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**Performing Fantastika
Lancaster University, UK**

Friday, April 28th

9:00am – 9:40am – Registration
9:40am – 9:50am – Welcome Address
9:50am – 10:50am – Session 1
11:00am – 12:00pm – Session 2A & 2B
12:00pm – 1:00pm – Lunch
1:00pm – 2:10pm – Keynote: Eddie Robson
2:20pm – 3:20pm – Session 3A & 3B
3:30pm – 4:50pm – Session 4A & 4B
7:00pm onward – Conference Dinner

Saturday, April 29th

10:00am – 11:10am – Keynote: Catherine Spooner
11:20am – 12:20pm – Session 5A & 5B
12:20pm – 1:30pm – Lunch
1:30pm – 2:50pm – Session 6A & 6B
3:00pm – 4:10pm – Keynote: Tajinder Hayer
4:20pm – 5:00pm – *Fantastika Journal* Launch (champagne toast)

See below for abstracts and bionotes.

Session 1: Theatres of History (Friday, 9:50am-10:50am)

- Nick Hubble, Brunel University London, UK, “Performing Gender in Mary Gentle’s *Alternative Histories*”
- Lorna Fitzsimmons, California State University, Dominguez Hills, USA, “Contemporary Parody of Corelli’s *The Sorrows of Satan*”

Session 2A: Gender in Martin’s *Song of Ice and Fire*/*Game of Thrones* (Friday, 11:00am-12:00pm)

- Tania Evans, Australian National University, Australia, “Some knights are dark and full of terror: Monstrous Masculine Violence in *A Song of Ice and Fire* and *Game of Thrones*”
- Adele Hannon, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland, ‘You Know Nothing Jon Snow: Transgressing the Gendered Body in Areas of Motherhood, Marriage and Maturity in *A Game of Thrones*’

Session 2B: Gendered Gothic Bodies (Friday, 11:00am-12:00pm)

- Donna Mitchell, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland, “Androgyne, Woman-Doll Dyad, Frozen Charlotte: Corporeal Intersectionality in the Gothic Doll”
- Jade Dillon, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland, “Locating Alice – The Gendered Body of Identity within Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and Tim Burton’s Adaptation”



Session 3A: Music of the Spheres (Friday, 2:20pm-3:20pm)

- Brian Baker, Lancaster University, UK, "Walking the Tightrope: Janelle Monáe's Cyborg Suites"
- John Sharples, Lancaster, UK, "Sounds from the Sky: Investigating Sound in Cultural Images of the A-Bomb, Flying Saucer, and Sputnik, 1945-58"

Session 3B: Writing Fantastika (Friday, 2:20pm-3:20pm)

- Kevan Manwaring, University of Leicester, UK, "Walking Between Worlds: Using Practice-Based Research in Writing Fantasy Fiction"
- Kevin McVeigh, Lancaster, UK, "'Sing my song, dance my struggle': Performance as Truth-Telling in Andrea Hairston's SFF Writing"

Session 4A: Spectacles and Spectators (Friday, 3:30pm-4:50pm)

- Charul (Chuckie) Palmer-Patel, Lancaster University, UK, "Performing Wizardry: The Theatricality of Magic as Ritual Performance"
- Helga Luthersdottir, University College London, UK, "Passing the Mantle: On Costume, Performance, and Prominence Among Superheroes."
- Madelon Hoedt, University of South Wales, UK "Acting Out: The Terrors of Fantastika in Performance"

Session 4B: Angela Carter & Fairy Tales (Friday, 3:30pm-4:50pm)

- Inés G. Labarta, Lancaster University, UK, "Is it such a bad thing to become like me? Constructing Gender Fluid Characters"
- Taylor Driggers, University of Glasgow, UK, "Faith in Feathered Floozies: Fantastical Desert Harlots in the Fiction of Angela Carter"
- Miriam Walsh, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland, "The Female Commodity: An Exploration of the Demonisation of Female Curiosity in Charles Perrault's *Bluebeard*"

Session 5A: The Dead Among Us (Saturday, 11:20am-12:20pm)

- Stephen Curtis, Lancaster University, UK, "Zombie-ing Human: Performing Normality From Beyond the Grave"
- Chris Hussey, University of Cambridge, UK, "'When we die, even if you plant us, nothing grows': Exploring Bodies of the Human and Xenos in Orson Scott Card's *Ender Saga*"

Session 5B: Gender Fluidity in Visual Performances (Saturday, 11:20am-12:20pm)

- Danielle S Girard, Lancaster University, UK, "'Passing' as Spock: The Vulcan/Human Body"
- Thomas Brassington, Cardiff, UK "'Glamour, Filth, Horror': Drag and the Gothic in The Boulet Brothers' *Dragula: Search for the World's First Drag Supermonster*"

Session 6A: Performing Fantastika on Screen (Saturday, 1:30pm-2:50pm)

- Stuart Lindsay, University of Stirling, UK, “Spectatorship as Performance: Simulations of the 1980s in Two Gothic Television Dramas – *Stranger Things* (2016) and *Black Mirror*’s ‘San Junipero’ (2016)”
- Declan Lloyd, Lancaster University, UK, “Performing Consciousness in *Westworld*: Julian Jaynes and the Ascension to the Human”
- Alison Tedman, Buckinghamshire New University, UK, “Performing the Virtual in Contemporary Non-Virtual Fantasy and Its Virtual Transmedia”

Session 6B: Science Fiction Theatre (Saturday, 1:30pm-2:50pm)

- Beth Cortese, Lancaster University, UK, “Imagining Worlds: Performing Fantastika in Seventeenth Century Drama”
- Ian Farnell, University of Warwick, UK, “Everything Bad is Real: Science Fiction and Fantasy in Alistair McDowall’s *Pomona* and *X*”
- Christina Scholz, University of Graz, Austria, “Mirza, Butler & Miéville’s *Deep State*: Hybrid Art Forms as Theatre of the Future and/or the Future of Theatre?”

Abstracts and Bionotes

Session 1: Theatres of History (Friday, 9:50am-10:50am)

- Nick Hubble, Brunel University London, UK, “Performing Gender in Mary Gentle’s *Alternative Histories*”

Abstract: Mary Gentle’s novels *Ash* (1999), *1610: A Sundial in a Grave* (2003), and *Ilario* (2006) feature a range of gender performances in alternate versions of European history. For example, in *Ash*, set in the 15th Century, Floria del Guiz passes as a male surgeon, Florian, in a company of mercenaries, where her ‘womanising’ goes unremarked, but when the plot takes her back to her native Burgundy, she successfully kills a mythical White Hart in a hunt through a fantasy wild wood and so succeeds to the Ducal throne. The eponymous hero of *Ilario*, set in the same ‘first history’, is a ‘hermaphrodite’ who during the course of the novel marries as both bride and groom and also gives birth. In *1610*, the brilliant swordsman and duellist Valentin Rochefort finds himself locked in to an overpowering sexual desire to be humiliated by his young rival, Dariole, who is actually a woman in disguise. Rochefort subsequently finds himself foiling a plot to kill King James I of England while cross-dressed as Clio, the muse of history.

