BSLS 2025 Conference: Abstracts and Biographies

Thursday 10th April

Plenary 1: (George Fox Building Lecture Theatre 1) Michael H Whitworth (Merton College, Oxford) 'Dark Companions: The Place of Poetry in Literature and Science'
Chair: Sharon Ruston

Some of the foundational books in the field of literature and science concern narrative, and in recent years narrative has become more prominent in the field, not least as a way of engaging with climate change. But there is also a long tradition of engaging with poetry in relation to science.

Why might poetry – whether lyric or epic – still matter to the field? Poetry has many different ways of incorporating science: as metaphysical conceits, as concepts, or as stolen jewels of sparkling discourse. We can ask what scientific ideas a poem has absorbed, but we can also ask what the poem itself knows. If the poem 'knowing' seems an unjustifiable personification, we can imagine the poem not as the product of inquiry but its instrument. Drawing examples from poems of the 1920s and 1930s, and from more recent poetry, I shall argue that poetry brings into focus more sharply than narrative the awareness that one form of knowledge is shadowed by another. Moreover, poetry brings into focus the tension between science as sign and science as mere signifier, and the difficulty of telling them apart.

Michael H. Whitworth teaches English Literature at Merton College, Oxford, and in the English Faculty at the University of Oxford. He is the author of *Einstein's Wake: Relativity, Metaphor, and Modernist Literature* (2001), of other articles and chapters on literature and science, and of other books on Virginia Woolf, modernism, and modernist poetry. He is currently working on a book about science, poetry, and intellectual specialisation in the 1920s and 1930s, which will include examinations of Marianne Moore, Mina Loy, Herbert Read, Hugh MacDiarmid, Michael Roberts, William Empson, W. H. Auden, and C. Day Lewis.

Panel 1.1 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 1) Scientists Reading: Reinserting Literature into the History of Science
Chair: Jordan Kistler

Gowan Dawson (University of Leicester), 'Conflict, Complexity and T. H. Huxley's Literary Reading'. The history of the relations between science and literature has been characterized more by conflict than convergence. It was only with the development of literature and science as an academic sub-field in the 1980s that their creative interaction became the dominant focus, although this so-called One Culture model has more recently been challenged and new areas of difference and tension explored. This paper seeks to move beyond both the revived interest in discord and the erstwhile emphasis on mutuality. Drawing on the modern historiography of science and religion, it will adopt the complexity thesis, which enjoins contextual sensitivity and rigorous empirical analysis as a means of avoiding a priori assumptions about conflict or harmony. Using this approach, the paper will examine the literary reading of Thomas Henry Huxley. Huxley's famous dispute with Matthew Arnold in the 1880s helped confirm the oppositional relation of science and literature, but his own scientific positions were often forged through his reading of literature. Notably, Huxley's reading practices were predicated on conflict, and it is only by tracing his shifting tastes—for Carlyle, Thackeray and Dickens—that his conception of science and literature can be recovered in its full complexity.

Gowan Dawson is Professor of Victorian Literature and Culture at the University of Leicester and Dean of Research and Enterprise for the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities. His books include 'Darwin, Literature and Victorian Respectability' (2007), 'Show Me the Bone: Reconstructing Prehistoric Monsters in Nineteenth-Century Britain and America' (2016) and 'Monkey to Man: The Evolution of the March of Progress Image' (Yale University Press, 2024), together with the co-edited collections 'Victorian Scientific Naturalism: Community, Identity, Continuity' (2014) and 'Science Periodicals in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Constructing Scientific Communities' (2020).

Richard Fallon (University of Nottingham, Natural History Museum, and University of Birmingham), 'Reading Literature and Science with a Young-Earth Creationist Geologist'. Few know that George McCready Price (1870–1963), founder of modern young-earth creationism, was analysing the relationship between literature and science long before Gillian Beer. A sometime poet, journalist, and literature teacher, Price's highlighted the imaginative, rhetorical dimensions of geological and evolutionary writing in books like 'The Fundamentals of Geology' (1913). Indeed, his reduction of evolutionism to textual discourse foreshadows the supposedly 'postmodern' stances later criticised by scientists during the Science Wars of the 1990s. Rather than relativism, however, these suspicious readings reflected his staunch Seventh-day Adventist beliefs in the primacy of the Bible and the prophet Ellen White over all other claimants to knowledge. His distaste was enhanced by Adventists' traditional scepticism about fiction and imaginative excess. Literary scholars have hitherto expressed no interest in Price, but this paper will reveal the surprisingly literary concerns of creationists by examining Price's most extended work of creativity and literary analysis, 'Some Scientific Stories and Allegories' (1936). This examination will serve some thoughts about what Price's reductively textual approach to science might inadvertently teach us about presuppositions in literature and science studies about reading, textuality, and the material practices of science.

Richard Fallon is a Postdoctoral Knowledge Exchange Fellow at the University of Nottingham and the Natural History Museum, and an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham. He is the author of 'Reimagining Dinosaurs in Late Victorian and Edwardian Literature: How the 'Terrible Lizard' Became a Transatlantic Cultural Icon' (2021) and the editor of the anthology 'Creatures of Another Age: Classic Visions of Prehistoric Monsters' (2021). His second monograph, 'Contesting Earth's History in Transatlantic Literary Culture, 1860-1935: Believers and Visionaries on the Borderlines of Geology and Palaeontology' will be published by Oxford University Press in 2025.

John Holmes (University of Birmingham), 'Olaf Stapledon and the History of Science'. In both popular essays and his major theorisation of population genetics, 'The Causes of Evolution' (1932), the evolutionary biologist J. B. S. Haldane recommended Olaf Stapledon's 'Last and First Men' (1930) as a prophetic myth of human evolution. Several scientists followed Haldane's recommendation, reading and revisiting 'Last and First Men' and 'Star Maker' (1937) from the 1930s onwards. James Lovelock and John Maynard Smith both mentioned Stapledon repeatedly as a formative influence, while the mathematician I. J. Good made several allusions to him in his editorial notes to 'The Scientist Speculates' (1962), co-edited with Maynard Smith. Yet these references to Stapledon remain rare and rarely very revealing. To place Stapledon back into the history of science in spite of the paucity of direct evidence, I will examine the resonances of his mythopoeic science fiction within Lovelock's Gaia Theory, Maynard Smith's view of evolution as structured by a series of major transitions and Good's concept of the technological singularity. In so doing, I will aim to show both how Stapledon's myths enabled radical transformations of the concept of evolution in the 1960s and after and how close inter-textual reading can shift our understanding of the history of science.

John Holmes is Professor of Victorian Literature and Culture at the University of Birmingham and President of the Commission on Science and Literature. His books include 'Darwin's Bards: British and American Poets in the Age of Evolution' (2009), 'The Pre-Raphaelites and Science' (2018, winner of the BSLS book prize) and 'Temple of Science: The Pre-Raphaelites and Oxford University Museum of Natural History' (2020), along with the edited collections 'Science in Modern Poetry' (2012) and 'The Routledge Research Companion to Nineteenth-Century British Literature and Science' (2017), co-edited with Sharon Ruston.

Panel 1.2 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 2) Reconceiving Biology and Technology
Chair: Emilie Taylor Pirie

Jerome de Groot, 'The Biomolecular Humanities?' Molecular storage solutions for our incipient data crisis are being developed in haphazard ways. Millions of bytes of information are currently being produced and storage is expensive, expanding, and highly energy intensive. Synthesizing DNA to store information both inert and in vivo has been proposed to address challenges about capacity and sustainability. Research in the past 10 years has led to a revolution in capability of this technology. Our future information may be stored in DNA, putting molecular matter at the heart of the humanities. Such new interactions may allow for more sustainable futures, hybridisation of fields and the implementation of complex novel practices of investigation. There is a need to ensure that ethics, bias, justice, equality and access are at the centre of

developing intellectual and practical frameworks. Biomolecular practices, archives, technologies and datasets have the capacity and the potential to obviate standard models of knowledge, practices of communication, and construction of archives. Enhanced genetic and biomolecular understanding suggests the possibility of a new type of humanities, one that understands the human entirely differently. The biomolecularisation of the archive suggests a shift to an embodied, molecular, biological understanding of the archive as something alive and also of-life, shifting our apprehension of what a knowledge production system is.

Jerome de Groot teaches at the University of Manchester. He has written various books including *Double Helix History* (2022).

Louise Benson James, 'Internal Ecologies: Gut Health and Rejuvenation in 1920s Medicine and Popular Fiction' Today's microbiome science prompts the question of what new understandings of symbiotic biology mean for human identity. This paper considers how popular fiction visualised the digestive system during a period in which the science of gut health was burgeoning, and how digestive knowledge was in turn "culturized" through popular fiction. In two bestselling novels – Marie Corelli's The Young Diana (1918) and Gertrude Atherton's Black Oxen (1923) – it explores scientific anti-aging technologies and the 1920s female rejuvenation craze. These texts speak to a growing understanding of the role of gut bacteria, and increasing popular awareness of the potential of food, diet, vitamins and probiotics to radically impact the body. Jean Walton points to the 'modern "peristaltic subject"' whose identity is defined by the external world passing through the alimentary canal, the unconscious instructions, processes, and perception of the gut, and the food networks and gustatory relationships that unite people to each other and to the non-human. Paying attention to the way in which the body as biome is permeable, absorbing, our internal bodies in conversation with their external environments, has the potential to give personal meaning to issues of ecology and climate, and the body's relationship to an increasingly industrialised world.

Dr Louise Benson James is a postdoctoral fellow at Ghent University, Belgium. Her research examines literature, culture, and medicine in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly hysteria, nervous disorder, internal organs, and the digestive system, in women's fiction, popular fiction, and periodicals. She is currently working on her first monograph, Medicine and Women's Fiction: Hysteria, Bodies and Narratives, 1850s to 1930s, for Edinburgh University Press.

Kirsty Dunlop and Caitlin MacLeod, 'Rebugging narratives: changing definitions of the bug through narrative and technological environments' The cultural conception of the bug carries a series of definitions and connotations, which have been conceived through narratives, and play out in literary spaces, through storytelling and associations that continue into our post-internet age. In this paper, we will be exploring the lineage of these definitions, from the concept of the bug's early usage emerging in the 1500s, meaning pompous haughty or proud, into the more positive usage, as a a keen fan (the radio bug), into the negative connotations of insects as invaders, outsiders and pests, symbolic of threatening presences to human boundaries. We will consider what it means to re-bug literary texts, from readings of Clarice Lispector to Franz Kafka. We will then consider the narrative of the moth as an early glitch, and more widely, how bugs have been aligned with malfunctions in computer systems. What might a re-bugged technological system look like? We will attend to specific instances of bugs that emerge as figurative and literal images and ideas in literary texts, before developing alternative ecological lenses for observing bugs in literary and technological spaces as living creatures and active agents, in the process opening up the possibilities for critical thought and creative practice.

Kirsty Dunlop is completing a Doctorate of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at the University of Glasgow, working on her original concept of 'Emergent Essaying', a collection of digital-born writings, which interrogate the overlaps between game design and hybrid practices. She teaches fiction, poetry and hybrid forms at the same institution, and is a freelance games designer. She is Editor-in-Chief of the post-internet poetry publisher SPAM Press.

Cat MacLeod is enrolled in an MRes in Eco-literature at University of the Highlands and Islands, for a project on the bug and cockroach in modernist literature, specifically analysing the works of Kafka and Lispector from a non-phobic stance taking into account the ecological contexts of the bug or cockroach. They also work in libraries, volunteer in archives and write poetry.

