

# **GREAT WRITING 2017**

Imperial College London  
Huxley Building  
180 Queen's Gate  
London  
SW7 2RH  
UK

## TIMETABLE

### Great Writing 2018: 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June

#### Imperial College, London

##### Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June

- 8.30a.m. Registration & coffee
- 9.00a.m. Welcome
- 9.15a.m. Panels 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D
- 10.45a.m. Coffee
- 11.15a.m. Panels 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D
- 12.45p.m. Lunch
- 1.30p.m. Panels 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D
- 3.00p.m. Panels 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D
- 4.30p.m. Coffee
- 4.45p.m. Panels 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D
- 6.30p.m. 2018 *New Writing* International Event –  
Solo Lute Performance by Sam Brown
- 8.00p.m. Close

##### Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> June

- 9.30a.m. Panels 6A, 6B, 6C
- 11.00a.m. Coffee
- 11.15a.m. Panels 7A, 7B, 7C
- 12.45p.m. Lunch
- 1.45p.m. Panels 8A, 8B, 8C
- 3.15p.m. Coffee
- 3.30p.m. Panels 9A, 9B, 9C
- 5.00p.m. Conference round-up
- 5.15p.m. Close

***Great Writing:*** The International Creative Writing Conference  
[www.greatwriting.org.uk](http://www.greatwriting.org.uk)

Lisa Koning, University of Winchester

**An ekphrastic inspiration for a writer: Bruegel's depictions of Carnival**

The idea of Carnival symbolised much about change in Northern Europe during the sixteenth century. A catalyst, the event symbolised renewal and rebirth. My paper is not a study of Carnival but a consideration of the event from the perspective of a writer looking for ideas for a novel. It details an ekphrastic journey of discovery as I explored Bruegel's art. The result is a collation of fragments of ideas, which became the sparks upon which to build my creative piece. The paper comes from my Doctorate of Creative Arts, Creative Writing Programme, University of Winchester. As a writer of historical fiction, I wanted my cast and setting to be authentic. Not simply content to read about the sixteenth century I absorbed the art and literature of the period as well as visiting locations to get closer. And so my journey to and through the Carnival became fundamental to my work, linking together the seemingly random strands I was gathering.

Ben Ristow, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York

**Einstein's Brain**

I'll be reading a short story called 'Einstein's Brain', based on a thought experiment Einstein imagined when he was a boy.

The story was shortlisted for the 2017 The London Magazine Short Story Contest.

Monika Schott, Deakin University, Victoria, Australia

**The faraway land of the house and two cows: investigating the concept of community in company ghost towns through a poetics of creative nonfiction writing.**

This paper will highlight key aspects of an investigation into the concept of community in company ghost towns that are in the business of sewage treatment through a poetics of creative nonfiction writing.

The investigation will record the social history of the community once living on the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Sewerage Farm, one of Australia's most important civic works projects in the 1890s and into the 1900s. It will help create new understandings of ghost town communities in the business of sewage treatment, how ghosts inhabit the land and a community, and the effect of prejudice and discrimination existing around sewage treatment on a cohesive and self-sustaining community.

Community activation, as part of stakeholder theory and a poetics of creative nonfiction writing, will be applied to retrieve stories from present communities. Many of these stories will be the only remaining truth in existence.

Eloise Faichney, Monash University

**Life Writing, Shards and Blood: The Naomi Mitchison and Zita Baker Letters**

How can the field of life writing illuminate lacunae in British women's life narratives? Scottish author, Naomi Mitchison (1897 - 1999), and Inezita 'Zita' Baker (1901 - 1952), met at Oxford University in the 1930s, forming a friendship that included years of intimate epistolary correspondence. Published excerpts from the Mitchison-Baker letters have been used to elucidate affairs the married Baker had with Tom Harrisson, founder of Mass Observation, and Richard Crossman, British Labour M.P. However, these excerpts are rich fragments of life writing, exploring early feminist thought, trauma, and the nature of silence in women's life narratives. In this presentation, I offer a re-interpretation of the life narratives of these women; one rendered extraordinary by history and the other remembered as unusually attractive, but ordinary. I consider the fragmentary Mitchison-Baker letters as shards of the past; incomplete and sharp on the edges, capable of drawing blood.

Michael Cawood Green, Northumbria University

***The Ghosting of Anne Armstrong: Creation, Reflection, and the Question of Research in the Contemporary Historiographical Novel.***

This practice-led paper is a reflection on the writing of a work of historical fiction which, in its concern with how history is constructed rather than simply deployed in fiction, may more properly be designated as a work of 'historiographical' fiction. As a piece of practice-led research, it is aimed at challenging the tendency within history writing to become a means of controlling and domesticating the past in the process of 'knowing,' 'understanding,' and 'recreating' it. As an essential part of this process, I ask if a case may be made for metafictional devices being recognised as legitimate forms of practice research methodology. Along with a reading from the work in progress, I investigate whether it is possible for a self-reflexive component internal to the creative work to fulfil the requirements for recognising practice as research whilst also serving as an inter-generative, vital part of the creative process.

Gail Hammill, American University in Dubai

**I Sing the Body Mammalian**

This lyrical essay, as the title suggests, is inspired by Walt Whitman's poem, "I Sing the Body Electric," as well as by the impulse that drove so much of Whitman's work: his need to unify the worlds of the body and the spirit, for a people determined to keep them separate. His many songs celebrating the body continue to water the arid soil of his native Puritan land. My essay is also motivated by a desire to share a vision of the body as sacred, but it focuses on the joys and burdens that accompany our mammalian condition, particularly for females, upon whom so much of the definition of mammals depends. I explore this idea by juxtaposing the language biologists use to classify mammals, for example, *warm-blooded*, *vertebrate*, *eutherian* and *dimorphic*; or the *obstetrical dilemma*, *lengthy gestation period*, *live birth*, and *mammary glands*--with my subjective experience of those phenomena at various stages of my life. Finally, incorporating memories of various encounters with mammals such as polar bears and dolphins, as well of my relationships over the years with the felines of my household, I also explore the deep sense of connection mammals have with other mammals, not just of their own kind, but across species.

Josie Barnard, Middlesex University

**The Multimodal Writer**

The ability to move between types of writing and technologies, often at speed, is, in a digital age, increasingly essential for writers. Yet, such flexibility can be difficult to achieve, and, how to teach it is a pressing challenge. In a 21st century writing and publishing landscape characterised by fast-paced change, it might seem that no single model of creativity can help. This interdisciplinary paper proposes that adopting a multimodal model of creativity can help build writerly resilience, enabling effective and productive negotiation of the wealth of affordances new media technologies provide. Drawing on a programme of research including a PhD by Public Work, a set of linked pedagogical pilots and a monograph, this paper considers what constitutes a multimodal model of creativity, why it is prescient and how it can be taught.

Lesley Ann Smith, Curtin University, Perth, Australia

**A Social Dimension of Writing**

Outside of academia writing critique groups had their origins in mutual improvement societies which required members to write and share their work. These societies were based on an egalitarian approach to knowledge and cooperative problem-solving. Creative writers continue that tradition when they gather in self-organised, largely industry-linked critique groups, to improve their writing through mutual assistance.

The aim of this paper is to reach a fuller understanding of the function of industry-linked writing groups. The presenter draws on her experience as a romance fiction writer in a Romance Writers of Australia sponsored critique group. While creative writing is largely a solitary activity the writing group introduces a social dimension to the writing process. Engaging with theories of creativity and collaborative learning this paper examines how critique groups function to aid, or not, a writer in improving their writing and meeting the expectations of the genre.

Sophie MacNeill, Griffith University, Australia

**This Is What I Couldn't Tell You: Increasing Empathy in Readers by Blending Memoir and Fiction**

Rocio Davis calls the effect created by blurring the boundaries between memoir and fiction 'biographical curiosity' (2015, p. 89). In my novel-in-progress, I am placing myself explicitly within the text as a character (through the use of identifying markers such as name, location and vocation) in an attempt to provoke biographical curiosity and therefore a greater depth of empathy from my reader. Davis argues that this entry point into others' experiences is something readers of fiction find satisfying, because the 'binary opposition between reality and fiction' is not as important as 'the actual reading experience afforded by the diverse narrative strategies' (2015, p. 91). In my creative presentation, I will read an excerpt from my novel-memoir hybrid, which incorporates three interwoven narratives each representing a different type of return or homecoming from exile – two fictional characters who are connected and created by the third autobiographical character.

Nigel McLoughlin, Angela France & Beatrice Hitchman, University of Gloucestershire

Nigel McLoughlin  
**“Unapproved Road”**

Using a framework drawn from Text World Theory (Werth 1999; Gavins 2007) and Stockwell’s (2009, 2011) model of literary resonance, Nigel McLoughlin will present a cognitive stylistic analysis of “Unapproved Road” by Paul Muldoon, which focuses on the liminal nature of the poem, how contextual knowledge affects world-building processes, and the relationship between worlds within the poem.

Angela France

Having become interested in what Nigel demonstrated with ‘Unapproved Road’, how the poem worked at different levels dependent on the readers’ contextual knowledge, Angela France wanted to try to achieve something similar in writing a poem about a place she knew intimately. The poem became a sequence, then a full collection and a multi-media poetry show. Angela will present a shortened version of the poetry show.

Beatrice Hitchman  
**The Strange Case of Arthur Whitmore**

Drawing on Nigel McLoughlin’s theorisation of contextual knowledge, and Angela France’s creative interventions in local history, I am going to present a pedagogical approach to historical fiction writing. This will showcase an undergraduate creative writing workshop on local archive materials. Students were asked to engage in ‘real-life detective work’, looking at scanned handwritten documents from the Gloucestershire Archive. The workshop invited reflection on what Hilary Mantel calls ‘making the fiction go’: the ethics of fictionalizing the past, and balancing creativity with the demands of historical accuracy. Through close-reading of the archive and a series of writing exercises, students were encouraged to interrogate their own creative process and relationship to the lived past.

