTIVE AND UNRELIABILITY

Gabriele D’Amato

University of L’Aquila and University of Ghent

Pseudo-Multiperspectivity in First-Person Omniscient Narratives

This paper explores the relationship between point of view and power in contemporary fiction, by proposing a peculiar case of multiperspectivity – that I will call “pseudo-multiperspective narration” – in which the multiplication of focalizations or narratorial instances turns out to be a stylistic device developed by a ‘first-person omniscient narrator’ (Dawson). Since this kind of unreliable narrator is frequently provided with a characterological motivation, pseudo-multiperspective narratives reflect – on both structural and thematic levels – on the deliberate manipulation of point of view, by restricting multiple perspectives within a limited narrative frame. Pseudo-multiperspective narratives present an elaborated multiperspective structure, that combines Werner Wolf’s hierarchisation of narratives and perspectives through framing devices and multiple diegetic levels – that I will call “vertical multiperspectivity” – with the more common “horizontal”, alternating account of events. In vertical multiperspectivity, lower diegetic levels are hierarchically subordinated to the framing narration, which can be represented by an editorial preface, a diary, or – as in my two case studies – a novel written by a character who is part of the storyworld. In Ian McEwan’s *Atonement* and Junot Díaz’s *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, first-person omniscient narrators write about people they have known during their lives, adopting a multiperspective structure. Whereas in *Atonement*, as an example of “mind-tricking narrative” (Klecker), the metafictional twist works as a “delayed disclosure”, producing what Brian Richardson has called ‘pseudo-focalization’, in *Oscar Wao* the revelation concerns the identity of the homodiegetic narrator. In both novels, this peculiar formal structure raises epistemological and ethical questions on the multiplicity of perspectives, suggesting that the access to the storyworld can be manipulated to produce a polyphonic illusion. Pseudo-multiperspective narratives enable us to problematize this assumption by exposing the rhetorical and formal strategies behind the creation of conflicting points of view.

Luca Diani

University of L’Aquila

Nostalgic Narrators and Unreliability in Analeptic Narratives

I examine how narrative discourse depicts, and is influenced by, nostalgia. Current research demonstrates that nostalgia is a timeless, transcultural emotion, based on the disjunction between a

subject (the “nostalgee”) and the object of her longing. A range of dichotomies arises from this contrast, including past and present, here and there, value and disvalue, order and chaos. The nostalgee strives to recover the object of desire through the affective filter of memory: in fact, one can remember without being nostalgic, but one cannot be nostalgic without remembering (Batcho). Memorial reenactment, combined with the irretrievable loss of the object, elicits a bittersweet emotional response in the nostalgee. The relationship between narrative and nostalgia is closely linked because they are both inherently tied to the concept of time and its re-creation. Nostalgic discourse frequently employs an analeptic narrative structure, in which a first-person narrator subsequently represents past experiences, thus establishing a fictional connection between the present and the past. Marcel Proust’s *Recherche du temps perdu* is a very well-known example of analeptic ordering. Furthermore, storyworlds provide ideal spaces to negotiate conflicting and unattainable desires by narrativising past experiences within a nostalgic affective framework. This paper investigates analeptic narratives that are affected by various forms of unreliability due to the emotional value of nostalgic recollection. When the first-person narrator is also a nostalgee, her discourse tends to shape, cut, and embellish the past she yearns for. Intertwining the past and the present in nostalgic embrace, the narrator might move through James Phelan’s three axes of unreliability – in terms of facts, of understanding/perception, and values – to overcome traumas and maintain present identity continuity.

Katherine Weese

Hampden-Sydney College

Denarration and Narrative Reliability in Kate Atkinson’s *A God in Ruins*

This paper analyses a limit text for rhetorical theories of unreliable narration. At the end of Kate Atkinson’s *A God in Ruins*, the novel denarrates, in Brian Richardson’s term, prior content about the storyworld that had been presented as given. The act of denarration—distinct from an alternative ending—radically affects the entire storyworld, the stability of which is challenged by the novel’s highly synthetic ending. Richardson proposes that the phenomenon of denarration calls for a theory of ‘unreliability unimagined in current narratology’ and expresses disappointment that rhetorical theorists do not consider alternatives to the six types of unreliable narration identified by James Phelan, all of which, according to Richardson, ‘are based on a mimetic paradigm’. Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz counter that a narrator’s reliability or unreliability must be measured not against a real-world standard but against the implied author figure’s norms and judgments and ‘stance toward [the narrator’s] reports’ (see also Phelan; Shen). They explicitly link this condition to character narration, whereas Atkinson’s novel is narrated from a third-person perspective. Rhetorical theory rarely addresses contradictory third-person narration. At the same time, however, the contradictory version of the story disclosed late in *A God in Ruins* does not suggest any discernible gap between the values of the implied author and the narrator—quite the opposite, the denarration reinforces the thematic content of the novel vis-à-vis changing social constructions of masculinity and the main character’s understanding of gender conventions as they evolve through the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This paper explores a text whose omniscient narrator reports contradictory information while presumably having knowledge of what really happened and analyses whether such contradictory information can be considered reliable given the relationship between the novel’s synthetic and thematic elements.

SESSION 10E – COGNITIVE APPROACHES

Melba Cuddy-Keane

University of Toronto

Sensory Storyminds and Cognitive Plots: Reading Childhood Memory and Indigenous Experience

Learning involves two contrasting cognitive modes: modal, bottom-up understandings emerging through sensory perceptions, and amodal, top-down processes in which abstract representations organize the perceived world. Most neuroscientific approaches adopt a hybrid model, but the precise interplay of the two processes is still being explored. Analysing the evidence of what I term sensory storyminds, I ask how the modal perceptions they manifest interact with the amodal understandings we, as readers, devise. My examples are two creative nonfictional works: Dorothy Richardson's "In the Garden," a short story depicting her earliest memory, perhaps around three years old, and Jordan Abel's multi-genre narrative *Nishga*, articulating his experience as an Indigenous intergenerational survivor of Residential Schools. Richardson's narrative offers a fascinating glimpse of modal understanding, but adult readers must suspend amodal explanation to recognize the child's sensory perceptions as not mistaken, but real. Abel's verbal narrative more complexly enacts the interplay between modal and amodal representations, but the visual elements work predominantly from the bottom up. The linguistic level (incorporating both historical documents and the transcript of Abel's doctoral defence) culminates in sobering, unresolved reflections on loss. Conversely, the drawing and photography enact an increasing sensory closeness, as images of Abel's own text literally touch his estranged father's Indigenous art. But just an adult must suspend egocentric consciousness to comprehend the allodiegetic perceptions of a child, so I must suspend my outsider's consciousness fully to attend to the Indigenous experience of loss that *Nishga* enacts. To that end, I tracked my reading along two lines: one where my own voice inevitably interjected its human and narratological questions and understandings and one where I stayed as close as possible to the sensory experiences on the page. Like my reading, my conclusion is two-fold: 1) attending to the sensory dimension of storyminds gives us access to cognitive plots not immediately detectable to amodal understandings; and 2) modal perceptions in sensory storyminds may help us to move, in Abel's words, beyond listening to the active participant state of witnessing, in which we 'carry forward' the story we 'hold [...] in our hearts'.

Wanlin Li

Peking University

Two Faces of Narrativity in Natural Narratology: Dual Experiencing Subjects in Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly*

Originally coined by the classical narratologists to designate an essential (and inherent) quality of narrative, narrativity was reconceptualised by Monika Fludernik as an attribute that emerges only in the process of narrativisation. Fludernik's redefinition of narrativity triggered an enduring, and, indeed, richly meaningful debate among narratologists in the last two decades. There is, however, a key inconsistency in Fludernik's constructive redefinition whose implications have not been fully explored. That is, it remains unclear whether experientiality, the main constituent of narrativity, mainly involves the experiencing character or narrator on the diegetic level, or the reader who cognitively reconstructs the fictional world at an extradiegetic level, or both. Distinguishing between the diegetic and the extradiegetic experiencing subjects and sorting out their interrelations can not only yield theoretical benefits, but also inform interpretive practices in productive ways. I argue that the diegetic and the extradiegetic subjects both figure importantly in the emergence of narrativity, and that they mainly interact with each other through a text-based mechanism of invitation. I use Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly* as a case study to illustrate how the text signals its readers to apply their cognitive parameters in specific ways so as to understand the fictional character's experience and his world. This mechanism of invitation thus brings the diegetic and the extradiegetic subjects of experientiality

together in a way that allows us to perceive at once the underlying continuity between natural narratology and classical narratology, and natural narratology's departure from its predecessor. Moreover, it also sheds new light on the cognitive principles by which the gothic as a genre operates.

Martin Riedelsheimer

Augsburg University

Narrative Infinity: Conceptual and Aesthetic Preconditions

Despite the fact that a reader's experience as well as the medium of any narrative are by necessity finite, narrative texts may evoke the notion of their own infinity. Typically, it is patterns of repetition that can in certain contexts imply the endless continuation of a narrative. I look at a range of examples of such seemingly infinite texts, taken from twentieth- and twenty-first-century narrative fiction, and to describe both the cognitive mechanism that may let readers conceive of a text as infinite and the narrative patterns that allow for the understanding of a text as infinite. A reader's experience of a narrative as infinite may be explained through conceptual metaphor theory: in their study of processes of mathematical thought, George Lakoff and Rafael Núñez identify the "Basic Metaphor of Infinity" (BMI), a conceptual metaphor that allows us to understand entities to be (actually) infinite. I argue that the BMI also comes into play when narratives are understood to be endless. As a precondition, narratives must (1) qualify as the source domain of the BMI, that is, they must contain iterative structures, and (2) contain some contextual marking that highlights their conceptual proximity to infinity, particularly in the case of relatively long and complex narratives. There is a range of narrative structures of varying complexity that may have this effect: forms of repetition, circular structures, *mise en abyme*, intertextuality, and even certain forms of omniscient narration. This paper discusses the means by which narratives entice our minds to entertain the somewhat paradoxical notion of narrative infinity that exists within the finitude of literary representation.

SESSION 10G – HEALTH AND ETHICS

Melissa Guadrón

Ohio State University

The Doctor is in [The Machine]: Narrative Problem Solving with Generated AI Therapists

Along with exacerbating socioeconomic inequities, COVID-19 skyrocketed rates of anxiety and depression across the globe. Many who subsequently decided to seek psychological help were confronted by barriers ranging from cost to a significant shortage of mental health providers. So, some turned toward more accessible means of gaining therapeutic help—generative artificial intelligence (*i.e.* ChatGPT) that mimicked the experience of speaking with a licensed mental health therapist. Across social media, people began praising ChatGPT's ability to provide therapeutic experiences. Reddit user SteadfastEnd called ChatGPT a "Godsend," and Mike2800 confessed the AI program made him feel "heard" in ways therapists had failed. Then, in May of 2023, ChatGPT updated its software and users were no longer able to use it for therapy. Reddit user Aquin1313 wrote, 'I know there is serious liability with allowing ChatGPT to be a therapist, but I'm proof there is also serious harm with removing the amazing therapy they were providing'. Nonetheless, an idea had come to the fore—AI therapy—and multiple ChatGPT-based therapist bots and AI apps were created. This presentation shares results from exploratory research aimed at better understanding how generative AI simulates solution-focused therapy. For this project, I take multiple approaches to studying these emergent technologies. Combining rhetorical theory (*i.e.*, deliberative rhetoric—persuasive discourse with the goal of convincing someone to take specific actions) and narrative theory, I first analyse social media discourse surrounding the use of ChatGPT for therapeutic purposes, before and after the May 2023 update. I then compare problem-solving conversations with two different programs, SommerAI and JungGPT to

investigate narrative and rhetorical structure. Beyond exploring the narrative rhetorical properties of these AI-generated interactions, I ask: is therapeutic generative AI an altruistic answer to our mental health crisis, or just another way for capitalists to exploit the needs of vulnerable populations?

Monika Kaup

University of Washington

Reckoning with Uncertainty: Narrative as Practical Judgement

Why do stories matter? This paper vindicates narrative as a reliable mode of knowledge. It does so by recovering narrative's intrinsic connection to a forgotten but important type of knowledge, *phronesis*, or practical judgment. Overlooked due to epistemology's fixation on scientific standards of certainty, *phronesis* is experience-based, first-personal know-how needed for deliberation and decision-making in all kinds of practical contexts, including courtrooms, clinical practice, economic behaviour, or child raising. Practical judgment is action-bound rather than detached. And human action takes place in conditions of irreducible particularity: doctors can't cure patients, judges can't pass sentences, simply by following abstract rules. On Aristotle's account, the central medium of learning practical judgment is storytelling. Twentieth-century hermeneutic phenomenology has developed this claim. That narrative shapes practical judgment is not surprising: like the former, stories attend to the realm of the particular, describing concrete individuals and actions, and synthesising scattered facts onto a meaningful whole. My argument is illustrated by works that fall under the rubric of contemporary neurofiction, Tom McCarthy's *Remainder* and Richard Powers's *The Echo Maker*. Neuronovels explore the experience of mental alienation stemming from brain injuries, focusing on *phronetic* judgment and decision-making in challenging clinical cases. These examples demonstrate a paradoxical but vital feature of practical and narrative judgment—its association with uncertainty, and a looser standard of truth, probability (in the sense of believability). Troubled by structural uncertainty, the messy domain of human action cannot be fully understood or predicted; therefore, knowledge can only be gained by extending reality with speculation—in short, by fictionalising reality. These novels illustrate an imperfect equilibrium: fiction harnessed by the reality principle, and reality enriched by the imagination.