Gentle interweaves the scientific and philosophical theme of the relationship between probability and reality into the gender performances of her protagonists. In *Ilario*, the statement ‘It’s all about perception! And perception is what makes reality’ (441) functions as a factual statement derived from post Heisenberg science. The plot of *Ash* turns on how a spectrum of possible outcomes coalesces into one human-experienced reality and specifically on how the existence of the universe (or the ‘Real’) depends on striking a balance of reality with deliberately manipulated quantum events (or magic). In Gentle’s fiction, balances are struck between realists, such as Rochefort and characters with the capacity for radical indeterminacy, such as Dariole. This paper will argue that Gentle demonstrates how

performance is not superficial but the determining factor in our concepts of history and normative reality.

Bionote: Dr Nick Hubble is Reader in English at Brunel University London. Nick is the co-editor of *The Science Fiction Handbook* (2013) and *The Science Fiction of Iain M. Banks* (forthcoming, 2017), as well as the author of articles and reviews in *Extrapolation*, *Foundation*, *Vector*, *Strange Horizons* and *The Los Angeles Review of Books*.

- Lorna Fitzsimmons, California State University, Dominguez Hills, USA, “Contemporary Parody of Corelli’s *The Sorrows of Satan*”

Abstract: not available

Bionote: Lorna Fitzsimmons is Professor of Humanities at California State University, Dominguez Hills, in Los Angeles. She has research interests in studies in literature, film and media, music, performance, the history of ideas, ecocriticism, cognitive studies, medical humanities, gender, and critical race studies. She is the author, editor, co-editor, or ghostwriter of 14 books.

Session 2A: Gender in Martin’s *Song of Ice and Fire/Game of Thrones* (Friday, 11:00am-12:00pm)

- Tania Evans, Australian National University, Australia, “‘Some knights are dark and full of terror’: Monstrous Masculine Violence in *A Song of Ice and Fire* and *Game of Thrones*”

Abstract: The mainstream media has vehemently problematised the fantasy genre’s violence in recent years, particularly in George R. R. Martin’s phenomenally popular fantasy series *A Song of Ice and Fire* and its television adaptation *Game of Thrones*. Yet fantasy scholars have rarely considered how gendered violence operates in non-realist texts, despite growing interest in how gender and sexuality are constructed in fantasy fiction. Given that *A Song of Ice and Fire* and *Game of Thrones* have achieved widespread popularity among diverse audiences and unflinchingly include violence, their construction of masculine violence may shift the foundations of contemporary Western masculinity. In this paper I argue that audiences are invited to critique violent hegemonic masculine norms because violent characters in the series are positioned as monstrous through fantasy conventions. I draw on Judith Butler’s work on gender performativity and Raewyn Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity to analyse two of the series’ most violent characters, Ramsay Bolton and Gregor ‘the Mountain’ Clegane. In so doing I demonstrate that the series’ depiction of violence and its unique manipulation of fantasy genre conventions may be utilised to address destructive masculine norms in Western culture.

Bionote: Tania Evans is a PhD candidate at the Australian National University. Her doctoral project investigates masculinities in George R. R. Martin’s fantasy series *A Song of Ice and Fire* and its television adaptation, *Game of Thrones*. She has also published several papers on masculinity in young adult fiction.

- Adele Hannon, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland, “You Know Nothing Jon Snow’: Transgressing the Gendered Body in Areas of Motherhood, Marriage and Maturity in *A Game of Thrones*”

Abstract: Delving into more hybrid notions of sexual identity, literature now blurs the male/female binary whereby dominant conventions concerning gender become destabilised. Interrupting the repetitive performance of gender, man not only allows the female to speak but transcends the binary further by embodying the feminine voice. Where cross-gendered narratives promote the process of transgression, the male author allows woman to operate outside her given role, challenging the heteronormative associations of the gendered body. Through an analysis of *A Game of Thrones*, the first in the series *A Song of Ice and Fire*, written by George R. R. Martin, this paper will evaluate how the contemporary male author constructs the female experience outside her biological inheritance. Deconstructing the female myth, fantasy-fiction illustrates a performativity of gender that is more subversive. Arya Stark, for example, demonstrates a blending of gender codes and becomes an embodiment of the hybrid identity- ‘female masculinity’. Furthermore, Martin’s observations on marriage, maturity and motherhood reflect on women’s efforts in transcending their expected roles in an attempt to escape the dismal world they are captives of. Challenging the hegemonic gendered body, the performance of Cersei Lannister and Catelyn Stark within warfare politics positions them outside the stereotypical prototypes of lover, child-bearer and domestic matron once the bonds of marriage are broken. This rebuttal of female expectation will also be investigated in the character of Daenerys Targaryen who utilises modes of male oppression to her advantage, whereby her body acts as a tool to exploit men for personal gain. Breaking the chain of repetition in habituated conventions and ‘performativity’, popular culture transgresses such ideological implications through the creation of dissident female characters who exude strong agency. Martin, through the multi-narrative voice, grants the female a weapon of strength and resilience in which she performs alternative identities, that allows her to cast off the shackles of her rigid typecast.

Bionote: Adele Hannon is a PhD student at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick, Ireland. Her current field placement is in Mary Immaculate College as a departmental assistant in the Department of English Language and Literature. She is interested in gender studies, the gendered body, popular culture, anamorphic perspective, psychoanalysis, and deconstruction.

Session 2B: Gendered Gothic Bodies (Friday, 11:00am-12:00pm)

- Donna Mitchell, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland, “Androgyne, Woman-Doll Dyad, Frozen Charlotte: Corporeal Intersectionality in the Gothic Doll”

Abstract: This paper will use a doll motif to consider how the female body is performed and perceived in the Gothic narrative. More specifically, it will dissect and analyse the character of Claudia in Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) in relation to the various aspects

of her identity as an androgyne, a woman-doll dyad, and a 'frozen charlotte' (a blend of corpse and porcelain doll).

As a vampire child whose doll-like façade encompasses the ominous silence that would prescribe all subsequent Rician heroines, Claudia possesses a complex and multifaceted identity which she hides beneath a mask of innocence. The steady progression of her psychological maturity despite her fixed childlike physique reveals her potential to become a double of her vampire father, Lestat. The temporary unification of their identities will therefore be considered through Freud's theory of doubling as a form of 'othering', which in this case, defines Claudia as an androgyne.

The second part of my analysis relates to Claudia's status as a woman-doll dyad; it will explore how the disharmony that exists between her inner and outer forms defines her body as a site of woman and doll intersectionality. Her obsession with and later destruction of her vast doll collection will be read as a foreshadowing of her eventual demise through decapitation and failed reassemblage.

The final part of my analysis will discuss Claudia's status as a 'frozen charlotte' doll. In order to do so, the unification of corpse and doll in Rice's novel will be connected to the recent (2011) real-life case of Russian historian, Antoly Moskvina's exhumation and mummification of young girls. The various identities that Claudia exemplifies in this text will therefore illustrate the presence of corporeal intersectionality in the Gothic doll.

Bionote: Donna Mitchell is a Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow in English in Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick and Co-Editor of *Fantastika Journal*. Her latest research uses the figure of the doll to examine female identity in Gothic narratives. She is currently writing her first monograph, entitled *The Gothic Doll*, for Palgrave Macmillan. Her work can be tracked here: www.ondollsanddemons.com.