Panel 1.3 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 3): The Future of Human Reproduction I: Genetic Engineering and Selection
Chair: Georgia Walton

Stephen Wilkinson and Kirsty Dunn (Lancaster University), 'Genetic Determinism and Genetic Enhancement in Octavia Butler's Xenogenesis Trilogy'. This paper examines Octavia Butler's Xenogenesis trilogy in an inter-disciplinary way by combining insights and techniques from Bioethics and Developmental Psychology. It provides a fresh understanding of Butler's work, which speaks to current bioethical and scientific debates, while also critically assessing aspects of her vision in the light of today's scientific knowledge of psychological development. While Butler's fictional depiction of young alien abilities predicts much of the recent understanding of human psychological development, an overemphasis of the role of genetics in human nature throws up ethical concerns about essentialism and self-determination that are still very much alive today. In Xenogenesis (1987-89) the Oankali are an alien race that has rescued the last remaining humans from a dying planet Earth. The Oankali, with three sexes and very different biology to our own, intend to merge their genetic composition with humanity's, creating hybrid species. The plot explores the struggles of humans grappling with their situation and the Oankali's seemingly beneficent, yet dominating and controlling approach; and latterly the lives of the human/Oankali hybrids ('constructs'). The paper explores the values and worldviews presented in the book and seeks to map these onto contemporary bioethical and scientific debates about the future of human reproduction.

Professor Stephen Wilkinson is Distinguished Professor of Bioethics at Lancaster University. Much of his work is about reproductive ethics and the regulation of reproductive technologies, especially the ethics of selective reproduction (practices that involve choosing between different possible future people).

Dr Kirsty Dunn is a Lecturer in Developmental Psychology at Lancaster University specialising in the teaching of prenatal development. Kirsty has been exploring the ways in which fetal and neonatal perceptual and cognitive development can be measured. She uses ultrasound and fetal heart rate to measure responses to sounds and shapes of light in the womb. Kirsty is particularly interested in questioning what these measures can really tell us about psychological development in the early years.

Sara Fovargue (University of Sheffield), 'Monsters, Choice, and Monstrous Choices: Disability, Chance and Genetic Selection in Simon Mawer's *Mendel's Dwarf*'.
The protagonist of Simon Mawer's 1997 novel *Mendel's Dwarf* explores scenarios where choices are made to abort or select in order to avoid gene mutation. In this paper, I argue that the novel does not allow for a positive solution whether decisions are taken deliberately, or things are left to chance. Therefore, disability is not viewed positively throughout. Drawing on theoretical conceptualisations of the 'monster', I examine what the novel claims for the inherent value of life and the unsettling revelation that 'monstrosity' evokes both fear and fascination. The protagonist employs intellectual prowess and black humour to address (and sometimes anticipate) reactions to his physical form, yet his experiences underscore the fragility of human existence and challenge conventional notions of normalcy. His characterisation of himself as a monster serves as a poignant commentary on the arbitrariness of 'natural' reproduction (chance), as opposed to the possibilities raised by genetic selection (choice).

I am an academic lawyer specialising in health law and ethics, with a long-standing interest in legal and ethical matters relating to emerging biotechnologies (such as xenotransplantation) and reproduction and reproductive technologies. I have published on a range of topics, including consent and capacity, how we regulate risks, court-ordered caesarean sections, the regulation of IVF, delivery decision-making by pregnant women who are subject to the Mental Health Act 1983, and conscientious objection in health care practice. I am a Co-Investigator on the Wellcome funded *Future of Human Reproduction* project and I am co Editor-in-Chief of the *Medical Law Review*.

Aline Ferreira (University of Aveiro), 'Designer Babies: The Future of Reproduction in Peikoff's *Mother Knows Best* (2019) and *Baby X* (2024) and Eve Smith's *Off-Target* (2022)' This paper addresses some of the unintended and unforeseen repercussions new reproductive technologies might bring about when implemented. Two recent novels dramatize and evaluate the consequences of the illegal and unregulated use of cutting-edge genome editing techniques both for the families involved and society in general. In Kira Peikoff's Mother Knows Best (2019) a woman has mitochondrial replacement therapy without her husband's knowledge in order to have a healthy baby. In Eve Smith's Off-Target (2022) the protagonist agrees to have a never before attempted procedure, with recourse to a version of CRISPR/Cas9, so as to have her husband's genes implanted in her 10-week-old foetus to replace those of the biological father, to hide her infidelity. These genetic edits, however, can have off-target

effects, alluded to in the name of Smith's book. These novels illustrate not only the potential dangers of the application of insufficiently tested new reproductive technologies, relying on innovative genetic engineering techniques, but also the risks some women are willing to take to have a healthy baby, as in Peikoff's Mother Knows Best, or to protect her marriage, as in Smith's Off-Target. The novels will be analysed drawing on recent work in the fields of bioethics and gender studies to illuminate the likely consequences, both positive in terms of health benefits, and negative, if misused, of the introduction of these new reproductive technologies.

Dr Aline Ferreira is an Associate Professor at the University of Aveiro in Portugal where she teaches English Literature and Cultural Studies. She holds a PhD from the University of London (Birkbeck College). Her main interests comprise the intersections between literature and science, bioethics, feminist utopias and gender studies. Publications include I Am the Other: Literary Negotiations of Human Cloning (Greenwood Press, 2005) as well as numerous articles in international journals. She is now finishing a book provisionally entitled: The Sexual Politics of the Artificial Womb: Fictional and Visual Representations.

Panel 1.4 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 4): Roundtable: Living and Researching amidst the Culture Wars: A Reflection on Literature and Science Studies.
Chair: Josie Gill

In 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement led many organisations and public bodies, including universities, to publicly renew their commitments to anti-racism and racial equality. Five years on, the outcomes of these commitments largely remain to be seen with many institutions quietly reneging on their promises. Calls for equality have been reframed as 'culture wars'—and are as fierce as ever. For committed researchers, addressing research inequality remains at the forefront of what happens across the university, be it in debates about the curriculum, admissions processes or the distribution of research funding. These debates cross the humanities and the sciences. The divide is now less between the disciplines than it is between those who are still pressing for universities to address the systemic and institutional inequalities entrenched within them at every level, and those who oppose this project as an unnecessary return to an 'identity politics' threatening rigour, quality, academic freedom of speech and tradition.

In this session, **Chisomo Kalinga and Josie Gill** will be in conversation to discuss the complexity of these issues and how they have impacted our lived experience as researchers in literature and sciences and medical humanities. We will draw from our own lived experience to ask one another questions such as: How do we navigate the cultures in which we work? How has this context impacted the field of literature and science studies and researchers from minoritized or marginalized backgrounds in this field? How are these debates relevant to the field? How do we hold one another and our peers accountable in debates about representation and belonging in literature and science? Do calls for accountability—especially with institutions and funders— inevitably require an academic activist approach? We want the conversation to be inclusive and welcome the interventions, questions and participation of attendees.

Josie Gill is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Bristol. She is the author of Biofictions: Race, Genetics and the Contemporary Novel (Bloomsbury, 2020), which won the British Society for Literature and Science Book Prize. She has written about literature and literary studies in relation to a range of topics including bioarchaeology and transatlantic enslavement, black health, racial science, epigenetics and the movement to decolonise universities. In October 2022 she was awarded a Philip Leverhulme Prize to work on a new book project provisionally titled *Black Lecturer*.

Chisomo Kalinga is a Chancellor's Fellow at the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Edinburgh. Her research interests are disease (specifically HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections), illness and wellbeing, biomedicine, traditional healing, indigenous beliefs and cosmologies and their narrative representation in African oral and print literatures. Her transdisciplinary work engages storytelling and literary traditions in Malawi focusing on the intersections between aesthetics, narrative, ethnography, representations of the body and the communities that produce stories about health and wellbeing. She founded the Malawi Medical Humanities Network in 2017 and is currently supporting the transition to project the Malawi University of Science and Technology.

Panel 1.5 Romantic Energies: Science, Technology, and Satire in the Early 19th Century
Chair: Barri Gold

Frank James, 'Before Thermodynamics: The Gaz Engine in the 1820s'. The laws of thermodynamics which started to be formulated in the 1840s have exerted considerable influence on writers, not least C.P. Snow using the second law as his test of scientific literacy for literary intellectuals. This paper will consider how such issues were approached in 1820s through the lens of the Gaz engine. This device was conceived following Humphry Davy and Michael Faraday discovering in 1823 that gases, such as chlorine and carbon dioxide, could be liquefied under pressure. Davy immediately had the idea that liquid gases might be able to displace steam as the expansive motive force for engines. He was in effect seeking a sort of perpetual motion – an idea that would have been inconceivable two decades later. For the remainder of the 1820s the engineers Marc Isambard Brunel and his son Isambard Kingdom Brunel sought to render the Gaz engine as a practical device. They failed largely due to the high level of engineering precision required, and appear not to have appreciated the theoretical impossibility of what they were trying to do. Nevertheless, their work did attract some interest from writers such as Henry Holland and Maria Edgeworth.

Frank James is Professor of History of Science at University College London. His has written widely on eighteenth- to twentieth-century science and technology and how they relate to other areas of society and culture. He edited in six volumes The Correspondence of Michael Faraday (IET) and wrote Michael Faraday: A Very Short Introduction (OUP) and is currently studying Humphry Davy's practical work. Past president of both the Newcomen Society and the British Society for the History of Science, he is now Chair of the Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry.

Sara Cole, 'Byron, Davy and The Bubbles: A Satiric Intertwining': The Davy Notebooks Project has revealed new poems written by Sir Humphry Davy and more comprehensive transcriptions of previously-discovered ones. One of these is a satire called 'On The Bubbles', a response to lines in Byron's English Bards and Scotch Reviewers and several stanzas in Don Juan where Byron reflects through satire on new discoveries in science, medicine and technology. Byron and Davy knew and admired each other, they met several times in Italy in the early 1820s and they appeared in each other's work: Byron described Davy as 'a great chemist' and mentioned him in Don Juan. Davy wrote two poems about Byron. Byron has long been associated with the satiric tradition, but he also had a wide knowledge of and interest in science and made claims for science to be the equivalent of poetry in terms of its ability to make sense of our human experience. Davy was an eminent man of science whose poetry was admired by many including Samuel Taylor Coleridge. In this paper I compare their interrelated satires and argue that both poets bring a scientific method of sceptical observation to their assessments of the impact of new developments in science, technology and medicine on contemporary life.

Sara Cole is a postgraduate researcher in the Department of English Literature and Creative Writing at Lancaster University and her research focuses on the relationship between science and satire in the Romantic period. Her academic interests include literature and science, the literary and visual satire of the Romantic period and the history of science, technology and medicine.

Paul Hamann-Rose, 'The Patent Accelerator, Potatoes, and the Periodicals: The Curious Originality of Romantic Science and Technology' The discourse of invention offered both literary and scientific authors of the early nineteenth century a framework to articulate their generative powers. Discursively, innovation in the arts and in science and technology was routinely couched in the same references to geniality, inspiration and singular ability. Yet the similar accolades of originality thus bestowed on poets and natural philosophers gloss over important differences that, when unearthed, illuminate an often overlooked but crucial interrelation between art and science in the Romantic period. In this paper, I explore the public craving for scientific and mechanical innovation in the early decades of the nineteenth century as evidenced by the growing space in periodicals such as The European Magazine or the Monthly Magazine dedicated to reports of new patents and inventions. Publishing new poetry alongside improvements in fields ranging from print production to the preserving of potatoes, these periodicals testify to multiple and overlapping cultures of originality. Against contemporary debates in the arts and sciences about geniality, utility, and intellectual property, paying attention to how new patents and inventions were mediated in these publications helps us understand how the status of the individual creative mind was negotiated within the social, cultural and legal contexts of the period.

Paul Hamann-Rose is Assistant Professor of English Literature and Culture at the University of Passau, Germany. His two principle areas of research are the legal and cultural construction of authorship across the new media landscapes of British Romanticism, as well as the interrelations between literature and genetic science. Current publications include his book Genetics and the Novel: Reimagining Life Through Fiction (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024) and "Mediating Authorship: Wordsworth, Copyright and Media History" (European Romantic Review, 2024).

