

After Fantastika



6-7 July 2018
Lancaster University

After Fantastika

July 6/7th, Lancaster University, UK

Schedule

Friday 6th

8.45 – 9.30	Registration (Management School Lecture Theatre 11/12)
9.30 – 10.50	Panels 1A & 1B
11.00 – 12.20	Panels 2A, 2B & 2C
12.30 – 1.30	Lunch
1.30 – 2.45	Keynote – Caroline Edwards
3.00 – 4.20	Panels 3A & 3B
4.30 – 6.00	Panels 4A & 4B

Saturday 7th

10.30 – 12.00	Panels 5A & 5B
12.00 – 1.00	Lunch
1.00 – 2.15	Keynote – Andrew Tate
2.30 – 3.45	Panels 6A, 6B & 6C
4.00 – 5.00	Roundtable
5.00	Closing Remarks



Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who has helped contribute to either the journal or conference since they began, we massively appreciate your continued support and enthusiasm. We would especially like to thank the Department of English and Creative Writing for their backing – in particular Andrew Tate, Brian Baker, Catherine Spooner and Sara Wasson for their assistance in promoting and supporting these events. A huge thank you to all of our volunteers, chairs, and helpers without which these conferences would not be able to run as smoothly as they always have. Lastly, the biggest thanks of all must go to Chuckie Palmer-Patel who, although sadly not attending the conference in-person, has undoubtedly been an integral part of bringing together such a vibrant and engaging community – while we are all very sad that she cannot be here physically, you can catch her digital presence in panel 6B – technology willing!

Thank you

Kerry Dodd and Chuckie Palmer-Patel
Conference Organisers

Panel Overview

1A – Haunted Histories – Management School Lecture Theatre 11

Chair: Catherine Spooner

- David Powell (University of Birmingham, UK) 'Hesitation, repetition and deviation: The temporal nightmares and haunted landscapes of British Television'
- Derek Johnston (Queen's University, Northern Ireland) 'Hybrid Time in *The Living and the Dead*'
- Katy Soar (University of Winchester, UK) 'Archaeological Horror and Non-Euclidean Chronologies' – Paper to be read in absentia by Kerry Dodd

1B – Colonial Narratives beyond Empire – Management School Lecture Theatre 12

Chair: Tess Baxter

- Helga Lúthersdóttir (UCL, UK) 'When 'therefore' becomes 'what if': Questioning colonial history through Thor and Black Panther'
- Robert Duggan (UCLAN, UK) 'Larissa Sansour: first Palestinian on the Moon'
- Chris Hussey (University of Cambridge, UK) "'I was there, the day Horus slew the Emperor"' (Abnett, Horus Rising, p13): an empire's eschatology, exploring the Black Library's Horus Heresy series'

2A – Temporal Spatialities – Management School Lecture Theatre 11

Chair: Valentino Paccosi

- Keith Scott (De Montford University, UK) 'Conceptual Breakdown and Epistemological Apocalypse: The Anti-liminal Histories of China Miéville'
- Tom Kewin (Liverpool University, UK) '[T]o escape from the rigours of a universal clock!': Chronostasis, Dusklands, and Memory in Jeff Noon's *A Man of Shadows*
- Brian Baker (Lancaster University, UK) 'Transmissions from the Future: the time of sound in science fiction cinema'

2B – Posthuman Evolutions – Management School Lecture Theatre 12

Chair: Cristina Dodson-Castillón

- Dania Idriss (University of Calgary, Canada) ‘Spectres of Evolution: H.P. Lovecraft and Greg Egan on Posthuman Metamorphosis, Extinction and Continuity’
- Grace Martin (Bridgewater College, Virginia, USA) ‘Taking Justice Into Your Own Robotic Hands: Reimagined Posterities in Muñoz Valenzuela’s *Flores para un Cyborg*’
- Katie Stone (Birkbeck, UK) ‘Children, Evolution and Non-linear Temporality in Wellsian Time Travel Narratives’

2C – Refracted Realities / Refracted Identities – Charles Carter A15

Chair: Mike Ryder

- Danielle Girard (Lancaster University, UK) ‘A Discovery of *Trek*’s Queer Mirror’
- Sinéad Mooney (De Montford University, UK) ‘“Futures Past”: Lost Worlds and Alternative Histories in Irish Science Fiction by Women 1892-1917’
- Victoria Brewster (Open University, UK) ‘Deconstructing Temporal Boundaries: Past, Present and Future in Naomi Alderman’s *The Power*’

3A – Distortions of Memory – Management School Lecture Theatre 11

Chair: Charlotte Gislam

- Rob O’Connor (York St. John University, UK) ‘Ted Chiang and the Deferred Effect: ‘Afterwardsness’ in the Science Fiction Worlds of “Exhalation” and “Story of Your Life”’
- Rebecca Gibson (Lancaster University, UK) ‘“Until Not One Part Remains”: disintegration and reconstitution in *Annihilation* (2018)’
- Cristina Dodson-Castillón (University of Seville, Spain) ‘The Retreat into Time: Temporal Escape in Stephen R. Donaldson’s *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, the Unbeliever*’

3B – Re-writing Determinism – Management School Lecture Theatre 12

Chair: Declan Lloyd

- Christopher Petty (University of Winnipeg, Canada) ‘Towards a Poetics of the Time Loop Plot: Logic, Learning, and Memory in *Edge of Tomorrow*’
- Valentina Salvatierra (Birkbeck, UK) ‘Tripping through time(s): Non-binary temporality in *Slaughterhouse-Five*’
- Alexander Popov (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Bulgaria) ‘Rewriting Myth and Genre Boundaries: Narrative Modalities in “The Book of All Hours” by Hal Duncan’

4A – Economic Re-inscriptions of Time – Management School Lecture Theatre 11

Chair: Grace Martin

- Jefferey L. Nicholas (Providence College, USA): ‘Between the Old and the New: Time Compression and the Critique of Capital in Fantastika’
- Sarah Dodd (University of Leeds, UK) ‘In the Ruins of Time: the Weird and the Eerie in the films of Jia Zhangke’
- Jo Lindsay Walton (University of Edinburgh, UK) ‘Time is not Money: Utopian Value in Fantastika’

4B – Post-apocalyptic Climate Fiction – Management School Lecture Theatre 12

Chair: Rebecca Gibson

- Marita Arvaniti (University of Glasgow, UK) ‘Rusting Earthfires: Climate Fiction, Anthropocene, and *The Fifth Season*’s apocalypses’
- Oliver Rendle (University of Glasgow, UK) ‘Horrific Outlines: 21st Century Post-Apocalyptic Fiction’
- Hollie Johnson (University of Nottingham, UK) ‘“The story of my times”: Remembering a Climate-Changed Future in Maggie Gee’s *The Ice People*’

5A – Reconstructing Time – Management School Lecture Theatre 11

Chair: Chris Hussey

- Rhys Williams (University of Glasgow, UK) ‘Time to change time to change time to change time’
- Sinéad Murphy (King’s College, UK) ‘Arabic Science Fiction is what we point to when we say it’
- Francis Gene-Rowe (Royal Holloway, UK) ‘Genre Out of Joint: History, Futurity and Vision in Romanticism and Science Fiction’

5B – Multimedia Remixes of Time – Management School Lecture Theatre 12

Chair: Brian Baker

- Tom Abba (UWE Bristol, UK) ‘Composing temporal space - affect in Ambient Literature’
- Tess Baxter (Lancaster University, UK) ‘Virtualisation of past and present: art and the salvage narrative’
- Charlotte Gislam (Independent, UK) “‘Goddess of Time, help us please! We need more time!’ – Playing with Time Travel in *Majora’s Mask* (2000)’

6A – Alternate History and the Archive – Management School Lecture Theatre 11

Chair: Rob O’Connor

- Ximena Flores Oviedo (University of Alberta, UK) ‘The Spectacle of History: “Black Museum”’s voyeurism and the present of violence’
- Indiana Seresin (University of Cambridge, UK) ‘Slave Resistance in the Speculative Archive: John Keene’s *Counternarratives*’

**6B – Messianic Time in Brandon Sanderson's *Mistborn* – Management School
Lecture Theatre 12**

Chair: Kerry Dodd

- Matthew J. Elder (University of Waikato, New Zealand) 'Martyr Narratives, Cultural Memory, and the Making of New Worlds in Brandon Sanderson's *Mistborn*'
- Charul (Chuckie) Palmer Patel (Independent, Canada) 'Chaotic Conclusions: Examining Cycles of Utopia in Brandon Sanderson's *Hero of Ages* (via Skype)

6C – Ontological Displacement – Furness Lecture Theatre 3

Chair: Francis Gene-Rowe

- Julia Wang (University of Cambridge, UK) 'Forming Subjectivity Via Timeslip: A Thirdspatial Perspective'
- Mike Ryder (Lancaster University, UK) 'Exclusions through time: Charlie Gordon and the biopolitical paradigm'

Abstracts and Bionotes

Keynotes

Friday 1.30-2.45 – Management School Lecture Theatre 4 – Caroline Edwards

All Aboard for Ararat: The Deliquescence of Clock-Time in Contemporary Apocalyptic Flood Fictions

This keynote will consider the productive timescales being suggested by a growing sub-genre of twenty-first-century apocalyptic literature: *flood fictions*. Flood fictions depict a range of apocalyptic floods, from tsunamis and deluges that are local, partial and/or provisional to planetary accounts of rising sea levels, global disaster, and pluvial shifts in meteorology. The significance of islands in these narratives suggests a formal relationship with the *locus classicus* of the Renaissance utopia; a genre grounded in pelagic crossings to the New World as European imperialism shaped new capitalist frontiers. The Renaissance island-utopia thus offered an exotic site for social experimentation that played on the idea of bodies, embodiment and sovereignty: rethinking the body politic by relocating society from the mainland to exotic island locations.

The reimagining of embodiment becomes an urgent question for our own times of rising sea levels and climate change; something that contemporary flood fictions interrogate through their depiction of transformed topography and the new island communities it creates. I will examine the different temporal orders that such islands make possible in several twenty-first-century flood fictions to think through the ambiguities of apocalyptic end times. Novels such as Will Self's *The Book of Dave* (2006), Stephen Baxter's *Flood* (2008), Megan Hunter's *The End We Start From* (2017) and Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York: 2140* (2017) reveal a number of different temporal orders functioning outside of, alongside, and beyond the regulatory clock-time of industrial modernity. From the phylogenetic or ancestral time of memories of ancient floods to the watery intersubjectivity of gestational duration represented by pregnancy and new motherhood; from the diachronic timescale of planetary evolution in a new Hydrocene era of sea level rises to the archipelagic consciousness suggested by new island constellations, and the return of pre-industrial modes of agricultural subsistence: these texts depict islands as sites of utopian change that hint at different social worlds with their own temporalities beyond capitalist clock-time.

Bionote:

Dr Caroline Edwards is Senior Lecturer in Modern & Contemporary Literature at Birkbeck, University of London. Her research focuses on the utopian imagination in contemporary literature, science fiction, apocalyptic narratives, and Western Marxism. She is author of *Utopia and the Contemporary British Novel* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), which examines temporal experience and utopian anticipation in contemporary texts by British writers including Hari Kunzru, Maggie Gee, David Mitchell, Ali Smith, Jim

Crace, Marina Warner, Sam Taylor, Joanna Kavenna, Grace McCleen, Jon McGregor, Patrick Ness and Claire Fuller. Her work on contemporary writers has also led to two co-edited books: *China Miéville: Critical Essays* (Gylphi, 2015) and *Maggie Gee: Critical Essays* (Gylphi, 2015). Caroline is currently working on a second monograph, *Arcadian Revenge: Utopia, Apocalypse and Science Fiction in the Era of Ecocatastrophe*, which examines fictions of extreme environments, including Mars, Antarctica, the deep sea, and the centre of the Earth. She has published articles in *Telos*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *Textual Practice*, *Contemporary Literature*, *Subjectivity*, the *New Statesman* and the *Times Higher Education* and is regularly involved in public events, having spoken at the Wellcome Trust, the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Harvard University, the Academy of the Fine Arts in Vienna, King's College London, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio 3, Hillingdon Literary Festival, the Museum of London, BBC One South East, and the LSE Literary Festival. Caroline is Secretary of the British Association for Contemporary Literary Studies (BACLS) and Editorial Director of the Open Library of Humanities.

