

Day One | May 30<sup>th</sup>

Panel 1A | Negotiating 'the North'

**Dr Andrew Frayn (Edinburgh Napier University)**

Northernness, rurality and modernity in the works of Norman Nicholson.

In the introduction to the *Collected Poems* of Norman Nicholson (1914-87), Neil Curry highlights the systematic denigration of writers from the north of England by metropolitan literary networks. *The Times* obituary described Nicholson as 'the most gifted English Christian provincial poet of his century'. The accumulation of qualifying adjectives damns with a faint praise Nicholson would have resented: his broadcast *On Being a Provincial* (1945) and fiction *Provincial Pleasures* (1959) both assert the value of rural life. Even recent sympathetic studies of the north, such as Dave Russell's *Looking North* (2004), have done little to move beyond familiar stereotypes.

In this paper I argue that Nicholson's unsentimental attitude to place offers a necessary alternative to the fetishization of the Lake District, and rural Britain more generally. A lifelong resident of Millom, an ironworks town in the part of south-west Cumbria that one might topographically and metaphorically describe as the arse end of the Lake District, Nicholson wanted rural communities to thrive. Nicholson's best-known volume *The Pot Geranium* (1954) reveals the need for rural communities to be allowed to embrace modernity in poems such as the highly formal 'On a Proposed Site for Council Houses', while the Cumbrian coast continues to be understood as a liminal space in the free verse 'From Walney Island' and 'On the Lancashire Coast'. In *Portrait of the Lakes* (1963), he implores the reader: 'Don't complain about quarries; don't protest against mineral workings. Give the dalesman a chance to go on living and making a living, and to stay more or less independent of the tourist[. . .] Don't stifle the life of a dale community for the sake of saving a view' (p. 180).

I conclude by pushing this argument further to think about the possibility for a more democratic literary criticism. In Nicholson's attitude towards the south-west Lakes there are principles that can refresh the work of literary criticism. He points to the need to think again about the relationship between the rural and industrial modernity, while his consciousness of the undesirability of mere preservation offers the possibility for further reflection on challenges to the literary canon.

**Biography**

Andrew Frayn is Lecturer in Twentieth-Century Literature and Culture at Edinburgh Napier University. He is the author of *Writing Disenchantment: British First World War Prose 1914-30* (Manchester University Press, 2014), and editor of a recent special issue of *Modernist Cultures* on 'Modernism and the First World War'. He has published widely on authors including Richard Aldington, Ford Madox Ford and C.E. Montague, and is Secretary to the Ford Madox Ford Society.

## Panel 1A | Negotiating 'the North'

**Jake Campbell (Newcastle University)**

*Errata Slip for a Northern Town: Poems from South Tyneside's Edgelands*

The poet James Kirkup said of South Shields that it is 'the most surrealistic' town in Britain. If literary verisimilitude is to be cautioned against (for, amongst other things, risking entrenching hegemonic narratives) how might poets, broadly writing about places, advance or else distort chorographic accounts of their locales? Extending the notion of the publisher's *errata* – a list of subsequent corrections – this paper seeks to creatively re-imagine, and simultaneously critically examine, peripheral landscapes and their corresponding identities.

Finding its cultural, semantic and geographic point of focus in the edgelands between South Tyneside and north Sunderland, my practice-led PhD in Creative Writing aims to explore, via the composition of an original volume of poetry, what – if anything – it means to belong to the North-East—an area arguably more susceptible to stereotype and misrepresentation than anywhere else in England. Underpinned by perambulatory practice, and in part responding to a literary-genealogical study of mid-late twentieth century North-East poets, my working collection, *Errata Slip for a Northern Town*, proposes a new way of understanding regional poetics: that is, to argue that the region as experienced is necessarily 'relational'; and that a poetic sensibility open to digression, challenge and revision might reveal a more dynamic nexus of affinities and connections than have hitherto been explored.

This paper will be entirely 'creative', taking the form of a reading of half a dozen original poems from my thesis, including explanatory notes, marginalia and reflexive commentaries, situating the work within an emergent discourse of contemporary regional poetics.

### Biography

Born in South Shields, Tyne and Wear, in 1988, Jake Campbell has published two pamphlets of poetry: *The Coast Will Wait Behind You* (Art Editions North, 2015) and *Definitions of Distance* (Red Squirrel Press, 2012). A regular collaborator on interdisciplinary arts projects, his work has been displayed in galleries, on billboards and as part of apps. A founding editor of the poetry magazine, *Butcher's Dog*, Jake's writings have appeared in a number of national and international journals. He is currently a third year PhD student at Newcastle University, supported by the Northern Bridge Doctoral Training Partnership.

## Panel 1A | Negotiating 'the North'

### Kyra Piperides (University of York)

'A town that lets you write': Philip Larkin and Hull

In his foreword to *A Rumoured City: New Poets from Hull* (1982), Philip Larkin wrote that:

Hull has its own sudden elegancies. People are slow to leave it, quick to return. And there are others who come, as they think, for a year or two, and stay a lifetime, sensing that they have found a city that is in the world, yet sufficiently on the edge of it to have a different resonance.

This sentiment, written after 27 years living in Hull, sharply contrasts with his early, bleaker impressions of the city, recorded in various letters to friends: 'Hull smelt revoltingly of fish this morning: my secretary said that meant it was going to rain. And it did.' In the years since his death, Larkin's attitude towards the city has been widely debated. The general critical opinion on his poetry is that it is relatively placeless: Rossen has suggested that Larkin's work 'does not seem to imply that the poet had a personal relationship with Hull', whilst Booth reports that 'the value of [Larkin's] poetry does not depend on any local reference'.

This paper will argue that this is not the case. An exploration of the various, rich histories of the city of Hull alongside a close reading of Larkin's poetry reveals frequent, subtle references to his East Yorkshire home. The poet's in-depth knowledge of local history is woven throughout his work, implying that Larkin was rather more integrated in the city than his letters would suggest. A keen photographer, Larkin's archives are full of images that demonstrate the poet's artistic appreciation of the city. Through detailed discussion of poems including 'Here' and 'Bridge for the Living', alongside references to his photographs and personal correspondence, this paper will aim to prove that Larkin's poetry *is* firmly grounded in place.

### Biography

Kyra Piperides is a second year PhD student studying in the Department of English and Related Literature at the University of York. Her current research explores portrayals of Yorkshire in twentieth and twenty-first century poetry, including the works of Philip Larkin and Ted Hughes. Kyra's work is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the White Rose College of the Arts and Humanities.

## Panel 1B | (Dis)Placement: Narratives of Migration and Refuge

### **Beniamin Kłaniecki (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań)**

Dis/Misplaced men: Liminal spaces and unsettled hierarchies in contemporary literary representations of male migrants.

In *The Ritual Process* Victor Turner defines liminality as the middle phase of the rites of passage – the state of being removed from one's symbolical environment and being suspended in between, where neither norms nor traditions apply. Such liminal spaces can be found in narratives about male migrants. In those texts, the integral part of migration – the literal and symbolic displacement of gender, class/caste and power relations results in the proliferation of conflicting dynamics in the male homosocial communities and further leads to the ultimate failure of the established power systems. As a consequence, there is produced a space, which is abstract, physically unconfined and released from its pre-existing social structures. In search of representations of homosocial liminal spaces, in which postcolonial masculinity is redefined and reconstructed outside of its original locus, I intend in this paper to close-read three contemporary literary texts: "The Street" (2010) by the Irish writer Colm Toibín, *A Life Apart* (2010) by the India-born author Neel Mukherjee and *The Year of the Runaways* (2015) by Sunjeev Sahota, a British novelist of Indian heritage. The proposed project will involve a selective and critical use of the theories of Connell, Sedgwick and Bhabha. The applicability of those theories to the reading of narratives portraying liminal immigrant spaces will be verified with regard to the following questions: the legitimacy of homosexual relations among Pakistani men in a displaced immigrant community, the demasculinising loss of national belongingness and subjectivity as well as the unsettled hierarchies of gender privileges and caste-related restraints resulting from the neo-colonial mechanisms of global capital. In sum, the study attempts to combine and reformulate well established theories from the fields of masculinity, sexuality and postcolonial studies, and subsequently employ them in the analysis of the interrelation of narrative, place and gender in contemporary literary representations.