- Jade Dillon, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland, "Locating Alice – The Gendered Body of Identity within Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and Tim Burton's Adaptation"

Abstract: Through the alterity and imagination of Children's Literature, issues of ideological implications and socio-normative discourse are transgressed to formulate an authentic, psychoanalytical deconstruction of identity within the protagonist. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) exudes a wondrous facet of female identity, agency, and gender ideology. Noticeably, Carroll's novel is the foundation for many adaptations and reinventions, on both text and screen alike. Benjamin Lefebvre (2013) argues that textual translations 'lead to new and complex conversations about authorship, adaptation and fidelity' in association with the original text (Lefebvre, 2013, p. 1). This is most evident in the film adaptations associated with *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, in particular Tim Burton's 2010 gothic adaptation. While the adaptations derive from the textual basis of the novels, these adaptive films add a spectrum of originality in their design, thus crediting themselves as something new in terms of authorship. Indeed, the numerous adaptations of the Alice stories are cinematically appropriated to combine origin and originality in order to create a justified juxtaposition of texts.

Interestingly, the female body is subject to various adaptations within the original text and Burton's film, thus creating a unity of change for Alice. The resizing of Alice's bodily form is deeply symbolic as it echoes the obsession with the imperfection of the female body in society. Therefore, Alice's physical reshaping can be analyzed within the spectrum of feminist transgression as it enhances the act of female defiance. In stark contrast to Carroll's original novel, there are strong gothic elements to the cinematic programming of Burton's work. Aesthetically, the body is presented in an authentic form which parallels the nuance of body politics in conjunction with social transgression. This paper argues how that transgression of the bodily form transcends the socio-normative limitations seen in the original novel, and will explore how the body develops in the adaptive text. Similarly, in conjunction with the genre of *Fantastika*, Burton's narrative will be used to illustrate the deconstruction of Wonderland's fantasy realm, and the anthropomorphism in association within Wonderland's physicality.

Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* enhances the original novel and expands the wonder of the Other and Gothicism within the dystopian realm of Wonderland. By definition, adaptation serves to alter a text thus allowing new authorship and creative freedom, yet Burton demonstrates deep respect and understanding of Carroll's novel. Certain cinematic aspects vary in terms of stylistic and aesthetic approach, and the framework of identity within Wonderland illustrates a facet of intertextual appropriation in relation to the gendered body.

Bionote: Jade Dillon is a Ph.D. Research Student and Departmental Assistant within the Department of English Language and Literature in Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland. Her research interests include: Children's Literature, Gender Theory, Psychoanalysis, Adaptation and Intertextuality, Film Studies, Young Adult Fiction, Illustrated and Animated Texts, Social and Political Ideology, Victorianism, Popular Culture.

Session 3A: Music of the Spheres (Friday, 2:20pm-3:20pm)

- Brian Baker, Lancaster University, UK, "Walking the Tightrope: Janelle Monáe's Cyborg Suites"

Abstract: The connection between science fiction and rock or pop is a somewhat strange one. David Bowie recurrently used space and science fiction imagery from 'Space Oddity' (1968) to *Heathen* (2002), taking in *The Man Who Fell to Earth* in the 1970s and the *Outside* album in the 1990s. Prog rock, in the 1970s, used cosmological themes and album imagery to provide thematic weight to set against symphonic instrumentation and use of synthesizers. For this paper, the legacies of Afrofuturism from the late 1960s and 1970s are more important: groups such as Sun Ra and Parliament used science-fictional imagery politically, to explore narratives of extra-terrestrial origin and exodus to explore African-American experience. The term 'Afrofuturism' was coined by Mark Dery in 1993 to characterise this form of popular cultural production and has been fruitfully explored since, not least in a special issue of *Science Fiction Studies* in 2007, edited by Mark Bould and Rone Shavers.

This paper will consider three later albums by the African-American music artist and actor Janelle Monáe, which use soul, funk, jazz and hip-hop to fashion a narrative of Cindi Mayweather, a cyborg living in the 28th century, who falls in love and is pursued by the

authorities for her transgression. These albums – *Metropolis (Suite 1)* (2007), *The ArchAndroid* (2010) and *The Electric Lady* (2013) – consist of ‘suites’, musical movements of diverse material, but are very different from the kind of ‘concept albums’ produced by rock bands in the 1970s. This paper will use work by Mark Dery, Mark Bould, and particularly Kodwo Eshun and Paul D. Miller (aka DJ Spooky, That Subliminal Kid) to conceptualise the ways in which Afrofuturism, science fiction, music of black origin and digital futures come together in Monáe’s work. Monáe, in performing Cindi Mayweather and her story, becomes a digital cyborg, a future subject who reflects contemporary African-American experience and culture. In performing the cyborg Other in a cyberpunk-influenced future music scenario, Monáe reconfigures the contemporary subject as a virtual assemblage, brought into being through transmissions of music across space (and time).

Bionote: Brian Baker is a Senior Lecturer in English and Creative Writing at Lancaster University, UK. He has published, among other things, *Masculinities in Fiction and Film* (Continuum, 2006), *Contemporary Masculinities in Fiction, Film and Television* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015) and *The Reader’s Guide to Essential Criticism: Science Fiction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), and recent articles on Brian Aldiss, Michael Bay’s *The Island*, trauma and genre in *The Tree of Life*, and on the work of Alan Garner (one of which is forthcoming in the *Fantastika* journal). He is currently making films, writing on 1960s science fiction, and starting a collaborative project on sound, music and literature.

- John Sharples, Lancaster, UK, “Sounds from the Sky: Investigating Sound in Cultural Images of the A-Bomb, Flying Saucer, and Sputnik, 1945-58”

Abstract: The atomic bomb, flying saucer, and Sputnik have been, in appearance or effect, comprehended and recognised within culture through prominent visual imagery. That is, their identities have been performed through their visual aspects. Yet, the recognition of the silhouette of a mushroom cloud, the sleek shape of an alien craft, and the silver ball of the satellite, comes with a plurality of meanings, befitting of the possessors of monstrous identities, which can be assessed in terms of other senses. This article, moving beyond the solely visual component of cultural representation, examines the manufacture of the monstrous identities of bomb, saucer, and satellite, in terms of the relationship between visual images and the sound produced by and around each object. Examining sound broadly, within varying locational and social contexts, illuminates further aspects of each object’s signification, both reinforcing the iconic visual image and providing alternative perspectives. Sound and sound-events contributed to the articulation by each object of specific cultural anxieties concerning the arrival of modernity through technology, the persistence and security of conventional structures of nation and home, and the power of the United States in a post-war, post-Nagasaki, post-Hiroshima world. Invading the minds of Americans via material culture, read about in newspapers and magazines, seen at the drive-in, or heard in songs on the radio, each entered formerly safe domestic space, becoming a site where expert opinion and accepted hierarchies of power and authority were challenged. As bright lights against darkening skies, suggestive of illumination and immolation, the domestication through sound of each within American culture can be juxtaposed with the persistent

monstrous status of each object, a monstrosity traditionally, but not exclusively, considered in visual terms.