Saturday 1.00-2.15PM – Management School Lecture Theatre 4 – Andrew Tate

After Bowie: Apocalypse, Television and Worlds to Come

David Bowie's creative life abounds with SF tropes, guises and gestures. After watching Nigel Kneale's *Quatermass* as a child, Bowie had an abiding fascination with SF television, and the protean performer's body of work similarly mesmerizes the medium. A whole gamut of popular twenty-first genre serials, including *Life on Mars* (2006-7), *Ashes to Ashes* (2008-10), *American Gods* (2017-) and *Hard Sun* (2018), are explicitly indebted to aspects of his visionary work. This paper will explore this legacy alongside Bowie's imaginative experiments with other worlds, dystopian futures, earthbound aliens and obsession with what Nicholas Pegg names a 'Home Counties apocalypse'. It will also address the links between Bowie's complex, post-traditional spirituality, anti-nostalgic approach to culture and future-oriented writing.

Bionote:

Dr Andrew Tate is Reader in Literature, Religion and Aesthetics at Lancaster University, UK. His research focuses on the relationship between spirituality, theory and popular narratives, particularly in American and Canadian literature. His most recent book is *Apocalyptic Fiction* (Bloomsbury 2017) and he is currently writing on theological, literary and cinematic responses to environmental crisis.

Roundtable – Saturday 4-5PM – Management School Lecture Theatre 4

Chair: Kerry Dodd

Roundtable panel:

- Caroline Edwards
- Andrew Tate
- Sara Wasson
- Brian Baker

To conclude the conference, we will be closing with a roundtable event to reflect on the discussion and dialogues that have taken place over the two days. Both keynotes will be invited to reflect upon not only the synergy between their talks but how these connect to wider ideas and concepts discussed by panel members across the two days. Joined by two distinguished Lancastrian academics, the roundtable will a space to offer some final thoughts on the stimulating connections that have brought such vibrant and diverse topics in dialogue. There will be plentiful time for any summative or overarching questions/comments on the audience, so keep any unanswered queries ready for this final event! Join us to celebrate the conclusion of two fantastic days of talks, ideas and collaboration as we cohere together some last thoughts on the past, present and future of time itself.

Bionotes:

Dr Sara Wasson works on critical medical humanities in a Gothic mode, science fiction, and second world war Gothic. Her book *Urban Gothic of the Second World War* examined how period writing in the Gothic mode subverts the dominant national narratives of the British home front, won the Allan Lloyd Smith Memorial Prize from the International Gothic Association and was shortlisted for the ESSE Award for Cultural Studies in English. She co-edited the collection *Gothic Science Fiction, 1980-2010* for Liverpool University Press and guest edited the special issue of *Gothic Studies* on Medical Gothic in May 2015, and her essays have appeared in journals such as *Extrapolation*, the *Journal of Popular Culture*, and *Medical Humanities*. Her current monograph-in-progress is a shadow cultural history of transplantation Gothic, in literature and film, and she is primary investigator on an AHRC-funded project examining literary representations of chronic pain, much of it in a gothic mode – submissions are welcome and the call for work can be viewed here: <http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/translatingpain/>.

Dr Brian Baker is a Senior Lecturer in English and Creative Writing at Lancaster University, UK. He has published, among other books, *Contemporary Masculinities in Fiction, Film and Television* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015) and *The Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism: Science Fiction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). He is currently making films, engaged in several critical/creative writing projects including a book on 1960s science fiction, and is developing projects that investigate the relation between sound/music, narrative and subjectivity.

Panels

1A – Haunted Histories – Management School Lecture Theatre 11

Chair: Catherine Spooner

- David Powell (University of Birmingham, UK) ‘Hesitation, repetition and deviation: The temporal nightmares and haunted landscapes of British Television’

Abstract:

“A place retaining a trace of historical and cultural happening... can then allow for the slippages in time, the event and its topographical traces being the gateway that allows the past to exist within the present, often fantastically and sometimes horrifically.”

Adam Scovell is quoted here discussing the TV adaptation of Alan Garner’s unsettling teenage drama *The Owl Service* (1969-70, Peter Plummer), but he could be describing any number of British television series and serials that feature landscapes stained by their folkloric heritage in which the past is not dead and forgotten but an atavistic and baleful force lurking just out of sight, eager to influence the present.

The manner of this temporal invasion takes many forms: the unearthing or discovery of long hidden but powerful relics, described by Mark Fisher as ‘xenolithic artefacts’, such as in *The Owl Service*, *Quatermass and the Pit* (Rudolph Cartier, 1958-59), and *A Warning to the Curious* (Lawrence Gordon Clark, 1972); the latent power vested in landscapes shaped by ancient cultures, as in *Children of the Stones* (Peter Graham Scott, 1977) and *Stigma* (Lawrence Gordon Clark, 1977); and occasionally the past itself breaking through as an aggressive, antagonistic force, as in *The Stone Tape* (Peter Sasdy, 1972) and *Sapphire and Steel* (David Foster, 1979). In all these instances the landscapes of the serials are inseparable from their folkloric past, hauntologically charged and corroding linear, progressive time through cyclicity, repetition, stasis and timelessness.

With a focus on the 1970s, this paper will survey a range of British television series and serials to examine the psychogeographical relationship between the landscapes and the pasts they are haunted by, and typify the forms of temporal distortion that manifest themselves.

Bionote:

David is studying part-time for a PhD in Film Studies at the University of Birmingham, his thesis characterising Folk Horror in British cinema and television. He presented papers at the 2017 At Home With Horror conference (University of Kent), and in April at the Urban Weird conference (University of Hertfordshire).

- Derek Johnston (Queen's University, Northern Ireland) 'Hybrid Time in The Living and the Dead'

Abstract:

The ghost story typically presents an interaction of the past with the present, often in the form of 'stone tape' type repeats of an event from the past. The 2016 BBC series *The Living and the Dead* went beyond this to show the merging of multiple time streams, so people made choices in the 'present' because of influences from past and future, and past, present and future interacted, affecting each other. This breaking down of linear time breaks down concepts of rational cause and effect. Simultaneously it emphasises interconnectedness across time, the way that decisions made in the past influence the present, and the way that choices made in the present will influence the future. The series emphasises this temporal hybridity within its narrative, showing traditional life encountering modernisation and the modern finding the value of the traditional, but also making use of familiar imagery and narrative tropes from period dramas to remind the viewer of other texts. By collapsing time in this way, at a time of choices over the future of Britain in Europe, and over the future of the environment, this haunted pastorate interrogated the ways that decisions made now are tied up with our (mis)understanding of causes and consequences, and our fears of what went wrong in the past, and what may happen in the future.

Bionote:

Derek Johnston is Lecturer in Broadcast at Queen's University, Belfast. His first monograph was *Haunted Seasons: Television Ghost Stories for Christmas and Horror for Halloween* (Palgrave, 2015). Recent publications include 'Ghosts on Television' in *The Routledge Handbook to the Ghost Story* (2017).

- Katy Soar (University of Winchester, UK) 'Archaeological Horror and Non-Euclidean Chronologies' – Paper to be read in absentia by Kerry Dodd

Abstract:

From the 19th century to the present day, the monstrous and the spectral have been intimately linked with the archaeological. In this paper I consider a selection of examples which draw heavily upon popular conceptions of the ancient past and the work of the antiquarian to create some of the most indelible and unforgettable examples of archaeological horror.

These examples - including works by the authors Arthur Machen, M.R. James, Grant Allen, and Sarban – will be considered to highlight one reason for this convergence between the archaeological and the monstrous. That reason is time; more specifically, the ways both archaeology and the monstrous operate within and without of their own temporalities. For a discipline so associated with chronologies and dating, archaeology often operates outside the standard linear notion of time and offers multiple complex relationships between temporality and materiality: archaeological time is entangled in a complex relationship with both animate and inanimate entities of the world. In this paper I argue that these entities – particularly in literary considerations of archaeology – include the spectral and the monstrous, which also operate within their own anachronistic temporalities. It is this convergence of paradoxical temporalities – or non-Euclidean chronologies – which makes the archaeological and the spectral such close companions.

Bionote:

I am a lecturer in Classical Archaeology at the University of Winchester. Amongst my interests are the uses of the past and archaeological discourse in the public imagination, particularly in popular culture in the 19th and 20th centuries. This dovetails nicely with my own personal interest in 'weird fiction' of these periods.

1B – Colonial Narratives beyond Empire – Management School Lecture Theatre 12

Chair: Tess Baxter

- Helga Lúthersdóttir (UCL, UK) ‘When ‘therefore’ becomes ‘what if’: Questioning colonial history through Thor and Black Panther’

Abstract:

While Marvel is rarely hailed as particularly progressive or daring it has provided a somewhat-critical somewhat-affirming approach to contemporary politics in its cinematic endeavours. The Iron Man franchise and The Avengers, in particular, have directly incorporated both American and Global politics into their plotlines, while Doctor Strange and Guardians of the Galaxy, for example, have largely steered clear of direct references to current political frameworks.

For Black Panther (Ryan Coogler 2018) to incorporate a strong political component was to be expected. For Thor: Ragnarok (Taika Waititi 2017) to have done so as well a year earlier was more of a surprise, especially given the franchise’s earlier apolitical approaches. Ironically, between the two of them, Black Panther, (widely hailed for its depiction of the first major black superhero onscreen), and Thor: Ragnarok, (arguably representing the ‘whitest’ of all superhero bases), present Marvel’s sharpest critique of colonialism to date.

Each in their own way, Thor: Ragnarok and Black Panther offer turning points in the approach of superhero films to colonialism, even if their approaches differ greatly. The former casts the spotlight on kingship and monarchy’s direct relationship with colonialism, while the latter presents the possibility of an African nation free of colonial history. Both question the role of women in direct context of colonial rule. Neither approach would be possible without the workings of fantasy, offering alternative histories, hope, and new beginnings, while simultaneously using accepted history and experienced past to raise doubts if not despair about the perceived futures.

I will trace how these two films play with the historical timeline of colonialism while exploring the importance of political engagement in popular film.

Bionote:

Helga is a Senior Teaching Fellow at the Department of Scandinavian Studies, UCL, where she convenes the Icelandic BA Programme and teaches modules on superheroes, Vikings and Valkyries, and crime in small communities.. Her research interests include visual representations of Norse Mythology and the Arctic Region in popular culture, Nomadic cultures, and (post)colonial history.

