

**AAWP 2017 Conference, ‘Climates of Change’, Flinders University: full titles and synopses.**

*Note: if you would like the reference details of any work cited in this document, please see the relevant presenter.*

**DAY ONE: Wednesday November 29**

**Art Gallery of South Australia, Radford Auditorium  
North Terrace**

**8:00am – 9:00am**

Registration  
Tea & coffee

**9:00am – 10:30am**

Welcome to country: **Georgina Williams**

Opening keynote: **Charlotte Wood**

“‘The Grumpy Struggle, Despair, and the Luminous Solution’: an anatomy of literary creativity’

**10:30am – 11:00am**

Travel to Flinders University, Victoria Square Campus

**Flinders University, Victoria Square Campus**

**11:00am – 11:30am**

Morning tea

**11:30am – 1:00 pm**

Room 10.1

**The Creative Writing Exegesis Now: Teetering between Safety and Originality**

Donna Lee Brien, ‘The comprehensive exegesis: An exegesis template and thesis structure’

The number of candidates completing research higher degrees in the discipline of creative arts has continued to grow over the past two decades, yet the anxiety associated with the exegesis, or critical component, to the award has not dissipated. This paper, based on an article co-written with three research degree candidates – Alison Owens, Gail Pittaway and Irene Waters – two of whom are also supervisors, identifies common challenges and proposes a number of strategies that may provide greater certainty and

alleviate some of the anxiety for candidates and their supervisors. It includes a template for a comprehensive exegesis and two ways the exegesis can be structured to form a supportive and rigorous frame around the creative work.

#### Shady Cosgrove, 'The Fear-less Exegesis'

Fear is an overlooked aspect of the PhD experience, both for the creative writing doctoral candidate and the supervisor, especially in relation to questions around what the exegesis is and what it should look like. Drawing on the experiences of both candidate and supervisor, this paper proposes that clear structural models for the exegesis are valuable because they allow students to focus their efforts on the substance of the academic component of their research project. Based on a paper developed with PhD candidate Hayley Scrivenor, I will also argue for the rewarding nature of a research project that sees students engage in practice-led research at the same time as their critical scholarship because alternating between these two can yield surprising results for creative writers drafting a large-scale work.

#### Jeri Kroll, 'The Potential of the Exegesis and the Challenge of Symbiosis'

Approaching the creative writing doctoral thesis as a coherent entity is rewarding for candidates. Working to establish a symbiotic relationship between creative and critical parts can maximise their opportunities for making original contributions to knowledge. Research for the exegesis can enhance the creative work's possibilities. Based on a paper co-written with two recently completed doctoral candidates, Annabelle Murphy and Katrina Finlayson, I argue that the potential of the exegesis can be realised in both a conventional (novel and exegesis) and experimental ('braided essay') dissertation. Clear templates underpinning the type of thesis candidates choose gives them security while not silencing their individual voices.

#### Rachel Robertson, 'Ambiguous texts: Creative non-fiction and the exegesis'

This paper explores the particular dilemmas that non-fiction works raise for the creative thesis and how we might understand such theses in the context of contemporary non-fiction publishing. Reflecting input from colleagues and postgraduates, and based on a paper co-written with PhD candidates Daniel Jukes, Marie O'Rourke and Renee Pettitt-Schipp, I suggest an embrace of the essay—that slippery, boundary-crossing non-genre—as a suitably ambiguous form for the creative non-fiction thesis.

### Room 10.2

#### **To edit or not to edit? Why is editing academic collections not recognised in the Humanities?**

##### John Dale & Sue Joseph, with interlocutor Carolyn Rickett

Edited academic books garner neither research metric nor institutional praise, compared to writing peer reviewed journal articles or monographs. For the editor, there seems no reason to undertake such volumes. But we still do them; we still edit or co-edit them. Louise Edwards claims there are many good reasons why academics persist in editing (and reading) this type of academic output, her prime one because they 'meet(s) a series of distinct intellectual and community needs' (Edwards 2012: 62). This panel brings together two academics who have both contributed to and edited or co-edited such volumes. The scope of the panel is to hear their experiences in editing and co-editing, and to open up a discussion about the worth of such volumes, why they are still popular and why despite the university's reluctance to recognise them as either creative or research outputs, academics continue to regard editing as a meaningful scholarly pursuit. And importantly, as we clearly do value these undertakings, how can institutional attitudes to their merit be changed? Panellists have their own personal ethos and experiences about editing and co-editing these texts and will discuss both. We see this panel as an open dialogue with the audience, with a collegial interlocutor, herself a co-editor of books.

### Room 10.3

#### **Stories from Strangeland**

##### Catherine McKinnon, 'Trinity: Working Day of the Dead'

Catherine McKinnon employs fiction to explore stories of people and lands that have been the catalyst, or reveal the consequences of, climate change. Using a fictional story based on true events, she uses scientific

and historical research to interrogate the first atomic explosion, code-named Trinity by physicist Robert Oppenheimer, that occurred in the Jornada del Muerto desert, New Mexico in 1945 – an event that changed the land, making it fragile. The Trinity explosion is often cited as being a catalyst for the Anthropocene.

### David Carlin, 'Preparations for thinking slow'

This paper employs creative nonfiction to explore stories of people and lands that have been the catalyst, or reveal the consequences of, climate change. He uses scientific and historical research to interrogate the role of the personal, social and political, in the creation of, and responses to, the current climate crisis. His essay, 'Preparations for thinking slow', reports from an event in the Arctic north of Finland that brought together artists, writers, scholars and tourism entrepreneurs to try to re-imagine paradigms for visiting and hosting in fragile places.

### Jason Nahrung, "'Stranded Assets': (de)constructing climate change via mosaic science fiction'

We are now living in a time, commonly labelled the Anthropocene, in which human actions such as greenhouse gas emission, deforestation and pollution are detrimentally altering the global ecosystem. Various descriptions include a 'super wicked problem' (Levin 2007), a 'hyperobject' (Morton 2013) or 'slow violence' (Nixon 2011), climate change has proven to be a difficult subject for us to come to terms with. The ramifications of accelerated, human-driven change have inspired a broad body of literature – dubbed climate fiction or 'cli-fi' – with science fiction leading the way within the genre. Given its interest in the intersection of technology and society, science fiction often uses stories set in the future to examine the present. Within my PhD, I employ a science fictional approach, along with the mosaic novel as a literary form, to help break down the abstract character of climate change into more digestible pieces. The creative core of my PhD is "Watermarks" – a mosaic consisting of twelve interconnected short stories set in near-future Queensland. The form allows me to concentrate on separate elements of climate change, while still retaining a novelistic sense of cohesion. One of these stories, 'Stranded Assets', is set in the Galilee Basin at a time of transition: abandoned non-viable coal mines are being transformed into high-tech market gardens. The story evokes empathy for the characters as they cope with facets of a climate-changed future, including refugees, evolving economic and political structures, and the spread of tropical diseases. In line with the overarching aim of my novel, the story blends cautionary dystopia with a cautious optimism, so as to encourage in its readers a similar mindset: while climate change cannot be reversed, its worst impacts may yet be avoided, or at least ameliorated, through both global and individual action.

## 1:00pm – 2:00pm

### LUNCH

Lunchtime launch: *Metamorphic: 21st century poets respond to Ovid*, a poetry anthology edited by Paul Munden and Nessa O'Mahony

## 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Room 10.1

### Trans writing/Writing change

#### Son Vivienne, 'Social media storytelling as fluid and multiple gender expression'

Between 2015 and 2017 I facilitated a series of creative workshops for trans and gender-diverse storytellers that explored digital self-representation as everyday activism. We experimented with photo-taichi, digital art, face painting, twitter haiku, dress-ups and creative writing shared on a variety of digital platforms, including Facebook, Tumblr and eventually the 'Stories Beyond Gender' web space. Our work ranged from pencil, paper and paint to born-digital and eventually found material form as an exhibition and zine. Interviews and focus groups with participants during and after offer evidence that this fragmented and multi-platform storytelling had an impact on changing peoples' attitudes to binary gender and sexuality.

Further, the iterative nature of storytelling across platforms allowed some storytellers to embrace emergent, fluid or multiple representations of their gender identities and to reflect upon changes over time-frames and spaces. Fundamentally, this paper probes whether digital representations and platforms, while binary at the level of bits and bytes, are opening up new possibilities for non-binary, fluid and multiple iterations of self.

### J.R. Latham, 'Theorising the self: Multiple sex in the gender clinic'

What is transsexuality? An innate feeling? A medical condition (or disorder)? A clinical diagnosis? An identity? A surgery? All of these at once? Or, perhaps, it is one thing here and another thing over there, or a little further along (to paraphrase Mol 2002). This paper considers how sex is enacted multiply across the clinical treatment pathways of transgender medicine through an autoethnographic analysis of my own experience as a trans patient. Following recent developments in science and technology studies (STS) that advance the work of Judith Butler on sex as performatively reproduced, I explore various ways that treatment practices produce particular iterations of what sex (and transsexuality) 'is' and how these processes limit (and foreclose) particular trans possibilities. Contrary to popular and medical common-sense, I argue that sex (and transsexuality) is not a stable, singular, pre-determined and biological phenomenon, but is unstable, multiple and emergent. By rethinking sex as ontologically multiple, we might better understand how medicine acts to produce sex in particular (and often oppressive) ways, and how trans people resist and contest that which is said about us.

### Quinn Eades, 'Transpoetics: Dialogically writing the queer and trans body in fragments'

In recent years we have seen an explosion of trans memoirs, but relatively few of these have a poetic sensibility or include poetry, with Thomas Page McBee's 2014 book *Man Alive* a notable exception. In this paper I will extend the concept of 'transpoetics', first coined by trans writer and poet T.C Tolbert in his edited collection *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics* (2013), who said in a recent interview that poetry meant "I could do things in language and create a world for myself that I didn't know how to inhabit with my body." I will posit that transpoetics carries all the markers of a dialogic form, despite the fact that Bakhtin privileged the novel over poetry and poetics, claiming that poetry could only ever be monologic. Through placing a pastiche of trans poetry and poetic statements from *Troubling the Line* alongside my own autobiographical prose poetry, this paper will perform a heteroglossic, 'both/and' writing of the queer and trans body.

## Room 10.2

### Collective memory and change

#### Daniel Juckes, 'Remembering persuasively: the essay form as mode for change and reconciliation in post-colonial Australia'

In this paper I will argue that the essay form is well suited to negotiating difficulties which persist in contemporary Australia as a result of colonial incursion. Using the work of Ross Gibson, I will suggest that the form and method of the essay, both in-the-making and as finished artefact, can help writer and reader engage with others, with silences, and with the past. The essays I will use to make my argument will be a number of the works awarded the Calibre Essay Prize, presented annually since 2007 by *Australian Book Review*. I argue that, throughout the history of the prize, essays have emerged which partake in a discontinuous, but vital, conversation concerning the interaction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Using concentration of focus, conversation and reciprocity, and the particular flâneur-like qualities of essayistic writing, I will argue that the Calibre essays become examples of what Gibson calls persuasive remembering; they are useful tools for thinking about, and aiming for, reconciliation. My focus will, by necessity, be on the Calibre essays which examine the repercussions of the past and the continuing implications of colonialism. In my paper I will try to describe a method of writing which prioritises a certain way of looking at Australia and its past, a way which might help non-Indigenous Australians know a little more about the place in which they find themselves. I argue that some of the Calibre essays advocate and demonstrate ways in which landscape might be felt in a more heightened way, so that the essay form itself might work as a method of mediation, and as a catalyst for change.

#### Carolyn Rickett, Sue Joseph & Paul Race, "'Why we ran the front page photograph': navigating the ethics of privacy in the digital age"

With the ever-changing and insistent 24-hour news cycle, readerly expectations typically demand that audiences have ready access to both print and imagistic representation of events occurring in real time. Consumers of news are now used to having their need for ‘instant’ updates gratified by an abundance of technologies mediating a breaking story. However, when the *Sydney Morning Herald* published a photograph of bowler Sean Abbott attending the fatally injured Australian cricketer Phillip Hughes on its front page, there was strong criticism posted on the *SMH*’s Twitter and Facebook pages. The negative reactions roundly critiquing the paper’s motivation led Editor-in-Chief, Darren Goodsir to offer a written statement explaining the decision to pictorially represent a fallen and vulnerable Hughes: ‘As traumatic as this moment is, it was felt that the compassion and humanity on display, combined with the image’s poignancy, demanded it be published.’ In the whirling digital media landscape defined by speed and quick consumption, it is rare to encounter a considered written response from a high-profile editor offering readers an insight into journalistic reflexive practice. This paper explores the ethical tensions raised by the publication of the photograph, reader reactions, and the subsequent editorial intervention.

### Rachel Robertson and Helena Kadmos, “Plural singularities”: writing collaboratively about change’

This Conference paper arises out of an unexpected synchronicity. Working at different universities and in touch only sporadically, the authors discovered that we had lost a parent within days of each other, triggering a research project to explore how we might be able to write a collaborative creative work around grief. The result is a co-authored memoir which will be published in *Meanjin*. Extending on this, we seek to investigate methodologies for community-based ‘joint collaborative’ (Brien and Brady 2003) creative writing by non-professional writers who are senior citizens living in the City of Melville, Western Australia. This work, based on workshops with local residents, explores the changes these residents have experienced whilst living for 50 years or more in one geographical area. In this paper we reflect upon the researcher-as-facilitator paradigm (Piché, Gaucher, and Walby 2014), explore the collaborative writing methodologies we used and the potential to privilege marginalised voices and unsettle the binary of individuality and communality (Bullock 2016). We explore the extent to which such projects may create ‘plural singularities’ (Torrell 2011) and the role of diverse voices in constructing a unified communal work which represents both similarity and difference, continuity and change.

Room 10.3

### **The Creative Writing Exegesis Next**

#### Nigel Krauth, “You gotta keep ‘em sep-a- rated”: Exegesis and artefact as a woven work’

The idea that the exegesis and the creative work are kept separate in a research degree submission dates back to early non-traditional doctorates in the Australian context. But, as an increasing number of research publications worldwide use fragmented structures and fictocritical strategies, what are the chances of honours and doctoral students succeeding under examination with submissions that weave together the exegetical and creative components? This paper examines strategies for, and examples of, the exegesis woven into the subject work it talks about.

#### Jen Webb, ‘Rhizomes and radicals: Performing and presenting new knowledge’

This paper takes its title as a response to Krauth’s 2011 comments on ‘radical trajectories’, and attempts to think through ways of presenting creative doctoral research that acknowledges the playfulness as well as the rigour, the collaboration as well as the solitary labour, and the engagement as well as the excellence of doctoral research. Borrowing aspects of practice from those applied in science PhD programs, and looking to industry-connected and team-oriented doctoral candidatures, it considers how the solitary artist/writer/scholar can extend the exegetical work in creative and productive, ethical and intellectual, modes of writing and other expressive presentations.

#### Craig Batty, ‘The Screenwriting PhD: Contributing to knowledge with practice and/as/for theory’

Using as a playful homage to traditional screenplay structure, the archetypal Hero's Journey, this paper offers examples of how the screenwriting dissertation is occurring at RMIT University – and where it might take us next. This includes discussions of what a creative practice methodology might look like; what an academic screenplay might look like; and rather than what a screenwriting PhD might comprise, what one might 'be'. Drawing on a range of completed and in-progress doctoral projects, including candidate and supervisor publications arising from them, the paper probes, prods, prises open and proposes what the future of the screenwriting practice PhD could be, in particular raising important points about the purpose and form of the dissertation.

**3.30 pm:**

**Afternoon tea**

**4pm:**

**AAWP AGM and prize winner readings**

**6.30pm (doors open):**

**an evening at *The Hearth*, The Wheatsheaf Hotel, 139 George St, Thebarton**

## **DAY TWO: Thursday November 30**

**8:00am – 9:00am**

Registration  
Tea & coffee

**9:00am – 10:30am**

Room 1.1

### **Speculative, Entangled, Essayesque: The Essay as Shape-shifter**

Robin Hemley, 'The Speculative Essay'

Through the use of appropriated forms, such as the report card, the book review, the menu, the testimonial, the questionnaire, the classified ad, we can find new ways to make the essay an instrument of wonder and speculation. This approach will seek to turn the essay into a kind of multiple choice test in which all answers are equally correct and equally wrong, in which the form contributes to a level of self-consciousness that is both satiric and sincere. In subverting and disrupting traditional forms of the essay, we also interrupt and disrupt patterns of self-delusion that the traditional personal essay might otherwise encourage.

Peta Murray, 'Essayesque Dismemoir: abandon, excess and other unravellings'

'To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now,' declared Samuel Beckett, with his customary prescience, in an interview given in 1961. This paper proposes 'essayesque dismemoir' one such form for our times. Hybrid, porous, and adaptive, essayesque dismemoir affords a method for collective inscription in, and upon, time and place and for essaying the liveness(es) and mis-remembrances of many, not one. At a time when contemporary events seem unbelievable, impossible, absurd, essayesque dismemoir captures the dis of our cognitive dissonance, offering an experience of attention and agency when we might remain passive at our peril.

David Carlin, 'The Essay, Entangled: Ordinary Wonders'

To quote Juno Diaz: 'We are at peak dystopia. Our political horizons have become distorted by dystopian imaginaries.' The current default settings for everyday life, be it for humans, coral reefs, cities or the countryside, are marked by precarity, anxiety, an ongoing sense of unhinged, manic-depressive craziness. Against all that, what hope? Many people argue that here is where we need to connect, or reconnect, with ordinary wonders. How might the essay use techniques like slow writing (Bird Rose 2013) and 'the radical act of paying attention' (Light 2017)? How can the essay envisioned as contaminated, ruined, entangled form help trace and nurture attachments to both human and nonhuman beings? Neither objectifying nor romanticising, but creating space together for small 'horizons of hope' (Braidotti, 2013).