Tracy Moniz

Mount Saint Vincent University

Written Narratives and Health Professions Education

This presentation explores the question: What can stories teach us about humanism in healthcare? Stories are avenues toward "telling" and "knowing" the self and others. Exchanging stories about illness and care from multiple perspectives may have implications for communication, collaboration, professionalism, and advocacy in clinical health settings and in health professions education. These lived experiences become stories that have the potential to shape, challenge, and construct how humanistic, patient-centered care is practiced and how it is taught. For instance, narratives about attitudes and behaviours toward "the difficult patient" have the potential to make visible norms and values communicated through medical culture, triggering more compassionate patient- and family-centered care. Thus, stories can become vehicles for change and transformation. So, too, can studying them. This presentation considers the distinct contributions of first-person written narrative as a source of qualitative data in medical education scholarship. Narrative theory and methods are more recent additions to this field, which has been dominated by a biomedical lens and quantitative approaches to research. Moreover, first-person written narratives remain an overlooked source of data in this field, despite its increasing uptake among medical learners, physicians, patients, and informal caregivers and despite its distinct ability to illuminate—for both writer and researcher—reflections on experience. Such narrative reflections have potential as a way of knowing and educating in the health professions.

Drawing on narrative theory and literature in the health humanities (*e.g.* narrative medicine), as well as examples of qualitative research (including that of the author), this presentation will make explicit ways that studying written narrative has implications for medical education and practice—from skills development and perspective taking to personal insight and social advocacy—with emphasis on the ways that written narrative can shape and optimize teaching and learning within the health professions.

SESSION 10H – FUN, GAMES AND GOOD CHEER

Lars Bernaerts

Ghent University

The Sophistication of Simplicity: Experimental Minimalist Narratives as Ludic Textuality

Narrative approaches to experimental fiction tend to resort to negative qualifications: these narratives are unusual, unconventional, unnatural, anti-mimetic, anti-narrative, de-familiarising and so on. In other words, they are defined by what they are not. An alternative positive approach to experimental narratives can be found in the concept of games and play, with its rich conceptual history in literary studies (Gadamer; Iser) and narrative studies (Ryan; Ensslin). Games (*ludus* in particular) combine the freedom of creating alternative worlds, more or less detached from the real world, with the constraint of rules. The rules determine the behaviour of players (characters, narrators, readers) and the limits of the story world. In that respect, the notion is attuned to the aims and nature of experimental narratives. Indeed, in avant-garde and postmodern writing, game and play became important models: we can think of *OuLiPo* constraints, metafictional play in the postmodern novel or surrealist games. This paper further develops the ludic approach to experimental narratives by zooming in to the narrative practice of minimalist writing, *i.e.* the narratives that can be projected onto or derived from mere words or sentences presented in a meaningful context (a book, a poster, a painting). Such minimalist narratives are examples of ludic textuality, activating the reader in particular ways and creating a space and time of its own. What are the rules of the minimalist game? What kind of players do authors, narrators, narratees, and readers become in this game? What kind of cognitive play does minimalism entail? Drawing upon theories of play and experimental literature, the paper aims to demonstrate how minimalist narratives work as ludic textuality.

Karin Kukkonen

University of Oslo

Playing Narration: The Game of the Novel in Early-Modern France

A group of people gets together and whiles the time away with telling one another tales. The setting has served as the playful frame for texts; Charlotte-Rose de Caumont de la Force turns the convention into a complex device for rethinking the role of the narrator at the cusp of the modern novel in France with *Les jeux d'esprit*. Her narrators play 'the game of the novel', engaging in shared narration of a story. La Force introduces her narrators as historical characters from the 1630s, who then pick a historical series of events from the 1330s to narrate. The narrators do not only "play" the characters from the 1330s, but also use the *mise-en-abyme* setting to try out different narrative modes, effectively producing a sustained reflection on how far you can push narrative conventions. La Force's narrators are players, fully aware that they are both creating and narrating it at the same time. La Force's use of play to think through narration paves the way towards early forms of free-indirect discourse and the novel's place between history and fiction. The issue, however, is not only relevant for the history of narrative devices, but also offers an opportunity to connect the discussion to related issues in game studies. What is the agency of players? And how does players' agency relate to their narrative identity? These are issues discussed in game studies to which the early-modern games may give new answers,

as La Force uses the ‘game of the novel’ to explore what roles narrators might take, playing through historical identities, modelling behaviour and narrative styles.

Merja Polvinen

University of Helsinki

Readerly Engagement with (De)Composition

Cognitive literary studies is taking a turn from focusing on mimetic effects narratives to estranging and experimental ones, and consequently from various kinds of story contents to their forms. My presentation frames this shift in terms of enactive cognition and the theory of affordances (Noë; Gallagher), and suggests that these theories give us a good grasp of the complex combination of agency and yielding involved in reading fiction. The cognitive environment we enact when reading affords us mental moves specific to that environment. I consider the reading of fiction as a form of cheerfulness, defined by Timothy Hampton as ‘a light-hearted emotional force through which one can shape oneself and one’s relationship to others’. As a mental mode, cheer involves both that light-hearted openness to the environment, and a sense-making dimension that aims at manipulating that environment for personal relevance. Combining the concept of cheerfulness with enactive cognition, with the work of Jean-Marie Schaeffer and Joshua Landy on fictionality as a ludic realm of ‘as-if’, and with Rita Felski’s and Steven Connor’s thoughts on attachment and giving way, I examine the curious mixture of agency and resignation that takes place when we entangle our cognition with narrative artworks. I illustrate these issues through a reading of Jim Crace’s *Being Dead*, a narrative about death and bodily dissolution that is - despite its macabre details and even graphic violence – notably cheerful. Crace’s novel, I argue, presents our human interconnectedness with each other, with the natural world, and with narratives as willed engagement in something that is both an action and a resignation.

SESSION 10I – NARRATIVES IN/OF THE DIGITAL, CONTEMPORARY CULTURE AND AFFECT II

Torsa Ghosal

California State University, Sacramento

Sentimentality and Fictionality in AI-generated Immigration Narratives

Researchers in the fields of machine learning and artificial intelligence have sought to leverage digital technologies to model story structures for several decades now (Meehan; Dehn; Gerva). The current generation of large language models (LLMs) such as GPT-4 and PaLM can be prompted to produce sufficiently complex narratives. As a result, technology companies are pushing forward a sweeping ‘cultural narrative’ (Nadel) wherein AI is the ‘future of storytelling.’ In contrast, cultural narratives circulating in creative sectors about LLMs, especially since the public release of OpenAI’s ChatGPT, remain concerned with plagiarism, increased circulation of fake news, and the devaluing of creative labour. Nonetheless, artists are experimenting with generative AI. Authors like Adi Robertson and Vauhini Vara report that narratives they co-wrote with AI are excessively sentimental. K. Allado-McDowell claims that AI helped her generate the “cringiest” autofiction. Such creative experiments offer cursory insight into features of the data and parameters training the current generation of LLMs. This presentation approaches AI-generated fictions as indexing how broad swathes of the online population thinks and feels—an archive of cultural narratives,—and instrumentalises narrative affordances of LLMs, trained on online public discourse, to grasp the ‘affective economies’ (Ahmed), or emotional collectives, forming around critical issues. I discuss findings of my ongoing project that assembles immigration-centric fictions generated through human-AI interactions in the year leading up to the 2024 US general election. Building on cognitive narratology and scholarly work on natural language processing, I propose a theoretical framework for analysing the affective dimensions of AI-generated fictions. In addition, comparing the emotional registers of AI-generated fictions with results

of sentiment analysis of social media conversations on the hot topic of immigration, I extend discussions of fictionality, a debated concept in narrative theory, to account for emergent forms of human-computer interactions.

Hyesu Park

Bellevue College

Korean “Bad Taste” Webtoon and the Consumption of Negative Feelings

Narrative theorists have actively engaged with digital narratives, offering medium specific analysis of digital fiction and suggesting new ways to think of the existing narratological toolbox and concepts to better understand these new textual forms. The digital narratives under their examination, however, predominantly originate from the Global North, although Asia has become a hub for numerous digital technological innovations. I hence ask what new insights do we gain when engaging with digital narratives born outside Western societies? I answer this question by studying webtoon, platform comics from South Korea that has grown exponentially and spread globally. Korean webtoon offers unique opportunities to investigate digital platform’s direct intervention in narrative production and its broader ecology, drastically altering some key features of traditional comics art, and demonstrates the significant ways in which technology, culture, and narrative intersect for distinct reading experiences. I discuss a particular genre of webtoon, byungmat webtoon with sketchy drawing styles and violent images that are likely to provoke negative feelings in the minds of webtoon readers. I show how the production and consumption of byungmat webtoon are optimised within the standardization of webtoon platform (serialization with weekly updates, vertical panel display, dependence on hand-held devices, comment function, for instance). I argue that the intersection among technological affordances and constraints of webtoon platform, narrative construction within it, and its cultural situatedness facilitate and enable consumption of negative feelings for webtoon readers.

Denise Wong

Giessen University

Intermediality in the Post-Digital Novel

In our current cultural environment, new media and technological developments are so constant that they have become banal. According to the ‘post-digital’ research paradigm (Berry and Dieter; Stimler and Vial; Spencer), the ubiquity of digital technology has obscured its ontological and epistemological distinctiveness, leading to the occasional conflation of digital media and non-digital domains. In fiction, however, many contemporary novelists are experimenting with the representation, incorporation and/or imitation of these new media forms in ways that recover the novelty of living with digital media from scenes of what Zara Dinnen calls ‘the digital banal’ (2018). In so doing, these emerging contemporary novels of the digital make legible the affective stakes of living ‘after new media’ (Kember and Zylinska). This paper focuses on two examples of intermedial contemporary print fictions that use the same linguistic mode to represent forms of digital media like emails and instant messages. While at first this seems unremarkable – because novels and emails are generally written in linguistic modes – I argue that the loss of their media distinctiveness in the contemporary novel is precisely how the affective stakes become legible. In Sally Rooney’s *Beautiful World, Where Are You* and Lauren Oyler’s *Fake Accounts*, I read the material absence of new media forms as a textual feature connected to Dinnen’s observation that new media works by obscuring how ‘we are co-constituted as subjects with the media’ and renders us wholly unaware of ‘the affective novelty of becoming-with digital media’. If, as Dinnen argues, mediation works through the effacement of its medium, then this effacement is represented in the way Rooney and Oyler resist the use of multimodality – or, different semiotic modes – to distinguish digital media from thought or verbalised dialogue.

**SESSION 11A – STRANGE TIMES/STRANGE SPACES:
ALTERNATIVE SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL ZONES IN SF**

Brian McHale

Ohio State University

Thinking with Paraspaces

A working assumption for much SF is that it constructs an alternative spatial continuum (distant in space and time) to which we readers are imaginatively displaced, giving us a remote perspective from which to view our own continuum, cognitively estranged by distance and difference. Somewhat neglected is a different SF topos, that of paraspaces: not an alternative continuum, but an internally diversified space – a shattered continuum. It has been a highly conspicuous motif beginning in the 1970s and 1980s with the proliferation of virtual spaces accessible through screens: game spaces; cyberspace; the metaverse, etc. But virtual/game paraspaces follow in the wake of other variants of internally diversified spaces, e.g. the other/parallel dimensions that were so versatile a part of SF's repertoire from the Golden Age of the 1940s through Philip K. Dick's heyday in the 1960s and beyond. Paraspaces relocate cognitive estrangement to the interior of the storyworld; to put it otherwise, every paraspaces is a *mise-en-abyme* of cognitive estrangement. Arguably, many time-travel stories (except for those that actively exploit time-travel paradoxes, or those in which such paradoxes are not explicitly blocked or neutralised) might best be thought of as paraspaces stories: the other temporal scene/plane really functions as another space.

John Plotz

Brandeis University

'I was obliged to tell them...their world was merely a moon': SF's Lunar Affordances

That frequently repeated "my world/your moon" trope suggests that speculative fiction from very early on is committed to what might be called a satire on "place value." The ways this plays out in Golden Age and New Wave SF are worth exploring in some detail: for example, in the role played by that lunar alternative in Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, written during what Jürgen Habermas called the late-capitalist legitimation crisis. It is not simply the way that *The Dispossessed* plays around with the conventional political science monikers of the day (Le Guin maps First World/Second World/Third World tensions in a slightly awkward way onto a world/moon dyad), but equally significant are the ways Le Guin deconstructs or inverts spatial boundaries on the moon/world of Annares. Children who grow up in a world without prisons dream one up so they can punish one another; the space port is both a walled-off wasteland and the only route to the stars; the only meaningful artworks described in the book are fragile mobiles "Occupations of Uninhabited Space.". They are perhaps the purest instantiation of the "Principles of Simultaneity" that are the vaunted achievement of the novel's protagonist Shevek. The way the mobiles float untouched overhead is a refutation of any orderly system that might allow residents of Annares, or the author herself, to say for sure that we are down and the mobiles are up. How then, to say with any certainty which of us lives on the real world and which merely on a moon?