- Robert Duggan (UCLAN, UK) ‘Larissa Sansour: first Palestinian on the Moon’

Abstract:

This paper explores the complex temporalities of three recent science fiction films by Palestinian artist Larissa Sansour: *A Space Exodus*, *Nation Estate* and *In the Future, They Ate From the Finest Porcelain* (reviewed in *Fantastika* 1:2). Treating them as an informal trilogy, the paper considers the films’ deployment of different sf tropes in relation to Palestinian history and geography, seeking to address the role of the fantastic in the Palestinian futures imagined by the artist, futures that are marked by technological progress and aspiration on the one hand but also by anxiety and traces of trauma on the other. Drawing on insights offered by key scholars on Israel/Palestine including Edward Said, Eyal Weizman and Nadia Abu El-Haj, the paper investigates how *Fantastika* can offer a set of conceptual and artistic tools with which Sansour encourages viewers to reimagine the present, through artworks that invoke breaks in chronology and what she has called “the flexible reshuffling of time-frames”.

In her most recent artwork, *In the Future, They Ate From the Finest Porcelain*, Sansour creates a protagonist who terms herself “a narrative terrorist” and who wants to intervene in the archeological record to contest contemporary narratives of belonging and enable people of the future to lay claim to kinship and territory. As part of the project, the viewer is offered displays showing how artifacts used in the film were buried in locations in Palestine, leaving behind the supposed zone of the fantastic film and entering history as a “fact in the ground”. The film’s fascinating meditation on history and posterity illuminates the potential of *Fantastika* for all kinds of artists.

Bionote:

Robert Duggan is Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Central Lancashire. He is the author of *The Grotesque in Contemporary British Fiction* (Manchester University Press, 2013) and has published widely on modern writing. He is currently working on a new book project investigating the politics of space in recent fiction.

- Chris Hussey (University of Cambridge, UK) “‘I was there, the day Horus slew the Emperor’ (Abnett, *Horus Rising*, p13): an empire’s eschatology, exploring the Black Library’s Horus Heresy series’

Abstract:

Games Workshop’s ‘Warhammer 40,000’ setting has spawned countless games since its inception in 1987 with *Rogue Trader*, and has regularly been supported by works of fiction since, allowing gamers to recreate particular battles or make their own narratives in a tabletop setting. The Black Library, Games Workshop’s publishing arm, has focused over the past ten years on the catalyst for the current setting, involving events set around the 31st millennium – an era known as the Horus Heresy.

Loyalist versus Traitor: a son seeking to overthrow his father in order to claim the empire that had been built for himself, having been tasked as the Warmaster for expanding it. The Heresy pits brother against brother for the fate of mankind in these works of military science fiction between augmented super humans (known as Space Marines), who are acting on behalf of all humankind. It heralds the end times for humanity, but this series (told through an ongoing series of novels and related media) resonates for the potential implications of what may come after: what will such a war leave, and at what cost will it be won?

This paper takes the series as its focus to explore how empires may be constructed and ultimately lost, and what the future may hold for those deemed the victors: when pushed to the brink of collapse, does the empire end, or endure, or is it simply replaced by another? Whilst the narrative continues, and the ultimate ending may be known, it allows for a reflection on these far reaching consequences for the characters and the setting, during and after the journey, and what this means for the millennia to come.

Bionote:

I’m embarking on my PhD journey at the University of Cambridge, exploring real and literary place in children’s literature, questing to continue collecting letters after my name. I balance part-time study with working for the charity Early Education, indulging both my love of children’s literature and education at every opportunity.

2A – Temporal Spatialities – Management School Lecture Theatre 11

Chair: Valentino Paccosi

- Keith Scott (De Montfort University, UK) 'Conceptual Breakdown and Epistemological Apocalypse: The Anti-liminal Histories of China Miéville'

Abstract:

"If there are no monsters after the revolution, I don't want to play!" (Miéville, 'A Marxist Guide to Monsters')

The concept of the boundary, the threshold between different realms, and its essential porosity as a narrative driver, is central to any definition of fantastika. From the portal narratives of Narnia to 'wainscot' tales such as *Mistress Masham's Repose*, the fantastic continually posits a quasi-Gnostic division between what we think the world is and what our imagination might let it be.

This paper examines three works by the British author China Miéville - *The City And The City* (2009), *Embassytown* (2011), and *The Last Days of New Paris* (2016) - which play on this venerable trope of 'separate but adjacent worlds' only to shatter and transcend it. These are tales of zones where thresholds exist solely to be crossed, and where the status quo is shattered by violent surges of the irrational and uncontrollable. Language, art, and politics are transformed through incursions of the un- and surreal. Set in landscapes which are themselves 'fantastic', Miéville's novels present a fantastika drawing on previous iterations of the mode but surpassing them; rather than simply moving from one world to another, these works depict collapse and blending of previously divided realms. These works show him developing a subversive vision of broken boundaries, incursions, and transformations which is both a revelling in the imaginative and artistic potential offered by fantastika and a political call for individual and social emancipation. These three novels are alternate histories, presenting a past that never was, a present that is not, and a future that never will be. In their depictions of shattered consensus reality, they present an 'end of history' and a radical reconstruction of their imagined worlds.

Bionote:

Keith Scott is a Senior Lecturer in English Language at De Montfort University, Leicester. He has research interests in cyber culture and speculative fiction; he has recently written on Warren Ellis and Charles Stross, and is currently working on a study of the construction of the concept of 'cyber'.

- Tom Kewin (Liverpool University, UK) '[T]o escape from the rigours of a universal clock!': Chronostasis, Dusklands, and Memory in Jeff Noon's *A Man of Shadows*

Abstract:

'[t]here is no time in post, or, rather, post offers a different time'
Patricia McCormack, *Posthuman Ethics*

Jeff Noon's *A Man of Shadows* concerns a city subdivided into three different spatial-temporal zones: in which Dayzone is a region of perpetual day, wherein time has acquired agency of its own, Nocturna is an area of eternal darkness, and Dusk is a spectral territory which seizes hold of time. In thinking of how Walter Benjamin – in his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' – speaks of 'blast[ing] a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history', of a reappraisal of our understanding of historical progress through our relationship to memory, there is a point of continuity in and of Jeff Noon's treatment of temporality. In many ways, Noon's *A Man of Shadows* dramatizes the manner in which Benjamin's 'calendrical time' is suspended: indeed, in Noon's cityscape, 'time has evolved in many new ways, each with its own unique pathway'; indeed, time is as much an agential force as it is a commodity. Evident in Noonian protagonist Nyquist's encounter with Lucille, a believer in Dayzone and the discontinuity of its timelines, there is an endearing quality to breaking with the notion of 'one timescale' – of 'calendrical time' as comparable to an 'evil overseer'. Instead, Dayzone offers the capacity to view each timeline as its own unique process, with time not as a stable entity – breaking with the universal clock – but as processes evolving in multiple, dynamic ways. Benjamin's call towards 'blasting' the specificities of a life or an event out of that 'homogeneous, empty time' anticipates the manner in which process-oriented philosophy approaches posthumanist accounts of temporalities, at least in outlining models of thinking about time which involves both flow and seizure, continuity and discontinuity. For the purposes of this paper, therefore, Noon's *A Man of Shadows* is explored in order to address the transubstantiation of time for space – as (dis)continuities, the anxiety surrounding subjective accounts of time across Noon's cityscapes, and the extent to which acts of remembrance are configured as seizures – seizures of memories and entire timelines.

Bionote:

Tom Kewin is a doctoral student researching into speculative fiction in the Department of English at the University of Liverpool. Tom is currently embarking on a research project which concerns posthumanism and the different ways in which it has been constructed and understood; as such, his thesis concerns the manner in which contemporary British science fiction explores narratives implicit to posthumanist theory and likewise challenges certain assumptions within the field. As well as this, Tom has worked extensively with the Widening Participation programme within the University of Liverpool to lead workshops on his research to schoolchildren of various ages, alongside working on the Being Human Festival in 2015 and 2016.

- Brian Baker (Lancaster University, UK) ‘Transmissions from the Future: the time of sound in science fiction cinema’

Abstract:

One of the most striking images of sound transmission in science fiction cinema is the opening of *Contact* (1997), which begins with a shot of the Earth from orbit, accompanied by a cacophony of broadcast transmissions, but then the camera begins a journey away from the Earth out of the Solar system and beyond, and as the camera ‘moves’, the sound changes, as if the viewer/listener was going back in time, through Watergate, WW2, to the earliest radio broadcasts, and then silence. This measurement of time as space, or space as time, is dependent on the speed of sound: the limit of radio broadcasts is as far as those signals have reached since the moment of their transmission. Rather than considering the speed of sound, this paper will consider the time of sound, and in particular the relation of transmissions to time itself. The paper will investigate the implication of transmissions in time travel – as in *Frequency* (2000), where the ‘past’ receives radio ham signals from the present, thereby changing the present – or in time loops, where, as in *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* (1986), the incursion of an alien transmission threatens the Earth and requires travel into the past to enable a response in the present. Where Jeffrey Sconce, in *Haunted Media* (2000) investigated the implication of media in uncanny spectrality, which has its analogue in sf cinema in the ‘uncanny’ sound of the future (from the theremin to analogue synths), this paper will consider how sound broadcast technologies themselves disrupt linear time.

Bionote:

Brian Baker is a Senior Lecturer in English and Creative Writing at Lancaster University, UK. He has published, among other books, *Contemporary Masculinities in Fiction, Film and Television* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015) and *The Reader's Guide to Essential Criticism: Science Fiction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). He is currently making films, engaged in several critical/creative writing projects including a book on 1960s science fiction, and is developing projects that investigate the relation between sound/music, narrative and subjectivity.

2B – Posthuman Evolutions – Management School Lecture Theatre 12

Chair: Cristina Dodson-Castillón

- Dania Idriss (University of Calgary, Canada) ‘Spectres of Evolution: H.P. Lovecraft and Greg Egan on Posthuman Metamorphosis, Extinction and Continuity’

Abstract:

As technology continues to develop, we get closer to facing anxieties addressed in science fiction literature. In the paper I propose to discuss I explore the place of horror, specifically body horror, in narratives that remove the pressures of time. This is a comparative study between early science fiction/ horror, mainly Lovecraft’s *At the Mountains of Madness*, and Greg Egan’s work in his novel *Diaspora*. Both these narratives express some anxieties over the place of the human in evolutionary advancement.

I have chosen these two texts because they bookend posthuman literature in an interesting way. Egan’s work modifies the human to a point where the concept of time no longer matters since there is no longer the possibility for the degradation of the body. Though time is no longer a problem for the people who have decided to leave the constraints of their physical bodies, there are traces of the horrors done to the people who have remained in their human bodies on earth. The figure of the human in Egan’s novel has used science to accelerate the process of evolution in order to create rapid speciation in a manner that is not constrained by the slow progression of natural time. Like many cyberpunk novels, Egan’s dismissal of the body in favour of machine, or artificial intelligence removes the horrific aspects of the physical body almost entirely. Though his use of science is primarily optimistic, I will use Lovecraft’s anxieties concerning evolution and purity of species to discuss the persistence of fear in Egan’s work.

I will be using posthuman theoretical works by Deleuze and Guattari, Donna Haraway, Katherine Hales, and Rosi Braidotti in my discussion. Egan’s use of the time measurement tau ($=1/800s$) changes the citizens’ perception of mortality and evolution in ways that are interestingly tied to post/transhuman philosophy.

Bionote:

Dania Idriss is a Master’s of Arts student in English Literature with a creative writing focus at the University of Calgary in Canada. She is currently working on a collection of horror stories based on Middle Eastern Folklore in order to discuss issues of postcolonialism in the region.