Room 2.1

### **Trash or treasure, and other spectacles**

Megan Blake, 'The changing space of valuable literature; or, whether *The Kindly Ones* is trash or treasure'

*The Kindly Ones* by Jonathan Littell is pornographic and sensationalist, the story of an unapologetic SS officer who has serious sexual perversions involving lots of incest and violence, and participates in the Shoah. It is also called a 'classic', has generated serious and wide-ranging discussion from respected scholars, was the subject of two international workshops in 2009 alone, and won for Littell the Grand Prix du roman de l'Académie Française and Le Prix Goncourt. Littell, on the back of this one book, was dubbed a contemporary Tolstoy, Pasternak and/or Dostoyevsky. And, of course, it won the 2009 Bad Sex in Fiction award from *The Literary Review*. It is repulsive, absolutely – gratuitously so, most probably – but this very nature could be the thing that makes it work, and it isn't a book that gives to you your position on it. You need to work out for yourself what that position is; and, in order to do that, you need to read and

reread. *The Kindly Ones* involves so many topics and writing strategies that in most situations would have it discarded as trash – valueless or momentarily, salaciously gratifying. But, if treated as more of a scriptible text, and read in a more scriptible way, it offers so much meat that it can also fit itself into the box reserved for ‘literature’. Hasn’t that always been the history of narrative, though? Plays from the Renaissance and Ancient Greece that were considered throwaway entertainment are now classics; novels from the 19th century that were guilty pleasures are now erudite compositions. So perhaps *The Kindly Ones* is merely part of that negotiation, in which a select few texts in each era treat what is taboo or pulpy in a way that rewards re-readings, and then they wait for us to change our perspective.

### Tim Napper, ‘Gunslinger, Private Eye, Samurai, Android – Noir, Cyberpunk, and the Spectacle of Ceaseless Change in East and Southeast Asia’

My PhD examines narratives of past, present and future change in Southeast and East Asia. I argue regional artists have used their creative practice to explore the nature of this change through a prism, darkly, of noir literature and film. Noir and its descendants – neo-noir and cyberpunk – have an identifiable lineage that remains consistent across narrative form, aesthetics, tone, and underlying philosophy. The Gunslinger, Private Eye, Samurai and Android are four noir archetypes that have an appeal across culture and time—from the hard-boiled template created by Dashiell Hammett in the late 1920s, which heavily influenced Akira Kurosawa’s *Yojimbo* in 1961, which was in turn copied by Sergio Leone for his gritty *A Fistful of Dollars* in 1964; to *Blade Runner* (1982), heavily influenced, again, by hard-boiled fiction, the aesthetics of film noir, and the cityscape of Hong Kong; to *Ghost in the Shell* in 1996, where the director, Mamoru Oshii said the foundation of his story ‘had’ to be *Blade Runner*. These archetypes are essential to my creative practice, and to the story-telling of many regional artists. They have often been used in critique of a century that has witnessed a “spectacle of ceaseless change” (Chin & Gallagher 2015: 31).

### Jessica Seymour, ‘Abraca-f\*\*\*you! Improvisation, collaboration, and continuation in The Adventure Zone’

“It is, however, exponentially more weird to go on imaginary dates with my brother”

– Justin McElroy, The ‘The Adventure Zone’ Zone – MaxFunDrive, March 30 2017

The purpose of this paper is to examine the narrative strategies involved in the Dungeons and Dragons-inspired podcast *The Adventure Zone* (2014-present), which is run by the McElroy family. *The Adventure Zone* is an ongoing podcast narrative about three adventurers who work to find and destroy seven extremely powerful Grand Relics. The narrative incorporates several different genres, themes, and both player and non-player characters. During the podcasts, the youngest brother, Griffin, explains settings and story elements so that his two brothers, Justin and Travis, and his father, Clint, can react to them while portraying characters that they have created. The podcast is entirely improvised, and although Griffin acts as DM (Dungeon Master), he must change his plans if the other players go in a direction that he was not expecting. This means that the overall narrative arc and intended ending of the campaign may change at any time. Character backstory is introduced as needed, and the players keep track of magical items and experience that they gain as they move through each of the story arcs. This paper argues that *The Adventure Zone*’s co-operative, improvisational story-telling style is successful precisely because it is performed in an organic way that is true to character motivation. Storytellers may be tempted to force the narrative towards a desired conclusion, but when working with four collaborators – three of whom are not aware of the intended conclusion – then the narrative can change at any moment. Griffin McElroy’s flexibility as DM and the innovative character creation of the three players contributes to an overall-stronger narrative as the podcast continues.

## Room 2.2

### From Shakespeare to Aristotle to Joseph Campbell

#### Aidan Coleman, ‘The Whole: An Argument for Shakespeare in Creative Writing’

This paper considers the ways that Shakespeare can inform writers’ creative practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. I will argue that Shakespeare’s body of work bridges the gap between our time and his own in a way few writers prior to Modernism do. Before outlining the qualities all writers can learn from Shakespeare’s subtle command of features such as rhythm, diction, syntax and ellipsis, I consider how some contemporary Australian poets, such as Toby Fitch, Jill Jones, and Kate Dellar-Evans have used

Shakespearian content and vocabulary in their poems. I will close with a consideration of how allusion functions in these writers, and my own work.

### Luke Johnson, 'Writing the body'

Aristotle's subordination of character to plot continues to provide provocation for narrative theorists and creative writers alike. In her 1992 book *Tragic Pleasures* Elizabeth Belfiore makes the point that Aristotle's 'views on the nature of tragedy differ radically from those of many modern readers and scholars, for whom character is the center of interest' (91). In this paper, my objective is to see whether it is possible not only to dehierarchise the two narrative elements action and character, but to conflate them into a single unit. If contemporary scholarship has mitigated the strict Aristotelian formula that views character as little more than a means to an end, pushing instead towards a relationship of interdependency, then my aim is to develop this even further. I envision a kind of narrative where *progression*, and *action*, and *plot development* might be fulfilled not by how a character chooses to act, but by the physiological changes that are both innate and inseparable from the body upon which literary characters are typically and metaphorically inscribed: the human body.

### Alexandra Henderson, 'Whose Hero? Whose Journey?: Mythic retelling and the "Hero's Journey"'

Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* is an iconic and influential text in the field of contemporary mythology and popular culture story structure. In it, Campbell outlines 'The Hero's Journey', his theory that all heroic myths share a common plot structure and themes—leading Campbell to define this structure as the 'universal narrative'. However, as Sarah Nicholson and Maureen Murdock have noted, there's an assumption both implicit and explicit in the text that, rather than the 'universal narrative' being gender-neutral, The Hero is always male. A gendered binary of man as active Hero and woman as guiding, symbolic 'other' underlies Campbell's theory and discussion of mythic archetypes, and it's this structure and concept of 'heterosexual male as default' that my creative research aims to challenge. Drawing on examples from contemporary popular culture, such as Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles*, Disney's *Moana*, and fairy tale deconstruction *Revolutionary Girl Utena*, I will discuss the way that forms of mythic retelling (particularly within the framework of feminist and LGBTQ+ representation) subvert Campbell's classic Hero's Journey to foreground the problematic nature of the straight, masculine hero as default. I will then discuss how these retellings have influenced my own creative work, which is a reimagining of the Irish Ulster Cycle myths but with a queer woman in the role of the Hero.

## Room 10.1

### Creative research transitions

### Corinna Di Niro and Amelia Walker, 'You're Doctor What? Challenges for creative arts research in a culture of binaries'

Our presentation explores challenges for creative arts PhD candidates and researchers in the fast-changing academic cultures of Australia and beyond. We write as two recently-graduated PhD researchers, whose theses concerned theatre (Di Niro) and poetry (Walker). Both of us consider ourselves children of the 'ERA era' (Krauth, Webb & Brien 2010), meaning that we commenced our PhD programs in the context of major changes to research evaluation in Australia. We have both also experienced – and still experience – challenges connected with gender and its related cultural binaries. Our presentation engages the methodology of duoethnography – 'writing in the form of a play script' (Given 2012: 8) as a 'collaborative research methodology in which two or more researchers of difference juxtapose their life histories' (Norris & Sawyer 2012: 9) – to explore the personal, political and cultural factors that shaped our experiences of PhD candidature, and which continue to impact us as we forge careers in an increasingly casualised and uncertain academic climate. Through this process of examining the similarities between our own experiences in two different-yet-connected areas of creative arts research, we recognise and discuss issues also pertinent to other higher degree by research candidates, supervisors and early career researchers. In particular, we consider how cultural notions of and around binary gender reflect and reinstate problematic-yet-pervasive assumptions that privilege the sciences in hierarchical relation over the arts. To facilitate our explorations, we present two interwoven dialogues: one between ourselves, and one between the fictional characters 'Dr No-Idea', a creative arts researcher, and 'Mr Obviously-Has-Stable-Employment', who challenges the validity of arts research. By repeatedly reviewing and remaking the fictional encounter, we

explore different forms of challenges to the arts in academia, as well as various possible modes of response – that is, ways of justifying arts research’s validity and value.

### Belinda Hilton, ‘Purging the Impostor: transitioning to an Early Career Creative Research (ECCR) practice’

A year on from the conferral of my PhD in creative writing I’m seeking my place as both a researcher and creative practitioner. My students ask me, ‘Why don’t you teach creative writing?’, colleagues ask ‘Are you applying for jobs?’, and I ask, ‘Can I call myself a writer if I’m not writing?’. At my doctoral graduation ceremony, the weight of the robes surprised me – being awarded the title of Doctor has led to a case of Impostor Syndrome. Transitioning from PhD candidate to Early Career Creative Researcher doesn’t feel like levelling up, but instead like starting over. I’ve achieved a creative writing doctorate, but do I have the grit to continue a creative practice outside the framework of the PhD? This paper is an exploration, seeking the catalyst to reignite a stalled creative research practice. I delve into my “to-read pile” of writer’s advice books, dust off the therapeutic writing research conducted during the PhD, and trawl the archives of Text and AAWP conference proceedings seeking writerly fuel. In *How To Be A Writer*, John Birmingham states, ‘You have to kick self-doubt in the dick’ (2016), in *On Writing*, Stephen King writes ‘*you must not come lightly to the blank page*’ (2000), and Kate Grenville notes, in *The Writing Book*, that ‘At the beginning, the only thing that matters is to get some words, any words, on the paper’ (1990). I have had time to rest from PhD burnout, nurse the wounds of examination, devote myself to procrasti-teaching; now the time has come to suck it up, purge the Impostor and face the risk of writing again. This paper is those ‘words on the page’.

### Ariella Van Luyn and Robyn Glade-Wright, ‘Changing climates for the artistic-academic: towards a framework for nurturing creative arts research beyond the PhD’

Creative Arts Research in Postgraduate Degrees has gained acceptance as a research methodology over the past three decades, particularly in University in United Kingdom and in Australia (Nelson 2014; Arnold 2012). The rapid growth in the literature describing the nature of Creative Arts Research continues to evolve and clarify practice-led research approaches. However, much of the literature focuses on the nature of Creative Arts research at a PhD level (for example, Nelson 2004, Milech and Schilo 2004, Haseman 2006, Haseman and Mafe 2009, Smith and Dean 2009; Webb and Brien 2011, Arnold 2012), with comparatively few papers focusing on researcher experiences in the academic environment post-PhD for ‘artist-academics’ (Bloom, Bennett and Wright 2008) or ‘practitioner academics’ (Arnold 2015). Yet, in changing research climates in Australia, the UK and Europe, non-traditional research outputs are increasingly incorporated into the scope of recognised intellectual activities beyond the PhD, and student demand for supervision across the Creative Arts and Writing sector grows. While practice-led research has a relatively recent history in Australian Universities, increasing numbers of writing staff hold doctoral level degrees with a creative practice component. In addition, a new focus in ERA on impact, and connections with communities outside academia, represents both challenges and potential for creative writing research. Artists-academics in tertiary institutions navigate complex institutional hierarchies and imperatives. Following Josie Arnold (2012, 2015), this paper takes an autoethnographic, ‘mystory’ (Ulmer 1985) approach to addressing these tensions and practical imperatives in a changing academic climate, proposing an initial framework for nurturing creative writing practice-led research in Australian universities.

## Room 10.2

### Interpretations of theatre

#### Houman Zandizadeh, ‘The Welkin's Horses Rain Ashes: the Evolution of a Few Lines into a Full-Length Play’

Siyâvash is one of the most famous parts of the Iranian epic *Shahnameh*, written by Ferdowsi. It tells the story of a Persian Prince, Siyâvash, who is loved by his father’s wife, Queen Sudâbeh. The King, who is suspicious about their relationship, commands them to pass through fire to prove their innocence – an ancient tradition in which liars burn. Siyâvash passes safely while Sudâbeh refuses to undergo the test. Following a number of consequences, however, they both die. The story has been adapted by many artists and writers, but often with no major change in the plot, characters, and conflicts. ‘The Welkin’s Horses Rain Ashes’ is a free adaptation of the Siyâvash story by scholar and playwright Naghmeh Samini. In this

play, she focusses on the fire test because for her, it is ‘the most imaginative part of the story’. Although Ferdowsi describes this image in only a few lines, Samini develops the idea into a full-length play. In her adaptation the main character, Siyâvash, is looking for the missing part of his dreams. It leads him into a road of trials and obstacles. In this paper I aim to answer this question: how did Samini adapt the Siyâvash story for the stage? My main concern is with the process of adaptation used by her. I begin by providing the background to the Siyâvash story. Following this, I summarise the plot of Ferdowsi’s Siyâvash and continue my analysis of the play adaptation by exploring its histories, performance contexts, the dramatic elements, and the writer’s perspectives and inspirations – most notably, the genre of magic realism and Joseph Campbell’s monomyth structure.

Wilson, Annabel, ‘Collision & Collusion: The Darkest Night - A creative collaboration’  
The point after which everything changes irrevocably for each character in the work, ‘The Darkest Night’ is the ‘peak’ of the stage and radio play ‘No Science To Goodbye’. Troubled by how to best serve the story in a theatrical sense, I left the writing of this climactic moment until last. As much about landscape as it is about love and loss, the intention behind ‘No Science To Goodbye’ was to convey a trio of unravelling lives within a distinctive environment. So the purpose of this particular scene was to interweave poesis with place. There needed to be a trauma, a Search and Rescue mission, helicopters and a hospital sequence; told with a musical score crafted by Cory Champion, minimal set and a cast of three. The collaborative team of our director, three actors and musician knew the story - they’d read the seed material (the creative component of my Masters). During workshops and the devising period, they kept raising the question: How are we going to make ‘The Darkest Night’ happen? By experimenting with structural tools, polyphony and sound, we constructed the scene with the aim of amplifying what Ellen Bryant Voigt has described as ‘the peak in the emotional chart’ (1994: 1). The process of shifting lines around soundscape and silence lead to a space of open-endedness and fracture in the creation of what Gary Henderson coined a ‘theatrical poem’. ‘Collision & Collusion: The Darkest Night - A creative collaboration’ will investigate the writing process of ravelling the part of ‘No Science To Goodbye’ I found most difficult, and most rewarding, to write.

Julian Meyrick, ‘Australian Theatre after the New Wave’

In this paper, I discuss my new book, published by Brill this September. *Australian Theatre After the New Wave* charts the history of three ground-breaking theatre companies: the Paris Theatre (1978), the Hunter Valley Theatre Company (1976-1996) and Australian Nouveau Theatre (1980-96), each of which appeared towards the end of the ‘New Wave’ of Australian theatre in the 1960s and 1970s. The book presents the narratives chronologically, detailing the different personalities, organisational approaches and aesthetic styles. In the twenty years after the historic dismissal of Gough Whitlam’s Labor government in 1975, these ‘alternative’ theatres struggled to survive in an adverse economic environment and an increasingly complex administrative one. The book also examines the policy envelope in which the companies operated, looking at the major arts and cultural policy documents of the period. Using archival sources, including previously closed files from the Australia Council for the Arts, I focus on the changing relationship between artists and the Australian State during these decades – what I call ‘the policy-practice fit’ – and the growing dominance of a managerial ethos in shaping our national cultural agenda. This was a time when Australian arts funding changed significantly, both procedurally and politically. I consider this increasing concern with public accountability (‘the justification imperative’) and a corresponding multiplication in audit and reporting tasks, in a critical light. In this paper, I am concerned with what lessons these case studies drawn from Australian theatre offer contemporary creative writers.

**10:30am – 11:00am**

Morning tea

**11:00am – 12:30am**

## Room 1.1

### Writing climate change

#### Deb Wain and Penelope Jones, 'Food, Fears and Anxieties in a Climate-Change Future'

How do creative writers approach the current fears and anxieties about food production and consumption in a climate-changed future? David Bell and Gill Valentine acknowledge that 'food has long ceased to be merely about sustenance and nutrition. It is packed with social, cultural and symbolic meanings' (Bell & Valentine 1997: 3). These meanings are of particular importance yet have not garnered significant attention in literary criticism or deliberately utilised in creative practice. Current climate change literature and literary criticism focuses on any number of the anticipated consequences of climate change such as rising sea levels, acidification of the oceans, increased carbon and greenhouse gases, extreme weather events, mass extinctions, ozone depletion, glacial and polar cap melt, decreased water availability and heatwaves. Food studies theories will be drawn upon as a means by which of considering what current texts are indicating around the control of food, what this says about food movements such as organics and slow food, as well as the ways in which foodways can be a form of resistance and food choices can be a political act. By exploring climate change and food studies theories and creative texts that respond to such theories we will analyse the representations of food, food production, control and nutrition. The impact of food supply in a climate-change future will be critiqued through an engagement with literature that includes representations of food such as Margaret Atwood's *Maddaddam Trilogy*. Via such texts, we will consider the fears and anxieties around food's impacts on society and culture, the ways in which food acts as 'social glue' (Bell & Valentine 1997: 15), and how these texts engage with ideas of uncertainty and resilience in terms of food production. In an ongoing creative project we are exploring the social and cultural ramifications of a world where the government controls food production and, through this control, manipulates the various populations it purports to care for and govern.