Panel 2.1 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 1): Lost Worlds, Evolution, and the Prehistoric Imagination
Chair: John Holmes

Anna McCullough, 'Survivals, Lost Worlds, and Evolutionary Progress in Edward Bulwer Lytton's *The Coming Race*' In 1871, Edward Burnett Tylor described the doctrine of survivals in his anthropological text Primitive Culture. Like Charles Darwin's vestigial organs, Tylor's survivals were remnants from a previous stage of evolutionary development, appearing in culture rather than in biology. Although Tylor's description of sociocultural evolution was progressive, survivals disrupted this progressive development by retaining 'primitive' qualities in modern society. Although many Victorian intellectuals, like Tylor, saw survivals as obsolete relics, others saw them as catalysts for new, alternative means of development. Popular fiction writers were particularly interested in survivals, which offered ways of imagining transformative interactions between past and present, and between British and non-western cultures. In The Coming Race, published in the same year as Tylor's Primitive Culture, Edward Bulwer Lytton portrays places, behaviours, cultures, and even races as ancient survivals that impact humanity's evolutionary trajectory. Drawing upon anthropology and evolutionary theory, this paper will examine Bulwer Lytton's idiosyncratic understanding of survivals and their role in sociocultural development. In his portrayal of a lost world and a re-emerging antediluvian race, Bulwer Lytton considers the possibility of societal perfectibility, the biological and anthropological links between races, and the power of survivals in Victorian culture.

Dr Anna McCullough's research focuses on the intersections between Victorian fiction and science. Her interests include evolutionary theory, children's literature, fantastical literature, animal studies, and folklore. She has published in the Journal of Victorian Culture and The Literary Encyclopedia, and she presents regularly at BAVS and BSLS. As an early-career scholar, she is currently finishing a book manuscript based on her PhD thesis and planning a new project on anthropological survivals in Victorian popular fiction.

Billie Gavurin, '"The nightmares of science": human prehistory in Huysmans' "À rebours" and the artworks of Odilon Redon' This paper focuses on Joris-Karl Huysmans' ekphrastic response, in his 1884 novel 'À rebours' (translated as 'Against Nature' or 'Against the Grain'), to the works of the Symbolist visual artist Odilon Redon. Many of Redon's paintings and illustrations engage with questions of our evolutionary development via fantastical and mythological imagery. Human and nonhuman shapes combine unnervingly, whether in the form of classical hybrids such as centaurs and satyrs, or in creations of Redon's own invention: a spider with the face of a child; a human head blooming from a leafy plant. These images speak to the cultural impact of evolutionary theory, with the lines between species no longer understood as being definitive. For Huysmans, such works emerge from 'the nightmares of science', and represent 'a new kind of fantasy, born of sickness and delirium'. In this paper, I will examine the ways in which evolutionary science and the fantastical combine in both Redon's artworks, and Huysmans' response to them. Ultimately, I seek to explore the question of what role myth and fantasy play in these fin-de-siècle works' reception of recently discovered palaeoanthropological truths.

Billie Gavurin is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Birmingham. Her research focuses primarily on the relationship between evolutionary science and mythology in the culture of the long nineteenth century, with a particular interest in questions of human identity and hybridity. She has published articles on myth and evolution in the literature of H. G. Wells and Algernon Blackwood, and has a forthcoming chapter on the Greek god Pan and Darwinian nature in E. F. Benson's 1904 short story 'The Man Who Went Too Far'. Her current research project focuses on counterfactual representations of prehistoric hominins in fin-de-siècle fiction.

Nathan Lewis Bramald, 'Science or sensationalism? Palaeofictional and palaeontological influences on the depiction of saurian life in Crichton's Jurassic Park and The Lost World'. Michael Crichton crafted Jurassic Park utilising the revolutionary research of the dinosaur renaissance period, receiving deserved praise for his scientific updating of fictional and literary dinosaurs, which would henceforth resemble active and intelligent creatures, rather than lumbering brutes. Still, there is an underappreciated and understudied link that exists between works of early palaeofiction and Jurassic Park. Early palaeofictional dinosaurs generally signified as monstrous, antagonistic, sensational creatures bearing little resemblance to real animals. Whilst subsequent linguistic approaches to describing dinosaurs changed dramatically, their fictional signification often remained rooted in early palaeofictive sensationalism. Crichton's dinosaurs are active and intelligent, but also antagonistic and monstrous. Their destructive and offensive qualities are frequently highlighted, emphasised, and outright exaggerated. Further, Crichton projects sensationalised speculative qualities onto many species, such as his acid-spitting dilophosaurus and hyper-intelligent, ultra-malevolent velociraptors. This paper will identify influences on saurian depictions in Jurassic Park and its sequel The Lost World, noting Crichton's blending of contemporary scientific revelation with the sensational roots of early palaeofiction. It will argue that whilst the science of the dinosaur renaissance is absorbed by and communicated through these novels, the sensationalism of early palaeofiction seeps into Crichton's otherwise revolutionary saurians. Given Jurassic Park's immense influence on media depictions of dinosaurs, this paper will further argue that early palaeofictional sensationalism survives vicariously in media and public consciousnesses through Crichton's adoption of early literary approaches to imaginatively constructing dinosaurs.

Nathan Lewis Bramald is a doctoral student studying at the University of Liverpool on a School of the Arts doctoral scholarship. His research pertains to the representation of dinosaurs in anglophone literature and film, with particular reference to how the science of the "Dinosaur Renaissance" has been communicated through literary fiction.

Panel 2.2 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 2) New Narrative Structures
Chair: Jenni Halpin

Gabriel Burrow, 'Science fiction as model: From artificial intelligence to alternative realities' This paper makes a case for analysing science fiction texts as a kind of model. This is a contentious proposition within literary circles. The term model is inextricably linked to quantitative practices and research methodologies, as well as computational systems. And, of all genres, science fiction has the greatest challenge moving beyond these associations; increasingly, it is instrumentalised for the purposes of future-thinking and product design (Dunne and Raby; Sterling). Drawing from first-hand experience working with technology firms, I identify throughlines between science fiction texts and the technological imaginaries of artificial intelligence and the metaverse. Whether through interpretation of existing texts or commissioning of new ones, science fiction is treated as a model to be emulated in search of profit. However, thinking of literary texts as models does not necessarily render them instructive or probabilistic. A handful of scholars have used the term model to describe the ability of texts to gesture towards larger systems and totalities through the narrow focus of their narratives (Shaviro; Elliott). Making reference to novels by Kim Stanley Robinson and Yanis Varoufakis, I argue that science fiction texts viewed in these terms have the capacity to gesture towards open-ended possibilities—to contingency and change.

Gabriel Burrow is a writer and researcher based in London. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from Leiden University with an MA in Literature and Society and is now studying for a PhD at Birkbeck, University of London. The focus of his research is practices of modelling in 21st-century science fiction. Alongside academia, he works as Research Lead for a creative communications agency, writing articles, reports, and whitepapers for major technology firms. His story "Bonsai" was shortlisted by the Urban Tree Festival and featured in its Canopy anthology, while his scholarship has been published in Foundation and SFRA Review.

Brandon Chitwood, 'Dao Zero: Hyperspace and Nihilism in the Anthropocene'. One could be forgiven for reducing the history of modernity to the pursuit of ever more precise measurements of time and space. The chronometer, the calculus, and other tools of measurement have transformed the planet over the past five centuries -- "shrinking" our world of distance and duration in the various interests of colonization, imperialism, capitalism and globalism. Modern life has become unthinkable without the time zones, alarm clocks and GPS systems which now constitute our lived experience of extension, duration and movement. But by the middle 20th century, speculative

fiction had devised imaginative means of shortening, even annihilating, these distances and divisions even further: film editing, narrative contrivance, and the panel-logic of comic books all worked to contract time and space – even galaxy-spanning light years. Beyond the obvious diegetic and dramatic needs for streamlining the representation of imaginary travel in spacetime, this paper will argue that such elisions do not simply allow for narrative excitement, but rather train us, the late capitalist consumer of fantasy, to demand such speeds in our Anthropocene reality, showing that fiction without speed limits can determine the measure of our commitment to time-sensitive issues of global reach on our home planet.

My research interests are in Victorian literature and culture, as well as the popular culture of the late 20th century. I have published and presented essays on Dickens, the Brontës, and representations of gender and identity in postmodern media. I teach at Saint Paul College in Minnesota, USA.

Irida Altman, 'Reading Mathematical and Literary Texts Through One Another' Contemporary Western mathematical and literary textual practices—practices of reading, writing, interpreting, manipulating textual elements—are usually considered only weakly comparable through their use of natural language and rhetorical strategies, with occasional similarities drawn based on storytelling and experimentation strategies. Analyses tend to focus on reading mathematical texts using literary concepts or on reading literary texts as structured by or as treating aspects of mathematical practice. I propose to entangle both approaches by relying on my own hermeneutical tools ('presentations' and 'd|rections'), developed to study both types of texts. Specifically, inspired by Karen Barad's diffractive reading, I propose to read mathematical proofs and literary excerpts through one another. Firstly, we read a literary excerpt for its underlying mathematical structure—for example, its treatment of logically exclusive scenarios—a process during which we obtain a particular social understanding of that structure. This understanding can then be used to guide the reading of a specific proof with that structure, thus exposing a previously hidden social aspect of the proof. The interpretation process may continue back and forth. I'll illustrate this entangled reading on a simple proof by cases and an excerpt from the postmodernist book "My Cousin, My Gastroenterologist" (Leyner 1990).,

Irida Altman is a doctoral student at ETH Zürich, researching in the intersection of philosophy, literature, and mathematics. Her project, titled 'Textuality and Mathematics: A Hermeneutics', is developing a theory of interpretation in the poststructural tradition based around the idea that textual practices rely on small quasi-languages (presentation systems) held together through established ways of interpretation (d|rections). Using this theory, she studies mathematical and literary textuality. She holds a doctorate in low-dimensional topology.

Panel 2.3 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 3): Shakespeare
Chair: Jerome de Groot

Emma de Beus, "Promising Young Woman: A Case Study of the Interdisciplinary Potential of Shakespeare and Light"
In this paper, I argue that the 2020 film Promising Young Woman (directed by Emerald Fennell) represents a prime 21st century example of how the physics of light and literary adaptations of Shakespeare can work symbiotically. Specifically, I will argue that Promising Young Woman constitutes an entangled adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet, a term which draws on the methodologies of optics. I analyze this novel form of adaptation–one characterized by surprising connections such as this case study– by considering the individual and thematic parallels between the 21st century film and the early 17th century play. Due to the entangled relationship between these two works, it would be impossible to reconstruct Shakespeare's famous early modern revenge tragedy from Promising Young Woman, unlike adaptations more closely connected to the original material. However, without the assistance of entanglement, it would be impossible, however, to hear the echo of Hamlet's story in Cassie's and to thereby be able to appreciate both more fully. Finally, I argue that this entangled adaptation provides a rare view into the extent to which the medium of adaptation can be stretched to accommodate even unlikely and unexpected examples in fruitful and nuanced consideration, taking adaptation to a new plane of understanding.

Emma de Beus is undertaking her PhD at Queen's University Belfast. Her research focus is contemporary adaptation of Shakespeare. She holds postgraduate degrees from Columbia University and The Shakespeare Institute. Her work has been published in the peer-reviewed Humanities and LEA – Lingue e Letterature d'Oriente e d'Occidente.

She has presented her work at meetings of the Shakespeare Association of America, the British Shakespeare Association, the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts, the British Society for Literature and Science, and at the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Timothy Ryan Day, 'Swallow'd with Yeast and Froth: Shakespeare and Fermentation' This paper will look at references to beer, ale, yeast, fermentation and distillation in Early Modern England and the works of Shakespeare. The idea that "spirits" could inhabit material was common ground between brewing and alchemy and represented an early modern scientific understanding of how something could shift from inanimate to living. The reanimation of Hermione at end of The Winter's Tale can be understood through the language of fermentation. There is also a metaphorical invocation of yeast as the sea is "swallow'd with yeast and froth" which takes place near the speech by the character Time in the space between the two geographically and generically separated halves. With the passage of years, Leontes' rage has calmed, and time has made the tragic outset of the play into a pastoral tale. The paper will look at fermentation in Early Modern England through scientific, alchemical, medical, and culinary lenses. Through analysis of Early Modern English texts, I seek an understanding of the process of fermentation, as well as the rhetorical and literary uses of yeast, leaven, and ferment as metaphors.

