

Being Human: How Hidden Narratives Challenge Authority

Institutions, Identity and the Individual

**The second Liberal and Performing Arts Conference
University of Gloucestershire, Francis Close Hall**

10am – 5pm, Tuesday June 12th 2018



Image of Crossbones Graveyard © Melanie Clemmey

Conference Programme

10.00 - 10.30	Coffee and registration
10.30 – 10.35	Welcome (Dr Duncan Dicks)
10.35 – 11.05	<i>Slipping Unnoticed Across the Border: The Hidden Narrative and The Liminal in Paul Muldoon’s ‘Unapproved Road’</i> , Prof. Nigel McLoughlin
11.05 – 11.15	Questions and discussion
11.15 – 12.15	<i>Remembering Whose Girl You Are: Lesbian Historical Fiction and the Invisible Archive</i> , Dr Bea Hitchman <i>Visible and Vocal: Ageing Women and the Impact of Punk Identity</i> , Alison Willmott <i>Controlling Female Reproduction in Serbia</i> , Senja Andrejevic-Bullock
12.15 – 12.30	Panel questions
12.30 – 1.30	Lunch
1.30 – 2.30	<i>Is the Universe Moral? God, Time and History in Kant and Heidegger</i> , Dr Will Large <i>Painting the Bible: The Book of Ruth</i> , Shelley Campbell <i>“I am not a Prophet, Nor a Prophet’s Son” (Amos 7:14): Prophets and the Prophetic Institution in Ancient Israel</i> , Louis Ndehka
2.30 – 2.45	Panel questions
2.45 – 3.00	Tea and coffee
3.00 – 4.00	<i>Kathleen Raine: Poetry and Spirituality</i> , Dr Rowan Middleton <i>Hidden Narratives in Nursing Homes</i> , Dr Hannah Grist and Prof. Ros Jennings <i>Challenging authority through the exposure of hidden narratives: an ecocritical perspective of Christian environmentalism</i> , Edward Perrins
4.00 – 4.15	Panel questions
4.15 – 4.45	<i>Misinterpreting other cultures through contemporary individualism</i> , Dr Paul Innes
4.45 – 5.00	Questions and discussion Closing remarks (Dr Duncan Dicks)

Speaker biographies and abstracts

Slipping Unnoticed Across the Border: The Hidden Narrative and The Liminal in Paul Muldoon's 'Unapproved Road'

Prof. Nigel McLoughlin

This paper outlines a cognitive poetic framework constructed from a combination of Text World Theory (Werth 1999; Gavins 2007) and Stockwell's (2009) model of literary resonance and applies it to an analysis of Paul Muldoon's poem 'Unapproved Road'. The analysis will make explicit the relationships between the various text-worlds in the poem, and examine the role of associative cues in making connections, or facilitating attentional movement, between text-worlds. These cues are often subtle and may be activated through shared historical, cultural and linguistic contexts, or by etymological, cross-linguistic, previously primed, and phonological associations. The paper will also examine the ways in which these associative cues act to attentionally foreground the different worlds of the poem at different times and explore what theoretical implications for Text World Theory arise from the analysis, and what the poem tells us about borders.

Nigel McLoughlin is Professor of Creativity and Poetics at the University of Gloucestershire. He has published five volumes of poetry, the latest of which is *Chora: New and Selected Poems* (Templar Poetry, 2009), and has written scholarly articles and book chapters on creative writing pedagogy, creativity, and cognitive stylistics. He served as Editor of the poetry journal *Iota* from 2018-2015, and edited *The Portable Poetry Workshop* (Palgrave, 2016). In 2011 he was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship, and in 2014 he was invited to record a selection of his poetry for The Poetry Archive.

Kathleen Raine: Poetry on the Threshold

Dr Rowan Middleton

Kathleen Raine (1908-2003) was the author of twelve collections of poetry and a critic with a particular interest in the mystical tradition she found in Blake, Yeats and Plato. She saw a tension between this tradition and a prevailing contemporary worldview that only considered the material. Although often associated with her poems about the natural world, Raine also wrote poetry about the city and the built environment. Here, the recurring references to doorways and openings can be read as a metaphor for ways of accessing the spiritual. Whilst there are poems that describe profound experiences of the spiritual, the 'doors' are not always open and several poems contain a sense of both grief and defiance at the inability to reach beyond the physical and connect with the forces contained within elements such as trees, mountains and the wind. As such, there are many poems that can be categorised as 'poems of longing', where there is a desire to cross the borders of what Charles Taylor described as the 'bounded self' and connect with the divine in others, the divine in nature, and the divine in oneself.