Jeri Kroll, Flinders University

**The Horse-Human Bond as Catalyst: Metaphors in Gillian Mears' Foal's Bread**

Gillian Mears' *Foal's Bread* (2011) is an award-winning Australian novel that helps to broaden ways of conceptualising the relationship between humans and horses through metaphor, with particular attention to the nurturing or abuse of both humans and horses. Key 'therapeutic metaphors' (Fry 2013, 276) appear in Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy (EFP), suggesting how the horse-human bond can act as a catalyst to promote healing from domestic violence and sexual abuse. Little research has identified this rhetorical link. Concepts such as hybridity, or the melding of identities, embodied in the mythical Centaur, a primary trope in the Mears' novel, also reflects upon the sense of union discussed in research about the horse-human bond. This essay explores metaphoric structures in *Foal's Bread* and correspondences in EFP metaphors, suggesting that EFP provides an evidentiary basis for Mears' figurative language, which demonstrates the rethinking of horse-human relationships in the context of the horse's role in human recovery or amelioration from sexual or domestic abuse.

Céline Richard, University Paris-Sorbonne

**Writing one's memories and History, in the wake of historical traumata.**

World literature can help History survivors writing their own life stories, or the life stories of some of their relatives and friends, in the wake of historical traumata.

It is possible to describe the so-called human condition (that happened to be not human at all) in very different ways. Writers of the past had ways to write brokenness, hope and despair, that might still be relevant nowadays, for History survivors, who are keen on writing their own life stories. Today's writers also reveal to be quite interesting as some of them can teach how writing historical traumata.

Let's study how describing the atmosphere of a place can be a way to reveal the state of mind of a few characters. An old oak in *War and Peace* by L. Tolstoï might unveil the state of mind of a character, for instance. Then, let's see how the temporal structure of a novel also matters to put into relief how the characters lived historical traumata. In the end, let's see how aesthetics can highlight the worldview of some characters traumatized by History. Indeed, a study of place, time and aesthetics in world literature matters to discover how it is possible to write one's memories and History.

James Kenworth, Middlesex University

**"Four legs badass, two legs wasteman!" – Reimagining Orwell for Austerity Britain**

In 2014, I was given special permission by AM Heath Agents on behalf of the George Orwell estate to adapt and modernise Orwell's classic satire, *Animal Farm*, and give it a fresh, contemporary twist, injecting its timeless tale of a revolution that went wrong with a gritty, urban, 'in-yer-face' language. The play was unique in another respect: it was staged on one of London's longest established and largest inner-city farms: Newham City Farm, with *The Independent's* Paul Taylor calling the play "a terrifically powerful update of Orwell's classic".

In this paper, I will explore the process/methodology of adapting a literary classic with a contemporary spin, with special emphasis on a creative and expressive approach to playwriting language/dialogue. The paper will also address the challenges of setting the play on an inner-city farm and how the use of non-conventional theatre spaces affects and reconfigures the relationship between a play and audience.

Rachel Flynn

### **Unfolding the Story**

In my teaching practice I always run a class on novel structure. Rather than work their way through 684 million results on the Internet, I suggest that the students imagine that someone is reading their finished novel. What do you want the reader to read first? ... And then what? ... And then? ...

What do you want them to read last?

Novel structure is usually described in terms of chronology, metaphor, genre or template – you can pick one from any number of websites including awesome structures for best sellers.

An imaginary reader is often the last to be considered while a novel is in progress. The writer is more likely to think about their characters, the events of the story, the world they have invented, or themselves on a publicity tour.

This paper explores the writer's task of unfolding the story for the reader. It will include a reading from a novel in progress.

Ashley R Lister, Blackpool & Fylde College

### **Defining the five super-genres: demonstrating the link between plot and genre**

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate a correlation between genre and plot in short fiction. There is a commonality of plot archetypes in short fiction. Variations on the same core story are encountered and repeated, invariably with the same story being associated with a specific genre. This is a creative and critical inquiry investigating the idea that unifying plot tropes are specific to genres. The creative portion presents a series of genre-specific short stories, each exploring the key facets of an identified plot applicable to that genre. The critical portion of this project explores these commonalities further by comparing the created artefact with published short fiction from appropriate genres.

This research explores how the concept of plot relates to genre, showing how generic expectations produce particular plot developments. Potentially this could lead to new ways for writers to address short story-creation.

The paper proposed here will consider the defining of the five super-genres that are representative of a large quantity of contemporary and classical short fiction.

Lily Greenall, University of Aberdeen

### **'A Series of Small Revelations': A Creative Exploration of Epiphany in the Short Story**

Suzanne C. Ferguson in her essay 'Defining the Short Story' states that, in the modern short story 'we move from epiphany to epiphany, or in Woolf's image "along a series of small revelations, "matches struck unexpectedly in the dark."' I was inspired by this image in writing my own short story 'Shoes' which is set during a power cut. I used this setting as an attempt to interpret Woolf's image literally; a woman moving through a power cut with unexpected things coming out of the dark. This presentation will examine the ways in which external settings can be used to guide or mislead the reader and to both obscure and illuminate events within the narrative. I will also expand upon the idea of epiphany in the short story and talk about the ways in which 'Shoes' attempts to complicate the relationship between the internal and external states of the characters



Tara Sidebottom, Curtin University, Perth, Australia

**What is a ‘reader-writer’? An exploration of historically-inspired young adult fiction**

This presentation will explore the role of Roland Barthes’ ‘reader-writer’ in contributing to historically-inspired Young Adult medieval fiction. A ‘reader-writer’ functions by reading a source text and being overwhelmed by a desire to contribute to the text, and therefore initiating their own writing through this desire. Historically-Inspired fiction has become a staple for popular culture and the adaptation of history has become a key process in young adult fiction. This discussion will centre around the notion that history is fragmented and the processes I’ve used to piece together various fragments to form a narrative of my preference. My PhD research aims to understand the creative and adaptive processes of writing young adult medieval fiction and fan fiction through understanding the functions of the ‘reader-writer’, and this presentation will feature a discussion of the Young Adult novella in my project.

Craig Jordan-Baker, University of Brighton

**Landscape, Language and Setting: Psychogeography and Creative Writing**

Among the things we all take for granted on a day-to-day basis, our language and our landscape are perhaps the most forgettable, though they play a vital role in the creation of identity and how we make our way through the world. In recent years, psychogeography has been popularised by the likes of Iain Sinclair (2002) and Robert MacFarlane (2015), which has brought to public attention to the deep connections between language, landscape and who we are.

However, literature itself has long been involved in this conversation, principally through the development of setting. Bailey (2001) and others have described setting as a ‘lesser angel’ in the writing process and some creative writing textbooks (Morley 2007) give it little or no mention. This paper re-evaluates the importance of setting in light of psychographic concerns, considering works such as Beckett’s *Endgame* (1957), Schalansky’s *Pocket Atlas of Remote Islands* (2009), McDonagh’s *Calvary* (2014). It argues that while setting is sometimes justified as a ‘lesser angel’, a more critically aware engagement with setting can help us explore connections between language and landscape, as well as how setting informs our own practice.

Debra Powell-Wright

**My Mother’s Tongue**

*‘It is an artist’s duty to reflect the times.’ –Nina Simone*

*‘I do not sing politits. I merely sing the truth’ –Miriam Makeba*

*‘They say a girl becomes a woman when she loses her mother.*

*You, my child, were born a woman.’ –Edwidge Danticat, Krik? Krak!*

*‘You can’t have relationships with other people until you give birth to yourself.’ –*

*Sonia Sanchez*

I propose a creative nonfiction essay with poetic elements, about my identity as a Black. Woman. Sistah. Writer. Teacher. Lover. The essay will reflect on four women who have influenced my artistry and activism: Nina Simone, Miriam Makeba, Edwidge Danticat, and Sonia Sanchez. Personifying my no-longer present mother, who is with me always and in all ways, I will write of being a daughter of African ancestry. I will write of becoming unsilenced, being a member of movements, and of making a difference. In my mother’s tongue, I have found myself.



Cindy Shearer, California Institute of Integral Studies  
**The Landscape of Memory**

A few years ago I curated *The Landscape of Memory*, an interdisciplinary art exhibit, in which I invited artists to use memory as a point of intersection—as the landscape--between seeing and shaping their experience. The exhibit included sculpture, glass, painting, mixed media, film, photography—and Memory Boxes created by the artists. I asked those participating: What do you see when you look from a distance at or into your memories? What landscape emerges? Out of this exhibit, I am working on a personal essay in which I am exploring both the panoramic and partial views this perspective provides. I'm interested in not only what we see when we view the landscape of our experience but how that seeing provides context for and suggests choices for art-making. In my presentation, I'd like to share my essay and to reflect on how my work with visual and interdisciplinary artists helped define the landscape of my piece.

Richard English, Brunel University  
**Writing the Existential Characteristics of the Addict in Fiction**

In my presentation I explore the *praxis* of writing the existential quandary of the addict in fiction. It begins with an analysis of the varieties of existential dilemma faced by the addict. These include alienation from society, national identity and peer group, whether before, during or after active drug use. Such alienation leads the addict to the psychological sequelae of isolation and misanthrope as well as anhedonism and a sense of futility. Surprisingly, the addict in fiction may continue to embrace his religion of birth in spite of his otherwise amoral and pessimistic world view. I conclude with an exposition of how authors depict the addict as other and his relationship with the law.

Lynn Hamilton, University of the Creative Arts  
**Standing on Shadows: Navigating the path to healing**

Stories of illness are often quest narratives – where sufferers seek to defeat the challenge of illness. The journey is likely to follow the natural chronology of narrative: there is a setting, a trigger event or a problem raised, followed by a solution and, hopefully, resolution. Narratives around trauma are not so clearly defined; generating characters described by Rubin as “[N]either fully devastated nor fully healed” (Rubin LC 2012, p131). Frank describes other narratives, namely “life as normal”, “borrowed stories”, and “broken narratives” as a “[C]reative response to a distinct problem of sharing experience...” (Frank AW 2013, p193) and links them to the stories of those affected by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This paper describes PhD research looking at how some fictional stereotypes fail to communicate the complexity of these narratives and includes readings from my creative response, *Standing on Shadows*, an anthology of short stories.

