



# The Art of Storytelling: Archetypes in Focus

A Transdisciplinary Conference

Featuring keynote speaker:  
**Patricia Leavy**



24-26 May, 2025



Oxford University  
(and online)



# *The Art of Storytelling: Archetypes in Focus*

**May 24-25, 2025**

## **Conference Schedule**

*Kindly note that **all timings in this brochure are according to the London time zone***

### **Zoom links for sessions:**

**For all “A” sessions, introduction, and keynote:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89624769637?pwd=ZFrOsrrCpkyNW4kM3OKcNEbc2paxaL.1>

**For all “B” sessions:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85710758981?pwd=VOIedvoNlidlpF8074e2F3UsbmpoHL.1>

**For all “C” sessions:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87869613574?pwd=Ult5qUmb1CaNuS33FGzdRn3UqsYtOv.1>

## **Day 1: May 24, 2025**

**9:45 Opening Words:** Roula-Maria Dib, “We are all storytellers”

**10:00-11:30 Parallel Sessions 1.a, 1.b, and 1.c:**

**Session 1.a-Tales Reimagined: Myth, Healing, and the Evolution of Story**

**Moderator: Arden Waterman**

**Jay Ludowyke, NYU Shanghai**

“Orion Recast: Mythic Revisioning and Character Development in Contemporary Fiction”

**Jon Norman-Mason, University of Brighton**

“Rockstars and Sci-Fi: Modernity, Fantasies and Re-Enchanting Built Space”

**Carol Arnold, University of Derby (online)**

“The Use of Fairy Tales in Art Therapy: Exploring Symbols and Images”

**Lisa Ritchie, La Trobe University (online)**

“She, Storyteller: A community-based program reimagining old stories and crafting new ones”

**Session 1.b- Between Disciplines, Across Cultures: Reframing the Storyteller’s Role**

**Moderator: Chloe Campbell and Lorna McNeur**

**Amra Pajalic, LaTrobe, Humanities and Social Sciences (online)**

“Storytelling as Remembrance: Writing Fiction to Preserve Historical Memory”

**Hamid Taheri, RMIT University (online)**

“Archetypal Masculinity and the Politics of Storytelling in Iranian Cinema”

**Mine Sevinc Kayahan, Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University (online)**

“Shahrazad and the Timeless Art of Storytelling: Archetypes Across Cultures”

**Diksha Sharma, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala (online)**

“Interdisciplinarity: An Antidote to Disciplinary Decadence”

**Session 1.c- Narratives in Motion: Transmedia, Migration, and the Making of Memory**

**Moderator: Melanie Hil**

**Kenneth Pratt, UWS (online)**

“Hunting Captain Henley”

**Jarosław Pluciennik, University of Łódź (online)**

“Transmedial storytelling by Tove Jansson?”

**Carlotta Susca, Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro, Italy (online)**

“Nostalgia for an Invented Past: Teaching the English Regency through Bridgerton”

**Sanskriti Bhardwaj, University of Auckland (online)**

“Belonging and place for migrant teachers: Artefacts and films in arts-based narrative inquiry”

**11:45-12:45 Keynote Session, Patricia Leavy**

“Fiction and Storytelling”

**12:45-13:30 Lunch**

**13:30-15:00 Parallel Sessions 2.a, 2.b, and 2.c:**

**Session 2.a- *Fathers, Fandoms, and Fiction-Selves: Recasting Identity Through Media***

**Moderator: Chloe Campbell and Nathan Lamarche**

**Simon Stanton-Sharma, University of Salford, Manchester (online)**

“In Search of a Father – Digital Storytelling, Archetypes, and Evolving Narratives of Fatherhood”

**Madeline Wahl, Independent**

“I opened my mouth to say her name, but no sound came out. I’m a person who stutters and I teleported in the midst of stuttering; I never said goodbye.”: Narrative arcs, fan fiction, and stuttering in *Doctor Who*’s multi-part episode “Silence in the Library” and “Forest of the Dead”

**Jane Topping, Glasgow School of Art (online)**

“Who’s nou? How one story used television to summon a non-human fiction-self device for the author”

**Ava Wegerbauer, Carnegie Mellon University (online)**

“The Enlightened Avatar: Aang as the Oriental Monk Trope”

**Session 2.b- *Stories That Heal: Narrative Medicine, Environment, and Disability***

**Moderator: Arden Waterman**

**Anika Sahni and Ana Baptista, King’s College London and Imperial College London (online)**

“The Pedagogy of Storytelling in Medicine: Preparing students to enhance patient-centred care”

**Vitalija Povilaityte Petri, Brussels Health Gardens (online)**

“Touching and being touched by the Szenne river”

**Joan Leotta, Independent (online)**

“Kindness Counts”

**Melike Irem ALHAS, TED University (online)**

“Who Gets to Tell the Story? Subverting the Disabled Victim Archetype through Sign, Description, and Metatheatrical Strategies”

### **Session 2.c- Spectral Frames: Cinema, Archetype, and the Poetics of Vision**

**Moderator: Melanie Hill**

**Ava Witonsky, Film and Media Studies (Emergent Media) Columbia University (online)**

“Projections Lumineuses: Magic Lantern Performance in the 21st Century”

**Ahmad Hayat, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (online)**

“Carving the Creative Vision”

**Alexander Green, Oregon State University (online)**

The Cinematic Golem and Its Descendants: Judaism, Expressionism, Sci-Fi, and Scissors

**Ayushi Pandey, FLAME University (online)**

“Map of the Concept Album: Co-opting Jungian Archetypes and Greek Myths to Create Fictional Personae in BTS’ Discography”

**15:00-15:15 Break**

**15:15-16:45 Parallel Sessions 3.a, 3.b, and 3.c**

### **Session 3.a- Thresholds of the Psyche: Storytelling, Survival, and Selfhood**

**Moderator: Melanie Hill and Jon Norman-Mason**

**Syazwani Farahin Jefferdin, University Nottingham Malaysia**

“The Room: Storytelling at the Threshold of the Unconscious”

**Mabel Verstraaten-Bortier, Middlesex University**

“Storying my Life @50 in Five Archetypal Sketches”

**Damina Khaira, Harvard University (online)**

“Randau Ruai and the Everyday: Storying Otherwise from a Longhouse in Borneo”

**Anna Chiari, The University of Edinburgh (online)**

“Storytelling as a Therapeutic Tool: Repetition, Survival, and the Narrative Drive in Trauma Theory”

**Session 3.b- Ekphrasis and the Antihero: Reimagining the Language of Image and Form**

**Moderator: Arden Waterman and Thomas Bennett**

**Ashley Elizabeth Trotter, Boston College (online)**

“Her Heart was Beating: The Literalization of the Symbol of the Heart in Jeanette Winterson’s ‘The Passion’”

**Debra Edgerton, Northern Arizona University (online)**

“Retelling Tales: Using Visual Images to Redefine Story”

**Nat Hardy, Florida National University (online)**

“The Dark Ekphrastic Art of Biomarkers: A Cross-Atlantic Digital Collaboration”

**Maria Nazaret Cano, Independent (online)**

“Velarte Breadsticks Antihero”

**Session 3.c- Mythic Maps: Archetypes, Identity, and the Journey of Story**

**Moderator: Sarah Norton and Chloe Campbell**

**Lilia Carpenter, Pacifica Graduate institute, US (online)**

Mythic Pathways: Exploring Archetypal Images in Folk Tales

**Katie Clausen, Dominican University, CST (online)**

“From Fragments to Fairy Tales: Reclaiming Self through Story”

**Padmini Sukumaran, Kean University (online)**

“The Arc in Archetype: Tracing Story and Identity Transformations in *The Faerie Queene*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Sleeping Beauty*”

**Plenary: Craig Chalquist, National University (online)**

Lamplighting: Change through Story, Vision, and Inspiration

**16:45-17:00 Break**

**17:00-18:30 Parallel Sessions 4.a, 4.b, and 4.c**

**Session 4.a- Stories We Carry, Stories We Heal: Memory, Trauma, and the Self**

**Moderator: Melanie Hill and Anja Rekeszus**

**Anh Hua, Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at San Diego State University**

“How Storytelling Has Been a Healing Tool for Me in Times of Uncertainty: From Writing Poetry, Children’s Book, My Memoir, and Creative Scholarly Prose”

**Mandy Lee, Trinity College Dublin**

“Hongkongers’ Letters to Home: Applying Poetic Transcription and Other Creative Presentations to Re-Tell Hongkongers’ Stories of Their Experiences since 2019 from an Anonymous Online Writing Project”

**Lahab Al-Samarrai, JAMP University, (online)**

“The Storyteller’s Cure: JAMP® Therapy and the Art of Healing Through Narrative”

**Kindee Dixon, JAMP University, (online)**

“The Stories We Tell Ourselves: The Impact of Storytelling on Trauma”

**Session 4.b- From AI to Archetype: Narrative Identity in Myth, Game, and Mind**

**Moderator: Arden Waterman**

**Nathan Lamarche, University of Alberta**

“Merging the Player/Character: Unique Emotional Responses in Video Game Storytelling”

**Hari C. Gangadharan, Ocean Grove Charter School and Mission College (online)**

“Synthesizing Research on AI-Driven Storytelling and Human Art in Video Games”

**Mark Kirkbride, Brunel University of London/ Middlesex University**

“Coherence/Incoherence: A Gestalt Approach to Mental Health Disorders Using Literary Genres”

**Anussya Jayasimhan, University of Nottingham**

“The Dystopian Lotus Goddess: Introducing the Padmavati, the Final Incarnation of Lakshmi in Young Adult Literature”

**Session 4.c- Tales That Nourish: Food, Fantasy, and the Psychology of Survival**

**Moderator: Chloe Campbell**

**Cindy Rinne, Independent (online)**

“Today in Three Caves”

**Claire Rodan, University of Maryland College Park (online)**

“Storytelling as Survival in ‘Life is Beautiful’ and ‘Pan’s Labyrinth’”

**Mette Rudvin, University of Palermo (online)**

“Storytelling through Food: The representation of food in folktales”

**Justin F. Martin, Whitworth University (online)**

“The Primacy and Potential of Superhero Narratives: Insights from Developmental Psychology”

**Day 2: Sunday, May 25:**

**10:00-11:30 Session 5.a- Rooted, Wild, and Weird: Storytelling in Times of Ecological Crisis**

**Moderator: Madeleine Wahl and Lorna McNeur**

**Madelena Mañetto Quick, University of Wales Trinity Saint David**

“Speculative Storying and Farmed Animal Worlds”

**Sam Mayne, the University of Western Australia**

“In Strange Times: Weird Storytelling in Ecological Crisis”

**Anja Rekeszus, University of Reading**

“Retelling the Urban Fox – a Southeast London Tale”

**Wendy Wuyts, Independent (online)**

“Rooted Narratives and Flowing Identities in the Baltic sea bioregion: The Resurrection of Eglė Through Hydrofeminist Storytelling”

**11:30-11:45 Break**

**11:45-13:15 Session 6.a: Writing the Seen: Ekphrasis, Representation, and the Politics of Perception**

**Moderator: Arden Waterman and Mandy Lee**

**Thomas Bennett, University of Gloucestershire**

“Locating the Punctum: An Ekphrastic Representation of the Ethical Dilemmas of Photojournalism”

**Kate Leonard, Colorado College**

“Text and Texture: A Case study in Cross Disciplinary Teaching”

**Jo Neil, Leeds Arts University**

“Experimenting with a visible research process: Telling stories of research, making and reflection in Fine Art practices”

**Bashabi Gogoi, Tezpur University, INDIA, (online)**

“The Legend of Hastar: Ekphrastic Storytelling in Tumbbad”

**Camilla Baasch Andersen and Yangjinbo Zhang, University of Western Australia, Perth (online)**

“Creative and Comic Contracts - Visual Storytelling in Law”

# Presenter Abstracts and Biographies

Saturday, May 24, 2025

## *Tales Reimagined: Myth, Healing, and the Evolution of Story*

### 1. Jay Ludowyke, NYU Shanghai

[jk110016@nyu.edu](mailto:jk110016@nyu.edu)

“Orion Recast: Mythic Revisioning and Character Development in Contemporary Fiction”

**Abstract:** Reimagining myth, as Joyce did with Odysseus in *Ulysses*, describes the transformation of mythic characters in literature, often through new contexts or perspectives. It is a form of intertextual writing that treats myth as malleable cultural material, rewritten to reflect contemporary concerns and voices. This includes concepts like revisionist mythmaking and mythic subversion, where revisions respond to problematic mythic archetypes. Such concerns have prompted postcolonial and feminist criticism of existing mythology, as seen with the latter in notable works like Margaret Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* and Madeline Miller’s *Circe*. While feminist revisioning often repositions patriarchal portrayals of female figures, this research questions the possibility and implications of a feminist and moralist revisioning of Orion—a figure closely tied to violence and male power. Orion’s fragmented and contradictory legacy in classical sources, such as Ovid’s *Fasti* or Apollodorus’s *Bibliotheca* (the most complete, but still minimal, account of Orion), complicates revisioning by demanding reinterpretation while defying narrative cohesion. A further complication is Orion’s status as a catasterism—a mythic figure immortalised as a star constellation—which reshapes aspects of the original mythology in relation to the mythology of nearby constellations. This scholarly review informs the planning and character development phases of a frame tale where Orion the Hunter is reimagined as Orion West, a recently released prisoner and astronomer. Sent to a remote Australian town, her story, paralleling that of the original Orion, unfolds and interweaves with global and Indigenous star myths, linking celestial mythology with contemporary reckonings. The discussion treats myth as cultural material, not blueprint, drawing on archetypal criticism and revisionist mythmaking to guide creative decisions around gender and moral reframing, culminating in a character sketch of Orion West and the ethical and aesthetic considerations that shaped her transformation.

**Bio:** Jay Ludowyke is an author and Clinical Assistant Professor in the Writing Program at NYU Shanghai. She holds a Doctor of Creative Arts (Written Communication) and is an Associate Fellow of Advance HE. She has taught writing at the University of the Sunshine Coast and the University of Queensland. She is a recipient of the \$75,000 Australian Postgraduate Award and her expertise is in narrative nonfiction. Her book *Carpathia* (2018) was published by Hachette, and she co-edited the anthologies *Madness in Bloom* (2021) and *It Begins with Us* (2022). She has been interviewed on Australian national radio and

television as well as on international podcasts. Her short fiction appears in respected Australian journals and anthologies including Visible Ink, Meniscus, and Petrichor. She is currently working on a novel that uses a frame tale structure to explore mythic revisioning in a small Australian town during a solar eclipse.

**Social media:** <https://www.facebook.com/jay.ludowyke/> (Facebook),

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jay-ludowyke/> (Linked-In)

## 2. Jon Norman-Mason, University of Brighton

[J.Mason2@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:J.Mason2@brighton.ac.uk)

“Rockstars and Sci-Fi: Modernity, Fantasies and Re-Enchanting Built Space”

**Abstract:** This paper reflects on my work, as a storyteller and PhD researcher, to engage with mythic archetypes from modern UK culture in performance storytelling – especially with a view to “re-enchanting” built space. Oral storytelling is often successfully employed to heighten awareness of our physical environment (e.g. Schneidau 2021, The Storytelling Choir 2022): echoing Weber (1922), performers and academics argue that for pre-industrial communities, the physical environment was imbued with “enchantment” and meaning through storied awareness of place (Nanson 2021, Lupton 2023). Oral storytelling is seen as ideally placed to reinvolve that imaginative connection, through its communally oriented delivery and connection to pre-industrial traditions and settings. However, cultural geography, anthropology and oral history demonstrate that imagination and meaning-making have continued in modern built environments (Cosgrove 1988, Ryden 1993, Summerfield 2004) - and yet “urban legends” and post-industrial settings are under-represented in contemporary UK storytelling. In research and practice, I explore how the storytelling medium can directly address myths arising from modern UK experience, thus reaching even wider audiences and diversifying its scope for re-enchantment. As well as sharing observations on storytelling technique from interviews with other storytellers, I argue that archetypes such as rock stars, superheroes and sci-fi fantasies are modern myths, offering meaning-making, enrichment and consolation in daily experience. However, I also note key differences between this storied consciousness now, and that in pre-industrial society: meaning-making from popular stories has become a more individual, private phenomenon, diminishing its impact on community cohesion and collective action (environmental, social or political). I discuss my own storytelling work with modern mythic archetypes – *Promised Land: The Myths of Rock’n’Roll* (2024-5) and variations on a *Time Travel Treasure Hunt* (2016-2025) – and reflect on the benefits of fantastical, “unreal” elements for nonetheless inspiring environmental awareness, action and enchantment in our familiar “real” local surroundings.