### **Biography**

Beniamin Kłaniecki, M.A. – a PhD candidate at the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. His main research interests include masculinity, postcolonial and queer studies as well as their application to the study of contemporary British and Commonwealth literatures. In 2017, he earned a master's degree in English after defending the thesis *Écriture homosexuelle: A case study of Bruce Chatwin's writings*. He is the recipient of Poland's Ministry of Science and Higher Education scholarship for outstanding academic achievements.

## Panel 1B | (Dis)Placement: Narratives of Migration and Refuge

### **Sean Richardson (Nottingham Trent)**

Writing: Legacies of Windrush and the Literature of the Brixton Uprisings.

Following the recent and shameful scandal surrounding Windrush migrants in the UK, my paper analyses the cultural legacy of Windrush through the literature of the Brixton Uprisings of 1981 and 1985. Drawing on original interviews with activists and authors involved in the riots, I trace the historical, literary and cultural lineage of Windrush through the catalyst of the Uprisings, and ask what these events may continue to tell us about national identity, space and place today.

### **Biography**

Séan Richardson is a PhD student at Nottingham Trent University, funded by the Vice Chancellor's Researcher Development Scheme. Séan has previously worked as a heritage assistant at Alexandra Palace, and for a number of research projects. He hosts the Modernist Podcast and runs the Midlands Modernist Network. In April, Séan organised Queer Modernism(s), a one-day conference at Nottingham Trent University. Currently, he is organising Queer Modernism(s) II: Intersectional Identities and Transitions: Bridging the Victorian-Modernist Divide, set to be held respectively at Oxford and Birmingham in April 2018, as well as curating the Forster50 museum exhibition, commemorating fifty years since E.M. Forster's passing.

## Panel 1B | (Dis)Placement: Narratives of Migration and Refuge

### Kevin Amoke (Lancaster University)

Encountering the other: gift, ethics and contending spaces in Ammar Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*.

With much of global wealth skewed against the third world and talks on globalization and multiculturalism celebrating and at the same time challenging our diversity and the oneness of our humanity the way they do today, contemporary discourse on migration may be at its most critical point. Global inequality has continued to necessitate the influx of people from developing economies with little or no opportunities to the developed world—where such movement is both desired and abhorred for several reasons—with its promises of plenty. As literature, in its very complexity, engages such passage and explores anxieties over trans-border crossings, literary criticism has adopted a plethora of perspectives in a bid to make sense of these concerns. At the centre of such critical engagement is the prostitute whose life is marked as heavily exploited, debased, and dehumanized; whose body is commodified; whose agency is threatened as well as asserted (as some have argued), and who manipulates or is involved in manipulating borders in a variety of ways to escape suspicion, evade the law, and gain right of stay. Both Amma Darko's and Chika Unigwe's texts for this study have been well received in the light of the above thematic concerns. This paper, however, seeks to draw attention to immigrants' encounter with the 'natives' by investigating the connection between gift, space, and ethics. It argues that the entry into the space of the other permits a reading of spatiality itself as a gift, problematizes the conception of space as home, and as well provokes ethical considerations about encounters with the other. This paper aims to engage these issues using Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*.

**Biography:** Anenechukwu Kevin Amoke is a second-year PhD student at Lancaster University where he is currently researching the intersection between gift economy and sex work narratives in contemporary African novels.

## Panel 2 | Spaces of Becoming: Adolescence

### Elly McCausland (Aarhus University)

'Territory Open to Girl Activity': The Wilderness in Camp Fire Girl Fiction, 1912-1920.

In 1912, American physical education instructor Luther H. Gulick created the Camp Fire Girls, an organisation that aimed 'to consider ways and means of doing for the girls what the Boy Scout movement is designed to do for the boys'. The early decades of the twentieth century witnessed the creation of multiple initiatives, often focused around scouting, designed to manage the apparently problematic energies of a newly recognised adolescent population in Britain and America. The idea of the wilderness lay at the heart of these movements, which cultivated practical life skills in a natural setting that apparently appealed to the wild spirit of the developing adolescent. Wilderness was also central to the large corpus of popular fiction inspired by scouting groups, shaping narrative imaginings of an adventurous child whose inner turmoil both possessed a curious affinity with, but could also be tamed by, nature's wilds. Focusing on the largely overlooked category of girl scouting fiction, particularly the popular *Camp Fire Girls* series by American author Hildegard G. Frey (1912-1920), I explore how such literature reclaimed the traditionally masculine wilderness as a specifically feminine space by interweaving it with the psychological, emotional and social dramas of girlhood. These texts depict a 'middle landscape' that is as much experiential as geographical, the perfect spatial counterpart to the adolescent of the period, who was also frequently conceptualised as 'middle': both literally, as representing a turbulent period between childhood and adulthood, but also as between primitive savagery and malleable social pliability. These novels offer important insight into the longstanding cultural connection between the child and the wild, illustrating how early twentieth-century constructions of the problematic adolescent and the restorative wilderness coalesced through a new mode of adventure that conflated physical and subjective space to emphasise the inner dramas of the youthful psyche.

### Biography

Elly McCausland is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Aarhus University, Denmark. As part of the Trust and Risk in Literature Network, also based at Aarhus, she is working on a monograph examining adventurous space in children's literature from 1880 to the present day.

## Panel 2 | Spaces of Becoming: Adolescence

### **Sarah Tytler (University of Glasgow)**

Our Castles Are Different: An Analysis of Fantasy Settings in Young-Adult Portal-Quests.

This presentation explores the relationship between the 'home world' and 'secondary world' in young-adult (YA) portal-quest fantasies. Specifically, I undertake a comparison of which elements of the protagonist's original world (usually Earth) are most commonly omitted by the author in the constructed secondary world of the fantasy novel. Portal-quest fantasies are those in which a character from one world travels to another--through a magical portal--and makes their way through the secondary world meeting new people, seeing new places, having adventures, and usually fulfilling their destiny as 'the chosen one' by completing a quest<sup>1</sup>. The protagonists are typically young adults who use the adventure as a way to achieve emotional maturity and character growth, which they then bring back to the 'home world' in the form of new knowledge or experience. By demonstrating the near-ubiquitous trope of the mediaeval, Eurocentric, predominantly White, cisheterosexual, male-centric cultures and settings of these secondary worlds--often as a legacy of such earlier fantasy works as *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*--my research shows how the removal of modern technology, the Industrial Age, and postcolonial politics gives these novels (even accidentally) a retrograde slant. I contrast this with my own attempt to deconstruct and de-colonise the YA portal-quest, with readings from my own fantasy novel. In particular, I highlight the ways in which genre-savvy protagonists can point the reader towards a more critical reading of a sub-genre which often constructs worlds which omit, make invisible, or refuse to admit the existence of women, people of colour, people with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ characters.