Timothy Ryan Day is Associate Professor of Early Modern Literature and Creative Writing at Saint Louis University's Madrid campus. His work has been published in Green Letters, Ecozon@, Interdisciplinary Science Reviews, and La Revista Pan among other places. He has several upcoming chapters and articles on Shakespeare, food, trees and fermentation. His books include the academic monograph Shakespeare and the Evolution of the Human Umwelt (Routledge 2020) and the novels Outside Athens (Adelaide 2021) and Big Sky (Adelaide 2024).

Panel 2.4 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 4): Water
Chair: Frank James

Rebekah Musk, 'H2O and the Molecular Mechanics of Queerness in Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan' Water has long been considered a transformational substance, shaping both landscape and society. Recently, there has been a marked increase in the attention paid to coastal and maritime spaces in scholarship on the long nineteenth century, but less attention has been paid to the materiality of the water itself. This is surprising given that H2O is one of the most ubiquitous and unusual molecules there is. Its uncommon bonding mechanisms, uneven polarities and uncertain orientations across different states disrupt notions of a stable spatiality, which may in turn destabilise established understandings of a text. I argue that the molecular peculiarities of H2O ripple through multiple levels of literary space, and that therefore a scientific understanding of the molecular mechanics of water, ice and vapour is a useful tool for literary analysis. Drawing on Sara Ahmed's ideas about orientation and the spatiality of queerness, I examine how we might use the molecular structure of H2O as a lens through which to view the queerness of aqueous textual spaces. My analysis focuses on the role of water and ice in Coleridge's poem 'Kubla Khan' and how the molecular disorientations of H2O offer a new way of reading queerness into this text.

I completed my PhD at Lancaster University in October 2023 and have been working as a research assistant on the Davy Notebooks Project. My research interests are queer spatial theory in the long nineteenth century, particularly how modern scientific understandings can help challenge heternormative perceptions of space.

Martin Willis and Keir Waddington, 'Charles Kingsley and the Water Companies' In his strange lecture, 'The Air Mothers', Charles Kingsley speculates on uses for the excess water following heavy rain and floods. For Kingsley, the water 'might have kept up health and cleanliness in poor creatures packed away in the back streets of the nearest town' or restore those 'crying out for rain' during a time of drought if only water companies would undertake their duties properly. Kingsley's lamentation of the poor state of Britain's waterways leads him to imagine himself immersed in water as a way to understand what water means in a 'civilized nation'. In the same way Tom in The Water-Babies (1863) is immersed in water as part of his spiritual (and Darwinian) evolution. While the watery themes of Kingsley's work have been acknowledged – and then often dismissed - a Blue Humanities approach shifts our understanding by placing water and its sciences (from public health to civil engineering) at the centre of

analysis. In this paper, therefore, we explore what water meant to Kingsley in his children's novel and essay. We ask what they can tell us about water in the 1860s, when debate focused on the polluted nature of Britain's waterways and the failures of private water companies to provide water for Kingsley's 'poor creatures'.,

Martin Willis is Professor of English at Cardiff University. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Literature and Science and former chair of the British Society for Literature and Science. His work focusses on Victorian literature and science, especially the medical sciences.

Emily Alder, 'Seas of light: marine bioluminescence in nineteenth-century science and fiction' The fugitive phenomenon of marine bioluminescence fascinated oceanographers and writers alike. While the tiny glowing organisms that produced it could be collected and, and their remains measured, dissected, and drawn, the only way to preserve this transient spectacle of night-time waters was by writing. Bioluminescence inspired scientists like Charles Wyville Thomson to poetic reaches as much as it did authors like Walter Scott and H. G. Wells. This paper examines how fiction, poetry, and science alike sought to understand the phenomenon within nineteenth-century discourses of creation, evolution, and ecology.
Despite the light and clarity of luminous bodies, they did little to diminish what remained unknown about the sea, or about the forces and agencies at work in the living world. Usually observed on or near the surface of the sea, bioluminescence prompted writers to ecological and metaphysical speculations, evoking the phenomenon with precision, yet associating it with fleeting precarity, unseen worlds, mysterious agencies, and elusive possibilities. I argue that observation and language, facts and whimsy, were all necessary tools for fathoming bioluminescence, a phenomenon that challenged some of the nineteenth-century's dominant constructions of knowledge, knowing, and human-nature relationships.

Dr Emily Alder researches literature and science, environmental humanities, Gothic, and Weird fiction, particularly in the literature and culture of the long nineteenth century. She is the author of Weird Fiction and Science at the Fin de Siècle, a monograph published in 2020 with Palgrave Macmillan, and numerous articles and chapters about animals, the sea, and environmentalism in Weird, Gothic, and science fiction. Emily is co-convenor of the Haunted Shores Research Network (https://haunted-shores.com) and co-editor of Gothic Studies, the journal of the International Gothic Association.

Panel 2.5 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 5) Other Landscapes
Chair: Adele Guyton

Jim Scown, 'Life on 'the Cornish Mars': Literatures and Landscapes of Extraction' This paper examines the relationship between scientific knowledge and literary form through representations of extraction and remediation at a mining site in Cornwall. Known as 'the Cornish Mars' for its distinctive red soilscape, Wheal Maid, in Cornwall's Poldice valley, is one of the most contaminated locations in Britain. The nineteenth-century history of the mine as one of the most productive copper mines in the world - 'the richest square mile on earth' - is signposted at the site. Signs also warn of the toxicity the landscape now holds, following the decision in the late 1970s to construct two tailing lagoons in the valley. Other times are held within the landscape, where the leaching of arsenic indicates failed containment strategies and the slow violence of toxic chemicals in the soil. Yet despite their toxicity to humans, life is not absent from these soils. As interest in mining for rare-earth metals for renewable technologies grows, the search is on at Wheal Maid for bacteria that might help to detoxify the land. This paper examines the contested forms of extraction and regeneration that emerge at the intersection of scientific writing on microbial remediation, the narrative histories of mining presented at Wheal Maid, and the anthropogenic soils of the site, drawing out how relationships between scientific knowledge and literary form act to constitute contested versions of the region's future as well as its ongoing materiality.

Jim Scown is Lecturer in Environmental Humanities at the University of Exeter's campus in Cornwall, UK, where he is co-director of the Centre for Environmental Arts and Humanities. From 2021-2023 he worked for the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission, where he is now an advisor. He is a BBC New Generation Thinker, regularly sharing his research on BBC Radio 3. His research focuses on the intersections of soils, literature and science.

Liliane Campos, 'Ecological Microcosms in A. S. Byatt's late fiction. This paper will theorize the role of ecological microcosms in twenty-first-century fiction by A. S. Byatt. My study focuses on stories where a single organism, an object or a small-scale area represents a larger ecosystem. Through these images, Byatt turns tropes drawn from popular science into spaces and agents of fiction. I analyze these microcosms as tools that help the reader engage with the planetary scale, enabling ecological perception by connecting incommensurable temporal and physical scales. These tropes, however, are inherently unstable, particularly in the novel Ragnarok, where the smooth scaling of microcosmic representation chafes against disjunctions of scale. My paper will ask what ethical and epistemic work is performed by these figures, and what forms of ecological response-ability they enable. I suggest that Byatt's unstable microcosms play with the complex space-time of environmental grief and Anthropocene guilt, as conceptualized by Timothy Clark, Paul K. Saint-Amour, and Lucy Bond, and that they simultaneously enable mourning as an affect and question it as a posture.

Liliane Campos is a Lecturer in English and Theatre Studies at the Sorbonne Nouvelle, and a Fellow of the Institut Universitaire de France. Her research explores the role of biology in contemporary literature and performance. She is the author of two monographs on science in theatre, and has edited several collective volumes, including the open access book Life, Re-Scaled: The Biological Imagination in Twenty-First-Century Literature and Performance.

Panel 2.6 (Charles Carter Building, A15): Monstrous Bodies and Medical Minds
Chair: Adelene Buckland

Sophie Haywood, "The Vampire Problem: Gothicizing Science" Gothic texts have often interrogated the boundaries of scientific inquiry. These narratives transform the scientific into the fantastical, where the line between what is hopeful or horrific is precarious. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818) and Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1886) are prominent texts in the canon of 'Gothic Science', equal parts awesome and awful. It can be argued that they began a long tradition of fictional scientific experiments gone awry. This paper will consider the delicate boundary separating science from magic, where monstrousness is intrinsic to both the process and result of experimentation.

I am particularly interested in how this has manifested in modern vampire literature. Every aspect of the vampire's existence has been subject to attempted scientific explanation, to varying degrees, in many of its iterations. True Blood (2008) asked if vampire's could be fed synthetically. The Vampire Diaries (2009) explored how the vampire transition would affect cancer. Twilight (2005) even had a vampire pregnancy, testing the limits of what 'undead' really means. Using these examples, I will examine how the vampire's body has become a site of transformation, where science and magic coalesce, grappling with science's potential, and its monstrous implications.

Sophie Haywood is a second year PhD candidate at the University of Sheffield. Her thesis examines the relationship between space and temporality in Ann Radcliffe's novels, considering the significance of diegetic structures, and the material conditions of the text as object. She was previously Co-President of Sheffield Gothic Reading Group, where she organised the 'Consuming the Gothic' conference and creative writing workshop. She has delivered lectures on *The Romance of the Forest* for the University of Sheffield, and was a guest speaker for the Miskatonic Institute of Horror Studies, where she discussed the influence of the Female Gothic on contemporary haunted house narratives. Sophie is also interested in pop culture phenomenon of the vampire and its transformation for an audience of young women.

Claudia Sterbini, 'Asexuality, Nonsexuality, and "The Real Demi-Vierge": Reading George Moore's "John Norton"' In his short story 'John Norton', featured in the collection Celibates (1895), Moore is concerned with representing a character whose lack of interest in sex is insistently defined in terms of being rather than choice. In this paper I will demonstrate that, in the presentation of John Norton, the term 'celibates', is not used to define a state of being unmarried and instead works as a sexual label comparable to others circulating at the time (i.e. 'homosexual', 'sexual anaesthesia'). It will be evidenced that, working in a way that resembles the pseudo-scientific case studies of sexology, Moore uses his characters as fictive case studies that allow him to translate his fascination with the 'perverse' (Confessions of a Young Man, 86) into empathetic narratives that Moore uses to attempt to understand the sexuality of individuals experiencing sex and gender in ways different from his own. I will showcase,

first of all, Moore's interest in and indebtedness to sexological praxis and his investment in the studies on sexual behaviours that circulated at the fin de siècle. Most importantly, I will also read Moore's writing as a project that creates parallel sexological formulations of the nonsexual patient, simultaneously mirroring, contrasting and doing sexology.

Claudia Sterbini is a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh. Her project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, explores the construction of pathological asexuality in Victorian fiction. Her research intermixes medical humanities methods with queer theory, excavating the history of asexuality. She has published articles on her medical humanities methods and on the objects of sexology in the journal The Polyphony.

Kristen Loutensock, 'Trauma Medicine: Contemporary American Medical Dramas' This paper examines post-Affordable Care Act representations of the American hospital in serial television drama. These shows, which center trauma narratives as a way to center the "defective doctor" as uniquely able to combine engineering-centered surgery and observational skills connected to the police detective, reposition the American hospital as sites of good medicine and bad administration. In the shows I examine (The Good Doctor, The Resident, New Amsterdam, and Brilliant Minds), medicine is re-centered as a practice of eccentric geniuses, generally cis white men, whose past traumas allow them to see the body as a machine and to see the small details missed by others. These doctors are surrounded by sympathetic nurses, who provide the care work, and empathetic hospital administrators, who see beyond capitalism and allow for a community-driven medicine to emerge despite the pressures of insurance and government oversight. This trio operates both to reassure the viewer that medicine is more than a business while also providing a fantasy of care that figures the body as a machine and the doctor as a skilled technician. This shift allows for an understanding of medicine as engineering, resituating the hospital as scientifically pure and objective.,

Dr. Kristen Loutensock received her PhD in Film and Media from the University of California, Berkeley. Currently a lecturer in the honors college of the University at Albany, her work focuses on the intersection of film, science, and medicine in 20th and 21st century American film and television.