#### Darryl Whetter, 'Field Notes from the Anthropocene: Climate Change Fiction Set in Canada's Oil Sands'

German literature confronts the Holocaust; American literature addresses slavery, yet landscape-obsessed Canadian literature devotes almost no attention to Canada's notorious oil-sands. My in-progress oil-sands novel addresses internationally relevant questions about this global epitome of peak oil. Given their accumulating toxic waste and threats to First Nations' health within habitat-threatening global warming, at what point must the Canadian oil sands be regarded as genocidal and/or a crime against humanity? Does genocide only apply to existing populations or are emerging populations (be they youthful, First Nations, globally coastal, etc.) vulnerable to genocide? The Canadian oil sands are a defining feature of contemporary Canada, yet they receive little attention in Canadian fiction. My cli-fi novel combines this relevant subject with the popular genre of the landscape novel. An excerpt of nearly 5,000 words was recently published by Canada's oldest literary journal (*The Fiddlehead*). My reading will be augmented with photographs from my fieldwork investigations in key oil-sands landscapes (including a helicopter flight above them) as well as audio from my interviews with First Nations elders affected by the notoriously toxic sands. The political consequences of a petro-state Canada are also revealed in this climate-change novel. One young 'ecoteur' prepares 'direct action' against university scientists in the pay of American oil companies and tries to help government-silenced scientists to share public-health science online. The young ecoteur couple compare their dysfunctional families to a dysfunctional parliament twice prorogued by a pro-sands government that limited the speech of federal scientists and literally burnt science libraries (those examples are from recent history, not fiction). Stories love change, but Life soon won't love climate change.

#### Rosemary Williamson, 'Wind, Water and Woe: Writing Eco-catastrophe in The Australian Women's Weekly'

A growing body of interdisciplinary scholarship concerns the ways in which writers conceptualise non-human others, including the natural environment. It calls for a posthumanist sensibility suited to a time in which anthropogenic climate change will make humans' relations to their natural environment more fraught because there will be more intense and more frequent eco-catastrophes, or what commonly are called natural disasters. Such scholarship is especially relevant to those who write about eco-catastrophe in Australia, a country in a region of the Asia-Pacific so threatened by climate change that it has been called Disaster Alley. In this context, writers and editors of magazine feature articles and other types of popular non-fiction should interrogate, and consider the ethical implications of, the ways in which accounts of eco-

catastrophe shape perceptions of Nature behaving badly. Scholars in writing studies can aid such interrogation. To that end, this paper identifies dominant and recurring tropes in narratives of eco-catastrophe in one of Australia's most popular and highest-circulation magazines: the *Australian Women's Weekly*. It takes a longitudinal approach, by presenting case studies of feature articles from 1934 to the present. All cover cyclones and floods considered to be among the most powerful in Australia's history since white settlement. Particular attention is given to the role of eco-catastrophe as spectacle, along with the perpetuation of an anthropocentrically artificial culture-nature divide that arguably is problematic in the twenty-first century. Findings will be situated within, and extend, recent scholarship in the environmental humanities.

## Room 2.1

### Moments of poetry

#### Natalie Texler, 'Illuminate: poetry from moments of healing'

Autoethnographical accounts are often used in creative writing processes to show the perspective of the practitioner through the lens of practice. While this is illuminating on a critical perspective, the accounts of people recovering from mental illness is usually analysed through qualitative means by the field of psychology, or interpreted through textual analysis. This has resulted in a gap for the examination of how a person recovering from a mental illness chooses to communicate. These inner perspectives are rarely given explication, or justified in their original unedited forms. Often, narratives are preoccupied with the moments leading up to the moment of 'breakdown', with endings remaining hopeful, yet not fulfilled. This collection of short poems seeks to 'illuminate' the perspective of experiencing recovery from a mental illness episode. Kept in their raw and unedited form and arranged in the order they were written, the collection aims to provide insight into the struggles for clarity, the desperation, and the desire to heal found in the weeks and months following hospitalisation. While avoiding editing is problematic for publication, these communications are vital to further understand the experiences of people living with mental illness. They provide a perspective that is often overlooked – that of a person learning to manage their mental illness, and to self-realise their identity post hospitalisation.

#### Jill Jones, 'Suburban Energies in Australian poetry'

I look at poems that (claim to) situate themselves in and move themselves through a variety of urban and suburban places, in capital cities as well as smaller cities. I will approach the poems not as static representations of those places but rather as mappings, nodes, energies that orient or negotiate experiences within and through these places, that acknowledge histories, political realities, environmental realities, changing material culture. In one sense, this is a kind of psychogeography, looking at unities or disunities of ambience, and the linking of unsettled or fluid emotional states to particular areas. I will examine the wide variety of modes of composition these poets use, including collage/fragment, seriality, performance, dialogue/diary, anecdote, as well as affective energies in the poems, including melancholy, irony, distance/intimacy. I intend to refer to work by poets such as Keri Glastonbury, Ken Bolton, Sam Wagan Watson, Cameron Lowe, Pam Brown, as well as my own work. I will also look at elements of The Red Room Company's ongoing geolocate project, *The Disappearing*, which focused on poems mapping fragmentary histories and memory of place using a specially-developed phone app.

#### Andy Jackson, 'The defecting voice of the other – new poems of bodily disruption'

Emmanuel Levinas posits that the other is experienced in a 'defecting of disclosure', a 'failing of presence'. A genuine encounter with the other within writing, then, ought to involve both an unsettling intimacy and a profound distance. But how is the other encountered within poetry? What difference does first-, second- or third-person address make? How is the voice and physical appearance of the other shaped by various aural and visual poetic devices? This paper explores these questions primarily through the presentation of new poems which engage in various ways with the disruptive proximity of bodily otherness. Some of the poems take on the voices of people with disabilities. Other poems address these others, directly or tangentially. In all cases, the body is presented as a site of disruption, harnessing the failings of poetic language in order to stage potentially transformative encounters. The paper will begin, however, with a brief theoretical introduction, expanding the concepts of both caesura and lyric voice. I argue that contemporary lyric operates neither as the simple expression of a singular authorial voice, nor as

a catachrestic effect which creates the illusory figure of a voice, but as the trace of an encounter with the other through the disfiguring of poetic language. I will also explore the possibility that caesura is not restricted to the technical break in a poetic line, but extends to multiple elements of the poem, allowing the voice of the other to emerge from within its ruptures, silences and artifices, as well as its overt voice of address.

## Room 2.2

### **AAWP Professional Skills Panel - This is the end?: Submission and examination**

Jen Webb, Deborah Hunn, Katrina Finlayson, Julia Prendergast, discussion chair by Shane Strange

For the doctoral candidate, submission of your thesis represents the final stages of an intense engagement with a research project, and very often, a way of life. However, the trials and tribulations of examination lie ahead. In this panel we bring together experts in examining creative doctorates with newly examined doctoral students to talk about the following: Submission: gearing up for the end; managing expectations from the examination process; evaluating creative theses –what are examiners examining?; finding appropriate examiners for your work; the role of the supervisor through submission and examination.

## Room 10.1

### **Change yourself, change your writing: Mindfulness and emotion**

Rebecca Carver, ‘The Impact of Adversity on Identity: Cognitive Psychology and Life-Writing Narratives’

My Pa’s life was littered with adversity, even trauma; his earliest memory was being blown across the street, as a six year old, in a bombing during the 1939 Battle of Britain. His father was already missing, and his mother was injured during the blast and consequently institutionalised. Pa was, therefore, placed in an orphanage, and wove his life narratives into the fabric of the facility, while his mother wove hers into the material of the mental home. Thus began a story – of individual and also family – that was characterised ever after by falling, or being knocked, down and having then to find a way up and forward. My creative project explores Pa’s biography in his own voice, through the lens of cognitive psychology, investigating the way in which his perception and narration of events (rather than the events themselves) changed him. Although his stories were often poignant and sometimes heartbreaking, he told them without ceremony or expectation. The life writing medium explores the relationship between this unimaginably matter-of-fact attitude and the formation of resilience, fusing private and public – individual and institutional – narratives to make his life ‘meaningful in terms of the lives of others’ (Buss 2001: 595) and in terms of a wider societal truth. McAdams, Josselson and Leiblick (2006: x) insist that, ‘our narrative identities become the stories we live by,’ but it is how we divide our own lives into emotionally significant chapters, and how we entwine them with the communities with which we engage, that is thus far underexplored through a creative medium. In this sense, my paper seeks to contribute to practice-led research in both life writing and cognitive psychology, through the telling of one man’s fascinating story.

Rosie Chang, ‘Mindfulness, creative writing and strong emotions: An examination of Natalie Goldberg’s approach to mindful writing practice’

Creative writers discuss the challenges of facing strong emotions in relation to writing practice. Indeed for some, strong emotional experiences become an impediment to their writing process (Davies & Cook 2010; Friedman 1994; Mann 2012). Emotions such as anxiety may be perceived as experiences to reject (Fidler 2008); while experiences of joy, or ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi 1975), may be perceived as experiences to pursue. These perceptions imply an impulse to alter or control one’s current experience. Mindfulness approaches can offer an alternative approach to rejecting or pursuing experience, a middle way. I am interested in mindful writing practice. In this paper I ask the question: What might we learn from an individual’s engagement in mindful writing practice? I approach the question by examining Natalie

Goldberg's body of work (Goldberg 1986, 1990, 2000, 2009, 2013, 2014). Goldberg's innovation is to articulate an approach to 'writing practice' that is analogous to meditation practice. Goldberg's monographs have become classics in bookshop how-to sections, and her writing exercises are referenced in literature on writing pedagogy. However, there has been little scholarly engagement with her intellectual contribution to contemplative studies, perhaps because her work is typically classified as 'creative self-help'. In terms of method, at the time of writing I am engaged in textual analysis of Goldberg's six monographs by coding and analysing thematically. The analysis draws on Buddhist perspectives (Loori 2005; Trungpa 1996), and theoretical frameworks from psycho-analysis, psychology and health science (Kabat-Zinn 2003; Mace 2007). In terms of the conference theme, the analysis will touch on the paradox that mindfulness practice is not motivated to seek change or self-improvement (Piver 2015). The paper will report on findings, and explore implications for personal and pedagogical practice.

#### Ursula Robinson-Shaw, 'Against Redemption: refusing therapeutic narrative'

Barbara and Richard Almond, in their qualitative analysis of the therapeutic narrative in literature, write that 'the psychoanalyst is a student of the human imagination, the novelist an observer of the human condition' (Almond 1996). In this paper, I will argue that the dominant fictive representation and production of subjectivity – the 'human condition', that linchpin of literature – is linked to the imperatives of capitalism through therapeutic narrative. By operating as a mechanism to recuperate damaged experience, therapeutic narrative abrogates meaningful efforts to emancipate subjective relations. Though therapeutic narrative has changed over time in response to industrial, psychoanalytic, and finally neoliberal forces, it consistently poses a schemata of the self that is an extension and reproduction of ideological violence, which precludes conceptualisations of the self that do not align with the imperatives of capitalism. This paper represents, in part, an effort to diagnose what Anis Shivani described as 'the predominant attitude of resignation, acceptance, even fatalism', which has had an observable influence on contemporary creative practice, and to account for the persistence of therapeutic narrative in contemporary literature (Shivani 2015). It will align a range of theoretical arguments from literary and cultural theory in order to seek modes of resistance against therapeutic narrative, and focus on the transformative potential of literature to establish forms of radical difference. It will examine the ways in which therapeutic narrative might be dismantled in order to imagine a more fully emancipated subject in fiction, who does not need to be recuperated, incorporated, redeemed or contained. The ultimate contention of the paper will be that, insofar as art conforms to the redemptive aesthetic which characterises therapeutic narrative, it is a system identical to its own crisis. By engaging in a dialectically critical account of the development of therapeutic narrative, I hope to identify its central features in order to aim at their dissolution.

#### Room 10.2

##### **Flâneurs and flânerie**

#### Chantelle Bayes, 'Writing the Posthuman City: Environmental Imaginaries, Cyber-Flâneurs and the Cyborg City'

As environmental concerns become ever more urgent, it's important to re-examine conceptions of 'nature' particularly in urban environments where a milieu of environmental imaginaries interact and continue to shape conceptions of and attitudes towards non-human nature. In a post-truth world where facts and fictions blur, creative practitioners might find opportunities to forge new ways of knowing, and new ways of connecting with the city. The development of new literary imaginaries can reconstruct natural/cultural relationships and propose alternative ways of living in a posthuman and multispecies community. The rise of smart-phone applications like Story City that allow writers to create digital narratives overlaid on real places as an alternative version of the self-guided tour have the potential to encourage real connections with urban environments. These narratives conflate virtual, corporeal and imagined experiences of the city and allow for new environmental imaginaries to be created in situ. I will explore these narrative possibilities in relation to notions of the post-human flâneur as developed by Debra Benita Shaw (2015) and the cyborg city in reference to Eric Swyngedouw's (1996) and Matthew Gandy's (2005) work on the city as cyborg organism – a hybrid of natural/cultural processes and entities.

#### Kerrie Davies, 'Researching Historical Literary Journalism: The practice of immersion informed by the flâneur in works of historical literary journalism'

When Norman Sims (2012) outlined the characteristics of literary journalism, he emphasised the importance of immersion reporting. Immersion requires the literary journalist to directly observe or participate in the events he / she is researching and has been likened to ethnography. (Conover 2009) Due to the expected presence of the literary journalist, immersion occurs in present time, and thus is problematic for literary journalists researching historical events that elapsed decades if not centuries ago. This paper discusses how immersion can be enacted in historical literary journalism via approaching the practice informed by the flâneur who observes street life. (Baudelaire 1869) The literary journalist revisits places that are significant to the historical narrative as exemplified in *A Wife's Heart* (Davies 2017) and Stan Grant's *Talking to My Country*. (2016) By simultaneously observing the past and the present, the immersion gives character, immediacy and intimacy associated with the practice in contemporary research. This paper arises from researching *A Wife's Heart*, a literary journalism hybrid comprising a biography of Bertha Lawson, Henry Lawson's wife, who separated from Lawson in 1903; and a contemporary memoir of single parenting, The original DARTS (Literary Journalism) thesis of the creative work and accompanying exegesis was submitted in March 2017.

Dan Disney, “it’s all good, it’s all fucked” flânerie amid the shitstorms, post-truths, and big data's Homo digitalis’

In an era of fake news, climate change denial, the rising threat of ideological and/or epistemic violence, kleptocratic petro-narratives in trumped-up tones of *there's no such thing as an Anthropocene* trumpeting alongside absurdist non-satires – or should that read ‘nightmarish political surrealisms’ – it seems cadres of First World men-in-suits are evermore vociferously urging our complicity in aging, hyper-capitalistic models. Philosopher Byung-Chul Han's *In the Swarm* (2017) foretells of a near-future in which ‘the mounting narcissification of perception is making the gaze, the other, disappear’ (*In the Swarm* 24); in response, this paper asks the rhetorical question ‘if creative producers are in the business of cultivating “voice” then, logically enough, *to which ends?*’, and argues for the creative text as a hopeful, humanising cry seeking a fraternity of others while speaking some kind of sense to power. Making-sacred in the marketplace-real, by these means can we hope to shelter together, a fraternity gathered against what Han characterises as an impending and fast-approaching ‘shitstorm’ (2). In an era of fast-changing political dimensions, this paper argues creative producers must turn, ethically, to face ourselves within our others, as distant and as near as a mirror's reflection.

**12:30pm – 1:30pm**

LUNCH

Lunchtime launch: New AAWP Postgraduate Journal, Antonia Pont

**1:30pm – 3:00pm**

Room 1.1

**Darker times in crime writing**

Leanne Dodd, ‘The Perfect Crime: Ways of representing trauma in crime fiction to transcend genre’

Trauma literature can be defined as fictional narratives that help readers access traumatic experience. Traumatic experience is frequently linked with events of a criminal nature, and criminal events form the key subject matter of crime fiction. These associations suggest crime fiction is an ideal vehicle for representing trauma, yet despite the central role trauma plays in crime stories, the capacity for crime fiction to be categorised as a discrete subset of trauma literature has not been explored in any depth. Within a

framework of trauma theory and its relationship to literature, this paper proposes writing strategies that enable crime fiction to portray narratives of trauma using textual cues that invite readers to enter the text in similar ways to trauma literature. Analysis of how these strategies can be aligned with the structure and literary devices typical of crime fiction are demonstrated through a case study analysis of award-winning author Kate Morton's novel, *The Lake House*. Although marketed neither as crime nor trauma fiction, *The Lake House* fits the definitions of both. It has a crime at its core, a detective and an investigation, as well as giving readers access to traumatic experience through the testimonies of its traumatised characters. In contrast, best-selling crime fiction author, Thomas Harris's novel, *Red Dragon*, is examined to illustrate that the genre's more traditional focus on plot often over-simplifies human behaviour and cognitive processes, and so neglects to explain the complexities of its characters' trauma. This analysis offers tools to write a form of crime fiction that transcends its popular genre into the trauma literature category and leads the way for further research into the power that narrative has to evoke psychological and emotional growth and benefits for a genre fiction audience.