### **Biography**

Sarah Tytler's research and writing focus on world-building in young-adult (YA) fantasy literature, specifically the socio-political implications of who and what gets left out of authors' secondary worlds; her previous research has examined the ways in which digital creative writing tools and computer coding complement each other in the classroom. Tytler's most recent project is a YA portal-quest fantasy about two young people who find themselves in a world of magic and political intrigue, and must decide which role they will play in the world's future.

---

<sup>1</sup> Farah Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2013), 12.



## Panel 3 | Literary London

### Ed Charlton (LSE)

*The Last London*: Iain Sinclair's Nativist Melancholy.

As an elegy to a fallen city, Iain Sinclair's *The Last London* is also a lament for the imaginative possibilities of a place since lost to neoliberal doxa, the fortressing of urban space, and the isolationism promised by the city's looming drift from Europe. His text marks both the culmination and the necessary end to a practice of urban narrativisation that finds in London's forgotten streets, its decaying buildings, and its anarchic inhabitants a rich source of lyrical reflection. For the London of 2016, of Brexit, of Olympicopolis is a London, he suggests, altogether lost to itself and, as such, lost to such expressive ends.

In this paper, I first draw out this sense of loss under the rubric of melancholy, finding in Sinclair's account of the contemporary city evidence of a compulsive return to those very places and people that most fervently compound his feeling of defeat. This, I take to be part of much wider schema of contemporary urban melancholy, one led by the disintegration of community, the daily insecurity of life in the city, and the relentless surges of regeneration. In Sinclair's case, however, I also aim to tie this melancholy to a potentially unedifying brand of nativism, one that routes this affective loss via an exclusive marker of belonging unavailable to the city's most recent arrivants. Despite its repeated concern with the social costs of Brexit, *The Last London* is, I argue, also a problematic requiem for a time and a place altogether separate from the contemporary reality of mass migration.

### Biography

Dr Ed Charlton is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at LSE Cities, London School of Economics. He holds a PhD in English from the University of Cambridge and was previously a Lecturer in Postcolonial and World Literatures at Queen Mary, University of London and a Mellon Fellow in Cities and the Humanities at the LSE. He is currently working on a project entitled 'Metropolitan Melancholia: Articulating Loss in the Contemporary City'.

### **Panel 3 | Literary London**

**Emilija Lipovsek (College of Tourism, Belgrade, Serbia)**

*Harare North*, South London: Spaces in Migrant Urban Narrative

This paper will put focus on the links between migrants' identities and urban spaces in the postcolonial context. *Harare North* by Brian Chikwava follows the main character after moving from Zimbabwe to the UK and portrays the discomfort and distress of those left on the margins of the society. Having no other options than to participate in the informal economy, immigrants are seeking low-paid jobs thus forming the new lower class. Modern labour arrangements continue to exploit people not any longer under colonial economies, but within global cities like London (Jacobs, 1996). Consequently, immigrants remain to represent the Other, the role that was once imposed upon colonized nations. Immigrants from former colonies have no means to move out of the poor areas of the city and they are forced to stay in squats. Therefore, colonial and postcolonial urban relations are yet to be found in London, as the city represents the centre of the Empire and the colonies can be seen as its periphery with immigrants (Varma, 2012). London as a modern and global metropolis still consists of liminal spaces inhabited by immigrants and the division between the global North and the global South is replicated and maintained within the postcolonial city.

#### **Biography**

Emilija defended her doctoral thesis 'Postcolonial London: City and Identity' at the Faculty of Philology, Belgrade University in 2015. She has participated in a number of international literary conferences with presentations on postcolonial authors, she has also published papers on their novels. In 2015 and 2017 she held seminars entitled 'Diaspora and Dystopia in Postcolonial Discourse' at the University of Bamberg, Germany. She has worked as an EFL Lecturer at the College of Tourism Belgrade, Serbia since 2005.

### Panel 3 | Literary London

#### Sofia Aatkar (Nottingham Trent)

“A street-name plaque was coloured red, gold and green over the black lettering”: Counter-mapping in Ferdinand Dennis’s *Behind the Frontlines*

If we accept that human conceptualisations of place are a construction – not concrete or collective but in fact abstract and figurative – then it follows that maps are a form of narrative, and thus it is possible to write back to the representation of place found on “official” maps. Defined by Dorothy L. Hodgson and Richard A. Schroeder as “mapping against dominant power structures” (Hodgson and Schroeder 2002, 79), the practice of counter-mapping is a means by which the information on state-endorsed maps can be contested. Although it is often used as a tool to protect the rights of indigenous peoples in disputes about land ownership, occupation, and access (Brody 1981; Peruso 1995), this paper extrapolates counter-mapping’s resistive principles and assesses how Ferdinand Dennis draws on them in his travel narrative *Behind the Frontlines: Journey into Afro-Britain* (1988).

In *Behind the Frontlines*, Dennis describes his journey around some of Britain’s major cities and is concerned with documenting the presence and location of the black communities he encounters. I will explore the ways in which his travel narrative presents a counter-hegemonic cartography of Liverpool and London as he takes care to describe the illicit spaces and invisible boundaries in the former slave port and the imperial metropolitan centre. I suggest that Dennis uses counter-mapping to topple London’s and Liverpool’s presiding, univocal history, and presents an alternative way to orientate oneself in a world that is increasingly concerned with frontiers and national identity – a foreboding prospect for racial minorities or for those with complex racial identities.

#### Biography

Sofia is an AHRC and M3C funded PhD student at Nottingham Trent University. Her thesis focuses on Caribbean-British travel writing and examines the extent to which Caribbean travel writers offer a resistance to the genre’s imperial inheritance. She is a postgraduate associate of the Centre for Travel Writing Studies and Postcolonial Studies Centre at Nottingham Trent University, and is the co-editor of the forthcoming anthology, *Caribbean Journeys* (2018).

**DayTwo | May31st**

**Panel 4A | Economies of Place: The Spatialization of Class**

**Deborah Giggle (Edinburgh Napier University)**

Angry Young Cities: Narrative, Space and Place in Alan Sillitoe's Nottingham.

Whilst Marxist-derived theories typically provide the default framework for critiques of working-class writing, the work of the 'Angry Young Men' often eludes satisfactory interpretation via these approaches. The assumption of working-class collectivism at the heart of Marxist ideology is particularly problematical where authors and texts express such an individualistic world-view.

Emphasising the importance of 'space' and 'place' in social realist texts, this presentation will explore the insights made possible by applying urban theory to the analysis of texts by the 'Angry Young Men'. Drawing on concepts outlined in Charles Baudelaire's *The Painter of Modern Life* and Georg Simmel's *The Metropolis and Mental Life*, this presentation will explore how new literary critical insights into Angry Young Men texts can be obtained by viewing them through the lens of modern urban experience.

Particular attention will be given to the protagonists of these texts, such as Alan Sillitoe's Arthur Seaton, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958), and Colin Smith, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1959). Samantha Lay argues that character and place are interconnected in texts such as these, and that 'environmental factors [are] largely deterministic of a character's fates and fortunes'. This presentation will therefore explore the role that urban theory might play in removing the ambiguities that tend to limit, blur or undermine interpretations of these texts. Finally it will propose (as a largely unexplored archetype) the figure of the working-class 'fag-end' flâneur, as an important, altogether proletarian, male gaze, inhabiting the pages of post-WW2 fiction.

**Biography**

Deborah Giggle is a postgraduate research student at Edinburgh Napier University. Her PhD research focuses on literary representations of class, and she has a particular interest in texts by socially-marginalised authors.