Friday, 11th April

Panel 3.1 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 1): Health, Care, and Medicine: Historical Narratives and Literary Depictions
Chair: Brycchan Carey

Adelene Buckland (King's College, London), 'Artificial mothers: neonatal queerness and the nineteenth-century machine' Focusing on George Haven Putnam's short story 'The Artificial Mother' (first written for the social reformist Fraternity Club in the early 1870s, and published as an illustrated book in 1894), this paper opens up a consideration nineteenth-century technologies of infant care (self-rocking cradles, robot mothers, and incubators). In particular, I think through Jack Halberstam's call for "a queer politics which is ... not tied to a nihilism which also lines up against women, domesticity and reproduction" to consider the ways in which we might reconstruct the queerness of the neonatal moment in both psychoanalysis and literature. I contend here that technological solutions to the problems of infant care - usually more imaginative than actually practical - perform the ideological function of "straightening out" the potentially radical, potentially liberatory, potentially even queer connections between carer and heavily-dependent infant, and that they often do so in conjunction with technologies of race.

Adelene Buckland is a Reader in Literature and Science at King's College London, currently writing a book entitled Baby Machines: Or, How to Hold an Infant in the Electromechanical Age - for the University of Chicago Press.

Emma Butler, '"But What Shall We Do With a Doctor Here?": Health and the Seaside in the novels of Jane Austen' The paper will focus on the representation of the seaside resort as a setting in nineteenth-century literature that allows for discussion around health, illness, and the 'invalid' figure. Using the works of Jane Austen, mainly

Persuasion (1817) and Sanditon (1817/1925), I will demonstrate how historical perspectives of disability enable a discussion of the seaside as a liminal space; a place of shifting and transcending boundaries, in this instance surrounding attitudes towards sickness and disability. Despite being heavily satirised, the invalid character trope opens up contemporary discussion about the gendering of the invalid, the reputation of the ill and disabled in literature and society. Furthermore, readings of the 'invalid' character in the nineteenth century enable debates about the validity of illness and the perception of pain and sickness during the long nineteenth century. The paper also explores the reading of the invalid as 'ridiculous', and how sickness was popularised as an aesthetic by the Romantics as a warped form of leisure, largely at the detriment of the chronically ill and disabled.

Emma is a current PhD researcher in English Literature at Edge Hill University. Emma's thesis 'From Health to Leisure: The Seaside Resort in the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination' studies the representation of the coast as a liminal space, related to health, economics and the Gothic. As a member of the EHU Nineteen Research Centre, her research interest spans the long nineteenth century, with a specific focus on the novels of Jane Austen. Emma holds a BA (Hons) in English and an MA in Nineteenth-Century Studies from Edge Hill University and is an interdisciplinary scholar of literature and history.

Heather Wardlaw, 'The Development of Effective Medicine and Care in Charlotte Bronte's *Shirley*'. The development of the medical profession in many ways drastically outpaced the development of effective medical practice in the mid-nineteenth century, with the profession carving out their area of 'expertise' long before the science was able to support the physician's sole claim to medical practice. Perceptions of medicine changed quickly and drastically, though not in a steady upward trend. Opinions vacillated between complete trust in contemporary medicine and the belief that all doctors are 'quacks'. This paper seeks to examine the changing opinions of medicine during the period, examining the different instances where family knowledge exceeds that of the medical man and vice versa. Charlotte Bronte's Shirley, a novel typically discussed only for its merits regarding industrialisation, provides representation of these shifting beliefs regarding medicine within a small community. This microcosm of a Victorian community provides a portrayal not only of mid-nineteenth century opinions regarding medicine, but also of familial duty and female capability within the sickroom, with echoes of these conceptions still being played out in medical encounters today. Using Shirley, I will examine these tensions between the family care provider and the budding medical profession, and the outcomes of the patient care provided by each.

Heather Wardlaw is a PhD student at the University of Warwick under the supervision of Professor Liz Barry and Dr Emma Francis. Her doctoral project examines depictions of family nursing and care circa 1830-1860 alongside the professionalization of medicine by utilizing medical manuals and domestic manuals to examine the works of the Brontë sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Yonge, and George Eliot. Heather's core academic interests are medical humanities, feminist literary studies, and ethics of care theory. Heather holds an MA in English Literary Studies from Durham University and a BA in English Literature and Secondary Education from Western Washington University.

Panel 3.2 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 2): Types of Knowledge
Chair: Sarah Dillon

Kévin Cristin, '"The height of spires cannot be taken by trigonometry": Scientific knowledge and experience in Robert Louis Stevenson's narratives' On his canoe journey in Belgium and France, Robert Louis Stevenson remained deeply struck by the imposing figure of the Noyon Cathedral, even more so after standing at the top of one of its towers. In An Inland Voyage, the account of the journey, this experience provokes a reflection on the limits of a purely scientific understanding of the world. A few years earlier, Stevenson had abandoned his training as an engineer, thus breaking with his family's expertise in the construction of lighthouses. Considering this professional trajectory, most biographers and scholars have opposed the author's initial background to his literary activity. However, this paper argues that, throughout his career, Stevenson continued to develop a critical reflection on science. Relying on scholarship in the history of engineering and on archival sources, I address the specificities of Stevenson's experience at Edinburgh University and use it as the background of my reading of his works. I demonstrate that the author did not reject science altogether but considered its existence along, and complementarity with, other valuable forms of knowledge. His writings explore the tensions between these knowledges and dramatize them through a variety of genres, including the travel narrative, the gothic fiction and the adventure narrative.

Kévin Cristin teaches at the Department of Anglophone Studies at Aix-Marseille University, France, where he completed his PhD in 2024. His research focuses on the intersections between literature, science and technology in the nineteenth century, especially in the works of Robert Louis Stevenson, the popular writer and member of a dynasty of engineers. His dissertation examines how the author's experience as an apprentice engineer shaped significant features of his literary works. Cristin's investigation follows the itinerary of Stevenson across disciplines, from his early training in engineering to his anthropological work in the colonial context of the Pacific.

Marijke Valk, 'From Lead to Lightning: Electrifying Alchemy and the Science of Transmutation in Arthur Conan Doyle's The Doings of Raffles Haw' As the Victorian era waned, alchemy experienced a remarkable resurgence, transitioning from a spiritual pursuit to a subject of scientific inquiry. Once dismissed as the embarrassing ancestor of chemistry, it came to be regarded as the future of modern science by both leading scientists and practitioners of occult spirituality and magic. Arthur Conan Doyle's The Doings of Raffles Haw (1891) epitomises this zeitgeist, featuring an alchemist who harnesses electrical currents to transmute matter into gold. The narrative, largely neglected by scholars, aligns with contemporary atomic theories, such as Lockyer's 1878 'dissociation hypothesis', positing that elements could break down into fundamental parts under extreme conditions, while also engaging with the occult concept of protyle, the primordial matter in alchemical traditions. I argue that Doyle's exploration of electricity and energy reflects the fin de siècle's dual interest, including theories predating Rutherford and Soddy's findings on radioactive disintegration, as well as advancing the idea – later proposed by Jasper Gibson – that electricity, heat, and radioactivity correspond to the alchemical sulphur, mercury, and salt, underscoring the alchemist's ability to manipulate energy. This paper posits Doyle's work as pivotal in alchemy's cultural evolution, affirming its integration into scientific discourse and its viability as a transformative practice.

Marijke Valk is an AHRC-funded PhD candidate in the English Literature Department at the University of Birmingham. Her PhD project, titled 'Transmuting the Borderland: Late-Victorian Fiction's Alchemical Revival and the Re-Enchantment of Science', examines the revival of alchemy and its influence on contemporary science through late-Victorian fiction. Her forthcoming chapter in Palgrave Macmillan's *Victorian Gothic and the Occult* explores the interplay between Gothic alchemical tropes and the scientific and occult anxieties of the nineteenth century.

Shannon Lambert, 'Dear Diary: The Weather, Emotion, and Epistolary Epistemologies in Women's Environmental Writing' This paper considers how epistolary forms such as diaries and journals chart environmental knowledge that is intimate, embodied, and everyday. Diaries, letters, and other ephemera collect around issues like climate change, functioning as understated and quiet sources of environmental information. However, many of the diaries and journals preserved in archives and collections belong to men—a reality that may be linked with social attitudes that saw men's minds and writings as more rational and objective, more "worthy of conservation" (Adamson 2015: 603-4). With this in mind, I turn to two literary examples that centre women's diary writing— Ruth Ozeki's "A Tale for the Time Being" (2013) and Nina Munteanu's "A Diary in the Age of Water" (2020). In these works, the seemingly solo endeavour of keeping a diary is stretched to collective and environmental scales creating a "network of weather diaries" (Adamson 2015: 602). In analysing both texts, I argue that diaries constitute a form of epistolary epistemology that adds experiential texture to abstract climatological processes like the weather through their blending of the quantitative and qualitative, and the individual and atmospheric.

Shannon Lambert is a BOF-funded postdoctoral researcher at Ghent University. Her research focuses on topics like science and narrative, environmental affect, and the nonhuman in literature. She is the author of "Science and Affect in Contemporary Literature: Bodies of Knowledge" (Bloomsbury, 2024), a monograph which explores how, in contemporary literature, emotions like desire, suffering, anxiety, and joy shape scientific persons, practices, and products. Beyond this, she is interested in scientific communication and creative ways of engaging with science.

Panel 3.3 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre LT 3): Genetics and Speculative Futures
Chair: Sharon Ruston

Jake Street (University of Lancaster), 'Kennedy and Hitler Reborn: Fears and Fallacies of Cloning as Resurrection in *Joshua, Son of None* and *The Boys From Brazil*'
Kerry Lynn Macintosh describes the resurrection fallacy as the misapprehension that "a person can be cloned to extend or resume the life of a deceased genetic precursor." Belief in this fallacy has led to situations like the outpouring of grief filled letters to the Roslin Institute following the birth of Dolly requesting that the researchers clone dead pets, and tragically, dead family members. This paper considers the way in which the fallacy emerges in the political space through Nancy Freedman's Joshua, Son of None and Ira Levin's The Boys from Brazil. Both involve the secret cloning of influential political figures with the goal of resurrecting them to usher in a new political age, leaving open questions about selfhood and genetic determinism. Both contend with a break from the genetic legacy of the clones. Yet, both circle back to, if not resurrection of the person, resurrection of the image of the person through cloning. In an era of toxic nostalgia, the horror of Hitler reborn and the fantasy of a 21st century progressive attaining Kennedy's legacy mean that these 20th century novels offer a morbid look at tech-saviourism in the use of cloning technology to produce a political messiah figure.

I am a postgraduate researcher at Lancaster University whose research focuses on the theoretical intersections of technology and literature. My PhD is on clone ontologies and their bioethical ramifications in and through science fiction.

Jenni G Halpin (Savannah State University), 'Begging the Ecology to Become Differently' In Nancy Kress's novella "Beggars in Spain", the protagonist, Leisha Camden concludes that the best model for human society is an "ecology of help." She becomes especially interested in models that include reciprocal aid, which aligns with the economic philosophy she and others in the 1991 novella espouse (Yagaiism). Because Camden is building her understanding up from this economic philosophy, her concluding position remains transactional. My reading will argue that terraforming is a better figuration of the desirable interactions between the haves and have-nots of this novella, foregrounding the inter-activity of humanity and the environments in which we belong. Through this re-framing I will explore Kress's Beggars series' applicability to the ongoing climate crisis (and our seemingly-inexorable approach to the 3-degree warming point), seeking an economy of oikos (home) rather than one of obligation or contractual exchange.

Jenni G Halpin works broadly across science and literature, considering dramatic texts and works of fiction, especially in relation to biology and physics. Her recent work seeks to complicate and correlate the interdisciplinary fields of science and literature and of science and theology.