**Bio:** Jon Norman-Mason is a professional storyteller, inveterate researcher of folklore, history and belief, and a fantasy, sci-fi and music fan. His research interests include cultural myths, and how stories reflect the beliefs and priorities of the times and places they are told in; the overlap between history, folklore, landscape and identity; intersections between literature, history and archaeology; and play and popular culture as pedagogy. He is in the final months of a PhD at the University of Brighton, entitled “Re-storying the city: applying urban perspectives to eco-storytelling.” He has performed at festivals and storytelling clubs

around Britain, and was shortlisted for the 2023 Step Up Commission. Publications include *Myth-making and the urban: Alienation, folklore and (re-)enchanted to land* in Holloway and Jordan-Baker eds, *Writing Landscape and Setting in the Anthropocene* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024). He also works as a Student Adviser at Brighton and Sussex Medical School, where he has taught storytelling as a professional skill, and was researcher for 13 episodes of the award-winning BBC podcast *You're Dead To Me* (and co-writer for six episodes). He can be found at <https://research.brighton.ac.uk/en/persons/jon-mason> and <https://jonthestoryteller.com/>

**Social media:** <https://www.facebook.com/jonmasonstoriesandmusic> (Facebook), @jonmase (Twitter), @jonthestoryteller (Instagram), <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jonthestoryteller> (Linked-In), <https://bsky.app/profile/jonthestoryteller.bsky.social> (Bluesky)

### 3. Carol Arnold, University of Derby (**online**) [carolarnold@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:carolarnold@hotmail.co.uk)

“The Use of Fairy Tales in Art Therapy: Exploring Symbols and Images”

**Abstract:** Research suggests that stories which came to be known as fairy tales have been told for thousands of years (Graca da Silva & Tehrani, 2016). They have been rewritten repeatedly, continually evolving. Ongoing fascination with these tales indicates their importance and the hold they have on the psyche. Much literature suggests that they could provide material for the work done in psychotherapy (Bettelheim, 1976, Von Franz, 1996, Cashdan, 1999). The language of symbol and metaphor used in fairy tales echoes that of Art Therapy, which uses the creation of imagery as the main method of expression. There is little previous research into what the image itself can contribute to therapeutic work with fairy tales. My research takes an inductive, qualitative approach toward filling this gap. It focuses on gathering the methods with which fairy tales are being used in Art Therapy. In my own therapy practice, a variety of methods are used, such as a structured 4-part tool and symbol cards. The research is discovery orientated, drawing on art-based methodology, using the distinctive perspective of visual imagery as data and a method of evaluation. Art therapy and arts-based research are closely aligned. Both are discovery focused, creative processes using the language of image and symbol to explore human experience. This paper will look at some links between fairy tales and art therapy through this shared language, showing examples of fairy tale imagery created as a method of reflection during the research process so far. It will outline the ways in which fairy tales have the potential to be therapeutically beneficial, taking into consideration a variety of factors including the age and presenting issue of the individual in therapy.

**Bio:** Carol is an artist and Art Therapist. After working in early years education, she qualified as an Art Therapist at the beginning of 2014. She grew up in Birmingham, and is now based in the North West of the UK where she is self-employed, working with children and young people in mainstream schools. She has a private practice providing personal therapy for trainee art therapists, and supervision, while working part time towards a doctorate in the use of fairy tales in art therapy. She often uses stories, especially fairy tales, and fairy tale

symbols in her therapeutic work and has created a structured fairy tale tool and set of symbol cards to facilitate this work. Carol's own art practice is focused on story and the painting of images from stories that she hears, reads or experiences; working on the principle that stories, especially in the form of traditional tales with their visual language of images and symbols, are powerful creations that can help us to express and connect. In 2025 a number of her paintings were included in the CRASSH University of Cambridge virtual exhibition for their "Fairy -Tale Trouble and the Art of Fluidity: Gender, Genre, Media" conference.

**Social media:** @Carolafillyjonk (Twitter), @talesfromtangledwood (Instagram), Carol Arnold MA (Linked-In)

#### 4. Lisa Ritchie, La Trobe University ([online](#))

[l.ritchie@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:l.ritchie@latrobe.edu.au)

"She, Storyteller: A community-based program reimagining old stories and crafting new ones"

**Abstract:** The She-Storyteller series, delivered through Laneway Learning in Naarm (Melbourne), Australia, invites women to engage with fairytales as a way of reflecting on and re-authoring their lived experience. Grounded in narrative therapy, mythopoetics, and archetypal psychology, the series uses story symbolism as a pathway to self-understanding and meaning-making. This presentation offers a case study of the She-Storyteller model, in which participants explore archetypal themes from fairytales and use guided writing prompts to uncover personal resonances. Over three classes, narrative processes are paired with grounding, hands-on craft activities to support reflection and integration of the material. Class one considers the psychological function of fairytales, inviting participants to uncover the personal symbolism within the tale that speaks to them. In class two, we examine coping and survival responses through the lens of the fairytale heroine - exploring how stories of the surrendered feminine came to dominate, and recovering the clever and willful heroines lost to time. In the final class, participants take their tale through the radical reimagining process, crafting a version that reflects them, as they are today. Feedback suggests that She-Storyteller particularly resonates with women who think in picture-language, are navigating life transitions, or who feel a sense of disconnection from their own life-narrative. This model offers a gentle pathway to working beyond the analytic mind, through metaphor, imagination, and tactile creativity. By sharing this case study, I aim to highlight the therapeutic use of fairytales in a community-based adult education context, for the purposes of self-reflection, meaning-making and emotional processing in ways that are accessible, creative and rooted in our shared humanity.

**Bio:** Lisa Ritchie is a Counselling Psychologist and Lecturer within the school of Psychology and Public Health at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia. Alongside her teaching, research and counselling work, Lisa develops story-based workshops in which she helps individuals use story symbolism as a tool for personal insight and reflection - identifying the unique relevance of that story for them, at that point in time. In 2024, Lisa ran a series of workshops relating to exploration of fairytale symbolism, the many faces of the powerful feminine and radical fairy-tale re-imagining. Her most recent work examined representations of maligned snake women across fairytale history, with a particular focus on the ill-fated

Melusine at the Perth Medieval and Renaissance Conference at The University of Western Australia. Lisa is particularly drawn to subversive readings of old stories in addition to updated narratives that challenge the status quo.

**Social media:** @thestorypsych (Instagram), <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lisa-ritchie-07bb01332/> (Linked-In)

### *Between Disciplines, Across Cultures: Reframing the Storyteller's Role*

1. **Amra Pajalic, LaTrobe, Humanities and Social Sciences (online)**  
[19660035@students.latrobe.edu.au](mailto:19660035@students.latrobe.edu.au)

“Storytelling as Remembrance: Writing Fiction to Preserve Historical Memory”

**Abstract:** Storytelling is often considered an act of imagination, yet the foundation of compelling narratives frequently lies in rigorous research. In my novel *Time Kneels Between Mountains*, a work of historical fiction set against the backdrop of Srebrenica during the Bosnian War, research played a pivotal role in shaping both the narrative and its emotional authenticity. The town of Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina made history on 11 July 1995, when 8,372 men and boys were slain and buried in mass graves, making it the biggest massacre on European soil since World War II. The Srebrenica massacre that led to the unanimous ruling the massacre of the enclave's male inhabitants constituted genocide, a crime under international law, in 2004 in the case of Prosecutor v. Krstić in the Appeals Chamber of the ICTY (Prosecutor v. Krstić, Case No. IT-98-33-A, 2004). As a result, this event is historically significant as it is first genocide conviction in Europe since the Holocaust. It is a globally significant event as it represents the catastrophic failure of the international community to prevent genocide, despite numerous warnings. This presentation explores how deep engagement with historical records, survivor testimonies, and journalistic sources informed my creative choices. I will discuss the challenges of translating research into narrative without overwhelming the story, as well as the ethical responsibility of representing historical trauma through fiction. Using my novel as a case study, I will outline my research methodology, including archival research, scholarly sources, and primary accounts, and how these informed the construction of my protagonist's journey. I will also address the tension between fact and fiction—when to adhere to historical accuracy and when to allow creative license. This presentation will provide insight for writers, academics, and readers interested in how research shapes storytelling and how fiction can serve as a vehicle for historical memory.

**Bio:** Amra Pajalić is an award-winning author, educator, and researcher. Her debut novel, *The Good Daughter*, won the 2009 Melbourne Prize for Literature's Civic Choice Award, re-released as *Sabiha's Dilemma* (Pishukin Press, 2022). The anthology she co-edited, *Growing up Muslim in Australia* (Allen and Unwin, 2014, 2019), was shortlisted for the 2015 Children's Book Council of Australia Eve Pownall Award for Information Books. Her memoir *Things Nobody Knows But Me* (Transit Lounge, 2019) was shortlisted for the 2020 National Biography Award. Her novel *Time Kneels Between Mountains* explores the legacy

of the Bosnian War through a deeply researched narrative of survival and retribution. She has conducted extensive research on genocide studies and historical fiction, completing a thesis on the representation of Srebrenica in literature. She is also the founder of Pishukin Press and a passionate advocate for storytelling as a means of historical preservation. Beyond writing, Amra is a dedicated educator and speaker, delivering workshops on self-publishing, writing as a business, and literature's role in shaping historical narratives. Her expertise in genocide studies informs both her fiction and non-fiction, as she works to preserve cultural memory through storytelling.

**Social media:** Amra Pajalic (Facebook), <https://x.com/AmraPajalic> (Twitter), @amrapajalicauthor (Instagram), <https://www.linkedin.com/in/amrapajalic/> (Linked-In)

## 2. **Hamid Taheri, RMIT University (online)** [hamidtaheri1988@gmail.com](mailto:hamidtaheri1988@gmail.com)

“Archetypal Masculinity and the Politics of Storytelling in Iranian Cinema”

**Abstract:** In the pre-revolutionary Iranian cinema, an escapist genre full of sex and violence called *filmfārsī* became popular. Although *filmfārsī* films were influenced by Bollywood and Hollywood products, they were anchored in the Iranian Islamic culture and its myths about Islamic leaders. Hamid Naficy (2011) categorises *filmfārsī* into two subgenres: the *stewpot* and the *tough guy*. Each category highlights a male archetype corresponding to the Islamic concept of *ghayrat*: *javanmard* and *jahel*, respectively. As the storyline of these *filmfārsī* films often included a female victim, I will specifically consider *ghayrat* through two of its broadest forms: “modesty *ghayrat*” and “non-modesty *ghayrat*.” Modesty *ghayrat* usually aims at women to control them. Non-modesty *ghayrat*, however, is broad and can be elicited in many situations, such as defending the vulnerable. The *javanmard* archetype in *stewpot* films was a helpful, self-sacrificing male and the symbol of non-modesty *ghayrat* and “protected” women. On the other hand, the *jahel* archetype in *tough guy* films is dangerous, violent, and often criminal and a symbol of modesty *ghayrat* who “controlled” women and avenged them when the antagonists sexually assaulted them. Interestingly, both these Muslim male archetypes – who in the narratives alluded to Shai Imams such as Imam Hosein and Reza – were regarded as symbols of “good.” In contemporary Iran, despite the rise of radical Islamic groups and real-life *jahels* to power who seek to control women violently, Iranian filmmakers opened a space to discuss *ghayrat*. Resistant filmmakers such as Asghar Farhadi portray modesty *ghayrat* as destructive – critiquing the *jahel* archetype and promoting the *javanmard* – leading to them facing attacks from the regime. Conversely, pro-regime films portray *jahels* as “good” and virtuous criminals. This presentation aims to show the evolution of these archetypes born from Islamic myths in Iranian cinema and their significance in comprehending broader cultural and political conflicts.

**Bio:** Hamid Taheri is a doctoral candidate in media studies at RMIT University in Melbourne, where he investigates the effects of modesty censorship rules on Iranian films. He has written extensively in Iranian and foreign publications and peer-reviewed journals such as *Feminist Media Studies*, the *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* and the *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*. He is also a translator, and Rick Altman's

Film/Genre, translated into Farsi, is the most renowned of his translations. Taheri is also a screenwriter and filmmaker whose name appears on several TV series, feature, and short films.

**Social media:** <https://www.facebook.com/hamid.ta.7> (Facebook), @hamidta24 (Instagram), <https://www.linkedin.com/in/hamid-taheri-16b237237/> (Linked In)

**3. Mine Sevinc Kayahan, Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University (online)**  
[msevinc@mehmetakif.edu.tr](mailto:msevinc@mehmetakif.edu.tr)

“Shahrazad and the Timeless Art of Storytelling: Archetypes Across Cultures”

**Abstract:** This paper examines the archetype of Shahrazad as the storyteller and its implications for postcolonial feminine writing, drawing from the theoretical framework developed in my book, *Postcolonial Feminine Writing*. Shahrazad, the legendary narrator of *One Thousand and One Nights*, embodies the transformative power of storytelling as both a survival strategy and a means of resistance. Her narratives blur the boundaries between fiction and reality, self and other, while also challenging patriarchal and colonial structures of power. By situating Shahrazad within the broader discourse of postcolonial storytelling, this paper explores how her archetype has been reinterpreted for contemporary readers by Hanan al-Shaykh in *One Thousand and One Nights* navigating postcolonial and feminist concerns. Drawing on the feminine writing concept of H  l  ne Cixous and postcolonial theory of Frantz Fanon, I will analyse how the act of storytelling in postcolonial feminine writing functions as an assertion of agency, subverting dominant narratives and reclaiming silenced voices. Furthermore, the paper will investigate the intersection of storytelling and gender, illustrating how al-Shaykh utilises Shahrazad’s legacy to articulate narratives of trauma and resistance. Through this exploration, I aim to demonstrate how the archetype of the storyteller remains a vital force in shaping identity and challenging socio-political hierarchies in contemporary literary landscapes.

**Bio:** Dr. Mine Sevinc Kayahan is an Assistant Professor at Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University in T  rkiye, specialising in English Language and Literature. She earned her PhD from the University of Surrey's School of Literature and Languages, where her research focused on postcolonial feminine writing, particularly in the works of Hanan al-Shaykh and Elif Shafak. Dr. Sevinc Kayahan's scholarly interests encompass postcolonial literature, feminist literary criticism, feminine writing, and Shahrazad's re-narratives.

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**4. Diksha Sharma, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala (online)**  
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“Interdisciplinarity: An Antidote to Disciplinary Decadence”

**Abstract:** The ubiquity acquired by certain disciplines due to convention has been challenged in the present postmodern scenario leading to their decadence. With time these conformist schools of thought have been ossified and have resisted all efforts to change thus becoming fortified or impenetrable epistemological entities. This stringent and unwavering attitude adopted by these disciplines and their practitioners has apparently alleviated the scope of the development of the discipline restricting its growth and in effect impairing the academic rubric. The paper proposes to analyse the causes of this decadence of established disciplines like humanities and social studies in the contemporary (progressive) scenario and highlight the potential of the post structural and postmodern interdisciplinary approach as an effective antidote to disciplinary decadence.

**Bio:** Dr. Diksha Sharma is a PhD in English Literature from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. She had been a College and University teacher for the last two decades. Having worked at the Government Degree College Theog (Shimla) for some time and later at Birla Institute of Technology and Science Pilani (BITS Pilani) for two years. At present she is working as an Assistant Professor in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala.

### [Narratives in Motion: Transmedia, Migration, and the Making of Memory](#)

1. **Kenneth Pratt, UWS (online)**  
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“Hunting Captain Henley”

**Abstract:** This paper uses reflections of childhood experiences on the shaping of a cross-genre narrative as a springboard for an interrogation of a new form of postcolonial literature. In *Hunting Captain Henley* creative and journalism merge with both Scots and English dialects resulting in an exploratory form of storytelling, the apex of which intermittently transmutes to prose poetry. While working in a leper colony on an assignment for *Sunday Times Scotland* in India I began to reflectively explore some core motivations beyond quality newspaper reporting and travelogue into what I refer to as the creation of new 'aesthetic buttons.' This innovative art of storytelling raises 'fundamental questions' about the world where journalists operate, the role of imagination, 'sensory perceptions' in everyday manifestations of journalism, as well as the place of 'the scholar' in the research process (Archetti 2017). The paper will therefore showcase excerpts from Chapter 13 *Drinking Cheap Wine With The Lepers of Shadnipurum*. While The Reuters Institute leads the way on combining academic and journalistic research methods, weaving them into a symbiotic whole, this paper professes an exploratory form of tri-partite alignment that sensitizes "the package" beyond the feeling of routine outrage normally instigated by traditional investigative research. In “The Loathsome, the Rough Type and the Monster: The Violence and Wounding of Media Texts on Rape,” Mona Livholts examines the media representation of rape in a small town in the north of Sweden. Livholts does not just conduct a discourse analysis of news reports, but includes memory work and short stories to make explicit the way herself, as a researcher, was being affected by the material she was investigating. Henley

builds on Livolt's findings in two ways: it reflects on the socio-psychological roots of the artform and the finality of its sociolinguistic consequences

**Bio:** Dr Ken Pratt is a Lecturer in Journalism at UWS (University of The West of Scotland). An ex-national newspaper reporter he was a finalist at The Guardian International Development Journalism Awards for his disturbing reportage from Uganda/DR Congo. He has a Ph (D) in Scottish Literature (creative writing) from Glasgow University. His novel *Hunting Captain Henley* is to be published by Rymour Books Summer 2025. His post-doctoral work is published in the *European Journal of Life Writing* (University of Amsterdam) and his most recent work on the ethics of the Lockerbie Disaster coverage is published in the *Association for Journalism Education Journal* (January 2025). Ken is scheduled to speak at the World Journalism Education Congress in San Francisco (August 2025) - progressive frameworks for the reporting of climate change disasters. Willy Maley, Professor of Renaissance Studies at Glasgow University said: "Henley is a cross between *Moby Dick* and *Marabou Stork Nightmares*. It impressed me a lot, blew me away in places. At its best it's as good as Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*."

2. **Jaroslav Pluciennik, University of Łódź (online)**  
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“Transmedial storytelling by Tove Jansson?”