## DayTwo | May31st

### **Chloe Ashbridge (University of Nottingham)**

Architectures of Class: the Welfare State in Contemporary Scottish Fiction.

This paper interrogates the literary position of the post-industrial urban novel. Centred on Anthony Cartwright's state-of-the-nation-cum-Brexit text, *The Cut* (2017), I provide a timely analysis of representations of regional deindustrialised spaces within ongoing debates surrounding what Tom Nairn terms 'the break-up of Britain'. *The Cut's* critique of the restorative bind between the British nation-state and an increasingly metropolitan literary economy will form the overarching contextual focus of this paper. I examine the spatial biases of British literary production and its respective scholarship, arguing that these prejudices perpetuate structural inequality throughout the UK. In the first part of this paper, I outline the ways the text exposes devolution as a project of regional containment, rather than a vehicle for meaningful self-determination. Drawing on the novel's task of 'build[ing] a fictional bridge between the Britains that opposed each other on Referendum day', I consider how the post-industrial landscape facilitates politicised modes of experience and civic participation that simultaneously support and challenge a unitary nation state, posing pressing questions regarding London-centred Britishness at a time when the nation's fissures are becoming increasingly clear. To this end, I address three overlapping and reoccurring thematic concerns: the continuing literary legacy of de-industrialisation, the absence of adequate forms of political representation beyond the South-East of England, and the marginalisation of the urban working classes. Finally, I conclude that the turn towards the post-industrial in contemporary British fiction ultimately undermines the emancipatory potential of the urban novel in the twenty-first century.

### **Biography:**

Chloe Ashbridge is an AHRC-funded PhD Researcher in the School of English at the University of Nottingham. Her thesis focuses on contemporary Northern English fiction, examining representations of the material landscape of 'the North' and its engagement with devolution and issues of British Unionism.

### **Richard Bromhall (Nottingham Trent)**

TBC.

## Panel 4B | Talking Travel

### Tim Hannigan (University of Leicester)

'A hideous and a wicked country': Reading Travel Writers' representations of western Cornwall from within the object landscape.

Since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978, scholarly examinations of travel writing have often been preoccupied with the issue of representation, and the more censorious critiques of the genre have typically focussed on the way that travel writers handle their encounters with the "travellee" – that is, the people resident in the places the traveller passes through and writes about. But the intriguing question of how the travellee might actually experience the process of being represented in travel writing, how travel writing representations might interplay with their own senses of place and identity – and how they themselves might feel about this – has been insufficiently addressed.

In this paper I survey travel writing about Penwith, the westernmost extremity of Cornwall, 'a loosely connected appendage stuffed with the residue of a thousand stories and mythical projections' in the words of one recent travel writer (Marsden, 2014). From Richard Warner and Wilkie Collins in the nineteenth century to Philip Marsden in the twenty-first, I examine the ways travel writers have constructed a sense of physical and cultural difference in their portrayals of Penwith, creating an impression of a 'foreign' landscape occupied by a 'foreign' people.

This paper is not, however, merely a survey of the construction of difference by travellers from without: as a self-identifying Cornish person, from Penwith, I examine my own responses to these texts, seeking to determine how their discourse intersects with my own sense of place and identity, a sense which, according to Bernard Deacon, 'may indeed borrow from dominant discourses but ... cannot simply be "read off" from such discourses' (1997, 8-9). In doing so I attempt to dissect what I have termed the 'unstable emulsion of outrage and pride' that comes of being 'travel-written'.

### Biography

Tim Hannigan is currently an AHRC/Midlands3Cities-funded PhD candidate at the University of Leicester, working on a creative-critical investigation of ethical issues in contemporary travel writing based on a series of interviews with notable travel writers. He is also an experienced professional travel and history writer, and the author of several works of narrative history, including *Murder in the Hindu Kush* (2011), *Raffles and the British Invasion of Java* (2012) and *A Brief History of Indonesia* (2015).

For more information, see: <https://vpp.midlands3cities.ac.uk/display/tah30leacuk/Welcome>.

## Panel 4B | Talking Travel

### Katherine Peters (University of Florida)

Sebald's Disruptive Geographies: An Anti-Odyssey.

In August 2015 I set out to retrace W.G. Sebald's journey in *The Rings of Saturn*, a perambulatory contemplation of traumatic memory. From Lowestoft's pier I walked south along the Suffolk Coast Trail, past Southwold, through Dunwich's bell heather heath, into Orford Ness, desert-isle weapons testing site, before turning inland and ending—close to where I started—at Somerleyton Hall, in the green corridors of Morton Peto's maze. The goal was to understand the text and its landscapes from an embodied perspective, for a chapter of a dissertation on trauma and narratives of travel. The paper I would present, "Sebald's Disruptive Psychogeography: An Anti-Odyssey", has been condensed from that research. It begins with a creative introduction recounting my psychogeographic trek and concludes with a critical reading of *Rings*. Working from Adorno's critique of language in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, where his reading of *The Odyssey* reveals how rigidifying dominant discourses are used to master unknown landscapes and bodies, effacing what cannot be accounted for, I explore Sebald's *Rings* as an anti-Odyssey. In conversation with Adorno, Sebald's uncooperative Suffolk geography perpetually disrupts attempts at mastery, registering repressed content along its crumbling coast, in its shadows, mirages, blocked views, wrong turns, and unmarked paths: traumatic memory reveals itself in symptomatic spatio-temporal returns. Just as the landscape disrupts the narrator's view and movement, the tortuous textual terrain thwarts the reader's attempts at discursive mastery. The book leaves narrator and reader wandering labyrinthine psychogeographies, where metaphorical dead ends and interpretive u-turns lead, not to identificatory arrival, but to a deeper sense of why past trauma eludes us. To counteract the discursive violence responsible for the traumas he seeks to describe, Sebald's disruptive geography engenders a spatializing poetics that restores the potential of language to make new meaning, to speak of the unspeakable.

### Biography

Katherine Peters is a doctoral candidate at University of Florida, currently completing a dissertation titled "Disruptive Geographies: Trauma, Memory, and the Spatializing Discourses of Travel". Focusing on the intersection of literature, landscape and trauma, her writing and research incorporates psychogeography, travel narratives, and ecocriticism. She held a fellowship (2015-16) at the Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg's Collaborative Research Centre 1015, a humanities think-tank focusing on spatio-temporal constructions of leisure. In addition to honours for her literary criticism, Katherine won the Donald Everett Axinn award for her novel draft, *Searching for Tsarnin*.

## Panel 5A | Hydrospace

### Sam La Verdine (University of Nottingham)

Reorienting the Aesthetics of Shipwreck in *la méditerranée*: the Interobjective and Intersubjective Poetics of Francis Ponge and Abdelkebir Khatibi.

Both a noun and adjective, the Mediterranean provides a space for the exchange of meaning in the production of regional identity, 'an ancient story of disorientation and disruption that punctuates Western literary culture from Odysseus and Jonah to Prospero and Robinson Crusoe'.<sup>1</sup> However, in its Eurocentric narration, the *méridional* poetics of a Mediterranean consciousness has often only mapped the *terre* of *la méditerranée* (the middle or mother of earths). Stéphane Mallarmé read a metaphysical landscape of harmony and beauty in southern France juxtaposed in his famous 'Un coup de dés' to the sea's hosting of the desired synthesis of chance and necessity and its shipwrecked [*naufagé*] quest for the absolute. But to poetry's inherent stochasticism eluded by an absent materialism of the divine, and Paul Valéry's own gaze onto the Mediterranean ('Le Cimetière marin') inspiring a battle between consciousness and existence, a tradition of French writers later rejected Médi-facing reconciliations so as to reinforce contradictions in its materiality and mythology.