Lisa Williams, Ramapo College of New Jersey,  
**In the Early Morning Calling**

For my presentation, I would like to read from my poetry chapbook, *In the Early Morning Calling* (Finishing Line Press, 2018). In these poems, I blend together ancient Buddhist texts with my own experience growing up and living now in New York City. The poems explore the relevance of texts such as Daisaku Ikeda's lectures on the Lotus Sutra and his biography of Shakyamuni Buddha in these increasingly difficult political times. About these poems, the poet Fred Marchant has said, "How casually we say to ourselves and others that we all know that life is short and nothing is permanent. But if we turn, for example, toward those we love, our parents, or spouse, or children, and try to hold in mind the idea that impermanence only is lasting, then we start to realize how difficult yet centrally important this thought is. Here in these beautiful poems are the lyrics of the Dharma, the songs that show us how hard it is to find and stay on the path, and how liberating and meaning-full it can be when we do." (–Fred Marchant, Author of *Said Not Said* (Graywolf Press, 2017).

Maggie Butt, Middlesex University  
**Story Hunting**

Sometimes you catch the scent of a story so alluring that you have to drop everything to track it down, following it wherever it leads, even if it takes you into a snowdrift on a lonely hill-top in Poland.

Maggie Butt describes two stories which took over her life, which drew her to research she never expected to undertake, and to outcomes she couldn't have predicted.

The first was a moving WW1 story, which resulted in the publication of a book which was a collage of photographs, paintings, extracts from memoirs and letters, and her own poems.

The other was a WW2 story, told to her in a lift. She thought she'd put it to rest by writing it as a long narrative poem, but it struggled to its feet and led her off through the Czech republic, Poland and Germany, and finally to a completed novel.

Louise Katz, University of Sydney

**The condition of getting jammed between tenses: creative space or sinkhole of despair?**

*Time's violence rends the soul: by the rent eternity enters.*

This paper considers liminal space where time ceases to function. While Csikszentmihalyi's creative condition of 'flow' is one such state, I am currently more interested in how an ongoing present might instead feel like a hell wherein one is trapped and doomed to follow the 'illogical logic' of the Inbetween terrain as if dictated to by a machine. To contextualize my ideas in consensual reality, I will briefly consider some real-life Inbetween zones (such as politically contested territory) before focussing on stories. For example, Dostoyevsky, Iris Murdoch, and Amos Oz have all played with sardonic underground men who are 'jammed between tenses'; and tracing back, we can see that certain inbetween attributes are found in traditional folk stories, some versions of which are also charged with dark humour. This paper consists of largely theoretical work but also includes fiction (some of it my own) to complement the ideas explored.

Gail Pittaway, Wintec, Hamilton, New Zealand  
**The ‘memoir problem’ revisited**

“That you had parents and a childhood does not of itself qualify you to write a memoir”. Neil Gunzlinger, book reviewer for the New York Times, griped in a review of yet another confessional memoir. It’s true; suddenly everyone is writing memoir, even people who only ever wrote fiction, rock music or poetry, or never wrote before. I even find myself writing memoir, but mining some of my own fictional writing for triggers and nudges, delving into old poems for clues and lines of inquiry. After all, the memory does not always linger on.

Now, since revisiting this autobiographical writing as a resource for chapters of my Creative Nonfiction PhD thesis, a food memoir, in this paper I’ll discuss attempts made to fictionalise the ‘true’ events of the stories, and the uses made of them, to revitalise memoir.

I also reflect on the work of controversial memoirist Karl Ove Knausgaard, whose six-volume work, ‘My struggle’, has offended members of his extended family, critics and purists, or simply bored many readers with the impossibly detailed accounts of his life, to ask again of memoir, “Should it be artful or truthful?”

Ashleigh Angus, Curtin University, Australia and The University of Aberdeen  
**“Fairy Man”:** Rewriting the Trial of Elspeth Reoch

In a witch trial held in Orkney, Scotland, 1616, Elspeth Reoch confessed that after giving birth to an illegitimate child at the age of fourteen, a fairy man visited her bedside for two nights, relentlessly trying to convince her to lie with him. On the third night, he awakened Elspeth by placing his hand upon her breast, and thereafter lay with her. The next morning, Elspeth ‘had no power of her tongue, nor could not speak’. Elspeth’s transcript, like all witch trial documents, is a work with several authors, which blends fact and fiction, and excludes any details that would not directly lead to a guilty sentence. In this paper, I will read “Fairy Man”, a short prose work that uses techniques of historiographic metafiction to navigate the gaps in Elspeth’s testimony, and construct one possible course of events. This text utilises a creative practice as research methodology to explore how Elspeth may have drawn on fairy folklore to cope with an unspeakable situation.

Eluned Gramich, Aberystwyth University

Between 1945-1948, millions of East Germans were forcibly expelled from their homeland. Although largely unknown in Britain, the expulsion (*Vertreibung*) has long been the focus of debate in Germany, revealing conflicting narratives in the commemoration of WW2 and Nazi atrocities. These rifts in historical interpretation have been exploited by right-wing parties such as the Alternative für Deutschland, who made unprecedented gains in the 2017 election, following the refugee crisis. My doctoral novel explores the effects of the expulsion on contemporary Germany by considering the role (or suppression) of contested narratives in the creation of a national history. Specifically, my creative-critical research considers how women’s memory of sexual violence in the immediate post-war period has been portrayed, hidden or forgotten. The presentation will be informed by trauma theory and the work of historians such as Elizabeth Heineman and Robert G. Mueller. It will also draw on contemporary literary works by Günter Grass, Dörte Hansen and Walter Kempowski.

Nasti Rings, University of Jyväskylä. Finland

How is writing for fun made possible? Writing as creative playing – not for publishing – gives you the freedom to explore your own inner world and voice. What aspects may support this open, curious and play-like relationship to creative writing? I will propose, that writings as creative playing consists of three elements: ritual, flow and habitat. I crafted a conception of such creative writing by using theories of subjunctive space (Luce-Kapler 2004; Karjula 2015), flow and creativity (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, 1991), creative habitat and habitation (Harper 2010) and ritual (Schechner 1995; Whish-Wilson 2009). With these tools, I show one possibility of how this open, subjunctive and play-like creative writing space and holistic state can be created and sustained.

Alexandria Peary, Salem State University, MA, USA

### **The Ability to Write is Always Present: Mindfulness Theory for Creative Writing Studies**

Mindfulness offers a different a perspective on creative writing instruction by highlighting present temporality in the rhetorical situation and the writing process. Typically, most writers give disproportionate consideration to the future and past as they write, and those temporalities become overly influential as constraints. With mindful composing, the act of writing is located inside an ever-shifting context of a present moment, a perspective which heightens metacognitive awareness and educes other aspects of creative experience including intrapersonal voice, preverbal emptiness, affective responses to writing, and preconceptions which impact creative writers' self-efficacy. Mindful writing can change how students write and, equally important, how they experience writing, bolstering interest, confidence, and fluency. Omitting the present moment of writing will lead to suffering and writing blocks; awareness of the present moment of writing will lead to a more optimal and sustainable relationship with creative writing.

Mags Webster, Murdoch University, Western Australia

### **Beyond words: learning to live with 'not-sentence-ness' in poetic practice**

'A sentence is better than not a sentence. But before you can make your sentence, you have to live with the state of not-sentence-ness' observes Australian author Helen Garner (Garner, 2008). The experience of "what am I going to say?" is familiar to anyone facing the blank page. But what does it mean for an Australian-based British poet whose PhD research, exploring the relationship between poetry and the ineffable, is effectively directed towards expressing 'not-sentence-ness'? In a contemporary academic context where the question 'Is poetry research?' (Magee, 2009, 3) is still common, how does this PhD student respond? And how does that response inform the process towards making sentences (or poems) *about* 'not-sentence-ness'?

This paper discusses the poetic and academic contexts informing my creative research, and how they are helping me to find 'not-sentence-ness', a state unexpectedly rich with creative and research possibilities.

Nic Velissaris, Deakin University, Victoria, Australia

**Making a Choice – Establishing a Poetics for Choice-Based Narratives**

In this presentation, Nic Velissaris will discuss the process of establishing a poetics for Choice-Based Narratives. Choice-Based Narratives are creative writing in which the reader is given the choice to choose the direction of the narrative, which as a form began in the early 1960s. This includes works of experimental literature from Oulipo, novels such as Julio Cortazar’s Hopscotch, and the young adult book series Choose Your Own Adventure (published by Bantam Books from 1979 – 1998).

Although Choice-Based Narratives have existed for over 50 years, there has been relatively little academic scholarship on how the form is constructed and how the storytelling operates. This presentation will seek to explain the common factors which establish a poetics for this type of storytelling. Particular emphasis will be given to discussing the history and development of the Choose Your Own Adventure series, whose large number of works represent a major contribution to the development of this form.

Jane Larkin

This research investigates the ‘many worlds theory’ and how to creatively represent and analyse this scientific theory. As theoretical physicist Brian Greene explains, there are only so many ways matter can be arranged in an infinite universe before eventually repeating itself. This ideology suggests, ‘if the Cosmos is infinitely large, it is home to infinitely many parallel worlds – some identical to ours, some differing from ours, many bearing no resemblance to our world at all’ (2011: 12). If time is accepted as a non-linear concept, then it can be applied to a work of fiction, and used to help structure the novel. While narratives such as Time’s Arrow subvert conventional interpretations of time as linear, I intend to represent time as non-linear by depicting the many worlds theory through a novel. This presentation discusses time as a philosophical construct and explores the way it can be researched through scientific theories and represented creatively through a novel.

Peter Cooley, Tulane University, New Orleans, USA

**Alternatives to the Lyric I (EYE)**

While most contemporary poets continue to write the first person lyric poem of personal experience, many poets’ works, including some of my own, embody alternatives to this strategy. Drawing on examples from Frank Bidart, Natasha Trethewey, Terence Hayes, Kevin Young and looking at dramatic monologues, persona poems, ekphrastic and auditory poems as well as collaborative works, my paper will show how my own work—and yours! —can be expanded beyond the tyranny of “I” and “Eye.”