Dr Rowan Middleton is a lecturer in English at the University of Gloucestershire, UK. He has published on Alice Oswald's long poem *Dart* and Edward Thomas' mystical poetry.

Hidden Narratives in Care Homes: Conversations with Carers and Autoethnography

Dr Hannah Grist and Professor Ros Jennings

The changing demographics of ageing within the UK suggests that there will be 19 million older people by 2050 (www.parliament.uk). While there is a growing demand in Western societies for residential and nursing care for older people, media reports and experiential accounts by care givers and care receivers suggest that in many cases, care workers are struggling to provide the level of care that is expected by the Care Quality Commission, let alone the individualized and dignified care essential to older wellbeing (Twigg et al., 2011). Whilst this is the picture for many care workers, popular media and news representations of the care home as a total institution (Goffman, 1961) fail to grasp the multiplicity of lived experience of working in a care home.

This paper draws upon research currently being undertaken by the presenters which explores carers, care homes and the UK media. One strand of the research project uses semi-structured interviews with current and former carers to explore what it means to be a paid care worker in the UK care environment. This paper draws upon these narratives alongside autoethnographic reflections from Hannah and Ros who have themselves worked as care assistants in UK nursing homes. The joining of the personal authorial voices together with those of current and former care workers adds an innovative methodological approach to media analysis, and uncovers hidden narratives of life and work in care homes.

Dr. Hannah Grist (hgrist@glos.ac.uk)

Prof. Ros Jennings (rjennings@glos.ac.uk)

Challenging authority through the exposure of hidden narratives: an ecocritical perspective of Christian Environmentalism

Edward Perrins

It is often the language we perceive as normal that does the most harm. From blatant sexism to subtle racism, ways that our society use language affects our ideologies and beliefs. Critical discourse studies have addressed socio-political issues within a variety of institutions, but relatively little mention has been given to the language that encourages ecologically destructive behaviour.

Through critical discourse analysis, the destructive language of institutions that construct humanity's relationship with other species can be examined and judged against ecological values. My paper will present prototypical examples of discourse within Christian Environmentalism and highlight the anthropocentric views we should seek to avoid.

Remembering Whose Girl You Are: Lesbian Historical Fiction and the Invisible Archive

Dr Beatrice Hitchman

Writing lesbian historical fiction could be said *always* to present a challenge to authority, in that it (re)-introduces lesbian characters into a historiography from which they are often excluded. This talk considers the ethical questions that arise from working within a partial, biased, frequently altogether invisible archive of lesbian (or lesbian-like) history and feeling. With reference to the research process for my first novel, I'll ask what opportunities doing 'imaginative recovery work' presents to unearth hidden narratives, but also whether using the imagination to 'make the fiction go' (Mantel, 2000) – in conjunction with marketplace pressures and questions of publishing acceptability - puts us at risk of interpreting the past through the flattening lens of contemporary thought, and further eliding the strangeness and revolutionary potential of the past.

Dr Beatrice Hitchman is a novelist and Lecturer in Creative Writing. Her research focuses on queer fiction, historical fiction, and ideas around endings and closure of novels. Her first novels, *PETITE MORT* (Serpent's Tail), was nominated for the Desmond Elliott Prize and Authors' Club Best First Novel Prize and serialised on R4 as a ten-part Woman's Hour drama.