After Albert Camus' *midipensée* and Gabriel Audisio's recognition of a site of celebration *and* tragedy – and subsequently ambivalence – a post-existential poetry from both sides of the sea affirmed the complexities of orienting creative subjectivity within the Mediterranean's liminal, mutable space. Recognising contemporary implications for the shipwreck figure, this paper argues that Francis Ponge's long poem 'La Mounine, ou Notes après coup sur un ciel de Provence' modifies an elusive *méridionalité* and interobjective alienation into a materially fluid metonymy of the Mediterranean's shared phenomena. Allied with Abdelkebir Khatibi's intersubjective poetics of alterity and *aimance* inspired by the North African landscape, a comparative reading of these two poets interpreting their relation to rather than mastering of natural space shows how in poetry's analogy of difference a non-equivalent topography but simultaneously an equivalent topology can help reconfigure a fluid Mediterranean.

<sup>1</sup> Steven Mentz, < <http://stevementz.com/shipwreck-modernity-ump-blog-post/> > (2016)

### Biography

Sam La Védrine is a final-year PhD student in Comparative Literature at the University of Nottingham. His work concentrates on planetary aesthetics and ecological engagement in comparative thought within French and English poetics from the 1950s up until the current day, looking at geo-, eco- and nomadic poetics ranging from Britain, North America, the Caribbean, and France to posit an ethical aesthetics of ecological comparativism.



## Panel 5A | Hydrospace

### Dan Powell (University of Leicester)

A real imagined coastline: setting, the creative process, and how the real becomes imagined becomes real.

Seagoon: What are you doing down here?

Eccles: Everybody's got to be somewhere!

-Spike Milligan

Setting, as the inimitable Eccles points out, plays a key role in any narrative. In fiction, a well realised setting does not merely give characters a place to be, but becomes an environment that can frame and reflect the character's internal world and the thematic pulse of the narrative. For readers, it provides a solid stage upon which the players within a fiction can strut and fret their hour. A firm sense of where a story takes place is essential if meaning is to be gained from its events.

Since I began to write short-fiction in 2009, a particular setting, inspired by a real location, has emerged as the backdrop to several of my stories, both published and unpublished. The real-life coastline of Highcliffe-on-Sea, a dramatic landscape of eroded cliff-sides to the east and landscaped coastal defences to the west, became the setting of my first attempt at writing short fiction, through which I began exploring how best to employ setting within a narrative. Though this early attempt at crafting a short story remains unpublished, and rightly so, its setting has resurfaced within my writing, emerging unbidden in other more successful stories over the last eight years of my writing.

This paper will explore how, in these subsequent stories, the real Highcliffe-on-Sea has evolved into a fictionalised space within my creative work, a space both real and imagined, both similar to its physical inspiration and yet quite different. Examples from my creative practice will reveal the impact a real setting can have upon the craft of writing fiction and, in turn, the impact crafting fiction can have upon the idea of that place. In conclusion, it will be shown how this process creates a hybrid, imagined-yet-real space reflective of its author's thematic preoccupations.

### Biography

I am a Doctoral Researcher in Creative Writing at the University of Leicester, investigating the staging of closure in British short fiction between 1800-2015. My prize-winning short stories have been published in respected print journals and anthologies. *Looking Out of Broken Windows* (Salt, 2014), my debut collection, was shortlisted for the Scott Prize and longlisted for the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award and the Edge Hill Prize. An experienced facilitator of writing workshops, I have delivered sessions at writing festivals, at Writing School East Midlands, as a First Story writer-in-residence, at the Teach First Summer Institute, and at the NATE National Conference.

More details of my academic and creative work can be found here: <https://vpp.midlands3cities.ac.uk/display/dcp10leacuk/Dan+Powell>; further details about my writing practice and publications can also be found here: <https://danpowellfiction.com/>

## Panel 5A | Hydrospace

### Elizabeth O'Connor (University of Birmingham)

Landscape, Identity, and Environmental Determinism in H.D.'s Novels.

In this paper, I explore the relationship between landscape and identity in three novels of the American modernist H.D.; *Paint it Today* (1921), *Hermione* (1927), and *Bid Me to Live* (1960). In these texts, landscape becomes an identity-shaping factor for their female protagonists, as H.D. presents their environments as something that both shapes and enacts their inner lives.

Where the landscapes in H.D.'s poetry may be characterised by their imaginative qualities and evocative Hellenism, H.D.'s prose is precise in its geographies. H.D.'s poetry rarely names or evokes particular locations, but her novels construct themselves around specifics; the leafy forests of Upper Darby in Pennsylvania, the crashing tides of Point Pleasant in New Jersey, the historical artefacts built into the rocks of coastal Cornwall, and the distinctive flora of the Isles of Scilly.

The novels blur fiction and memoir as they trace H.D.'s own movements, from leaving her Pennsylvania home to the literary scene of London, the alienation and homesickness of a London-dwelling American, and her inter-war experiences of mythology and mysticism along the Southern English coast. All are concerned with the inner lives and self-actualisation of their central heroines, examining their search for artistic vocation, their romantic relationships, and exploratory sexuality. *Paint it Today* draws the identity of its heroine specifically as the natural landscape of her East-Coast American home; in each of these texts, the landscape is acutely observed as an intrinsic part of how a person may experience the physical world, and a crucial factor in their own self-actualisation.

H.D. is rarely read as a writer of landscape, yet her novels suggest a palpable link between a person's environment and their sense of self. With this study I hope to centre the significance of landscape in these texts, and signal the potential for further ecocritical readings of H.D.

### Biography

I am a third year PhD student at the University of Birmingham, researching the presence and significance of the sea and coast in the poetry and prose of H.D. My research interests are in modern poetry, modernism, ecocriticism, ecofeminism and nature-writing.

## Panel 5B | Reconfiguring Space

### **Matt Myers (University of Nottingham)**

Urban space and civil war in Tacitus' *Histories*.

This paper will consider the importance of urban spaces to the narrative of civil war in the *Histories* of the Roman historian Tacitus. Written in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, Tacitus' *Histories* chronicle the events of the year AD 69, when, following the suicide of the emperor Nero, Rome was plunged into a bloody civil war which has since come to be known as the 'year of the four emperors'. A central feature of Tacitus' narrative of this period is a series of violent spectacles in which the urban landscape emerges as a politically and religiously charged counterpoint to the immorality of the fighting taking place around it.

This paper will demonstrate how Tacitus uses sacred and historically significant urban spaces as a reminder of Rome's glorious past and in doing so encourages the reader to condemn the sacrilegious killing of Roman citizens which takes place during civil war. The paper also seeks to emphasise how Tacitus goes beyond these contrasts to depict the way in which civil war impacts upon the spaces of Rome itself. It will demonstrate how, as the narrative progresses, Rome's urban topography is itself corrupted: sites that once held religious significance now become grisly monuments to murdered emperors, the Forum is re-paved with the bodies of the defeated, and temples are repurposed as viewing galleries where the mob gather to watch the violence. This gradual transformation of the city from its traditional grandeur into a desolate battlefield is used by Tacitus to explore the all-corrupting nature of civil warfare, as both the city of Rome and its people succumb to violence and brutality and forget their venerable past.