Jaak Tomberg

University of Tartu

The Present as the Past of a Utopian Future in Epp Annus's *Tere, Alexander!*

By now, there is plenty of evidence that Science Fiction has moved past its presentist phase of the beginning of the twenty-first century – best exemplified by William Gibson's turn to contemporary realism with his *Blue Ant* trilogy and Neal Stephenson's turn to contemporary techno-thrillers with *Cryptonomicon* and *REAMDE* – and started to imagine future utopian alternatives more often again. Paradoxically, the very long-term perspective of global ecological crisis and its possible mitigation has

provided the utopian imagination a sufficiently stable and urgent object to focus on, and plenty of literary production has followed. Nevertheless, unlike the static and encompassing form of early modern utopias, and more like the critical utopias of the 1970s, these new utopias – best exemplified by Kim Stanley Robinson’s *The Ministry for the Future* – lay the emphasis not so much on describing the end product of the slightly better state of affairs, but rather on the believable description of the process of getting there. In this framework, my presentation analyses the narrative set-up of a recent Estonian novel, Epp Annus’ *Tere, Aleksander!*. The novel is made up of an inner monologue of a 96-year-old lady who recounts her past to her three-month-old grand-grand-son sleeping in her lap – but the twist is that she’s doing it in the year 2066 in what is a kind of communal Estonian utopia. The account thus ties her childhood and adolescence in the late-Soviet period of the 1960s–1980s with the present-day Estonia and its future before 2066, inventively refiguring (as Fredric Jameson said) the present into the determinate past of some (proposed) future. This kind of narrative mechanism makes the utopian alternative it proposes much more believable and empowers the present readerly imagination to believe that positive change (and alternativity as such) might be possible.

Hilary Duffield

University of Trier

Anthropocene Consciousness and Time Loops in Narratives of Anthropogenic Environmental Disaster

A particular form of science fiction narrative involving scenarios of anthropogenic disaster and multiple time levels emerged in the latter twentieth century. Here an apocalyptic future is connected to an earlier historical level by various looping structures. The 1980s was the key period for this pattern (Gregory Benford’s *Timescape*, *The Terminator*; *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*; *Back to the Future Part II*), but it already commenced in the unfolding storyline of the original *Planet of the Apes* films: using time travel, characters attempt to prevent the environmental disaster from occurring in the future. This kind of plot therefore creates a form of enhanced human agency in response to catastrophic human impacts. Later SF narratives also create loops across multiple time-levels, but in slightly different ways, such as the reimagined *Battlestar Galactica*, Emmi Itäranta’s *Memory of Water* and *Interstellar*. In their diverse depictions of environmental disaster, these texts also embody the emerging human insights into the planet’s state of anthropogenic jeopardy that has been slowly growing since the nineteenth century. This Anthropocene consciousness thus starts developing well before the term Anthropocene was proposed in 2000, and spans multiple emerging recognitions into the dangers of industrial pollution, the human power of nuclear destruction, of anthropogenic climate change, the ongoing sixth mass extinction event, and the possibility of AI singularity. These collective realisations of different forms of human destructive power all feature markedly in the texts listed above. I compare the time-loop patterns of these texts, their patterns of fictional environmental agency, and their different expressions of Anthropocene consciousness. I also compare key tendencies in the twentieth-century texts with more recent ones, particular *Interstellar*, whose time-loop pattern negates environmental agency, offering one worrying yardstick of environmental perceptions in our present time.

SESSION 11B – TRANS/QUEER AFFECTS, DESIRES, AND COMMUNITIES

Brendan McNeely

University of Wisconsin-Madison

‘The Company You Keep’: *Final Fantasy XIV*, Queer Publics, and the Limits of Representation

This paper explores the formation and dissolution of queer collective publics and narratives within virtual ludic worlds through an analysis of the role-playing community in *Final Fantasy XIV Online*. A game that has demonstrably captured millions of players within a genre of online gaming already deemed saturated, *FFXIV* houses a thriving queer community that sets it apart in terms of welcoming

and supporting new players within the often-hostile world of online gaming. What undergirds this formation of a supportive, collective queer public, I argue, is a kind of solidarity built not on the game's own representation of queerness in its diegetic world – *FFXIV* actually possesses very few explicitly queer characters in its quest structure – but instead on an emergent articulation of difference at the individual level. From avatar creation and customization to the use of paratextual platforms like Discord, the queer community within *FFXIV* continually iterates on a project of narrativising both an individual and collective queerness in a game that in many ways is not explicitly queer in terms of strict representation. Building on the work of trans theorists like Hil Malatino, Tobias Raun, and Andre Cavalcante, this project moves beyond the politics and mechanics of representation, actively theorising the ways that ludic experience can create space for the formation of queer publics without adhering to a politics of representation—as well as the ways that a game whose articulation of character gender is limited and dimorphic can nonetheless enable the proliferation of non-normative gender expression within its virtual world. Through the process of role-playing, in-game chat practices, and paratextual interfaces, the innumerable interactions that occur on an individual level all contribute to a collective identity, built on agreed-upon spatial, ludic, and social practices, that continually produces new articulations of difference and forms new queer publics.

Ellen Peel

San Francisco State University

Unknowable (Trans?) Desire in Honoré de Balzac's *Sarrasine* and David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*

If people are transgender, it is likely they desire to present as having a gender other than that assigned at birth, even if that desire remains fulfilled. For the essentialist, the trans person wishes to present the different gender because it is authentic, whereas for the anti-essentialist, the trans person wishes to perform the different gender. Yet both descriptions imply that the person has a particular desire, part of an inner life. A person lacking that desire would not be trans, however, even if coerced to present as trans. I examine two texts in which relative powerlessness forces characters to present as trans, and certain narrative techniques prevent us from knowing their inner life—thus from knowing if they also desire to present that way. Can someone with no knowable inner life be considered trans? Can a narrative be trans if it does not represent a character's inner life? I examine these questions through Honoré de Balzac's novella *Sarrasine* and David Henry Hwang's play *M. Butterfly*. Both concern a Frenchman who goes to another country and falls in love with someone whose body he perceives as female on- and offstage, not knowing that female roles are played by men there. In both works, the performers might be trans, but I argue that we can never know, because they are professional performers and certain narrative techniques combine to make their inner lives invisible. Lacking a narrator, most plays lack focalization, though a similar effect is sometimes achieved by how much certain characters appear onstage or express their inner lives. These techniques in effect focalize *M. Butterfly* through René. Actually, this play does have a narrator, also René, who recounts his past, focalised through himself. Song is hardly silent, but says things so ironic and manipulative as to seem less revealing than silence. So why do they perform as women? One reason is powerlessness—poverty or pressure from peers or the government clearly push the singers toward their seemingly-trans presentations—but do the singers themselves also desire that? Are these trans narratives? Both texts skilfully use narrative techniques to make the answer unknowable, with broader implications for the narratology of trans consciousness.

Ralph J. Poole

University of Salzburg

Trans Heimatfilm: Johannes Maria Schmitt's *Neubau* as Narrative of Resilience

The Heimatfilm arguably is a distinctly German genre capitalising on nostalgic and heteronormative notions about home, nation, nature, family, and gender. Contesting this view, I read Johannes Maria Schmitt's film *Neubau: Ein Heimatfilm* as an example of a recent willingness to openly challenge the genre's categorical straightness and address queer and trans concerns within a broader Europeanised format of the Heimatfilm. *Neubau* is relevant and courageous in narrating the romance between a German transman and a Vietnamese man within a mostly accepting rural community that also includes an elderly lesbian couple. While the fantasised flight from rural ennui and potential homophobia to the exciting and liberated queer metropolis (Berlin) is one possible trajectory for the transman, the film also shows a rural community willing to accept sexual and otherwise othered outsiders. I discuss *Neubau* as exemplary of a new wave of films that has taken on the rural space and deliberately queered its connotations of inferiority and backwardness alongside toxic notions of hegemonic masculinity, queer/transphobia, and heteronormativity. *Neubau* is a rare example of featuring a transgender protagonist in a genre where such characters are entirely absent. The film also resists assigning the urban queer scene with a superior status and relegating in turn non-metro queers to an unwelcoming space, *i.e.* the rural. I argue that the film is part of a growing pan-European cinema that pays tribute to changing, democratising, and de-stigmatising developments of societies by offering the queer a home (Heimat) that hitherto was foreclosed for him/her/they. I argue for the genre's inherent resilience, continuously resisting such de-democratic assaults on diversity and inclusion.

Evangeline Thurston Wilder

University of Wisconsin-Madison

'Keep the Sister Love Flame Burning': Rage, Love, and Survival in Kai Cheng Thom's *Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars*

In Kai Cheng Thom's *Fierce Femmes and Notorious Liars*, a group of trans femmes form a girl gang to fight back against the cops and johns who terrorize them. This paper reads the girl gang as an example of the collaboration between rage (against the transphobic world) and love (which imagines a safe world for trans femmes) in trans survival stories. Stories in which trans characters must fight to survive together are common in trans literature, but remain undertheorised. I bring Thom's novel into conversation with existing (trans)feminist scholarship on rage, especially from Hil Malatino and Susan Stryker. I take up the directional metaphors they use to describe rage and argue that, if rage is directional, something needs to direct it. I suggest that love is the best tool for 'orienting' (Ahmed) the force of trans rage. My conception of love as an orienting affect emerges alongside recent trans scholarship on "t4t", as theorised by Torrey Peters, as well as Thom's own nonfiction work. I call this affective process—where rage animates and love orients—"trans ragelove." Thom's novel demonstrates the electric potency of trans ragelove in the girl gang. However, in the end, the trans femmes are narratively chastised for fighting back against their oppressors. I dwell on a dream sequence to argue that the narrative blurs the distinctions between systemic transphobic violence and the justified "violence" of self-defense. The novel ultimately suggests that love alone—in direct opposition to rage—is necessary for trans liberation. I try to make sense of this turn away from the generative power of rage and love's collaboration. Finally, I use the framework of trans ragelove to imagine a new kind of trans survival story, in fiction and beyond.

SESSION 11C – DIGITAL NARRATIVES

Himadri Agarwal

University of Maryland

'Don't tell me what to do': Intrigue and Immersion in Games

Daniel Punday expands the applicability of Espen Aarseth's conception of 'intrigue' beyond cybertext narration to electronic narratives at large. He considers intrigue as a way of talking about what players materially do while reading or playing a text. Punday also subverts the idea that metaleptic jumps (transgressions between world boundaries) are distancing. He argues for the immersive potential of such boundary shifts. I juxtapose these two ideas and examine two digital indie games, *Please Answer Carefully* by litrouke and *Woebegone* by louey as "intrigants," focusing on the moments which position the reader to act upon the text as a material object, and consider how those metaleptic moments increase immersion through arguably illogical emotional response. These are both games which require input from the user at every stage, making them suitable for a study of intrigue. While *Please Answer Carefully* is designed as a survey, it is a horror game about stalking. *Woebegone*, meanwhile, is a narrative game about mental health which also takes frequent inputs from the user through text boxes, pop-ups, and hyperlinks. I consider 'diegetic operator acts' (Galloway), which represent 'the moment of direct operator action inside the imaginary world of gameplay' and reconcile how these acts position players as intriguees, since the medium of effecting these actions, in this case the keyboard, still exists outside the game-world. Although both these games constantly point to the constructedness of the text by asking the player to engage with the stories through their devices, I will argue that they increase immersion rather than causing distancing. I take a closer look at boundary shifts in game narratives and examine the oft-ignored connection between metalepsis, intrigue, and immersion.

Corinne Bancroft (with Emma Ainsworth and Rowan Watts)

University of Victoria

Visualising Braided Narratives

As Marie-Laure Ryan has pointed out, diagrams have been an important way of representing and producing narrative knowledge. This presentation will report on a pilot project that developed and tested digital methods to visualize the braided narrative, an understudied genre of the novel developed by prominent, diverse authors. Braided narratives twine together multiple narrators who tell distinct stories to engage key questions about historical trauma and social responsibility. This project draws on the tools of the digital humanities to produce three types of visualisations for five novels: three braided narratives and two comparison texts. First, we created formal structure infographics that visualise the intertwined nature of braided narratives. Like a graphic table of contents, these images illustrate the progression chapters over the course of the novel and also indicate the narrator of each chapter and the embedded structure of stories. Second, we produced social networking visualisations that map the relationship among characters in a novel. These visualisations demonstrate how different constellations of characters are interconnected in braided narratives. In sharp contrast to work that uses social networking for 'distant reading' (Moretti), our methodology is grounded in close reading techniques. Third, we adapted methods that plot discourse time over story time on cartesian plane. Because braided narratives depend on the juxtaposition of multiple narrators, we designed a method to include narrators and the temporal occasions on which they speak in these visualizations. The fifteen visualisations produced through this pilot project not only demonstrate the unique features of braided narratives but also reveal ways that narrative theory and the digital humanities might enter into productive conversation.