- Grace Martin (Bridgewater College, Virginia, USA) ‘Taking Justice Into Your Own Robotic Hands: Reimagined Posterities in Muñoz Valenzuela’s *Flores para un Cyborg*’

Abstract:

Although science fiction in Latin America is only recently coming out of global obscurity, it has long served as a valuable literary vehicle for the examination and criticism of authoritarian regimes in the region. The fantastic character of SF texts makes them ideal vessels for sociopolitical commentary, providing a necessary veil against censorship. This is the case with Diego Muñoz Valenzuela’s novel *Flores para un cyborg* (1997), which offers extensive criticism of (post)authoritarianism in Chile. The novel presents an alternate timeline of Chile’s transition to democracy, where the author tasks his protagonists, a genius Chilean roboticist named Rubén and his equally genius robot companion, Tom, with personally avenging the torture and murder of Chilean civilians during Pinochet’s dictatorship. Rubén, Tom, and their allies form a grassroots justice unit that, with the aid of advanced technologies, track down and punish ex-regime officials who were never tried for their human rights violations—a re-imagining of Chilean history where impunity is curtailed rather than tolerated.

Critics such as J. Andrew Brown suggest that Latin American authors employ posthuman figures as narrative reflections of State-sponsored bodily torture and trauma. Contrastingly, my reading of Muñoz Valenzuela’s novel identifies robot figures as representations of the psychological—rather than physical—ramifications of dictatorial terror and generalized social impotence during transitions to democracy. Furthermore, I interpret the alternate timeline in *Flores para un cyborg* as a strong criticism of literary tropes in which trauma is resolved through revenge, as is often seen in superhero, action, and SF narratives. My study highlights specific ways in which posthumanism in Muñoz Valenzuela’s novel simultaneously revises Chile’s history and yet underscores the futility of this change: social jadedness and political fragility remain just the same.

Bionote:

Grace Martin is a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Spanish at Bridgewater College in Bridgewater, Virginia (United States). She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky and specializes in Latin American science fiction, with an emphasis in posthumanism. Martin’s scholarly interests include superhero cultural studies, media studies, and Latinx studies.

- Katie Stone (Birkbeck, UK) 'Children, Evolution and Non-linear Temporality in Wellsian Time Travel Narratives'

Abstract:

In his discussion of H. G. Wells' 'The Time Machine' (1895) Darko Suvin maps the unnamed protagonist's journey into the future onto T. H. Huxley's notion of descending an 'evolutionary ladder'. In this reading the creatures the traveller meets as he moves forwards in time represent evolutionary stages of decreasing complexity. The future is thus depicted as a distorted reflection of the past and to move through time in either direction is to witness the gradual but ubiquitous transformation of life.

In this paper, however, I will argue for the presence of an alternate, non-linear construction of time present within both Wells' seminal text and the many time-travel narratives which it has inspired. I will suggest that the fact that the Eloi - the first inhabitants of the future the traveller encounters - are referred to as not only 'less evolved' humans but as children provides the key to this alternate temporal construction. When the traveller frames the Eloi as children he is forced to both remember his own childhood and imagine his, as yet potential, descendants. Here, then, past and future are not neatly separable into stages in a linear narrative of (d)evolution but are rather compressed into the present and rendered simultaneous through the workings of imagination and memory which children evoke.

By reading Wells' seminal text alongside the writing of former vice-president of the H. G. Wells society Brian Aldiss I hope to highlight the radical potentialities engendered by this non-linear temporal model. In this I will draw upon both the utopian philosophy of Ernst Bloch - who granted the child privileged access to the utopian future as constituted by the unrealised potential of the past - and the queer theory of Lee Edelman; although I will argue that both 'The Time Machine' and Aldiss' 'The Night That All Time Got Out' (1967) defy Edelman's absolute identification of The Child with the conservative future and instead engage in precisely the kind of queering of temporality which his writing champions.

Bionote:

Katie Stone is a doctoral candidate working in the English and Humanities department at Birkbeck, University of London. Her thesis is entitled 'Children are the Future: Utopia and the Child in Science Fiction and its Criticism'. Katie is the recipient of the Birkbeck Postgraduate Scholarship and lead organiser of forthcoming conference: 'Utopian Acts'.

2C – Refracted Realities / Refracted Identities – Charles Carter A15

Chair: Mike Ryder

- Danielle Girard (Lancaster University, UK) ‘A Discovery of *Trek*’s Queer Mirror’

Abstract:

(***This paper will contain spoilers to the first season of *Star Trek: Discovery*)

In 1967 *Star Trek* introduced its concept of the Mirror!verse in one of the show’s most popular episodes, *Mirror, Mirror*. The episode sought to pit two contrasting visions of the perceived future into a firm binary of utopia/dystopia, or good/evil. Yet despite crafting a evil empire of evil mirror!selves, the episode further separated the character of Spock as his mirror!self is the only alter ego depicted that does not subscribe to the belief that murder begets power, and indeed ultimately aligns with the good version of Kirk – helping him and the other trapped crew members to return to the universe to which they belong. Later, in 2017’s *Star Trek: Discovery*, the Mirror!verse plays a significant role in the arc of the second half of the season. During these episodes, the audience is presented with yet another imagined binary of a good/evil universe, with the specific distinction being made that the Mirror!verse opposes and hates ‘all things Other.’ In these episodes, it is Lt. Commander Paul Stamets (*Trek*’s first written-to-be-gay character) who is allowed to exist in a space between this perceived binary, communicating with his Mirror!self and his deceased partner in a way that is unique to his character.

In this paper, I will examine how this mirror universe is used to create a binary landscape of time and space that is actively challenged in-text by the presence of queer identity. In essence, I will ask how queerness’ existence outside of the established binary allows notably queer characters (such as Spock and Stamets) to function in the inbetween space of a narrative, thereby arguing that this antithesis to the established binary seeks to comment more broadly on the wider problematic of a heterosexual/homosexual binary. In essence, how does *Trek* use its Mirror!verse to speak to queer identity?

Bionote:

Danielle Girard is currently reading for her PhD at Lancaster University. Her thesis, tentatively titled: *Slashing the Frontier; Queer Representation and the Heteronormative Canon: Examining Star Trek and the Effects of Participatory Culture* seeks to explore Gene Roddenberry’s *Star Trek* at the intersection of Fan and Queer Theory.

- Sinéad Mooney (De Montford University, UK) “‘Futures Past’: Lost Worlds and Alternative Histories in Irish Science Fiction by Women 1892-1917’

Abstract:

This paper will explore speculative chronologies in late 19thc and early 20thc novels by Irish women writers which slip between various popular genres, from 'future-war' narratives through nationalist and unionist utopias, 'mad science' and political Gothic to paranoid invasion stories produced in oblique imitation of a contemporary late-imperial trend in England. Responding to 'future history' narratives of the early 1880s such as the anonymous *The Re-Conquest of Ireland AD 1895* (1881) and *The Battle of the Moy; Or, How Ireland Gained Her Independence 1892-1894* (1883) which envisage Fenian rebellion from both nationalist and unionist perspectives, my paper will consider female-authored speculative novels such as the following, arguing for a reading of them as a form of gendered confluence of Irish Protestant Gothic and nationalist fable with the non-realist genres in which many Irish women writers of the turn of the 20thc worked:

Alice Milligan's *A Royal Democrat* (1892) in which, in an imagined 1939, the radical heir to the British throne is shipwrecked off the west of Ireland, seizes his chance to escape his royal destiny, and pretending to be an American citizen, is accepted into the local community, where he falls in love with a local girl; L. McManus' *The Professor in Erin* (1918). Originally serialised in Arthur Griffith's *Sinn Féin Weekly* newspaper in 1912, the plot follows the Celtologist Schliemann as he tries to navigate a parallel universe in which Ireland was never anglicised; Mary Carbery's *The Germans in Cork* (1917), originally published anonymously in the form of letters to the *Irish Times* in 1916, and discontinued a week before the Easter Rising, tells the story of a German invasion of Ireland in 1918, aided by Sinn Féiners who naively think that the Germans will cede power to them once the takeover is complete. Instead, Sinn Féiners are exiled to German colonies in the Baltic, and a fascist dystopia ensues.

Bionote:

Sinéad Mooney is a senior lecturer in English at De Montfort University, Leicester. Her research interests include modernism, particularly the work of Samuel Beckett, and Irish women's writing, and her *A Tongue Not Mine: Beckett and Translation* (OUP, 2011) won the American Conference for Irish Studies Robert Rhodes Prize. She is currently working on a study of Irish women's modernism.

- Victoria Brewster (Open University, UK) ‘Deconstructing Temporal Boundaries: Past, Present and Future in Naomi Alderman’s *The Power*’

Abstract:

Naomi Alderman’s *The Power* is a novel that imagines a violent female revolution in the reader’s present, written from the viewpoint of a matriarchal distant future, deconstructing ideas of time and history. The ‘present’ described in the letters between the novelist and his mentor, and the ‘present’ in the historical novel both echo the reader’s 21st century present, with a focus on social media and conspiracy theories. Tracy Hastie’s review of *The Power* described this narrative device as adding “humour and nuance”, but it also reminds the reader that the events that happen in the 21st century – both fictional and actual – will become ancient history.

The establishment of past, present and future are integral, providing a series of interpretive lenses through which to view the narrative. A satire is created that suggests all times are essentially the same. The ‘archaeological drawings’ included within the novel further deconstruct present and future, ancient history and recognisable now. Both events and artefacts haunt the novel and the reader throughout, fiction imitating reality and future imitating present and past. These ideas will be analysed within the framework of current theory on feminism, time and history.

Alderman’s use of time and history in *The Power* suggests a constant and self-perpetuating repetition of the same events, echoing Orwell’s *Animal Farm* in its constant of power and abuse that simply transfers between tribes. Whether patriarchy or matriarchy, the narrative is haunted by objectification, rape culture and insidious gendered inequality. It proposes that the cultural and sociological norms of human nature are the factor that needs to change to break the cycle of inequality, as time itself only prolongs the inevitable. This paper will explore Alderman’s use of time and history as a construct for demonstrating the echoes that occur throughout our own and an imagined future history.

Bionote:

Victoria is a Masters student studying with the Open University. She also works as an accountant in the Civil Service. Her current research is focussed on Michel Faber and his portrayal of humanity as an intrinsically religious experience.

3A – Distortions of Memory – Management School Lecture Theatre 11

Chair: Charlotte Gislam

- Rob O'Connor (York St. John University, UK) 'Ted Chiang and the Deferred Effect: 'Afterwardsness' in the Science Fiction Worlds of "Exhalation" and "Story of Your Life"'

Abstract:

The science fiction writer Ted Chiang has won every major award in his field, including four Nebula, four Hugo and four Locus Awards. Despite being a published writer for over 25 years, Chiang's output consists of only 15 short stories and novellas, spanning across just one collection and a handful of online and now out-of-print genre magazines. A self-proclaimed "occasional writer" (*The New Yorker*) Chiang is, nevertheless, widely regarded amongst his peers as one of the most exceptional thinkers in his field, challenging perceptions of what constitutes the science fiction short story as a form.

Freud's theory of *Nachträglichkeit* - translated as 'deferred effect' or 'afterwardsness' - suggests that memory can be reprinted or become altered by future experience. A further extrapolation of Freud's theory is that temporality is fluid, ever-changing and nonlinear. One shared component of Chiang's stories is their willingness to play with and explore the concept of temporality, not through the obvious motif of time travel itself but in a more philosophical and psychoanalytical manner.

Chiang's stories entitled "Exhalation" and "Story of Your Life" (adapted to the cinema in 2016 as *Arrival*) both utilise the concept of deferred effect within their narrative structure, playing with chronology and the reader's temporal perception and understanding. This paper will analyse how effectively Chiang applies deferred effect within both "Exhalation" and "Story of Your Life" and how important this is to show that the examination of temporality within science fiction is not just restricted to the novum of the time machine, that the genre is capable of speculating about humankind's psychological perception of time itself.