**Abstract:** TOVE JANSSON as Transmedia Storyteller Tove Jansson, although primarily recognised as the creator of the Moomin saga, stands as an exemplary figure of transmedia storytelling whose artistic practice traversed literary, visual, performative, and cinematic domains. Far beyond children's literature, her creative output encompassed works addressed to diverse audiences, including adults. Her satirical comics, songs with nuanced social commentary, and monumental public artworks — such as murals and the altarpiece in the church at Teuva — demonstrate her capacity to craft narratives and images that engage both intimate and public spaces, reaching a wide demographic spectrum. A pivotal illustration of Jansson’s transmedia engagement is her 1978 collaboration with the Se-Ma-For studio in Łódź, where she contributed to an Austrian-Polish puppet film adaptation of the Moomins. Her reception of the Order of the Smile from Polish children underscores the profound cultural resonance of her creations, yet it is crucial to acknowledge that Jansson’s audience extended well beyond children, shaping collective imaginations across ages and cultures. This paper argues that Jansson’s oeuvre functions as a sophisticated response to existential and societal crises, beginning with the origins of the Moomin narratives during the turmoil of World War II. Her storyworlds interweave motifs of catastrophe, resilience, environmental sensitivity, and the coexistence of human and non-human agents. Anchored in Scandinavian aesthetic principles of simplicity and clarity of design, her transmedia narratives offer meditative reflections on survival, communal belonging, and ethical cohabitation in a fragile world. Employing interdisciplinary perspectives from narratology, media theory, and environmental humanities, the presentation situates Jansson as a cultural mediator whose multifaceted storytelling continues to articulate forms of hope and ethical imagination amid global challenges of the twenty-first century. Keywords: transmedia storytelling, Tove Jansson, narratology, media theory, stories

**Bio:** Jarosław Pluciennik is a full professor of the humanities at the University of Łódź, specialising in cognitive literary studies, cultural history and theory, and literary criticism. He has authored eight books and over 180 scholarly articles, and has edited numerous academic volumes. His research focuses on narrative theory, cognitive poetics, and the cultural history of modernity. He has conducted research at leading institutions across Europe, including Lund University and the University of Cambridge. Between 2012 and 2016, he served as Vice-Rector for Education at the University of Łódź and later as the Rector's Plenipotentiary for Open Educational Resources until 2020. He actively participates in international research networks, including Erasmus+ projects and the UNIC alliance. Currently, he co-leads research on transmedia storytelling and the cultural impact of the Moomin universe, in collaboration with Pirjo Suvilehto (Oulu University, Finland). His academic work explores the intersections of storytelling, media ecology, and social values such as kindness, resilience, and cultural memory.

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3. **Carlotta Susca, Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro, Italy (online)**  
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“Nostalgia for an Invented Past: Teaching the English Regency through Bridgerton”

**Abstract:** This paper explores the use of storytelling, particularly through popular media, as an effective educational tool in teaching cultural and historical content. Drawing on a case study from a university course on English culture and civilization, I examine how the Netflix series *Bridgerton*—with its distinctive reimagining of the Regency era—was used to engage students in a critical exploration of early 19th-century Britain. Rather than presenting *Bridgerton* as a faithful historical representation, the course leveraged the show’s deliberate anachronisms and revisionist approach—especially in terms of race and gender—to highlight the gap between historical fact and narrative fiction. This approach opened space for deeper discussion on issues such as the roles and rights of women, the realities of racism and colonialism, and the socio-political structure of the time. By analyzing key scenes from the series alongside historical documents, students were encouraged to question whose stories are told, how they are told, and what is at stake in telling them differently. The pedagogical goal was not merely to correct misconceptions, but to foster historical empathy and critical awareness of how cultural memory is constructed. In this context, the course also addressed the instrumental use of historical nostalgia in contemporary politics—such as the evocation of a glorified British past during the Brexit campaign to support the Leave vote—as a way to show how selective narratives of the past can be mobilized to shape present ideologies. This paper argues that integrating popular storytelling into academic contexts can enrich students’ learning experiences by making historical inquiry more accessible, relatable, and reflective. It also discusses some of the challenges and benefits of using controversial or stylized representations in the classroom, and offers practical strategies for educators seeking to combine narrative media with rigorous historical analysis.

**Bio:** Carlotta Susca teaches Transmedia and Interactive Storytelling at the DAMS program of the university of Bari Aldo Moro; Publishing and Crossmedia Storytelling as an interdisciplinary course at the University of Bari; English Culture and Civilization at the Bona Sforza Higher School of Language Mediation in Bari. She holds a PhD in English Literature and Comparative Literature; she serves as the editorial director of DOTS publishing house. Her research interests focus on television seriality and the transmission of classics over time. She has published the monographs: David Foster Wallace nella Casa Stregata. Una scrittura fra Postmoderno e Nuovo Realismo (Stilo 2012) and Il romanzo audiovisivo. Le serie TV come genere della narrazione (Aracne 2021).

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4. **Sanskriti Bhardwaj, University of Auckland (online)**  
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“Belonging and place for migrant teachers: Artefacts and films in arts-based narrative inquiry”

**Abstract:** With an unprecedented increase in migration to Western nations, educational lives negotiate a cross-cutting sense of belonging and place across multiple axes of social and political relations. Here, a common response is to ‘accommodate’ differences and induct, orient, and integrate the complex lives of migrants into the ‘host’ country’s grand narrative. As a migrant teacher of Indian ethnicity teaching and living in Aotearoa-New Zealand, failing to find narratives of belonging and place beyond the binaries of inclusion/ exclusion into the ‘host’ system, I decided to inquire into the storied experiences of other teachers of migrant backgrounds. To this end, I present an arts-based narrative inquiry design as a relational research methodology to construct stories of minoritised teachers’ experiences. By incorporating the aesthetic elements of storytelling, I seek to enlarge an empathetic understanding of the particularities of belonging and place for teachers in between national, ethnic and political borders. I propose to invite women teachers of Indian ethnicity in Aotearoa-New Zealand to reflect on personal-social artefacts in interviews and film discussions on an anthology feature, Kāinga, that captures Asian women’s meanings of ‘home’ in Aotearoa-New Zealand. In this way, I borrow the power of visual texts in evoking stories of experiences to arrive at the multiplicities of belonging and place for migrant communities. In the modern politics of dualities, where the violent language of meritocracy slices educational lives into achievers/falling behind, educational research pursued artistically may offer a place where people’s pluralities flourish. For teachers of migrant backgrounds, who may stand across, within and beyond any singular notions of belonging, threading storytelling and research may acknowledge more multifaceted experiences of belonging and narrate the rhizomatic nature of identities that refuse containment into simplistic narratives of ‘us’ versus ‘them.’

**Bio:** Sanskriti Bhardwaj is an Indian national living, teaching and learning on the lands of Indigenous Māori nations in Aotearoa-New Zealand. She is a current doctoral candidate at Te Pūtahi Mātauranga, Faculty of Arts and Education at the University of Auckland. She is a primary school teacher whose personal experiences energise her inquiry into the complex,

storied and subjective lives of teachers of migrant backgrounds and her commitment to bringing relational views of belonging onto the educational landscape.

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### **11:45-12:45 Keynote Session, Patricia Leavy**

**Patricia Leavy, Ph.D.**, is a world-renowned researcher and bestselling author. She has published fifty books, earning commercial and critical success in both nonfiction and fiction, and her books have been translated into many languages. Her books have garnered more than 100 awards. She has also received career awards from the New England Sociological Association, the American Creativity Association, the American Educational Research Association, the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, and the National Art Education Association. In addition to her experience as an author, Patricia has served as series creator and editor for 10 book series, partnering with 4 different publishers including Oxford University Press and Guilford Press. Through her fiction and nonfiction book series, she has vetted thousands of book proposals and helped hundreds of authors publish and market their work, including numerous bestselling and award-winning titles. A fierce author advocate, she successfully spearheaded game-changing negotiations with Brill, a global publishing house with a 300+ year history, securing better terms for all their authors. In 2022 an empowerment network gave her an award for “Leadership and Humanitarian Efforts in Literature and Publishing.” In 2024 the London Arts-Based Research Centre established “The Patricia Leavy Award for Arts-Based Research.” Patricia has been an author for nearly 25 years, full-time since 2012.

### **13:30-15:00 Parallel Sessions 2.a, 2.b, and 2.c:**

#### ***Fathers, Fandoms, and Fiction-Selves: Recasting Identity Through Media***

1. **Simon Stanton-Sharma, University of Salford, Manchester**  
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“In Search of a Father – Digital Storytelling, Archetypes, and Evolving Narratives of Fatherhood”

**Abstract:** Storytelling is central to identity formation, shaping how we understand ourselves and others. Yet, while fatherhood is a universal experience, its portrayal in film and television remains bound by archetypal storytelling tropes—the absent father, the authoritarian, or the hapless fool. *In Search of a Father* is a video essay that examines these recurring representations, exploring how storytelling constructs, reinforces, and sometimes challenges cultural perceptions of fatherhood. Through over 70 film and television examples and interviews with scholars and activists—including Adrienne Burgess (Fatherhood Institute) and Toby Reynolds (*The American Father Onscreen*, 2021), this project interrogates the intersection between myth, media, and social reality. Laura King (2012) highlights how historical narratives often exclude fathers, while Stephen Williams (2008) and Stella Bruzzi (2019) map the shifting paradigms of paternal identity in cinematic storytelling. My research builds on these frameworks, revealing a disconnect between evolving societal expectations of

fatherhood and its media portrayals. This research also situates these narratives within broader socio-political structures, considering how media representations intersect with real-world policies. Despite shifts in expectations around fatherhood, the UK has some of the lowest paternity leave provisions in Europe, with nearly half of businesses offering only the legal minimum (CIPD, 2023). These limitations reinforce outdated notions of paternal roles, mirroring and perpetuating restrictive storytelling frameworks. This paper will combine excerpts from the video essay with a critical discussion of storytelling as a mechanism that both reflects and shapes cultural narratives. Engaging with themes of archetypal storytelling and cross-genre narrative exploration, this work contributes to broader discussions on the power of storytelling in shaping identity. As contemporary works, such as *Bluey* (Ludo Studio, 2018–present) begin to challenge outdated depictions, this project asks: how can digital storytelling create new, more expansive narratives of fatherhood that better reflect lived experience?

**Bio:** I am a lecturer at the University of Salford, specialising in film and television production and serving as a research fellow on the AHRC-funded project ‘South African Modernism 1880-2020: Decolonising the English Literature A-Level.’ With over twenty-five years of experience as a filmmaker and television director, I have worked primarily at the BBC. Notably, I led the launch of the BBC’s new Africa service in Kenya, Nigeria, and Senegal, and for seven years, directed *Newsnight* on BBC 2. My recent publication is the co-authored article “The Making of All That Is Buried: Dialog, Chronotope and Decoloniality,” published last year in the *Media Practice and Education* journal. My principal research interest lies in decolonising production practices. Through my films, academic contributions, and research projects, I am committed to exploring the complexities of culture and identity with a particular focus on the Global South, while challenging conventional approaches to narrative and production.

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## 2. **Madeline Wahl, Independent** [madelinewahl@gmail.com](mailto:madelinewahl@gmail.com)

“I opened my mouth to say her name, but no sound came out. I’m a person who stutters and I teleported in the midst of stuttering; I never said goodbye.”: Narrative arcs, fan fiction, and stuttering in *Doctor Who*’s multi-part episode “Silence in the Library” and “Forest of the Dead”

**Abstract:** Fanfiction, according to Bronwen Thomas in *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*, “refers to stories produced by fans based on plot lines and characters from either a single source text or else a ‘canon’ of works.” In BBC’s 2005 reboot of the beloved science fiction television show *Doctor Who*, main character The Doctor travels on adventures through time and space. This paper will explore my own storytelling in writing a piece of flash fanfiction for a *Doctor Who* charity anthology published by Altrix Books called *Shadow of the Gallifreyan*. My fanfiction refers to the two-part episodes “Silence in the Library” and “Forest of the Dead.” In these episodes, The Doctor and Donna Noble, his companion, land on a seemingly uninhabited planet. After a brief experience in virtual reality, Donna is brought back to the planet. She thinks her husband, who stutters, isn’t real.

However, he's a real human. In a heartbreaking moment, he sees her but can't shout her name because of his stutter. He's transported from the world without making contact. Stuttering, according to the National Institute of Health in the UK, is "is a speech disorder characterized by repetition of sounds, syllables, or words; prolongation of sounds; and interruptions in speech known as blocks." By writing fanfiction, I attempted to course-correct the ableist view of stuttering in the show. In my writing, I continue his storyline through his perspective as he works through his disability, show how he finds a wife of his own who respects him, and then becomes a father of two children. While fanfiction is a relatively new phenomenon, this paper will argue that it is a crucial part to creative expression and highlights how fans of a particular work can continue the storytelling of beloved characters through narrative arcs.

**Bio:** Madeline Wahl (she/her) recently completed her MLitt in Fantasy Literature at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. Previously, she has held editorial positions at Reader's Digest, HuffPost, and Golf Channel. She was a speaker at the Australian Speak Easy Association's online 2020 conference and has previously written about stuttering for The Stuttering Foundation. She holds a BA in Advertising/Public Relations with a minor in Psychology and a minor in English-Writing from the University of Central Florida. She is working on her first novel in YA Fantasy and her first nonfiction book proposal on millennial caregiving.

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### 3. **Jane Topping, Glasgow School of Art (online)** [j.topping@gsa.ac.uk](mailto:j.topping@gsa.ac.uk)

"Who's nou? How one story used television to summon a non-human fiction-self device for the author"

**Abstract:** My short film titled *nou* (18 minutes, 2018) is part of an art practice which uses established methodologies of appropriation, the cut-up and collage in order to speculate new worlds and new beings. When I was a child, I was hypnotised by my dentist. Using a narrative involving rabbits being chased by a fox as an induction to hypnosis, my dentist gave me a filling, without anaesthetic. The event was filmed by the BBC and broadcast on television in the UK as part of the documentary *Hypnosis and Healing* (1982). Much of my art practice uses this piece of television footage as a tool of change and as an opportunity to discuss resonances and readings of existing cultural objects such as films, books, and biographies. A response to Naomi Mitchison's feminist science fiction novel *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* (1962), *nou* is a tale of space travel, hypnosis and transformation in which the protagonist nou leaves her home planet, travels through a kaleidoscopic tunnel only to emerge in the tooth of a child who has been hypnotised by her dentist. The film performs the well-known science fiction trope of alien invasion, reframing it from a feminist perspective in order to foreground the fluid nature of identity. In *nou*, the BBC archive footage of childhood hypnosis is the setting for a narrative that merges bodies and creates hybridization, rendering distinctions between the artist, the hypnotized child and the alien 'nou', fuzzy. In *nou*, the television archive changes the future by mutating the artist from a human to an alien/human hybrid while reclaiming her broadcast image. This presentation will discuss how this new

hybrid being might be used as a device to drive future fictions in which she imagines her way out of the contemporary ideological framework from which she emerged. nou is available to view online here: <https://vimeo.com/266847565> - though I'd love to screen it as part of the conference if there's an opportunity.

**Bio:** I'm an artist and Lecturer on the MLitt Fine Art Practice programme at Glasgow School of Art. My interdisciplinary practice meddles with science fiction and horror, the archive and the screen, sometimes meandering towards autofiction or delving into the literature and lives of writers, including Naomi Mitchison (1897-1999). Recent outings for my practice and research include *The Cloud of Unknowing: Encounters with the UFO Phenomenon*, Mildred's Lane, New York, USA (2024), *From Glasgow to Saturn: A Literary Journal* at the University of Glasgow, Issue 52: Radical Joy Edition, Transitions: Annual Conference of Science Fiction Research Association, University of Tartu, Estonia (2024), solo exhibition *Drew Barrymore's Island Hotel from Hell*, Patricia Fleming Gallery, Glasgow (2023), *Fiction Machines IV*, Bath School of Art, Film & Media, (2023) & *Feminist Histories of the Future*, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, (2023).

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4. **Ava Wegerbauer, Carnegie Mellon University (online)**  
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“The Enlightened Avatar: Aang as the Oriental Monk Trope”

**Abstract:** Storytelling has long relied on archetypes to craft culturally compelling narratives, but these recurring representations can also reinforce racialized stereotypes. *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, an animated children's series, follows the journey of Avatar Aang as he seeks to fulfill his destiny of bringing peace to the four elemental nations and restoring balance to a fractured, war-torn world. While the television show specifically engages with Asian philosophies—such as spiritual enlightenment, harmony, and a deep connection to nature—it simultaneously reflects a broader cultural tendency to reduce Eastern cultures to symbols of wisdom for Western consumption. This study draws from Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Jane Iwamura's *Virtual Orientalism*, focusing on the “Oriental Monk” archetype, which idealizes Eastern figures as wise, pacifist guides while stripping them of cultural specificity. I argue that although Aang diverges from aspects of this archetype, he ultimately embodies the Western ideal of a non-violent, spiritual figure rooted in Eastern traditions. By analyzing his characterization, this study interrogates how archetypes evolve within contemporary storytelling and how they shape cross-cultural perceptions in popular media. This study concludes that Aang's portrayal aligns with Western fantasies of spiritual Asianness, thus reinforcing racialized aesthetics of equanimity and pacifism.

**Bio:** Ava Wegerbauer (she/her) is a Master of Arts student in the Department of English at Carnegie Mellon University. Her research focuses on African and Caribbean postcolonial and African American literature, focusing on narratology and the hybridization of race, identity, and animality. Her work utilizes interdisciplinary sources and methods to examine how

marginalized communities are portrayed across various mediums. She is interested in the portrayal of race in popular culture—particularly within comic books and television shows—exploring how these recurring representations often perpetuate racialized stereotypes that distort and confine complex cultures.

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### *Stories That Heal: Narrative Medicine, Environment, and Disability*

#### 1. **Anika Sahni, Imperial College London, King's College London (online)** [anikasahni23@gmail.com](mailto:anikasahni23@gmail.com)

“The Pedagogy of Storytelling in Medicine: Preparing students to enhance patient-centred care”

**Abstract:** Pedagogy refers to the method and practice of teaching. In medicine, education is a lifelong endeavour that encompasses both theoretical knowledge and its practical application. Good medical practice, as defined by the General Medical Council (GMC), is a framework that outlines what is expected from doctors in their professional responsibilities. It emphasises that doctors must involve patients in decision making, demonstrate compassion, and understand patients’ experiences. It also highlights the importance of doctors caring for their own health and well-being, as this is integral to sustaining effective and empathetic patient care. While medicine is traditionally rooted in the biomedical sciences, storytelling offers an underutilised yet valuable pedagogical method to develop the skills outlined in Good medical practice to support patient centred care. In medicine, the importance of storytelling for patients is recognised as “narrative-based medicine”, which aims to promote empathy and individualised care. While the value of narrative-based medicine is recognised, it can sometimes be overlooked in favour of scientific measurements of illness. Additionally, the importance of storytelling for physicians and medical students is still rarely discussed despite its role in fostering reflective practice and helping professionals process emotional experiences. This study explores the value of storytelling for 3 groups; patient, physician and medical student, using collaborative auto-ethnography of a fifth-year medical student and a medical education researcher based at Imperial College London UK. Through the analysis of the lived experiences of the student studying medical humanities and attending clinical placement, we reflect on the value of storytelling as a tool for connection, catharsis, expression, and learning. We argue that these uses of storytelling come together to integrate book and practical knowledge, creating compassionate and competent medical professionals committed to the overarching goal of better patient care.