Audrey Halley

University of Indiana at Bloomington

Myths, Stories and Video Games: Narrative Relevancy in the Age of Interactive Media

Orally narrated for centuries before taken on written forms that have provided the seminal material for literary genres like theatre, novel, and poetry, myths have been an endless source of inspiration. Numerous adaptations of Greek and Norse mythology to cinema and TV such as the *Clash of the Titans* and *Ragnarök* prove their enduring interest. The advent of video games has changed the audience's relation to narratives from a mostly "passive" reception (reading a book or watching a film), to the player's active control over the hero's actions and movements. The temporal and spatial framework of a video game is designed to be haptically interactive and the game's plot evolves based on the player's choices. Have traditional narrative features like the narrator or the plot have become irrelevant for the new medium? I claim that with the advent of video games, traditional narrative features have not disappeared, on the contrary, they still exist in video games while influencing the creation of interactive narrative forms. I compare the way in which mythological narratives – Ancient Greek myths and Nordic sagas – are used in two video games: *Assassin's Creed* and *Immortal Fenix Rising*. In these games, traditional narrative forms merge with the interactive medium of the video game. Both games feature a narrator that, while being controlled by the player, provides crucial information about the story and guides the hero's actions, ensuring the player's progress through the stages of the game. Such examples demonstrate that traditional narrative devices are foundational components of video games while attesting to their adaptability to new interactive media. I show that only an interpretive framework that accounts for both narrativity and interactivity in video games can allow us to grasp their specificity versus other storytelling-based activities such as literature and film.

SESSION 11D – READING IRISH LITERATURE**Audrey Holt**

Yale University

Remapping Worlds: Narrative Dynamics as Conceptual Space

Neither history nor social change can happen in a vacuum—all history, that is, must be lived history—but capturing and transmitting impressions and experiences of a lived historical moment in narrative form is not a neutral exercise. Rather, the question of which experiences of a (fictional or real) place or moment a reader "takes away" from a narrative aligns with the question of what ripple effect the narrative has in conceptualizations of the actual present. I consider the way narrative works engage the cognitive faculties of real readers as themselves and the way readers can be linguistically oriented relative to the people, events, and objects of literary or textual worlds. I trace which elements of a fictional world are implicated as familiar versus novel, proximal versus distal, perceptible versus only described. I contend that the means by which writers arrange readers' actual (cognitive) experiences of their literary worlds plays a significant role in how these experiences ultimately shape, persist in, or overlap with, these readers' comprehensions of the actual world. To examine this effect at a time of now well-documented political and cultural upheaval, I focus on patterns of semantic and pragmatic (inter)subjectivity which implicate the readers' real cognition in the fictional text worlds of modern Irish novels. Against the backdrop of both literary modernism and of the shifting political and cultural values and categories of the Irish Literary Revival period, the boundaries between the fictional and actual worlds of these novels are often actively blurred, and the cognitive mapping of the conceptual space in one affects that of the other. Drawing from this case study, I point to narrative strategies which appear across eras, regions, and genres to blur these lines in the minds of readers.

Sarah J. Link

University of Wuppertal

Narratives That Count: Enumerations in Anna Burns' *Milkman*

I discuss how Anna Burns' Booker Prize-winning novel *Milkman* makes use of lists and enumerations as a narratological device of representing trauma. My paper will connect narratological considerations on the uses and functions of literary lists to recent work on the representation of trauma in literature. Kathleen Costello-Sullivan argues that contemporary Irish novels engage with trauma in a way that manifests in the novel's structure as well as thematically. In Burns' novel, the protagonist frequently resorts to lists and enumerative structures to describe the politically charged and socially constrained living conditions in Northern Ireland during the sectarian conflict that has become known as 'the Troubles'. This choice of form fulfils two different, seemingly contradictory functions in the novel: firstly, as a form associated with conciseness, order, and structure, lists can be read as a formal manifestation of the protagonist's attempt to make sense of a world increasingly dominated by chaos and senseless violence. Lists thus provide insight into the psychological and emotional turmoil faced by the protagonist. Secondly, however, the novel problematises the deceptively simplistic logic of categorisation strategies that are based on easily listable markers of identity. *Milkman* demonstrates how the protagonist becomes a victim of such categorization structures, and consequently also highlights the list form's capacity for disorder and fragmentation. My argument connects the tension between the list's conflicting affordances – to order and to fragment – to the protagonist's attempt to define herself within the confines of societal expectations, and demonstrate how *Milkman's* use of lists constitutes a metanarrative engagement with the cultural force of trauma.

Mikelyn Rochford

University of York

Irish Literary Tradition Beyond Unnatural Narrative and Flann O'Brien

Narratology has sought to accommodate texts that do not adhere to realist parameters by appeal to concepts such as the synthetic and the anti-narrative, even leading narratologists to question what they view as narrative theory's 'clear mimetic bias' by appeal to unnatural narrative (Alber). However, these terms further entrench the models and biases they intend to challenge, in that they are predicated on a binary opposition in service to an assumed realist standard (and therefore rendering texts that don't easily fit within the realist model as peripheral or minor). I argue that an intervention is needed to investigate the ways in which these texts instead participate in cultural traditions of storytelling. For example, certain Irish texts that narratologists have characterised as unnatural are instead part of a literary context sustained and shaped by a distinct lineage of cultural and social traditions. This paper focuses on Flann O'Brien's novels *The Third Policeman* and *At Swim-Two-Birds*, attending to moments in these narratives that narratologists have misconceived as unnatural, but showing instead their connections to Ireland's literary traditions and their participation in storytelling cultures. This includes transgressions between storyworlds, the concurrence of myth with events unfolding in the narrative, metanarrative, and logical and spatial impossibility. I open a dialogue between Irish literary studies and narrative theory and to situate Irish texts that have been misconstrued by current narratological interpretations within their own ongoing literary tradition, one that has historically evaded easy categorization and consensus.

SESSION 11E – MEMORY AND HISTORY

Philip Deans

Newcastle University

Stimulating the Mind, Soothing the Soul: Representing War at the Imperial War Museum in 1940

This paper presents a historical case study of a public museum exhibition curated by the Imperial War Museum, London, during the opening months of the Second World War. Museums are amongst the most powerful soft-power institutions in society. Through their exhibitions and public programmes, they can inform, educate and entertain visitors. They can also be a means for individual and communal definition and representation. In doing so, museums are dealers of stories, projecting ideas and ideologies, taking sides over issues, and conveying messages both domestically and internationally. At the Second World War's onset, the Imperial War Museum found itself assuming this role, representing and interpreting Britain's participation in the hostilities and thereby providing cultural and psychological nourishment for an anxious, frightened public. Using material pertaining to the First World War, it curated an exhibition about the Second World War, narrating why the United Kingdom had become involved, and what the public could expect from the experience. This case study demonstrates the power of museum exhibitions to convey narratives about contemporaneous issues and ideas. It exemplifies how these narratives can contextualise difficult situations, making them more knowable and digestible. It also shows how they can inform opinion and rouse people to action.

Nanny Jolma

Tampere University

Literary Means of Thematising Memory in Oral History Narratives

This paper addresses literary means of thematising memory in non-literary, non-fictional narratives. At the centre of my interest are first-person narratives that, in addition of utilising different retrospective and self-reflexive techniques (Cohn; Brockmeier; Freeman), thematise memory with temporal expressions and especially vocabulary related to remembering. Literary fiction offers examples of narratives that effortlessly slide between different time layers, and where the narrator's stance towards the past self takes multiple forms (Cohn; Fludernik). These narrative means enable illustrative ways of describing memory as a way of making sense of one's past and of the present moment of narrating (Meretoja). The repeated use of memory related vocabulary often underlines the self-reflexiveness of the literary work but it also thematizes the ambiguous temporality of memory narratives: the tension and movement between now and then (Jolma). I participate in the discussion on literariness and fictionality in oral history (Mildorf) by applying approaches of literary studies and memory studies to analyse oral history interviews of former Finnish MPs (1988-2018). The large digital corpus is lemmatised, enabling me to locate mentions of the memory process for closer analysis. In the interviews conducted by the Library of Parliament, the MPs are asked to reflect on their personal history and their path of becoming a politician. Thus, they are institutionally and practically guided to deal with memory as well as personal and professional identities. The interviews provide interesting dialogues both on the story level and in the moment of the narrative interview, and meta-level discussion about traditions of autobiography, memory, and politics. I show how the MPs position themselves in the narrative interaction and in relation to the expectations of telling one's memories.

Olivia Sutherland

University of Oxford

'an unwinding of America': Pastiche, Counterfactual and Narrative Pedagogy in Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad*

'The progression from Plantation to Slave Ship to Darkest Africa generated a soothing logic', thinks Cora, the recently-escaped protagonist of Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad*, as she

enacts, for a gawping crowd of museum-goers, the stereotypical roles ordained by white America for her race, 'It was like going back in time, an unwinding of America'. By placing these objectionable figurations of her past in a backwards chronology, Cora senses she can craft for herself an alternative narrative, and thus, attain a momentary, slippery grasp on her future. This paper argues that Cora's sentiment can be read as a coda to Whitehead's own novel, which stages a counterfactual thought-experiment: what if the underground railroad that helped so many enslaved people escape to freedom in the U.S. were a literal railroad? By creating of shiver of *différance* from his sources in nineteenth-century slave narratives with this one, key intervention, Whitehead implies that the past might be malleable, usable, in ways we have not yet considered. Specifically, *The Underground Railroad* suggests that encounters with narrative – from reading almanacs to dwelling in a short-lived, utopian library of black literature – can provide a springboard for both characters and readers to conceive of futures different from those in which the racialised subject has been framed previously. Placing a Heideggerian concept of 'heritage' in conversation and tension with the idea of a 'usable past', as used by such historians as Eric Foner, this paper reads *The Underground Railroad* as a work of narrative pedagogy. Appearing in the fraught political climate of 2016, on the eve of a racially-charged election, Whitehead's novel both figures and performs the idea of the narrative work as a school in which the past can be grappled with, and the future made anew.

SESSION 11F – NARRATIVE LITERACY IN HISTORIOGRAPHY, EDUCATION AND READING/VIEWING

Silvana Beerends-Pavlovic

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences

Narrative as Skill: Development of Narrative Literacy for (Future) Storytelling Professionals

There is a growing narrative scholarship concerned with the effects and affects of storytelling, focusing on critically analysing public and professional storytelling practices. Their research focuses on conveying the possible downsides of today's story economy and the instrumentalization and uncritical celebration of storytelling. Thereby posing that this widespread uncritical use of narrative may have large-scale consequences that are neither intended nor anticipated (Makela *et al.*). The gap between the growing narrative critical scholarship and the widespread use of narrative by storytelling professionals underpins the need for further development of the concept of narrative literacy for storytelling professionals. Narrative literacy would possibly enable these professionals to critically reflect on how narratives are constructed, how stories could be used for persuasion, how stories negotiate values and develop the skill to actively resist storytelling (Moenandar). In this paper I explore how the narratological toolbox could contribute to the narrative literacy of future storytelling professionals in the creative industries. I measure the effect of the narrative tools offered in class on changes in narrative literacy of the students by conducting semi-structured interviews with twenty students from the Communication & Creative Business program at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. During the module students analyse different types of text by focusing on plot structure (Greimas) with special attention to the way in which narrative negotiates values (Korthals Altes) and the role that choices of genre play in life writing (Moenandar and Huisman,). I assess the level of narrative literacy at the start (baseline) and the end (effect) of the module with a topic list focused on getting insights into 1) critical reflection on constructions of narrative, 2) how narrative can be used for persuasion, 3) how narrative negotiates values and 4) how narrative can be resisted.

Steven Willemsen

University of Groningen

Who's Afraid of Ambiguities and Open Endings? Preferences for Narrative Complexity and Tolerance for Ambiguity

The complex forms of storytelling found in contemporary film, television and literature produce a particular kind of narrative experience – one characterised by high rates of uncertainty, ambiguity or incongruity. In everyday life, people are known to vary in their willingness and ability to cope with such uncertain or ambiguous epistemic states. Could the same personality factors influence the enjoyment of complexity in narratives? And if so, which personality traits are the most influential? To address these questions, the research presented here combined narratology, media psychology and personality research. To assess people's varying preferences for storytelling complexity, we first developed the new 'Preference for Narrative Complexity' scale. This scale was tested and validated in an online experiment with 101 participants. The participants also completed personality scales for the 'Big-5', Need for Cognition, as well as Tolerance for Ambiguity. The findings provide support for our hypotheses: that people who are more tolerant of ambiguity in real life, or who tend to seek out more cognitively effortful activities in sensory or abstract information, also show a preference for forms of storytelling that stimulate these traits.

Ruben Zeeman

Central European University

Experimental Historiography: Towards a Narrative Literacy of Historical Testimony and Time

'Think about it as a work of history inspired by Akira Kurosawa's famous film *Rashomon*.' That is how Yair Mintzker described his *The Many Deaths of Jew Süß*, a monograph about the trial and execution of Joseph Süß Oppenheimer, a seventeenth-century German Jewish banker working at the court of Duke Charles Alexander of Württemberg. Instead of weighing the evidence and presenting a more or less authoritative interpretation – a historical practice dating back to Thucydides – in it Mintzker postpones judgement and instead leaves the contradicting testimonies to coexist alongside each other. Mintzker's work can be considered an example of experimental historiography, a subgenre of historical works, that also includes documentary films, that has enjoyed varying popularity throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. I discuss two types of experimental historiography: those dealing with historical testimony; and those dealing with historical time. A number of historical texts and documentaries – including Mintzker's, Natalie Zemon Davis' *The Return of Martin Guerre*, and Péter Forgács' *El Perro Negro* – will be analysed through the lens of unnatural narratology. Underlying this research is the awareness that history is being politicised and manipulated on a scale rarely seen, at least since the 1990s. Whether it is Vladimir Putin's "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians," competing memories of the military dictatorships in Latin America, or the censorial laws against "genocide denial" in Rwanda, an awareness of how history is constructed to fit the agendas of non-bona fide history producers is of fundamental importance. Understanding the ways in which experimental historiography plays with the conventions of historical research can be an important contribution to such narrative literacy.