Visible and Vocal: Ageing Women and the Impact of Punk Identity

Alison Willmott

Older people are subject to cultural expectations that influence the way they act, look and spend their time. My PhD research focuses on women aged 50+, who identified with punk. Boundaries of age are notoriously difficult to define and the widely used 'middle age' is not exempt from this, nor from restrictive expectations of appearance, behaviour and leisure pursuits. This is particularly problematic for women, who are subject to gendered expectations throughout their lives. The subculture of punk came into being in the UK in the late 1970s and existing research on 'ageing punks' has so far failed to capture the experiences of women. Findings nonetheless suggest that punk identities, lifestyles and practices endure into middle age, providing an alternative to the narrow view of 'ageing' that public discourse holds. Punk, as a genre that advocated a DIY, non-conformist approach to music, lifestyle, and appearance, may have had a lasting impact for the women influenced by it, potentially their ability to resist conforming to wider social expectations of ageing. If women retain their punk identity, how (if at all) might this shape their experience of ageing?

Alison Willmott is a PhD student with the Centre for Women, Ageing and Media and is in the second year of study. Her PhD subject is 'The Ageing Experience of Women in the UK who Identified with Punk Cultures', which is an interdisciplinary ageing studies project. Alison has been exploring the experiences of ageing women through individual interviews and participant observation, most recently at a small punk festival called 'Nice n Sleazy', which inexplicably wasn't mentioned in the recent Guardian guide to festivals...

Controlling Female Reproduction in Serbia

Senja Andrejevic-Bullock

This presentation reflects on the current reproductive politics in Serbia and the likely impending change of their Law on Termination of Pregnancy to a more conservative and controversial model. A strong theoretical framework already exists for the examination and understanding of the role of gender in 'nation-building'. This presentation will explore how this concept applies specifically to gender and neo-nationalism in Serbia, both with a retrospective view of the media campaigns of the late 1980s before the break-up of former Yugoslavia, and with respect to the current state, the Republic of Serbia. It will also explore and highlight the critical role of NGOs in challenging the patriarchal authority of the Serbian state and church, and the often contradictory objectives that they have to attempt to reconcile. While Serbian's women's right of choice, bodily autonomy and reproductive health are currently under attack, this is not an isolated phenomenon but can be interpreted as 'mobilising against equality' and one of the many current anti-gender campaigns in Europe (Kuhar, 2017).

Senja Andrejevic-Bullock teaches Dramatic Writing and has previously completed an MA in Creative & Critical Writing at University of Gloucestershire. Her work has been published in *The Lampeter Review*, *The Wrong Quarterly*, *Scrutiny Journal*, *The Dawntreader*, *Literary Mama*, *Brain*, *Child*, *Storgy* and other magazines. Her plays have successfully reached long-lists and short-lists of several national competitions such as the Bruntwood Prize and Bristol Old Vic Open Session and her work has been performed at the Everyman Studio in Cheltenham.

Is the Universe Moral? God, Time and History in Kant and Heidegger

Dr Will Large

There isn't one kind of atheism responding to one type of theism in the history of philosophy, but a plurality. Take for example the philosophy of Kant. He rejects the traditional ontological arguments for the existence of God for the subjective necessity of the moral idea of God. Why does Kant think the belief in God is necessary for morality? His answer is that without this belief we would fall into moral despair, since if the universe conspired against our moral actions we would realise they were futile. Morality without progress towards a just world would be empty, but the existence of a such a world requires a 'moral Author of creation'. One possible response to Kant's argument is a secular one. Why not do away with the idea of God completely, and make progress wholly dependent on human action? I argue that the real source of Kant's idea of God is in how he thinks of time and history. In Heidegger there is different way of thinking about history and time, which jettisons the idea of progress, and therefore the need for the moral idea of God.

William Large (Ph.D. University of Essex) teaches philosophy at the University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham. He is the author four books, *Maurice Blanchot* [co-authored] (Routledge, 2001) *Ethics and the Ambiguity of Writing: Emmanuel Levinas and Maurice Blanchot*, (Clinamen, 2005), *Heidegger's Being and Time* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), and *Levinas 'Totality and Infinity: A Reader's Guide* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015]. His articles have appeared in *The Journal of the British Society of Phenomenology*, *Theology & Sexuality*, *Textual Practice*, *Literature and Philosophy*,

The Journal of Nietzsche Studies, *Angelaki*, *Journal of Cultural Research* and *The Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory*. He was also special editor of the *Parallax* issue on Maurice Blanchot. He was elected by the trustees as a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 2009 for his contribution to philosophy in the UK and the RAE. From 2010-2104, he was also elected President of the British Society of Phenomenology.