Jayde Martin (University of Birmingham), 'From Gene Patenting to Genetic Manipulation: Assetisation of the Genome in Nancy Kress' *Beggars and Choosers* (1994)'
In Beggars and Choosers (1994), Nancy Kress speculates that the ethics of gene patenting and its use in the American pharmaceutical industry would negatively affect the application of genetic manipulation under the same system. She extrapolates on the context of gene patenting in the 1990s to explore the socio-cultural effects of genetic manipulation. The context of monetising genetic data (for pharmaceutical profit and application within healthcare systems) provides insight into Kress' exploration of the social consequences of assetising the genome. Her worldbuilding critiques the role that the assetisation of the genome plays in worsening wealth disparity. One of the most pertinent patents to Kress' text was the monopoly patenting of cancer genes by healthcare company Myriad Genetics. Kress' extrapolation on the ethics of gene patenting for the widespread use of genetic manipulation tellingly anticipates some of social inequalities outlined in the 2013 Supreme Court case Association for Molecular Pathology vs Myriad Genetics. To further assist in understanding how Kress uses literary techniques to explore assetising the genome, this paper uses Wendy Brown's critical work on neoliberal capitalism, Nicholas Rose's concept of the molecularization of life, and Kean Birch's analysis of the bio-economy.,

Jayde Martin PhD student at the University of Birmingham, previously funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. She is researching the representation of genetic manipulation in the North American feminist science-fiction trilogies of Margaret Atwood, Octavia Butler, and Nancy Kress. She has published with co-author Ben Horn on posthumanism and the use of viral infection in North American science-fiction literature by Greg Bear, featured in Routledge's Posthuman Pathogenesis: Contagion Literature, Arts and Media.

Panel 3.4 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 4): Interconnected Narratives: Relationality, Resources, and Representation in Global Literatures
Chair: Lucy Davies

Blaise Sales, 'Thinking with Relationality: Animals, Cognition and Textual Metamorphosis in Yoko Tawada's 'Memoirs of a Polar Bear' (2016)'. Heeding Terence Cave's argument that an account of 'cognition can't be accessed by logical or scientific modes of thinking alone', this paper explores how the Japanese-German writer Yoko Tawada makes use of gaps, fissures and betweenness in her novel 'Memoirs of a Polar Bear' (2016) to think beyond a reductive account of cognition, as predicated on an exclusively brain-based, singular and human-centred cognitive unit. Drawing on Michael Cronin's work on 'eco-translation' alongside post-humanist phenomenological accounts of the ecological body, this paper argues that Tawada's thrice-translated novel invites nuanced ways to conceptualise cognition as a constantly shifting and open-ended field of interlinguistic, intercorporeal and interspecies relationality. Attending to how the process of literary translation is itself an act of transformation, this paper focuses on the deep links between thematic content and form in 'Memoirs'. As the model of a 'body-in-movement-in-a-changing-environment' becomes increasingly dominant in cognitive science, this paper argues that Tawada's surrealist novel offers ways to think both about and beyond scientific formulations of embodied, ecological cognition. Instead of a closed model, Memoirs produces gaps, openings and spaces of body-becoming through the ways the animal bodies in the text and the linguistic bodies of the text move and change in translation.

Blaise Sales is a PhD student funded by the White Rose College of the Arts and Humanities. She holds a BA in English from King's College London, and an MA in the Medical Humanities from the University of York. Her current thesis brings models of 4E cognition into dialogue with ecocritical concerns to rethink the neoliberal ideology of bounded individualism in the context of global climate change. Her comparative methodology explores brain-body-world relations through different cultural epistemes and novelistic mediums beyond the universally exported models of Anglo-American cognitive science.

Rinni Haji Amran, 'More than an Oil Nation: Translating and Re-translating Oil in Mussidi's 'Hon!' (1997) and Kathrina Mohd Daud's *The Witch-Doctor's Daughter* (2022)' As Brunei seeks to ramp up its energy transition, there is an according need to re-examine the role of oil. Its discovery in 1929 paved the way for Brunei's independence, economic growth and political stability, which led to oil becoming synonymous with prosperity and a secure sense of national identity. Accordingly, the government and multinational oil-and-gas companies have fostered petro-narratives that naturalize the essentiality of oil to the nation. This has been demonstrated through their continued insistence on the necessity of oil and gas to the country's future. Thus, this paper suggests that a retranslation of oil can only be productive with a denaturalization of oil as inextricably linked to national identity and security. To that end, this paper will analyze two local works of fiction that elucidate the current translations and possible re-translations of oil in an energy transition. Mussidi's 'Hon!' (1997) defamiliarizes – and thus criticizes – the petro-narratives of unlimited economic growth and technological progress by utilizing the genre of magic realism. In contrast, Kathrina Mohd Daud's The Witch-Doctor's Daughter (2022), offers an alternative vision of Brunei beyond the current petroculture that is centered on the collective well-being of the diverse human and nonhuman communities in the nation.

Rinni Haji Amran is currently Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Oslo. She is working on her research project titled 'Petro-Ambiguity', which studies the Bruneian petroculture through local literature. Her research interests also include Southeast Asian ecocriticism and climate fiction, on which she has published several articles and book chapters. Rinni is also a Lecturer in English Studies at Universiti Brunei Darussalam. She graduated with a PhD in English Literature from the University of Exeter in 2015. Her thesis was on aviation and modernist British and American literature.

June Douglas, 'Women's Mental Health as Epitomized in Caribbean Literature' This paper, sets out to challenge the controversial area of women's mental health reflected in Caribbean literature concentrating on the 20th century and the development of femininity and its inherent images, constructed with the onset of industrialisation in the 19th century. Inequality, present today in the labour market and in the home, is illustrated within the texts, reflecting the change in society not only early in the 19th century but mid to late 20th Century with the granting of island independence from colonial powers.
Women in Western culture have become caught up in a forced binary, in which the extant power structures have devalued basic human values such as empathy in favour of objective, rational knowledge in ways that undermine the ability to recognize and respond to the signal functions of affect so crucial to psychosocial development. (Gilligan & Richards, 2009) Women's psychological trauma manifests in literary illustrations. In this paper, I will analyse the self-published story Force Ripe by Cindy

McKenzie and other stories local to the Anglophone Caribbean island states, using the treatment of Bertha in Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea written in the 20th century but set in the 19th century as a framework.

Dr. June Douglas is an Associate Professor at St. George's Medical University in Grenada. Dr. Douglas serves as the Director of English in the Department of Humanities & Social Science. As an accomplished author, her education text, "Education and Ghettoized Voices: A Deficit Ideology of Poverty in The Caribbean," was published this year by Routledge as part of the Research on Educational Equity in Developing Nations series, which sheds light on important issues related to education and social inequality in the region. Dr. Douglas's commitment to scholarly excellence and social justice is evident in her academic work and teaching.

Panel 3.5 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 5): Eighteenth-Century and Romantic Literature and Science
Chair: Sara Cole

Sophie Musitelli, "'From the mapped lichen, to the plumed weed, / From thready mosses to the veined flower": Sequence and Network in Charlotte Smith's Botanical Poetry' This paper offers to examine botanical metaphors in Charlotte Smith's poetry, from Elegiac Sonnets (1784-1797) to Beachy Head, Fables and Other Poems (1807), focusing on poems that exhibit a fondness for organisms living inside and / or feeding on other living structures. Smith's precise knowledge of natural history opens on to a reflection on the way form is spun, in organisms and poems alike. As she looks into the decay of saprotrophs nourishing plants they once fed on, Smith develops a poetics of vitality that reaches towards dead matter. Those intricate layers of decaying and developing tissue tear the poems away from the linear temporality of human life towards the strange temporality of plant and fungal life. More generally, the poems display a tension between sequence and network to build a poetics of cohabitation with nonhumans as inhabitation. The poems' tropism towards weaving, manifest in images of nesting birds, web-spinning spiders or silkworms extends to vegetal and fungal realms as, for instance, "leathery lichen weaves / Its wintry web". The poems' gnarled syntax and phonic networks also participate in that attempt at turning the linearity of writing into entanglements in which nonhuman life could nest and thrive.

Sophie LANIEL-MUSITELLI is Professor at the University of Lille (France). Her research focuses on the interactions among literature, the sciences and philosophy in the Romantic era. She has written books, articles and chapters on the works of Erasmus Darwin, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, William Blake, William Wordsworth, Percy B. Shelley, John Clare and Thomas De Quincey. She is currently working on a monograph entitled The Sciences of the Senses in Romantic Literature (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming) and on the research program WISE (Women Poets Inspired by the Sciences since the Romantic Era).

Greg Lynall, "'who can sing thy force?": Eighteenth-Century Women's Poetry and the Scientific Imagination Unbound'.
This paper will consider how women's poetry of the eighteenth century was both energised and intimidated by scientific knowledge and its establishment within polite culture. In so doing, it will include poetic voices wholly or substantially absent from the seminal studies of eighteenth-century poetry and science by Marjorie Nicolson and William Powell Jones – especially Phillis Wheatley and Jane Brereton – showing how those marginalised from scientific culture nevertheless incorporated natural knowledge within their works and possessed unique perspectives on this material. The paper will argue that while poetry became a significant populariser of scientific knowledge (at a time of increasing disciplinary specialization), and (in line with physico-theological thought) celebrated how science was transforming understanding of the Creation, female poets in particular were often anxious about the merits of their work in comparison to the seemingly limitless insights gained through the scientific practices of observation and experiment, which appeared to be transforming the possibilities of the imagination.

Professor Greg Lynall is King Alfred Chair in English Literature, and Head of English at the University of Liverpool. He is co-director of Liverpool's Literature & Science Hub research centre, and a former Chair of BSLS. His publications include Swift and Science (2012) and Imagining Solar Energy (2020).

Mateusz Kucab, 'Soul of Things. William Wordsworth, American Psychometry and New Materialism'. The aim of my paper is to analyze how 19th century American psychometrists centered William Wordsworth's poetry within the methodological framework of psychometry. The spiritualist-based idea of psychometry was based on

assumption that physical examination allows the interpreter to ‘read’ the inner side of things, both objects and animal remains. By inner side I mean their history, its previous owners, and previous vital energy. Interestingly, psychometric theorists, Joseph Rodes Buchanan and the Dentons, invoked Wordsworth as an artist and a thinker who proposed the most comprehensive insight into materiality. I argue that psychometrists used Wordsworth’s poems as a visual key to the theory of spiritual-oriented materiality. Psychometry plays an important role in spiritualism even though it is considered as pseudo-science. However, in my paper I want to show psychometry as both a cultural and historical phenomenon. During my presentation I will show how psychometry defined its theoretical framework through Wordsworth's poems (Buchanan, the Dentons), and how their psychometric interpretation could be seen as a form of literary analysis. This is why I would like to link psychometry with contemporary new materialism showing how both practices stimulate anthropocentric relationship with objects. My paper shows the result of my Fulbright research in American archives.

Mateusz Kucab is a doctoral student at the Jagiellonian University, a 2023/2024 Fulbright Junior Researcher and a member of the American Studies Association of Norway. He is preparing a doctoral dissertation on Emily Dickinson and Polish women poets of the 20th century. Mateusz is interested in contemporary ecocriticism and postsecularism, environmental ethics and possible connections between religious imagination and ecological awareness.

Panel 4.1 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 1): Roundtable: Creepy Methods for Queer Ecologies
Chair: Laura Ludtke

Laura Elizabeth Ludtke, Lloyd Meadhbh Houston, K Angel, Madeleine Rose, Samuel Bradley, Caleb Parkin, Mar Astrid Rodda.
The recent BSLS Winter Symposium ‘Imagining Queer Ecologies’ explored queer ecology as a potent critical and interpretive approach to exploring, to borrow Timothy Morton’s terms, the ‘intimacies’ and ‘interdependencies’ of literature and science, medicine, and technology. Building on this work, the proposed roundtable ‘Creepy Methods for Queer Ecologies’ expands on contribution to an upcoming issue of Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities theorising this praxis and these affinities through the concepts of ‘the creepy’ and ‘creepiness’. Beginning with the premise that creepiness is at once a way of knowing and of not knowing, this roundtable seeks to explore what creepy methods have to offer when it comes to ways of knowing wherein an imposition of categories become an intrusion of the definite, the real, and even the colonial on embodied, everyday ontologies and lived epistemologies. With an eye to extending the field of literature and science, this roundtable speaks to how (often simultaneously) the queer, the colonised, the disabled, the non-human co-opt creepiness, not only because they figure in category confusion but also in how they incite reorientations and, in some instances, de-orientations of bodies, objects, and affects. To this end, this roundtable asks what it means to have a ‘creepy method’ when working with and extending queer ecology as a concept and discipline. Participants in this roundtable will expand on their work to theorise and develop conceptual readings of the ‘creepy’ as a site where this traffic in norms and nature converges on affective experience within.