### Leigh Redhead, 'You Want it Darker: Post-feminism, Neoliberalism, and the rise of Domestic Noir'

Noir novels have changed since the classic noir of the 40s and 50s, and neo-noir of the 70s, 80s and 90s. Female characters in these earlier incarnations have been interpreted as embodiments of the male anxiety of their times: classic noir women rejecting traditional roles in the post-war period, and neo-noir women dangerously empowered by second wave feminism. However, in contemporary noir there is a new paradigm at work. Female characters are more likely to be liberated from the prescriptive Madonna/whore dichotomy and presented as being just as flawed and morally ambivalent as the males. In the domestic noir of Megan Abbott and Gillian Flynn, women are depicted as complex, violent and alarmingly real. After years of "strong" women crime protagonists, these characters are finally allowed to be bad and in doing so reflect shifting realities of female experience. My paper will investigate the changing roles of women characters in crime fiction through a close textual analysis of Megan Abbott's *Dare Me* and Gillian Flynn's *Sharp Objects*. It will demonstrate that they offer a complex, subjective vision of female agency, sexuality and power which exposes femininity as performance and offers an antidote to post-feminist representations of women which are an expression of neoliberal values. I will argue that noir, with its sense of alienation, entrapment and paranoia, and its facility for critiquing social, cultural and economic ideologies, is the perfect genre through which to explore contemporary discourses on third wave and post-feminism and to accurately reflect the complexity of female experience.

### Ruth McIvor, 'Our Dark Places: private lives, public memory and the perils of re-writing "true" stories in true-crime inspired crime fiction and crime memoir'

As part of the creative production component of my PhD with Curtin University, I am writing a true-crime inspired fiction novel/crime memoir set in 1994, in a fictional US town called Northport. *I shot the Devil* is partly inspired by true crime events, recreating a cultural milieu and a changing personal and political landscape. Narrated by a flawed, but powerful female narrator, a journalist, who uncovers a series of crimes that she's intimately affected by and inadvertently written into – the novel operates as a post-modern pastiche of hardboiled detective fiction. It seeks to expose the fallibility of private memory and public record and how media fashions and manipulates both, challenging tropes of memory and identity. Like James Ellroy's, *My Dark Places: An LA Crime Memoir* (1996), my creative methodology lies in accessing and manipulating fact and recollection, while employing fictive rhetorical devices. In writing both the 'semi'-real and entirely imagined, I uncovered other submerged crimes; private and public traumas, that informed the inclusion and exclusion of narrative content and the representation and characterisation of 'real' people, places and events. In my presentation, I'll discuss this creative process and how a narrative collage of 'true crime' events became a lens for re-remembering, allowing me to uncover the 'real' story and 'true' crime, on both a narrative and metanarrative level. In outlining the practical and ethical responsibilities and quandaries that arise from using 'true crime' a research tool and narrative device, I'll illustrate how true crime and crime memoir can be radical vehicles to re-write and subvert dominant narratives, collapsing the dichotomy between public records and private recollection – creating narratives that not only catalogue change, but catalyse change on an intersubjective and intercultural level.

## Room 2.1

### Forms and change

### Katharine Coles, 'Lyric Time and Lyric Change'

Increasingly, I have sought in my work, especially but not only in my poetry, to address questions of change (in climate, through poems written out of a US National Science Foundation-sponsored trip to Antarctica; in relationships; in age and the aging body; and, most recently, in social and political circumstances) not by thinking about them but by enacting them in language. I am particularly interested in how perception and thought interact with the world through language, which I increasingly think of as being itself embodied and organic and, like all embodied and organic things, utterly subject to change in response to circumstances and under pressure. My primary interest is what I call 'passionate thinking', which attempts to engage the entire body, including embodied language, with the world it perceives in the moment of encounter. Of course, this effort raises significant technical questions. Though (or perhaps because) the resulting poems have moved increasingly away from autobiographical narrative, moving ever closer to the purely lyric techniques that I think of as being not descriptive but enactive of such encounters, the poems have become ever more intimate, not in the confessional sense but in their efforts to trace the operations of mind and body as they change in response to a changing world and a changing perception of that world. In this reading, I will present poems that are explicitly working in this vein and talk about some of the lyric strategies they bring to bear.

### Molly Murn, 'Writing on the Threshold: Ali Alizadeh's Ashes in the Air'

In his seminal work *Networked Language* (2008), Mead posits that the language of poetry is networked to the 'culture and history within which it lives'. Poetic texts, therefore, have 'an after-life in subsequent and changing cultural contexts', and this after-life is significant in that it leaves a map, a poetic textual history, of what has been before and, just as importantly, what is *becoming*. As recent publications such as *Southerly's* special issue 'Persian Passages' (2016), and *Australian Poetry Journal's* Indigenous themed 'Skins' (2017), have shown, in the space of Australian contemporary poetry and poetics, there is growing visibility of a polyphony of voices: Indigenous, migrant, exiled, settler. This paper will consider the recent collection of Iranian-Australian poet Ali Alizadeh, *Ashes in the Air* as one exemplifier of the changing landscape of postcolonial poetics. Alizadeh writes in the Persian lyric mode of the ghazal but renovates the form within the literary space of contemporary Australian poetry. He writes on the threshold between cultures and identities, inhabiting the *intermezzo* or the middle ground. In this productive capacity of the middle, there is the possibility for synthesis, a third space across and between cultures where something new can emerge, not only in terms of poetic form, but in the landscape of contemporary Australian poetics more generally.

### Cat Sparks and Rose Michael, "'Flamed Terrains – shifting landscapes of Australian speculative fiction": a braided joint paper'

This joint paper will explore how speculative fiction is responding to contemporary political and environmental changes. It will discuss the state of speculative publishing, and the factors shaping it, as well as the ways speculative examples are engaging with real-world concerns and exploring creative responses. The presenters each offer different perspectives, dis/identifying with the overarching 'spec-fic' category in different ways and working with different types of fiction: from short-form to novel-length works, including a wide range of subgenres, from 'hard SF' and climate change fiction ('cli-fi'), to dark fantasy and horror, 'weird fiction', and more literary-identifying 'slipstream' works. The writers will share their experience of the use, misuse, and abuse of generic conventions, within in their own creative works and other Australian examples, making a case for their unique take on what 'spec fic' is now, how it can work, and why they do it.

## Room 2.2

### **Expectations of change**

#### Kersten Kugler, "'Faith, Love, and Hope": Reading Matthew Quick's *Sorta Like a Rock Star* through a Kristevan lens'

This paper seeks to place the maturation process in Matthew Quick's *Sorta Like a Rock Star* in the context of a reflection on Julia Kristeva's work on love. By reading Quick's YA novel through a Kristevan lens, I illustrate how Kristeva's critical investigation of love, her concept of the subject in process, and her notion of adolescence as 'open structure' add to the complexity of analysing the protagonist's maturation process.

The selected YA novel is an example of love as Christian concept, and this paper will place the narrative in the context of Kristeva's study of *agape*. Kristeva's work on love from a psychoanalytic, philosophical, theological, and sociocultural position forms the framework for the critical analyses of this narrative. This paper responds to the view of several poststructuralist literary critics, such as Roberta Seelinger Trites, Karen Coats, and Martha Westwater, that have challenged YA's isolation in the field of pedagogy and argue for a greater inclusion of adolescent literature in the critical study of literature. By placing the study and practice of YA literature in a poststructuralist context, notions of growth and power structures in adolescent literature are explored. By reading the maturation process in Quick's YA novel through a Kristevan lens, I aim to add to recent poststructuralist approaches to a study of maturation in YA literature, opening up discussion of the representation of love and growth in adolescent literary texts.

### Gay Lynch, 'Untagged YA fiction: what are Mum, Dad and Grandma doing in the first paragraph of adult literary fiction?'

The YA label began as a marketing strategy to target particular consumers. Its literary conventions, tropes, subjects and themes are largely agreed upon but YA books may not suit all adult readers. How does the adult consumer of literary fiction choose books when neither publishing houses nor reviewers consistently tag YA books. Untagged YA books now appear in shortlisted literary prize lists. Does the confusion cut both ways? Where one reader aged eighteen or under might feel patronised and throw a book tagged with a YA sticker in the bin, another might reach for it with delight in a world of over choice and rapid consumption. Many adults read YA books for preference. Some adults read canonical adults texts before they reached puberty. What is an adult in 2017? This paper will briefly attempt to nail down a working definition of YA literature before it audits its perceived presence in short and novel-length, adult Australian literary fiction over a five-year period (2012-2017). In doing so it will refer briefly to Australian contemporary literary culture as a renaissance site influenced by 21c ideas about work and leisure, creative writing vocations, the reading/writing paradox, and the deregulated market. It will identify de-identified YA fiction in literary magazine content and newspaper reviews, publishing promotions and literary prizes. It will look at changed perceptions of adult fiction/reading in Gallop data, Nielson Book Scan, and the ABS. This discussion may not be generative. It will show that literary fiction marketed to traditional reading adults (over eighteen) now incorporates YA protagonists (aged eighteen to forty but with strong ties to recent childhood) and traditional YA preoccupations: identity and relationships, sex and violence, stimulants and substances, rites of passage, hope and redemption: didacticism. Many genres and forms fall under the YA umbrella and, therefore, YA is not genre. The paper shows diverse applications for the term YA within the writing, reading, buying, promoting demographics. This is a preliminary study with a short time span, intended to raise questions on the untagged YA phenomenon. Present trends are difficult to extrapolate. While there appears to be a surge in the popularity of YA fiction, labelled and unlabeled, market changes are rapid and readers both ovine and promiscuous. Urban millennials perceived disenfranchisement from education, employment and private housing impacts on their reading choices and access. The responsibility in universities for engaging with YA literary culture (consuming, producing, critiquing) given the majority of their student age cohorts suggests a follow-up paper.

### Dominique Hecq, 'Perpetual change and notions of fluidity'

*Air: Dreamwork of a Novel* is a hybrid text in search of a mode, form and genre of writing. It purports to be a work of fiction in which a series of intertextual subtexts run through. Is it a novel, a prose poem, a lyric essay, a painting or a poem, asks the autobiographical 'I'? The book interrogates the process of self-creation at work in the writing-process while exploring the kinship between textuality, origin and originality. It informs us as to the ways in which texts are made, transmitted and received while uncovering both unconscious and social forces at work in this process. The intertextual relations that contribute to the autobiographical subject in this work are underscored by a more complex set of internal relationships. The narrator's quest is shaped by an intratextual network of autobiographical writing told from different subject positions. The effect achieved is one of foregrounding the retrospective character of autobiographical writing in a process of rediscovering and reinventing the past through a revisionary act of writing, thereby calling attention to the performative and self-reflexive nature of writing and to the shifting boundaries between fact and fiction in self-representation. The presentation will focus on the opening of the 'dream work': though inspired by true-life events, the narrative actively blurs the boundaries between the autobiographical material and the novelistic impulse, introducing elements of ambiguity by confounding facts with fictional details, linking the notions of perpetual change and fluidity with regard to identity, artistic expression, and genre.

## Room 10.1

### **New directions in non-fiction**

Paul Munden and Anouska Zummo, 'The Four Seasons in flux: Interpreting Nigel Kennedy through a hybrid biography' (to be read by Shane Strange)

In January 2017, 28 years after releasing his first recording of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, which broke the Guinness world record for sales of a classical album, British violinist Nigel Kennedy toured Australia with a radically new version of the concertos. Paul Munden, who was present at the Sydney Opera House concert, has followed many of Kennedy's projects and performances, and is writing a book that is part biography, part critical commentary, musing on the nature of individual talent and its unorthodox tendencies, and with the prose chapters linked by poetic *transitoires* – Kennedy's own term for the newly composed sections that link the movements of his *New Four Seasons* recording. The concept underlying the book – *MONSTER! An interpretation of Nigel Kennedy*, still in development – is that a maverick subject needs a maverick literary form to do it any kind of justice. At the heart of the proposed book is a new translation of the original Italian sonnets, often attributed to Vivaldi himself, which are written in the original *Four Seasons* score, making clear the music's programmatic intent. The new translations take that intersemiotic origin as their cue, their interpretation refracted through the music – specifically as reconceived in Kennedy's latest performances, with a willfully contemporary idiom brought into play. In this conference presentation, a reading of the new translations will be accompanied by a reflection on the challenges they involved, and a brief overview of the book's larger themes.

Barrie Sherwood, 'Tibet, Women's Football, and the Boundaries of Non-Fiction'

In March this year I set off to interview the Tibetan Women's Soccer Team in Dehradun, India with the intention of starting a book about their experiences. Paul Hawken (in his book *Drawdown*) rates a combination of family planning and educating girls as the most effective measures that can be taken to halt climate change due to global warming; and in few other places is the need to educate and empower women more pressing than the Indian sub-continent. These Tibetan women in exile, all passionate about soccer, exemplify one way that women may achieve some measure of social, political and physical empowerment. But the documentary approach needed for my project – for which the methodological spectrum covered interviews, group discussion, participatory observation, and video capture – I found almost entirely foreign to my usual approach to a topic as a fiction-writer. This presentation narrates some of the author's challenges in this education in switching genres.

## Room 10.2

### **Politics, activism, crises and creativity**

Nandi Chinna and Alison Bartlett, 'Highways, activism and solastalgia: poetic responses to Roe 8'

This paper is a response to activism last summer when bulldozers pushed a 5km highway footprint, known as the Roe 8 extension, through urban wetlands and woodlands in Perth's southern suburbs. We argue that the impact of the community campaign and the clearing of this land evoked a form of cultural mourning and loss that can be thought of as solastalgia (Albrecht 2008). As an increasingly common experience in the Anthropocene, we are interested in how solastalgia can be expressed. In our need to comprehend and articulate solastalgia, we propose that a poetic response to the Roe 8 bulldozing offers a complex and intense a form of mourning which is not restricted to that summer of activism but connects with broader experiences of solastalgia. This presentation will include a performance of poetry written in response to the physical affect of witnessing radical ecological destruction.

Alex Dunkin, 'The unfairness of Fair Day: Mandatory creative change towards the extreme'

This paper presents the social and political influences that necessitated modifications to the novella, *Fair Day*. It discusses how real-world developments redirected the creative objective away from its original intent and into darker, more grotesque spaces. *Fair Day* is the creative artefact that was completed and submitted as part of my PhD thesis entitled *Expanding cannibale satirical writing into the Australian cultural space*. It is written in the style of *cannibale*, a contemporary Italian genre that satirises current political, social and cultural norms by exploring the extreme potential outcomes such standards suggest if they remain unchallenged. During the production of *Fair Day*, Australian (and western more generally) political and

social trends themselves lurched to new extremes. This meant that plot events that had at the time of writing appeared extreme to the point of being preposterous then occurred in reality, rendering events in the narrative intended to be grotesque and extreme suddenly mundane, and thus forcing significant alterations to the creative product to trump this new extreme. The presentation will visually display the social, political and cultural trends that altered the requirements and intent of *Fair Day*. Discussion on the timing of recent key moments in the Australian experience will demonstrate how such events can disrupt the satirisation of Australian norms. Additionally, abstracts from the original drafts and the final artefact will be presented to highlight the extent of the impact on the creative process.

### Nicholas Robinson 'How and where to begin the novel in crisis: a discussion of sincerity, politics and Ben Lerner's 10:04'

I will put forward a critical narrative about Ben Lerner's 2014 novel *10:04* and its relation to the political. In *10:04*, we are made deeply aware of the effect that crisis – economic, ecological – even aesthetic – has on the way we conceive political responsibility in novel writing. What is often called an aesthetics of resistance is complicated not only by the market and the art commodity, but also by the absence of belief in literary culture and the novel. I argue that if the problem is a matter of belief, then it is conviction – the belief in belief itself – that is presented as the solution. In *10:04*, this attitudinal form of resistance is realized through a relational aesthetic. An appeal to the reader through the sincere use of the text's pronouns - 'I' and 'you' - refigure the reading experience as a commons. By centering the value of connection between reader and writer, belief in the novel and novel writing become something like a 'co-constructed' textual experience. Through my analysis, I make the point that the contemporary novel, in order to become, must put forward an argument for how and why it is a unique political form. In other words, we must come to conceive of the novel as a technology for creating, as literary theorist Nicholas Brown puts, "a theory of itself" (Brown 2015).

## 3:00pm – 4:30pm

### Room 1.1

#### Space, Fairy Tales, and Place

#### Bronwyn Lovell, 'The Progressive Science Fiction Writer: Writing against the current of society and oneself'

I am a creative writing PhD student, composing a feminist science fiction verse novel called *The Best of Both Worlds*, which follows six astronauts as they leave Earth and embark on a seven-month long journey through space to colonise Mars. Through the act of writing this story, I have better come to understand that deeply-rooted gender and racial biases can still affect a text, even when the writer is attempting to avoid them. In the first draft of my novel, I did not imagine a female character being in command. I was eager to include ethnically diverse characters in my cast, but none of these were cast in a position of power either. When I imagined the leader of my space mission, he arrived – as so many do – a white American male. And this was a genuine attempt at feminist writing. If I had written this story outside of the PhD structure, not having to critically position and evaluate the text through an exegesis, I would have composed the story without being conscious of the cultural and social assumptions upheld by the narrative and promoted by the characters within it. I would not have held myself to account in the same manner, or at all, perhaps. Writing *The Best of Both Worlds* has helped me appreciate that the political is personal. As a feminist science fiction writer, I must recognise myself as a product of present-day patriarchal society, and consciously write against what feels natural and realistic, if I am to conceive a truly socially progressive text. This paper will discuss my experience writing feminist science fiction and the role that science fiction plays in inspiring progressive thinking and social change. I will read examples from my work to illustrate these concepts.

#### Kirstyn McDermott, 'Braid': reimagining female collaboration in revisioned fairy tales'

The antagonism between girls/women in fairy tales has been the subject of much discussion, particularly among feminist scholars and theorists, in recent decades. However, significantly less attention has been paid to the critical absence of collaborative female relationships in both traditional fairy tales and their contemporary retellings, an absence that has become the focus of my ongoing PhD research. 'Braid' – one

of six novelettes that will form the creative component of my thesis – takes the fairy tale Rapunzel and builds upon its well-known story, changing and extending the received narrative in order to interrogate its character dynamics (a witch who steals another woman's baby; a controlling mother figure who imprisons her adolescent daughter in a tower), as well as imagining new and collaborative relationships in which girls and women might find themselves. Susan Sellers argues that feminist fairy-tale revisioning can be either an act of demolition that exposes and detonates stories that have previously restricted women, or an act of construction that creates 'enabling alternatives'. The best re-visioned fairy tales, I would contend, are those that accomplish both of these acts in tandem. The extracts from 'Braid' presented here illustrate the ways in which I have sought not only to recast the female relationships in the source fairy tale, but to introduce new women in Rapunzel's life with whom she may connect and collaborate beyond the confines of the tower. 'Braid' will be published in the *Review of Australian Fiction* (RAF) in October 2017.