Bionote: Dr John Sharples completed his PhD at Lancaster University in 2013. He has published on the cultural history of the chess-player, the flying saucer, and other cultural phenomena. His first book, entitled *A Cultural History of Chess-Players: Minds, Machines, and Monsters* is out soon (Manchester University Press, 2017). He welcomes feedback and communication via email and social media. Email: jjsharples@live.co.uk Twitter: @jjsharples

Session 3B: Writing Fantastika (Friday, 2:20pm-3:20pm)

- Kevan Manwaring, University of Leicester, UK, “Walking Between Worlds: Using Practice-Based Research in Writing Fantasy Fiction”

Abstract: Drawing upon extensive research into the ‘Bardic Tradition’ and experience of performing and hosting spoken word events, I will discuss how the two worlds – of the ‘spoken’ and ‘written’ – have cross-fertilized in my creative practice, and brought alive the performer-protagonist in my Creative Writing PhD novel, *The Knowing – A Fantasy*. Through digital formats, the project explores ways in which the reader ‘performs the text’ in their interaction with hypertextuality. I will discuss how, as a storyteller, performance poet, and fledgling folk-singer, I have used my creative practice to inform my prose fiction, field-testing material to a live audience. Using the case study of a ‘ballad and tale’ show called ‘The Bonnie Road’, which draws directly upon the supernatural Border Ballads of Thomas the Rhymer and Tam Lin, and my research into Scottish folk traditions, I will illustrate how it is possible to turn a novel into a ‘live lit’ experience, one which is co-created with the audience in a slightly different form every single time due to the extempore style of delivery. This ‘research through practice’ has enriched my visualisation of the novel and deepened understanding of the characters. The response from the audience, discussion generated and comments garnered have helped create a fertile feedback loop. Finally, I will discuss how *The Knowing* has attempted to push the boundaries of both form and content – finding fertile ground in the creative tension between the Actual and Imaginary, as Nathaniel Hawthorne terms it. I argue that true Fantastika lies within the negative space of these apparent extremes.

Bionote: Kevan Manwaring is a 2nd Year Creative Writing PhD candidate at the University of Leicester. His books include *The Bardic Handbook; Oxfordshire/Northamptonshire Folk Tales; Ballad Tales*. He is a Fellow of Hawthornden, The Eccles Centre (British Library) and the Higher Education Academy. He blogs and tweets as the Bardic Academic.

- Kevin McVeigh, Lancaster, UK, “‘Sing my song, dance my struggle’: Performance as Truth-Telling in Andrea Hairston’s SFF Writing”

Abstract: The principal figures, along with many peripherals, are frequently engaged in some form of performance. Many are some form of performance artist, others are playing a public role concealing the personal. In an early scene she writes “They longed to know the story behind the story.”

This brief paper aims to highlight some of the ways in which Andrea Hairston uses storytelling in performance, whether as West African griots or black theatre pioneers in Chicago or teenagers in Pittsburgh. She brings together these different approaches to show consistent truths about the African and African American experiences.

As she says:

The Griots of West Africa are musicians, oral historians, praise singers negotiating community. They stand between us and cultural amnesia. Through them we learn to hear beyond our time and understand the future.

The historical setting of *Redwood* and *Wildfire* alongside the related strands of *Will Do Magic For Small Change* assert a neglected and almost lost history of African American creativity and cultural meaning. I hope to show how performance and code playing in these stories reveal something otherwise missing in *Fantastika*. Whereas much fantasy is storied, I think the key here is that the layers of story on story Hairston applies clarify through performance rather than obscure.

Bionote: Kevin McVeigh is a long time reader and reviewer of *Fantastika*. A former chair of the British Science Fiction Association, co-editor of *Vector* - the BSFA critical journal 1989-93, a former judge for the Arthur C Clarke Award and British Fantasy Award he tends to focus on authors who aren't getting attention elsewhere.

Session 4A: Spectacles and Spectators (Friday, 3:30pm-4:50pm)

- Charul (Chuckie) Palmer-Patel, Lancaster University, UK, "Performing Wizardry: The Theatricality of Magic as Ritual Performance"

Abstract: Wizards in epic fantasy fiction are often impressive. Though they may be depicted as unassuming in the first meeting (Gandalf in J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955), Belgarath in David and Leigh Eddings's *Belgariad* series (1982-1984)), later encounters in which the wizard demonstrates an act of magic are more remarkable. Often, the first demonstration of magic is a theatrical one. The wizard uses costuming, props (a staff or wand), and even lighting or special effects to their advantage. Later productions of epic fantasy demonstrate an awareness of this theatricality embodied in the wizard character. In Joe Abercrombie's *The Blade Itself* (2006), Bayaz the First of the Magic deliberately clothes himself and the rest of his party in costuming provided by a theatre company in order to properly look the part of a wizard. In Patrick Rothfuss's *The Name of the Wind* (2007), Kvothe describes how his life began in his father's travelling theatre troupe; the lessons he learned as a child goes on to subtly inform and guide his actions later as a wizard.

These depictions of wizardry as a conscious performance hark back to the bardic and mythic roots of fantasy fiction. In Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (lectures 1835; published 1904), Carlyle suggests that the first phase of the Hero is Hero as Divine, the next as Prophet, and the third Hero as Poet. In this paper, I will argue that the wizard of fantasy fiction becomes a particular type of Hero, one which combines ritual aspects of communing with god or nature, expressed through a theatrical performance which incorporates magical language (Prophet and Poet). In essence, the wizard plays the part of the priest, one which spiritually guides the main Hero on their quest or journey while

simultaneously embodying the moral good for the audience. This paper will examine the wizard's performance in relation to this spectacle of the moral good.

Bionote: Charul (Chuckie) Palmer-Patel is completing her PhD in English Literature at Lancaster University this April (award pending corrections' approval). Her doctoral thesis uses interdisciplinary approaches to examining narrative patterns within heroic epic fantasy. She started organizing the Fantastika conferences 4 years ago at Lancaster and hopes to continue the international conference in some form once she moves back to Canada.

- Helga Luthersdottir, University College London, UK, "Passing the Mantle: On Costume, Performance, and Prominence Among Superheroes."

Abstract: Possibly the most memorable moment of *The Incredibles* (2004) is the cape monologue of Edna 'E' Mode. In the voice of Brad Bird, the semi-retired super designer emphatically lists the dangers of cape-wearing while the audience is treated to an exquisite montage of superheroes being blown-up, squashed, sucked into vortices, shredded, and incinerated, all due to their wearing of capes. 'No capes!' Edna exclaims, and the gleeful audience agrees with her.

Capes are clichés. They are impractical and antiquated remnants of times past, obsolete, outmoded and, as Edna so dramatically demonstrates, absolutely not performance enhancing. With the exception of Christopher Nolan's *Batman* (2005), superheroes seem to have little if any use for their capes, leaving these extra yards of fancy fabric to function mostly as dramatic emphasis. And yet, capes intractably remain a staple in the superhero wardrobe.

On one level, the persistence of the cape is a reminder that superheroes like themselves a little drama, as do their audience. On another, it speaks to the conservative side of the superhero genre, where tradition and convention have long ruled the day blissfully ignoring demands of practicality and performance. And then there is the level, countering all of the above arguments, where capes are not only an acceptable but a vital component of a centrally important performance, the performance of prestige.