### **Biography**

I have recently completed a PhD in the department of Classics at the University of Nottingham, where my thesis explored the relationship between, vision, space, and power in the works of the Roman historian Tacitus. Prior to this I completed an MA in Classical Literature at the University of Nottingham and a BA in Ancient History and History at the University of Leicester. My research mainly focuses on space and vision in ancient historiography, but I am also interested in how these concepts are utilised elsewhere, as well as the relationship between space and other forms of sensory perception.

## **Panel 5B | Reconfiguring Space**

### **Jennifer Caddick (University of Nottingham)**

Forging a Dialogue: The Crown, Commons, and Painted Chamber at Westminster, 1399-1484.

The Painted Chamber in the Old Palace of Westminster was once considered one of the most spectacular buildings in medieval Europe. Formerly the king's bedchamber it gained prominence as a parliamentary space in the later medieval period. By the fifteenth-century, it was the only building to be repeatedly used for the ceremony of the opening of parliament. Its destruction by fire in 1834 has left little direct evidence of its once astounding decorative paintings. It is, however, survived by four ceiling panels, copies of its paintings produced by antiquarians in the early nineteenth-century, and historical records which detail its significance.

The topic of this paper addresses a highly understudied topic – the Painted Chamber as a parliamentary space in the fifteenth-century. This paper aims to highlight the importance of this building in the first instance. Then to draw upon evidence, findings, and methodologies from the disciplines of History, History of Art, and Archaeology to argue that the Painted Chamber was a tool used by kings throughout the fifteenth-century during the openings of parliament to establish a specific dynamic between itself and parliamentary members, the Commons in particular. Within this established dynamic, a dialogue could be conducted which crossed class and regional boundaries between the crown, the lords spiritual and temporal, and the commons. This dialogue allowed parliamentary members not only to assent to the crown's wishes, but to make demands of their king and his council. Therefore, this paper will also challenge the concept of the absolute power of the king over his parliament.

### **Biography**

Jen is a first-year PhD Student in History at the University of Nottingham, supported by the AHRC-funded Midlands3Cities Doctoral Training Partnership. She focuses on late-medieval English politics and parliament, with a particular interest in the workings of fifteenth-century systems of government. Her thesis is entitled "The Distribution of Royal Patronage to the Gentry in the Minority of Henry VI, 1422-1437".

## Panel 5B | Reconfiguring Space

### Joanna Wilson-Scott (University of Leicester)

The Anthropocene Comes Home: Space, Place, and the Domestic Effects of Climate Change in Contemporary Literature.

This proposed paper explores representations of domestic spaces and places in climate fiction, questioning how the Anthropocene home is constructed in contemporary literature. In so doing, the work responds to Adam Trexler's assertion that the Anthropocene involves a "cultural transformation" (2015: 5), not simply a geographic, atmospheric, or environmental one. This paper shifts the focus away from the manner in which climate change impacts the environment and concentrates instead on the tangible effect it has within a domestic context, and how it shapes familial places and private spaces. Often overlooked in favour of disaster narratives, the home is a powerful way of reconceptualising the effects of the Anthropocene and comprehending the way in which they are increasingly impacting our lives.

As narratives of place and space, literary representations of the Anthropocene home offer a way to understand how climate change is shaping fiction, and equally how fiction shapes our understanding of climate change. The proposed paper offers a comparative analysis of Andrew McGahan's *The White Earth* (2004) and Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior* (2012). As such, the work explores northern and southern hemispheric texts on the domestic effects of climate change, because at its core my research aims to reflect and acknowledge that the effects of the Anthropocene are a pressing global concern that are not restricted to one cultural or geographical framework, and that the negative effects can be literally and metaphorically brought home, wherever that may be. The paper is grounded in interdisciplinary foundations, informed as it is by anthropology, cultural geography, and environmental studies, but at its essence it uses literary texts to explore how climate change shapes the way we negotiate our relationship with intimate and personal spaces and places in the Anthropocene, and equally how the domestic sphere can bring climate change more sharply into focus.

### Biography

Joanna Wilson-Scott received her doctorate from the University of Leicester earlier this year, and now teaches literature at the University of Gloucester. Prior to this, her background was in comparative literature and social anthropology, with masters degrees from University College London in both disciplines. These combine to inform her current research on narratives of place, climate fiction, the Anthropocene, domesticity, and violence.

## 6A | Borders and Boundaries

### **Peter Haysom (University of Nottingham)**

Lamenting the end of a placeless margin: rural decay and the threat of modern urban (?) capitalism in José Saramago's *A Caverna*

Modern industrial capitalism, particularly in the context of globalisation, is often associated with the destruction of traditional rural communities through urban development. These tensions and concerns appear frequently in the work of Nobel Prize-winning Portuguese novelist José Saramago (1922-2010), an open Communist Party member and fierce critic of transnational structures such as the European Union (Eberstadt 2007). In addition, Saramago had a close personal association to rural society, due to his family background. His 2000 novel *A Caverna* [The Cave] portrays the relationship of a pottery maker's family in a rural periphery to a gigantic shopping hub – literally named “The Centre” – and the economic and personal loss caused to local community by the increasing dominance of an urban settlement. This dynamic between geographical margin and centre certainly draws attention to the divide between “globalisation and particularism” (Rollason 2004) in modern Portugal. Indeed, Portugal's political and social landscape changed exponentially between 1974 and 2000, particularly after joining the European Community in 1986. As in other Western nations, its exposure to modern globalisation has contributed towards “fading rural communities” (Hatton 2011), as commercial urban centres have increasingly monopolised economic and social activity at the expense of traditional livelihoods and settlements. Nevertheless, Saramago's deliberate omission of topographical and temporal markers in *A Caverna* invites a broader reading of this text as a critique of industrial capitalist processes that belie their immediate historical and localised contexts. Drawing upon the British Marxist cultural theorist Raymond Williams's *The Country and the City* (1973), which considers the historical developments of rural and urban societies, and challenges the view of rural decline as an inherently modern phenomenon, this paper will consider this novel as a geographically and historically ambiguous exposition of capitalism's impact on “margin” and “centre”, and of the symbiotic relationship between these two entities.

### **Biography**

Peter Haysom is a PhD Candidate in Portuguese & Lusophone Studies at the University of Nottingham, with an award from the Midlands3Cities AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership. His research areas include regionalism, regional identity, geocriticism and cultural geography in 20th Century Portuguese fiction, as evidenced by his article “‘Obsessiva eternidade’: o fim do mundo rural, segundo Aquilino Ribeiro”, in *Materiais para o Fim do Mundo 7* (2017). He has also presented a paper considering relations between Portuguese literature and local community at the international conference *Geopoetics 2017 International Conference: Literary Spaces and Critical Territories* (University of Porto, 2017)

## Panel 6A | Borders and Boundaries

### Sam Wiseman (University of Erfurt)

'The Broken Edge of England': Metropolitan Perspectives and Rural Gothic Landscapes in Edith Nesbit's Ghost Stories

This article considers the role of English rural landscape and place in the ghost stories of Edith Nesbit, particularly focusing upon how those narratives explore the entwinement or collision of metropolitan modernity with the traditions, folklore and topography of the countryside. I note what Raymond Williams calls the 'centrality of change, and of the complications of change' in Thomas Hardy's Wessex also provides us with a foundation upon which to interpret the urban-rural interplay in Nesbit's stories. These dynamics play out in different ways: 'Man-Size in Marble' (1893), for example, presents a rural landscape mediated by the romanticized metropolitan perspectives of its protagonist and his wife, establishing a naïve view of the countryside which can then be contrasted with a mysterious latent threat. Nesbit's story evokes a seductive pastoral environment which escalates, as the story progresses, into a dreamlike space—one in which borders dissolve, and the landscape stirs to animistic life. The story also explores the modernist concern with the instability of the self by blurring the boundaries between narrator and environment, in ways that emphasize their Gothic effects. 'The Violet Car' (1910) in some ways inverts the dynamics of 'Man-Size in Marble', by presenting an idyllic rural space that is Gothicized by the intrusion of a mechanized modernity blind to local relationships and traditions, which threatens to render humanity as automata. But the landscape here is also imbued with a sense of supernatural resistance, and Nesbit's story suggests that even as modernity and technology seek to illuminate such marginal spaces, they inadvertently create new spaces of obscurity: as Anne Williams puts it, the 'very word "Enlightenment" creates a necessity for darkness'. In different ways, then, Nesbit uses these apparently bucolic, pastoral landscapes to dramatize the cultural, social and technological shifts of the period.