SESSION 11G – VICTORIAN NARRATIVES

Geoffrey A. Baker

Yale-NUS College

The Tense of Circumstance: Temporality and Evidence in the Nineteenth-Century Law Report and Novels by Mary Shelley and Elizabeth Gaskell

In her reading of the narrative form of the law report in nineteenth-century England, Ayelet Ben-Yishai notes in particular its future-oriented nature; the law report, by narrating a past, decided case, is understood to provide context and precedent for future, similar cases. What one also notices in these reports is the particularly complex manner in which they manage the past. In the statement of the facts of a case that occupies the first portion of the typical law report, the narrative voice carefully controls its tenses, shifting in interesting ways between past perfect, past, and present. In so doing, the reports make temporality a means of organising information in a genre in which this information is itself the whole story. Both the facts themselves as they chain together to shape the story of a criminal act, and the discovery of those facts during investigation, are the narrative. Leaning on Ben-Yishai and on Alexander Welsh's analysis of the relationship between circumstantial evidence and fictional narratives, I use the law reports' complex temporalities in order to frame readings of pivotal passages in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton*. As these novels portray innocent defendants who stand accused of capital crimes on purely circumstantial evidence, Shelley and Gaskell complicate the temporality of the law report in their representation of the statement of the facts of a case. Like the law reports, they use tense to organize information and causality, but they also reveal two pasts accessed through tense in these narratives: the one when the crime happens, and the one in which that occurrence is being narrated and framed by a character. The novels thus disclose the narrativity of the report, and implicate authoritative narrative temporality in legal processes and questions of social justice.

Gregory Brennen

University of Tampa

Serial Imagination and George Eliot's *Middlemarch*

This paper reevaluates George Eliot's *Middlemarch* through a focus on the seriality of the novel's composition, revision, and publication processes. To succeed in the marketplace while achieving literary status, Eliot developed an innovative format for publishing a novel in eight half-volume parts at two-month intervals. This paper pays particular attention to how the serial composition and revision processes shape the novel's narrative form and the communities it imagines. As she composed *Middlemarch* for serial publication, Eliot revised, expanded, and combined two shorter drafts, "Miss Brooke" and "Middlemarch." In doing so, she carefully forged narrative links to bring together stories focused on the population of a new manufacturing town and the members of the hereditary landed gentry. As a result, the novel bridges these respective discourse networks while each to retain its distinctive modes of social interaction and political belief. Especially in light of the novel's setting in the years immediately preceding the First Reform Act (1832), *Middlemarch* transforms the intractable political conflict between town and gentry constituencies into a negotiable merger of print culture. The serial narrative form imagines how townsfolk and landed gentry might come, however provisionally and uncomfortably, to coexist in a shared community, but the larger stakes of this model of sociality lie in the fact that it is theoretically scalable and transferrable: if shared print culture can bind rural town and country, then perhaps it can connect metropolis and countryside, or even metropole and periphery of empire. Ultimately, *Middlemarch* constructs a distinctively Victorian serial imagination in which readers can, through access to a print culture that disseminates information between communities and cultural spaces, imagine different, distant peoples as civil interlocutors in a shared community.

Joshua Parker

University of Salzburg

Narrativising Networks: Victorian to Present-Day Stories of Infrastructure

Recently, scholarship in English and media studies has turned to the ways we conceptualise largely invisible systems which we are famously supposed to not notice except when they fail. Work has also been done on how, as Nicole Starosielski notes, fictional narratives (short stories, novels) about networks like undersea cables are almost invariably narratives of initial connection or of disruption, which themselves, she suggests, intentionally occlude the networks' actual positions in space and means of functioning in order to protect them from possible disturbance. Within the framework of a larger current study of the metaphors and narratives we use to conceptualize technological networks, whether of trade or communication, this proposed paper examines the way such stories or metaphors have evolved since the mid-nineteenth century—and more interestingly, how they have remained stable. The paper begins by highlighting the private (and sometimes publicised) philosophical and metaphysical thoughts of inventors like Samuel Morse, Thomas Edison, and Alexander Graham Bell, from archived diaries and contemporary newspaper interviews. From there, it suggests how we today imagine infrastructure and technology networks is sometimes based on narrative formulas used by these early inventors. Finally, the paper highlights how strange uncanny early metaphors for and narratives of such technology were in these men's private writings, and how tied to political metaphors of their time. Its conclusion offers illustrations of ways these century-old narrative tropes show up not only in literature and speculative fiction, but in contemporary advertising images, particularly when new types of technologies are introduced to consumers for the first time.

SESSION 11H – PLAYFUL NARRATIVE ACROSS MEDIA

Jan-Noël Thon

Osnabrück University

Playful Narrative across Media

This paper approaches playful narrative across media from a theoretical perspective, aiming to develop a theoretical frame and method for the analysis of playful narrative across media that focuses less on playfulness as a “positive” mood, attitude, or state of mind than on how (post)digital media forms may play with their medial, aesthetic, and narrative frames in creative, innovative, and subversive ways. Playful narratives may manifest playfulness in at least four salient and interrelated aesthetic dimensions, preliminarily identified as playful agency, multimodality, narrativity, and referentiality. Playful agency aims at how digital media forms may creatively play with and/or resist the expectations around the agency of recipients (a term that, here and in the following, is meant to include readers, viewers, players, and other users), referring not just to unusual forms of interactivity that can be encountered in digital works such as *Possibilia*, but also to more pronounced forms of co-creation that are characteristic for digital works such as *Homestuck*. Playful multimodality stresses that the aesthetics of playful narrative cannot be reduced to language play, focusing instead on the multimodal combination of semiotic modes that can also lead to transgressive remediations of altermedial aesthetics in digital works such as *Wondermark* or *What Remains of Edith Finch*. Playful narrativity refers to unconventional reconfigurations of established strategies of narrative representation, both on the level of the storyworld (e.g. by queering expectations regarding characters' gender or sexuality in digital works such as *Timespinner*) and on the level of the narrative representation (e.g. by employing metareferential narrators in digital works such as *The Stanley Parable*). Playful referentiality highlights how digital works such as *Fort McMoney* or *That Dragon, Cancer* play with and at least partially subvert the distinction between fictionality and nonfictionality by combining a range of fictional, metaphorical, nonfictional, and even documentary “referential claims.”

Kieron Brown

Osnabrück University

Playful Design in Daniel Benmergui's *Storyteller*

This paper approaches playfulness as an appropriative attitude characterised by a desire or willingness to be free from the restrictions of convention. If playfulness then entails individuals transforming or “reframing” situations to suit their own ends, the notion of designing narrative artifacts to facilitate a playful attitude in recipients might seem somewhat contradictory. In contrast to this idea, the paper argues that unconventional narrative works may encourage something akin to a playful attitude on the part of the recipient by offering significant levels of ambiguity and agency, affording experimentation within an under-specified context. As a case study, the paper draws on Daniel Benmergui's *Storyteller*, an independent puzzle game offering an unfamiliar combination of video game and comics features. The game involves players creating rudimentary comics narratives to solve puzzle prompts in the form of plot descriptions. Two of *Storyteller*'s design features stand out as potentially conducive to playfulness: multiple solution pathways and instant reactivity. While the actual range of permissible solutions to *Storyteller*'s puzzles may be limited, the assumed openness of responses suggested by the game combined with the instant reactions to player behaviour encourages players to “play around” and solve the puzzles in intuitive, improvisational ways.

Theresa Krampe

University of Tübingen

Playing with Games: Playfulness as a Hallmark of Metareferential Videogames

This paper delves into the connection between playfulness and metareference in independent videogames. If we understand playfulness as ‘that which plays with the expectations of play’ (Sutton-Smith), then recent “meta-games” offer promising subjects for analysis. Not only are they rich with experimental forms that challenge established narrative and ludic conventions, but they also prompt players to play with the game—to bend its rules and explore possibilities that seem to go beyond the game as intended. In doing so, these games formulate an often-critical self-commentary that sheds some light on the age-old question of how videogames can tell stories (differently) and how they construct worlds that appeal to the player's sense of agency. I look at examples of metareferential indie games that, roughly ten years after *The Stanley Parable*, put a new spin on the conflict between an anthropomorphised computer system and the player's agency. In *Backfirewall_*, as a case in point, players play as update assistant gone rogue. Using controls that mimic cheats and software command lines, players can manipulate rules and environments to come up with creative puzzle solutions. They thus adopt a playfully subversive attitude towards the game that encourages out-of-the-box thinking and provides a deeper understanding of how videogames function as systems. At the same time, *Backfirewall_* also inherits *The Stanley Parable*'s critical impetus in that it offers a metaphorical engagement with contemporary anxieties about privacy, cybersecurity, and breakneck technological development. Combining innovative puzzles with self-referential humour and serious overtones, games like *Backfirewall_* thus make good use of the engaging quality of playfulness and turn it into a rather effective ally to critical forms of metareference.

SESSION 11I – METANARRATIVITY, NARRATIVE AGENCY, AND NARRATIVE MEDICINE

Laura Mazzoli Smith

Durham University

Metanarrativity, Epistemic Uncertainty and Critical Narrative-based Learning

Narrative practices reflected on at the cultural level through the narrative turn and talk of a storytelling boom, contribute to engagement in metanarrativity in public discourse. Yet we also see the widespread

entrenchment of narrative allegiances, for instance in the form of ‘cancel culture’. In an emotive metanarrative stance a Palestinian man responds to a question put to him by a BBC interviewer on the role of Hamas in the current Middle Eastern conflict with another question – asking the interviewer where he would like the story to commence. Actions are described and justified narratively in the most contested of human contexts and it is incumbent on us to continue to work towards the development of inclusive, critical, narrative-based learning opportunities, through which to support dialogic engagement across pluralist spaces. The concepts of narrative competence and narrative agency, made particularly visible through narrative medicine, have become important spaces in which to focus such activity. In this paper I discuss self-reflexive awareness as a theoretical orientation in narrative-based learning, through foregrounding perspective transformation in relation to metanarrativity. Taking up Shaun Gallagher’s view that ‘[n]arratives are complex objects of joint attention, and they can function as such in educational contexts’ I explore what considerations a focus on metanarrativity in inclusive learning contexts might necessitate, so as to leverage narratives as ‘blueprints for change’. I consider these particularly in the context of transformative learning theory and the epistemic insecurity that could accompany metanarrativity in narrative practices. I suggest that American Pragmatism can help us respond to very real concerns about uncertainty and hence further entrenchment through fixed narratives. American Pragmatism can support the promise of self-reflexive awareness as linked to open-endedness, and metanarrativity as linked to indeterminacy, by mitigating against reductive and instrumental instantiations of reflective practice in teaching and learning and epistemic uncertainty.

Hanna Meretoja

University of Turku

Metanarrativity and the Potential of Narrative Medicine to Strengthen Narrative Agency

This paper suggests that the theoretical-methodological approach of narrative hermeneutics can provide a productive analytic lens for narrative medicine. Narrative hermeneutics takes narratives to be culturally mediated interpretative practices that provide us with interpretative resources to make sense of various experiences, such as those of illness and health, resources that can also be delimiting and harmful. In this framework, narrative agency can be conceptualised as our ability to navigate our narrative environments, to use and interpret the narrative resources that are culturally available to us, and to reinterpret them in critical and creative ways. In my model, the three aspects of narrative agency are narrative awareness, narrative imagination and narrativity dialogicality. Narrative medicine has potential to strengthen all these aspects of narrative agency when it comes to our ability to navigate our narrative environments in relation to issues of illness and health. In this paper, I discuss how metanarrative fiction, which thematises culturally dominant ways of narrating illness, can help us move beyond narrow and problematic illness narratives, such as the narrative of battling illness, and provide counter-narratives that broaden our culturally available repertoire of making sense of illness. I take examples of fiction that problematizes dominant narratives of cancer, and I discuss the metanarrative reading group model that we have developed, in my research group, and which we are now using in two university hospitals in reading groups for cancer patients and medical professionals working in cancer care. These groups aim at strengthening narrative awareness concerning different cultural models of narrating cancer, narrative imagination as the ability to find alternative ways of narrating the cancer experience and narrative dialogicality as the ability to listen to the stories of others and to engage with them in a dialogical way that can contribute to new “narrative in-betweens”.