Comparing and contrasting Thor, Superman, and the Black Panther, this talk will analyse the donning of a cape as a social performance and reinforcement of status, while exploring its origins, purpose, and developments.

Bionote: Helga is a Senior Teaching Fellow at the Department of Scandinavian Studies, UCL, where she convenes the Icelandic BA Programme and teaches courses on superheroes, Vikings, and Valkyries. Her research interests include visual representations of Norse Mythology and the Nordic and Arctic Region in popular culture, Nordic Noir, and Nordic (post)colonialisms.

- Madelon Hoedt, University of South Wales, UK "Acting Out: The Terrors of Fantastika in Performance"

Abstract: The horror genre has always been a subject of fascination, both in popular culture and in academia, and its manifestations continue to inspire monographs and papers. These

studies, however, often focus only on books and movies, whilst the genre encompasses much more: art, music, theatre and games, forms which have not had as much attention. The objective of this paper will be to move beyond this limited tradition, instead engaging with another specific form, that of *performance*, or live action, horror, i.e. the manifestations of the genre that are found in the field of performing arts. These forms range from traditional stage performances, such as Stephen Mallatratt's adaptation of *The Woman in Black*, to psychologically challenging events such as *BlackOut* and *McKamey Manor* in the United States.

It is this range of performance types which is of particular interest here. Due to its liveness, horror performance injects a number of unique features into the experience. Often immersive in nature, this type of horror is able to offer spectators a feeling of involvement, and even confrontation, which cannot be replicated by books or film. Performance horror places its audience at the centre of the experience, often asking (or even demanding) direct input from its spectators in order to create a narrative. It insists on one's engagement with the material through a meeting between living beings.

The aim of this paper is to offer an overview of this range in horror performance, the aesthetics and their implications of each form, and to discuss a framework for their closer examination. This will encompass an analysis of the elements of performance, and particular attention will be paid to the positioning of the audience('s body) within these events.

Bionote: Madelon Hoedt lectures at the Faculty for Creative Industries of the University of South Wales. Her PhD "Acting Out: The Pleasures of Performance Horror" focuses on genre, performance, stagecraft and audience affect. In her other research, she is concerned with issues of narrative and embodied experience in live performance and video games (specifically in relation to horror and the Gothic).

Session 4B: Angela Carter & Fairy Tales (Friday, 3:30pm-4:50pm)

- Inés G. Labarta, Lancaster University, UK, "Is it such a bad thing to become like me? Constructing Gender Fluid Characters"

Abstract: 'Is it such a bad thing to become like me?' (Carter, 1977:65) asks Mama, the plastic surgeon and self-created Goddess who is about to give Evelyn – an Englishman – female sexual attributes. *The Passion of New Eve* challenges the concept of femininity as even after his body conversion Evelyn refuses to be a woman: 'I'm the most ludicrous mess in the world!' (1977:79). In this paper, I will focus on the creative process behind the construction of characters that cannot be classified as female or male referring, of course, to Judith Butler's critical piece *Gender Trouble* (1990). I will read an extract of my own creative work, which – as Carter's – reflects on the question of what it is to be (or not) a woman. In my novella, set Spain during the thirties, an Irish nun is abducted by a sculptor who finds in her a muse for her last commissioned piece, a statue of St Ciarán. Carmen, the sculptor, dresses the nun as man, treating her as a son since she considers that 'being a mujer is a hassle... and dangerous.' Carmen herself struggles with her own femininity. Like Mama, she has also undergone a surgical procedure but, in this case, it's a forced one – a hysterectomy. My story differs from novels such as *Middlesex* – whose main character is born hermaphrodite – as it doesn't much

focus on gender physical performances but on psychological and social ones. I'm taking much inspiration from the idea of gender fluidity, brilliantly explored in Maggie Nelson's *Argonauts*, where Harry Dodge – Maggie's partner – states: 'Hey, I was born female and look how that turned out' (2015:108).

Bionote: Inés G. Labarta is a published author and CW PhD student at Lancaster University. Her publications include three novels and two novellas. She researches the links between Ireland and Spain by writing three novellas that mix languages and genres. She's a steering member of the Centre for Transcultural Writing and Research.

- Taylor Driggers, University of Glasgow, UK, "Faith in Feathered Floopies: Fantastical Desert Harlots in the Fiction of Angela Carter"

Abstract: The novels of Angela Carter are populated by women who inhabit an uneasy, tortured space between realism and myth, always exceeding the generic categories into which others attempt to place them. *Nights at the Circus* (1984) and *The Passion of New Eve* (1977) both chronicle transformative (and in *New Eve's* case, trans-formative) encounters with the women who reside at this fantastical crossroads between essence and artifice, fact and fiction, uncanny and marvellous. *Nights at the Circus* follows journalist Jack Walser as his initial, fruitless quest to debunk the winged trapeze artist Fevvers thrusts him into a world of playful subversion and parodic flights of fancy, eventually leading both him and Fevvers into the Arctic wilderness where identity breaks down. Meanwhile, in *New Eve*, the chauvinist Evelyn finds in the apocalyptic desert of the American west an underground realm of manufactured magic, where a plastic surgery-created goddess seeks to transform him into a second Eve and a Hollywood starlet embodies an endless parade of sorrowful characters. Simultaneously prophetic and profane, held in religious reverence even as they transgress almost every boundary of gender and sexual expression, Carter's fantastical women bear a striking resemblance to the desert harlots of early Christian folklore as reimagined by Grace Jantzen. For Jantzen, the desert is a subversive space where 'the woman, usually linked with the demonic [...] become[s] a channel of the divine'. This presentation will demonstrate that the fantastical desert spaces in Carter's fiction become sites where the category of 'woman' is both broadened and complicated and easy essentialisms are frustrated at every turn. The various mythic and religious appropriations, permutations, and transformations endured by her feminine figures are not easily separated from the demonic powers of patriarchy, but they also may herald a liberating divine revelation in the midst of their unreality.

Bionote: Taylor Driggers is a PhD researcher in English Literature at the University of Glasgow. His current research focuses on how fantasy texts provide a narrative ground on which women and LGBTQ+ people can contend with and even reclaim religious traditions that have historically marginalized, silenced, or abused them.

- Miriam Walsh, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland, "The Female Commodity: An Exploration of the Demonisation of Female Curiosity in Charles Perrault's *Bluebeard*"

Abstract: *Bluebeard* is one of the less celebrated fairy tales found in Charles Perrault's *Les Contes de fées*. The traditional tale of *Bluebeard* is imbued with many gothic elements including the isolated castle, the mysterious eastern seducer, and the foreboding threat of violence against female sexuality which permeates the tale. The darker element of the traditional tale of *Bluebeard* argues against its inclusion in the contemporary library of children's fairy tales, yet remnants of the tale exist in popular culture today.

Bluebeard is a tale imbued with a moral which helps to enforce the patriarchal construct that a female should remain docile to her male counterpart, while also suppressing any innate female desire for knowledge or pleasure. This is not a new trope and: 'can be seen as a replaying of one biblical masterplot: the Genesis account of the Fall. For several centuries now, standard interpretations have identified Eve as the principal agent of transgression and have infused her act of disobedience with strong sexual overtones' (Tatar, 1992:96). This paper will explore how the darker elements of the tale reinforce the demonisation of female curiosity, pleasure and sexuality, through various theoretical approaches, utilising the works of both noted folklorists and also feminist theorist Luce Irigaray.