Catherine Noske, 'Space, Place, Play: Writing the constant coming into being of place'

*You seem  
benevolent, stately,  
canopy spread as  
an umbrella custom-made  
for protection, or perhaps  
the purpose of illustrating:  
  
my human incapacity to see  
subtleties in natural design,  
and further, the inadequacy  
of anthropomorphism  
in trying to know another.*

(Moreton Bay Fig)

Etienne Souriau, writing of the potter as an artist, describes the process of the artwork coming into being as an 'instauration' – a delicate exchange between the object and the artist, responsive to the desires of each. Several have picked up this notion, including in Australia Stephen Muecke. Muecke, however, applies the same concept of interrelation and responsiveness to a constant coming into being of place and space. He opens the exchange to the influence of all comers, draws in various philosophical standpoints and perspectives, to see place as a live network, constantly remaking and sustaining itself in the instauration process. Talking about landscapes in this light gives us a way to contextualise our own implication in the places they represent. It also offers a way to configure agency within place, both subjective and spatial. Returning from Muecke's work in the Australian context to Souriau's initial conceptualisation of the process of instauration in art, this work intends to explore how writing represents its own coming into being – one which has the power to construct and sustain place through its interaction with natural spaces. Taking up mixed forms and structures, the writing will attempt an ekphrastic engagement with a series of natural spaces. The aim will be to find a practice of writing which contributes playfully and positively to the instauration and existence of the natural space, allowing the writer a form of involvement in that live network which does not interfere with its unique agency.

## Room 2.1

### **Looking back, imagining the past**

Sophie MacNeill, 'You Can Go Home Again: Exploring the Impact of Return and Transcultural Identity on Creative Writing Practice'

In her book *Transcultural Writers and Novels in the Age of Global Mobility*, Arianna Dagnino describes her concept of *creative transpatriation* as 'the combined process of defamiliarization with one's primary culture and the de-ethnicization, detribalization, deterritorialization, and denationalization (or dispatriation) of one's sense of identity, belonging, or allegiance', leading to engagement with transculturalism and transcultural space (2015: 4). Dagnino suggests this is not necessarily an act of disowning or ignoring the influence of one's primary culture, but rather accepting a fluidity of identity that allows for the reception of other cultures and worldviews. This paper will explore how the act of return after exile or displacement can act as a rupturing process for a writer, ultimately leading to Dagnino's idea of *creative transpatriation*.

Returning to the lost homeland forces a confrontation with a newly realised reality that involves alternative, transcultural strategies of belonging and a fluidity of identity. In the article ‘Transcultural Space and the Writer’, author Inez Baranay laments that ‘the gap she made by leaving has been filled. It’s a place in *time* she left. Once you’ve lived the neo-nomad life, or the life of a multiple migrant, then you will also feel a touch of foreignness returning to the places you ought to feel you belong to’ (2016: 7). While still in exile, this realisation of what we might call a ‘hybrid’ identity can be clouded by intense feelings of nostalgia and melancholy for the lost homeland. It is through a return, and the confrontation with the impossibility of a complete return, that one may experience the rupture necessary to accept new transcultural strategies of belonging and identity. This paper will explore the implications of return and the *creative transpatriation* process for writers and their subsequent creative output, including my own.

### Carol Millner, ‘Resisting the historical impulse? Historiographic Metafiction and the Migrant Short Story’

*I like stories because they’re usually set in the present or in living memory; the genre seems to resist the historical impulse...*

– Jonathan Franzen

The 2016 census data shows that almost half of the people living in Australia were born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas. My research question – How have writers employed the short story form to represent migrant experience in Australia since 1945? – draws attention to the different ways in which writers in Australia have represented the immigrant experience. The title I have chosen for this paper refers to Jonathan Franzen’s introduction to Alice Munro’s short story collection, *The Runaway* in which he suggests that short fiction and history are mutually exclusive. To what extent is it possible to argue that as a result of late twentieth century developments in historiography and poetics, writing in a way that refers back to and comments upon history and history-making has become a strategy deployed by short prose writers in Australia seeking to represent the immigrant past? This paper will consider selected approaches to historiographic metafiction, as identified by Linda Hutcheon, and will reference Nam Le’s award winning collection, *The Boat* (2008).

### Craig Billingham, ‘Imagining Memory, Creating Fiction: On J.M. Coetzee’s ‘Nietverloren’

My paper will offer a close reading of J.M. Coetzee’s short story, *Nietverloren* (2002, 2014). I will argue that Coetzee’s staging of memory and remembrance is constitutive of the realist literary character, and therefore of notions of ‘character development’, verisimilitude, representations of historical change, and nostalgia. However, I will also suggest that *Nietverloren* – as with Coetzee’s oeuvre more generally, and the ‘author personae’ novels specifically – ‘doubles’ as an extended metaphor of creative writing, and of creative writing’s antagonistic relationship to history. Coetzee, I will argue, moves beyond realism, but carries it with him, by virtue of what Elleke Boehmer (2016) has identified as his challenge to Roman Jakobson’s distinction between the ‘expressive function of language’ and its ‘symbolic function’. Read symbolically, *Nietverloren* operates as a coda to several important aspects of Coetzee’s work.

## Room 2.2

### Family tales

#### Julia Prendergast, ‘Slow Time’

‘Ghost Moth’ is short story set in the Strathbogie Ranges in Victoria. It is a story about mothering and memory, and the bond between a father and a daughter. The story attends to themes of remembering and forgetting: writing significant moments of change. Jared Diamond asked the acclaimed evolutionary biologist Ernst Mayr (1904-2005) why Aristotle didn’t come up with the theory of evolution. Mayr’s answer was ‘frage stellen’ which Diamond translates as ‘a way of asking questions [sic.]’ (ABC 1 2013). The idea that a particular way-of-asking might generate a particular way-of-knowing and, indeed, a particular branch-of-knowledge, is utterly intriguing, especially when we frame the practice of creative writing in those terms—as a way of asking questions. Drusilla Modjeska unpacks the concept of ‘temporising’ in her article ‘Writing Poppy’ (Modjeska 2002: 75). This discussion invites us to consider the generative possibilities of the temporising space—as an imaginative space for writers—a way of asking questions. ‘Ghost Moth’ enacts the concept of temporising at the level of form and content. It interrogates the connection between language and imagery, the work of association and similarity, and the way we use these tools to

unpack our world. 'Ghost Moth' was an invited submission for the 2017 edition of *Australian Short Stories* (ed. Bruce Pascoe).

#### Chemutai Glasheen, 'A Mother's Wife'

Our lives are bound up in the stories we tell. We tell stories to explore, reflect and contextualise our thoughts. *A Mother's Wife* provides a way to discuss an intimacy that is outside of the male and female marital relationship. This short story interrogates what marriage is and what it can be by suggesting that there are multiple ways of being in a marital relationship especially in a larger context where same sex marriage is not only publicly denounced as un-African but is also criminalised. How does one discuss a culturally taboo topic, especially one cloaked in rights rhetoric, except by clothing it in a familiar form and context? Huels says that human rights principles are most effectively presented when one's culture and institutions are seen to sanction them. The context statement will also discuss how fiction conceptualises understandings of human rights from African perspectives in the midst of climates of change.

#### Lillian Allen, 'Family gems or baggage: capturing anecdotal family stories in their fluid nature'

My anecdotal family stories have been passed down three generations. These stories are fading in their verbal form, and are slowly losing value as truths are forgotten or adapted. Part of this loss of detail has been due to the oral generational re-telling, as well as the unreliable nature of people's memories. As a creative writer, I'm wanting to capture these anecdotal stories in their fluidity to try and make sense of the immigration journey of my great grandma and grandma. The family has branched over three different countries, causing their stories to do the same, each family lineage telling a different perspective of our family tree, those in Norway, America, and Australia. The perspectives have been changed with the tellers' personal slant, faded memories, and perhaps guilt over events that occurred, or personal 'imagined wishes' of what might or should have been. This makes me begin to question if these stories are more baggage than gems and if they are worth recording in this corrupted form, or is there some rough value after all. As the stories have changed and family members have passed, and now I'm looking at creative writing as a means to explore and record the truths of what has been told and past down, to highlight the different family perspectives in an attempt to capture what might have happened in the past.

#### Room 10.1

#### **Messages of Unknown Provenance: giving voice**

#### Robyn Ferrell, 'Becoming Mrs Smith: memoir of an imaginary friend'

In Winnicott's psychoanalysis of early childhood, imaginary friends are viewed as alter egos of a powerful unconscious kind. In this 'false memoir', the aim is to draw out the memoir of an unacceptable part of the self. The story addresses the uncanny and the fear of ungovernable psychic conflict. Mrs Smith is a triumphal voice but she is also an unruly and unacceptable self, associated with unserviceable feelings like misery, selfishness, resentment, and childish greed. This presentation combines an extract from the memoir with a reflection statement.

#### Lorinda Tang, 'Traumatic Change: the dynamics of character and chronotope when Bakhtin's "other" is harmful'

What are the implications for character and the lived experience of time and space when a traumatic event occurs? Can trauma theory explain the effects of harm inflicted by Bakhtin's 'other' on the self? Bakhtin is concerned with time and space in two ways: (1) as boundaries of the self and the other (identity); and (2) as a venue for being (chronotope). In the context of identity, the self's spatial form and perception of the world are dependent on the other, and the other "stands over against me in space and his inner life stands over against me in time". As the self strives to be, to exist, in the world it enters into a task of making sense and meaning out of what would otherwise be chaos. Each self is granted a unique venue for this task, being the moments and locations of the events in their lived experience. When a traumatic event occurs, the meaning built by the self can be disrupted or fractured. This is traumatic change. According to Caruth, the distinctive characteristic of trauma is the 'belatedness' of its experience. Trauma displaces an individual, and sets them out of time; the traumatised self straddles two disparate chronotopes. The lived experience of trauma also triggers a series of changes within a survivor which are juxtaposed against the stasis or

repetition of the woundedness. This paper explores the identity of the traumatised character and the author-traumatised hero relationship. It examines the complicated merging of the traumatised character's horizon and environment in the context of being extended across chronotopes, and considers the implications of trauma for narrative.

### Janice Simpson, "'Our Father, Who Art in Heaven': the influence of Christian texts on nonfiction writing'

Child adoption practices in twentieth century Australia were reliant on Christian agencies to facilitate the separation of child from mother and the subsequent re-homing of that child with others, almost always married couples referred as suitable parents by their local minister or priest. Stories told by adoptees are frequently stories of loss, grief and abandonment, as recorded in memoir, government inquiries and research studies. The creative work presented in this paper 'embodies' the 'shell' of the King James Version of the first two chapters in Exodus, a book in the Bible's Old Testament.

## Room 10.2

### **New directions in publishing**

#### Julian Novitz, 'Digital Publishing and the Rise/Revival of the Australian Novella'

Though often contested and difficult to define as a form, the novella has been more visible in Australian literature in recent years and two somewhat contradictory ideas seem to be at work in much of the discussion around its supposed 'revival'. Firstly, there is the sense that the novella has been neglected in Australia and needs to be encouraged and preserved. The stated intent of *Seizure's* 'Viva La Novella' prize, for example, is to 'celebrate and promote short novels – because ... some of the greatest works in the English language are actually novellas'. Secondly, there is the belief that shorter forms of fiction may become more popular and commercially viable due to the rise of digital publishing and new media technology. Quoting from the *Griffith Review's* 'Novella Project': 'Novellas: longer than a short story, shorter than a novel, have come into their own, with the digital publishing revolution providing new opportunities for writers to experiment with longer stories that are intense, detailed, often grounded in the times, and perfectly designed for busy people to read in one sitting.' This paper will consider whether changing commercial and technological conditions are leading to a revival of the novella in Australia by surveying the publication and reception of a range of contemporary Australian novellas – particularly high profile outcomes of the initiatives of *Seizure* and *Griffith Review*, like Bruno Kramzer by A.S. Patric and *The Wisdom Tree* sequence by Nick Earls. Furthermore, these works will be examined in the context of past and current debate around the status of the novella, so as to consider whether the current rise of digital publishing platforms has shifted the ways in which the form is approached and understood.

#### Shane Strange, 'Publishing and poetry: 'new' challenges in Australian poetry publishing'

Writing in 1979, Michael Denholm suggests of the small press publishing 'flourishing' in the 1960s and 1970s was not only a result of technological innovation (in this case offset printing and innovations in layout) but also:

[a] response to cultural and intellectual developments in Australia...especially the emergence of many young new writers, and to the failure of large Australian publishers and the overseas publishers in Australia to understand and meet the needs of Australian writers. (Denholm 1979: 1)

In the late 2010s, we find ourselves in a similar space in relation to poetry and poetry publishing in Australia, where a similar flourishing is occurring in the face of significant technological change that, over the last 20 or so years, has not only altered the way books are published and distributed, but also introduced technologies that affect the act of reading and question the idea of the 'book' in all its forms. In 2016, as part of the *Poetry on the Move* poetry festival run by the International Poetry Studies Institute at the University of Canberra, I chaired a discussion panel comprising five 'small press' poetry publishers of varying operating scales, audiences, and experiences, to discuss the challenges and opportunities of poetry publishing in the contemporary moment. This chapter reports on this discussion, attending to areas such as the perceived necessity of government support for poetry; technological change and publishing; and the necessity of 'sacrifice' or unpaid labour and financial cost in being a poetry publisher in the contemporary market.

Sif Dal, “I don’t know who I am.” Flash fiction and Third Culture Kids: the perfect match’

With the relentless increase of global migration of the past two decades, the phenomenon of Third Culture Kids (TCKs) has spread from the life experience of missionary off-spring, ‘military brats’, and children of diplomats, to a far broader range of children in society. Third Culture Kids are brought up under the competing influences of their parents’ cultural backgrounds and the culture of the country they find themselves inhabiting outside the family home. These children must combine their disparate cultural experiences into a third culture to represent their self-identity. The creation of this unique ‘third culture’ has been researched extensively and has revealed, among other things that these children experience isolation and a deep understanding of being the ‘other’. The contention of this paper is that Flash Fiction offers Third Culture Kids the ideal writing approach for recording their experiences. Dan McAdams has suggested that the formation of identity occurs through the knitting together of fragments of memory. William Randall takes the idea of fragmented identity further into the remembrances of the geriatric population, as a form of identity narrative. Autobiographies tend to take the form of novel length manuscripts rather than shorter forms of writing. The life-span, though anecdotal is offered up as linear, coherent, and continuous. The theoretic stand point of both McAdams and Randall suggest the contrary; that it is fragmented, non-contextual, and sometimes incoherent to all but the person relating their life-narrative, their chosen identity. Parallel to the proliferation of this TCK experience has been the growth of Flash Fiction as a form. Both Flash Fiction and the creation of a ‘third culture’ to integrate competing cultural influences are strong examples of fragmentation. The fragmentary nature of Flash reflects the fragmentation of the Third Culture Kids’ formation of self-identity in such a way as to offer the opportunity to highlight and emphasise the experience of Third Culture Kids to others.

**4:30pm – 5:00pm**

Afternoon tea

**5:00pm – 6:30pm**

Room 1.1 – 6pm finish

### **Changing stories of the self**

Gail Pittaway, ‘De-fictionalising memoir: putting the Non back into fiction’

[*Memoir*] I’ve never liked the word; I find a back-of-hand-to-brow affectation in it. (*You* write a lumpen autobiography; *I*, deah boy, write a memoir.) I also find an evasiveness. A memoir is an arrangement of memory, a work where art takes precedence over accuracy. Will Rogers said it: “When you put down the good things you ought to have done, and leave out the bad things you did do – that’s Memoirs.” David Hill <https://nzbooks.org.nz/2004/non-fiction/telling-it-like-it-was-perhaps-david-hill/>

In the 1990s a short story I wrote, *Voices*, won second place in a national New Zealand short story competition. Heavily autobiographical, about teenage religious anxiety and peer pressure, I was writing ‘from what you know’ as all the textbooks tell us; about events in my life that occurred over 20 years previously. But ‘what I knew’ was a strong religious upbringing, a deep relationship with a divine presence, in conflict with the fashion-and boy-mad obsessions of my peers. In order not to offend members of my family (‘Don’t tell my mother!’), the only mode for it was fiction – and comedy. I now revisit this story and other autobiographical writing as a resource for chapters of my Creative Nonfiction PhD thesis, a food memoir, and, in this paper, discuss attempts made to fictionalise the ‘true’ events of the story twenty years ago, and the uses made of it, now to revitalise memoir. I also reflect on the work of controversial memoirist Karl Ove Knausgaard, whose six volume work, *My struggle*, has offended members of his

extended family, critics and purists, or simply bored many readers with the impossibly detailed accounts of his life, to ask again of memoir, 'Should it be artful or truthful?'

Gabrielle Everall, "Bad" "Madness"; "Good" "Madness": who decides this change?