Kiare Ladner, Aberystwyth University

**Searching for Lightness**

My PhD was concerned with interpreting Italo Calvino's 'Lightness' in *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* and using the concept as a catalyst to create change in the material, perspective and style of my writing.

This presentation will introduce Calvino's 'lightness'. His ideas of lightness and weight are idiosyncratic: complex, subtle and sometimes perplexing, they do not equate to the obvious assumptions; lightness does not imply simple prose or a refusal to engage with tragic or complex subject matter, just as heaviness does not imply lengthy sentences or challenging prose.

Furthermore, Calvino's *Memos* are full of ambiguities and paradoxes; they are playful, deeply subjective and surely intended to be suggestive rather than definitive. My approach, as a fiction writer rather than a literary scholar, takes a creative, sometimes provocative, attempt to engage with Calvino's concept on its own terms.

The second part of the presentation will discuss the relevance of lightness to my writing practice. It will explain why lightness matters to me by showing the influence of Calvino's ideas on my perspective as a writer and my own fiction. I would suggest that lightness may have relevance to other writers struggling with how to approach dark, heavy subject matter.

John Dale, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia

**What would 1984 be like if it were written today?**

If George Orwell were alive today what would his politics be? Norman Podhoretz posed this question in 1983. For Podhoretz, Orwell's driving passion was his opposition to totalitarianism. More than any other writer of the 20th century, Orwell responded to a period of historical change in imagining his dystopian 1984, perhaps the most influential political novel ever written. At the same time 1984 was very much a product of post-war England with its rations and shortages. Great writers engage with the changing times and by using their imaginations transform their ideas and environments into fiction. Orwell remained a socialist until his death in January 1950, but the far more intriguing question is what Orwell's 1984 would be like if it were written today, in an age of fake news, Donald Trump, Islamist terror, and post-truth politics.

Senja Andrejevic-Bullock, University of Gloucestershire

**The Demonisation of Lionel Asbo: Middle Class Prejudice or Post-Modernist Failure?**

Chinua Achebe has questioned whether a novel which celebrates dehumanisation, which depersonalises a portion of the human race, can ever be called 'great'. In this presentation, I shall endeavour to answer that question with regards to one of the recent works of Martin Amis, *Lionel Asbo*.

This state-of-the-nation novel provoked extreme reactions and was hailed as 'Dickensian' on one end of the scale as well as being dismissed for its 'sub-literate prose' on the other. But why did Amis create the character of Asbo, a grotesque caricature of a 'chav' who has won the Lottery? I shall examine how media representations of poverty converged with Amis' post-modernist interests to give us one of the most memorable, if unlikeable, anti-heroes of recent years. Analysed against the backdrop of Jean Baudrillard's simulacra theories of contemporary culture, I will critique Amis's characterisation approach in this novel and aim to conclude whether, creatively and culturally, he has succeeded or failed in his attempt to justify class prejudice.



Patrick Bizzaro, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, PA, USA

**The Poetics of Science: Revaluating the Conceit**

Wordsworth ends his “Preface” to the Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads with the prediction, “The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or the Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet’s art as any upon which it can be employed...”. This talk will explore Wordsworth’s prediction as it has come to fruition in contemporary poetry and present poems by four contemporary poets who make use of the conceit to connect daily life with findings by scientists. The talk will assert the value of the conceit to these poets and argue for the new relevance of conceits in the teaching of creative writing. The speaker will conclude this talk by introducing an activity for use with students that teaches how to write a conceit based upon discoveries by Astrophysicists.

Anthony Wilson, University of Exeter

**Young writers’ poetry writing development**

Theoretical explanations of young writers’ poetry writing development are relatively rare. This is partly due to poetry’s secure but mixed status in writing curricula of Anglophone countries. In addition, neither cognitive models of writing development nor descriptions of poet-practitioners or inspired experts provide fully nuanced representation of the complexities of poetry composition or the contexts in which this takes place. Our theorisation has led us to propose a new model of poetry writing as a socially contextualised practice, one which encompasses learners’ motivations and the fluid social contexts in which they develop skills and tastes as readers, writers and performers of poetry. Our presentation explores how we are now using this model to begin investigating young poets’ stories. It draws on our multiple perspectives as: published poets, teacher educators and researchers.

Esmat Azizi, Kyoto Sangyo University, Japan

**Fostering learner autonomy among Japanese EFL learners through creative writing**

This paper looks at creative writing as a means to embrace and promote learner autonomy in EFL teaching. Since creative writing is considered as an effective form of self-expression in many fields, even therapeutic for in some situations, its introduction in the classroom can revitalise the learning process through learners’ engagement and self-expression. My observation and the results of this study show that the majority of learners have a more positive attitude towards creative writing because it allows them the freedom to experiment with their new language and express their ‘truer’ selves in the process.



Paul Munden, University of Canberra, Australia

**MONSTER! Interpreting Nigel Kennedy in poetry and prose**

How might a critical biography be creatively shaped to match the maverick nature of its subject? And what role might poetry play in such a project? Nigel Kennedy, violinist, has defied conventions throughout his career, mixing genres while also detesting the 'crossover' label. As rebel, he is also a perfectionist; as child prodigy, he has continued to break new musical ground. Paul Munden has followed Kennedy's career and is writing a book that attempts to capture the sometimes contradictory nature of an exceptional talent. Taking its title from one of Kennedy's favoured terms of greeting, the book is structured partly as a critical biography, partly as a Kennedy gig; the prose is interspersed with poems that mirror the violinist's own inventive transitoires. Thus the 'biography' goes off at many tangents, considering how talent is nurtured or repressed, and how knowledge and self-discipline underpin departures from artistic convention.

Tina Makereti, Massey University, New Zealand

**The Māori Boy in the Egyptian Hall**

In 1846, fourteen year old James Pomare was exhibited in the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, as part of George French Angas's exhibition of etchings from his New Zealand and South Australian expedition. In 2014 I began writing a novel that aimed to give voice to the Māori boy in the Egyptian Hall, privileging an Indigenous view of early Victorian London, a perspective that is rarely seen in literature. Rather than a simple story of exploitation, the true story and the fiction both contain unexpected complexities and tensions. But do we tend to oversimplify our view of history and of Indigenous-Empire relationships? This presentation will explore some of the technical and cultural challenges of writing the novel, and will include a reading from the soon-to-be-published book, *The Imaginary Lives of James Pōneke* (Penguin Random House NZ).

Bryony Stocker, University of Strathclyde

**Don't Lie – A historiography for historical Fiction**

Writing historical fiction requires an engagement with the historical record, but the novelist, unlike the historian, must not be constrained by it to the detriment of the narrative. Does this mean, however, that the writer is without method, their inventiveness springing from "the freedom with which they handle their material" as Lukács argued? In interviews with six authors of historical fiction, including Tracy Chevalier, a common approach to research and a set of rules for dealing with the historical record emerged. This paper will outline the uncodified methodology which these authors utilise and propose them as a historiography for historical fiction.

David Jackson Ambrose, University of Pennsylvania, USA  
**State of the Nation**

In this presentation, I will be reading from my novel, *State of the Nation*. The readings will focus on the character of Dion, an African American gender non-conformist. This novel takes place in the late 1970's, when people of color that did not identify as heterosexual were in grave danger, as their identity was perceived as a threat to working class African Americans who were struggling to find their space in American society on the tail end of the gains of the civil rights movement.

Creating this character was difficult for me, as I questioned, during the writing process, whether I was fairly fleshing out this persona, or whether my own innate homophobia might be inhibiting my depiction of Dion's 'truth'. I did not want to make Dion a tragic figure, nor one that evokes sympathy. This would be difficult, given the violent backdrop of the novel, and the rather perilous existence of the characters, but I wanted to show dignity within the confines of a (seemingly) horrific existence. Dion exists alongside his two friends, Luqman and Santos, who, while not identifying as gay, do not identify as heterosexual, or, perhaps more accurately, they do not engage the tropes of what has traditionally defined heteronormative behaviors. They communicate in a non-conformist manner with one another, utilizing the urban gay lexicon of late twentieth century American subcultures. This book is my attempt to trouble preconceived notions of sexuality.

Beatriz Rivera-Barnes, Penn State University, USA  
**Broken Relationships, A Cuban Saga**

In Upper Town Zagreb (Croatia), near the funicular's stop at the top, there is a museum called the Museum of Broken Relationships. True to its name, this museum is a collection of objects left behind after a relationship ends: one stiletto perhaps, or a stuffed caterpillar, or a song such as *If you leave me now* played over and over again.

*Broken Relationships* is the story of three generations of a Cuban family. It begins around 1904 and continues to the present day. It takes place in Havana, Miami, New York State and Jerusalem. It also has many flashbacks: from Spain, to Leysin, Switzerland, to Paris, France.

Julia Basavi has arrived in Jerusalem to finish what her father left undone, recover an old manuscript that he found in Cuba and then left behind in a Jerusalem taxicab. The immediate questions are: How did he go this far out of his way to lose something? And what does the manuscript say? The answer lies in this story that explores broken relationships, twin-hood, doppelgangers, tragi-comedy, disguise, watchers, eternal return, and history that goes all the way back to January 1, 1492, Granada, Spain, a city where three cultures once co-existed.