Bluebeard is a tale which overlaps both gothic and fairy tale genres. This paper will show how this fairy tale utilises gothic elements such as the portrayal of the eastern Bluebeard, the punisher of female transgression, as a tool which is utilised in order to subjugate the female to her role as commodity for patriarchal society and to deny her access to her body.

Bionote: Dr Miriam Walsh is a PhD graduate from Mary Immaculate College. Her research areas include literary theory focusing on deconstruction and gender studies. Her main area of investigation involves fairy tales, using traditional fairy tales and their modern counterparts to help analyse the influence of fairy tales in contemporary culture.

Session 5A: The Dead Among Us (Saturday, 11:20am-12:20pm)

- Stephen Curtis, Lancaster University, UK, "Zombie-ing Human: Performing Normality From Beyond the Grave"

Abstract: Zombies have dominated popular culture in recent years, eclipsing the fascination with vampires that was initiated by *Twilight*, *True Blood* and their ilk. Movie theatres, TV screens, and gaming consoles are swamped by shambling, reanimated corpses engaged in an instinctual search for delicious human brains. As with vampires, however, a more nuanced and less traditional form of the monster has been gaining in popularity. These zombies don't shine, but they do exhibit a consciousness and sense of self that separates them from their Romero-esque brethren.

In this paper, I argue that the shift towards thinking zombies, or 'Homo Zombiens', is a critical reaction to the increased use of dehumanising language and metaphors in political and social discussions. In the true inquisitive spirit of the best of *Fantastika*, authors of these thinking zombie texts are interrogating the limits of human nature; judging our treatment of the most vulnerable through the filter of the walking (un)dead. My discussion will take in I- *Zombie*, Darren Shan's *Zom-B* book series, Daniel Water's *Generation Dead* books, and the newly released (exhumed?) *Santa Clarita Diet*. These texts show that zombie media can have its brains and eat them too.

Bionote: Dr Stephen Curtis is an Associate Lecturer at Lancaster University whose research specialism is blood and horror in Early Modern culture. He has also written and presented extensively on various aspects of Fantastika, from science fiction to horror videogames. He is currently writing monographs on both blood and horror in the Early Modern period, as well as engaging in the early steps of setting up an academic network of sanguinary scholars, to be entitled 'Bloody Cultures'. He tweets at @EarlyModBlood

- Chris Hussey, University of Cambridge, UK, "When we die, even if you plant us, nothing grows': Exploring Bodies of the Human and Xenos in Orson Scott Card's *Ender Saga*"

Abstract: Orson Scott Card's *Ender Saga* (1985 to present) includes a plethora of bodies and characters, both human and alien, in a series that includes themes that span from intergalactic warfare and colonisation, to the consideration of religion and the concept of the soul over a period of novels. The focus of this paper will be on the representation of bodies within Card's novel *Speaker for the Dead* (1986), which takes place on the planet Lusitania, where xenologers are studying and co-habiting with the sentient alien race of the pequeninos (or 'piggies', as they are colloquially known due to their porcine appearance).

The study of the pequeninos' cultural practices is central to the novel, and the fundamental misunderstandings that occur between both parties about the ways in which notions of life and the body are conceived offers a lens through which performative bodies can be considered more broadly. The juxtaposition of these two differing perceptions of the body, framed within the context of meanings of life and death from a social, cultural and religious perspective, allow for an exploration of the different ways the body can be represented, portrayed and perceived across species and stars.

In a saga that focuses on the character of Ender Wiggin, it is in Ender's new role, as a Speaker for the Dead rather than a perpetrator of xenocide, which brings about a greater understanding of these conceptions and perceptions towards the body through his mediation between species. It is through the performance of his newly assumed identity as the Speaker, and as a representative of the disembodied, that allow these perspectives to be drawn out, and the ways in which the various bodies are portrayed and performed, as well as their respective purposes and functions, will be explored within this paper.

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

Session 5B: Gender Fluidity in Visual Performances (Saturday, 11:20am-12:20pm)

- Danielle S Girard, Lancaster University, UK, "Passing' as Spock: The Vulcan/Human Body"

Abstract: In *Star Trek: The Original Series* the interspecies character Mr. Spock is often must perform in accordance with one of his two sides: Vulcan or Human. This performance acts as

an expectation for Spock to 'pass' as either human or Vulcan dependent upon a variety of factors – pre-space-age humanity, as in 'The City on the Edge of Forever;' another Vulcan presence, as in 'Amok Time' and 'Journey to Babel;' or for human comfort, as in 'Balance of Terror.' While 'passing' was originally coined as a term with racial connotations – and Spock is the target of racial slurs within the canon – my focus in this paper will be on the term's evolution to encompass heteronormative assumptions with the aim of reading Spock as a queer character. In this paper I will argue that Spock's failure to perform for the comfort of others subverts the trope of 'passing' and instead stands in stark contrast to such fear of the 'other' by presenting the image of a world in which the 'other' is under constant scrutiny but is inflexible in its existence and therefore unable to be labelled as 'wrong,' thus creating an ideal where the necessity of 'passing' is negated in favour of negating hateful rhetoric and reassigning the label of 'wrong.' I will do this by examining the trope that homosexuality is 'written on the body,' and two key episodes from the series ('The City on the Edge of Forever' and 'Journey to Babel') in which Spock is expected to perform.

Bionote: Danielle Girard is a first year, international PhD student at Lancaster University researching Star Trek and its place in fan and queer history. She is particularly interested in the gender politics at play when fans slash the textual canon to create homosexual couplings, such as Kirk/Spock.

- Thomas Brassington, Cardiff, UK "'Glamour, Filth, Horror': Drag and the Gothic in The Boulet Brothers' *Dragula: Search for the World's First Drag Supermonster*"

Abstract: Drag is the quintessential queer performative mode that embodies a simultaneous mockery of heteronormativity and celebration of queerness. With cult TV shows like *RuPaul's Drag Race* and *Drag Queens of London* thrusting drag and queerness into mainstream pop culture, and the Internet's ability to accommodate a variety of subcultural media, drag's increased presence in pop culture begs academic investigation.

There is a distinct aesthetic style within drag which tends towards the Gothic. Drag aesthetics like Genderfuck, Drag Terrorism, and Tranimal commonly blend Gothic Horror imagery with queer gender performance to interrogate and mock established heteronormative gendered traits. Similarly, the specific drag aesthetics of performers like Sharon Needles and Anna Phylactic explicitly draw on Gothic tropes for their referential material. In a complementary way, I believe that aspects of drag proliferate in the Gothic, from monstrous creatures rupturing the gender binary as in Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*, to Violet Baudelaire's use of traditionally feminine ribbons to perform stereotypically masculine thinking in Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. More explicitly, pop culture icons like Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, intersect Gothic iconography with camp performativity to mock the rigid gender structures of traditional (Gothic) femininity.