**Bio:** Dr. Ana Baptista is Principal Teaching Fellow and Strategic Lead for Medical Education Transformation at the Faculty of Medicine at Imperial College London (UK). Ana leads on the new MBBS curriculum evaluation, being particularly interested in examining its impact on the development of students’ professional identity. Ana is interested in less ‘conventional’ research methodologies in Higher Education research that illuminate students’ and staff diverse and enriching experiences. Autoethnography is one of those research methods as it provides a great potential to access powerful stories. Ana is particularly interested in

storytelling when understanding medical students' learning journeys by becoming doctors. Anika Sahni is a final year medical student at King's College London. She intercalated at Imperial College London, completing a Bachelor of Science in Medical Humanities, Philosophy and Law. She is interested in the intersection between medicine and the human condition. She is interested in understanding the emotional dimensions of medicine through personal narrative with the goal of improving patient care.

2. **Vitalija Povilaityte Petri, Brussels Health Gardens (online)**  
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“Touching and being touched by the Senne river”

**Abstract:** In 2019 I co-created a transdisciplinary research project “Brussels Health Gardens” where we are exploring new possibilities to increase urban resilience by experimenting diverse ways of healing, learning and living with plants. Through time this project shifted towards multispecies interactions, more-than-human health practices and moved closer to water by co-creating collaborations with various local learning communities. One of them is “STILL HERE - An Alliance of Care for the Senne River”. The Senne river flows in three Belgian regions: Wallonia, Brussels and Flanders. Due to intense urbanisation the bed of the river was changed in many places and Senne was almost completely covered by 1871 in Brussels. The underground waterways have been created with possibilities to use it as the spin of the sewage network. As a response to global warming part of the Senne will be uncovered in 2025 aiming to establish a non-exploitative coexistence between the Brussels inhabitants and its waters. The “STILL HERE - An Alliance of Care for the Senne River” is rooted in Natural Contract Lab work which explores what forms of care are possible by paying attention to relationship with river by feeling, being present with and sensing the river and moving beyond human representation of river rights. This art-based participatory research aims to explore local social dynamics and invites people to engage into performing arts by sensing river landscapes, connecting to lived experiences, grieving of what we lost, remembering and immersing into storytelling. Participatory walks prepared by the leading project artists Maria Lucia Cruz Correia and Vinny Jones are based on site-sensitive scores that help to align our sensory scores to other participants, plants, wind, light, soil, birds to follow the rhythms of the water and the surrounding land by creating spaces for togetherness and mutual care. As a participant and researcher, I am exploring what relationships we are experiencing with non-human creatures of Senne river, especially plants, and how those relationships change our perception how we participate in Brussels life and on-going urbanisation processes, especially uncovering of river in Max-sur-Zenne project. My focus on plant life questions what species are co-habiting with Senne river, how climatic changes and distorted by climate change plant phenology is observed in river ecosystems, if at all. In this study I am engaging through participant observation and autoethnography as main research methods. In this paper I will present results from my observations of 6 walks with Senne river and Agora meeting that happened in 2024. I will share in more detail my own experiences how spending time with Senne river is shifting my perception and stories about myself, Brussels, Senne river, water and climate change. Participation in this project awakened our personal and collective curiosity to study history of Senne river and follow

on-going research on social conflicts, urbanisation process around Senner river and new studies of cartography as well as completion of geoarchaeological and archaeobotanical data.

**Bio:** Dr. Vitalija Povilaityte-Petri is a pharmacist, transdisciplinary researcher, kin gardener, storyteller and co-creator in urban communities focusing on nature-based health practices for resilience and personal exploration in possible becoming. In her work she is focusing on relational lived experiences shared between humans and plants.

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### 3. **Joan Leotta, Independent (online)**

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“Kindness Counts”

**Abstract:** “Kindness Counts” is a set of folktales where kindness is the central focus. Joan will be performing tales taken from various world folktale sources, where one will likely be a story she will present in June at the Hans Christian Andersen Statue in Central Park in NYC in June

**Bio:** Joan Leotta plays with words on page and stage. Internationally published, including in *Lothlorien*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *One Art*, *Indelible*, and others as essayist, poet, short story writer, and novelist, she’s a two-time nominee for Pushcart and Best of the Net, has been a nominee for Western Peace Prize, and was a 2022 runner-up in Robert Frost Competition. Joan also performs folk and personal tales of food, family, strong women, and Italian folklore, on stages across the country and in UK and Europe. She also offers a one woman show bringing Louisa May Alcott to today’s audiences. She is on the LABRC’s *Indelible* Board and has taught writing and story performance for North Dakota and Brunswick County NC Humanities and at many conferences.

You can find her on Facebook, Joan Leotta, or contact her at [joanleotta@gmail.com](mailto:joanleotta@gmail.com) regarding her writing, to arrange a story performance, or to “meet” with Louisa May Alcott.

**Social media:** Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/joanleotta>, X- @joanleottawrite

### 4. **Melike Irem ALHAS, TED University (online)**

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“Who Gets to Tell the Story? Subverting the Disabled Victim Archetype through Sign, Description, and Metatheatrical Strategies”

**Abstract:** This paper asks, “Who gets to tell the story?” by examining how Kaite O’Reilly’s play, *peeling* (2016), disrupts ableist theatrical conventions and subverts the persistent archetype of the disabled person as tragic victim. Through the integrated use of sign

language, audio description, and metatheatrical strategies, O'Reilly challenges the dominant narrative prosthesis that reduces disabled characters to metaphors or moral lessons. Instead, she presents protagonists who are irreverent, difficult, sexual, and ordinary—resisting the expectation that disabled figures must elicit pity, inspiration, or symbolic meaning. Peeling does not merely incorporate access tools; it embeds them into the dramaturgical structure, treating British Sign Language and audio description as theatrical languages in their own right. This formal commitment to accessibility reorients narrative authority, privileges d/Deaf spectatorship, and unsettles phonocentric and ableist assumptions about language and representation. The play's metatheatrical strategies further resist the tragic victim archetype by confronting spectators directly, exposing the mechanisms of narrative reduction and the power dynamics of the theatrical gaze. Characters refuse to be metaphors or objects of instruction, instead asserting their presence as speaking, signing, watching subjects. O'Reilly's peeling thus offers a radical departure from normative storytelling. By dismantling ableist archetypes and reimagining form through disability aesthetics, the play reclaims storytelling as a space of complexity, challenge, and inclusive transformation.

**Bio:** Melike İrem Alhas is a lecturer in TED University (Ankara, Türkiye). Her research interests are disability studies, British drama and digital humanities. She received her bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature and MA degree in British Cultural Studies from Hacettepe University (Ankara, Türkiye). Currently, she is a PhD candidate in English Culture and Literature doctoral program in Atılım University (Ankara, Türkiye). In 2023, she studied at Lancaster University (UK) in the Department of Languages and Cultures as a visiting research student, courtesy of a TÜBİTAK (Türkiye) scholarship.

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### *Spectral Frames: Cinema, Archetype, and the Poetics of Vision*

1. **Ava Witonsky, Film and Media Studies (Emergent Media) Columbia University (online)**  
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“Projections Lumineuses: Magic Lantern Performance in the 21st Century”

**Abstract:** As I pull focus on its accordion gills, my magic lantern constellates a centuries-old borealis of hand-painted glass. Suddenly, before a crowd of seated cinephiles and their cell phones, a Marian apparition dazzles in oil hues of cerulean and eggshell divinity. My hands move slowly, careful not to graze the lamp's house of searing cast iron. It is early December of 2022, and I am performing as a magic lanternist during the second night of the Mono No Aware Expanded Cinema Festival. True to cultural anthropologist Hannah Gould's evocation of mono no aware (もののあはれ) as “pathos for the passing of things,” my work with the magic lantern continually attunes me to the care demanded by a bulky and blistering medium living long past its spectacular heyday. What transmedial approaches to storytelling open up to magic lanternists working in the 21st century? Working with a media archaeological

approach, how might magic lanternists introduce new audiences to different assemblages of visual, audible, and sensory experience? And crucially, how can we understand magic lantern performances not merely as a precursor to the cinematic, but as dynamic, enduring practices "still in the process of becoming"?

**Bio:** Ava Witonsky is a writer, magic lanternist, and analog film artist currently researching children and film labor as a Film and Media Studies Master's student at Columbia University. She has contributed to ScreenSlate and to programs at Light Industry, Arverne Cinema, Anthology Film Archives, Film-Makers' Cooperative, cinemóvil, and Microscope Gallery.

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2. **Ahmad Hayat, University of Tennessee, Knoxville (online)**  
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“Carving the Creative Vision”

**Abstract:** This is documentary film about a blind woodworker who works and teaches amongst a local community of artists in East Tennessee. With a focus on the unique nature of his creative process, the film explores how his distinct teaching style highlights that his blindness is not a limitation but instead details how art can be more than a visual medium

**Bio:** Dr. Hayat is an Assistant Professor of Journalism and Media at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He is also a television producer, known for creating documentaries for KTV2 and serving as a script analyst for Hollywood movie studios, Eclectic Pictures and The Hideaway Entertainment. His recent short film, *Carving The Creative Vision* (2025), has won an award of excellence at this year's Broadcast Education Association's Festival of Media Arts. Dr. Hayat's research focuses on the commissioning process of TV series with special interest in Arab and American programming. His research is published in prestigious academic journals, and his latest publications have focused on the complex development of slasher killers and representations of mental disorder in slasher shows.

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3. **Alexander Green, Oregon State University (online)**  
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“The Cinematic Golem and Its Descendants: Judaism, Expressionism, Sci-Fi, and Scissors”

**Abstract:** The tale of Rabbi Loew and the Golem of Prague has inspired countless science-fiction appropriations and comparisons over the last few centuries. Scholars have long noted the striking similarities between the creation and social condition of the Golem and Frankenstein's Creature, and theories abound as to Mary Shelley's potential exposure to Golem folktales (Bertman 2015, Davidson 1995). Both stories concern the godless animation

of a man of artificial origin and the complex subject-creator dynamic therein. In the cinema, James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931) has an additional layer of connections to Paul Wegener's *Der Golem, wie er in die Welt kam* (1920) in its liberal borrowing of Expressionist visual style alongside its preexisting Golem-esque essence. While the tale of the Golem of Prague has traditionally served as one of Jewish empowerment and resourcefulness in the face of adversity, cinematic appropriations have opted for a horrific reading ostensibly inherent within this class of beings, leading to a common set of narrative and thematic beats between Wegener's and Whale's respective films as well as *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (1920) – each of which Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands* (1990) nods to in one way or another. The “Other-ization” of Golem-esque beings in film generally implies that this Other is deserving of hostility or persecution because of its “imperfect” state of existence, that these imperfections must accompany an intrinsic moral failing or ineptitude. *Edward Scissorhands*, however, goes to great lengths to “de-monsterize” this Golem-esque Other by revising, point by point, its imposed cinematic archetype. In this conference, I break down the evolution of the folkloric Golem of Prague into science-fiction staple by way of German Expressionist cinema as well as the ways in which *Edward Scissorhands* represents the reflexive culmination of a cycle that had, up to that point, uncritically conflated “imperfection” with “monster.”

**Bio:** Alexander Green holds a B.S. in Film from Portland State University and is currently a first-year M.A. student in English (with an emphasis in Film and Visual Studies) at Oregon State University. His primary research interest concerns the identification and extrapolation of narrative and thematic archetypes within German expressionist cinema that have gone unnoticed in favor of studying and charting the movement's prevailing influential visual style. He hopes to demonstrate the ways in which these archetypes have accompanied Expressionist visual influence through contemporary Expressionist-descended cinema, both implicitly and explicitly. Broadly speaking, Alexander is also interested in researching film and fascism, silent slapstick comedy, and various national cinematic movements towards realism. Once he completes his Master's degree, Alexander plans to pursue a PhD in Film and, ultimately, hopes to become a Professor of Film so that he can finally be the one who decides which movies students are forced to watch.

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4. **Ayushi Pandey, FLAME University (online)**  
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“Map of the Concept Album: Co-opting Jungian Archetypes and Greek Myths to Create Fictional Personae in BTS' Discography”

**Abstract:** BTS are the biggest group to emerge from the K-pop industry. Their discography is laden with references to Greek mythology in songs like “Blood, Sweat and Tears” and “Fake Love”. However, in 2019, they took their mythical storytelling to another level by

creating album(s) around Carl Jung’s archetypes of the persona and shadow. The album is called “Map of the Soul: Persona” and includes songs like “Intro: Persona” and “Dionysus”, drawing direct inspiration from the Greek god of the same name. A companion album in 2020 called “Map of the Soul: 7” includes songs from “Persona” and completes the storyline by including “Interlude: Shadow”, corresponding to the Jungian framework. They even performed as seven Greek gods for their 2019 Melon Music Awards performance. Their performance incorporates elements from Dionysian rituals. This paper analyses the use of mythic archetypes of persona and shadow from Jungian psychology and myth-ritualist theory to analyse on-stage performances. This methodology is important to demonstrate the use of mythology in creating concept albums in popular culture. It makes the myths and the theories that help analyse these myths more accessible to general audiences, instead of keeping them gatekept in classics. The theories still offer us useful lenses to understand themes behind storyboarding and creating a concept album. In doing so, the artists equate themselves with the archetypes, using the myths to talk about their personal experiences in the album(s). While previous research has focused on analysing archetypes in “Blood, Sweat and Tears” and “Fake Love”, this paper aims to use other approaches, like the myth-ritualist theory, to offer a larger analysis of Greek myths in BTS’ discography. This also demonstrates how a myth’s story and language are co-opted to narrate one’s personal experiences through a music album, proving their broad applicability.

**Bio:** Ayushi Pandey has recently graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Literary and Cultural Studies and a Postgraduate Diploma in Interdisciplinary Studies and Research from FLAME University, India. Their research primarily focuses on queer studies with a focus on the current queer publishing landscape in India and South Asia. They have previously presented their research on the authenticity of queer Indian experiences portrayed in media at the University of Mississippi. Recently, they presented their paper on the reconstruction of familial and individual selves through memory in the works of South Asian women poets at Cambridge University in the Women Who Create conference. Their undergraduate dissertation aims to deconstruct the anatomy of the South Asian queer poem and in doing so, create a guided, critical framework to read and analyse queer poetry that emerges from this region. They are looking to pursue either Publishing, World Literatures in English, or Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies for their Master's.

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**15:00-15:15 Break**

**15:15-16:45 Parallel Sessions 3.a, 3.b, and 3.c**

### *Thresholds of the Psyche: Storytelling, Survival, and Selfhood*

1. **Syazwani Farahin Jefferdin, University Nottingham Malaysia**  
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“The Room: Storytelling at the Threshold of the Unconscious”

**Abstract:** The art of storytelling is an experience that is unique to each person. For some, stories arrive as sudden as summer storms, for others, as natural as breath. Sometimes, they

are as stubborn as a mule- refusing to yield onto the pages. In my case, storytelling is dipping my hands into the threshold of the unconscious where the in-between memories lie, the unforgotten emotions unfold, and the trinkets of ideas begin to glimmer. Sometimes, I draw out something solid and firm. Sometimes, they slip through my fingers like water. Sometimes, I scoop out nothing at all. This presentation is one of those findings: a performed reading of my short story, *The Room*, which follows two friends observing an oddity taking place across their flat. I explore *The Room* as an archetype of the unconscious- both a setting and a presence that watches, waits, and repeats. Born from that liminal space, the story invites listeners to sit inside uncertainty, to follow the narrative as it folds back on itself, and to linger in the spaces between what is remembered and what remains unsaid. In this framing, storytelling becomes a form of return: not just to memory, but to the consequences we narrate again and again without resolution. This reading invites the audience to experience storytelling as haunting — not just in a sense of horror, but in how it mimics the mind’s tendency to trap moments in emotional amber. *The Room* is not just a place. It is a loop. A reckoning. A quiet question, asked again and again: “What lights?”

**Bio:** Syazwani Farahin Jefferdin began writing at the tender age of nine and has since never put down her pen. She is a talented writer known for her captivating storytelling and thought-provoking prose and poetry. She is currently doing her PhD in English- Creative Writing in the University of Nottingham Malaysia, focusing on interweaving Malaysian culture and mythology in her high fantasy research/novel. She also teaches English literature and linguistics at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). With a passion for speculative literature that began at a young age, Syazwani has honed her craft over the years, creating works that transport readers to new worlds and explore the depths of human emotion. As a new author, she has published a novella, a short story, and an artwork in both print and online publications, earning recognition for her ability to engage, entertain, and inspire readers. Her academic and creative presentations have been accepted at two LABRC conferences and at the 30th Iligan National Writers Workshop (INWW) in the Philippines. When Syazwani isn't lost in the world of words, she can be found drawing, painting, reading, updating her character playlist and Pinterest board, or entertaining her cats.