Liam Murray Bell, University of Stirling  
**Rare Stories: An A-Z**

During 2018 I plan to post a flash fiction, of 1000 words, every week to my personal website [www.liammurraybell.com](http://www.liammurraybell.com), with the stories being based on rare or obsolete words found in the OED. This paper will combine a reading of some of the stories with a discussion of the experiments, narrative techniques, and challenges encountered along the way. The project will also be set in the context of influential, contemporary short fiction writers and texts such as Lydia Davis, Tania Hershman, and the *National Flash Fiction Day Anthologies*. The first 'rare' story 'apple-squire' will appear on the 5<sup>th</sup> January and there will then be a weekly flash fiction for every letter of the alphabet; with the conference providing the stage for a premiere of the twenty-sixth and final story which will be posted online on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

John Vanderslice, University of Central Arkansas, USA

My novel *The Last Days of Oscar Wilde* (Burlesque Press, December 2017) depicts the author during his final years in Paris. His reputation is ruined. His finances are in shambles. He is reduced to begging meals from strangers. The most important romantic relationship of his life, his alliance with Lord Alfred Douglas, has ended in failure. Yet, against this backdrop of poverty and declining fortitude, Wilde survives. He even maintains a circle of sympathetic supporters, some of whom refuse to give up on the possibility that Wilde can write again—and write triumphantly. But Wilde’s disillusionment, to say nothing of his precipitously degrading health, means that his friends’ mission to restore his name is the longest of long shots. My presentation is a brief excerpt from the novel, one that captures the reduced, uniquely awkward straits in which Wilde found himself. If time allows, discussion may follow about the challenges inherent in turning such a well-known historical figure into a workable fictional character.

Maureen Fielding, Penn State Brandywine, USA

**Reclaiming the Past in Words: Transforming My West Berlin World**

After a Kafkaesque experience as an American soldier working as a Russian Voice Intercept Operator in Cold War West Berlin, I returned to college and began exploring those events in Creative Writing classes. Then I earned a Ph.D. in English specializing in trauma literature, began a tenure track job, and stopped writing poetry and fiction. Decades later, after surviving cancer, I determined to begin writing again. I discovered how, without a conscious decision on my part, I had chosen an academic specialty that applied to my own writing. Now aware of the traumatic effect of my experiences in West Berlin and the healing potential of writing, I have returned to writing and teaching Creative Writing. I have been working on a novel inspired by my West Berlin experiences. I propose to read an excerpt and discuss the relationship between my academic training, my pedagogical practice, and my writing.

Emily Larkin, University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia

My research explores how speculative fiction may examine the subjective nature of depression in ways that are particularly engaging to an emerging adult audience. In Australia, suicide is the leading cause of death for 15-24-year-olds (Black Dog Institute 2015-2016), and, as the last decade has seen emerging adults across the Western world swept up in dystopian narratives such as *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, and *The Maze Runner*, this genre may serve as an effective platform for promoting awareness and discussion of an issue of high importance and impact to this age bracket – namely, depression. In this presentation, I discuss how the use of a dystopian setting and heightening current technologies in narratives may be used to broach social taboos to explore how individuals experience depression in unique ways.

Bernardo Bueno, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil  
**Creative Writing in the Digital Age, from a Higher Education Perspective**

It is time to ask if we are prepared, as teachers, programme directors and higher education institutions, to explore the potential of digital creative writing. By that I mean a variety of possibilities that include, but are not limited to, social media, interactive narratives, games and the Internet, i.e. a change in the way texts are written and not only how courses are delivered (e.g. online writing workshops). This paper is based on my experience as a lecturer at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS, Brazil) where, in 2017, I taught the postgraduate module Literature and Digital Language, and the undergraduate module Digital Convergence Lab. These classes focused on the dialogue between literature and technology and, despite their experimental approach – both taught for the first time – discussing their teaching process can contribute to a larger and older discussion on where literature stands when it becomes digital.

Jen Webb, University of Canberra, Australia

**“So, what do you do? Preparing our students for careers”**

It is almost two decades since the inception of the Creative Industries(CI) policy in the UK, quickly followed by Australia and many other nations. The ‘creative turn’ in education and broader policy worked on the assumption that creative individuals would lift the overall wellbeing (both cultural and economic) of cities, regions and nations. Many financial reports show the contribution made by artists, writers and performers to GDP. However, an equal number of reports show that those creative individuals earn little or nothing for all their creative work. Despite this, students are still attracted to our degrees. My current research investigates whether there is an alignment between the creative curriculum and subsequent capacity to build a career and make a living; and whether in fact the concept of financial security and a conventional career trajectory matters to creative students, on the whole. The paper combines statistical evidence and the content of interviews with creative writing graduates in two UNESCO Cities of Culture (Melbourne, Shanghai) to suggest ways of better preparing our students for their future careers.

Susanna Ho, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

**Do we need more writers?**

There is no better time to reflect upon the past two decades of my writing path that totaled two theses: a Master’s and a PhD; one full-length novel, and a novella; some poetry; and numerous unpublished works. With the number of MFA, MPhil and PhD candidates ever increasing, one wonders whether there are now too many writers, or, how we can find a voice in this competitive field of work. In this presentation, I will argue that a writer is more likely to find an existence if she can create a unique voice through time, space, and events. As the job of a writer is to give life to a research interest, and/or everyday mundane matters, so that they are worth writing about, and interesting to read, it is important to place events in a sequence that is special and meaningful, at least for the writer herself. My argument will be illustrated with the creation process of Hope and Despair, a short story that I also shared with my CLE colleagues in a staff development session at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in October, 2017. I will finish my presentation with a short reading from this story.

Anne Caldwell, Open University

**'Between a Volcano and a Guinea Pig': The Prose Poet's Toolkit**

The quote above is taken from Carson's verse novel, *Autobiography of Red* (1998) and the humour of the line seems a good place to start when thinking about teaching prose poetry. After over twenty years of teaching free verse and traditional poetic forms to students, I am currently setting up a series of masterclasses on the prose poem for the first time. This has led me to consider how to spot a good prose poem and whether there are particular qualities to look out for when beginning to teach this form. The British poet Luke Kennard made the observation that an accomplished prose poem writer is 'able to write in a style at once self-conscious and analytical, humorous yet philosophically and politically driven. The prose poem... is an ideal form for this' (Kennard, 2008). For writers new to this form, is this the wrong end of the 'telescope' to start with? I would argue that this list of qualities is too limiting in terms of what prose poetry can achieve. Is there space for the lyric and unselfconscious voice, as well as the playful and subversive? What might be the stumbling blocks for writers new to this genre? This presentation will take the form of a discussion and conversation. I would welcome views on teaching this genre of creative writing.

Satu Erra, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

**Poetry as a Craft in Upper Secondary School Workshops**

In my presentation, I address the dadaistic method of writing poetry in upper secondary school workshops. The starting point for these workshops is the ironic instruction of Tzara (1924), which calls for cutting a text into words and constructing a poem by random picking. Inspired by Finnish visual artist Nurmi, I have applied the method in such a way, that the used words have been pre-cut from institutional texts familiar to the attending students. In my presentation, I discuss the pedagogical and social opportunities of such workshops. My aim is to argue that while participating in manufacturing poems, listening others reading their work, or simply looking at the outcomes it is possible to examine diverse aspects of language, and thus poetry becomes an easily approachable craft. Simultaneously, the workshops help to dispel myths associated with creativity and offer opportunities for informal discussion about studies and student life in general.

Hayley Elliott-Ryan, Deakin University, Victoria, Australia

**Bricoleur and the void: a theory of creative writing practice**

This paper considers the practice of creative writing as bricolage, and argues that the writer as bricoleur has the potential to reveal the nature of the mythology, not just ancient, but modern mythologies of politics, order, and economy, which undermine dominant orders, social organisation, and classification. Performing a review of bricolage theory, I argue that the writer as bricoleur, reveals the potential for new myths to emerge from a 'closed world', while revealing how myths are made, and that structures supported by myths are resting on a 'void' or a whole that has no centre; no point of reference beyond the myth that disguises the void. Furthermore, this is demonstrated in the works themselves, and experienced by the bricoleur, in the practice of writing.

Rodney Davey

**Transient laughter: the satirist and his enemies**

There is a tendency to see the role of satire, these days, as coincident with laughter. One thinks of quasi-satirical, performance-oriented events largely dependent on the quick wit and the personality of the participants. This is not to disparage it, but it wouldn't be too far off the mark to claim, in shows of like these, that where the laughter fails, the satire fails - and the show fails along with it. Until quite recently, however, there was a tradition in Western literature, from the Classical era through to recent times, in which satire was a respected (and sometimes feared) literary art. It wasn't inimical to laughter, but laughter was neither its primary aim nor the criterion of its success. In style more measured, in length usually, but not always, relatively brief, intellectually balanced between moral outrage and (insofar as there's a difference) philosophical scorn, above all insightful, it elicited admiration for its literary qualities as well as for the humorous ingenuity with which it is expressed. To these satirists, laughter was almost incidental. The kind of satire so popular today would have seemed to them altogether too shallow, the enemy of the thoughtfulness they hoped to provoke. In a word: too reliant upon the 'joke'; just not serious enough to qualify as 'satire'. Has the time for the classical satire returned?

Sue Joseph (UTS, Sydney) and Carolyn Rickett (Avondale College of Higher Education)

**Student collaboration in the co-construction of assessment rubrics**

Collaborative or innovative models of enhancing student learning pertaining to assessment grades – involving students in co-constructing tools used to grade assessment work – are rare. Inviting students to take part actively in the design of assessment rubrics is one method of filling this research gap, potentially garnering a shared understanding of assessment requirements. Rubrics traditionally are constructed by educators, based on set criteria, in order to streamline grading more cohesively and equitably. But research demonstrates that assessment rubric use is of more benefit and aid to the educator in grading, than to the student in undertaking the assessment task – the educator understands requirements but often requirements are not clear to the student. This paper discusses the results collected from one Sydney campus who took part in collaborating and developing an assessment rubric; distributing it to a 250-student cohort; actively using the rubric for a final assessment; and discussing the effects and benefits, if any, of such activity. We set out to answer the question: How do collaborative rubric construction, use and moderation impact on student learning experiences?

Karma Waltonen, University of California, Davis, USA

**Teaching Stand-Up Comedy**

Through the ten-week quarter, students in my Writing and Performing Stand-Up Comedy course analyze professional performances, discuss comedy techniques, and workshop what will be their final—a five-minute live set, with an audience. This teaches all the things we strive to in standard composition classes: that word choice, concision, organization, and audience awareness are paramount to rhetorical purpose. The students eagerly engage in the workshops; reviewers give immediate visceral feedback in the form of laughter or silence and the performers learn how to improve and take chances. The students also realize that they're in a rhetorical conversation with the audience and each other; multiple students start to "tag" an earlier routine—to build upon it—in their own. This presentation will give an overview of how traditional composition pedagogy can morph into comedy pedagogy and will include a short live comedy routine.