I would like to present a suite of poems that bears witness to the 'bad madness' of contemporary politics and reinstates the 'good madness' of R.D Laing's concept of 'breakdown as breakthrough' (1967: 101). In contemporary Western cultures 'madness' is sometimes perceived as bad. When something goes wrong in the world it can be described in a metaphor of pathologization. For example, Arandhati Roy in her interview on Radio National this year defined the state of the world as 'psychotic'. The president of the United States, Donald Trump, is perceived as having 'a personality disorder'. A headline for *The Washington Post* reads 'Trump is Crazy, I'm worried'. Trump deliberately deploys 'the madman theory' taken from Richard Nixon as a form of foreign policy. While Sander Gilman in *Are Racists Crazy?: How Prejudice, Racism and Anti-semitism became markers of Insanity* questions whether racists are crazy or just plain racist like Donald Trump. The 'mad' are also perceived as terrorists or potential terrorists. However, in Ancient Greece to be 'mad' meant that one was communicating with a God such as Eros. The goddess Tara welcomes hysterics into her Indian temple. In cultures designated as not Western 'a madperson' could be a shaman or seer. The Western anti-psychiatrist R.D Laing does not see 'madness' as entirely negative. He writes: 'Madness need not all be breakdown. It may also be break-through. It is potentially liberation and renewal as well as enslavement and existential death (1967: 110)'. According to Laing it is 'egoic' experience and 'the counter-madness of Kraepelinian psychiatry' that is the 'bad' 'madness' (1967: 117).

Room 2.2 – 6pm finish

### **Change in the workshop, boundaries in the world**

Shady Cosgrove, 'Size matters – increasing class numbers and the creative writing workshop'

With heightened funding pressures on Australian universities, academics are being placed under more pressure to increase class sizes. Creative writing workshops, where students provide feedback on each other's creative work, can be rigorous and demanding sites for teachers in ways that differ from 'traditional' classroom settings. While creative writing teachers face many similar issues – such as encouraging participation or ensuring that assigned reading has been done – there are additional concerns for the creative writing teacher. Students may bring in emotionally charged material that demands quick-thinking and emotional intelligence from the teacher. Students might offer feedback that's not constructive or appallingly misguided. And while there are pedagogical strategies for these classroom situations, it becomes exponentially more difficult to monitor the workshop space when numbers are increased. This article will survey critical research on class sizes and the workshop model, as well as third-year creative writing student perspectives, arguing that if the class numbers continue to increase, students will miss out on optimal learning experiences and universities will fail in their duty of care to protect students.

Samantha Leigh Trayhurn, 'Object-oriented Writing in Response to Environmental change'

Object-oriented feminism (OOF) is a burgeoning field providing a feminist intervention into philosophical discourses of speculative realism and new materialisms. Where object-oriented ontology (OOO) de-privileges the human and places objects and matter as primary '... object-oriented feminism turns the position of philosophy inside out to study objects while being an object oneself' (Behar 2016). I posit that object-oriented feminism is also proliferating in the field of contemporary literature, and is characterised by a style that operates in a liminal space between the subject/object in an attempt to make sense of an ever-changing global environment. Looking at the works of Marie Ndiaye and Dorothy Tse, I will show how these women describe literary worlds where the boundary between oneself and thing is always blurred. They beg the question; what if there is no boundary at all? What if you are already a thing to begin with? I will specifically discuss object-oriented literature that responds to changes to the natural environment drawing on Dorothy Tse's short stories 'Woman Fish' and 'Monthly Matters' before presenting my own darkly humorous piece in which a woman sells her bottled menstrual blood at the local farmers market in

Sydney's inner west. This short story forms part of my own object-oriented response to a growing disconnect from our bodies cycles and the wider disconnect, especially in suburban and city environments, from the changes occurring in the physical world around us.

Room 10.1

### **The pedagogy of transformation in creative writing**

Kay Are, 'A touch transformed: Reflective learning versus diffractive learning in the writing classroom'

'Understanding the world is about living inside stories. There's no place to be in the world outside of stories.

And these stories are literalized in [...] objects [...]. Or better, objects are frozen stories.'

– Donn Haraway, *How like a leaf*, 107

This paper argues that writing students' engagement with material culture through touching and handling objects – profane objects as much as those sacred to museological and educational markets – can occasion transformation (in a sense more radical than pedagogics ordinarily allows). By means of this teaching methodology, which promotes what I want to call, after Donna Haraway, 'diffractive' learning, I hope to contribute to modifying the discourse around what is called 'reflective learning'. Constructivist models – such as student-centred, project-led and collaborative learning – are rapidly gaining purchase in the higher education setting (including, of course, in the teaching of creative writing), and all of these models suppose that a student's reflection on their own educative experience is preliminary to arrival at profound and lasting knowledge, i.e. transformative learning (Hunter 2015). Yet the discourse of reflection in this context seems ideologically committed to an integral subjectivity that is humanist and insular and, in fact, constitutionally incapable of genuine change. Diffractive learning, I suggest, can result from a writing practice that engages *reciprocally* with studied objects; that treats writing as a screen to accrete the diffractive patterning of stories emergent from objects touched. The product of this encounter may be a material history or archive of making – not a representational text or object but a radically evolving register of process. I will suggest that the approach allows the diffractive writer, not a chance to reflect on personal, interiorised learning, but a chance to situate writing as *an active making of the world*.

Lynda Hawryluk, 'The changing face of creative writing in education: the StoryBoard project and its effect on school-aged children in the Northern Rivers'

StoryBoard is a mobile creative writing workshop for school-aged children living in the Northern Rivers.

An initiative of the Byron Writers Festival, the project takes its inspiration from the 826 National creative writing workshops located across the United States. StoryBoard's ongoing goal is to provide creative writing opportunities for school-aged writers, particularly those in marginalised areas. The Northern Rivers Social Profile reveals a region with higher vulnerability rates than other parts of NSW for children's social competence, communication skills and general knowledge. While the aesthetic of StoryBoard is fun and lively, there is a broader goal of creative and cultural literacy at play. The origins of this model of creative writing workshops, their impacts on school-aged participants and the long-term effects represent the changing face of creative writing in educational contexts. Cultural literacy and creativity educational research that informs the StoryBoard workshops will be discussed in this paper, along with the outcomes of the project as it is implemented across the Northern Rivers. Further project goals and any implications for tertiary writing programs are also at the centre of this ongoing research into the changing climate of creative writing in academic contexts at all levels.

Linn Skoglund, 'The pedagogical challenge of change – preparing for change in the writers life and in their writing – preparing for the unknown'

How does riding the subway and tram back and forth for two days, presenting to strangers texts the students have had one day to write, prepare our graduates for the ever-changing life and craft of a writer? Westerdals Oslo School of Arts, Communication and Technology (WOACT) offer the only undergraduate degree in writing in Norway. The aim of our program is to educate what we call 'multi writers' – writers that in their capacity as writers can utilize their writing skills in a multitude of forms of writing and platforms. The degree has equal focus on writing for advertising, journalism and creative writing, what we call art oriented writing. It is essential that our graduates are capable of adapting to an ever-changing craft and workplace and are prepared for the unknown. This paper addresses some of the pedagogical challenges in teaching writing related to the above question. This is done through a case study of one week of creative writing in our first-year students first semester where they spend much of their

time riding the subway and tram back and forth while they present their writing. The case study will include examples of student work (translated from Norwegian to English) as well as feedback and reflections from the students and teachers that are involved in the project. The paper also aims to develop a deeper understanding of how the pedagogical choices we make can prepare the program and its teachers for the continuous changes we also need to make.

Room 10.2

**Panel discussion: Reviewing and revising academic journal articles**

Tips and insights from journal editors Julienne van Loon, Nigel Krauth and Jen Webb  
This one hour panel discussion brings together several academic journal editors, who will speak about the submission, revision and blind referee process with an emphasis on providing best-practice advice, tips and tricks for article reviewers as well as for authors on how to best respond to referee reports and move forward productively with revisions. Whether you are a post-graduate student, or an early, mid or late-career-researcher, come and learn from the experiences of AAWP members who work or have worked as academic journal editors. The session will include plenty of time for Q & A.

## **DAY THREE: Friday, 1 December**

**8:30am – 9:00am**

Tea & coffee

**9:00am – 10:00am**

Closing keynote: James Bradley  
*Level 10*

**10:00am – 10:30am**

Morning tea

**10:30am – 12:00pm**

Room 1.1

### **Experimentations in storytelling**

Louise Sawtell, 'WRITE! Performing the musical screenplay'

*Write!* A poem. A dance. An experiment.

As a way to get through writer's block, she dances to the rhythms of the typewriter and pencil. Like poetry on the page the words create a different display.

The screen work plays with the placement of words on the page to replicate the rhythm and sounds of the dance. Drawing on scholarly research in alternative screenwriting practices, Kathryn Millard's script as 'design prototype' and the conventions of the musical genre, the screenplay can represent the movement of the proposed film.

Jessica Seymour, 'Experimenting with changing storytelling styles; or, Performing improvised collaboration'

Storytelling has constantly changed over its history. It began as an oral practice, developed into manuscripts and print, and then into the audio-visual medium. The critical paper I am proposing for the conference explores a podcast-based narrative that utilises a co-operative, improvisational story-telling style, and this represents a change in style from a creator/creators moving towards a specific narrative goal, to a collaboration where only one collaborator has a plan and the others are playing with the narrative as they go. In the critical paper, I explore how the McElroy brothers play Dungeons & Dragons – with one player, the Dungeon Master (DM), guiding the players through a campaign while the players improvise their characterisation and choices. There is an opportunity, at any point, for the narrative to veer off-course because the players do not know what the DM is planning. This narrative style is exciting, and I would like to experiment with it. This paper will describe the playing of an improvised, McElroy brothers-style Dungeons & Dragons hybrid campaign titled 'The Quest for Tenure'.

Camille Roulière, 'Writing with Salt: composing languages beyond ecological devastation'

Drawing on the work of philosophers Henri Lefebvre, Édouard Glissant and Gaston Bachelard on rhythm, relation and water, this presentation explores how several composers, sound artists and performers use music to reimagine and transform our relationships with watery areas near the Murray Mouth. By engaging in composition processes which require exchanges and interactions across and beyond

ethno- and anthropocentric boundaries, these artists redefine musical creation as a form of recuperative and restorative collaboration. Sounds become memories, and musicians are historians tasked with retrieving residues and shards of acoustic meanings in profoundly disfigured (arrhythmic) areas. Saltwaters are at the centre of these composition processes: stagnant or lapping, they reverberate and speak through the music by simultaneously contracting and unfolding the space-time continuum. Their sonic viscosity enables the artists to hear (recover) resonances and echoes, and to consequently reveal and expose polyrhythms with which to compose beyond the exploitative shadows of areas devastated by salinity. Infused with saltwaters, these repetitive acoustic layers craft an acoustic experience which generates transformative encounters by stimulating emphatic and visceral communions between listeners and place. Such music thus shifts and reconfigures how listeners perceive these areas. As such, it invents and sustains new languages of awareness and care which are cognisant (rather than defiant) of salinity. These languages do not occupy space, but (re)compose and nurture it through rhythmic accumulations and proliferations of ontological significance, as both the environment and its traditional custodians, the Ngarrindjeri Nation, contribute to their formation.

## Room 1.2

### **Fragments of change**

#### Ian McHugh, 'The Narrative of Assemblage (and the Assemblage of Narrative)'

Jerome Bruner identifies narrative as the key organising principle of the domains of human self-knowledge, society and culture (1991: 4). Narrative—fiction or nonfiction, written or oral—is the practice through which humans remember, understand and learn from history and explain the present. Knowledge traditions are constructed through the accrual of narratives that impose historical continuity and both legitimate and question canons and norms (Bruner 1991: 11, 15, 19). The stories we tell are, thus, a primary vehicle for the emergence, legitimation and re-evaluation of human social structures, systems and institutions. A theoretical perspective critically concerned with change and, particularly, with the contingency, transience and heterogeneity of human social structures, systems and institutions (assemblages) is assemblage theory. It provides a way of thinking about the forces and the acts of human agents that seek to preserve assemblages despite their inherent instabilities and illuminates how human assemblages, and the power relations inherent in them, can be destabilised and reinvented (Allen 2011: 154). An important facet of heterogeneity in assemblages is that they are not configured through any single logic of composition and connection, nor do they decompose and disconnect, re-compose and reconnect in any single direction (Collier 2006: 400). Thus, beyond the broad aspects of composition and decomposition proposed by Deleuze and Guattari (1988), assemblage theory avoids articulating any overarching models for preservation and change. I would like to contend that narrative is a key logic of both composition and decomposition of human assemblages. I believe the opportunity exists for theories of narrative to make a key contribution to the theorisation of human social assemblages, how they hold together and how they change and, conversely, for assemblage thinking to further illuminate how narrative practice can influence the emergence, legitimation and re-evaluation of human social structures, systems and institutions.

#### James Vicars, 'Southerly change: rethinking the biographical tendency and rediscovering 'lost' lives in Australasia'

Geörgy Lukács wrote that '[t]he important historical novels show a clear tendency towards biography' (1), pointing, as he saw it, to the way authors sought to confront the present with the great model figures of humanist ideals. Viewing this to be more of a fashion than a deeply rooted tendency, Lukács might therefore have been surprised at the turn of the historical novel towards the biographical novel and the expansion of biofiction. A consequence of this has been also to change the nature of the biographical tendency Lukács anticipated: the 'great' figures of the past have been joined in the limelight or even overshadowed by stories of infamous figures, as well as by lesser known or obscured lives that have been 'rediscovered'. A growing diversity of works by writers in Australia and New Zealand have moved to inhabit this biographic space and to focus on such subjects in addition to better known historical figures. From the biographical novel to hybrid true stories, this paper will reflect on some of the works inhabiting this space and consider the kind of contributions to knowledge, culture and identity that they may offer.

#### Kaylia Payne, 'Writing for Change: the case for narrative persuasive techniques'

*Writing for Change: The Case for Narrative Persuasion Techniques* explores the use of persuasion techniques in fictional work written with the intention of fostering empathy for marginalised groups. The results of this research have informed the creative work for my PhD thesis *Boundless Plains*. *Boundless Plains* focuses on the issue of Australia's treatment of refugees and asylum seekers, with an emphasis on boat arrivals. Narrative persuasion refers to the process by which people alter their attitudes and beliefs to match that of information provided in a narrative (Green & Brock 2000). Appel and Richter (2007) demonstrate that changes in belief brought about by fictional narratives are longer lasting than those influenced by non-fiction narratives. More recently, Wojcieszak and Kim (2016) found that narratives can lead to political persuasion and improved attitudes towards marginalised groups. This suggests that narratives, including fictional narratives, can be a useful tool in bringing about social and political change. Studies on the narrative tools contributing to attitude and belief change in the reader have produced results that provide direction for writers seeking to influence and inform the public. Strange and Leung (1999) found that when the narrative demonstrates that the issue in question is a result of a societal rather than individual failing, the reader's judgments about the causes of and solutions to social issues adjusts to fit that of the narrative. *Writing for Change: The Case for Narrative Persuasion Techniques* discusses how narrative persuasion research guided the development of *Boundless Plains* and, in particular, how *Boundless Plains* draws on the narrative persuasion technique outlined by Strange and Leung (1999) to describe and explore the issue of Australia's treatment of asylum seekers, foster empathy for those seeking asylum, as well as to pursue political change on a national level.

## Room 10.1

### Whose story is it?

Dan Disney, 'scenes, *et c.*'

In his recent study, *In the Swarm* (2017), philosopher Byung-Chul Han glimpses speculatively toward what he understands to be an approaching global shitstorm, and asserts that we 'fail to grasp the radical paradigm shift that is underway' (ix). Taking its lead from Han, and scanning amid the *Homo digitalis*, the long poem 'scenes, *et c.*' surveys how '(throbthrob throbthrob) the mind is '0IŋkIŋ, '0IŋkIŋ', and takes opportunity to fix a gaze toward 'o urselves in definitudes'. In 1938, on requesting first options for Faber, T.S. Eliot received this summary of *Autumn Journal* from Louise MacNeice: 'it contains reportage, metaphysics, lyrical emotion, autobiography, nightmare', and these each resonate throughout 'scenes, *et c.*'. Perhaps an uncanny memoir, this epigrammatic text appeared randomly and in fragments during an extended six-week period of Vipassanā meditation. As such, the epiphanies therein are as if snapshots momentarily lighting – click, *flash!* – the strange darknesses between self and others. MacNeice to Eliot again: 'The writing is direct; [almost] anyone could understand it.'

Andrew Pippos, 'Changes in narration: the network, the arranger, and *Infinite Jest*'

This paper describes the network that fuses together the chapters of David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*. This network can be viewed as the sum of Jest's narrative process and, at the novel's abrupt conclusion, its design points toward a continuation of events outside the frame of the book – readers must construe the missing segments of Jest in order to complete the text's overall design. Such networks are common in certain novels – centrifugal novels – in which different narrators and forms of narration proliferate throughout the text. In the case of *Infinite Jest*, the narrative viewpoint shifts from chapter to chapter, and the network operates as a sequence of conjunctions between episodes. Once this paper specifies the network of narrators and narrating positions in Jest, the question remains as to which storytelling agency we ascribe the connections between chapters and the overall arrangement of plot. Scholars of James Joyce's *Ulysses* offer an answer: "the arranger" is one source of control in that novel. This paper draws from the concept of the arranger as established by David Hayman, who argues that the Joycean arranger, a figure positioned somewhere between narrator and implied author, functions as a subtle intruder in the 18 episodes of *Ulysses*. I argue for an extension of Hayman's concept: in centrifugal novels, the arranger is the binding agent between the various narrators. The narrator tells the chapter; the arranger tells the novel.