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## 2. **Mabel Verstraaten-Bortier, Middlesex University** [borteleyb@hotmail.com](mailto:borteleyb@hotmail.com)

“Storying my Life @50 in Five Archetypal Sketches”

**Abstract:** These are the stories of my life upon turning 50. Storytelling can be a therapeutic tool for writing ourselves into becoming well. Stories are the way in which we make sense of ourselves and the world around us. The stories we tell, tell where we have been and foretell where our life's trajectory may lead us. Reflecting on my life so far, it becomes clear that my life can be divided up into tidy 25's. The first 25, being my maiden years, the second 25 being my active mothering, homeschooling, and doctoral degree years. And now I've just stepped onto the beautiful threshold of my third 25. My autoethnographic sketches start with "The Pause" - a story of biology, one that my aging body is telling me, or rather I in conversation with her. That is followed by stories of living in community - a not-so-welcoming one. "A

leper's Healing" is about the stories others tell and the story I'm telling in response to the not-so-truthful one told of me. It's a story of the phoenix rising from the ashes. The maiden, and the mothering years were filled with the drilling gaze of others, but in the here and now, as I stand on the beautiful threshold of crone-hood, I'm in a position to return the gaze and even direct how others see me. This is elucidated in the story "Expected to be the Entertainer". These are some of the feminine archetypes I've embodied immediately leading up to, and during my 50th year on planet Earth. They are stories of where I'm at right now - On the threshold of affirmative crone-hood. This paper thus provides an example of how reflective writing of the self-using archetypal storytelling can lead to healing, wholeness, and self-empowerment.

**Bio:** I'm an existential therapist and currently a visiting lecturer at a postgraduate institution in Cameroon where I teach Advanced Couples Therapy, Ethics and Legal Issues in Psychotherapy, and Human Sexuality. In the past I have taught courses in Grief Counselling, Mental Health Policy, and Marriage & Family Therapy. I'm also an independent researcher, homeschooling mum and a trailing spouse. My research interests include therapy with suicidal clients; role of spirituality in emotional and mental wellbeing ; the use of self in therapy; the experience of being a trailing spouse, as well as other women's issues, e.g. spinsterhood, motherhood, childlessness, women's experiences in marriage, and delaying one's career to raise a family. My methodological preference is qualitative research methods with most of my current work being in retrospective autoethnographic inquiry. I am also particularly interested in the use of poetry for the dissemination of my research findings as well as the use and creation of poetry particularly in lived experience research.

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3. **Damina Khaira, Harvard University (online)**  
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“Randau Ruai and the Everyday: Storying Otherwise from a Longhouse in Borneo”

**Abstract:** Anthropological and popular framings of Indigenous communities in the global South often depict Indigenous life through the lens of structural forces—colonialism, the nation-state, modernization. When it comes to storytelling, these representations tend to focus on ceremonial traditions, often constrained within narratives of loss, disappearance, and degradation. But what stories are we telling about Indigenous life—and what archetypes are being produced through this singular lens? If we shift our attention from the ceremonial to the everyday, a different picture of Indigenous experiences begins to emerge. Drawing from eighteen months of fieldwork in an Iban longhouse community in upriver Sarawak, Malaysian Borneo, I explore Randau Ruai (lit. “wandering creeper”), a practice of informal, “intertwined talk” that unfolds on the communal verandah. These exchanges span a wide range of topics, from oral history and farming knowledge to food preparation and childhood memories. Due to its fluid, unstructured nature, Randau Ruai has often been overlooked by scholars, and dismissed in popular discourse as mere chit chat. Through personal and fieldwork-based reflections on listening to elder women share stories layered with care and memory, I position Randau Ruai not as mere small talk but as a living archive of shared life. Blending ethnographic vignettes with creative prose, my presentation invites us to consider

Randau Ruai as both a practice and a way of thinking—a storytelling form that invites ways of knowing otherwise, one that resists fixed labels and makes space for many voices. Ultimately, I invite reflection on storytelling as a way of reimagining self, each other, belonging, and community across disciplines and borders.

**Bio:** Damina Khaira is the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies and a lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University, where she draws inspiration from the curiosity and engagement of her students. Before academia, she practiced law and worked in heritage conservation and humanitarian aid. Her research focuses on storytelling, aging, and cultural transmission, while her creative work explores the textures of everyday life in Malaysia, her home country. Weaving ethnographic insight with narrative and image, she sees creative ethnography as a bridge, one that makes research more intellectually enriching, emotionally resonant, and accessible to diverse audiences.

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4. **Anna Chiari, The University of Edinburgh (online)**  
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“Storytelling as a Therapeutic Tool: Repetition, Survival, and the Narrative Drive in Trauma Theory”

**Abstract:** This paper investigates storytelling as a mode of survival and a therapeutic tool for the working-through of trauma, with particular reference to Freudian psychoanalysis and its legacy in contemporary trauma theory. Through close readings of Jonathan Safran Foer’s *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, Primo Levi’s Holocaust testimony (*If This Is a Man*, *The Drowned and the Saved*), and Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, I argue that storytelling functions as a compulsion to survive by speaking. These texts articulate the unbearable aftermath of survival, a moment of crisis where narration becomes both a psychic necessity and a tool for meaning-making. Both fictional and testimonial voices exhibit a narrative compulsion to repeat, which Freud describes as a way to master what was never fully grasped. This repetition may appear destructive, yet it also enables a deferred form of agency and meaning-making. I argue that storytelling functions as a psychic and affective response to the “trauma of survival” itself—an often unbearable and incomprehensible aftermath that demands narration. Even when rejecting the notion of traumatic amnesia, as in Joshua Pederson’s work, the urge to narrate persists as a form of self-reconstruction. Storytelling thus emerges as an essential site of tension between symptom and strategy, pathology, and repair—a threshold between destruction and symbolic re-elaboration.

**Bio:** Anna Chiari is a PhD candidate in Comparative Literature at the University of Edinburgh. She holds a BA in English and French literatures and languages and a Joint Master’s Degree in English and American Studies from Ca’ Foscari University (Venice). Before moving to The University of Edinburgh, she specialised in Comparative Literature with an MA at UCL. Her research explores the intersectionality between trauma and gender

studies in Virginia Woolf and Marguerite Duras and analyses silence and absence as a representation of trauma and a form of feminist resistance. After spending an academic year as a visiting researcher at Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris, she now teaches English literature at the University of Edinburgh. She also works as a writer and journalist and is completing a Professional Diploma in Script Development at NFTS.

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### *Ekphrasis and the Antihero: Reimagining the Language of Image and Form*

1. **Ashley Elizabeth Trotter, Boston College (online)**  
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“Her Heart was Beating: The Literalization of the Symbol of the Heart in Jeanette Winterson’s ‘The Passion’”

**Abstract:** In her 2011 memoir *Why Be Happy When You Can Be Normal?* Jeanette Winterson writes that many of her novels developed from single-sentence lines. Her 1987 novel, *The Passion* arose from the following: “I’m telling you stories, trust me.” Imbued within this phrase are themes that pilot the novel: how stories are narratively defined/constructed and how meaning becomes resultantly rendered. As the novel progresses, Winterson establishes this phrase as a threshold between literal and fantastical worldviews, a liminal space crossed by her characters and, subsequently, her readers; this borderline becomes central to both the telling and composition of *The Passion*. This presentation traces Winterson’s utilization of this in-between space to strip conventional metaphors of their preconceived meanings, achieved by literalizing metaphors through corporeal transformation, such that the heart as conceit becomes the heart embodied. By combining lyricism and fantastical elements, and employing a fragmented narrative style, Winterson reinvents the (metaphor of the) heart. Her innovative language offers what her deconstructed plot cannot alone give: it’s not just storyline or linguistics that renders the ultimate sensuous experience, but the synthesis of both, delicately fused and overlapping, together. In adapting this narrative methodology, Winterson reimagines traditional notions of the ‘love story,’ what it means ‘to give one’s heart away,’ offering readers a visceral and emotive storytelling experience, underlining scholar Susan Cokal’s claim that “[Winterson] takes us from the acceptance of what we all know to a questioning of what [we] really put into words—the precise nature of love, and then the precise nature of the aesthetic language that expresses it and, in doing so, creates a realm apart” (Cokal 2004). The effect of this reconceptualization is Winterson’s presentation of passion as a transcendental experience perceived through the heart, an epiphany only recognized when offered across literal and fantastical lines.

**Bio:** Ashley Elizabeth Trotter is a Master’s scholar in English Literature at Boston College, where she explores the intersection of narrative, philosophy, and modernist aesthetics. Her research focuses on the ways literature constructs and reimagines memory, time, and identity, with particular attention to Marcel Proust and the broader modernist tradition. In addition to her work on Impressionist literature and artistic experimentation, Trotter is interested in the poetics of storytelling—how narrative shapes emotional landscapes, especially through metaphor and symbolism. She has presented research at Oregon State University and at the University of Cambridge as part of the LARBC Modernism Remodelled 2025 transdisciplinary conference.

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2. **Debra Edgerton, Northern Arizona University (online)**  
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“Retelling Tales: Using Visual Images to Redefine Story”

**Abstract:** Ekphrastic storytelling provides ways to connect two forms of creative processes through translating images with descriptive text/storytelling. From a visual artist perspective, I see text, the other way around, as an inspiration for my visual process. Whether reading for reference, research or just enjoying a tale, writing/text inspires my art. Retelling an existing story through visual images is a way to recapture the importance of an existing story. Toni Morrison wrote of the collective black experience and the difficulties in navigating life through the perspective of the white male power structures. However, in the past few years the US has witnessed an unsettling resurgence toward White Nationalism. Fears of losing a nostalgic “misrepresented” ideal of America is adding to a magnified disdain for people of color and those who might get in the way of hierarchical historical structures. This paranoia has led to the banning of Morrison’s books to remove a portion of the contributions of Black American culture in literary form. Therefore, can the utilization of visual images arouse a story’s importance to culture identification? In the *Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison spoke to issues of perceived beauty, desire for acceptance, repercussions of incest, and the psychological frailty of a child’s mind. Her words help shape the perspectives of the black community. In this presentation, I reimagined Morrison’s *Bluest Eye* through visual images in picture book format. Like the Brother’s Grimm’s cautionary tales, Morrison weaves a story that translates into a warning to readers of ideals that can cause harm. In true fable form, this visual interpretation could expose a new audience to stories needing to be told.

**Bio:** Debra Edgerton is an Assistant Professor in the School of Art at Northern Arizona University (NAU). Her work speak to issues concerning identity, perception, race politics, and environmental justice. And her current body of work tackles ecosystem relationships and their parallels to human existence. Ms. Edgerton received MFAs at the San Francisco Art Institute and Vermont College in Interdisciplinary Art. She has received numerous grants and awards for her work that includes but not limited to a Provost Award for Faculty Excellence in Global Learning, Commission on the Status of Women Outstanding Achievement and Contribution to Diversity, Arizona Commission on the Arts Research and Development Grant, 2022 McAllister Fellowship, VanDenburg Grant, and Contemporary Forum Artist

Grant. Professor Edgerton is a President's Distinguished Teaching Fellow at NAU and a Research Associate with the Museum of Northern Arizona.

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3. **Nat Hardy, Florida National University (online)**  
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“The Dark Ekphrastic Art of Biomarkers: A Cross-Atlantic Digital Collaboration”

**Abstract:** Collaborations tend to occur within, rather than across disciplines. This is hardly surprising given the institutional and professional bias towards specialization that exists throughout the academic world. Projects that take artists outside of their cloister are as important as they are unusual. Often the most potent collaborations are serendipitous, their workings as illusive and enigmatic as the creative process itself. As artists we must confront the implicit difficulties, hazards and demands with regards to making a career, or perhaps more importantly, defining that condition which is fundamental and right to the very marrow of one's creative being. Working hard with oneself to define a sure and certain style or 'signature' whilst familiarizing oneself with one's own enduring themes and motifs. Because artists feel driven and compelled to report on the world in a certain way, it is indeed rare therefore and perhaps unusual, to find interdisciplinary collaborations, partnerships and overlaps which do, often contrary to popular belief, locate artists of whatever 'species', solidly in the world of social beings. This conference presentation will reconsider the collaboration between poet and visual artist in an academic and performative sense. Our ongoing collaboration, “Another Place” appears in digital form on the World Wide Web and in print in arts and literary journals. Unlike many creative collaborations, however, our creative partnership has, to date, has been exclusively restricted to the virtual realm. In spite of the political chaos of our times, the innovations of modern technology has enabled two artists, who have never met in person to not only collaborate but share our work globally via the internet. Our collaboration, “Another Place” is testimony to the almost seemingly impossibilities the digital age offers to artists of any medium. Artists are now able to transcend political borders and overcome great distances to create and collaborate within a digital medium without censorship or political reprisal. The digital age is the next logical evolutionary artistic medium and “Another Place” is a positive affirmation of this new artistic reality.

**Bio:** Nat Hardy currently serves as the Division Head of Arts & Sciences at Florida National University and has over twenty years' experience in supporting higher education as an administrator and faculty member in the U.S. and Canada. Nat has held teaching and administrative positions at the Stephens College, the College of Saint Mary, the University of North Georgia, Savannah State University, Rogers State University, Oklahoma State University, Louisiana State University, the University of Alberta, and McMaster University. Nat holds a Ph.D. in English (University of Alberta), an M.Ed. in Higher Education Administration (Georgia Southern University), an M.F.A. in Creative Writing (Louisiana

State University), an M.A. in English (McMaster University) and a B.A. in English (University of Alberta).

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4. **Maria Nazaret Cano, Independent (online)**  
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“Velarte Breadsticks Antihero”

**Abstract:** VELARTE. Valencian Breadsticks Antihero. 1969. Versus. Grissini Breadsticks Hero, 1643, Italy. Bad Copy. Valencian Brand Territory. Main Feed MASKART, sensations of this product: Dry and, difficult to draw. The Valencian pyramid idiosyncrasy since now, 2025: to appear, to steal ideas and to kill the creativity. KILLART. Thief trade platform from Mediterranean Valencian area. Spain. XXI century?

**Bio:** Born in Madrid and graduated in Fine Arts in 2000 (UPV). My main skills are to draw and to conceptualize. I developed a Master programme in Advanced Interaction in 2014 (UPC). Nowadays I am working as a Computer media, design and art teacher. In this sense, I am interested in the intersection of storytelling and technology as well as to innovative, challenges, costumer experience and service and product new approaches.

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### *Mythic Maps: Archetypes, Identity, and the Journey of Story*

1. **Lilia Carpenter, Pacifica Graduate institute, US (online)**  
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Mythic Pathways: Exploring Archetypal Images in Folk Tales

**Abstract:** Folktales extend beyond mere narratives. They serve as manifestations of the collective unconscious, elucidating profound psychological truths through archetypal imagery. As a writer and researcher steeped in folklore, I have composed a collection of fairytales to examine how these narratives encapsulate the psyche’s journey towards individuation. Drawing from oral traditions, my tales incorporate timeless archetypes: the Hero, the Shadow, the Great Mother, and the Trickster, each serving as representations of unconscious forces that shape human experience. In one narrative, the ogress embodies the Devouring Mother, encapsulating a primal force that simultaneously poses a threat and catalyzes transformation. A magical horse operates as a psychopomp, facilitating the protagonist's evolution by navigating between worlds. The motifs of the ring of power, the Storm Goat’s song, and the trials of fire and water symbolize alchemical transmutation, highlighting themes of psychic death and rebirth. Employing a Jungian analytical framework, I will delineate these archetypal motifs within my tales and examine their symbolic functions in the psyche. Similar to dreams, folktales, fairytales and folklores externalize inner conflicts

and present initiation rites that mirror the individuation process. Engaging with these narratives through methodologies of active imagination and amplification allows for the exploration of myth's therapeutic and transformative capacities. This presentation will critically analyze how my folktales resonate with ancient mythic structures. They serve as a bridge between personal storytelling and the universal lexicon of the unconscious. By reclaiming these symbolic narratives, we can invoke the living myth, fostering a reawakening that guides us toward enhanced self-awareness and psychological wholeness.

**Bio:** Lilia Carpenter is a PhD candidate at Pacifica Graduate Institute, specializing in Depth Psychology with an emphasis on Jungian and Archetypal Studies. Her research explores myth, folklore, alchemical symbolism, and the intersection of dreams and the collective unconscious. As a research analyst, she examines the psychological structures within mythic narratives, tracing their resonance in personal transformation and cultural storytelling. Beyond academia, she is a storyteller who crafts original folk tales infused with archetypal imagery and initiatory themes. She is also a hypnotherapist who specializes in past-life regression and dream analysis, working with the psyche's symbolic language to facilitate personal growth. Her work integrates Tarot, Kabbalah, and alchemical traditions, offering a unique lens on the mythic imagination as a tool for individuation. She is currently developing a Tarot deck and a book on esoteric symbolism, weaving together depth psychology, mysticism, and storytelling.

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2. **Katie Clausen, Dominican University, CST (online)**  
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“From Fragments to Fairy Tales: Reclaiming Self through Story”

**Abstract:** Timeless and transformative, fairy tales endure because of their intrinsic ability to shapeshift. Brimming with archetypal imagery, these stories serve as pliable vessels of meaning, offering liminal space where fragmented identities can be explored and reassembled. Drawing from Dr. Richard Schwartz's Internal Family Systems (IFS) theory, this presentation illuminates how the fairy tale narrative can serve as an externalized mirror that reflects the fragmented yet interconnected aspect of the psyche. By offering narrative distance, fairy tales provide safe avenues for individuals to recognize the multiplicity of their inner world, integrate disparate parts of themselves, and build a pathway toward transformation. As mental health awareness grows and society grapples with a crisis of identity and belonging, contemporary culture has increasingly embraced the IFS framework as a means of understanding the self. The modern sociopolitical landscape frequently frames ideas and identities in terms of absolutes, leaving little room for the complexity and intersectionality of lived experiences. The liminal nature of fairy tales provides opportunities to navigate between polarities—between visible and hidden, human and beast, villain and victim, self and other—by engaging archetypes as intermediaries. Rather than identifying characters as purely dialectical or divided figures, this presentation examines complexities and subtleties found between narrative extremes. An original spoken-word poem will

illustrate the integration of scholarly theory and creative practice, exploring themes of escape, survival, and the cost of women's silence. Most importantly, it will reveal the transformative power of breaking that silence—turning fairy tales into tools for integration and reclamation.