Bionote:

Rob O'Connor is a Literature Studies PhD student at York St John University, writing on the work of China Miéville. His other research interests include genre theories, contemporary literature and creative writing. He also teaches literature and creative writing and is the director of the York Literature Festival.

- Rebecca Gibson (Lancaster University, UK) “‘Until Not One Part Remains’: disintegration and reconstitution in *Annihilation* (2018)’

Abstract:

Annihilation (2018) begins in the future. Natalie Portman’s biologist, Lena, is interrogated in a white, featureless decontamination chamber full of bewildered colleagues who keep asking her what happened? What happened to the rest of your team? Where are they? How did they die? What did you see? How didn’t you die? Who are you, really?

Alex Garland’s film adaptation of Jeff Vandermeer’s novel jumps backwards from Lena’s evasive answers to show us the origin of all such questions, and the answer to them, in the arrival of something truly alien: a stream of light and colour that penetrates the atmosphere and crashes to earth, enveloping a lighthouse on the coast. The form of the alien being – whether categorised as a creature or element – bears many similarities to the titular menace from H. P. Lovecraft’s ‘The Colour Out of Space’ (1927) but while Garland’s alien being does have a disintegrating effect on the characters of the film as the colour does in Lovecraft’s story, I posit that the non-chronological structure of the film also signifies a disruption of time and lived experience. Lena’s timeline and perception of events prisms and fractures throughout the course of the film just as surely as her DNA and mental state, resulting in a film which replicates its central theme – disintegration of identity – in its very structure. Lena slips back and forth in time as easily as wading into a stream, and her only markers are the motifs that guide the viewer to an understanding of the slipperiness of time itself, and the flimsiness of the framework we impose upon it. I conclude that Garland’s interpretation succeeds in creating a unique cinematic spectacle by weaving elements of the unknowable and indescribable from Vandermeer’s original text into its structure and storytelling.

Bionote:

Rebecca Gibson is a second-year PhD student at Lancaster University. She researches how Gothic depictions of plastic surgery in contemporary text and media foreground the vulnerability of the surgical body and problematise dominant discourses of body maintenance. Her other interests include feminism and gender studies, weird fiction and the medical humanities.

- Cristina Dodson-Castillón (University of Seville, Spain) The Retreat into Time: Temporal Escape in Stephen R. Donaldson's *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, the Unbeliever*

Abstract:

The objective of this paper is to establish a theory of correlation between madness and portal-quest fantasy. In this fantasy genre, the protagonist's psychological trauma builds throughout the narrative of the primary world without any realistic means of escape from these conditions. Due to this oppression, the only possibility of achieving agency, power, and psychological healing is through the departure into a madness-induced fantasy. Thus, the protagonist withdraws into this alternative realm, discovering a haven which helps him heal from his psychological and physical wounds. This work analyzes the ways in which portal-quest fantasy utilizes the mechanism of time, among other devices, to better depict and highlight such a retreat.

Stephen R. Donaldson's portal-quest fantasy series, *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, the Unbeliever* describes the journey of Thomas Covenant, a leprous anti-hero, as he psychologically escapes into a magical world known as the Land. Each retreat into this realm is triggered by a traumatic experience in Thomas' primary society and originates through his loss of consciousness. He remains in the Land for an extended period until he completes the required quest, yet upon his return to his primary reality, mere moments or hours have passed. This lack of parallelism between the passing of time in both realms acts as an important literary device in Donaldson's series; Covenant is given the time he needs in the Land to psychologically recover from his trauma and treat his mental illness, without being deprived of this temporal interval in his primary reality. By displacing Covenant in a different time period resembling the middle ages, this irregular temporality is heightened, adding to the ontological ambiguity of the Land.

Bionote:

Cristina Dodson-Castillón is a doctoral student at the University of Seville currently writing her thesis on identity and ethic in contemporary dystopian fiction. She has previously earned a degree in English Studies at the University of Seville and an MSc in Literature and Modernity: 1900 to the Present at the University of Edinburgh.

3B – Re-writing Determinism – Management School Lecture Theatre 12

Chair: Declan Lloyd

- Christopher Petty (University of Winnipeg, Canada) ‘Towards a Poetics of the Time Loop Plot: Logic, Learning, and Memory in *Edge of Tomorrow*’

Abstract:

Academic responses to science fiction have focussed disproportionately on differentiating its narrative conventions and schemata from those of mainstream fiction. My paper will suggest that one SF convention—the time loop plot—challenges the determinism of tragic narrative without undermining plot logic.

The plots of mainstream narratives often depend on a faulty moral choice—or simply a wrong step—by the protagonist. While comedy assumes a forgiving universe (*Pride and Prejudice*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Lucky Jim*), in tragic fiction a wrong choice brings disaster (*Jude*, *Lord Jim*, *Atonement*). The SF movie *Edge of Tomorrow* begins with precisely such a thoughtless error. After refusing what he sees as an inappropriate order, military PR officer William Cage is stripped of his rank, and sent into battle against a superior alien force.

The attraction of this and other time loop plots is that they enable protagonists to survive their mistakes, and even triumph. The laborious but logical plot of *EoT* forces the narcissistic and privileged Cage to develop into a skilled member of a military unit concerned not only with his own life but also those of his comrades. Case learns to face death (frequently) with equanimity; he learns to think strategically, moving from focusing on personal survival to actively confronting the enemy; and he is rewarded (apart from saving the world) by being restored to his original rank and privileged role.

Cage’s success reiterates the logical but compassionate plots of earlier time loop movies. Lola (in *Run Lola Run*) saves her undeserving boyfriend’s life and is rewarded with casino winnings beyond her needs. Colter Stevens in *Source Code*, having changed history by preventing a “dirty” bombing, reconciles with his estranged father and achieves romantic fulfilment within the alternate universe of the source code. Responding to a postmodern frustration with programmed outcomes, time loop plots offer flexible alternatives to the limited lexicon of conventional plot possibilities.

Bionote:

Christopher Petty teaches science fiction, fantasy, and modern literature, at the University of Winnipeg and holds degrees from Cambridge, Western, and the University of Manitoba. He has researched time in narrative in both mainstream fiction, SF, and film. More recent conference papers are on chaos theory in *Run Lola Run*, and on Ursula Le Guin.

- Valentina Salvatierra (Birkbeck, UK) 'Tripping through time(s): Non-binary temporality in *Slaughterhouse-Five*'

Abstract:

This paper opens up the time travel narrative of Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* to richer interpretations by rejecting the idea that simultaneous and sequential temporalities are mutually exclusive. I use Elana Gomel's idea of the 'timeshape' as a shorthand term to denominate varying cultural experiences of time, a slightly more precise term than 'temporality' because it is concerned with the narrative representations of such temporalities. The paper begins by considering how deterministic conceptions of time as a fourth dimension of spacetime are echoed by 'Tralfamadorian' time in the novel. I use hypothesis-driven quantitative analysis to argue that such a deterministic timeshape does not exhaust the text's possible readings. I then explore the alternative timeshape of contingency suggested by the novel, which is seemingly denied by the concept of simultaneity in 4D spacetime.

Two possible readings of the novel emerge from its two timeshapes: I argue that *Slaughterhouse-Five*'s quasi-scientific exploration and contemplation of time coexists with its richness as anti-war text. In closing, I situate my discussion in the wider context of postmodern fiction, as well as the philosophical and scientific discourse about time. In a postmodern context, dichotomic metaphysical arguments that purport to prove the 'unreality' of time, such as J.M.E. McTaggart's A-series and B-series distinction, are not of much interest. A better philosophical understanding might be derived from something like Steven Connor's concept of contemporality, the 'holding-together in representation of different, competing temporalities'. It is this type of non-binary operation, much more challenging than the rejection of one concept and the acceptance of another, that *Slaughterhouse-Five* asks its readers to perform.

Bionote:

Valentina Salvatierra is currently working towards an MA in Contemporary Literature & Culture at Birkbeck College. Her MA dissertation will bring together her interests in science fiction studies and comparative literature, by exploring the idea of 'alien translanguaging' as a site of resistance as well as world-building.

- Alexander Popov (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Bulgaria) ‘Rewriting Myth and Genre Boundaries: Narrative Modalities in “The Book of All Hours” by Hal Duncan’

Abstract:

Hal Duncan’s “The Book of All Hours” (“Vellum”, 2005, and “Ink”, 2007) is a labyrinthine exploration of a constellation of themes: time, space, alternate realities, mythology, psychological archetypes. Time is represented as non-linear and as intricately intertwined with a host of other variables, some of them semantic rather than of causal nature. Characters reprise or subvert their roles in slightly different reiterations of the same stories across the fictional metaverse, mapping out the immense possibilities of story-space and genre: fantasy, myth, tragedy, SF, cyberpunk, historical novel, etc. This paper will analyse the governing dynamics through which the text organizes itself in a self-referential framework, and how it structurally reinforces the idea of rewriting history, of eliminating determinism. Writing and art come to signify in it an act of politically charged cognitive reorganization. A mythological rebellion cast in modernist forms.

This analysis will attempt to demonstrate that the byzantine plot articulates in parallel a kind of genre theory, or what is possible to write – an intervention echoing its political overtones. It is an apparatus that Duncan has outlined partially in online publications, as well as in “Rhapsody: Notes on Strange Fictions” (2014), but one that is perhaps best explicated via its embodiment in fiction. His theory of narrative modality builds on Samuel Delany’s notion of levels of subjunctivity and brings together diverse influences from narratology (Tzvetan Todorov, John Clute) and mythological and archetypal criticism (Northrop Frye). However, it presents a dynamic rather than a purely structuralist view of genre, with Duncan’s own fiction flowing seamlessly between forms. This builds towards a spatio-temporal framework for describing fiction in which the fantastic modes of writing are privileged, because of their greater access to the phase space of storytelling. This invests in them a greater capacity to challenge boundaries and reinvent conventional categories.

Bionote:

Alexander Popov is finishing a PhD in Artificial Intelligence at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. He teaches a course on SF at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. He has published work on reader-response theories of SF, on representations of utopia, and multiple articles at the Bulgarian semiprozine “ShadowDance”, where he is an editor.

4A – Economic Re-inscriptions of Time – Management School Lecture Theatre 11

Chair: Grace Martin

- Jefferey L. Nicholas (Providence College, USA): ‘Between the Old and the New: Time Compression and the Critique of Capital in Fantastika’

Abstract:

David Harvey writes that capitalism functions through the compression of time. Time-space compression occurs when subjects experience a qualitative shift in either time or space. Time is sped up or space is reduced. Harvey draws the notion from Marx’s idea that capitalism annihilates time-space.

Cyberpunk highlights how time compression functions. An essential characteristic of cyberpunk is the heightened compression of time, primarily through information exchange, for example computer systems and world wide web technologies. In cyberpunk worlds, communication is hyper-compressed and corporate capitalism controls the distillation of information. Neal Stephenson’s *Snow Crash* particularly illuminates this relationship in its ingenious take on glossolalia—a primitive form of communication that can override normal linguistic communication. Glossolalia, like capitalism compresses time-space, first, by returning human communication to a pre-historical form of communication and, second, by changing the subject experience of time-space of those “possessed” by glossolalia. Ingeniously, glossolalia in *Snow Crash* threatens the hyper-compression of time-space by crashing the system that supports the virtual world.

In contrast, fantasy novels typically depict worlds in which time has slowed down to pre-industrial forms. Here, time-space, rather than being compressed, are returned to “natural” forms. While magic provides characteristic outliers of time-space compression in scrying and teleportation, such magic is more the exception than the rule. In “natural” time-space (or uncompressed time-space), not consumerism, but human relations define social interactions.