Jess Miller, "'Perhaps she was mad": How narrative voice can irrationalise female time-travellers, and what to do about it'

Time-travel narratives inherit from science fiction the social responsibility of being a "climate of change". The subgenre's experimental structure has given writers a platform to interrogate socio-political hierarchies, and to challenge notions of time, linearity, free will, and the future. Writers of time-travel fiction have, however, stagnated in their representations of women. Narratives featuring female scientists,

for example, are largely absent, and in the few exceptions to the rule these characters are made irrational through the narrative voice of the protagonist. This paper is a combination of scholarly discussion and creative performance, which together will consider the effect of an unreliable or prejudiced narrator on how secondary characters are read. It will draw on second-wave feminist theory—specifically the writings of Shulamith Firestone and Simone de Beauvoir—to conduct brief character studies of Luciente from Marge Piercy’s *Woman on the Edge of Time*, and Noÿs Lambent from Isaac Asimov’s *The End of Eternity*. These texts are two of the exceptions to the rule noted above. Both women are, in relation to the text’s main characters, from a future society. Both are also intelligent, progressive beings, and well-suited to authoritative positions within the narrative. Despite this, the unreliable narration of Piercy’s protagonist weakens the reader’s trust in Luciente, whilst Noÿs is largely portrayed as a damsel in distress. This discussion will frame a short reading from my creative PhD novel, *My Daughter Before Me*. My protagonist Artemis is inspired by Luciente and Noÿs. Whilst a leading quantum physicist, and the inventor of the time-travel program I.R.I.S., Artemis is also a mother. As part of her job, she must send her young daughter alone back in time. Artemis, who encompasses both scientific logic and motherly emotion, is intended to challenge skewed characterisations of intelligent female characters like Luciente and Noÿs, by erasing the middle-man and thus the distance between herself and the reader.

Room 10.2

### **Creative Writing And Strategic Innovation: Possibilities, Problems, and Practicalities**

Jason Bainbridge, ‘Riding the Wave or Just Treading Water: How Can Creative Writing Programs Stay Afloat In Times of Rapid Change?’

Today's University is expected to be organically connected to community and industry, to solve wicked problems in entrepreneurial ways and to produce graduates with skills that meet societal demand. And in addition to all of this, Universities are also required to deliver programs that are not only financially viable but also exhibit an ongoing capacity for economic growth. This paper examines the place of creative writing education within these models and considers how writing courses can not only survive but thrive during periods of profound institutional change. It discusses how and why creative writing programs can position themselves as central to their University's strategic goals and vision and considers the costs and benefits of setting this as a goal. Drawing on theories of strategic leadership, it makes suggestions for how writing programs might ensure they not only ride the wave of institutional and economic change, but paddle ahead to find a happy medium between their core business and current university imperatives.

Carolyn Beasley, ‘From Social Enterprise to Start Ups: Creative Writing As An Engine of Innovation’

From living labs, to social enterprise, to startups, the university has become a space which privileges ways of teaching and learning considered to be dynamic, co-designed, and community or industry focused. There is increasing pressure on creative writing programs to walk this path. While innovation in creative writing teaching can take many different shapes, higher value is often placed on projects that cohere with the strategic goals of the home university or university department or school. These can include entrepreneurship, social justice, inclusion, digital storytelling, work integrated learning, online delivery, and industry income. This paper evaluates how different innovation models and their methodologies could be applied to creative writing programs, and discusses their challenges and benefits. It also examines projects and outcomes from around Australia and the rest of the world and considers how they might interact with existing writing curriculum.

Julian Novitz, ‘Evolutions of the Writing Workshop: Writing Students’ Perspectives’

As universities push toward greater innovation in delivery, design, interaction, and enterprise, questions arise as to how we might measure the value of the student experience. Using the idea of the workshop as a case study in innovation, this paper examines how the creative writing workshop has evolved from traditional mentorship models, to bricks and mortar classroom, and to online space and beyond. It considers the pressures placed on the workshop by university strategic learning and teaching approaches such as blended learning, flipped classrooms, micro credentials, and online interaction. It then discusses

student reactions to these approaches, shares ideas about good practice for engagement and draws on theories related to these, and asks how valuable the various models of workshopping may be to the skill development of writing students and to those beyond the university classroom.

### Room 10.3

#### **Creative transpositions**

##### Jessica Kirkness, 'Writing the Hearing Line: Deafness, Music, and Stories of Lived Experience'

Literary writing about deafness has been historically, socially and culturally fraught. Currently, there are so few texts about deaf lives that some scholars write of the 'invisibility' of deafness in the cultural imaginary. How then, can we address the dearth of writing on this topic without resorting to the caricatures that prevail in extant literature? This paper suggests the value of creative nonfiction as a vehicle for exploring deaf lives. Increasingly, the genre is enlisted to animate people's embodied experience, evident in the rise of auto/biographical writing about illness and disability. And yet despite the popularity and prevalence of creative nonfiction (memoir, biography, reportage, etc), people's experiences of hearing and deafness have received little attention. This paper examines the ways in which hybrid memoir has the potential to bring to life the complexities and nuances of interactions across the 'hearing line' – the invisible boundary between the deaf and the hearing' (Krentz 2007: 2). By way of a case study, I reflect upon the process, difficulties, and sense of urgency I have experienced in writing a collection of critically informed personal narratives about the lives of my Deaf grandparents, and my relationship with them. Here, I negotiate and write from the precarious 'in-between' space occupied by a hearing person with intimate ties, but also exclusion from deafness and the deaf world. In doing this writing, I draw upon Deaf Studies scholarship in order to disrupt the hierarchical binaries of the able/disabled body, and to change the ways in which we understand deafness. At the heart of this project is a desire to intervene in the various discourses that have constructed deafness as deficit, and mobilise instead, an understanding of the multitudinous ways of engaging sensorially with the world.

##### Marie O'Rourke, 'In the service of likeness: Writing memory through metaphor'

My hybrid works are experiential rather than narrative-based, gesturing rather than connective. Working under the umbrella term of 'lyric essay', they share a tonal allegiance and associative structure/logic with poetry, having a similar reliance on white space and silence, and dense, fragmentary language. These qualities make the lyric essay both allusive and elusive, and, I think, more suitable than other forms of prose for expressing embodied truths, especially those which are emotionally and/or ethically challenging. In this paper, I'll look at how metaphor allows me to approach such complex topics. Lia Purpura suggests a writer's best work is 'in the service of likeness' seeking 'moments of interpenetration' where we might 'feel the exchange across borders.' *Kintsugi*, the creative work at the core of this paper, experiments with symbol and metaphor to find likeness—something known, knowable—within an alien and disorienting experience. Acknowledging that language struggles when it comes to recreating complex and confronting memories on the page, the essay shows the crucial work of symbol, metaphor and blank space in holding together highly fragmented prose.

##### Katherine Barnes, 'Creative transposition: Changing diary entries into a first-person narrative'

Musical transposition takes a piece that's written in one key and changes the notes, the harmonies, the arrangement to a different key, to suit a different instrument or voice. In converting my father-in-law's World War II diaries to an extended first-person narrative I transposed his voice, his idiom, the rhythms and cadences of his speech into a different medium: a full-length work of narrative non-fiction. Diaries give you a single voice, a single point of view. My father-in-law Tom Barnes, who served with the Special Operations Executive in Nazi-occupied Greece, was a diligent, observant and funny diary writer. I wanted to preserve his voice and point of view in my account of those remarkable few years of his life. But for Greeks, the events of the Greek Resistance are highly contested, and I wanted the freedom to step outside Tom's point of view to explore other versions. For that I needed the voices of his friends and fellow-fighters among the Greeks and the Allies. Where does truth reside in this endeavour? One sort of truth resides in the underpinning research, in interviews with survivors who knew Tom, written eye-witness

accounts, situation reports for the British Foreign Office and Special Operations personnel files, contemporary photos, facts established and retained in the book. This is the historical truth that Penny Russell (2004) writes of. The other kind of truth is in reconstructing voices in dialogue and anecdote, real experiences of my ‘characters’, things they actually said in accounts they wrote or stories they told me, although we can never reconstruct any conversation exactly, since short diary entries don’t and can’t record that level of detail.

## 12:00pm – 1:00pm

### LUNCH

Lunchtime book launch:

*Dreamday*, a verse novel by Amelia Walker, to be launched by Dominique Hecq

## 1:00pm – 2:30pm

### Room 1.1

#### **Responses to environment and place**

Tess Barber, 'Rethinking Environment through Science Fictional Worlding'

The paper and creative work proposed is an attempt to approach the seething mass of matter and semiotics that Anna Tsing calls the ‘arts of living on a damaged planet’ (Tsing 2014). In her most recent work, *Staying with the Trouble* (2016) Donna Haraway works from the assumption that ‘it matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with... It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories’ (12). Ecologically, the urgency of such matters is charted by the rate of melting icecaps, in square kilometres of reef, in loss of home and country. Through experimental writing technique science and speculative fictions (SF) have the potential to instigate a change in perspective – allowing the opportunity to not only imagine futures, but also examine the present (Suvin 1979). This paper then, will turn to SF to analyse notions of environment, nature and ecology, within an Australian context. This analysis will shape and be shaped by the practice-based component of the paper: Perhaps revolution is too strong a word, but ... A SF novel. The paper will specifically explore the process of world building through the novel’s opening act: Variance. By the year 2540 the city of Melbourne has resorted to drastic measures to survive planetary destruction, and functions in self-sustainable isolation amongst a climate-altered bushland. Methodologically informing this world-building will be Donna Haraway’s notion of the Chthulucene, a richly science-fictional vision for continued living on a dying planet, a vision pieced together by many players, processes and metaphors, but particularly concerned with the ideas of sympoiesis, response-ability, and making kin. The paper, and subsequent creative work, will attempt to not only study notions of environment in Australian SF, a neglected area of study, but to also glean strategies for continued living in our changing environments.

Robin Hemley, ‘Multiple Loyalties: Unstable identities on unstable ground’

This paper will consider how, a writer organizes a book on a specific place, dealing with aspects of history, culture and politics, while simultaneously making the work ultimately about the self. As my prime example, I will use Jan Morris’ book *Trieste: or the Geography of Nowhere*, which has become a touchstone for my own project on the phenomena of ‘exclaves’, extraterritorial bits and bobs of nationhood separated from their motherlands. Morris uses Trieste and her long association with it, its history, its liminality as a metaphor for her own destabilised sense of self. My work-in-progress, *Exclaves: an incongruous geography*, is an exploration, meditation, and travel book about patriotism, nationalism, and global citizenship. During the course of the project, I’ve traveled to isolated exclaves and enclaves around the world on or around their national days. I visited the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad (formerly Königsberg, Germany) for Russian Federation Day, The Falkland Islands for Guy Fawkes Day, the American exclave of Point Roberts for Canada Day and July 4th, the last French territory in North

America, St. Pierre and Miquelon, for Bastille Day, the walled Spanish city of Ceuta, surrounded by Morocco, and the most curious set of exclaves in the world, the dozens and dozens of unmoored territories of Cooch Behar, along the border of India and Bangladesh. The subject is in many ways a meditation on the invisible and physical ties that bind us to our nations. But the book will make the kind of essayistic turn that Morris makes, in which the reader understands that even an external exploration can and should be invested with one's own personal conflicts.

### Melanie Pryor, 'Wild Bodies: Walking and Women's Nature Writing'

In Tim Winton's recently published landscape memoir entitled *Island Home* (2015), he explores a connection to place for which bodily experience is central. Yet there are only a handful of times in his memoir when Winton reflects directly on his physical body. In contrast, Cheryl Strayed's walking memoir *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* (2012) presents an experience of place that circles back repeatedly to embodiment: Strayed explores the physical changes her body undergoes and a sense of independence that increases as her body changes. The reader is aware unequivocally of Strayed's gender, and the complexities that being a woman, alone, in the wild entails. Both memoirs are about place and self, but for Winton the body, while functioning as a site where self and landscape commune, remains invisible; for Strayed, the body is articulated deliberately against a backdrop of nature. This paper examines how the trope of engaging with the natural world is borne out in these memoirs, with a particular interest in the role of gender in the differences between the two representations. Examining these differences, I explore embodiment as a way to read new traditions in nature writing, and focus on Strayed's walking in *Wild* as an act that subverts dominant ideas around women being in the wilderness. The work in this paper foregrounds questions around gendered writing traditions and how we interact with the non-human natural world.

## Room 1.2

### On posthumanism

#### Richard Nile, 'Specious Time, Posthumanism and Creativity'

'It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards,' the Red Queen admonishes Alice in *Through the Looking Glass*. So, why is it that humans can only remember the past and not the future, Stephen Hawking asks in *A Brief History of Time*. The most common explanation is that time's arrow moves in a single direction and that we experience its movement as entropy. Further, humans typically separate time into the categorical divisions of past, present and future, where the past is unalterable, the future is unknowable, and the present is ... well ... the present. Henry James' older brother, the psychologist and philosopher William James popularised the concept of the specious present which, he argued, exists in consciousness for as little as a few seconds and probably no more than a minute. This thin ribbon of consciousness asserts the historian Tom Griffiths is the singularity through which the future passes into the past. According to Yuval Noah Harari, this human consciousness of time is the basis of a cognitive revolution that enabled Sapiens to jump several rungs to the top of the food chain more than 100,000 years ago. Sapiens' unique ability to conceptualise and communicate through story, Lynne Kelly similarly argues in *Memory Code* has allowed humans to organise socially and maintain forms of cultural understanding across generations, centuries and even millennia. A growing body of recent scientific, historic and philosophical works, however, has begun to suggest that human cognition and perceptions of time may be coming to an end. Rosi Bradiotti argues that we have already entered The Posthuman phase which Harari calls *Homo Deus*. This phase contains the potential for remembering in both directions and possibly even of separating out time from our experience of existence. In this presentation, I argue that posthumanism radically recasts creativity in the twenty first century.

#### Pete Mawhinney, 'Reinstalling the posthuman into Critical Posthumanism'

Posthuman topics such as body and genetic enhancement, artificial intelligence and intelligence amplification are at the forefront of changing notions of what it means to be human. Yet, some critical posthumanists want to distance themselves from these kinds of issues because of their connection with transhumanist thinking. Theorists such as Cary Wolfe (2010) and Bruce Clarke (2008), see transhumanism as a kind of hyper-humanism that not only reinforces but amplifies humanity's centrality and superiority in notions of being. It has been argued that the idea that humanity is at the apex of a hierarchy of being has led to the global problems that posthumanism would like to save us from, such as exploitation of the environment and forms of oppression. Indeed, posthumanist theory seeks to de-centre notions of

humanity to reposition our relationship with our environment and each other. In this context, transhumanist or posthuman topics are seen to perpetuate a reification of human rationality which leads to their dismissal by critical posthumanists. While I agree with many arguments by which posthumanism rejects transhumanist ideas, it is my contention that the posthuman topics mentioned above and others like them, such as human-machine articulation are critical fields for the discussion of posthumanist concerns. One reason for this is that posthuman topics are increasingly a subject of widespread interest and thereby provide an opportunity for posthumanist thinking to reach a non-academic audience. But also, and perhaps more importantly, because posthuman topics are cutting edge and catalytic in fields of ethics and ontology that are of primary concern to posthumanists. This paper argues that while posthuman issues should be of significant interest to critical posthumanists they are being dismissed due to their association with transhumanism. This argument is made by analysing instances of posthuman representations in popular culture to demonstrate their relevance to critical posthumanist thinking. The paper goes on to challenge examples of critical posthumanist arguments that reject posthuman concerns.

## Room 10.2

### **Rivers and lakes, swimming and floods**

#### Carol Mills, “‘Brigadoon’ –Self, Place and Narrative in Memoir’

Earlier this year, the High Court in India declared the Ganges and Yamauna Rivers to be legal persons. It follows a similar ruling in New Zealand that recently granted the Whangamui River personhood status, the culmination of a 140-year legal struggle by the Maori people. The rulings have caused a dramatic shift in the ways in which places are, or might, be perceived. Unlike traditional Western culture where place is ‘mapped’ through relationships of power, the rulings were a result of the recognition of religious/cultural narratives combined with the spatial practices of the local peoples. The changes have brought stricter environmental controls and have already impacted on some mining and tourism projects. It could be also argued that the rulings have shifted power relationships of local narratives: what was once viewed as “outsider” narratives or stories “from below” have now become dominate narratives and legitimised alternate ways of “knowing” particular places. Brigadoon is a small section of my creative work (memoir). It depicts my experiences of being an outsider in Innisfail, a small seaside community in Far North Queensland. It examines the concepts and narratives of place and self through my own spatial practices living in a small community, how the sites of ‘township’ and ‘beach’ are mapped and the ways in which I narrate myself in this place as being an ‘outsider’.

#### Laura Kenny, ‘On Either Side’

*On Either Side* is a novel-in-progress which constitutes the creative component of my practice-led PhD-in-progress. The novel, set in a fictionalised Grantham, Queensland, is comprised of two parallel storylines: one encompassing the week leading up to a flood, and the other encompassing the week leading up to the five-year anniversary of the event. The novel grapples with ideas of change on many levels. This is particularly evident in the later storyline, narrated by thirteen-year-old Lainey, whose mother died in the flood. The physical landscape of the town has been altered by the flood: Lainey’s old house has been destroyed and she has a new house in a newly-created suburb up on the hill. The people around Lainey have changed: some have left the town because of the flood, while others have returned after long absences. Alzheimer’s has rendered their neighbour, Mrs Beck, almost unrecognisable. Lainey herself is poised on the brink of physical, social, and emotional changes. However, what I am most interested in is the way the experience of childhood trauma changes a character’s relationship with place. From humanistic geography we know that our sense of place is a critical component of our identity, and is acquired during childhood (see, for example, Chawla 1992). From psychology we know that the experience of childhood trauma affects a child’s identity formation (see, for example, Herman 1997). If place plays a significant role in identity, then it is reasonable to assume that a disruption in identity formation may result in a distorted experience of and attachment to place. This creative paper is comprised of selected extracts from Lainey’s narration beginning with the opening section of the novel and ending with Lainey’s observation towards the end of the novel that place can be, and mean, more than one thing at the same time.