**Bio:** Katie Clausen is a scholar-artist, PhD candidate, and instructor at Dominican University in Chicago. Her work merges feminist cultural studies, fairy-tale studies, and narrative identity. She has published in Sand Hills Magazine and has an essay forthcoming in a Fulcrum Publishers anthology. In 2023, Katie presented her research on Grimm's ATU 510B at Brown University; her article on the topic will appear in *Marvels and Tales* in 2025. She holds an MA/MFA from Simmons University and an MLIS from Dominican, and in 2023 she received the Ellin Greene Folklore Research Scholarship and the Clarke Historical Library International Research Grant.

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3. **Padmini Sukumaran, Kean University (online)**  
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“The Arc in Archetype: Tracing Story and Identity Transformations in *The Faerie Queene*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Sleeping Beauty*”

**Abstract:** This Presentation explores how Classical-Narratives from Epic-Poetry, Drama, and Classical-Ballet engage with and complicate Fairy-Tale character-types, revealing archetypes not as static roles but as evolving, multi-dimensional energies. By focusing-upon Britomart in Sir Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Juliet in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, and Aurora in Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty*, I trace how character and story arcs work in tandem to depict interior-transformation, fate, and symbolic-resolution. These heroines traverse overlapping -archetypes—accordingly illustrating that individuals within stories are not bound to a single type, but embody shifting-roles in response to desire, loss, magic, and destiny. Britomart's journey exemplifies a symbolic-exploration of the tension between chastity and desire, with her inner-psyche divided into personifications of purity (Belphoebe) and relational love (Amoret); and her ultimate resolution lies in a beautiful balance between the two. This internal conflict shapes her development, illustrating how multiple archetypes can coexist within a single character. Juliet, often viewed as a tragic figure, is a plume-ingénue—a wise-innocent who embodies both youthful idealism and insightful maturity; navigating love with a clarity of purpose beyond naïveté. Aurora's symbolic-arc—cursed, silenced, and reawakened—mirrors psychological and mythic patterns of transformation, with surrounding figures like the Lilac Fairy and Carabosse echoing the timeless roles of the magical helper and dark enchantress. By analyzing these figures through the lens of fairy-tale character types and narrative progression, this paper proposes a fluid, arc-centered understanding of archetypes that accounts for character complexity and emotional resonance. Ultimately, it argues that the enduring power of fairy tales lies not only in the roles they define—but in the ways those roles are reshaped through the arcs of story, psyche, and time.

**Bio:** Dr. Padmini Sukumaran has an English Literature Doctoral Degree from St. John's University, which she earned during the Fall Semester of 2015; and her Dissertation is

entitled, “The Inner-Fairy: Reason and Imagination in The Faerie Queene and A Midsummer Night’s Dream.” Padmini really enjoys teaching World Literature, Seventeenth Century Prose and Poetry, College Composition, Process of Writing, College Writing, English I, and English II at Caldwell University, Kean University, and Union College of New Jersey; and her Scholarly Areas of Specialization are Medieval and Early Modern Romance, Fairy Tale, Fantasy, Dramatic Performance, Metafiction, Metadrama, Magic, and Psychoanalysis. She relishes participating in Academic Conferences since the Spring Semester of 2014; and she is working towards the next step of publishing her Scholarship. Padmini, in her spare time, truly loves to delve into the Creative and Performing Arts—specifically Creative Writing in the Forms of Poetry, Prose, and Drama; Classical-Ballet; Drama; and Musical-Theatre.

4. **Craig Chalquist, National University (online)**

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“Lamplighting: Change through Story, Vision, and Inspiration”

**Abstract:** “Lamplighting,” a term taken from the *Lamplighter Trilogy*, refers to how we make lasting change in the world through storytelling, reimagining, inspiration, applied wisdom, and even play. We will look at examples of lamplighting, consider the power of story to enchant change, and consider the prospects of building an inclusive mythology for our time.

**Bio:** Craig Chalquist, Ph.D., Ph.D. is program director of Consciousness, Psychology, and Transformation at National University and a former associate provost and several other administrative and leadership roles. His background includes group counseling, depth psychology, mythology, ecopsychology, and philosophy and wisdom studies. He presents, publishes, and teaches at the intersection of psyche, story, nature, reenchantment, and imagination. His motto is: “Converse with everything!” Visit Chalquist.com.

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**17:00-18:30 Parallel Sessions 4.a, 4.b, and 4.c**

***Stories We Carry, Stories We Heal: Memory, Trauma, and the Self***

1. **Anh Hua, Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at San Diego State University**  
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“How Storytelling Has Been a Healing Tool for Me in Times of Uncertainty: From Writing Poetry, Children’s Book, My Memoir, and Creative Scholarly Prose”

**Abstract:** In this presentation, I wish to explore how storytelling has been a healing tool for me in these times of uncertainty. Since I received my tenure and became an Associate Professor in 2015, about 10 years ago, I started to write more creatively, leaving behind the conventional academic writing genre. Throughout my career as a feminist Asian Diasporic artist, painter, writer, scholar, and activist, I always felt I had the room and freedom to do whatever I wanted, as long as it gave me the pleasure to be creative, to have my voice heard, to experiment with uncharted territories. After devoting 6 years trying to achieve tenure, the restriction of getting tenure made me crave for more room and space to experiment with different forms of writing. I began to write more poetry, my memoir, children's book, and personal creative scholarly prose. When the pandemic hit in March 2020 and recently in our political uncertain times, I immediately returned to my comforting desire to tell stories through poetry, my memoir, a children's book in poems, watercolour painting, and photography, as ways to heal myself. When writing scholarly books, I slide right back to my comfort zone of including personal narratives, storytelling, writing that is emotive, authentic, raw, honest and vulnerable. I didn't want to hide behind scholarly high-brow jargons and concepts with citations and footnotes and just write to release my desire and need to tell stories in beautiful lyrical languages, to capture a historical embodied moment. In this presentation, I wish to explore how storytelling and creativity have healed me by exploring the process as well as sharing excerpts from my poems, memoir, children's book and other creative acts.

**Bio:** Dr. Anh Hua received her B.A. in Cultural Anthropology and her M.A. and Ph.D. in Women's Studies at York University, Toronto, Canada. She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at San Diego State University, California. Her areas of research include Asian and Black diaspora studies, cultural studies, critical race and postcolonial feminisms, literature and film studies, arts and the humanities. She has published in the journals *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*, *Feminist Formations*, *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture*, *Asian Women*, *African and Black Diaspora*, the *Journal of International Women's Studies*, and *Canadian Woman's Studies* and in the anthologies *Diaspora, Memory, and Identity: A Search for Home and Emotion, Place and Culture*. At the moment, she is working on six book projects: *Global Healing in a Changing World*; *Decolonial Diasporic Feminisms: Literature, Film and the Arts*; *Writing Poetry While Healing from Long Covid*; *Aurora and the City of Twelve Sisters: A Children's Book in Poems*; *Ginkgo Memories: A Chinese Diasporic Feminist Memoir*; and *Cherries and Pear Nectar, My Love: A Collection of Poetry*.

## 2. Mandy Lee, Trinity College Dublin

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“Hongkongers' Letters to Home: Applying Poetic Transcription and Other Creative Presentations to Re-Tell Hongkongers' Stories of Their Experiences since 2019 from an Anonymous Online Writing Project”

**Abstract:** This paper will focus on presenting some interim findings from a narrative inquiry research project that explores the trauma, resilience, and resistance of the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement since the 2019 mass protests. The narratives for this paper came from an anonymous online writing project that captured the self-writing exercises of self-reported

Hongkongers on their experiences post 2019 which were generated through a series of writing prompts. My goal in presenting these narrative findings is three-fold: 1) to explore creative ways by which these narratives of Hongkongers could be presented that amplify their narrative power while retaining the integrity of their individual stories; 2) to consider the ethics of representation in “re-telling” these anonymous stories, where member-checking is not possible nor desirable in the context of a repressed community; 3) to showcase some of these stories themselves as told by Hongkongers through anonymous writing, to compare and contrast with other narratives that are present in the public domain where Hongkongers use a range of narrative strategies to relate their experiences in an environment where they know their words would likely be monitored by the regime. The creative analysis method I will focus on for this presentation is poetic transcription (Glesne, 1997; Yi and Mackey, 2023; Smith, 2023), with a side-bar discussion on creative juxtaposition and visual sociology.

**Bio:** Mandy Lee is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Health Policy and Management, School of Medicine, Trinity College Dublin. A sociologist of health and illness, her research interests include narrative medicine, trauma studies, and research ethics, with an increasing focus on creative/arts-based research methodologies and resilience/resistance studies. She is also a PhD Candidate (part-time) at the Sociology Department of Trinity College Dublin, pursuing a narrative inquiry project exploring the trauma, resilience, and resistance of the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement since 2019. Mandy is a co-representative of the Trinity Medical and Health Humanities (MHH) working group at the Irish Humanities Alliance (IHA). She is also on the advisory board of the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum and a member of the Trinity Centre for Resistance Studies. A Hongkonger by ethnic background, she is an Executive Board member of Art and Culture Hong Kong (ACHK), a solidarity group of artists, scholars and activists that focus on the intricate interplay between art, culture, and politics pertaining to Hong Kong. Mandy also co-founded and co-convenes the Research Ethics Conversation Series that is held jointly across Trinity College Dublin and University of Galway.

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3. **Lahab Al-Samarrai, JAMP University, (online)**  
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"The Storyteller's Cure: JAMP® Therapy and the Art of Healing Through Narrative"

**Abstract:** "The Storyteller's Cure: JAMP® Therapy and the Art of Healing Through Narrative" In many healing traditions, the healer is not just a practitioner but also a storyteller—one who helps individuals reframe their narratives to foster resilience and transformation. JAMP Therapy (Joy, Awareness, harmony, Meaning, and Peace) exemplifies this principle by integrating storytelling into therapeutic practice, recognizing that healing often emerges through the reconstruction of personal and collective stories. At its core, JAMP Therapy operates on the belief that trauma, pain, and suffering are often rooted in fragmented or disempowering narratives. The healer, as a guide, helps individuals reclaim agency by co-creating new stories—ones infused with joy, awareness, meaning, and peace. For example, a person struggling with grief may initially frame their experience as one of irreversible loss. Through JAMP, the healer gently shifts this narrative, helping them uncover moments of joy

in remembrance, awareness of their strength, meaning in their continued bonds, and peace in acceptance. The healer's role as a storyteller also extends to cultural and communal contexts. In JAMP Therapy, group sessions often involve shared storytelling, where participants witness and validate each other's journeys. This collective narrative-building fosters connection, reducing isolation and reinforcing healing as a communal act. Moreover, JAMP's emphasis on "meaning" aligns with narrative therapy's focus on how stories shape identity. By helping individuals reinterpret their struggles as chapters of growth rather than defeat, the healer empowers them to become protagonists in their own lives. Ultimately, JAMP Therapy illustrates that healing is an act of storytelling—one where the healer holds space for rewriting despair into hope, chaos into coherence, and suffering into wisdom. Through this process, both healer and client become co-authors of renewal.

**Bio:** With 25+ years of clinical experience, Dr. Lahab Al-Samarrai is a licensed psychotherapist (MA Clinical Psychology, PhD with child/adolescent specialization) who has treated individuals, couples, and families across diverse settings. A Jungian scholar studied at Chicago's Jung Institute under Dr. Murray Stein, his work was profoundly influenced by Dr. Allan Guggenbuhl's Mythodrama work, which shaped his doctoral research. An internationally recognized speaker, Dr. Lahab has presented at IAAP/IAJS conferences and lectured at the University of Zurich and Seattle Children's Hospital. His leadership as past President of the Washington Counseling Association demonstrates his commitment to advancing the field. In 2020, he revolutionized trauma treatment by developing "Jungian Advanced Motor Processing® (JAMP®)", creating three training platforms (JAMP® Training Institute, University, and Online) to certify practitioners worldwide. His published works include two books and three peer-reviewed papers on this breakthrough modality. Through the "Institute for Conflict (IFC)" – sister organization to Zurich's IKM – Dr. Lahab implements conflict resolution strategies in institutional settings while hosting popular psychology podcasts (Archetypes of Destiny, The Four Archetypes, The Magician's Call) and an annual international conference.

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4. **Kindee Dixon, JAMP University, (online)**  
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“The Stories We Tell Ourselves: The Impact of Storytelling on Trauma”

**Abstract:** This lecture explores the profound influence of the stories individuals construct about their experiences on how they process and recover from trauma. It highlights that the narratives we create about our trauma—whether we view them as sources of personal strength or as insurmountable challenges—play a pivotal role in shaping our psychological and emotional outcomes. We will explore the concept of "narrative identity," where people integrate traumatic events into their life stories, thus framing their understanding of who they are. Positive or coherent narratives can foster resilience and healing, whereas fragmented or negative stories may contribute to prolonged distress or maladaptive coping. The information from this lecture draws from psychological theories and trauma research to demonstrate that

the way people interpret and retell their traumatic experiences can either reinforce their suffering or enable them to reframe their reality, leading to a sense of empowerment. It also emphasizes therapeutic approaches, like JAMP, that encourage individuals to rewrite or reinterpret their trauma narratives, fostering adaptive coping mechanisms and a healthier self-concept. Ultimately, we will navigate the impact that storytelling has on overcoming trauma as a path to healing.

**Bio:** Kindee Dixon holds an associate license as a clinical psychotherapist with a master's degree in clinical mental health counselling. She also holds a master's degree in health sciences, is a JAMP Transformational Coach (focusing on a Jungian approach to healing trauma), and Director of Training at JAMP University. Kindee also holds certifications in Foot Zoning (Reflexology), Akashic Records, Theta Healing, Emotional Release, and has studied extensively how the mind and body work together to promote healing. Additionally, she co-developed and continues to facilitate an ongoing mindfulness course at Rocky Mountain University in Utah, USA. She has been coaching individuals in the US and internationally for over a decade and specializes in parts work, somatic processing, trauma therapy, and Archetypal healing. Her main emphasis is helping people to rediscover who they were always meant to be. Kindee has lived on three continents and has visited over 40 countries, always seeking ways to help others as she learns about herself. She has volunteered for the past 25 years as the VP of Warm Hearts Foundation emphasizing the building of schools and clean water wells in Africa. She loves laughter and creating meaningful adventures with her three children.

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### *From AI to Archetype: Narrative Identity in Myth, Game, and Mind*

#### 1. Nathan Lamarche, University of Alberta [nlamarch@ualberta.ca](mailto:nlamarch@ualberta.ca)

“Merging the Player/Character: Unique Emotional Responses in Video Game Storytelling”

**Abstract:** Immanuel Kant defined two forms of the sublime, the mathematical and the dynamical. The mathematic is a sense of perceived infinity of size, such as looking up at the stars and realising our own insignificance. The dynamic is a sense of a perceived overwhelming power, such as a crashing storm on the sea, from which you are sheltered nearby but out of direct reach of the danger. This is our realisation of the incomprehensible vastness of that power, which we are only able to properly grasp without being overwhelmed by fear if we perceive ourselves to be safe from danger. In both cases, the self-realisation of relativity of the observer is an essential component to the experience of the sublime. The sublime is most evident through nature, not forms of art, as a painting cannot be infinite in power or size, and an attempt to represent that infinity does not evoke the same sensation as in reality. They can, however, be represented, such as the mathematical in Van Gogh's *The Starry Night* or Friedrich's *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*. In the video game *Elden Ring*, two moments attempt simulations of the sublime, being the minute-long elevator descent into Siofra River (mathematic), and climbing over the smouldering wall from Limgrave into Caelid and seeing a crow for the first time (dynamic). These moments merge player

experience with immersive nonverbal storytelling in order to approach the same emotional triggers as the sublime, something conventionally inaccessible in constructed works. In this presentation, I will demonstrate that video games possess a unique ability through innovative technology and storytelling techniques to merge the experiences of the player and their character and evoke an emotional response that would otherwise be both restricted to real-life experiences and circumstances, and functionally impossible to achieve with conventional storytelling.

**Bio:** Nathan Lamarche is a Master of Arts in English student at the University of Alberta, a creative writer and poet, and the Graduate Student Association's Associate Vice President of Labour. Their research concerns the impact of artificial intelligence on social relationships and institutional infrastructures through deceit, artificial empathy, and information control. Their future research will delve into domestic national security policies and international relations and treaties to mitigate the risks of GenAI. Other areas of research interest include Métis and Indigenous poetry and literature, creative writing and innovative storytelling, rhetoric and composition theory, accessibility in academic writing, labour laws and movements, queer theory, masculinity and gender, and neurodivergent communication. They were the first ever recipient of the Bruce Gladue Otipemisiwak Legacy Award, and have also received many others, including the Alberta Graduate Excellence Scholarship, the Sarah Nettie Christie Scholarship, and The Kerry Wood Memorial Award in Arts. They were also a finalist for the UofA's 3 Minute Thesis (2025). When not doing research, you can probably find them buried deep in the mountains backcountry hiking, cooking very strange meals, and brewing mead out of pinecones.