Both cyberpunk and fantasy offer critiques of time-space compression. Cyberpunk uses a *novum* to highlight the effects of time-space compression on human relations especially forms of domination. Human relations are more commodified the greater the time-space compression. Fantasy, in contrast, offers a pre-compressed time-space alternative to harken back to pre-capitalist forms of interaction. While cyberpunk, and other science fictions, might be more critical of present forms of reality than fantasy, fantasy also offers a critique of contemporary social relations.

Bionote:

Jeffery L. Nicholas is an associate professor of philosophy at Providence College, author of *Reason, Tradition, and the Good: MacIntyre’s Tradition-Constituted Reason and Frankfurt School Critical Theory* and of a number of articles in Blackwell’s Philosophy and Pop Culture Series. He is also editor of *Dune and Philosophy* (Open Court 2011).

- Dr Sarah Dodd (University of Leeds, UK) 'In the Ruins of Time: the Weird and the Eerie in the films of Jia Zhangke'

Abstract:

This paper uses Mark Fisher's work *The Weird and the Eerie* (2016) as a starting point to read two of contemporary Chinese director Jia Zhangke's films: *Still Life* (2006), a study of two intertwined lives just before the flooding of the Three Gorges, and *A Touch of Sin* (2013), a brutal dramatization of four recent criminal cases. Though the films reflect Jia's documentary realism in their representation of today's China, both involve slippages in time and space that lead to weird and eerie effects: a UFO speeds across the sky over the soon-to-be flooded Three Gorges; a building takes off into the night like a rocket; snakes slither through a town suddenly transformed into something much older and more violent.

The films depict the landscape of contemporary China as a place of ruins and violence, where the headlong rush towards the future has left ordinary people behind, and I argue that it is these irruptions of the weird and eerie that provide the films with their unsettling power, letting Jia explore the consequences of this speeding-up of time in the period of economic reform since Mao Zedong's death. Whilst the work of Jia Zhangke has garnered much critical attention in recent years, the fantastical elements of his films have yet to be fully explored. Examining the role of time and space in these films can offer insights into how the real and the unreal intersect in his work, providing new possibilities for an exploration of the eeriness of the contemporary Chinese landscape, and enriching current scholarship on the weird and the strange.

Bionote:

Sarah Dodd is a Lecturer in Chinese Studies at the University of Leeds. Her research is on the fantastic in contemporary Chinese fiction and film, and she co-organises the research group 'Reading the Fantastic'. She is also co-editor of *Samovar*, an online magazine publishing speculative fiction in translation.

- Jo Lindsay Walton (University of Edinburgh, UK) ‘Time is not Money: Utopian Value in Fantastika’

Abstract:

During Allende's brief presidency of Chile, the economic management system Project CyberSyn reached an advanced prototype stage. Project CyberSyn was to have involved an information network of unprecedented reach and sophistication. It was intended to materially refute the position taken by Austrian economists during the socialist calculation debates of the 1920s – that only money, markets, the price mechanism, and revealed preference can adequately allocate resources in modern complex societies – through a melding of Marxist political economy and the new interdisciplinary science of cybernetics.

Half a century later, as diverse digital value-forms proliferate, and platform capitalism places ever more of our daily life under algorithmic management, we remain haunted by the legacy of unrealised techno-utopias. This paper weaves together Stafford Beer's cybernetic polemic *Platform for Change* (1975); Eden Medina's history of Project CyberSyn, *Cybernetic Revolutionaries*; Jorge Baradit's alternative history *Synco* (2008), which imagines Allende's presidency was never cut short by the coup of 1973, and extrapolates Project CyberSyn into a totalitarian techno-dystopia; Francis Spufford's *Red Plenty* (2010), which deliberately hesitates at the threshold between fiction and non-fiction, to narrate the Soviet search in the 1960s for a cybernetic path to post-scarcity; as well as fantastika such as Ursula K. LeGuin's *The Dispossessed* (1974), Diana Wynne Jones's *A Tale of Time City* (1987), and Matthew De Abaitua's *If Then* (2015), in order to explore temporalities of utopian economic planning.

Throughout these texts we see threaded the complex relationship between time and value. How do new and speculative anthropotechnics aim to make intelligible the Marxist notion of value as ‘socially necessary labour time’? How do temporal processes such as aging, healing, forgetting, and grieving figure into the gap between the qualitative and the quantitative, between exchange-value and use-value? How do scientists, revolutionaries, and writers of fantastika approach speculation, expectation, hope, and regret as constituents of scarcity or of abundance?

Bionote:

Jo Lindsay Walton is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh, researching finance in speculative fiction. He is the co-editor (with Polina Levontin) of *Vector*, the critical journal of the British Science Fiction Association. He has recently published chapters in *Economic Science Fictions* (ed. Will Davies) and *The Science Fiction of Iain M. Banks* (ed. Nick Hubble, Esther MacCallum-Stewart, Joseph Norman). He runs the Economic SFF database (economicsciencefiction.blogspot.com), and his fiction includes the paranormal romance novel *Invocation*.

4B – Post-apocalyptic Climate Fiction – Management School Lecture Theatre 12

Chair: Rebecca Gibson

- Marita Arvaniti (University of Glasgow, UK) ‘Rusting Earthfires: Climate Fiction, Anthropocene, and *The Fifth Season*’s apocalypses’

Abstract:

How many apocalypses does it take to bring about the end of the world? More than we could possibly imagine, at least according to NK Jemisin’s *The Fifth Season*. From acid rain to vast volcanic eruptions that choke the life out of the planet, Jemisin’s world looks like every environmentalist’s worst nightmare, offering a depressing view on what a planet like ours could look like if it decided to retaliate after centuries of abuse. The intense focus that is placed on the setting and humanity’s corrupted and toxic relationship with the planet allows us to approach the *Broken Earth* trilogy as an example of climate fiction; a bleak but possible future for the Anthropocene period. Jemisin’s work brings the problems in our treatment of eschatology into focus, forcing humanity to consider its insignificance in the cosmic order.

‘The world has ended’ is never a true statement, according to Jemisin; as long as the planet survives it is only a civilization that has ended. While the overall importance of the work is evident in its popularity and the awards it has gained, what still remains unclear is how the novel is supposed to be read and marketed; as science fiction, fantasy, or any of the genre bending categories in between. In my paper I will argue that NK Jemisin’s trilogy can be read both as an example of climate fiction and a post-apocalyptic narrative and how her use of defamiliarizing techniques reminiscent of Brechtian theatre work to support the work’s connection to both those genres.

Bionote:

Marita Arvaniti is a Fantasy MLitt student in the University of Glasgow and holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Theatre Studies from the University of Athens. Her academic interests include the relationship between drama and the fantastic, as well as the works of Terry Pratchett, N. K. Jemisin, and Diana Wynne Jones. She can be reached at maritarvaniti@gmail.com.

- Oliver Rendle (University of Glasgow, UK) 'Horrific Outlines: 21st Century Post-Apocalyptic Fiction'

Abstract:

This paper uses three texts, *The Road* (Cormac McCarthy), *Vic and Blood* (Harlan Ellison) and *The Tain* (China Miéville), to analyse how twenty-first century, post-apocalyptic literature exploits horror theory to guide the reader's opinion on contemporary society: projecting a view of the future in order to comment on the present. Specifically, these texts collocate abject horror, the Uncanny, and art-horror with a vision of the future in order to create fear and disgust. The monstrosity of the post-apocalyptic world, through which the writers express their opinions, both terrifies and fascinates through its (un)familiarity. But while Ellison and McCarthy use a technique best described as pre-nostalgia to condemn post-apocalyptic immorality and to praise an alternative, Miéville is more subversive. Instead of showcasing the importance of selflessness and stubborn morality in the face of destruction, he rejects the post-apocalyptic genre's introspective quality, never letting the reader forget that their pre-apocalyptic world is just as monstrous as the post-apocalyptic one he created. Despite the different national, political and theological backgrounds of these writers, let alone the different catastrophes and post-apocalyptic social situations they portray in their works, I argue that all three of them are drawing heavily on the horror genre in order to portray an uncanny vision of the reader's world. The writers' manipulation of both form and content in their visions of the future presents an alienating image of the world after the end. In doing so these writers present their opinions on 21st century society in stark relief against a horrific backdrop: the world that may yet come to be.

Bionote:

Oliver Rendle is a postgraduate student studying Fantasy at Glasgow University. His primary areas of research are horror and SF, as well as children's literature and Tolkien-studies. Besides academia, he is interested in film studies, is a keen photographer, and enjoys travel when he can. (OMRendle@outlook.com)

- Hollie Johnson (University of Nottingham, UK) “‘The story of my times’: Remembering a Climate-Changed Future in Maggie Gee’s *The Ice People*’

Abstract:

The overwhelming temporal scale of climate change complicates traditional conceptions of time, specifically in the relationships between past, present, and future. The resulting sense of disorientation is further exacerbated by the way in which thinking about climate change requires us to reconsider the significance of the past in light of new knowledge in the present. In this sense, established ways of thinking and acting become compromised when they are shown to stem from and be complicit in destructive systems. Yet, anticipating the hindsight of the future is exactly what the dystopian novel has always attempted to do. By offering speculative visions of worlds radically altered by climate change, the ecodystopian narrative not only aims to make the consequences of current environmental exploitation more tangible, but also transforms future into past in a switch of perspective which encourages a more critical view of the present.

This paper explores the representation of ‘future-as-past’ in dystopian fiction and its capacity to address the temporal disruption of the global warming narrative, focusing on the specific example of Maggie Gee’s post-apocalyptic dystopian novel *The Ice People* (1998). Gee’s decision to represent a quick-acting ice age allows her to concentrate the tensions at the heart of the current global warming crisis, including the realisation that knowledge has arrived too late. My analysis looks at the self-reflective use of the retrospective narrative and how it shapes our encounter with the events of the novel. I furthermore explore how the protagonist Saul’s use of memory and storytelling play a vital role in the construction of the dystopian counter-narrative, serving as a tool for assigning meaning and significance to past actions and failures to act. These narrative strategies of recovery and reconstruction allow Saul to make sense of his place in a time and space radically altered by climate change.

Bionote:

I am a Midlands3Cities/AHRC-funded, final-year PhD student based in the School of English at the University of Nottingham. My research aims to carry out an ecocritical re-evaluation of literary dystopias that tracks the role of environmental concerns within the development of the genre, exploring the dialogic relationships between humanity and non-human nature as presented within contexts of extinction, climate change, and environmental exploitation.

5A – Reconstructing Time – Management School Lecture Theatre 11

Chair: Chris Hussey

- Rhys Williams (University of Glasgow, UK) ‘Time to change time to change time to change time’

Abstract:

For Andreas Malm, the turn to fossil fuels in Britain in the early industrial revolution was due to “capitalist property relations of early nineteenth-century Britain [producing] *their own form of temporality*, which, after entering a moment of acute contradiction, had to reorder nature [...] *they* had to construct and rearrange *nature* out of the materials at hand” (*Fossil Capital* 193). While the waterways that previously supplied the power were in a state of motion by nature, and the coal at a standstill, “from the standpoint of cotton capital, as it accumulated in time, *the flow was liable to standstills and the stock fireable at any moment*, the lethargic and the timely transposed.” (*Fossil Capital* 193) This key moment of energy transition can be understood as being driven by a temporal reorientation, a new way of relating to and conceiving of time and one’s relationship to it. But more than a subjective shift, this new ‘time’ embeds itself as an objective fact, a fetish that turns to govern those that create it.