Danielle Spencer

Columbia University

Narrative Medicine in the Metacene

Narrative Medicine’s methodological approach suggests that close reading skills fortify clinical practice. This reflective orientation also invites a self-reflexive hermeneutical awareness and interrogation of the dynamic roles of reader, writer, and text. Such self-reflexive awareness is heightened by experiences of metagnosis, when one learns suddenly of a longstanding undetected condition, as this often prompts renegotiation of the relationship between individual identity and normative labels such as normal, diseased, disabled, etc. Such awareness also helps to illuminate some of the patterns of the illness narrative and clinician memoir genres—the ways in which their self-reflexivity threatens the subject/object divide in medicine. And this self-reflexive awareness is also reflected in contemporary fictions—such as the many instances of metafiction going mainstream, and storyworlds containing multiple realities and/or multiverses, from *Everything Everywhere All at Once* to *Barbie*. If we become aware of this degree of self-reflexivity and change and understand it to be characteristic of our current era—what I have termed the metacene—then we will have more tools to help us navigate our roles and responsibilities in healthcare and beyond. Particularly as we are confronting wholesale change in light of generative AI—tremendous power and capacity for further scientific advancement, but also, as with medicine’s technological progress up until this point, the risk of letting our humanity be eclipsed, which applies both to healthcare professionals and ill persons. How can we better understand our capacities as self-reflexive beings? Rather than tracing the same frustrating narrative arcs, how can we celebrate and learn from changing stories? How might we harness the power of narrative and work towards the storyworlds we wish to inhabit?

SESSION 12A – CHARACTER

Glenn Deer

University of British Columbia

Narratives of Situational Enslavement: Reading Kazuo Ishiguro

In Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Klara and the Sun*, a uniquely sensitive robot (“AF” or artificial friend) provides companionship for a terminally ill girl, and studies the invalid with the aim of becoming her substitute. Like many of Ishiguro’s situationally enslaved characters, including the children raised as organ donors in *Never Let Me Go*, or the butler Stevens who supports the fascist aristocracy to uphold the “dignity” of his position in *The Remains of the Day*, Klara’s programming is determined by rules occluded from the understanding of characters, or indeed the reader. The regulation of these worlds requires the renunciation of curiosity to survive within the situation – non-conformity results in dismissal or termination. This paper addresses narrative situation by applying the problematics of agency to the situational enslavement of characters in the novels of Kazuo Ishiguro. Cressida Heyes recuperates the agency of the subject in the wake of modernity’s traumatic neurological ‘bombardment’ and the subsequent technologies, described by Susan Buck-Morss, that ‘enhance, control, deaden, or eliminate sensation [and which] are ever more central to a wide range of lives and deaths’ (Heyes). Two fundamental Heyes-inflected questions about Ishiguro’s situationally dominated characters are proposed: first, as characters awaken from docility to a clearer understanding of the dominance of situation, how do they affectively respond to their situational fate in a zero-sum game that inexorably leads to the sacrifice of their bodies and occupations? In other words, what is the affective phenomenology of a character after they take the red pill of metalepsis, see clearly the conditions of their entrapment by the situation, and consider meaningful action? The second question I propose concerns the political and ethical use of situationally dominated characters in narratives. Ishiguro’s robots, butlers, and organ donors are the contemporary inheritors of situational constraints partly

elaborated in the Victorian novel. For example, the relentless social determinism in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* haunts much of Ishiguro's work. What are the political and ethical consequences of the persistent figuring of characters as experimental subjects, or Girardian scapegoats, enslaved labourers as robots, butlers, and organ donors? What are the consequences of the persistent figuring of characters as the sacrificial victims of institutionalised servitude?

Kayla Goldblatt

Ohio State University

Characters as Surrogates

The character-system in Henry James's *What Maisie Knew* is largely determined by a long chain of parental surrogates: Maisie 'was still, as a result of so many parents, a daughter to somebody even after papa and mamma were to all intents dead' (James). While we might interpret the character-as-surrogate in a semiotic sense, I suggest that a rhetorical approach would better equip us to analyse the specific narrative function of these types of relational character dynamics. In illustrating this approach, I analyse examples from James's novel—namely the Captain and the Countess and their role as surrogates-for-surrogates—and from the short story "The Proxy Marriage" by Maile Meloy, where the story's main characters are, technically, surrogates for peripheral characters' marriage ceremonies. Drawing on theoretical frameworks from Alex Woloch, Philip Hamon, and James Phelan, this talk proposes a concentrated approach to surrogate characters as thematic, relational constructs. This technique aims to spotlight new characterological problems that complicate our typical frameworks for understanding, for example, "flat" or "minor" characters. These surrogate characters are thematically charged figures in the text who derive their primary significance through their relationships to the characters they supposedly represent. However, in my analysis of "The Proxy Marriage" and the Captain and the Countess in *What Maisie Knew*, this talk argues that these surrogates' departures from their relational counterparts are just as—if not more—significant than the convergences.

Evan Thomas

South Dakota School of Mines and Technology

'People Don't Change!': AMC's *Better Call Saul*, Serial Character and the Feminist Ethics of Care

The narrative treatment of character remains a live issue, can be seen in the recent dialogue on character between Jim Phelan and John Frow. Both Phelan and Frow consider a degree of contingency preceding an interpretation of character: for Frow in particular, the relevant framing of "fiction" depends on the emergence of adequate interpretive regimes. Frow's larger point here is that to draw attention to the historical contingency of regimes of fictionality. But much of the discussion of the topic of narrative character has concerned self-contained literary regimes, and too little has concerned the serial representation of character in other media. To respond to this need, this paper discusses *BCS* as a source that highlights the difficulties of teleological approaches to character that have followed from the tradition of (neo)Aristotelian narrative theory. This show has its origins as a narrative extension from *Breaking Bad*, with proleptic and analeptic elements providing no guarantee of a safe end-point for the characters. Any attempt to reduce the titular character, Saul Goodman, to a single determinate *ethos* or *telos* resembles one of the many scams and deceptions that Saul perpetrates on his adversaries. The notable examples of this involve Saul's rivals in the law firm Hamlin, Hamlin & McGill, where Saul uses his rivals' low estimations of him against them, luring them by exaggerating his vice and concealing his capacity for change. As an alternative to this, this paper proposes that the *BCS* models a more appropriate stance toward serial character: an open-ended responsiveness appropriate to relationships of care. The specific case study to understand this is Kim Wexler, who displays a connection with Jimmy that leaves open the possibility of change and development in this serial character.

SESSION 12B – THE HUMAN IN THE PRE-MODERN

Alice Gaber

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Before the Anthropocene: Sophocles' *Antigone* as Environmental Narrative

The intersection of narratology and ecocriticism has almost exclusively focused on narratives that self-consciously foreground ecological concerns in a contemporary, realist mode (James; Weik von Mossner). Yet, pre-modern narratives also configure human-environment interaction as an integral element of their aesthetic, ethical, and cognitive discourses. Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone* is not often interpreted as a narrative about the environment, yet natural phenomena pervade the play's imagery; at the same time, the earth itself – and the impact of human action on it – uncannily delimits both its storyworld and its plot. While it is possible to read *Antigone's* engagement with the environment as metaphor for an unsophisticated pre-modern audience, an econarratological approach offers a more nuanced interpretation. First, in the penultimate scene of the play, the prophet Tiresias tells King Creon that he has angered the gods by refusing to bury his nephew's body in accordance with natural law. He claims that Creon's ethical miscalculations have created a miasma that pervades the Theban landscape and manifests in the corruption of natural phenomena, such as the orderly communion of birds and the burning of sacrificial offerings. Next, the play thematises the obscure concept of *Atē* ("ruin" or "delusion"). *Atē* is personified, a super-human environmental agent of the divine and fate; *Atē* is also an ecology in itself. *Atē* is a force of nature, a force which is incomprehensible and beyond human control and at the same time comes as divine vengeance, a result of unethical human actions, both specific and universal. *Atē* – a word that occurs in the second sentence of the play and introduces its final, cathartic scene – is a pre-modern representation of the anthropocene in its interest in the complex relationship between human agency, ethics, and the natural world.

Mustafa Roker

Aljamea-tus-Saifiyah University

'Should we not prostrate before you like the camel?': Narrative Techniques in Prophetic Hagiography

Hagiography as a genre, though dated, remains a relic of historiographic consciousness. Often categorised as unreliable and credulous by the proponents of the 'modern critical' method, this genre functions as a site of knowledge production about the past from a sacred perspective. Hagiographic accounts – with their expressive narratives – offer, to an extent, fragmentary information about the actual past, but their real potential resides within these textual narratives. Focusing on these compositions reveals an interplay of techniques, including agency shifting, which provide insights into the "Author – Historian" mind. Despite a sizeable amount of literature dealing with the hagiographic genre and its narrative topos, there remains room to integrate and expand these ideas into the context of Islamic historical scholarship. Within Islamic Historiography, *Dalail al Nubuwwat* (Prophetic Proofs literature) is a subgenre of biography (*Sira*) of the Islamic Prophet. Like any hagiographic text, it too contains a highly evocative narrative centring on the life and trials of the Prophet. I evaluate these narratives and their construction techniques to underscore the role of narrative in the formation of sacred history. Drawing on two Arabic Islamic Medieval works from the *Dalail* genre, the paper illuminates how authors shifted agencies by attributing actions to animals rather than humans when presenting miraculous events. This shifting technique allowed the author to explicitly and implicitly modify the discourse, demonstrating the inclusive nature of narrative, which extends beyond humans as prime actors. Additionally, it highlights how religious scholars employed narrative tropes to establish and legitimise political and sacred authority. Although by no means exhaustive, this study provides an avenue for understanding the dynamic role of narrative, both as a historical record and as a presenter of historical knowledge.

P.J. Zaborowski

University of Iowa

'Herde we nevere swylke mervayle!': Witnessing and Testifying in *Richard Coeur de Lyon*

Prior to Samuel Morse's invention of the telegraph in the first half of the nineteenth century, communication technology was limited to oral or textual messages delivered by a messenger. Arthur C. Clarke notes that 'When Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837, she had no swifter means of sending messages to the far parts of her empire than had Julius Caesar—or, for that matter, Moses', In the Middle Ages, messages, and the messengers who delivered them, played a crucial role in the dissemination of information for both the secular and religious realms and were a seemingly universal presence within medieval communities. As such, they are also indelible fixtures in medieval literature, omnipresent yet understudied, and their unique communicatory function shapes the narrative structure of medieval texts. Messengers in medieval literature embody Jim Phelan's definition of narrative: 'somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose (s) that something happened'. The titular hero of the early fourteenth-century romance *Richard Coeur de Lyon* utilises bodily messages, in the form of body parts removed from both human and non-human animals, to project his identities of king and conqueror. Richard's unique style of imperialistic messaging employs a rhetoric of consumption. The presentation of the severed body part provides only the first step in his messaging process and the full message is instead delivered through his consumption, of both the carnivorous and cannibalistic varieties, of the flesh from his victim-cum-messaging medium. Richard's consumptive messaging is reliant upon the use of messengers to deliver and disseminate his messages of mastication. In the poem's most infamous sequence—the King's performance of cannibalism in front of Saladin's messengers—the messengers act as narrative witnesses who both view Richard's heinous act and recount it for their leader and the readerly audience.

SESSION 12C – TRANS/QUEER NARRATIVE FORMS, EMBODIMENTS, AND POSITIONALITIES

Evan Martens

University of California, Davis

Queering Narratives: Playing with the Ethnicised Body in Mithu Sanyal's *Identitti*

Mithu Sanyal's *Identitti* unravels the intricacies of identity construction in the postcolonial era. I argue that a queer of colour critique, when applied to Sanyal's novel, reveals both the performativity of socio-cultural identity elements such as ethnicity—but also race, class, gender, sex, sexuality, etc.—as well as a potential lacuna in the logic bolstering queer of colour critique, namely José Esteban Muñoz's theory of disidentification. I argue that this revelation not only indicates the existence thereof, but it also entails a colonialist mentality lingering in the postcolonial era. I pay particular attention to the primary characters, Nivedita and her foil, Saraswati. I then turn to queer of colour critique to investigate the narratives Nivedita and Saraswati use to construct their identity. Here I discuss Roderick Ferguson's exploration of Black American novels and their relation to the American literary canon. Ferguson's exploration exemplifies queer of colour analysis and I apply his exploration to the German literary canon in my analysis of *Identitti*. From here I relay José Esteban Muñoz's work on disidentificatory performance and toy with the idea that Saraswati, through the public and performed falsification of her ethno-cultural heritage, complicates Muñoz's theorisation which views disidentificatory performance as a means of empowering the minoritarian subject. Queer of colour critique assists in unweaving the web of conflicting narratives embedded in Sanyal's novel and unearths the presence of colonialist thought. Additionally, through its use of rebellious counternarratives, queer of colour critique points to the arbitrariness and performativity of identity in Sanyal's novel.

Joonas Sääntti

University of Jyväskylä

Metanarration as an Aesthetic Problem in Trans Narratives

This paper focuses on metanarration (narration about the act of narrating) in written narratives about transgender and transsexual lives. One typical example recurring in both autobiographical and fictive trans-storytelling is the allusion to a standard expectation, which the text in question refuses to actualise: “this will not be one those stereotypical trans narratives, where...” This also works as a popular strategy to connect a single life narrative to macrolevel cultural narratives about transness in transit, such as moving from (past) trans rage to (emergent) trans joy. I relate this narrative strategy to a burden of representation (mostly in the sense of “standing for” a minority), which contributes to a need to explain and rationalize artistic choices and their motivations in a transparent manner. I suggest this strategy is related to a still powerful sense of trans narratives as means to educate and guide a supposedly ill-informed or misinformed authorial audience. This assumption can also be perceived to guide the reception of these works of literature, especially in the case of autobiographical texts. I discuss this critically as an aesthetic limitation for the genre. I support my argument with examples from twenty-first-century narratives.