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2. **Hari C. Gangadharan, Ocean Grove Charter School and Mission College**  
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“Synthesizing Research on AI Driven Storytelling and Human Art in Video Games”

**Abstract:** The video game landscape has been evolving rapidly over the last decade to assimilate the advances across game scripting, animating and storytelling. From ideas that appeared in the human mind and were translated artistically to produce video game narratives and game play in the past to the increased presence of AI in generating ideas, their implementation and ‘blink of an eye’ improvisation within games has initiated the need to understand the relational existence of both AI and human art in video game development, especially the art of storytelling that is crucial for loyal and sustained engagement of players with the game. The existing literature on the subject has addressed the topic of interaction between AI driven storytelling and human art from multiple perspectives of divergence, convergence, neutrality and co-creation. This has led to a scattered understanding of the present interplay between the two. Hence, it becomes highly important to synthesize the prevailing literature that remains disorganized. The present paper aims to provide a comprehensive and a consolidated perspective on the subject of AI-driven storytelling and

human art in video games to help identify patterns and gaps, and advance a more focused approach on combining AI crafted gaming narratives and sustaining their relevance across the essential parameters of creativity that define human art, such as intentionality, continuous evolution, novelty and a significant positive impact on humankind. Keywords- AI generated stories, gaming narratives, human art, video games

**Bio:** Hari C. Gangadharan is an emerging gaming researcher and currently a dual enrollment student at Ocean Grove Charter School and Mission College, California (USA). He is passionate about topics related to ethical game design and computational creativity. His previous research papers have been accepted at the prestigious IEEE and other international conferences (IEEE Gaming, Entertainment, and Media Conference 2024, IEEE 3rd International Conference on Intelligent Reality 2024, eTEXTS 14: Literary and Cultural Studies Conference 2024 , International Conference on Interdisciplinary Dialogues - ICID 2024). He is also a game developer dedicated to implementing his research into practice.

### 3. **Mark Kirkbride, Brunel University of London/ Middlesex University** [MarkKirkbride@talktalk.net](mailto:MarkKirkbride@talktalk.net)

“Coherence/Incoherence: A Gestalt Approach to Mental Health Disorders Using Literary Genres”

**Abstract:** Mark Kirkbride shares and discusses his novel *The Conspiracy Factory*, the product of a PhD in progress at Brunel University of London exploring mental health in the light of literary genres. Set in a psychiatric facility, the novel is told in, through and between different genres, with schizophrenia mapped onto the cognitive estrangement of science fiction, PTSD onto horror, and paranoia onto conspiracy thriller, to give the reader a flavour of what each condition might be like. In the light of current theories of consciousness and with genres used as a focusing lenses, his research asks how successfully coherence, as opposed to incoherence, can be used to represent or communicate the experience of mental health disorders. Whereas the modernists and writers since used incoherence to represent mental health disorders, with surface difficulty gesturing at that experience, he is investigating whether taking the opposite course, writing in terms of wholes or gestalts, provides a more ‘immersive’ approach that is explicatory rather than simply figurative. Accordingly, he uses plot shape and literary genres, along with associated tropes and techniques, to convey the experience of mental illness. He emphasises different genres in relation to different psychiatric disorders with the intention being to give an authentic representation of mental illness and understand the relationship between literature, genre and representations of various mental health conditions. By combining creative and critical methods, his research also asks how writing about psychiatric disorders through distinct genres might illuminate mental illness and considers what the comparison reveals about the nature of genre(s). The presentation will include a reading from the novel and a brief summary of the research and thinking behind it.

**Bio:** Mark Kirkbride lives in Shepperton, England. He is an Hourly Paid Academic at Middlesex University. He is currently completing a PhD at Brunel University of London. He is the author of *The Plot Against Heaven*, *Game Changers of the Apocalypse* and *Satan’s Fan Club*, originally published by Omnium Gatherum but republished by Crossroad Press. *Game*

*Changers of the Apocalypse* was a semi-finalist in the Kindle Book Awards 2019. His short stories can be found in Under the Bed, Sci Phi Journal, Disclaimer Magazine, Flash Fiction Magazine, So It Goes: The Literary Journal of the Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library, Titanic Terastructures and The Last Horizon. His poetry has appeared in the Daily Mirror, the Morning Star, the Big Issue, Neon, the London Reader, The Climate Matters Anthology 2020 (Culture Matters/Riptide Journal), Sein und Werden and Horror Writers Association chapbooks. He was longlisted in the SaveAs Writers' International Writing Competition 2021 and the AUB International Poetry Prize 2021, and shortlisted in the AONB Landscape category of the Ginkgo Prize 2021. <https://markkirkbride.com/>

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4. **Anussya Jayasimhan, University of Nottingham**  
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“The Dystopian Lotus Goddess: Introducing the Padmavati, the Final Incarnation of Lakshmi in Young Adult Literature”

**Abstract:** Lakshmi, a principal goddess in the Hindu pantheon, is revered as the goddess of prosperity, beauty, and abundance. Depicted as the epitome of devotion and loyalty, she is celebrated as the ideal wife and consort to Vishnu—the supreme Lord who creates, protects, and transforms the universe. From her mythic emergence during the churning of the cosmic ocean to her various incarnations as Vishnu’s earthly consort, Lakshmi’s avatars have been immortalised in epics, romances, tragedies, and children’s literature. The most renowned are Sita from the Ramayana, and Radha, Rukmini, Satyabhama, and Jambavati from the Mahabharata. These portrayals highlight unwavering devotion and self-sacrifice; however, they also reflect and, at times, romanticise the suffering, prejudice, and injustice endured by her incarnations—particularly Sita. Recent feminist reinterpretations of these narratives have begun to challenge the patriarchal lens through which these incarnations have historically been viewed, offering a more critical and empowering perspective on their lives. In this presentation, I demonstrate my efforts to reimagine the apocalyptic future avatar of Lakshmi—Padmavati, consort of Kalki, the prophesied last incarnation of Vishnu—within a dystopian, contemporary setting that starkly contrasts with the patriarchal contexts of her earlier incarnations. This creative ambition presents unique challenges, largely due to the nature of Hinduism as an actively practiced religion. While contemporary literature has seen an emergence of female protagonists inspired by Hindu mythology (as seen in Roshani Chokshi’s *Star Touched Queen* and Shveta Thakrar’s *Star Daughter*) these portrayals are often highly fictionalised and intentionally distanced from established or emerging deities. Thus, I aim to highlight the critical role research has played in shaping my approach to narrating Padmavati’s story—as well as those of her earlier incarnations—within the framework of young adult literature.

**Bio:** Anussya Jaya is a matcha-fueled PhD candidate at the University of Nottingham, researching the decolonisation of the creative writing curriculum by day and crafting

dystopian retellings of Hindu goddesses by night. She holds a bachelor’s degree in creative writing and a master’s in education. Her thesis emerged from the curiosity and frustrations of an undergraduate student who felt alienated by the literary canon presented to her—one that rarely reflected her identity as a brown, female, Hindu, Malaysian, and Southeast Asian student studying in a UK university situated in Asia. As a writer, her bedtime stories featured the divine romance of Radha and Krishna, not Romeo and Juliet, and epics like the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas. These narratives inspired her to reimagine Hindu deities, demons, and mythical beings in contemporary and speculative settings, giving voice to characters that have long existed within the margins of mainstream literature.

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### *Tales That Nourish: Food, Fantasy, and the Psychology of Survival*

1. **Cindy Rinne, Independent (online)**  
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*“Today in Three Caves”*

**Abstract:** *Today in Three Caves* is book three of the “Today” fairytale series. This third tale takes place on three planets: Earth, Empyrean, and Mars. The story exhibits how a fairytale’s expanding narrative boundaries can address contemporary issues such as extinction and changing climates. Science and fairytale collide in this fantasy story told in Haibuns. There’s an origin myth about Rainshadow and a Sisterhood on Mars, Mother becomes a Candlewoman on Earth, and Olus migrate from one planet to Empyrean to avoid extinction. The Map of the Ancestors inhabited by Aspens and Yellow Birds exists on Earth, Empyrean, and Mars in three caves. Anahita, a goddess, oversees the maps and the planets. Natural disaster on one map affects the other two. How can the ancient cave art and star maps be repaired? Modern day eco-issues enter this fairytale as the Mouth of the Planet freezes on Empyrean with resolution in surprising ways of interconnectedness between humans and beyond humans. Note: The presentation includes art by Toti O’Brien and Haibun by Cindy Rinne.

**Bio:** Cindy Rinne lives in San Bernardino, CA. She is an interdisciplinary creative in poetry, performance, zines, fiber art, and collaborating with musicians. Her poems have appeared in anthologies, art exhibits, and dance performances. Rinne was awarded a writing residency at the Chateau d’Orquevaux in France. Cindy attended an art and writing residency at Desert Dairy Artist Residency, 29 Palms, CA. Her artworks have been exhibited at “World of Threads Festival” Ontario, Canada; Riverside Art Museum; Roswell Space, LA; and more. She performed “Dancing Through the Fire Door” during the PAMLA conference at UCLA. Her performance poetry has been experienced at LA Artcore, Los Angeles, CA; MOAH (Museum of Art & History) and MOAH CEDAR, Lancaster, CA; OCCCA (Orange County Center for Contemporary Art) Santa Ana, CA, and more. Cindy is the author of several

books: *Dancing Through the Fire Door* (Nauset Press), *Today on Two Planets* (Written by Veterans), *The Feather Ladder* (Picture Show Press) and more. Her poetry and visual poetry appeared in: *The Closed Eye Open*, *Verse-Virtual*, *Mythos Magazine*, *swifts & slows*, *Lothlorien*, *Unpsychology*, and others.

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2. **Claire Rodan, University of Maryland College Park (online)**  
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“Storytelling as Survival in ‘Life is Beautiful’ and ‘Pan’s Labyrinth’”

**Abstract:** *Both Life is Beautiful* (1997) and *Pan’s Labyrinth* (2006) use fairy tale elements to explore trauma, war, and resistance, demonstrating the power of storytelling as a means of survival. Roberto Benigni’s *Life is Beautiful* presents a father who shields his son from the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp by transforming their suffering into a game, using humor and imagination as a defense against brutality. Similarly, Guillermo del Toro’s *Pan’s Labyrinth* follows a young girl navigating the violence of Francoist Spain through a dark fantasy world, where myth and reality intertwine. Both films highlight how storytelling reshapes historical memory, offering alternative ways to process trauma and resist authoritarian control. While *Life is Beautiful* emphasizes the redemptive power of optimism, *Pan’s Labyrinth* underscores the blurred boundaries between fantasy and political resistance. This paper examines how these films use fairy tale structures to critique historical violence, focusing on the ways in which myth, imagination, and narrative agency function as survival mechanisms. By situating these works within the framework of war literature and magical realism, this paper analyzes how storytelling serves as both an escape and a subversive tool against oppression.

**Bio:** Dr. Claire Rodan serves as a senior faculty specialist in the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland College Park. She completed her doctoral studies at Indiana University Bloomington, earning a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature with a complementary minor in Communication and Culture Studies, and International relations and affairs certificate program at Johns Hopkins University (SAIS). Dr. Rodan had taught at George Washington University, Defense language Institute, and University of Maryland College Park. Her academic contributions are diverse, with substantial publications across multiple prestigious platforms. Dr. Rodan has authored book chapters featured in distinguished academic presses such as Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Routledge, Brill, and Lexington Books. Her scholarly articles have been published in a range of peer-reviewed international journals, including *Interface: Journal of European Languages and Literatures*, *Monde Chinois*, *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies*, *English and American Literature Association Journal*, and *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*.

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3. **Mette Rudvin, University of Palermo (online)**  
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“Storytelling through Food: The representation of food in folktales”

**Abstract:** Food Studies is emerging as a central area of research in numerous disciplines, touching upon a broad range of human experiences. Like other cultural artefacts, food is a potent symbol and representation of society, an essential part of identity-formation. It is a powerful storytelling-frame because it embodies the senses in a very tangible manner: The memory of tastes and smells, deeply embedded in the human brain through evolution, is profound. Representing one of the most fundamental human needs, the stories that are told through food span all genres of literature and all historical epochs. This paper examines the representation of food in folktales. The need for food, and the lack of it, is an expression of the constant, primordial threat to human existence: hunger and starvation. In folklore studies, food has been researched primarily as an expression of the fear of hunger, and for what it tells us about social and economic history. This paper examines the presence of food in *The Norwegian Folktales*, a text that became crucial to the building of an independent national identity in 19th Norway, collected orally in rural Norway and re-written and promoted in the metropolitan areas. Through a masterful storytelling strategy, it came to influence both the language and the culture of an emerging nation-state as Norway was separating itself from Danish hegemony. The rural population in Norway had experienced periods of food deprivation; thus, both lack, and abundance of food became important motifs. The difficulty in procuring and processing food in pre-modern rural areas was expressed in descriptions of toil (preparing the soil, harvesting, preparing grain and dairy products, gathering firewood, cooking in spartan circumstances, etc.). The paper shows how these features – among others – are symbolically and tangibly built into the tales and become central to the storytelling format.

**Bio:** Mette Rudvin completed her studies in Norway and the UK; she holds a PhD in Translation Studies, focussing on a corpus of Norwegian folktales, and a Master’s degree in the Philosophy of Food and Wine from the University of San Raffaele in Milan. She taught English, translation and public service interpreting at the University of Bologna from 1996-2019 and is currently Associate Professor at the University of Palermo. She has taught a variety of subjects related to English language/literature, translation and dialogue interpreting, and has published and lectured widely nationally and internationally. In 2015 she set up the first multilingual continuous education course in interpreting in the legal sector at the University of Bologna. Her most recent publications include articles and books on interpreting in the workplace, legal and public-service interpreting in Italy, interpreting in the refugee setting, interpreting ethics, the interface between interpreting and philosophy, and English as a lingua franca. In addition to translation and English-language related subjects, her research and teaching interests also include oral narrative and Food Writing.

4. **Justin F. Martin, Whitworth University (online)**  
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## “The Primacy and Potential of Superhero Narratives: Insights from Developmental Psychology”

**Abstract:** While superhero scholarship within the social sciences and psychology specifically has notably increased since the 2000s, the latter rarely centers developmental psychology. Building on previous work (Martin, 2023, 2024, 2025), the paper elucidates how developmental psychology affords unique opportunities as an analytical frame considering some of superhero narratives’ common features (e.g., the use of origin stories, alternate realities, and parallel universes; the application of superpowers across varying social arrangements). Specifically, research on the development of moral (e.g., welfare and justice) and nonmoral (e.g., intentions, informational beliefs, and societal rules) concepts may partially explain these narratives when it comes to their (1) popularity and ubiquity, (2) potential usefulness in pedagogical contexts, and (3) ability to encourage intellectually rich and empirically testable research questions across various age groups. First, the paper discusses some core features of a constructivist approach to social and moral development (Lagattuta and Kramer, 2023; Recchia and Wainryb, 2023; Smetana and Yoo, 2023; Turiel, 2023), and how this approach can inform people’s engagement with and understanding of superhero narratives. Second, the author introduces research on Social Cognitive Domain Theory (SCDT) and Theory of Mind (TOM) and explains the usefulness of this research in moral and nonmoral development, respectively, within a constructivist approach to understanding superhero narratives. These areas of scholarship have increasingly become intertwined for reasons that hopefully become more apparent throughout the paper. For discussions regarding (1) popularity and ubiquity, (2) pedagogy, and (3) empirical research, examples from multiple superhero narratives and platforms will be brought to bear. Overall, the paper aims to center a constructivist view on the development of moral and nonmoral considerations as a context for better understanding the depth and breadth of superhero narratives.

**Bio:** Justin F. Martin is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Whitworth University. His research explores the intersection of moral development and superhero and dystopian media. His superhero scholarship highlights superhero media as a context for generating pedagogical and research activities that examine the relationship between moral and nonmoral social concepts. Recent publications explore Black Panther, Luke Cage, Mr. Freeze, Bishop, Jean Grey, Daredevil, Superman, and The Walking Dead. He is the co-editor of *Arkham’s Souls: A Multidisciplinary Analysis of Batman’s Villains and Villainesses* (Lexington, 2023) with Marco Favaro. He teaches courses in statistics, research methods, developmental psychology, moral development, and morality within the Marvel Universe.

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**Sunday, May 25, 2025**

*Rooted, Wild, and Weird: Storytelling in Times of Ecological Crisis*

1. **Madelena Mañetto Quick, University of Wales Trinity Saint David**  
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“Speculative Storying and Farmed Animal Worlds”

**Abstract:** Speculative design offers a powerful framework for reimagining narratives and challenging dominant assumptions about human-animal relationships. Through research-driven design practice, this presentation explores how speculative storytelling can open imaginative spaces for multispecies world-building. By engaging with creative design experiments—including narrative prompts, a fictional sanctuary journal, and an imagined co-design workshop—my work interrogates existing human-animal relations and envisions alternative futures that emphasise relationality and ethical cohabitation. As a discursive practice, speculative design engages with ‘wicked problems’ by generating thought-provoking stories and scenarios rather than definitive solutions. This presentation will showcase my speculative design narratives that investigate the ethical and relational dynamics of farmed animal worlds, demonstrating that such approaches allow for the reimagining of anthropocentric hierarchies and the expansion of multispecies collaboration. By leveraging speculative design as a method of narrative inquiry, I contribute to ongoing conversations about storytelling’s role in shaping perceptions of farmed animals. My methodology follows an iterative research-through-design approach, positioning creative practice as a form of knowledge production that extends beyond theoretical critique into applied experimentation. The three speculative design experiments presented include: a series of narrative prompts that generate alternative worldviews centering farmed animals as active participants in multispecies futures, a speculative first-person account from a farm sanctuary owner that blends ethnographic insight with fictional storytelling to explore ethical dilemmas, and an imaginary workshop in which participants collaboratively envision new interspecies futures. This presentation will contribute to discussions on how speculative storytelling serves as both critical inquiry and creative intervention, challenging entrenched narratives and envisioning alternative ways of more-than-human worlding.

**Bio:** Madelena Mañetto Quick is a Lecturer in Visual Communication Design at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Madelena earned her PhD from Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington’s School of Design Innovation, where her research explored interspecies relationships within farmed animal worlds and the stories surrounding them. As a creative design researcher, Madelena adopts a multidisciplinary approach, entangling multispecies ethnography, narrative studies, and speculative design. Her work

seeks to challenge dominant assumptions, reimagine human-animal relationships, and envision radical, hopeful futures through critical design and storytelling.