1) Considering creepiness as a means of understanding ecological entanglement in Charlotte Mew’s poetry, focusing on her presentation of unsettling disruptions of the domestic space in her dramatic monologues, and asking whether it is possible to locate ecological concepts creeping into her work via her personal relationships with botanists Edith Tansley (née Chick) and A.G. Tansley.
2) Exploring the connection of creepiness to the Eurasian jay, who ‘obscures knowledge’ in the landscape with their mimicry, with particular attention to the queer poetic voice and the creepiness of ‘mimicry without referent’: the inherent uncanniness which comes of animals speaking human words; the muddling of technology and ecology; and the ‘cover version’ that is the ‘after’ poem.
3) Discussing of the role of disability studies, autoethnography, and radical empathy with ancient texts while also focussing on the tension between acknowledging the ecology of their own body and their empathy with ancient bodies, and working within a secondary literature who keeps shying away from acknowledging real life pain experiences.
4) exploring autism as a neuroqueer ecology of creepiness by drawing on techniques from creative non-fiction, autie-ethnography, neuroqueer studies, and queer ecology to examine the collapse of the Anthropocene as a sovereign category in the work of J. G. Ballard and George Miller.

5) Exploring the literary modernist doll, especially in the work of Djuna Barnes, as a figure open to 'creepy' interpretative possibility reliant on its observer's beliefs and desires; considering the doll a queer figure that straddles categories of the (in)organic and (un)natural; and asking how a method of juxtaposing, or 'displaying', different examples of literary dolls can help us examine the sense of creepiness that the doll can provoke.
6) Using the ambiguous treatment of 'creepy-crawlies' in DH Lawrence's poetry collection Birds, Beasts and Flowers (1923) to investigate creepiness as a mode of unsettling cross-species attachment and as an uncanny physiological response that confuses or short-circuits ideas of ecological pleasure.

Dr Laura Elizabeth Ludtke is a Stipendiary Lecturer at Merton College, Oxford, and also teaches with the Faculty of English at the University of Oxford. Laura's research explores intersections between literature and technology, gender and genre, sexual science and satire, and creepiness and queer ecology. Currently the Treasurer of the British Society for Literature and Science, Laura chairs the Society's annual book prize.

1. Dr Lloyd Meadhbh Houston is a (gender)queer, autistic scholar based at the University of Cambridge, where they are Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in English. They are the author of Irish Modernism and the Politics of Sexual Health (OUP, 2023), and a range of articles and chapters on the medicalization of sex, queer cultural history, and the history of erotica and obscenity. Co-host the podcast Censored with Dr Aoife Bhreatnach.

2. K Angel is an autistic, kinky, trans/non-binary writer, performer, and researcher from the American Midwest. A two-time participant in the HBMG Foundation's National Winter Playwrights Retreat and shortlisted for the Virago Furies Competition, their projects across genres play with myth, consent, chosen community, and metamorphosis interruptus.

3. Madeleine Rose is a DPhil candidate at Corpus Christi College, University of Oxford. Her doctoral research focuses on the relationship between entanglement and modernist poetic innovation in the work of Charlotte Mew, Marianne Moore, and H.D., informed by both material ecocriticism and study of nineteenth and early twentieth century Ecology.

4. Samuel Bradley is a PhD student at King's College London. His thesis, tentatively entitled Cruising Landscape: Artists, Writers and English Queer Ecologies, applies queer and ecocritical theories of space and place to non-urban English topographies in the work of EM Forster, Jocelyn Brooke, Denton Welch and Derek Jarman.

5. Caleb Parkin is a practice-based poetry PhD researcher in RENEW Biodiversity, University of Exeter. A former Bristol City Poet (2020–22), Caleb was awarded second prize in the National Poetry Competition (2016) and the Winchester Poetry Prize (2017). His poetry has appeared in numerous pamphlets and collections (debut pamphlet, 'Wasted Rainbow' and This Fruiting Body [2021]; 'All the Cancelled Parties' and 'The Coin' [2022]). His most recent collection, Mingle was published in October 2024.

6. Dr Mar Astrid Rodda is Leventis Research Fellow at Merton College, Oxford. Their research is interested in disability and gender in Greek literature, focussing on the representation of disabled mythical characters in the works of Lucian of Samosata, how it reflects changes in the ancient world's view of disability, and how the characterisation of disability intersects with gender, class, and ethnic identity.

Panel 4.2 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 2): Poetry and Experiment
Chair: Felix Sprang

Peter Middleton, 'How is a contemporary writer to deal with the latest science?' A contemporary writer who wants to write fiction, drama or poetry informed by the current state of the sciences faces formidable challenges. They will be confronted with complex jargon, esoteric mathematics, and unfamiliar laboratory and fieldwork contexts. Moreover, what the imaginative writer is most likely to want, beyond information and potential metaphors, are clues to how new scientific discoveries are reshaping contemporary understanding of the world. What new paradigms, what cognitive patterns are emerging? How are they altering cultural imaginaries? In this paper I will briefly discuss how these challenges are addressed by Redell Olsen in her recent poem about radar, Weather, Whether Radar: Plume of the Volants, and Carole Watts

in her poem of ecological meditation, Mimic Pond, and then focus on the leading British poet of science, Allen Fisher. I shall argue that over his fifty year career as artist and poet Fisher has tested several modes of engagement with science, including straightforward historical presentation, exposure of scientific language to poetic decomposition in radical collage, and most strikingly, the embedding of scientific technical discourse in scenes of everyday life. He has accompanied these experiments with supportive theory of aesthetics based around the concept of decoherence.

I am an Emeritus Professor of English, University of Southampton. Currently writing a book about the modern history of the code concept that includes family history, cultural history, and poetic reflections on the qualities of code materials. I have published many essays on poetry and poetics. My most recent book is Expanding Authorship.

Caspar Wort, '"Don't Laugh: Maybe a Dog?": Lessons from The Design and Pilot Study of a Survey Analysing Reader Descriptions of Poetry's Speakers and Addressees'. This paper outlines the design and application of an empirical methodology for analysing reader responses to speakers and addressees in contemporary poetry. The survey is designed to collect free descriptions of a poem's speaker and addressee for up to six contemporary poems, with an aim to analysing both how depth of description varies between given poems, and what descriptors are prioritised by readers when asked to describe who speaks and to whom in poems with no additional context. I will describe the research questions behind the design of the survey, the challenges in designing such an experimental tool, and the influence the pilot study has had on the final draft of the questionnaire. In doing so, I propose that a rigorously designed methodology for analysing reader responses is crucial for a full understanding of the reader experience and demonstrate that a readership's shared understanding of poetic voice is dependent on the paratext provided with a poem and the context around the text, the absence of which leads to a multitude of conflicting but not invalid interpretations.

Caspar Wort earned his BA in English and Drama from Loughborough University in 2021, and stayed on for an MA in Creative Writing and the Writing Industries (graduating 2022) and subsequently a PhD. His research interests are focused on psychopoetics and reader response to contemporary poetry. However, his interests extend to creative writing and science-poetry. He is a published poet, with poems appearing widely in print and online. He is a member of the Poetry Society, the International Society for the Empirical Study of Literature (IGEL), and (by the time of this conference) the British Society for Literature and Science.

Hilary White, '"get the scientist over here!": Bernadette Mayer's hypnagogic poetry as literary sleep experiment'. Bernadette Mayer's 1989 experiments with 'hypnagogic word clusters' in her 'skinny sonnets' implicitly and succinctly challenge the poetic history of the lyric subject—composed, singular and masculinised—at the same time tapping into contemporary psychological interest in the hypnagogic and unconscious (especially Andreas Mavromatis' Hypnagogia, also 1989). This paper considers Mayer's poetic experiments with hypnagogic states—those occurring between sleep and wakefulness—as part of a wider investigation of the literary sleep experiment. Via her 2011 poetry collection, Ethics of Sleep, featuring hypnagogic poetic experiments, poems thematising sleep, and prose which meditates on dreams and memory, I home in on Mayer's methodology: how she uses exploratory writing processes to get closer to (understanding) her subject, in this case sleep and the mind, at the same time acknowledging how language might not 'fit' her material. Taking in this hypnagogic poetry and dreamwork, and her archive which further demonstrates Mayer's interest in direct collaboration with scientists, I query at what point, if any, do the literary and scientific experiment converge. Mayer tracks consciousness in ways that seem genuinely interested in contributing to scientific knowledge but seem equally interested in the impossibility of the task, become focused on experimental process rather than results.

Hilary is an Irish Research Council, Government of Ireland 2023 Postdoctoral Fellow at Maynooth University, working at the intersections of experimental poetry and sleep science, on a project called Forms of Sleep: Literary Experiments in Somnolence. A monograph, The Visual Novel: Christine Brooke-Rose, Ann Quin, Brigid Brophy, is forthcoming with Edinburgh University Press (May 2025). A co-edited collection, Gestures: A Body of Work, is forthcoming with Manchester University Press (January 2025). Her academic articles are published in Women: A cultural review, ANGLES and Anglica Wratislawiensia. She has published creative work widely, including a book, Holes, with Ma Bibliothèque.

Panel 4.3 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 3): Scientific Legacies in Modernist and Post-Victorian Narratives
Chair: Lucy Davies

Adele Guyton, 'Crossing the Victorian-Modernist Divide: the Afterlife of Nineteenth-Century Astronomy in *Tales of Wonder* (1937-1942)'. The first British science fiction magazine for adults, Tales of Wonder (1937-1942), had a feature called "Search for Ideas," in which readers contributed their visions of the future. These contributions shed light on readers' and writers' multiple chronological allegiances where astronomy is concerned. Some contributions intervene in astronomical debates—such as communications with Mars—that were current in professional astronomy decades earlier. Others, more interestingly, forecast discoveries related to timely astrophysical topics—such as the origins of the universe—but ascribe a combination of futuristic and Victorian methods to the scientists making astrophysical discoveries. Henry K. Bulmer of Lewisham, for instance, proposes that scientists might station themselves on a distant planet and use time travel to watch the universe unfolding (Summer 1941). His suggestion of unmediated human vision and experience as astrophysical method highlights a tension between nineteenth- and twentieth-century astronomy that runs throughout Tales of Wonder's fiction and non-fiction. In this presentation, I trace how Tales of Wonder's fiction and non-fiction looks both forward and back where astronomy is concerned and argue that optical wonder and sensory experience was—and may still be—an integral part of the science-fictional sublime.,

Adele Guyton is a doctoral researcher at KU Leuven, Belgium, where she is finishing a dissertation on popular periodical culture in Germany and Britain, 1890-1945. Her writing has appeared in Victorian Popular Fictions and C21 Literature, and is forthcoming in the Victorian Periodicals Review. Her next project will be about alternate history short stories.

Daniel Abdalla, '"The family soul is naturally vindictive": Writing (Neo-) Darwinian Heredity for the Modernist Stage'. This paper traces how two turn-of-the-century American writers--Jack London and Elizabeth Robins--drew on theories of heredity to engage in broader debates about racial hybridity, empire, and the environment. Scholars of literature and science and theatre and science writing about the late-Victorian to Modernist period have demonstrated literary writers' interests in various scientific models of heredity. In many cases, this has been seen as part of an era in the history of science called 'The Eclipse of Darwinism' in which degeneration, eugenics and the theories of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck 'eclipsed' Darwin's initial view of variation through random mutation until the rediscovery of Mendelian genetics in the early-twentieth century. Yet, Gregory Radick's _Disputed Inheritance: The Battle over Mendel and the Future of Biology_ (2023), has demonstrated the extent to which the history of science has overstated the import of Mendelian inheritance in this period. Drawing on Radick's recent work as well as well as my own archival research on a diverse set of American writers--Elizabeth Robins, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Jack London--I show the sustained literary engagement with Darwinian and Neo-Darwinian heredity in the late Victorian to Modernist period. In view of this, I question whether our prevailing view of literature and science in this period has been defined by an over-reliance on canonical works.