Sven Van den Bossche

University of Antwerp

Beyond Subversion: Narrating Alternative Models for Trans Embodiment in Dutch Literary Fiction

As an emerging subfield, trans narratology is grappling with the tension between dominant narrative forms for trans experience (*i.e.* the common tropes of the linear progressive trans memoir) and narrative forms that supposedly “subvert” this familiar story. I argue that this opposition in narrative forms is based on an unproductive distinction between so-called ‘normative’ and ‘anti-normative’ models for trans embodiment. Through an analysis of narrative techniques in a corpus of modern and contemporary Dutch trans novels, I discuss how the structure of these stories paint an alternative picture of trans embodied experience that complexify transness instead of dividing it in “good” and “bad”, or “normative” and “subversive” variants. Firstly, I highlight narrative techniques that draw the focus on transness as a sensory, affective experience instead of a visual affirmation or subversion of bodily norms. This is, for instance, the case in the use of specific narrative metaphors for trans experience that allow readers to imagine trans embodied sensations and affects. Secondly, I discuss strategies that portray transness as situated in history, culture and physical environment. For example, the collage form points to the fragmentary influences that make up bodily experience and thus complicates the reductionist model of an essential gender identity trapped in the ‘wrong’ body. Finally, I show how different embodied plots can be combined to shine a new light not only on gender but simultaneously on other experiences of embodiment, and thus allowing for an embodied intersectionality. In one of the novels in my corpus, the plot of entrapment in a growing girl’s body and gender role is intertwined with the plot of going into hiding as a Jew during the Holocaust. By bringing these three elements together, I present a trans narratology that centres subjective embodied experience instead of a specific political stance on narrative and gendered norms.

Ivo Zender

University of Bielefeld

Authenticity and Realness in Contemporary Transgender Fiction

The corpus of contemporary transgender literature has grown significantly, emerging from virtual non-existence until the 2010s to becoming an integral part of contemporary literature. Trans autobiography, a genre with a long history, remains consistently published and read and has also received profound analysis; however, trans autobiography has also encountered substantial criticism for simplifying trans

experience into a linear, progressive, teleological transition narrative and proliferating transnormativity. Since ‘autobiography’s primary purpose is [...] to order the disorder of life’s events into narrative episodes’ (Prosser), autobiography has also been deemed inappropriate to ‘authentically represent the complexities and ambiguities of lived experience’ (Stone). Sandy Stone suggests that trans authenticity rather lies in narratives that embrace multiplicity, ambiguity, polyvocality, and disrupt transnormativity. Trish Salah and Andrea Long Chu, in turn, hope for stories about the mundane in trans fiction, and Casey Plett seeks richer, three-dimensional depictions of trans life, appreciating works like Imogen Binnie’s *Nevada*. In essence, there is a desire for more authentic expressions of trans experiences, preferably in other genres than autobiography. While my research is indeed interested in fiction as a literary space where new, different narratives about trans identity might emerge, I refrain from engaging in the ongoing debate over whether autobiography or fiction offers a more authentic portrayal of (trans) experience. Instead, I explore how fictional trans novels navigate the expectations of authenticity and realness on an intra- and extradiegetical level. Given the significance of “realness” for trans individuals, often subjected to scepticism about the authenticity of their gender identity, and the expectation ‘of proving one’s realness’ (Clare) in transgender literature, my research explores how fictional trans narratives understand narrative and gendered authenticity and realness. This inquiry is particularly relevant because fiction is not constrained by a pact of truthfulness, but rather operates within a reader-writer contract that allows for the suspension of reality.

SESSION 12D – EXPERIMENTAL AND MULTIMODAL NARRATIVES

Gretchen Busl

Texas Woman’s University

Multimodality, Non-Discursive Rhetoric, and Narrativity

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s *DICTEE* has often been considered a postmodern pastiche or postcolonial memoir; this paper, instead, argues it is a multimodal narrative that aims to expose the prejudice and insufficiency of the dominant monolingual, monomodal textual paradigm. First, I demonstrate how Cha employs the trope of untranslatability to explicitly challenge the artificial division between semiotic codes which complicates our conception of expressive language’s capacity to narrate subjective experience. Next, I explore how Cha employs multiple languages and non-discursive rhetorical elements to demonstrate that narrativity is not strictly bound to discursive symbol-making. This paper also addresses other scholars’ persistent desire to label *DICTEE* a “novel,” arguing that Cha’s text is just one of many printed texts that – while they predate our current digitally-focused conception of multimodality – suggest that we should expand the definitions of forms we consider to, as Marie Laure Ryan says, ‘possess narrativity’.

Grzegorz Maziarczyk

John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

Happy New World: Consciousness, Technology and Affect in Nicola Barker’s *H(A)PPY*

Drawing on Catherine Malabou’s neuropsychanalytic understanding of affect as well as Antonio Damasio’s theories of self and emotions, I read Nicola Barker’s *H(A)PPY* as an example of experimental fiction that pushes the boundaries of the novelistic engagement with the mind in both form and content. Barker mobilises the multimodal potential of the book as object and employs unconventional typography and layout to depict a Web-extended, intermental and (dis)embodied posthuman consciousness in its affect-induced rebellion against the supposedly utopian system. Equally innovative is her deconstruction of the discursive parameters of the novel. *H(A)PPY* oscillates between a dystopian, allegorical extrapolation of our current entanglement with digital information technologies and a

mimetically recuperable representation of the mind, reinforcing its own hybrid characteristics through appropriation and incorporation of non-fictional textual fragments.

Spencer Morrison

University of Groningen

Drone Art and Demos: Jena Osman's *Public Figures*

My paper examines Jena Osman's experimental narrative poem *Public Figures* as an exemplar of a large body of recent poetry about drone warfare that critics have nearly entirely overlooked. I explore *Public Figures* not merely to cast light on this neglected corpus and the cultural narratives it expresses, but to suggest new critical vantages for understanding contemporary art about drones. While the vast corpus of drone poetry has mostly escaped critical interest, drone-related cinema, visual art, and fiction have not: the ample body of criticism these artworks have attracted often interprets them in relation to documented aspects of drone militarism (e.g. technological features, military command structures) and focuses on the relationship between drone operators and their faraway targets. As evidenced by *Public Figures*, however, much recent drone poetry foregrounds cultural narratives centred upon a relationship marginalised by drone-art criticism: the relationship between citizens and their state. Osman's narrative poem, like many other drone poems, involves citizens imagining acts of covert state violence whose details remain classified. Rather than engage known aspects of drone militarism, recent drone poems such as Osman's confront readers with all that remains unknown and opaque about U.S. covert operations. It circulates within a wider body of cultural narratives that Timothy Melley has called 'the covert sphere'. Drone poems such as Osman's represents a vital locus of democratic thought within contemporary U.S. literature, I argue. In *Public Figures*, clandestine state violence catalyses strained reflections on the responsibilities of democratic citizenship in an age of attenuated, perhaps even thwarted, popular will. Through both its imagery and its sly modulations of narrative address, *Public Figures* testifies to U.S. democratic decline by confronting citizens with a paradox: they are potentially responsible for state actions over which they exercise no control.

SESSION 12E – MUSIC ACROSS MEDIA

Ivan Delazari

Nazarbayev University

Tellability across Media: Music, Drama, Comics

In narratology, tellability tends to be narrativity's shadow: a tellable story possesses certain innate narrative dynamics making it worth telling before it is told (Ryan; Baroni). Low tellability can be overridden by conditional factors of narrative interest, discursive and/or contextual (Herman and Vervaeck). If so, what is the heuristic value of tellability in its narrow "story-level-only" sense? It is no accident that tellability is studied more in Labovian discourse analysis, where it matters insofar as it is impaired/clogged in everyday stories of trauma, disability, and stigmatising (Ochs and Capps; Norrick; Schuman; Karatsu; Jackl). Unspeakable experiences, not exciting event sequences, are what makes a tellability measuring useful. Due to the linguistic bias of such studies and classical narratology's favouring of telling over showing in a Platonic diegesis/mimesis divide (Genette), the telling of tellable stories is, by default, verbal. Though we recognise narrative and narrativity as transmedial entities and allow single pictures and instrumental music to be narrative to some degree (Wolf), we keep tellability out of it. This paper challenges the exclusion and argues for the stretching of tellability to non-verbal/multimodal storytelling such as untexted music and pictorial arts, treating the showing/telling dichotomy through the metaphor/metonymy distinction. Insofar as classical music is reputed to be untellable, the commonsensical instinct is not to retrieve its metaphoric narrative but to relate the composer's life as music's metonymic substitute. Showing (performance) is superior to telling

(musicology), whereas the only justification of the noteworthiness of Ludwig van Beethoven's biography is his music. Recalling the transmedial nature of narrative, this paper positions tellability as an umbrella term for tellability and showability (performability/vocability/audibility/etc.) in Adrienne Kennedy's play *She Talks to Beethoven* and the comics *The Final Symphony: A Beethoven Anthology*.

Gala Patenkovic

University of Michigan

Sound of Music as Sound of Unity: Musicality as Politics in Zeina Abirached's *Oriental Piano*

In her graphic novel *Le Piano Oriental*, Zeina Abirached blurs the boundaries between text, image, and music. Through extensive repetition of visual details and onomatopoeic words, Abirached creates a universe that plunges the reader in a story that intertwines her own experience of departures and returns between Lebanon and France with that of her great-grandfather and inventor of the Oriental Piano, a piano that can create both Western and Arabic tones; as the author terms it, 'a bilingual piano'. A surplus of words and patterns pervades the pages of this *livre-objet* (book-object) that, arguably with success, evokes sounds and rhythm with its repetitions. These are important as her story explores not just the invention of an instrument, but also the musicality of French and Arabic, the languages she weaves together in the construction of her identity. Would her text be understandable without all these seemingly superfluous repetitions, drawn and written? Certainly, but the playfulness of the visuals and the repetitions of musical keyboards and words are key as they seem to take off the page and evoke real sounds. Harmony is crucial to Abirached's story, and it is musical as well as political as she tries to knit together diverse cultures in a peaceful coexistence. I examine how *Le Piano Oriental* seems an exercise in synesthesia, and analyse the potentials and pitfalls of Abirached's decision to deploy all of the senses in this "book object" to examine historically difficult topics of colonization, language bias, and immigration.

Joel Wheeler

University of Victoria

The Multivocal Messages of Tommy Orange's *There There* and its Companion Playlist

Alongside the release of his novel *There There*, Tommy Orange shared a playlist on his Spotify account containing songs alluded to in the book, as well as those he used as writing inspiration. By incorporating a range of artists across genres, eras and geography—from Madvillain to Ludwig van Beethoven—into his playlist, Orange explores the same questions of time, place and authenticity as in his novel, but in a sonic rather than written form. Just as in the novel's many character sections, the songs in the playlist can be experienced individually but gain and change meaning when juxtaposed together as one overarching piece. While Steven Ross and Steven Sexton have written on how 'Orange's novel uses digital technologies in [...] complex ways', their analysis stays within the diegetic world of the novel. This paper furthers their work by arguing that considering the playlist as an extension of narrative communication changes how we read the novel on its own. Here, a rhetorical narrative perspective is helpful: Orange's playlist draws attention to the synthetic nature of creation and references to the playlist compels the reader to consider their artifice. At the same time, the in-text allusions to real songs serve a mimetic function by increasing the realism of the character's experience and environment. Therefore, by examining this tension between artifice and realism—through an analysis of how the playlist subverts Spotify's intended digital infrastructure, and through an examination of how characters gain greater understanding of self when they experience sound in-person versus digitally—a thematic argument emerges: despite the dangers of digital technology, the digital world and the real world will always be interrelated. The digital world must be critically and actively engaged with in order to enact change in the real world.

SESSION 12F – NARRATIVES AND PRACTICES: POINTS OF EMPOWERMENT, POINTS OF DISRUPTION

Danielle Bainbridge

Northwestern University

Lessons for Engagement: Digital Storytelling and Remote Learning

What are the benefits of digital storytelling? And how can we teach students to tell complex and entertaining narratives online through remote teaching and learning? When I proposed to teach the course *Digital Storytelling*, a pandemic was the furthest thing from my mind. Soon after the course was approved the world was plunged into the COVID-19 pandemic and it quickly became evident that classes would remain online for the foreseeable future. Facing these challenges I also had to determine how to do something I'd never done before: teaching a course remotely while also engaging and activating my students' creativity...all through a screen. The result of the course were narratives and stories that made me laugh, think, and empathise in new ways. Although I had experience creating online stories for years before the class started, I had always collaborated with people in person to create those digital outcomes. So I was understandably wary when I started this online course. I was pleasantly surprised by all I heard and learned through this process. I heard of students grappling with queer identity while living at home, or taking care of family members, or trying to stay connected with friends scattered throughout the world. For this paper I analyse the lessons I learned from teaching digital storytelling in a form that also mirrors the outcome (*e.g.* everything being done online.) I will outline the pitfalls of the process, how we managed a complex learning environment, and what it made possible for my students and for me as an instructor. I will explore strategies and techniques for teaching digital storytelling in the digital age and how we as instructors can guide our students to create compelling narratives that experiment with style and form.