Craig Batty, RMIT, Melbourne, Australia

**Screenwriting as Research: How PhD Candidates Articulate the Screenplay as a Contribution to Knowledge**

As the number of screenwriting doctorates thrives internationally, it becomes important to map the work being undertaken and, from the stance of research education, theorise their underlying concepts and constituent components. While some of this work has been done for filmmaking and screen production, very little has been done for screenwriting – a discipline in its own right, yet one that sits both across and between creative writing and screen production. In this article we analyse a range of completed screenwriting practice PhDs to ask the question: how do candidates articulate the screenplay as a contribution to knowledge? Underpinning this task is a desire to better understand how – or indeed if – these candidates conceive of the screenplay as a research artefact, one that might very well be aimed at production or industry development, but for the PhD one that has a particular function: to enable or communicate new knowledge. The paper will thus bring together empirical insights with contextual literature on doctoral education and creative practice research, which will include document analysis of a sample of theses awarded internationally. Key areas of consideration include: do screenwriting candidates position their screenplays in particular ways; are there patterns in the articulation of methodology; are candidates capable of talking about the knowledge they are contributing; and does such an analysis lead us to a sense of the typical ‘standard’ of a screenwriting practice PhD?

Kayleigh J Moore, University of Gloucestershire

**Desire Lines - when PHD students walk across the grass**

Desire lines, or paths, are those made by natural human behaviour and deviate from the route officially planned. Writers are well acquainted with desire lines, but PhD students are often keen to stick to the prescribed route. There are books and websites dedicated to the process of undertaking a PhD, but these methodologies are often difficult to align with the more organic process of creative writing. Pursuing ‘PhD-ness’ in a novel can stifle creativity, butcher plot and balloon characters into caricatures whilst the author despairs in their supervisor’s office. It can go completely wrong. PhD students can abandon the PhD Path. This presentation will draw on personal experience to describe how the desired path is what saved the thesis, and offer reassurance that it’s fine to walk on the grass.

Paul Clifford, Curtin University, Perth, Australia

My thesis will employ Walter Benjamin’s definitively photographic concept of history to explore the use of photographic images and written text to construct narrative. It will use the remaining photographic archive of my grandfather, Arthur Firmin, to develop what I term a critical photographic narrative form. Based on my family’s history in Kenya, this narrative will integrate the exegetical into the creative artefact to create a text that is at once personal, historical and theoretical. An image by Firmin titled ‘World’s End’ exemplifies how Benjamin’s notion of historical materialism, and more specifically his definition of the ‘dialectical image’, can be used to demonstrate what it means to assume responsibility for an image and its history. The question of how I am to write about my grandfather’s photographs must always remain a question of what I am to do with the legacy of my past.



Sarah Armstrong, Open University

**Finding texts within texts - creating physical spaces for lost and hidden words**

The aim of novelists is clearly to sell as many books as possible. Yet, just as the rise of the electronic book forced publishers to rethink the impact of physical book covers, maybe mass marketing has created a place for the handmade book.

The idea of a text within a text, in *The Fire Gospel*, *The Aspern Papers*, and others, suggests our longing for a unique relationship with discovered words - a lost work, a found story. So, in a world of numbers, how can we recapture the intimacy between the words and the reader?

From hand-sewn limited editions to the single folded sheet, there are growing markets designed to recapture this personal link in different ways. I will discuss how I intend to combine both the conventional and handmade book in my own work, linking this to my research on underground magazines of the 70s/80s and Russian samizdat.

Sean Baker, Anglia Ruskin University

**Millennial Regionalism and the Short Story Collection**

The 21st century has seen a resurgence in regionalism in fiction, and nowhere more so than in short story collections.

This growth, particularly strong in the USA, can also be seen in collections published by writers from Canada, the UK and Australia, underlining one aspect of the short story described by Kasia Boddy as 'local in emphasis and yet a means of understanding the nation as a whole' (*The American Short Story since 1950*, 2010, Edinburgh University Press).

My paper will consider some of the reasons why this might be. Drawing on a number of contemporary collections, including those by Daniel Woodrell, Ron Rash, Annie Proulx, Jon McGregor and Tim Winton, I will consider the linguistic features of millennial regionalist collections, as well as the stylistic commonalities of writings from the different regions featured, exploring the reasons why an increasing number of short story writers might be looking locally rather than globally.

Shady Cosgrove, University of Wollongong, Australia

**Controlling the clock – how showing and telling impact time in short-short fiction**

'Show, don't tell' is a common axiom in creative writing classes but the short-short story form complicates this idea. Often, in micro- and flash fiction, it is through telling and implication that showing occurs. Taking that into account, I will argue that in the micro- and flash context, where brevity defines the narrative parameters, the relationship between showing and telling is one connected to pacing and the narrative construction of time. That is, what the author chooses to show and tell often impacts on the representation of temporality. This will be explored critically and creatively via case studies 'Insect Wisdom', 'Note to Self' and 'Sanctuary'.

Georgia Rhoades & Sherry Alusow Hart, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC, USA  
**The Sheela-na-gig**

Sheela-na-gigs are, in most cases, medieval stone carvings of old, bald, naked females, startling in any context but particularly in such church settings as Kilpeck and Church Stretton in England. These figures appear throughout Ireland and the UK: while some have been preserved in museums such as the National Museum of Ireland and the Hunt, others still guard churches, towers, and town walls. In research for the piece, Rhoades viewed over seventy figures in six countries over ten years. This creative performance work speculates in part on the reasons these figures resonated with their intended audiences and their effects now. Rhoades and Alusow Hart link the forgotten exigence for the sheela to a character in the early stages of dementia who is trying to understand how her life is changing. This creative piece has been performed by Rhoades at several venues in the US, England, Ireland, and Northern Ireland.

Moy McCrory, University of Derby

**On Silence. The Roaring ghosts. Depictions of Female silence and its oppositions.**

Any examination of female silence and speech has to consider the context in which such images were created. An examination shows that despite two world wars, social attitudes to female silence barely shifted from beliefs held during the Renaissance to those held in the last century. Simborowski writes how ‘the motif of women’s silence is deeply embedded in our culture’ citing folk tales which use the features of dumbness, and of tongues. When women speak they are reduced to ‘old wives’ represented as gossiping women whose hands are idle but whose tongues never rest. (2003:108)

The roaring ghosts are those images which project and give voice to women and show the tension between acceptable behaviours and the difference between silence and the act of silencing. This attempts to examine the interfaces between passive and active forms, between choice and imposition, between trauma and freely made decision. It will look at images where the roaring female appears on the page, and question why it is easier for a ghost to inhabit this role, rather than a living woman.

Zoe Mitchell, University of Chichester

**Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live: disobedient women in the era of #MeToo and #TimesUp**

On the surface, the witch is a misogynistic symbol that categorises women outside society as crones or sirens. Witches are best summed up by the line in the *Malleus Maleficarum*: “when a woman thinks alone, she thinks evil thoughts.”

From Carol Ann Duffy giving a voice to the condemned Pendle witches to Audre Lorde “treacherous with old magic” and Louise Glück’s unapologetic Circ, the portrayals from female poets are neither negative nor two-dimensional. In giving voice to witches, writers speak for women who have been silenced and articulate what the witches in Macbeth call “A deed without a name,” namely the exercise of female power.

Backlash against the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements suggests that they are witch hunts but the opposite is true. Witch hunts represent brutal, institutionalised violence against women; any attempt to halt the current movement is the rhetorical equivalent. The time has come to let witches speak.

Tracey Icton

**“This novel is NOT entirely a work of fiction - Exploring the use of fact in contemporary creative writing practice**

The debate over using real events for a plot and actual people as characters in fiction rages amongst the reading/writing community. Some authors eschew reality entirely. Others offer thinly veiled versions of it. And some throw themselves on the pyre by writing novels based wholly on it. Why on earth would a fiction writer write about reality? Surely their business is making stuff up? Isn't using fact more effort than it's worth? What about all the research? Why would a novelist put themselves through this? And don't get me started on ethical minefield of this writely madness! Author Tracey Icton offers some answers to these questions, discussing why and how she tackled such problems in the writing of her novels *Green Dawn at St Enda's* and *Herself Alone in Orange Rain*, parts one and two of her Celtic Colours trilogy - both of which are more fact than fiction.

Lania Knight, University of Gloucestershire

**Hate Your Life? Write a Novel and Change the World (in Twelve Easy Steps)**

Are you trapped in a job you loathe? Do you endure a soul-crushing commute? Are you looking after family members with special needs, no end in sight, no chance for self-sufficiency? Have I got the cure for you! Consider writing a novel. It will take your mind off things. If you don't like the world you're living in, don't do something, just sit there and imagine the world twenty, fifty, 100 years in the future, and let yourself get lost. In this presentation, which includes brilliant, insightful readings from the author's latest book – a SciFi novel set in the future, no less – you'll discover in Twelve Easy Steps (give or take the 'Twelve' and the 'Easy' part) why writing a novel just might change the world, or, at least, why it might change *your* world.

Sarah Pye, University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia

**Biographer: Omniscient Narrator or Silent Witness?**

Abstract: Traditional biographical writing assumes the writer is a silent witness. Nadel (Allen 1986) and Backscheider (1999) criticise biographies where the author is present in the work, believing this practice confuses the narrative structure. Edel (1984) disagrees, describing a 'narrative-pictorial style' of biography in which the biographer acts as an omniscient narrator. Stratchey, who Edel calls the father of this style, believed that uninterpreted truth is 'as useless as buried gold' (1909). My presentation examines these differing views and applies them to the creative non-fiction biography I am writing for my Doctorate of Creative Arts, a biographical memoir which explores the life of Malaysian biologist and founder of the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre, Dr Wong Siew Te. Ziegler (Donaldson 1992) states that biography doesn't readily lend itself to innovation; however, my creative artefact seeks to innovate by incorporating not only my own journey of discovery and interaction with Dr Wong and his Centre, but the voice of the sun bears themselves.