#### Ingrid Horrocks, ‘Gone Swimming: A Creative Nonfiction Immersion’

This paper will consist largely of a reading from a new creative essay, ‘Good Swimming’. The essay experiments with writing about the environment in ways that might change the minds of those not usually

sympathetic to considering environmental issues. The essay was written in response to a recent policy decision in New Zealand. In February 2017 the National government released a new policy goal of ‘90 per cent of New Zealand’s lakes and rivers meeting swimmable water quality standards by 2040’. The policy was widely criticised as simply shifting the goal posts, as waters once declared only safe enough to be ‘wadeable’ will be re-categorised as ‘swimmable’. What seemed to be missing from the debate, however, was the question of why people might actually care about swimming. This travel essay takes as its starting point the idea that while it is not clear that swimming, rather than biodiversity or the survival of ecosystems for example, is even the right benchmark for measuring water health, if we are to use the activity of swimming as a benchmark it will need tugging free from the mechanistic policy adjective ‘swimmable’ and being returned to rivers, lakes, and seas. The essay narrates a swimming journey up the North Island of New Zealand, interweaving accounts of the pleasures of swimming with observations on the health of New Zealand’s waterways. It utilises a new ‘Can I Swim Here?’ cellphone App issued by the Ministry for the Environment and draws on the work of environment historians Geoff Park and Catherine Knight. In terms of literary influence, it aims to do the kind of slow-burning exploratory political work of nonfiction writers such as Rebecca Solnit in the United States and Robert Macfarlane in the United Kingdom. It builds on the author’s own extensive practice as a travel writer and essayist.

### Room 10.3

#### **Not your grandmother’s change**

##### Ffion Murphy, ‘Speaking for the dead’

One third of the 60,000 Australians killed in the 1914-1918 war were unable to be identified. Known collectively as the ‘Unknown Soldier’ they were reburied in the postwar years with the inscription ‘Known unto God’. In 1993, the remains of one Australian killed on the Western Front were exhumed, repatriated and interred in the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. In his eulogy, then prime minister Paul Keating declared, ‘We do not know this Australian’s name and we never will,’ adding we would never know the man’s rank and battalion, age, birthplace, personal circumstances, religion, marital status, ‘who loved him or whom he loved’, or how and when he died. The unknown may have enlisted without coercion, but has had no say in his transmutation and further service to the nation, in his spectacular metamorphosis. In 2007, Archie Weller published the ‘Unknown Soldier’, a poem which appears to invoke CJ Dennis’s vernacular verse and, in a double-act of ghosting and reversal, endows the soldier with a name, voice, history and character. Weller deploys prosopopoeia, which was described as the ‘fiction of the voice from beyond the grave’ and a ‘master trope’ of poetic discourse by Paul de Man. His verse undercuts notions of the sacred associated with the unknown soldier: the speaker identifies himself as Jimmy Dawson, who ‘wasn’t unknown in Fitzroy’s back streets’, and the story he tells is one ‘bones can’t tell ya, mate!’. The concept of an ‘unknown person’, Weller observes, is ‘wonderful for the imagination’. Weller creates presence from absence, making explicit a key motive of imaginative writing. His speaking-for the dead appears an act of ‘half-mourning’ (Derrida), that is, a work both of and about mourning. This paper speculates on the potency of the ‘unknown’ and the way that writing assists both revelation and concealment, resurrection and erasure, remembering and forgetting.

##### Nicole Anae, ‘Mapping Climates of Social and Literary Change in the poetry writing of Catherine Helen Spence (1825–1910)’

While nowadays Catherine Helen Spence (1825–1910) is well recognised as an unmatched advocate of women’s rights in Australia and internationally, the ‘great apostle of effective voting’, and Australia’s first female professional journalist, among other distinctions, her literary significance remains somewhat under-examined. Although Spence achieved widespread fame as the first Australian woman to write a novel, *Clara Morison: A tale of South Australia during the gold fever*, published anonymously in two volumes in London in 1856, a critical gap remains in the scholarship examining her originative role in both the Australian Victorian poetic tradition and the development of Australian women’s literature. The aim of this presentation then is twofold: a) to adopt a deconstructive approach in identifying Spence’s utilisation of hybrid forms for writing as vehicles to apprehend, describe, and defend social change, and; b) to shed new light on how Spence’s relatively overlooked collection of innovative poetries—including, but not limited to, ‘Narrative Palindromes’, ‘Anagrammatic Narratives’, ‘Charades’ (dramatic and literary), and double and triple ‘Acrostics’—merits recognition as pushing the traditional boundaries of nineteenth-century creative writing to transform the dynamic innovation of the text.

## Donna Hanson, 'Retro Mills & Boon taking on feminism: representations of feminist social issues in Penny Jordan's 1983 novel Man-Hater'

Despite denigration in the 1970s and 1980s from critics and second wave feminists such as Germaine Greer who, in *The Female Eunuch*, famously described romance novels as 'escapist literature of love and marriage voraciously consumed by housewives' (Greer 1970: 241), popular romance fiction regularly depicts feminist social issues. This paper focuses on the contemporary or realist category novels published in 1970s and 1980s, when there was considerable change occurring in multiple areas of social discourse, including the rise in critical engagement with women's rights and second wave feminism. Authors were engaging with feminist social issues, at times commenting on the disparities between the law and the social reality of lived experience. Contemporary popular romance novels are set in the everyday context and as such cannot but help portray the world in which the authors and their characters exist, including social issues present in the mind of the author, whether consciously or unconsciously. In this sense, the concept of Pierre Bourdieu's 'habitus' underpinned the textual analysis—'this partly unconscious "taking in" of rules, values and dispositions...' (Webb, Schirato & Dahanher 2002: 44). This presentation will include analysis of *Man-Hater* by Penny Jordan (1983), a narrative that includes commentary on sexual harassment, the court's treatment of rape cases and the treatment of women in real life versus rights established in law.

## 2:30pm – 3:00pm

Afternoon tea

## 3:00pm – 4:30pm

Room 1.1

### **Diversity in workshops and residencies**

Julienne Van Loon, "'Spouses and children are not allowed": gender equality, unconscious bias and the legacy of Romanticism in elite writers' residency programs'

As the Australia Council for the Arts acknowledges, writers and artists seek to take up residency programs for a number of reasons, but key among them are the 'time and resources' such residencies can provide 'for reflection and experimentation, [the] development of artistic practice, and [the] opportunities to connect with other artists who can stimulate ideas and possibilities'. Blurring notions of domesticity, monasticism, the Romantic ideal of the lone author/auteur, and the culture of the office, writers' residency programs can be problematic for writers who are also unpaid carers. In many cases, the rules and regulations for writers' residencies or fellowships explicitly exclude the possibility of a visiting writer travelling with one or more dependents. Where regulations do allow dependents to accompany a writer, lack of access to local professional care and/or the additional expenses involved in providing such care can work to structurally exclude writers with unpaid carer responsibilities. Alternatively, the expense of leaving dependents at home with paid carers can be prohibitive. In this paper, I explore the legacy of Romanticism in contemporary notions of creative writing practice and discuss how these notions contribute to writers who are unpaid carers being too frequently excluded from writers' residency programs, particularly at the elite national and international level. In consultation with selected Australian and international writers who are unpaid carers, and through reflection on my own experience with residencies in China, Australia and the United States, this paper identifies some of the key effects of rules such as 'spouses and children not allowed' and proposes a set of best practice guidelines for residency program Boards and administrators to consider, based on the Australian Human Rights Commission toolkit for supporting unpaid carers in the workplace.

### **Roanna Gonsalves, 'Race, class and gender in the writing workshop'**

The discipline of Creative Writing continues to grow in the Australian academic context, with increasing racial, ethnic, class, and gender diversity in the cohort from year to year. Yet there is little discussion of how the writing workshop may be a space that constrains and excludes students who live and write outside of dominant hegemonic positions. Using a reflexive, autoethnographic approach, this paper attempts to

contribute to scholarship on the writing workshop, exploring how students in minority positions in relation to race, class, and gender may be supported and nurtured. It suggests a set of ethical practices that may be considered to achieve a workshop situation that is inclusive and enabling of diverse writers, which in turn may lead to an Australian literary culture that is a more realistic reflection of contemporary Australian life.

## Room 10.1

### **Creatures of change**

Jeri Kroll, 'The Horse-Human Bond in Literature: Healing Metaphors and Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse'

This creative presentation is based on my Doctor of Creative Arts project entitled 'The Horse-Human Bond in Literature: Healing Metaphors and Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse.' It concentrates on those metaphors and figurative language that embody that bond. Key metaphors – called 'therapeutic metaphors' (Fry 2013: 276) – can be found in Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy (EFP) that includes an equine in a therapeutic environment with the purpose of improving client outcomes. I identify equivalent metaphors in contemporary nonfiction and fiction in these exemplary texts: Monty Roberts' *The Man Who Listens to Horses: The Story of a Real-Life Horse Whisperer* (1996, 2009), Jane Smiley's novel *Horse Heaven* (2000) and Gillian Mears' novel *Foal's Bread* (2011). Little research has made this rhetorical connection, nor looked at how literary texts suggest the dynamics of healing that accords with current scientific and psychological research. This project attempts to fill that gap by asking these questions: how do metaphors embody the horse-human bond in contemporary literature and how can texts support or even elaborate in an artistic practice the implications of that research? Can a novel's use of key metaphors suggest ways in which we can better understand why the horse-human bond is particularly effective with adult female survivors of sexual abuse and domestic violence? I will read a short extract from my novel-in-progress, *Waifs and Strays*, in order to demonstrate how this project is developing.

Hayley Elliot-Ryan, 'Intimacy not Identity: reparative ways to write erotic encounters'

This paper takes up the question (framed by Deleuze in *The Logic of Sense*) of how desire 'without Others' might be performed, and argues for its relevance as a way of writing new erotic encounters, and representing shifting sexualities in fiction. Drawing on Segwick's definition of 'Reparative Reading' I consider two examples of 'perverse' sexualities and the subsequent readings that reframe perversion as a positive representation of sexuality that concerns itself with intimacy, rather than identity, a being-with, rather than a means of (re)production. Applying this theory to my fiction writing, I challenge definitions of sexuality and sexual practices by writing characters that embody perverse logic and desire in diverse and unexpected ways. In this way, fiction writing works to imagine new and creative erotic encounters that affirm something of Deleuzian desire, and recognises sexuality as unfixed, multiple and positive.

Nicole Crowe, 'Magoo'

This extract of a book-length memoir manuscript is a non-traditional research output produced as part of a PhD in creative writing that explores the narrative possibilities of humour in Australian memoir, an area that has been largely overlooked by Australian literary scholars. To date, De Groen and Kirkpatrick's *Serious Frolic: Essays on Australian Humour* (2009), is the only extended study of Australian humour in literature, and discusses works of fiction without touching on non-fiction/autobiography. This extract explores a moment of change in my own life, of burgeoning sexual awareness/awakening. Told from an adult's point of view, this extract employs techniques of Superiority Theory: the adult eye is looking back at the follies of the childish self (Hobbes) and sees through a lens of humour the experiences of the former self's awkward, even disturbing attitudes and events. In this way this memoir extract contributes to the small but growing body of Australian humour writing, and offers a contrast to the recent trend toward trauma memoir (McCooney).

## Room 10.2

### **Now you see it, now you don't**

Antonia Pont, 'Repertoires of Feeling in Literature & their Relevance for (the) Work(s) of Writing'

This paper is concerned with tracking various incidences of the articulation, naming or exploration of so-called bad feelings in works of creative literature. It enquires as to literature's unique role in both *setting out* and also *containing* so-called bad feelings in such a way that diffuses the perceived risk that might be associated with them in non-literary (that is: lived, or quotidian) contexts, as well as performing for its readers their complexity rather than 'negativity' or 'volatility'. Prompted by an observed preponderance of suspicion, refusal or elision of certain registers or "classes" of feeling, the paper explores, less the well-documented moral agendas of literature, and more its promise of a wider range or repertoire of experience – 'including more'. Recalling Spinoza's provocation that we don't yet know what a body can do, we might also, following Deleuze's take on the role of art, not yet know *the extent to which a body can feel*. This is not about amplitudes of feeling, extreme feelings, or turning up (or down) the volume on generic/classified feelings, but rather about multiplicities and nuances of feelings: the proliferation of atmospheres, or creation of affects, beyond polarised, caricatured encounters. The paper argues that a lens of "breadth of repertoire of feeling" might serve writers given the inevitable feedback loops operating between what we read as makers and what we will *perhaps* be vast enough to create in words. Finally, it queries to what degree feeling more widely, and therefore literature itself, might make other change possible, or at the very least less-precluded.

### Kieran Stevenson, 'Masking and Unmasking in Creative Writing'

Historically, the concept of 'authenticity' has often been employed when evaluating the artistic value of a creative work. 'Authentic' voices and accounts are often seen as indicators of a unique legitimacy or truthfulness. This can result in arbitrary barriers between forms and genres which can impede open and generous creative practice. This paper argues against the notion of 'authenticity' as a particularly useful sign of value. It will suggest that creative writing, rather than drawing its strength from this representative quality, suggests meaning to us through Nietzschean behaviours of masking and unmasking. I will attempt to show some of the ways in which masking and disguise are present, on some level, in every instance of creative action as automatic and inescapable effects. I will be analysing Nietzsche's work on masks in *Beyond Good and Evil* and Deleuze's own writing on the concept of the mask. I will also be examining the pre-occupations with illusion and truth in Kurt Vonnegut Jr's *Cat's Cradle* to provide a concrete example of these ideas at play in literature. These texts enable us to consider illusion and truth not as opposites but rather as symbiotic components of the same whole, to consider masking and disguise as necessary gestures of truthful expression and, as a result, central aspects of the resonant experiences which creative work offers us. Through this analysis, I will theorise elements of creative practice which I have employed in my own work and suggest how this approach can be used as a creative practitioner. Ultimately, this paper seeks to reconsider the position of authenticity as a locus of creative or artistic value, reframing this particular kind of verisimilitude as one of many possible stylistic or formal choices rather than a marker of unique truth.

### Katharine Coles, 'Sounding Metaphor'

Five years ago, I was persuaded to join a team of computer scientists in the project of creating a computational tool that could identify complex relationships (beginning with sound) within poems and visualize these relationships in a way that might be interesting to close readers of poetry. My role as I saw it was twofold: first, to teach the computer scientists in a precise enough way that they could teach the machine what poets care about in how a poem creates its sonic landscape; and, second, to act as skeptical outsider to the process. Along the way, I was surprised, though perhaps I shouldn't have been, to observe that the process was changing the way I thought about and read poetry, whether or not the machine was present during the reading. This paper will use close reading to discuss how the machine led me to consider metaphor not only in relationship to poetic sound but potentially as one of its products.

## Room 10.3

### Techniques of writing

#### Raelke Grimmer, 'Using genre to communicate purpose'

Categorising works by genre can be controversial in literature. Margaret Atwood and Kazuo Ishiguro are two examples of writers who have been vocal in denouncing the genre their works have been boxed into. Yet in applied linguistics, genre is seen as an essential part of the writing process, because specific language,

styles and structures are used within different social contexts to communicate purpose. This paper analyses different iterations of what became a novella-length memoir, structured in vignettes, to illustrate how the purpose of my writing dictated the genre of the final version of the text. While genre did not dictate the writing process from the first time I sat down to write, communicating my purpose the way I intended depended on finding the right genre. I worked on the memoir over a few years, and in that time the text began as fiction and then morphed to poetry, personal essay, and finally, to a memoir told in vignettes. While I initially resisted memoir, as I continued through the writing process it became clear that memoir was the genre best suited to my purpose. Genre was a tool I used to construct my writing in order to clearly communicate my purpose.

### Hayley Scrivenor, 'What did we just see? Point of view and revelation in the first person plural'

Questions of point of view are pivotal in fictional texts and determine what story, exactly, the author can tell. But what happens when writers present particularly challenging or complicated points of view? This paper will interrogate stories where point of view 'asserts' itself to the reader and examine the ways writers encourage readers to engage in more conscious ways with this element of a narrative. With a focus on who is speaking and who is being addressed (a component of point of view that Genette refers to as 'voice') this paper will address narratives where the relationship between the teller and the told is ambiguous, or where a challenging point of view is revealed to be an integral component of the plot. Drawing from unnatural narratology and with a focus on the first person plural, this paper examines fiction that complicates point of view in a way that can be seen to intersect with core elements of a given narrative. This paper is particularly interested in the notion of revelation, that harbinger of change, and exploring the relationship of revelation to point of view. Looking at a range of contemporary novels written predominately in the first person plural, notably TaraShea Nesbit's *The Wives of Los Alamos*, Malcolm Knox's *The Wonder Lover* and Jon McGregor's *Even the Dogs* as well as my own novel-in-progress, *Things We Can't Say*, this paper explores the innate ambiguity of the first person plural and the ways in which authors of fiction in the first person plural have exploited this ambiguity to shape key revelations within their texts.

### Louise Sawtell and Sophie Langley, 'The 'New Look' Creative Thesis: Innovative approaches to braiding creative and critical text'

This paper considers how the 'new look' creative thesis can be "a site for radical experimentation" (Krauth 2005). By blurring the boundaries between creative artefact and dissertation, two current research candidates expand and play with the written form. In her PhD, a writer-director experiments with the function and presentation of the screenplay text. By privileging the personal and process-driven script development stage of a screen work she argues that the screenplay is *more than* the proposed film. By presenting examples of the scenes and creative, critical and personal narratives from her 'fictocritical screenplay', she will show how a dialogue happens between the artefact and dissertation, writer and story. This new form challenges traditional ways of 'knowing' a screenplay. In her Masters by Research, an essayist and sound art maker plays with the relationship between written text, sounds and image, to create 'sonic essays' that document and reflect on embodied knowledge and 'thoughtful practice' (Heldke 1992) in everyday practices. Presenting fragments of these sonic essays, which braid together sound, creative writing and academic writing, she will argue that such a text offers new perspectives both on the essay form and on the everyday practices they present. Together, the candidates explore the 'innovative and critical potential of practice-based research' (Barrett 2010: 2), both to generate new ways of presenting knowledge about creative practice, and to reveal 'philosophical, social and cultural contexts for the critical application of the outcomes (Barrett 2010: 2) offered by creative theses.