Ada Cheng

Dominican University

Storytelling as a Path for Inquiry, Dialogue, and Transformation

I will weave together stories and literary writings to present the power of storytelling and examine its critical role in academia and in community engagement as a path for inquiry, dialogue, and transformation. I will reflect upon a path forward toward transformation and healing, through which story-sharing serves as a process of truth-claiming, witnessing, and affirmation. This presentation is based on my years of experiences in academia as well as those in community, activism and advocacy.

Anthony Dunbar

Dominican University

Power, Self-Efficacy, and CRiT

This presentation discusses the dynamics of power and the self-efficacy of empowerment related to creating, cultivating, capturing, and circulating narratives and digital identities related to social and racial justice. Through the three-dimensional CRiT lens, we can understand this crucial current moment in history as a time to interrupt and optimistically disrupt the techno determinism of the global information industrial complex.

SESSION 12G – LEGALITY AND TRANSGRESSION

Deborah de Muijnck

Giessen University

The Embodied Nature of Literary Scandals: Narrative Empathy and the Case of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Grey*

Literary scandals can serve as catalysts for introspection, provoking intellectual engagement, and thereby pushing boundaries of acceptability and confronting ingrained norms. I introduce a new approach to assessing literary scandals, intertwining the concepts of narrative empathy and embodiment within previously censored narratives. The concept of narrative empathy involves sharing emotions and taking on the perspectives of characters within narratives (Keen), while embodiment centres on the profound connection between the reader's own physicality and the text. Literary history underscores the significant influence of narratives involving the human body in instances of censorship, particularly due to explicit bodily functions (e.g. James Joyce's *Ulysses*), or non-normative sexualities, gender expressions, and sexual desires (e.g. D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*; Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*). This study explores the relationship between narrative empathy and the scandalization of narratives transgressing normative physicality, focusing exemplarily on *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. I argue that narrative empathy challenges the embodied reader to face the norms they have been socialised with, leading to either identification with the presented text and its characters, change and growth, or to scandalisation and censorship. The relevance of this study in the twenty-first century is highlighted by recent instances of censorship, such as the banning of Maia Kobabe's *Gender Queer* in certain states in the US. While many previously censored novels have become integral parts of the literary canon, which illustrates the enduring power of scandalised narratives, debates over freedom of expression, identity, and morality continue to rage. With calls to ban books hitting the highest level ever recorded in the US in 2023, understanding the dynamics of literary scandals and their enduring impact remains vital.

Annie Kim

University of Virginia

Focalisation and Narrative Time in Judicial Narratives of Police-Qualified Immunity

Scholarship on the most important form of written legal narrative—found in appellate court opinions—remains thin, more anticipatory than investigatory. We continue to lack a shared vocabulary, much less a robust interpretive framework, for studying these legal narratives. Theorists in recent years, such as Simon Stern, have questioned whether judicial narratives can even be analysed as narratives because they typically lack narrative techniques such as the production of narrative desire and suspense, or characters that reflect mental states. They are, moreover, produced by judges seeking to promote narrative authority and reduce narratorial visibility. This paper concludes that we can and should study narratives within appellate opinions precisely because they tend toward undernarration and low narratorial visibility. We can do so by examining appellate opinions that routinely incorporate robust narratives: U.S. Supreme Court and Circuit Court of Appeals decisions on qualified immunity for police officers in excessive force claims, which turn on complex, pre-trial allegations of what the officer would have perceived at the scene. By examining three such opinions, this paper contends that: (1) appellate legal narratives employ a range of external, multiple, and what I term “contingent” focalisation in response to rules of adjudication that require the provisional acceptance of allegations, resulting in both high and low levels of narratorial visibility; (2) narrative time is surprisingly complex, moving fluidly between the poles of undernarration and ellipsis on one end, and overnarration and pause (or stretch) on the other, creating fragmentary but putatively comprehensive accounts of story events; and (3) we should begin building a common framework for interpreting appellate narratives that will foster deeper examinations of narration, focalization, and narrative time.

Rebecca Shaw

University of Leeds

Legal Storytelling and the Dismantling of Legal Masterplots

Robin Wharton and Derek Miller demonstrates how ‘narrative suffuses all of legal practice’. They established three major intertwining strands which thread throughout law and narrative. However, within these strands, there is arguably a fourth one for consideration: how narratives, and specifically the analytical study of the nature of narrative, can dismantle legal masterplots and affect successful law reform. The deployment of legal storytelling as an integral part of law reform has been somewhat explored, most notably through the perspective of oppositional storytelling or counter narratives. Work by some (Murphy; Delgado and Stefancic) has examined the integration of powerful human stories in law reform efforts; how stories told by members of “outgroups” can subvert the conventional legal position; and how, in legal discourse, narratives which embody preconceptions or myths shape mindset and supply the background against which formal laws are not only interpreted and applied, but also created. Yet, this appreciation of storytelling, particularly those stories from the margins, has been criticised for its omission of any analytic study of the nature of narrative, what it is and how it works (Brooks). If storytelling, therefore, is to be a successful tool in law reform, and affect a “narrative shift” within legislation, do we need to re-think this perspective and consider the narrative templates and devices adopted to persuade law makers to take action? I investigate the use of storytelling within law reform and how an appreciation of the narrative devices deployed in these stories might offer fresh insights into their ability to affect successful law reform. Taking as a case study the legal context surrounding the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, I analyse the narratives upon which this legislation was passed and their attempts to disrupt the masterplot of domestic abuse. In particular, I ask whether a better appreciation of narrative devices, such as the narrator’s identity and their structural position vis-à-vis the events narrated and the narratees, might enhance the rhetorical, political and legal power of these stories in affecting the legislature and real-world change.

SESSION 12H – NARRATIVISING MEMORY

Niamh Gordon

University of Glasgow

Writing the White Cart Water: Stacked Narratives of Grief and Motherhood

This paper is a practice-based exploration of the same walk along a river path through an inner-city neighbourhood. Drawing on Sianne Ngai’s idea of ‘thick’ writing which ‘[stacks] multiple temporalities, an overlapping of instantaneities and durations’, this creative-critical paper interrogates urban walking, repetitions, grief narratives, and new motherhood. The White Cart Water is a tributary that runs through the southside of Glasgow. Over the last three years, I have stepped into the current of the river path and walked alongside this water. In this experimental paper, I meld narrative theory with personal memoir, attempting to answer the following: how do these repeated river walks reveal the present environment around me, or, alternatively, how do they obscure my capacity for noticing and observation? How do they encourage an inward remembering, and how, in grief, might the local landscape become a substitute for any other place, the specificities of it lost to stacking temporalities? How can this smooth, stacked current of memory be disrupted, both in life and on the page? And how does the arrival of new motherhood transform these walks: an interruption of paths well-trodden, like a grief from another life suddenly marking itself onto the present? At the same time, I grapple with the challenges of conveying multiple temporalities in written prose, and traces the flow of interrelated meanings between walking, noticing, remembering, and the process of change through narrative repetition.

Christiana Gregoriou

University of Leeds

Language and Life Narrativisation in World War Two Memoirs

I am currently researching into the nature, functions and significance of British Army World War Two memoirs, focusing specifically on selected lengthy, European theatre, and Prisoner of War personal, written and yet non-commercially published accounts. I investigate links between such memoirs' style and meaning-making, whilst adding to our knowledge of the great diversity of contributions made by British and non-British personnel in the British Army during WW2. Since '[i]n her hour of need, Britain had called upon the services of her dominions and imperial territories to help prosecute the war' (Moore and Fedorowich), colonised men's British Army services require attention. It is the services of one such colonised man I look to for my pilot study; I engage in stylistic analysis of the Greek memoir of my grandfather, Cyprus Regiment sergeant Phylactis Aristokleous, examining his story-telling technique, and interrogating the relationship between experience, memory, life narrativisation, identity and story-tellability. I draw connections between children's literature and war memoirs, and address/problematised matters such as whether everything happens for a reason, and whether everything is a learning experience of sorts. It is here that I highlight, and explain, a narrative pattern which allows heroization to emerge: disnarration. I also address speech reporting, and focus on Aristokleous' use of foreign languages in his memoir. I propose he word-for-word remembered things said in these foreign languages especially as this was a period of his life where he used said languages the most. I end by highlighting that Greek proverbial use seems particularly helpful to Aristokleous' memoirising and its tellability/evaluation. I position his memoir in the context of wider memoir literature, by studying a further eleven neglected (English language) comparable memoirs held in Leeds' archives.

Matthew Richardson

North Tyneside Council

Jewish Histories, Queer Jewish Futures: Heritage, Memory, Selfhood

The narration of history is a carefully choreographed act whereby selves and others are (trans)formed in situ. Selves are made, not given - an agential, creative, and messy process of subject (trans)formation illustrated through storytelling. The stories of our lives begin long before we are born - the narration of which enables us to make meaning out of our position in the worlds around us. In this paper, I centre the lived experiences of eighteen queer Jews in postsecular Britain through virtual narrative ethnography. My focus is on the stories participants told, the memories they recalled, and the queered ethno-religious worlds they (trans)formed through unstructured life story interview, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation. I explore the role of heritage and memory in participants' self-construal; that is, the various ways in which they defined themselves behaviourally, cognitively, emotionally, and relationally to each other. I find that rituals are pivotal in actualising ties to a symbolic peoplehood - an affective, (im)material, and fundamentally social entity (trans)formed through the narration of history and recollection of memory. I attend to the queer silences patterning participants' heritage narratives - challenging claims from contemporary self-construal scholars who argue (Villicana *et al.*) that ethno-religiosity supersedes queerness in self-construal. I move from origin story to life story - re-directing focus towards the storytellers present subject position while adding nuance to narratives they curate.

SESSION 12I – NARRATING CRIME

Adva Balsam

College of Management Academic Studies

Documentary Cinema as Psychosocial Mediation: Suspended Shame in the Collective Perpetrators Genre

This paper examines the genre of “Perpetrator Trauma Films” (Morag), and suggests that the psychological narrative that characterises them operates on the basis of a phenomenon that I term “suspended shame”. In an era marked by political polarisation and disinformation, my inquiry delves into documentary cinema’s untapped potential as a mass media platform for working-through. While reaching a broad audience, this medium uniquely reveals neglected psychological and collective realms. I explore the dialectical interplay between documentary cinema and psychoanalytic therapy, focusing on their intersections with gender and cultural studies. Concurrently, the innovative “Perpetrator Trauma Films” genre, prominently featuring Israeli documentaries, draws on insights into therapeutic and broader social spheres (Even-Tzur). *To See If I’m Smiling* is an award-winning film made by a woman about women’s experience of military combat. This is the first time a documentary has dealt with the injustices done by women acting under the auspices of a state. This film integrates the gender aspect, which is notably absent in discussions about collective perpetrators. It challenges dichotomies like truth-falsehood and soldier-civilian, in current politics. I argue that this film weaves a unique voice of the collective unconscious, one that can be called a “mother-tongue”, which challenges and expands upon the hegemonic “father-tongue”. This occurs through “suspended shame”, assuming shame is the element that remembers, in a suspended manner, the events that have been silenced by social decree. Documentary cinema offers a democratic form of care—a way to represent the hidden, denied, and rejected, and contain it within, and in between, us.

Anna Kirsch

Durham University

Narrative as Moral Technology in Ecological Crime Fiction

I interrogate how morality and ethics are deployed through the narrative tropes inherent in the crime genre, arguing that the genre’s intrinsic questioning of accepted morality and ethics makes the crime genre eminently suitable for social activism, especially environmental activism. Environmental action requires a psychological sense of responsibility and the ethical frameworks created in crime narratives are designed to prompt a sense of responsibility. I explore how crime fiction as a genre faces the challenge of negotiating the tensions between individual and collective blame and responsibility in a late-capitalist society, charting an ethical cartography in which the traditional closure associated with cosy and hardboiled crime fiction is responding to the current ecological awareness rising within popular culture. I also consider how some contemporary crime fiction is being used as a form of moral technology to challenge traditional expectations of the crime genre to console and reassure readers faith in legal structures and cultural perceptions of justice. Indeed, crime writers have been forced to reconcile the traditionally restorative imperatives of the crime genre with the paralysing uncertainty of modern life. This uncertainty has led contemporary crime writers engaging with ecological crimes to struggle with a distinct cultural nostalgia for narrative closure in a world where some crimes remain unresolvable.

Vaibhav Parel

Newcastle University

Recuperating History? Crime, History and Politics in South Asian Diasporic Crime Fiction

South Asian Diasporic Crime Fiction is a relatively new sub-genre. In this paper, I focus on two American-Asian Parsi women writers: Sujata Massey and Nev March. In March’s *Murder in Old Bombay* and

Massey's *The Satapur Moonstone*, Mumbai of the 1920s is used as a setting. I ask three inter-related questions: how does crime get narrated through historical fiction? How does a popular genre – like the crime novel – recuperate forgotten facets of colonial history? And finally, how does the study of popular narrative in these texts help us to understand the socio-political functions of narrative in our world?