Charlotte Nash-Stewart, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

**The brain and the text: using neuroscience to inform writing practice, teaching, and research.**

Neuroscience and creative writing seem to exist in polar opposite paradigms. Creative writers generally improve their craft through experiential and often ad hoc learning, with a goal of producing art. Neuroscience in contrast performs designed experiments to understand fundamentally how our brains work. Over the last decade, however, neuroscience has increasingly studied how our brains process stories, creating the possibility of a meaningful dialogue between art and science.

This presentation charts a journey to bring the neuroscience of reading into creative writing practice, research, and teaching. I will present a neuroscience-based model of reading (focused on situation models), and demonstrate how I have applied three key principles (causation, inference, and embodiment) to textual analysis, creative writing practice, and in the creative writing classroom. I will show that considering the reader's cognitive processes produces a useful and clarifying perspective that compliments the standard wisdom of creative writing.

Rebecca Carver

**The Impact of Adversity on Identity: Cognitive Psychology and Life-Writing Narratives**

How do our stories shape our identities? How does our perception of adversity illustrate resilience? And how do individual and institutional narratives interweave to impact these relationships? McAdams, Josselson & Leiblick argue, '[O]ur narrative identities become the stories we live by.' My grandfather's life was littered with adversity, even trauma; his stories were often unimaginably heartbreaking, yet he told them without ceremony or expectation. My project explores his biography in his own voice, through the lens of cognitive psychology, investigating the way in which his perception and narration of events (rather than the events themselves) changed him. It fuses individual and institutional narratives, interrogating the impact of perception on the formation of resilience and construction of identity. This explicit blend of life writing and psychology aims to contribute to scholarship in both fields, thus making his life 'meaningful in terms of the lives of others' (Buss, 2001, 595).

Anna Kiernan, Falmouth University

**The habit of collaborating: Reflections on routes into reading, writing and mentoring in a digital age.**

This paper will explore the internal dynamic between the 'creative' and 'critical' self and the external dynamic between private writer and branded social self that publishing and the contemporary literary marketplace is currently embracing.

'Mad Girl's Love Song', the title of the poem by Sylvia Plath, forms the starting point of this reflective account because it captures the interdisciplinarity that characterizes my practice and pedagogy, in terms of writing and collaborative working. This reflective account details a range of creative writing approaches, from critical comparisons of Plath's poetry and P J Harvey's lyrics to explorations of Virginia Woolf's concept of 'granite and rainbow' in the context of contemporary copy writing.

Beginning by re-examining Dorothea Brande's seminal text *The Habit of Writing* (1981) as a means of identifying the tensions writers often experience between their 'creative' and 'critical' selves, the paper concludes that cross-disciplinary working may offer a way of expanding on Brande's notion of these binary selves in favour of a creative/critical/collaborative self.

Stephanie Vanderslice, University of Central Arkansas, USA

**Teachability and The Growth Mindset: Believing In It In Ourselves, Developing it in Nascent Writers**

A recent article by Maria Popova in Brainpickings.org, “Fixed vs. Growth--The Two Basic Mindsets that Shape Our Lives,” explains that a “fixed” mindset assumes that our character, intelligence and creative ability are static givens which we can’t change in any meaningful way. . .and success is the affirmation of that inherent intelligence. Conversely, a growth mindset thrives on challenge and sees failure not as evidence of a lack of intelligence but as a springboard for growth. It makes sense, then, that as a writer and an artist, it’s better to be teachable, to cultivate in yourself, as Popova writes, “a passion for learning rather than a hunger for approval.” This presentation will make the argument for the growth mindset as critical to life-long artistic development as well as a key tenet for the teaching of creative writing. Ultimately, it will also offer suggestions for ways to creating a creative writing classroom that develops and embodies this mindset.

Matthew Cheeseman, University of Derby

**A Dictionary of Neoliberal Terms**

Neoliberalism has been the dominant economic and cultural paradigm for (arguably) the last thirty years. This presentation describes a creative project that captures critical and poetic descriptions of neoliberal terms in an accessible publication.

The project participants developed definitions of terms and common phrases that the designer used to produce the first volume in both a digital and print edition. The first volume includes terms and phrases such as ‘ahead of the curve’, ‘cupcake’ and ‘zero’. As the dictionary expands and new entries are added, readers are encouraged to add them to the open-ended print publication.

The purpose of the project is to produce accessible, creative and critical writing in an innovative artistic form that discusses and critiques the contemporary moment. In so doing the project hopes to further understand the critical and creative role of artists and writers working within Higher Education. Our aim is to have a varied and prestigious range of contributors as the project develops: as such we hope to solicit entries from the conference delegates.

Stefanie Markidis, RMIT, Melbourne, Australia

**A body of words: writing dis/order at the edge of language**

This writing project considers how experimental life writing can transform concepts of the corporeal. Through an embodied writing practice, I explore the tensions of representation, and co-implications of writing and physicality, within an eating dis/ordered experience. Using dance as a method to inform life writing, I will consider how my ‘off the page’ interventions have shaped the written work.

This presentation will explore the im-possible, which Derrida describes as the conditions or chance of the possible: making a body present within writing; pushing writing to its limits, like a body at the edge, in crisis; and the im-possibility of fleeing alongside the overwhelming desire to flee (one’s body, language). This project draws from philosophers of difference and feminist theorists of language and embodiment. This is creative-critical writing: exploring the in-between of flesh, form and movement.

Katharine Coles, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT, USA

**The Poetics of Distraction (A Defense)**

All the new talk is about attention. I, too, engage poetry and its pleasures, along with the pleasures of the world, in part by paying close attention, but even more fundamental to my practice of reading, writing, and the living that gives meaning to both is my natural errancy, which leads me to wander and to trespass, and for the sake of which I court and indulge the many delights of distraction. This lyric meditation will make the case for allowing the object(s) of attention not only to focus our thinking but to “tease us out of thought” – and, potentially, into the space of poetry.

Julia Prendergast, Swinburne University of Technology, Victoria, Australia

**Ideasthesia: liminality and imagination in creative writing practice**

In this article I critically investigate the concept of ideasthesia as it applies to creative writing, from a practice-based perspective. At the heart of my current research is the theory of ideasthesia, a concept from cognitive neuroscience, developed by Professor Danko Nikolić (Max-Planck Institute for Brain Research, Germany). This article examines cognitive processes at play in creative writing practice.

This article explores, embodies and tests the concept of ideasthesia through the development of a short story: *Slow Time*, told in close third-person. The article tracks the evolution of this story, as primary data for analysis of ideasthetic practices in creative writing.

The concept of ideasthesia arises from the ‘Ancient Greek words *idea* (for concept) and *aesthesis* (for sensation). Hence [...] the term ideasthesia [or] sensing concepts’ I am intrigued by my own experience of ideasthesia as a means for understanding writing process—as a way of deconstructing the ways in which writers sense concepts (ideas) in metaphorical, associative and sensory ways.

Amy Lee Wai Sum, Hong Kong Baptist University

**The Uses of Solitude: Inspirations and Practices from Literatures to Writing**

The state of solitude in world literatures has always been associated with unusual human circumstances such as confinement in prison, a voluntary religious experience, or explorers charting new challenges in remote lands. The contemporary global capitalist world, however, with advanced information technology and the many gadgets made available to those who can afford them, is seen by many to have increasingly become a world where individuals are living in solitude among the electronic sound and fury. Our world is a world of rising number of single-person household in major cities, increasing ownership of mobile gadget for communication and entertainment, and ironically escalating number of people suffering from psychological and emotional conditions. If the state of solitude has become a norm in our world, how can we reconcile with this condition and adapt ourselves to this new world? The presentation is a work-in-progress report about learnings from interdisciplinary literatures about solitude, and how this state of being can have positive “functions” in our daily life settings for leading a better life. It is hoped that some of the insights can be developed into exercises that can be taught in a classroom setting.



Caroline Rowan, Deakin University, Victoria, Australia

**Dreaming Third Wave Feminist Plays onto the Stage: Theory, Practice and the Politics of Programming in Australian Theatre**

In this paper, I will highlight the symbiotic relationship between academic theory and creative practice by discussing the methods used in writing a full-length, third wave feminist playscript. Titled: *Minor Players*, the play is about out of work actors and celebrity culture, and examines the role that Australian theatre can play in critiquing neoliberal and postfeminist discourses centred on subjectivity and the rational, self-governing, entrepreneurial woman who can ‘have it all’, provided she employs the right ‘strategies’ and makes the right ‘choices’. In creation of the play, I will draw on the method of ethnotheatre and a self-devised play-making model: The Knowledge/Dream Spiral; an appropriation of academic/practitioners Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean’s concept of an ‘Iterative Cyclic Web’, and scholar, critic and popular fiction writer Jane Goodall’s notion of ‘knowledge-based dreaming’. By bringing these methods together, I will build knowledge and develop creative work in synergetic congruence.

Dennis J. Bohr, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC, USA

**Who Knew?**

In a monologue cast as a one-sided conversation between two Presidents, Dennis Bohr discusses the current state of U. S. politics regarding the nature of truth, collusion, the fruits of narcissism, immigration, racism, cyber-bullying, the Wall, and gender issues. As Trump talking to Putin, Bohr blends the absurd realities of the U. S. President’s consistency in one area of his rhetoric and behavior: his adulation for the President of Russia. He addresses many of Donald Trump’s favorite topics, including fake news, the Russia investigation, Hillary Clinton, and, of course, himself. Bohr has performed this piece for the U. S. Bolofest, a solo performance festival, and has performed his other original political work since 1995 at The Playhouse in Derry, N. Ireland, including *The Disposable Man* in June 2017.

Angie Farrow, Massey University, New Zealand

**Crafting a Political Drama**

Theatre has always been an excellent vehicle for the political text because it thrives on dialectic and thematic tension. However, when the politics of the play overwhelm the flow of the narrative or the emotional appeal of the characters, the drama can lose its momentum and audience engagement. How is it possible to create a theatrical play that creates a useful balance between political discourse and compelling storytelling? How can we make the political message of the play palatable, punchy and apparently impartial?