Painting the Bible: The Book of Ruth

Shelley Campbell

Amongst biblical grand narratives, the *Book of Ruth* is a gentle story in which devotion and loyalty prevail. However, as a kind of charming interlude within the House of Israel, some theologians are dissatisfied by this characterisation of *Ruth*. Instead, they provide evidence for reading *Ruth* as a relevant and powerful contemporary account of immigration, ethnic translation, and being – or living with – ‘the stranger’. With regard to Ruth’s perceived differences in a host community as an immigrant-stranger, this art project aims to maximise identity by minimising distinctions and increasing inclusivity.

The project credits participation as a kind of performance that ‘minimises distinctions and increases inclusivity’. First, the mundane but versatile running stitch is practiced on a sampler come sketchbook. Second, to portray identity, old photographs are used as stitching patterns. The focus on making as ‘the object’ invokes the Institutional Critique which challenges the normal expectations of gallery attendance and the established art-viewing system.

This paper takes into account some apparent incongruities: first, using Ruth’s story to discuss identity and integration while she ‘turns her back’ on her homeland; second, raising the Institutional Critique while using institutional privilege to carry out the protest; and finally, using stitchery to increase inclusivity while many are excluded due to low-level motivational interest.

I’ve been a practicing maker since 1984. Some highlights have included commissions at the Chelsea Flower Show for the National Trust (2001 & 2002) and the Australian Garden (2004). In 2005, I took a sabbatical from making and attended the University of Gloucestershire on the Religion, Philosophy & Ethics course. In 2013, I was awarded an M.A. – Art & Design from Cardiff School of Art & Design (Cardiff Metropolitan University). I am currently a part-time research student in the Art Department at the University of Gloucestershire.

“I am not a Prophet, Nor a Prophet’s Son” (Amos 7:14): Prophets and the Prophetic Institution in Ancient Israel

Louis Ndekha

One of the key issues in the study of the history of Ancient Israel is the relationship between the monarchy and the prophetic institution. The rise of the prophetic movement is usually considered as having coincided with the rise of the monarchy. The early function of the prophet was largely that of a charismatic moral spokesperson and covenantal counselor to kings, providing, as it were, the necessary checks and balances in the monarch’s discharge of royal duties from a covenant perspective. However, the institutionalisation of the prophetic movement led to professionalization of the prophetic office with its attendant challenges to its effectiveness. This paper argues that as one of the oldest documents of the writing prophets Amos reveal the apparent tensions between the institutional (cultic) prophets and a new generation of charismatic prophets. The former’s attachment to the monarchy was called into question by the latter representing a new age of the prophetic movement in Ancient Israel.

Louis Ndekha is a 2nd year theology PhD student, studying ‘Luke and the Rhetoric of Praise and Blame: the Lucan Beatitudes in Greco_Roman Context’. He has been Lecturer in Biblical Studies at University of Malawi, Department of Theology. His special interest is in New Testament History and Biblical hermeneutics (both old and new testament). He recently published ‘Zechariah the Model Priest: Luke and the characterisation of ordinary priests in Luke-Acts’, *HTS theological studies*, Vol 74, No1, (April) 2018.

Misinterpreting other cultures through contemporary individualism

Paul Innes

Anglophone cultures are often closely associated with the rise and dominance of the individual, or rather individualism. However, it should be remembered that its power is not all-encompassing, and that its emergence is in fact a relatively recent historical occurrence. The rise of Shakespeare will be taken as a case study for a discourse that is deeply flawed, contradictory and at times completely ahistorical in its interpretative practices. In other words, individualism is an ideology, and as such can and indeed must be contested.

I am a specialist in Shakespeare and his contemporaries with further interests in the western classical tradition. I became hooked on Shakespeare as an undergraduate at Glasgow University and my interest deepened while studying his sonnets for my PhD at Stirling University. My first academic position was teaching English Literature for the British Council at Warsaw University in the years following the fall of the Berlin Wall. Prior to joining the team at Gloucestershire I worked for twenty years in Scotland, at the Universities of Edinburgh, Strathclyde and Glasgow.

The Being Human website can be found at <https://beinghumanresearchcentre.org>.