### Biography

Sam Wiseman completed his AHRC-funded PhD in English Literature at the University of Glasgow in 2013. The project, which focuses upon how travel and technology changed modernist depictions of the English landscape, was published by Clemson University Press in 2015 as *The Reimagining of Place in English Modernism*. He has also published articles on Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, John Cowper Powys, Mary Butts, M.R. James and Arthur Machen, among others, and edited the collection *Assembling Identities* (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2014). Sam is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Erfurt, Germany, working on *Locating the Gothic in British Modernity*.

## Panel 6A | Borders and Boundaries

### **Polly Atkin (Independent Scholar)**

We must learn to speak of what we are made of: writing at the intersection of pathography and place

In her essay 'Pathologies' Kathleen Jamie describes the inner spaces of the body as 'the unseen landscapes within' – one of the final frontiers – 'strange new shores' enfolded within us all. In this paper I will read and discuss a selection of my own poems which explore how illness and disability alter not only the ways in which we are able to access and experience landscapes, but changes the landscapes we find.

At the geographical centre of much of my writing is the English Lake District. This is a landscape silted up with historical cultural references, but as my work seeks to show, it is also a breathing, working, constantly evolving contemporary sphere, connected to global circuits of production, commerce, mobility and creativity. It is also a landscape associated with certain kinds of outdoor activities, and much writing about the Lake District focuses on the more adventurous or ambitious of these. Through my experience of chronic illness, I have been experimenting with the potential of poetry to encourage a shift from a relatively standardised notion of place (geographical locations; the world around us) to a wider discussion about where or how we might experience location (or dislocation).

The discussion will chart various attempts to build a sympathetic relationship with our own inner wildernesses, asking questions we are more familiar with asking of our relationship with the external environment: how can we move towards sustainable living? how do we reconcile function with aesthetics? how can we limit the ecological damage of intervention? More importantly, how can we learn to speak of what we are made of? They will also conversely explore how our relationship with the places around us – particularly with 'wild' landscapes such as the Cumbrian fells – is altered by changing inner ecologies.

### **Biography:**

Polly Atkin lives in Cumbria. Her first poetry collection, *Basic Nest Architecture*, was published by Seren in 2017, following pamphlets *bone song* (Aussteiger, 2008) (shortlisted for the Michael Marks Pamphlet Award, 2009) and *Shadow Dispatches* (Seren, 2013) (Mslexia Pamphlet Prize winner, 2012). She taught English and Creative Writing at Lancaster University, and the Universities of Strathclyde and Cumbria. She is interested in site-specific work, and where poetry might intersect with Disability Studies. She is a Penguin Random House *Write Now* mentee, for a forthcoming non-fiction book exploring place and chronic illness.



## Panel 6B | The Cultural Memory of Place

### James Aitcheson (University of Nottingham)

Space, place and identity in historical fiction.

Our relationships with the places we inhabit have evolved considerably over the centuries. What we understand by 'England' and 'English', 'Britain' and 'British', for example, is not what people living in these isles one thousand years ago would have understood by the same labels. Evoking a proper sense of place in historical fiction is therefore about more than simply describing the right *mis-en-scene*: it also involves understanding and entering into a worldview appropriate to the period in question, and communicating that worldview to a modern lay reader in an intelligible and accessible way. As a practising novelist currently in the first year of my PhD in Creative Writing exploring how the Middle Ages are represented in modern fiction, these issues are central to my work.

In this paper I will explore what strategies are available to the novelist in communicating historical attitudes to space, place and identity. Some of these strategies are linguistic or stylistic and are employed during the composition of the work itself, such as the use of dialect words and contemporary place-names. Others relate to the publication process: the inclusion of illustrative maps, for example, and other paratextual elements into which the author might or might not have a significant input. I will make particular reference to the period in which I specialise – early medieval England – and draw upon examples from the relevant contemporary sources as well as from my own creative work (both published and in progress), and from the novels of others. In comparing the medieval sources with the modern treatments, I will identify potential problems with how the Middle Ages are represented.

The paper may include a short reading from my creative work to illustrate some of the themes under discussion.

### Biography

James Aitcheson is the author of four novels set in medieval England and published in the UK, the US, Germany and the Czech Republic. His latest title, *The Harrowing*, was published by Quercus in 2016 and named by *The Times* as a Book of the Month. He is currently working on his fifth novel while studying for his PhD in Creative Writing at the University of Nottingham. His research examines the representation of the Middle Ages in fiction, with a particular focus on the fantastical and the supernatural, and is funded by the Midlands3Cities DTP.

## **Panel 6B | The Cultural Memory of Place**

### **Jamie Smith (University of Nottingham)**

'Burning contempt for this place': Reversing memories of locations with diplomatic submissions

On June 21<sup>st</sup> 1940, French General Huntzinger met German representatives to negotiate his country's surrender from World War II. It was an emotionally charged scene, made harder for the Frenchman by the meeting's location. The Germans had insisted the French surrender in the same railcar, in the Compiègne Forest, where they had signed the armistice to end World War I. Whilst the French were distraught, for Adolf Hitler this was his finest hour. W L Shirer, a journalist at the event, described Hitler as having an 'inner joy at being present at this great reversal of fate'.

In this presentation I will explore this surrender in relation to two comparable diplomatic case studies: The German signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, and Tiridates I of Armenia's submission to the Romans in AD. 62. All three events share a common storyline. Firstly, one group was defeated by another at a particular site. Next, the conflict resumed, and the formerly vanquished side emerged victorious. Finally, the new victors forced their enemy to submit at the earlier defeat's location. Evidently, the initial defeats caused the losing parties to develop painful cultural memories tied to specific locations. Consequently, they endeavoured to reverse these memories by converting the sites from spaces of defeat to ones of victory.

My purpose is twofold. Firstly, to investigate the significance of diplomatic locations. Whilst historians have considered how sites, like Vienna, are reused for diplomacy due to people's memory of them as places of friendly interactions, less has been said on the use of locations connected with trauma and pain. Secondly, to explore, not just the association between a space and a distressing memory, but how a group can break or alter this connection.

### **Biography**

Jamie Smith is a PhD History student at the University of Nottingham, where he is studying diplomacy between medieval British kings.

Prior to this, he completed his BA and MA degrees at Cardiff University. There, as well as historical diplomacy, he investigated Anglo-Saxon identity, Victorian approaches to the middle ages and medieval slavery.

When he is not studying history he enjoys running, travelling and boring people about history.

## Panel 6B | The Cultural Memory of Place

### Sophie Campbell (University of Nottingham)

Sites of Memory as Palimpsests?: Bristol's Statue of Edward Colston.