Playwright Angie Farrow will consider these questions in relation to the writing of her own full-length drama, ‘The Politician’s Wife’. The play that deals with the global refugee crisis and especially as it relates to Australasia, was performed in New Zealand in 2016 and was subsequently awarded second place in the New Works of Merit International Playwriting Competition (USA, 2017).



Sam Meekings, Northwestern University in Qatar

**Social Media Addicts: Utilising Smartphones in the Creative Writing Classroom**

My presentation will explore how using social media apps in the classroom allows instructors to reconceptualise the process and reception of writing. Traditionally, form shapes the way that writing is both transmitted and received: a sonnet or haiku will dictate the structure and composition of a poem, while the physical manifestation of a book signals to the reader the structural limits of the story. The presentation will explore how Twitter chain-stories, Instagram narratives and Snapchat poems each present a model as distinct and formally challenging as a sonnet or novel. In addition, it will suggest ways in which social media apps in the classroom present a range of possibilities for experimenting with character, voice, structure, tone and world-building. Consideration will also be given to the problems inherent in using social media platforms for storytelling, and some of the common issues faced by creative writing students when writing online.

Marshall Moore, Lingnan University, Hong Kong

**Author Platform**

In the scholarly research that has been done in the field of creative writing, one major strand is the topic of lore, the mythology or received wisdom that has accumulated based on the cumulative work and experience of practitioners. In and of itself, lore is not a bad thing. However, as the researcher Stephen North pointed out in *The Making of Knowledge in Composition* (1987), lore is inherently additive: no mechanism exists for discarding something that doesn't work. A current article of lore is the notion of author platform, the idea that for a writer to be publishable, s/he must already have an established audience and a specialization in a certain type of work. I argue that this sort of pigeonholing is counterproductive: today, authors may work successfully in multiple genres, and it is unhelpful to encourage emerging writers to cultivate author platforms at the expense of focusing on the work itself.

Calum Kerr, Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton

**Forget the Rules**

Creative Writing is a taught subject. There has been an A-level, there are higher education degrees at all levels, and there have been evening classes, salons, workshops, and all manner of creative writing classes. These work by putting forward sets of rules, or if you prefer a lighter touch, they proffer guidelines. But does this lead to great writing?

Even if we look beyond the classroom to the garret, we see writers engaged in their art, and we see them suffer under self-imposed precepts, decrees, even laws or commandments. But do these help? This paper will explore the possibility of breaking, smashing, ripping up, or even removing the rules altogether. Can writing still be taught? Can writing still be practised? And if the answer to either of these questions is anywhere near 'yes', what would that look like and what might be the result?

Resa Crane Bizzaro, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA

**Rhetorics of Culture: Resisting Literary Representations in the Creative Writing Course**

Well-known Native American writer, Sherman Alexie, with regard to his representations of American Indians says, “Aren’t we all making shit up...?” This statement points to one of the reasons why we should examine our easy acceptance of characterizations of Native Americans (and other ethnic groups) in contemporary literature; they are often inaccurate and misleading, even if unintentionally so. Vizenor refutes a Native American scholar who claimed that Native Americans do not like to touch by citing contradictory evidence from a source text by explorers Lewis and Clark. This speaker will demonstrate the limits of Alexie’s representations by referring to Alexie’s popular short story, “A Drug Called Tradition.” This analysis will enable the speaker to differentiate “literary authenticity” from “literary survivance” and provide an activity for use in a creative writing class.

Rebecca Beattie, Middlesex University

**Looking for Mary Webb**

Mary Webb wrote novels, essays and poems in the early Twentieth Century that explored folklore and the sacred qualities of nature. She received posthumous success during the countryside revival of the 1930s, and in the 1980s as Virago Press re-introduced her work to a new readership. Webb has gone largely forgotten and unstudied, and very few personal papers survive.

For my PhD in Creative Writing, I am taking inspiration from the life and work of Webb to write a novel which seeks to use imagination to fill the gaps in the record. I set out to create ‘a living, breathing, fictional Mary Webb’ through the imagined recreation of her diaries, alongside a contemporary storyline. In this paper I will explore some of the challenges I have encountered in writing a fictional diary, and examine the process of making what must appear to be a ‘private’ form suitable for ‘public’ readers.

Lisa Walker, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

**Writing the Novel of Male Ripening**

Many contemporary novels are rejecting the previously dominant notion of old age as a time of decline. Critics such as Margaret Gullette and Barbara Frey Waxman have called for a plot of progress which depicts the ageing, like youth, as capable of positive change.

Waxman has identified a new genre, the Reifungsroman or novel of ripening, where adventure and self-discovery continue into old age. While Waxman applies this term only to novels of female ageing, critic Billie Gray argues that the genre may also apply to men.

This paper will add to the discourse around narratives of ageing in contemporary fiction by analysing my own novel-in-progress, ‘Five Concepts of Time’ and Rachel Joyce’s ‘The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry’ (2012) as male Reifungsromane. These novels add to that ‘rare phenomenon,’ (Gray) – literature which illustrates the self-development of the ageing male.

Cassandra Atherton, Deakin University, and Paul Hetherington, University of Canberra  
**Fragments of the Place Itself: Boston Neighbourhoods in Prose Poetry**

As complex and geographically discrete life environments, city neighbourhoods are invested with a great deal of personal meaning as well as with general cultural significance. Michel de Certeau argues that ‘the city is poeticized by the subject’ and explores the refabrication and consumption of space by the city dweller, along with the outsider’s creative and fractious presence. Boston, MA, has been touted as ‘the city of neighbourhoods’ by Anthony Bak Buccitelli and our practice-led research project, *Fragments of the Place Itself*, investigates insider and outsider creativity, rupture and poetic form in Boston’s North End, Beacon Hill and Cambridge neighbourhoods through prose poetry. Our project considers the notions of perambulation and drifting, and the idea of genius loci. Further, we argue that prose poetry is well suited to writing about neighbourhoods because prose poetry’s fully justified text is able to set up a demarcation or ‘plot’ that readily accommodates both insider and outsider viewpoints.

Natalie Rose Dyer, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands  
**Black Ink**

Black ink has the character of contemplating our beings in existence. In *The Process of Art: Nineteenth Century Art Offered to Alain Raitt*, Roger Pearson argues that [French poet] Mallarmè’s talks of writing in relation to black ink whereby the writer attempts to grapple with her/his existential conundrum and make sense of the universe. For Mallarmè writing in black ink then is an attempt to make order in an otherwise chaotic world (Pearson, 1998, p.138). I take up this mode of writing in black existential ink in my new collection of poems *Dear Faustus*. I explore the tension between the existence of the individual as free agent engaged in meaningful human and non-human relationships up against the global capitalist war machine. As such, the authenticity of the individual comes under review. I consider how we need to learn to change our desires in the face of micro-political fascism.

JoNelle Toriseva, SUNY, USA  
**Considerations of Craft: The Matter of Time and Place**

The role of time in a piece of writing sets the clock for characters, writer, and reader. Writer’s choices and the transformations, fusions and projections caused by such adoptions are the topic of this investigation into how a writer chooses to portray the timegrid, and how they move the elements in and out of time in works such as Victor LaValle’s *Changeling*, Claire Messud’s *The Burning Girl*, Colette’s *My Mother’s House*. and Virginia Woolf’s *Sketches of the Past*. Along with the working rituals of writers, the external and the internal environment of the author as they write, there is the external and internal time and place in which the author situates their text amid the myriad of obstacles that confront an artist. The choice (self-imposed) is a stricture worth investigating as a plumb line through the narrative and through the creative process being lived.

Melissa Bender, University of California

**Dysfunctional Family Values: U.S. Memoir and the Neoliberal Self-Made Individual**

Over the last two decades a number of U.S. memoirs featuring dysfunctional families have captured the reading public's attention. The children in these texts are raised by poor, negligent, and sometimes violent or mentally ill parents. Further, the narrative arc of these memoirs follows the child narrators as they succeed in rising above their materially- and emotionally-impoverished origins by virtue of consolidating an array of middle class virtues. In other words, such memoirs present readers with a version of America's favorite myth--that of the self-made man, though refashioned for the 21st neoliberal economic landscape. In this presentation, I demonstrate how this trend in memoir inadvertently reinforces the neoliberal agenda, with a focus on Jeanette Walls' *The Glass Castle* (2005), which has recently been adapted as a feature film.

Lauren Aimee Curtis, University of Technology, Sydney

**Performing the Act of Fictionalising: Elizabeth Hardwick's *Sleepless Nights***

This paper discusses how Elizabeth Hardwick performs the act of fictionalising in both *Sleepless Nights* (2001) [1979] and its earlier form, "Writing a Novel" (1973). Most critics and scholars have focused on the autobiographical reading of *Sleepless Nights*. I argue that the evolution of this work--first published as an excerpt of a novel 'in-progress' in the *New York Review of Books*--not only adheres to Linda Hutcheon's description of metafiction as 'mimesis of process' but can also be situated in terms of both performativity and performance. Because memory (and its relationship to fiction) is a thematic concern of both works, this paper also explores how the act of fictionalising, as outlined by Wolfgang Iser (1997), is similar to the act of recollection, drawing on works documenting Giulio Camillo's *Theatre of Memory*.

Susan Pyke

**Mother Country: or Framing Falsehoods in Shadows of the Past**

In the tentative beginnings of an autofiction I have long been expecting to write, my words reach towards a northern Queensland town called Theodore and a nearby cattle station, Thormby. These places spin the story of the devastating mother loss written into my blood. My mother was marked by her mother's early death. My ancestral gaps are shaded in by her verbal romancing. Barely a photo, few of the visual clues that reveal my own childhood. My mother, holding the view finder, as she holds the floor when telling stories. I cannot write myself away from her unknowable past. Distant relations are becoming ghostly inventions in this story of selfhood that is neither hers nor mine. Our bloodline is all mixed up with the pulse of a country that holds the story of my father, a gentle quiet man who gives me the heart to stand in my mother's frame.