For Mark Rifkin and Sara Ahmed, time is shaped by institutions, habits and routines, and being “temporally oriented” suggests that “one’s experiences, sensations, and possibilities for action are shaped by the existing inclinations, itineraries, and networks in which one is immersed, turning toward some things and away from others [...] suggesting ways of inhabiting time that shape how the past moves towards the present and future.” (*Beyond Settler Time* 2) As we now seek to trigger a new energy transition, an urgent move away from fossil fuels to sustainable energy sources, a key question must be: what temporal orientation facilitates such a shift in behaviour, such a “turning toward” an alternative future? And in what institutions, habits and routines might it be embedded? What might a sustainable and just temporality—an anti-petrocultural, anti-extractivist, anti-colonial temporality—look and feel like?

While realism is beholden to a limited time and place (Ghosh, *The Great Derangement*), ontologically committed to the status quo (Jameson, “A Note on Literary Realism”), the genres of the fantastic bring the frame into the picture, providing divergent models of temporality in their narrative forms and affordances. Different from the subjective temporal play of Modernism, the fantastic genres contain unique affordances that allow an objective restructuring of time, and our institutional and habitual relationship to it. This paper will explore the potentials and limitations contained within the various fantastic genres for narrating radical and sustainable temporalities, considering their lessons for habitual reorientation in the so-called present.

Bionote:

Rhys Williams is the Lord Kelvin Adam Smith Research Fellow in Fantasy at the University of Glasgow. He has published articles and reviews in journals including *Science Fiction Studies*, *Foundation*, *SFSTV*, *Paradoxa*, and *Utopian Studies*, as well as co-editing the special issue of *Paradoxa* 26, “SF Now.”

- Sinéad Murphy (King's College, UK) 'Arabic Science Fiction is what we point to when we say it'

Abstract:

In his study of "The Emergence of Science Fiction in Arabic Literature" (2000), Reuven Snir observes that "[t]here was, and in fact still, is almost no mention [in Western scholarly work] of SF as existing in Arabic literature." Although this lack has been partially redressed in recent years, Arabic Science Fiction—and its increasing popularity in English translation—remains understudied. Outside of academic settings, Arab-authored Science Fiction also remains on the margins of the genre, despite the growing prominence of Science Fiction from the (semi)-periphery more generally. This peripheralisation of Arabic science fiction belies its increasing readership in Arabic, as well as the degree to which it has attracted the interest of English-language translators, publishers, and literary prizes. In one recent example, Ahmed Saadawi became the first Iraqi writer to win the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) in 2014 with his novel *Frankenstein in Baghdad* (2013). The novel's English translation (2018) has subsequently been shortlisted for the 2018 Man Booker International Prize—one of only a handful of Arabophone authors ever to do so.

Against this backdrop, I argue that analysing the dynamics of Arabic Science Fiction in an increasingly globalised literary marketplace reveals a crisis of identity for Science Fiction as a genre, as well as the polarising tendencies of the marketplace towards non-Eurowestern literary production. In recent years, the limitations of the Science Fiction canon have gradually been recognised, resulting in the representation of a broader range of voices within the genre, and in turn, in reassertions of the imaginative and critical capacities of the genre's central themes and tropes. At the same time, repeated pronouncements regarding the demise of the genre appear periodically. As texts continue to be written, published, translated and read as 'Science Fiction' even while definitions of the genre remain a moving target, what kind of cultural cachet do we understand 'Science Fiction'—and more specifically, 'Arabic Science Fiction'—to have? In this paper, and with particular focus on Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, I will interrogate interpretations of Arabic Science Fiction as adaptation, suggesting ways in which we might defamiliarise and critique the literary marketplace in which these narratives circulate.

Bionote:

Sinéad Murphy is a PhD candidate in the Department of Comparative Literature in King's College, London. Her thesis analyses speculative aesthetics in contemporary Arab literature in translation. She co-organised the Kings Fantastic Talks series and is organiser of the Speculations Seminar Series. Her article for *Strange Horizons*, "Science Fiction and the Arab Spring", received a nomination for a British Science Fiction Association (BSFA) award.

- Francis Gene-Rowe (Royal Holloway, UK) ‘Genre Out of Joint: History, Futurity and Vision in Romanticism and Science Fiction’

Abstract:

Although many of Science Fiction’s most iconic tropes are intrinsically spatial in nature – images of speculative beings and worlds, extreme velocities, new forms of perception and sensation – in scholarship the category is frequently assessed in terms of time rather than of space. In 1987, Kim Stanley Robinson wrote that SF is “an historical literature,” a genre defined by its historicity (“Notes for An Essay on Cecelia Holland”), whilst Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. has linked its emergence to a change in cultural notions of time: “The future had to be imaginable as a time when conditions might be completely different from those of the present” (*The Seven Beauties of Science Fiction*). To step sideways in time, Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre have offered a definition of Romanticism as a modern critique of modernity “in the name of values and ideals drawn from its past,” one which nonetheless involves in its most active strains an orientation towards a transformed future (*Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity*). Turning back (or forward), SF could be said to behave in the same way, albeit with the present time of its reception serving as the already-lost past of its speculative futures. Is, then, SF a contemporary form of Romanticism? Is Romanticism inherently science fictional? To what extent do SF’s spatial, additive, worlding tendencies complicate a time-based reading of either category?

This paper offers a nodal reading of different ideas and forms of temporal experience in selected works by Philip K. Dick and William Blake, taking nostalgia, remembering and history as its areas of focus. Speculative time for these authors serves as a formal and conceptual interruption of orthodox thinking, uprooting normative ways of reading ‘the world,’ the landscape which we must survive. An intimate relationship exists between speculative time(s) and present, lived materiality, to the extent that the now-moment of a text’s production and interpretation is itself subject to change. The transformative temporalities of Dick and Blake’s works do not leave generic stabilities unscathed. Beyond interrogating the canonical positioning of these two writers – Blake the SF author, Dick the Romantic? – such a reading offers some initial inroads into reconceptualising the boundaries and confluences between SF and Romanticism, the ways in which they lean into and through each other. Furthermore, it is my intention that this enquiry open up broader questions about the ways in which we read genre, the extent to which the notion of ‘genre’ is itself fundamentally durational and timebound.

Bionote:

Francis Gene-Rowe is a doctoral candidate at Royal Holloway, University of London. His PhD research explores the relationship between Romanticism and Science Fiction, with a particular focus on the work of William Blake and Philip K. Dick. He co-directs the London Science Fiction Research Community (LSFRC), and co-edits *Fantastika Journal*. He was the recipient of the 2017 Science Fiction Research Association (SFRA) Best Student Paper Award.

5B – Multimedia Remixes of Time – Management School Lecture Theatre 12

Chair: Brian Baker

- Tom Abba (UWE Bristol, UK) 'Composing temporal space - affect in Ambient Literature'

Abstract:

The AHRC funded Ambient Literature project explores situated digital storytelling as it responds to the presence of a reader. The foundation of the study are three commissioned works and a set of smaller experiments, each exploring an approach to the design and delivery of a digitally-mediated experience of urban space. These *Ambient works* take the form of a smartphone delivered audio experience, interdependent with movement through physical space. They are constructed as being activated by their readers, who more accurately act as a participant in an emerging narrative experience; performing each work as much as reading it. This shift from reading a work to enacting it gives rise to a series of disruptions to conventional grammars of storytelling.

This paper will explore the manner by which perceptions of temporality and formal causation can be subverted within Ambient Literature, drawing on analysis of two works - Duncan Speakman's *'It Must Have Been Dark by Then'* and Tom Abba & Alyssia White's *'Words We Never Wrote'*. Each of these works disturb temporality as it relates to narrative structure - Speakman's work enacts a sonic evocation of the anthropocene, merging present and future through field recordings and documentary form; Abba & White employ a non-linear structure in order to foreground the gradual dissolution of their formal narrative. That each of these works employ temporal shifts within both their *form* and their *content* marks them out within the emerging canon of work produced by the Ambient Literature project. The paper will also address how the specific poetics of an Ambient work enable this affective tenor, and discuss techniques for writing and composition within this medium.

Bionote:

Tom Abba is Associate Professor of Art & Design at UWE Bristol. His research addresses grammars of writing and design within digital literature, and he directs the Ambient Literature project. Within the artists' collective Circumstance, he makes interdependent digital/physical books, working with the narrative of experience, sound and mobile technology.

- Tess Baxter (Lancaster University, UK) 'Virtualisation of past and present: art and the salvage narrative'

Abstract:

Potteiger and Purinton describe 'salvage narratives' (1998 p.22) as 'restorations of one moment in time, or adaptive reuse, which brings the past and present together in continuous narrative'. In my practice based PhD, I capture video from virtual worlds (machinima) and set it against 'real' or 'actual' world material.

In this presentation I consider how archive film and other material can be set against virtual world 'film', through video art. Archives and museums are keen to digitise material to make it accessible, but use is what ultimately matters. However, digitised archive film is not simply a reproduction. Virtual is derived from the Latin *virtus*, and 'virtuality... [is] a complex cultural interpretation of objects that forces us to rethink the tangible and intangible imprints of our cultural history' (Müller 2009 p.296). My aim is not to set the 'digital new' against the 'analogue old', but to reframe cultural meaning through a montage of interacting virtualities, to share history, art and virtual worlds across a wider audience.

Montage as a technique was explored from the early days of film by Méliès onwards. The process creates movement between images and affect in a 'contrapuntal relationship' (Balázs 2011 p.130). But montage also affects time, interrupting and time-shifting virtual and actual world material within and against themselves, displacing and refixing (Krapp 2011 p.159) much as Brechtian theatre set text against action, deployed music, and juxtaposed disconnected scenes (Unwin 2014 p.59). 'Non-linear' digital video editing software enables new techniques of montage that are apparent in my practice. My aim is to present new perspectives, through visual contradictions, complex seeing and ambiguous narratives, to leave viewers to reach their own conclusions (Unwin 2014 p.66) while considering film academically on its own terms and without needing to 'spell it all out in words' (Martin and López 2017).

Bionote:

Tess is working on a practice based PhD in Contemporary Art at Lancaster University. Her practice is video art, filmed in Second Life and montaged with real world material. Her work has been selected for film festivals and art exhibitions, and is on Vimeo under her in-world pseudonym, Tizzy Canucci.

- Charlotte Gislam (Independent, UK) “Goddess of Time, help us please! We need more time!” – Playing with Time Travel in *Majora's Mask* (2000)’

Abstract:

The use of time travel as a vessel to explore the thematic centre of a narrative is key to the genre. It is seen in *La Jetee* (1962), *Donnie Darko* (2001) and even *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946). Each film uses its own specific type of time travel to embody the core of the narrative it is telling.

In this paper I will show how this can be extended into the medium of video games. To do this I will look at Nintendo's *The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask* (2000). In the game the moon is falling onto the world of Termina and the player has exactly three days to stop the disaster. The game creates a time travel mechanic where the player manipulates time via playing a song on the ocarina. This sends the player back to the beginning of the three-day loop, reversing the destruction. This acts as a core gameplay mechanic which also actively involves the player in producing the thematic core of the game.

During this paper I will use Paul Booth's work 'Harmonious Synchronicity and *Eternal Darkness*' to help examine the manipulation of time. *Majora's Mask* purposefully creates what Booth's refers to as “messy” time travel to explore *Majora's Mask's* thematic centre of responsibility and regret. Themes which would not be as successfully represented without the use of time travel.

Bionote:

Charlotte Gislam is an independent scholar. Having completed her MA at Lancaster University she is currently applying for a PhD. Her interests include Game studies, the Gothic and Spatial Theory.