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2. **Sam Mayne, the University of Western Australia**  
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“In Strange Times: Weird Storytelling in Ecological Crisis”

**Abstract:** This paper explores the capacities of Weird fiction, a permutation of the Gothic and speculative genres, as a means of articulation, response and reflection in the midst of the global climate crisis. Following Amitav Ghosh's assertion that the realist novel is not only limited in its capacity to engage the realities of ecological crises and the Anthropocene-but in fact often also functions to obscure those realities-I contend that the topos of Weird writing is uniquely well-suited for reckoning with them. This is in part because of Weird fiction's "close and profoundly uncomfortable' relationship to realist writing (Freeman), which prevents weird narratives from being easily dismissible as pure fantasy or speculation, as well as the 'enweirding' potential of the genre. I speak to the latter idea as both a critical reader and writer of the genre and consider how my own creative practice has brought about a distinct, embodied engagement with the climate crisis and the more-than-human world.

**Bio:** Sam Mayne is a writer/researcher living and working on unceded Wadjuk Boodjar. She is currently undertaking a PhD in creative writing at the University of Western Australia. Her project focuses on more-than-human engagement and ecological subjectivity in creative practice, with an emphasis on Weird and speculative fiction. Her work has appeared in *Westerly*, *Antipodes*, *ISLE*, *Gramarye* and elsewhere.

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3. **Anja Rekeszus, University of Reading**  
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“Retelling the Urban Fox – a Southeast London Tale”

**Abstract:** In this paper, I would present the outcomes of and reflections on my project *Retelling the Urban Fox: A Collaborative Fairy Tale*, which I conducted as an Inclusion, Participation and Engagement fellow at the School of Advanced Studies, London. Through participatory, creative and digital research methods, this project sought to uncover the ways in which the writing of collaborative fairy tales with other community members influences participants' perceptions of urban foxes. It recruited 30 adult participants from the borough of Southwark and consisted of three stages: an initial survey assessing participants' pre-existing associations with and emotional reactions to urban foxes; a one-day storytelling workshop, run by artist Elizabeth Dearnley, which resulted in the compilation of collaborative fairy tales about urban foxes; and a final evaluation of how the participants' associations and emotions

surrounding urban foxes had changed after the workshop. The findings of the project give a broad range of insights into how writing fairy tales can influence humans' perceptions of urban foxes. For example, many participants joined the project with an ambivalent view on foxes – finding them “beautiful” and “cute” but also “noisy” and “a nuisance” –, but often made them the protagonist of their tales, using their perspective to explore imagined versions of their community. This hints at the possibility of leveraging urban foxes and other animals to support communities in envisioning desirable futures. In their surveys, participants said that the collaborative writing process had caused them to pay increased attention to their encounters with foxes and other animals, and had sparked curiosity about their ways of life. It also connected to them to an “imagined community” of other humans looking out for foxes, strengthening their feeling of a shared space and community.

**Bio:** Anja is a lecturer in German and Translation Studies at the University of Reading. She completed her PhD at King's College London in summer 2023, where she explored how women writers of the nineteenth century wrote transcultural fairy tales as a means of engaging with socio-political discourses. Her articles have appeared in the *Publications of the English Goethe Society* and *The Conversation*. For 2024/2025, she is an Inclusion, Participation and Engagement Fellow at the School of Advanced Studies, London; her participatory research project investigates how the collaborative creation of fairy tales can impact individuals' perception of urban foxes in the borough of Southwark. As a researcher, Anja is particularly interested in the role that stories play in how humans view and identify with landscapes and non-human actors. Other research interests and specialisms include women's writing, Romanticism, fairy tale studies, and transculturalism. She is also an environmental campaigner with Friends of the Earth and the Climate Majority Project.

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4. **Wendy Wuyts, Independent (online)**  
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“Rooted Narratives and Flowing Identities in the Baltic sea bioregion: The Resurrection of Eglè Through Hydrofeminist Storytelling”

**Abstract:** Drawing from the rich tapestry of Baltic folklore, this presentation explores the transformative retelling of *Eglè, the Queen of Serpents*, through the lens of hydrofeminism. This narrative, deeply entrenched in themes of interspecies relationships, transformation, and resistance against patriarchal structures, provides fertile ground for examining contemporary environmental and gender issues. Our project, involving a collective of artists and activists—or 'artivists'—interrogates the traditional portrayal of Eglè and her progeny, focusing particularly on her daughter, traditionally depicted as a betrayer and the weakest link, thereby challenging established narratives and proposing a nuanced understanding of her role. The heart of our exploration involves a series of "writing(with)plant" sessions and landscape engagements that not only deepen our connection with the story's environmental elements but also serve as a metaphorical resurrection of Eglè and her daughter in today's wounded Baltic seascape and landscape. This narrative resurrection intertwines with hydrofeminist practices, emphasizing fluidity, connectivity, and resilience against ecological and social disruptions.

Moreover, the project extends into a book that weaves together hydrofeminist fiction, essays, and a proposed sequel focusing on the regenerative journey of Eglè and her daughter. This narrative expansion aims to foster a broader dialogue on healing and resistance through storytelling, blending folklore with urgent contemporary issues. This presentation will share insights from both our creative processes and the outcomes of our various online and physical gatherings. Each session is designed as a deep dive into the mythic and literal landscapes, retracing the steps of Eglè and her family, now transformed into trees, thus exploring the symbiosis between narrative, identity, and ecological activism. Through this project, we not only revisit a classic tale but also reimagine it for a new era, highlighting the enduring power and relevance of storytelling in cultural and environmental discourse.

**Bio:** Wendy Wuyts is a multifaceted artist-practitioner-academic, who uniquely blends her diverse interests and expertise across environmental science, medical anthropology, and storytelling. Originally from Belgium, Wendy has carved out a niche for herself by incorporating profound ecological and anthropological insights into her creative and academic work. She completed her PhD in Environmental Science in Japan, where she also trained as a certified forest therapy guide. Wendy has a rich background in the arts, having participated in several semi-professional theatre plays during her childhood. This early exposure to performance art has deeply influenced her storytelling approach, which is vividly reflected in her narrative style. She has published a variety of short stories in English across platforms such as Uneven Earth, Ecozon, and the Anthology Educational Fabulations, and has several fiction titles to her name in Flemish. Her academic contributions are extensive, with over 15 journal articles that explore interdisciplinary connections, demonstrating her commitment to bridging diverse fields of knowledge. Wendy identifies as a "serial rooter," having established deep connections with multiple countries including Belgium, Czech Republic, Austria, Thailand, Japan, and now Norway. Currently, Wendy is working on her first English book, a hydrofeminist retelling of the Baltic myth of Eglè. This project not only showcases her innovative narrative techniques but also her dedication to integrating ecological and cultural preservation within her work. Through her unique lens, Wendy continues to enrich the academic and literary landscapes, contributing profoundly to the discussions on environmental and cultural sustainability.

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### *Writing the Seen: Ekphrasis, Representation, and the Politics of Perception*

1. **Thomas Bennett, University of Gloucestershire**  
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“Locating the Punctum: An Ekphrastic Representation of the Ethical Dilemmas of Photojournalism”

**Abstract:** My presentation will be centred around my PhD research into the life and work of tragic South African photojournalist Kevin Carter, whose 1993 Pulitzer-winning image *The Vulture and the Little Girl* illustrated the horrific consequences of the (ongoing) civil war in Sudan — and was, it seems, the catalyst for Carter taking his own life the following year. My

output is a nonlinear novel depicting key moments in Carter's life and career, accompanied by a critical thesis exploring the intersection of photojournalism, morality, and (historical) fiction in the postmodernist age. The first part of my presentation is creative, as I shall be reading current drafts of some of the chapters inspired by Carter's photography, including the scene towards the beginning of the novel in which the eponymous 'Little Girl' is first introduced to the reader, and to Carter. The second half will discuss the ways in which I constructed these excerpts, including how I employed language and narrative voice to simulate the distance between reader and subject that is at 'the nexus of the dilemma pitting professional duty against moral obligation' (Kim and Kelly, 2014: 205). Particular reference is made to Barthes' theory of 'studium' and 'punctum' (1981), which has proven a paramount framework in shaping the ekphrastic dimensions of the novel. In locating the 'punctum' — the 'element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me' (ibid.: 26) — within Carter's photographs, I have been able to extract the precise details that I can reproduce as vivid descriptions in my prose; this is crucial for developing the authenticity and emotional resonance that justifies creative writing as the most suitable methodology in representing, and recontextualising, a quandary as stark and brutal as the duties and responsibilities of photojournalists in times of war.

**Bio:** Thomas Bennett is a first-year English and Creative Writing PhD student at University of Gloucestershire, from where he obtained a BA (Hons) in English and Creative Writing in 2023, and an MA in Creative and Critical Writing in 2024. His thesis combines a novel depicting the life and work of South African photojournalist Kevin Carter during Apartheid with a critical exegesis examining the portrayal of aesthetics and ethics in postmodernist historical fiction. Alongside his PhD research, Tom delivers Outreach workshops and literacy tutoring for local schools on behalf of the University and works part-time in its Libraries and Student Support department. Additionally, he has recently joined the team of students responsible for organising its annual Creative Arts postgraduate research conference. He was Chief Editor for the University's Creative Writing and Illustration anthology *Unbreakable* in 2023–24, led the English Literature showcase at Cheltenham Literature Festival last October, and presented his work on using poetry as a therapeutic tool for young people at Leaf Journal's 2024 'On Writing for Young People' conference.

2. **Kate Leonard, Colorado College**  
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“Text and Texture: A Case study in Cross Disciplinary Teaching”

**Abstract:** When the protagonist of David Foster Wallace’s “Church Not Made with Hands” (2007) meets his new co-worker, Eric Yang, for the first time, one of the first things Yang tells him is that he, Yang, has what the narrator describes as a “special talent . . . the mental rotation of three-dimensional objects” (196): “I close my eyes and form a perfectly detailed image of any object. From any angle. Then I rotate it” (199). Yang’s ability to perform this mental rotation may itself be the stuff of fiction and his reasons for doing so may be unclear. However, the desire to mentally rotate an object, to simultaneously experience it from multiple views, fuels the teaching interests of two faculty members at Colorado College, one a visual artist and one a literary scholar, who co-teach a cross-disciplinary class, entitled “Text and Texture”, on narratology in art and literature. Building off the work of Eric J.

Jenkins, the course asks students to not merely to analyze pictorial and literary representations of three-dimensional space, nor to illustrate it, but rather to actualize it, to engage with it multi-sensorially. Much contemporary pictorial and literary representation of space is shaped by the fact that a fixed station point has been disrupted in postwar-American, pictorial painting and drawing and that postmodern modes of literary representation refuse grand narratives or single points-of-view. While students may be familiar with how to formally analyze such representations, a course goal is to have them also do so phenomenologically, that is, to experience the reality of space as we perceive it. In this paper, I report on the structure of the class and present students' creative projects informed by an examination of narrative structure in novels such as Ling Ma's *Severance* (2018) and paintings such as those of Julie Mehretu.

Works Cited: Jenkins, Eric J. *Drawn to Design: Analyzing Architecture Through Freehand Drawing*. Birkhäuser, 2022. Wallace, David Foster. "Church Not Made with Hands." *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men*, Back Bay Books, 2007, pp. 194-210.

**Bio:** Kate Leonard is Professor of Art at Colorado College where she directs the Graphics Research Lab and teaches courses in printmaking and drawing. Kate works from her studio in Manitou Springs, a vibrant art community at the foothills of Pikes Peak and the Rocky Mountain Range, and travels widely teaching workshops on her innovative photographic transfer paintings (Anderson Ranch Art Center in Colorado, the Valand School of Art in Gothenburg, Sweden and the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences in Lappeenranta, Finland).

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### 3. Jo Neil, Leeds Arts University

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"Experimenting with a visible research process: Telling stories of research, making and reflection in Fine Art practices"

**Abstract:** This academic and creative presentation will share an ongoing artistic and pedagogic research project that documents the thinking, making, research, and outputs of a creative practice. The research extends an artistic practice and builds on doctoral work which used digital and autoethnographic methodologies as a vehicle for dialogic reflection. One strategy adopted an experimental and discursive narrative approach that utilises different modes of writing: descriptive, reflective, explorative, personal, critical, informative and creative. Finding different ways to construct and disseminate narratives about making, or 'telling stories' about lived experiences, help us to make sense of what we have done and what we might do next. Different modes of writing enable us to surprise ourselves in what gets constructed with the constraints and unexpected possibilities they bring. Sharing lived experiences of knowledge production (making visible the indecision, decision making, strategies, successes, failures, tactics, distractions and diversions) through different modes of writing, or 'telling stories' about the research process, provides a pedagogic strategy and insight into one's practice. For context, the artistic practice being navigated and reflected on through different modes of writing, explores protective armour construction, and the aging and fragile body. It references artefacts at The Royal Armouries, Leeds and builds upon

research concerned with bioceramics developed at Future Materials, Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht. The practical work is informed by open-source methods for making biodegradable air-drying ceramics with eggshell. The presentation shares underpinning theories and context for the work and includes a short performance of spoken word reflections from this process and methodology.

**Bio:** Dr. Jo Neil is an interdisciplinary artist, academic and arts educator. Her work explores the spaces between research, making, writing, presenting, and performance and focuses on the domestic, everyday, and ‘imagination’ of the self. Exhibitions and performances include: ‘Digital Autoethnography a pedagogy for empowerment’ (Working Class Academics Conference 2021), ‘SOS’ (International Symposium on Autoethnography and Narrative Inquiry 2021), ‘Creating Spaces for Reflection and Bracketing Practice’ (Vilnius, Lithuania, 2020), ‘Conversation with Selves’ (International Project Space, Birmingham, 2018), ‘Trace: impression|depression’ (Embodied Experience of Drawing, Ocean Studios, Plymouth, 2018), ‘an autobiographical account of childhood’ (New Modes of Art Writing 2, Manchester Metropolitan University, 2017), and ‘Interview with Self Part II’ (Feminist Readings#3, University of Helsinki, Finland, 2016). Recent publications include: ‘Interview with Self Part III’ (In J. Goode, K. Lumsden and J. Bradford [Eds]. *Crafting Autoethnography: processes and practices of making self and culture*. Oxford Routledge, 2022), ‘Creating Spaces for Reflection with Digital Autoethnography: Students as Researchers into Their Own Practices’ (*IJADE* Vol. 38 (4): pp. 823-831, 2019), and ‘Slow Drawing: Conversations with the Inanimate, Animated, Real and Virtual’ (In J. Journeaux & H. Gorrill [Eds] *Drawing Conversations: Collective and Collaborative Drawing in Contemporary Practice*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2017).

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4. **Bashabi Gogoi, Tezpur University, INDIA, (online)**  
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“The Legend of Hastar: Ekphrastic Storytelling in Tumbbad”

**Abstract:** As a literary genre, ekphrasis is the vivid description of a visual work of art, whether real or imagined. In cinema, ekphrastic storytelling uses visual imagery to tell the story and convey meaning eschewing too much reliance on dialogue. This paper is an attempt to study cinematic ekphrasis in the 2018 Indian period folk horror film *Tumbbad*, directed by Rahi Anil Barve. A critically acclaimed film and a cult classic, *Tumbbad* tells the story of Vinayak Rao, who embarks on a search for a hidden treasure in the Indian village of Tumbbad. The film is a masterclass in visual storytelling, juxtaposing a narrative about human greed and a mythical ghoulish deity Hastar. Through the theoretical framework of depictive and interpretive ekphrasis in film, the paper will study how *Tumbbad* tells an unforgettable story with its subtexts contributing significantly to the narrative. The paper will explore the conundrum of the “monster” in the film and analyse how *Tumbbad* uses cinematography to conjure a fantastical world; the claustrophobic eeriness of the vast landscape and the brooding atmosphere throbs with an expectancy of the diabolique while being a stunning aesthetic masterpiece. Thematically, the film resonates as a cautionary tale

reflecting contemporary real world moral dilemmas even though it is set in a certain period in Indian history. Although a horror film, Tumbbad uses the tropes of myth and parable to portray the primal sin of greed and the resulting moral decay which transcends traditional storytelling conventions, a film where images speak louder than words. Keywords: ekphrastic storytelling, cinematic ekphrasis, myth, legend, horror

**Bio:** Bashabi Gogoi is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Tezpur University, Assam, India. She completed her MA with a Gold Medal from Tezpur University, MPhil from EFL University, Shillong, and PhD from Gauhati University. Her areas of interest include Indian Writing in English and Film Adaptation Theories. She is also interested in translation from Assamese to English. She currently teaches Romantic Poetry and Novels, Modern Prose, Literary Criticism, and Indian Literature in Translation. In her leisure time, she loves to read and watch movies.

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5. **Camilla Baasch Andersen and Yangjinbo Zhang, University of Western Australia, Perth (online)**

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“Creative and Comic Contracts - Visual Storytelling in Law”

**Abstract:** This joint presentation, delivered jointly by Prof. Andersen and Dr. Zhang, explores the intersection of law and storytelling in recent examples of visual comic book contracts developed by the Comic Contracting team at UWA. By telling stories in visual form as drivers for compliant contract behaviours, these contracts have proven to improve engagement and enjoyment, ensure mutual expectations are understood, and have thus eliminated disputes. Dr. Zhang and Prof. Andersen will explore how these stories are developed to enhance the contracting experience.

**Bio:** Professor Andersen heads the Comic Contracting team at UWA. With a long academic career spanning International Commercial Law and Comparative Law, she has written extensively on many topics - recently taking the plunge into visual contracts and legal design. See UWA profile at UWA Profiles and Research Repository. Dr. Zhang recently completed his PhD in Computer Science at UWA, with a research focus on developing a data storytelling framework that bridges data visualisation and digital arts. His work spans a range of interdisciplinary areas, including Data Storytelling, Human-Computer Interaction, Data Analysis, Visualisation, Visual Media Communication, User Experience, Information Theory, and Digital Arts.

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