The Boulet Brothers' *Dragula: Search for the World's First Drag Supermonster* is part competition, part *Paris is Burning*-style documentary, part B-movie campy horror film. Based on the Boulet Brothers' real world 'Dragula' ball, the series focuses on punk and horror inspired drag performers competing for the title of 'Dragula'. This paper begins my exploration into the intersections of Gothic and drag. Using the final episode of *Dragula* I will explore how the categories of 'Glamour, horror, and filth'—the pillars of the *Dragula*

aesthetic—present this intersection and explore the extent that Gothic is used to mock heteronormativity and celebrate queerness when used in drag.

Bionote: Thomas Brassington is hoping to do a PhD that explores the intersections between the Gothic and drag soon (depending on whether someone will give him money to do that.) Currently, he works as an Administrative Assistant at Cardiff University.

Session 6A: Performing Fantastika on Screen (Saturday, 1:30pm-2:50pm)

- Stuart Lindsay, University of Stirling, UK, “Spectatorship as Performance: Simulations of the 1980s in Two Gothic Television Dramas – *Stranger Things* (2016) and *Black Mirror’s* ‘San Junipero’ (2016)”

Abstract: As a highly performative and imaginative literary genre of the late-Eighteenth century, the Gothic’s interpretation of history and historical setting had a twofold aim: to explore the tumultuous, contemporary issues of nationality, revolution, and sexuality, and to still this apprehensive present along political and class lines using the ideological concepts of heritage, leisure, and nostalgia. Many Gothic scholars contend that, as the literary Gothic developed throughout the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, its simulation of the past, of gender roles, and of ideal, familial domesticity could no longer abject the social anxieties, upheavals, and traumas of the ages it now found itself in. While this is largely true, my paper will claim that two Gothic Television Dramas distributed on Netflix in 2016 – The Duffer Brothers’ *Stranger Things* serial, and the ‘San Junipero’ episode of Charlie Brooker’s *Black Mirror* series – utilise the Gothic’s focus upon technological innovation and misuse to involve audiences engaged aesthetically and socially with the 1980s past in a diegetic or virtual recreation of the era. By identifying with the two television dramas’ respective depictions of the period, viewers participate in a performance of cultural memory: locating the significance (perhaps through individual experience) of leisure in the 1980s, its consumption and practice in a number of contemporary texts – pop music, arcade videogaming and tabletop gaming in parents’ basements – and recognising their importance as powerful sources of nostalgia possessing a role in structuring personal identity and social outlook.

Stranger Things and ‘San Junipero’ provide even those for whom the 1980s is not a living memory with a domestic security and social heritage via the dramas’ respective deployment of shared cultural origins, practices, and performances popularised in this era: the video arcade, Dungeons and Dragons, and nightclubs. What makes *Stranger Things* and ‘San Junipero’ so popular is their ability to enshrine their respective portrayals of 1980s childhood and adolescence in the youth of their audiences, who, in their exercising of collective, cultural memory, recall or imagine their own lives in a version of the 1980s – a performance derived from spectatorship.

To challenge and potentially shore up this defining, youthful identity, both texts introduce threats that take a decidedly Gothic turn, and which are as relevant at the time of the programmes’ release in 2016 as they were in the 1980s: Military-Industrial scientific experimentation in a Cold War climate, and corporate ownership of users’ private data. With reference to other relevant texts, such as Ernest Cline’s novel *Ready Player One* (2011) and the *New Retro Arcade: Neon* (2016) Virtual Reality emulation platform, this paper will

conclude by arguing that the performance of a generation's social practices and collective identity, acted out vicariously via cultural memory prompted by literature, television and technology, is under threat from external, Gothicised forces in *Stranger Things* and 'San Junipero'.

Bionote: Stuart Lindsay is a teaching assistant at the University of Stirling, U.K. In 2016, along with Dr. Dale Townshend and Dr. Peter Lindfield, he ran the *Massive Open Online Course: The Gothic Revival, 1700-1850: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, and was the Web Officer of the International Gothic Association from September 2010 to February 2017. His Ph.D. thesis, completed in 2014, concerns psychological trauma in Chernobyl survivors, and the intersection of horror fiction with this trauma. His research focus also includes Gothic and new media: Gothic in comics, videogames, and Internet sub-culture.

- Declan Lloyd, Lancaster University, UK, "Performing Consciousness in *Westworld*: Julian Jaynes and the Ascension to the Human"

Abstract: (nb: this paper will contain spoilers) In Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy's recent TV adaptation of Michael Crichton's 1973 cult classic film *Westworld*, the writers and directors decided to integrate Julian Jaynes's theory of the origin of consciousness, a highly controversial and much lambasted study published three years after the release of the original *Westworld*. In such Jaynes put forward that human consciousness as we know it - this in the sense of our capacity for self-reflection, introspection, internal dialogue and our ability to think about time in a linear fashion - only emerged as recently as the year 1200 B.C, before which humanity were in a perpetual state of mind akin to that experienced by people with chronic schizophrenia: they were at the mercy of their own internal 'gods', experiencing audible hallucinations which were the superegoic personifications of their deepest drives. Jaynes argued that the point at which humanity became conscious, was with the emergence of language, but not just any form of language: specifically metaphorical language. The appearance of metaphorical language allowed for a meteoric shift in human cognizance, and allowed for the almost complete submergence of the Real (following Lacan) - that is, reality beyond language and linguistic comprehension - and the upsurge of the symbolic order, which became a reality encompassing veneer giving us the capability to logically and rationally comprehend and navigate our surrounding world. In *Westworld*, the advanced automaton 'hosts' are designed so that their programming equates an inner voice: their inner gods are their preprogrammed instructions, the narratives instilled by the writers and designers of their microcosmic fictitious world. By equating programming with inner voice, the hosts become 'bicameral', this a means to 'bootstrap consciousness' as envisioned by their legendary and elusive maker, Arnold. In this paper I shall explore this movement from performative consciousness, which is wholly reliant upon the hosts' sticking to their scripts, towards the birth of actual 'human' consciousness, which is the result of a narrative deviance, and the defiance against the omnipotent 'inner' gods themselves.

Bionote: Declan is a second year PhD Literature student at Lancaster University and his research focuses on visual dimensions in Late Modern texts: looking at art and artistic allusion (esp. Dada, Surrealism, Pop Art, Fluxus), the manipulation of the graphic surface, the

use of experimental visual formats and authorial engagement with reader psychology through these graphic/pictorial elements. He is particularly interested in works by J. G. Ballard, William Burroughs, Douglas Coupland and Mark Danielewski.

- Alison Tedman, Buckinghamshire New University, UK, “Performing the Virtual in Contemporary Non-Virtual Fantasy and Its Virtual Transmedia”

Abstract: This paper examines tropes that convey the performance of virtual identities in recent fantasy film and television. Such performances remediate tropes from older speculative science fiction including the holodeck in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-94). Cyberpunk presented virtual identities in dystopia in films such as *The Matrix* (1999). In 2017, *Ghost in the Shell* offers a hyperrealist remediation of a cyberpunk anime. Cyberpunk tropes have also been reworked in 21st century young adult dystopian media. Young Adult dystopian film franchise *Divergent* (2014-) and Season 3 of television series *The 100* (2016) both make virtual and augmented reality central to their narrative action. Cultural fantasies of virtual embodiment are increasingly aligned with technological developments in virtual, augmented and mixed reality within the global context. This paper draws on critical work on performance in virtual environments, and on virtual representation in film and media, among other methodologies, to consider the tropes through which such fantasies are currently digitally conveyed. It focuses largely on identity in the virtual landscape in media for a youth demographic. Transmedia marketing for *The Hunger Games* franchise (2012-), *Insurgent* (2015) and *Allegiant* (2016) includes 360 degree trailers and ‘experiences’. These, like many 360 short films, are mainly presented in first person, while the films themselves construct a third person view. It is possible to convey augmented or virtual reality in 2D, through a first person viewpoint, as in the short film *Hyper-Reality* (2016). Young Adult media and its paratexts tend to connote virtual reality by breaking the laws of physics to create spectacle. This, I will show, creates paradoxical similarities with the digital visual construction of organic identities in the environment as bricolage, as in *A Monster Calls* (2017).