6A – Alternate History and the Archive – Management School Lecture Theatre 11

Chair: Robert O'Connor

- Ximena Flores Oviedo (University of Alberta, UK) 'The Spectacle of History: "Black Museum"'s voyeurism and the present of violence'

Bionote:

Black mirror has consistently scandalized its viewers in this fast-growing neoliberal economy where invention is the certainty of a profitable gadget. Although this show brings us closer to the horrors that are already pretty close in our everyday life, such as cellphones, surveillance, etc, the grounding of its horrors is found in reflecting the realities that we choose not to see, and pushing them to the point where seeing and being complicit in is unavoidable. Even though each episode works independently from the other (although some stories are vaguely referred along the show), the concretion of this world comes in the last episode of the series, "Black Museum", where every story is gathered into a museum, a place to preserve the history of that world. This episode culminates the spectacle of horrors with the never ending torture of a black man. Considering the history of the show, I would like to propose a reading of this episode as a parallel to the sanitized version of U.S history that has shaped and continued racism to the present day. In the episode, past and present are collapsed, bringing into light the ongoing subjection of black bodies to violence. In my analysis, I will address the notion of the spectacle as an entry point through which to conceptualize violence (physical inflicting of pain and the voyeurism that this activity allows) and the way in which the preservation of history has depoliticized the past. Thus, the episode still gestures to that possible future that the genre entails to look at the past and its ongoing mark in the present. In the end, I seek to show how "Black Museum" not only addresses the violence of the show, and the spectator's participation in it, but also the violence of slavery and the racist ideology it has maintained as foundation to the U.S as a nation.

Bionote:

Ximena Flores Oviedo is currently an MA student at the University of Alberta with a scholarship granted by the Mexican National Fund for the Arts and Culture and the Mexican National Council for Science and Technology. Her research deals with identity, nation and refusal in literature, particularly written in Canada.

- Indiana Seresin (University of Cambridge, UK) ‘Slave Resistance in the Speculative Archive: John Keene’s *Counternarratives*’

Abstract:

John Keene’s collection of short stories *Counternarratives* (2015) is a speculative reimagining of black life in the Americas from the sixteenth century to the present. Elements of the collection resemble the “alternate history” subgenre of science fiction, yet rather than conjuring an alternate reality, Keene deploys the speculative as a mode of encountering subterranean truths lying “beyond the surface of this world of men”. In doing so, the text participates in a black speculative tradition formed in response to the gaps, failures, silences, fictions, and lies of the historical archive, particularly in representing the lives of the enslaved. In *Lose Your Mother* (2007) Saidiya Hartman foregrounds the absences and deficiencies of the archive while experimenting with the speculative as a mode of narrating from a position of irrevocable loss. Later, in “Venus in Two Acts” (2008), Hartman labels this experiment “critical fabulation”, a “double gesture” that involves “straining against the limits of the archive to write a cultural history of the captive, and, at the same time, enacting the impossibility of representing the lives of the captives precisely through the process of narration”. *Counternarratives* aligns closely with the intellectual project of “throwing into crisis ‘what happened when’” and “exploiting the ‘transparency of sources’ as fictions of history”. At the same time, Hartman’s refusal to write a “romance of resistance”—typical of the Afro-pessimist suspicion of all forms of closure and catharsis—is not reflected in *Counternarratives*, which is an unashamedly redemptive project. By utilizing the form of archival documents (letters, reports, journal entries), Keene roots his stories in historical specificity while restaging the deficiencies, silences, and paradoxes of the real archive. Keguro Macharia (2017) writes that in the black speculative tradition, “the ‘speculative’ becomes part of the asymptotic narration, the gap in representation—the gap in the archive, the gap in the lie, the gap that is the lie”. *Counternarratives’* speculative archive recovers a silenced history while preserving these gaps as a reminder of that which can never be recovered or repaired.

Bionote:

Indiana Seresin holds a BA from Harvard University with highest honours in Comparative Literature and Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality. Her MPhil at the University of Cambridge is funded by a Newton Award. In October 2018 she will begin an AHRC-funded PhD, also at Cambridge.

**6B – Messianic Time in Brandon Sanderson’s *Mistborn* – Management School
Lecture Theatre 12**

Chair: Kerry Dodd

- Matthew J. Elder (University of Waikato, New Zealand) ‘Martyr Narratives, Cultural Memory, and the Making of New Worlds in Brandon Sanderson’s *Mistborn*’

Abstract:

Brandon Sanderson’s *Mistborn* series presents a hushed world, a broken world, a people oppressed. The skaa are silenced, denied identity and heritage, choked by a racist hegemony just as the plantations they tend are choked by the constant ash fall. The oppressed skaa have no history, no stories to tell that could unify them, no cultural narrative other than their instilled day-to-day normality in which they are marginalised and have no power. The dominant narrative of Scadrial places them on the plantation, in the tenements, isolated and afraid of the nightly mists that prevent them from travelling, gathering, and talking. Transgression, even an imagined slight against the nobles, is punished by death. Imagining a different life, a different world, is impossible for the skaa.

Mistborn asks the question: how do you change a dominant narrative that has persisted in power for a thousand years? It explores the way that the marginalising pressures of such a disjunctive power structure reduces the identity of those outside the established norm. And, it proffers an answer: a drastic act, an act of sacrifice, a martyrdom. The martyr narrative of Kelsier, the ideology performed by his act of sacrifice, provides a shared cultural memory for the skaa, something that is theirs, something they can share and repeat, and, ultimately, performatively create for themselves through that repetition a new identity that juxtaposes the status quo. This identity pushes back against the thousand year narrative of oppression and empowers a rebellion, a new religion, and a vision of a future world beyond racial oppression. Martyrdom becomes the narrative hinge that critiques the problems of the world before, and imagines the world after. *Mistborn* explores the way that martyrdom creates a shared cultural narrative, and the way that telling that story builds new worlds, new futures, hope.

Bionote:

Matthew J. Elder is a PhD candidate and tutor at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. His research interests include contemporary fantasy literature, magic, and identity construction. Sacrifice in contemporary fantasy is the subject of his doctoral research.

- Charul (Chuckie) Palmer Patel (Independent, Canada) 'Chaotic Conclusions: Examining Cycles of Utopia in Brandon Sanderson's *Hero of Ages* (via Skype)

Abstract

Epic Fantasy often cycles between states of utopia and anti-utopia as the people in the community attempt to re-establish stability and return to the world they once knew. But, as a number of different theorists argue, a utopic state cannot be static. The Epic Fantasy hero thus acts as an agent of change, forcing the community to break the cycle. The hero's actions may temporarily increase chaos, but will eventually lead to a brighter and better future.

I will examine these ideas by looking at cycles that lead to a 'new equilibrium' in *Hero of Ages* (2008), the book of Brandon Sanderson's first *Mistborn* trilogy (2006-2008). The trilogy depicts a cyclical structure within its three parts. This cycle becomes shorter and faster in the final book as chaos and turmoil increase to an extreme point.

I will argue that the coming of the hero allows society to move forward in time, past a static existence in order to progress into the future. Just as in chaos theory, a new system of change is triggered when far-from-equilibrium conditions are reached, so to do far-from-equilibrium conditions in Epic Fantasy lead to a bifurcation point that will progress the system into the future. These ideas are particularly evident in *Hero of Ages*, as several different communities initially resist the change – and thus salvation – which is offered by the hero.

Bionote:

Chuckie Palmer-Patel started the Fantastika conferences when she was a PhD student at Lancaster University. She's thrilled beyond belief that she can pass on the command to Kerry Dodd and equally devastated that she can't attend in person.

6C – Ontological Displacement – Furness Lecture Theatre 3

Chair: Francis Gene-Rowe

- Julia Wang (University of Cambridge, UK) ‘Forming Subjectivity Via Timeslip: A Thirdspatial Perspective’

Abstract:

In Diana Wynne Jones’s *The Crown of Dalemark*, Maewen, an adolescent from the present, is pulled into the past and into the subject position of someone fighting to become the Queen of Dalemark. I will examine whether and how her timeslip experience of a place vastly different from her “norm” expose her ideological constraints and thereby affect her formation of subjectivity. How are her identities different in the two places? How does compounding identities affect her development of intersubjectivity? What are her assumptions of her own subjectivity and of her “place” in history? How do her experiences confirm, rebuke, or complicate those assumptions?

I will use a postcolonial spatial framework to tease out the complications of Historicizing the past and those who live in it. My methodology is based in phenomenological geocriticism, an emerging field that combines spatial theory with literary criticism. Specifically, I will adapt Edward Soja’s (1996) postmodern geography of Thirdspace. Roughly put, Firstspace perceives spatial realities, Secondspace conceives imagined aspects, and Thirdspace is the analytical perspective that deconstructs both Firstspace and Secondspace and sees the other potentials in the spatial experience that neither Firstspatial nor Secondspatial perspectives provide.

In Jones’s novel, Maewen’s timeslip experiences enable her to apply the Thirdspatial perspective. For example, after she returns from the past, she is able to see paradoxical truths in events: Upon learning a historical fact from the period she has personally experienced, she decides that “history” is “[r]ight, in a way, but so wrong too” (p. 447). Simultaneously, she has gained her voice: Before the timeslip, Maewen does not have the “nerve” (p. 87) to ask questions, even to her dad. Afterwards, she does. How has Maewen’s timeslip enabled this more empowered subjectivity? What are the interrelationships between her empowerment and her newfound ability to apply Thirdspatial perspective?

Bionote:

Julia Wang is a PhD student in Children’s Literature at Cambridge University. Her research interests include border-straddlers such as multiverses, posthuman studies, fairy tales, science-fantasy, and monsters. Diana Wynne Jones’s novels are among her favorites, and they comprise a large part of her PhD corpus.

- Mike Ryder (Lancaster University, UK) 'Exclusions through time: Charlie Gordon and the biopolitical paradigm'

Abstract:

In *Flowers for Algernon* (1966), protagonist Charlie Gordon is trapped in a world of biopolitical control. Excluded for his low intelligence, and then for his genius, his double exclusion serves to enshrine the law through time, casting him as a form of bare life – what Giorgio Agamben describes as the 'originary activity of sovereignty' (*Homo Sacer*, 1998).

Throughout the narrative, Charlie is constituted within different temporal frameworks. At first he is excluded as 'young' Charlie, the man of low intelligence, and then 'present day' Charlie the genius. He is also framed within the context of his ever-present future self – the Charlie Gordon who will suffer mental decline and ultimately death as a result of his unique status. Each of these figures haunts the narrative of *Flowers for Algernon* and casts Charlie as an exemplar par excellence – a paradigmatic figure who desires integration, but who can never be received back into the system that excludes him. This temporal element also ties in with what Judith Butler describes as 'precarity' and the concept of 'grievable life' (*Precarious Life*, 2004). In this case, his life is not deemed worthy of sympathy or grief and is framed within the context of the mouse Algernon whose life certainly *is* worthy of grief, as depicted in the novel's closing lines.

To this end, this paper will explore the ways in which Charlie Gordon is constituted through his various exclusions that situate him within a temporal biopolitical framework of what was, what is, and what is yet to come. It will ask, why does Charlie desire his own repression, and how do his exclusions serve to replicate societal codes and manufacture consent to sovereign rule?

Bionote:

Mike Ryder is a PhD researcher at Lancaster University. His interests include biopolitics, sovereignty, war, and autonomy, with a particular focus on the philosophy of Agamben, Foucault, Derrida and Deleuze. His website is www.mjryder.net.

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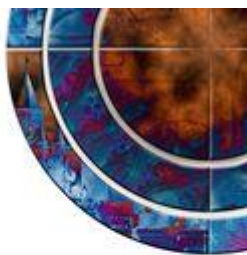
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