Public spaces are dominated by historical commemorations of individuals whose complicated pasts are increasingly being publicly discussed, and this paper is concerned with the mnemonic power of space. Jay Winter, in his work on postcolonial sites of memory, argues that 'each and every one is a palimpsest'. This draws upon Pierre Nora's work on *lieux de mémoire* and Michel de Certeau's claim that 'place is a palimpsest'. I will explore this idea – that sites of memory are not fixed but are malleable palimpsests – with particular reference to the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol and the debate and artistic interventions that have surrounded it in recent years. Colston (1636-1721) is a widely commemorated philanthropist in Bristol who also made his fortune from the Transatlantic Slave Trade. A statue was erected in his honour in 1895, but recently the statue has become a 'symbolic lightning rod' for debates about race, history and public memory. In the wider climate of the Confederate statues controversy and Rhodes Must Fall, I will discuss whether the meanings of these statues are 'set in stone' or mutable. If it is true that 'objects do not speak for themselves', and that 'memory makers' and 'memory consumers' shape how they are interpreted, then it may be possible to change the narrative of Colston in Bristol without removing his statue, and in fact this may already be happening.

### Biography

After achieving a First in my BA (Hons) in History at Lancaster University, I undertook a MA in Art Galleries and Museum Studies, from 2015 to 2016 at the University of Leeds, in which I achieved a Distinction. From 2016 to 2017 I worked in a small financial services business, while applying for my PhD. In October 2017 I began my AHRC funded doctoral research at Nottingham, which looks at collective remembrance, in the 2010s, of Transatlantic Slavery in Britain and, its former colonies, in the Caribbean and the United States.

## Panel 7 | Creating a Nation: Landscape, Heritage and Englishness

### **Erika Hughes (University of Portsmouth)**

Brexit Through the Gift Shop: Anxiety and the Commercialization of English Heritage.

At the new visitors' complex in Stonehenge, a bus awaits to take visitors on the mile journey to the ancient site. Upon returning, all visitors are made to disembark the bus (outside) and follow a snaking path made of barrier ribbons (much like those that greet you at airport border control) into the gift shop, where one finds all manner of 'Best of British' goods and Stonehenge-exclusive special editions by top British companies. Dover Castle, the largest castle in England and a major medieval heritage site, was home to a major British military defense initiative during WWII. Behind the famous coastal cliffs lies a maze of tunnels that served as shelter, hospital, and strategic planning site. Further down the hillside tunnels sits a gift shop with myriad reproductions of wartime propaganda posters - with slogans that discourage gossip among male colleagues and encourage the women of Britain to go into the factories - printed on all manner of household items including tea towels, coffee mugs, and refrigerator magnets. In this presentation I examine how anxieties about English national identity are performed in the material gift shop cultures of Stonehenge and Dover Castle, the two most famous sites managed by registered charity English Heritage. In the words of Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "so many attractions are really performances, cultural performances." The gift shops at Stonehenge and Dover Castle are sites of tactile engagement with the marketing of cultural heritage. As the United Kingdom is suspended in a state of mid-Brexit insecurity, cultural sites such as Stonehenge and Dover Castle are taking on new significance for English Britons who struggle to define their relationship to their country, their nation, and Europe.

### **Biography**

Erika Hughes is Senior Lecturer in Drama and Performance at the University of Portsmouth. Her written work has appeared in *Theatre Topics*, *Performance Research*, *Youth Theatre Journal*, *Theatre Journal*, and a number of other volumes. Her directing work has been seen on stages in Germany, the United States, Israel, and Pakistan

## **Panel 7 | Creating a Nation: Landscape, Heritage and Englishness**

### **Faye Shortland (University of Birmingham)**

Narrating the Lake District: An Ethnographic Study.

My research focuses on the ontology and experience of cultural landscapes; my case study is the Lake District National Park in England. I aim to explore how different embodied experiences of the landscape can translate into feasible policy suggestions.

Focusing on the newly inscribed UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Lake District National Park, I will discuss my proposed methodology for my ethnographic fieldwork. I will focus on discussing human-environment relations, the notion of 'living heritage' and embodied experiences of different stakeholder groups within the Lake District National Park. I will primarily be focusing on the farming community within my research and be conducting an extended period of ethnographic research (1-year) with this community. I will be extremely appreciative of feedback regarding my proposed methodology and the ways in which I can capture these embodied experiences with the landscape (photography, walking interviews, participant observation).

I will discuss the work of Tim Ingold and John Wylie, with particular reference to walking ethnographies and what these can offer my fieldwork. This methodology offers me scope for narrating my own experiences within this landscape and exploring how politics, economics and socio-cultural factors can influence the way in which the landscape is experienced. As well as narrating my own experiences in the field, this methodology gives me the opportunity to experience the landscape with people who live and work within it on a daily basis. It will enable me to understand the intricacy of their human-environment relationships.

I will welcome any comments on my proposed research method and be open to discussions concerning embodiment, human-environment relations and narrating a sense of place in a changing world.

### **Biography**

I am a first year Human Geography PhD student in the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Birmingham, funded by the M3C AHRC DTP. My PhD explores the ontology and experience of cultural landscapes in the English Lake District and draws conceptually from work in both Geography and Anthropology. I completed my undergraduate degree in Geography at the University of Birmingham and then my MA in Socio-Cultural Anthropology at Durham University. These two disciplines complement one another within my research and have allowed me to develop my theoretical and methodological skills set.

## Panel 7 | Creating a Nation: Landscape, Heritage and Englishness

### **Gemma Edwards (University of Nottingham)**

Touring Jez Butterworth's *Jerusalem*: 'Here and Now'.

The rural as both theme and site of performance has been repeatedly marginalised in theatre scholarship; theatrical rural England largely remains a cultural construct allegorised by urban outsiders. Jo Robinson's *Theatre and the Rural* (2016) calls for a new focus on work that is about and sited in rural spaces: this paper draws on my doctoral research project which seeks to address this critical imbalance. Here, I will focus on one play: Jez Butterworth's *Jerusalem*. Although *Jerusalem* offers a complex depiction of rural England in our contemporary socio-political milieu, I argue that this nuanced representation has been simplified in the play's reception by both theatre reviewers and scholars. Rural England in *Jerusalem* is read as constituting a national iconography (Rabey, 2015), a mythological dream space (Kingsnorth, 2010), an antidote to globalisation (Harpin, 2014; Balestrei, 2015), and a place where urban audiences can fleetingly escape their everyday reality and indulge in the Dionysian realm (Monbiot, 2013); it is fundamentally symbolic and is always in a dialectic with the urban. Although these readings provide productive lenses through which to read the play, the English rural is scarcely acknowledged as existing outside of these symbolic dimensions. Combining spatial theory and performance analysis, this paper aims to remedy the way in which rural space has been appropriated in the play's reception by focusing on The Common Players Theatre Company's *New Jerusalem* project (2014) which took *Jerusalem* back to the rural West Country communities in which the play is set. Through this analysis, I will propose that this shift to conceiving of English rural space through a local frame can offer alternative views of this freighted cultural landscape.

### **Biography**

Gemma Edwards is a doctoral researcher in the School of English at The University of Nottingham and is funded by the Midlands3Cities/AHRC DTP. Her research interests focus on performance, place and spatiality and her PhD will examine the representation and reception of the English rural in contemporary theatre. She is also one of the coordinators for the Landscape, Space and Place Reading Group, an inter-institutional and interdisciplinary group which is held at the University of Nottingham each month.