Bionote: Dr. Alison Tedman is a Senior Lecturer at Buckinghamshire New University. She teaches Film and Media Studies on the Film and Television Production BA, and has written and taught many modules in Film and Media Studies and Critical Theory at the University since developing the first Film modules there in the 1990s. Her PhD from the University of Kent theorised fairy-tale film. Her research interests include Young Adult dystopian cinema.

Session 6B: Science Fiction Theatre (Saturday, 1:30pm-2:50pm)

- Beth Cortese, Lancaster University, UK, “Imagining Worlds: Performing Fantastika in Seventeenth Century Drama”

Abstract: The seventeenth century witnessed the establishment of the Royal Society, along with the development of the telescope. It is no surprise that amidst such a climate of scientific discovery, colonisation and travel, seventeenth century texts express a fascination with the existence of other worlds and of life in outer-space. Frances Godwin’s *The Man in the Moone*

(c.1621) and Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing World* (1666) have recently been hailed as early prose works of science fiction. Despite the prevalence of sham astrologers in seventeenth century comedy, less attention has been paid to the role of the fantastical onstage. This paper will explore the role of Fantastika in Aphra Behn's popular spectacle and farce *The Emperor of the Moon*, first performed in 1687 and Margaret Cavendish's comedy *The Lady Contemplation* (1662). As household drama performed in the Duchess' stately home, Cavendish's *The Lady Contemplation* presents a private, immersive and intimate performance of Fantastika which relies on the imagination, while Behn's *The Emperor of the Moon* makes use of lavish costume, special effects and painted scenery to create her lunar inhabitants in this public spectacle. I consider the way in which each performance of Fantastika raises questions about gender, the public and the private sphere, the relationship between the body and the mind, along with the allure of spectacle and fantastical contemplation.

Bionote: Beth Cortese is a third year PhD student and Associate Lecturer in English Literature at Lancaster University. Her thesis supervised by Professor Alison Findlay focuses on women's wit in the work of female playwrights 1660-1720. Beth is also the author of two children's books which feature a farting windmill and a military wasp.

- Ian Farnell, University of Warwick, UK, "Everything Bad is Real: Science Fiction and Fantasy in Alistair McDowall's *Pomona* and *X*"

Abstract: Of Alistair McDowall's five published texts, three are influenced by science fiction, and one on gothic horror. McDowall's knack for drawing on the fantastic has earned him many accolades, and has seen him hailed as one of the most exciting British playwrights working today. This paper will focus on his two most recent plays: *Pomona* (2014), which takes place in and around a deserted concrete island in Manchester that has become the scene of gothic horror, and *X* (2016), set on a research outpost on Pluto which has lost contact with Earth.

Patrick D. Murphy wrote in *Staging the Impossible* (1992) that dramatic fantasy can 'question consensual reality [...] disrupt generic conventions and call for reassessment of perception, conception and communication' (1992: 4). This paper will examine McDowall's use of the fantastic to trouble, alter or subvert typical theatrical practice. The incorporation of a role-playing fantasy game in *Pomona* disturbs the distinction between choice and fate, with incoherently-ordered scenes that fracture the narrative. This is further explored in *X*, as its protagonists find themselves unstuck in time, resulting in the disruption of cause and effect, with linear order of chronological events shattered. In both texts, dialogue falters, language breaks down, and action spirals into violence, chaos and horror, creating a highly stylised yet still 'realist' drama – a hybrid of theatrical form and fantastical content.

McDowall's work is eminently theatrical, fusing perfectly its fantastical images with its performative nature. Referencing the 2015 National Theatre production of *Pomona* and the premiere run of *X* at the Royal Court in 2016, this paper will analyse McDowall's embedding of the fantastic throughout his work.

Bionote: I am writing my Masters by Research – *Stage the Final Frontier: Science Fiction and Contemporary British Theatre* – at Warwick University. I have presented papers on this subject at Edinburgh University's 2017 Fear and Loathing in Fantasy and Folklore Conference, and the 41st Comparative Drama Conference at Rollins College, Florida.

- Christina Scholz, University of Graz, Austria, "Mirza, Butler & Miéville's *Deep State*: Hybrid Art Forms as Theatre of the Future and/or the Future of Theatre?"

Abstract: Karen Mirza and Brad Butler's 2012 film project *Deep State*, scripted by China Miéville, tells the story of a time traveller who passes through holes in conventional history created by the irruptive power of riots. Formally it oscillates between cinema and drama in that it incorporates archive footage as well as theatrical elements. The collage-style editing technique establishes a relationship between non-fiction, fiction and semi-fiction and can also be read as a deliberate nod to another seminal experimental time travel film, Chris Marker's *La Jetée* from 1962.

One could argue that by subtracting the dynamic aspect and the unrepeatability of a dramatic performance, the theatrical scenes lose much of their immediacy and impact. However, by employing elements from Augusto Boal's concept of the Theatre of the Oppressed, Mirza and Butler succeed in evading any one-sided, ideologically motivated representation of characters. Instead they foreground the human factor. This facilitates the audience's empathy without blatantly forcing identification with the characters and motivates them to critically engage with and question action ostensibly taken in the name of freedom and democracy – culminating in a torture scene employing direct quotes from the infamous leaked CIA "torture memos" of 2002.

Mirza and Butler state that their goal was to make a film about how to shift political language by implementing the concept of the Theatre of the Oppressed – articulating oppression, making images with one's body, with collective bodies, and working from the body to speech. These elements constitute and reinforce the character of the language teacher who takes the place of the "joker" (in Boal's terminology), simultaneously struggling to speak and attempting to teach, fighting without using physical violence. They also facilitate easy re-imagination of the film as a dramatic performance, with the archive footage (back-)projected onto the backdrop, so that the separate spaces that come together through editing in the film are actually brought together in the same physical space on stage.

The language teacher's pedagogy is both a physical and verbal move away from fossilised conceptions of resistance into new, unimagined possibilities. Hopefully it may also spawn a renewed discussion of film and theatre as related, if different, media and of hybrid art forms and cross-overs as fecund ground for new developments.

Bionote: Christina Scholz is currently writing her PhD thesis on M. John Harrison's Empty Space trilogy and teaching English Literature and Culture and Intermediality at the University of Graz, Austria. Her fields of interest include the British New Wave in Science Fiction, the further theorisation of Weird Fiction, Hauntology and the Gothic imagination, and Literary and Cultural Theory. She has a Master's degree in Comparative Literature.

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