Daniel Ibrahim Abdalla is currently Lecturer at the Department of English, University of Liverpool. His first monograph, on heredity in American literary culture from the late-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, is forthcoming in the Palgrave Studies in Literature, Science and Medicine series. His new research project looks at literature and the history of ideas about the environment. His work has been published in Modern Drama and in 2024, he was the W.E.B. Du Bois Centre Fellow at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Michael Wainwright, 'William Faulkner's "Pylon" and John Bowlby's Darwin: An Alternative to the Freudian Family'. This paper traces the prescience of William Faulkner's "Pylon" beyond the premonitory orbit of his youngest brother's demise. On 25 March1935, Faulkner's novel—a tale of barnstorming pilot Roger Shumann that seemingly climaxes in his fatal accident—appears in print. Eight months later, during an air display, Dean Falkner crashes the plane his brother William had gifted him; he dies on impact; Shumann's "fictional fate prove[s] tragically prophetic." That same year, in London, trainee psychiatrist John Bowlby reads Ian D. Suttie's "The Origins of Love and Hate," a Darwinian approach to familial relations. Suttie's thesis, which emphasizes the importance of parental bonds to child development, strikes Bowlby as an evolutionarily accredited alternative to Sigmund Freud's doctrine of drives. Bowlby hereafter develops this alternative into "attachment theory." Like Bowlby, the evolutionarily minded Faulkner—"in my synonymity, 'living' equals 'motion, change, constant alteration,' equals 'evolution'"—also distanced himself from Freud—"what

little of psychology I know the characters I have invented and playing poker have taught me"—and Faulkner's "Pylon" offers a salutary rendering of parental deprivation as a probable consequence of alienating modernity. As this paper demonstrates, Bowlbian concepts help to explore these Faulknerian insights, help that the novel equally reciprocates.

Michael Wainwright has long held the position of Honorary Research Associate with the English Department at Royal Holloway, University of London. Previous appointments include visiting lectureships at St. John's College, Cambridge, Lancaster University, the University of Birmingham, and Staffordshire University. His monographs include "Darwin and Faulkner's Novels" (2008), "Game Theory and Minorities in American Literature" (2016), "The Rational Shakespeare" (2018), "Literature, Parasitism, and Science" (2021), and "Kantian Dignity and Trolley Problems in the Literature of Richard Wright" (2023).

Panel 4.4 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 4): Pandemics & Hauntings: Cultural and Scientific Imaginaries
Chair: Martin Willis

Şima İmşir, "'Reach Out and Touch Someone": Hauntology, Covid-19 and the Digital in Ali Smith's *Companion Piece* (2022) and Rob Savage's *Host* (2020)'. In The 2010s: A Decade of Contemporary Fiction, Alice Bennett defines the digital turn in day-to-day experience as a recurrent theme in the fiction of 2010s, which she calls 'the age of distraction.' While in contemporary writing such as Sally Rooney's Conversations with Friends (2017) to Mohsin Hamid's Exit West (2017), Elif Batuman's The Idiot (2017), digital communication technologies have already begun to provide authors with new narrative tools that highlight our simultaneous online and offline existence, the lockdowns during the pandemic of Covid-19, intensified our already blurred boundaries of personal and public space. During this period of creating physical 'social distance', digital communication technologies such as Zoom became 'haunted networks' – like the virus that knows no boundaries, a Zoom séance invited what is outside, inside. In this talk, looking at Ali Smith's novel Companion Piece (2022) and Rob Savage's movie, Host (2020), I will discuss the ghostly and uncanny literary imagination on the pandemic by drawing on Jacques Derrida's hauntology and David Trotter's understanding of 'new media' as first and foremost a 'lived experience' to argue that the double bind of online and offline existence turns the digital communication tools into eerie conduits that undo boundaries, not just between here and there, but also now and then.

Şima İmşir is an assistant professor in Comparative Literature at Koç University in Istanbul. Her monograph, Health, Literature and Women in Twentieth-Century Turkey: Bodies of Exception was published in 2023 as part of the Routledge Studies in Literature and Health Humanities series. Her teaching and research ranges from medical and health humanities, illness and literature to comparative modernisms, and technology and literature.

Sofia Varino, 'Containing Covid: Securitization Regimes and Biomedical Imaginaries'. My paper examines how Covid-19 narratives and practices have mobilized a vast biomedical archive of concepts, metaphors, models and techniques centered on the anticipatory logic of prevention. Indeed, the logics of prevention and anticipation have historically featured prominently in western technocultural imaginaries, from inoculation and nutrition to surveillance and securitization regimes. During the Covid-19 global pandemic, masks, vaccines, social distance, and (self)isolation became key biomedical object-practices (re)enacted to manage the public health crisis. Predicated on a foundational separation between inside and outside, or between the internalized, vulnerable, visceral space of the individual(ized) human body and an externalized, hazardous, contaminated shared environment, strategies for avoiding exposure became paramount, reciting a long genealogy of preventative measures that encompass protection, containment, prediction, and risk assessment. Mobilizing the transdisciplinary methodologies of feminist technoscience studies, in particular authors like Evelyn Fox Keller (2000, 2002), Susan Squier (2003), Emily Martin (1994), Margrit Shildrick (1997, 2002), Karen Barad (2007), Michelle Murphy (2006) and Mel Chen (2012, 2020), my paper examines scientific articles about Covid-19 ranging from the fields of epidemiology, virology, immunology, biochemistry and genetics, alongside scientifically based governmental and media reports. Throughout, I seek to show how older, influential or obsolete, biomedical imaginaries haunt cutting-edge research about the Covid-19 pandemic and the vast range of anticipatory and preventive practices they elicit.

Sofia Varino is a public scholar working on cultural histories of knowledge production. Varino has published in leading academic journals including Catalyst, Shima,

Somatechnics, and the European Journal of Women's Studies. Their recent book Aquatopia: Climate Interventions (Routledge, 2023), a study of global environmental politics co-written with May Joseph, was selected for a 2023 ASLE Spotlight by the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment. Varino is a Berlin-based postdoctoral researcher affiliated with the RTG Minor Cosmopolitanisms. Website: sofiavarino.com

Panel 4.5 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 5): The Influence of Literature on Science: Three Cambridge Case Studies
Chair: John Holmes

This panel brings together papers that investigate the literary influences and literary outputs of three key figures in mid-twentieth century Cambridge, whose literary activities have hitherto been (purposefully) obscured: economist Joan Robinson (1903-1983), computational linguist Margaret Masterman (1910-1986), and mathematician and philosopher Alan Turing (1912-1954). Each paper draws on archival research, and makes a new case for the importance of the literary to the scientific thought and output of these significant figures.

Sarah Dillon, 'Alan Turing, Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, and Literary Influence'. Scientific and popular myth frame Alan Turing as disinterested in literature, but biographies note his love of epic novels (including Vanity Fair, The Forsyte Saga, and War and Peace) and his home library of Trollope and Austen. Archived letters show him thanking Nicholas Furbank for lending him a copy of Le Rouge et Le Noir, and mention enjoyable theatre trips with his mother. Turing was also the author of at least one piece of creative writing, an unpublished short story - commonly referred to as 'Pryce's Buoy' - held in the Turing archive at King's College, Cambridge, and potentially indebted to E. M. Forster's Maurice. Turing also directly acknowledges literary influence in his scientific writing by including Samuel Butler's Erewhon (1865) in the bibliography of his seminal essay 'Computer Machinery and Machine Intelligence' (1950). Although he does not reference the novel directly in the text, he refers to it again in a BBC Radio broadcast the following year where he concludes that 'at some stage therefore we should have to expect the machines to take control, in the way that is mentioned in Samuel Butler's Erewhon'. This paper presents the findings of the Turing chapter of my monograph in preparation - Literature and AI: Rhetoric, Influence and Epistemology - which investigates these influences of literature on Turing's scientific work.

Sarah Dillon is Professor of Literature and the Public Humanities in the Faculty of English at the University of Cambridge. She specialises in contemporary literature and film, in particular the intersections of narratives and science, and speculative fiction. Her work investigates the epistemic function and value of stories, especially in relation to policymaking and public reasoning. Most recently, she is the author of Storylistening: Narrative Evidence and Public Reasoning (2021), and co-editor of the BJHS Themes issue on Histories of Artificial Intelligence: A Genealogy of Power (2023) and the book AI Narratives: An Imaginative History of Intelligent Machines (2020).

Siddharth Soni, 'Masterman, Machine Translation, and The Novel'. With a resurgence of interest in the work of Margaret Masterman, a Cambridge linguist, semiotician, theologist, and, as Lydia Liu (2021) has successfully argued, 'a post-Wittgensteinian' philosopher of language, a look at her novels, both published and unpublished, is perhaps owing. Masterman was herself the author of three novels, each of which was subject, at best, to lukewarm praise: Gentlemen's Daughters (1931), The Grandmother (1934), and Death of a Friend (1938). Drafts of her other initiatives in prose fiction remain bound to her archives in Cambridge and Birmingham. Such is the historical weight of Masterman's scientific work on language, and particularly early MT (machine translation) that is best referenced using her 'computational thesaurus' model, that her writing endeavours are dismissed, in comparison, as a vocational activity. I explore, in this paper, how scientific ideas of language in the period could be placed in dialogue with fiction-writing, or composition, as itself, and self-evidently, a formal practice of language. In view of the emergent formalist school, figures within which (such as Roman Jakobson) became one among Masterman's many interlocutors within linguistics, I explore Masterman as a scientist whose work on language owes a debt—an intuitive debt—to her early practice as a composer of fiction.

Dr Siddharth Soni is the Lecturer in Literature and Digital Culture at the University of Southampton. He was formerly the Isaac Newton Trust Fellow at Cambridge, which is where he received his PhD. His work has appeared, or will soon appear, in Critical Quarterly, Review of English Studies, New Formations, and Intersections. A proposal for his first book, on the rise of information in the context of colonialism, was awarded the Ideas Prize for Non-Fiction.

Dominic Walker, 'Departing from Scientific Economics: Joan Robinson and Literature'. Regularly cited as 'the greatest "Nobel" Prize winner who never was', Joan Robinson remains a correspondingly underappreciated member of the so-called "Cambridge Circus", which emerged as a rival to the scientific orthodoxy following Alfred Marshall's death in 1924 (Pasinetti 2007, xiv). This paper examines the origins of Robinson's radical departure from Marshallian scientific economics in light of her literary background and contemporaneous literary compositions. It takes as a historical starting point her Professor's decision to destroy his prodigious poetic output, lest it undermine his work as an economic scientist, despite having insisted months before that '[a]rt for the sake of art is a most worthy purpose of human endeavour and literature and is perhaps the highest form of art' (Marshall 1922, qu. Groenewegen 2007, 177). Though Robinson was initially a very peripheral figure in the Cambridge Circus, she grasped better than anyone certain salutary lessons about the value of 'rigorous [...] verbal reasoning' in lieu of Marshall's mathematical shortcomings (Backhouse 2002, 228-29). Focusing on a complete short story and a sketch for a scandalously recognisable, semi-autobiographical novel, the paper will argue that Robinson's radically language-oriented methodology was directly informed by her early literary passions and practices.

Dr Dominic Walker is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Cambridge. He is based at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH) and at Magdalene College, where he teaches English Literature. Dominic's work concerns the relationship (or putative lack thereof) between imaginative literature and postclassical economic thought. His current project aims to provide an empirical rationale for renewed consideration of the role of literary writing in the intellectual biographies of economists who, despite generally seizing on the marginalists' repudiation of 'the flowery path of literature' in a bid for nomothetic credibility, nevertheless produced a richly revealing corpus of extant literary material.

Panel 4.6 (Science and Technology Building C009): Ethics, Technology, and the Science of Reproduction in Fiction
Chair: Stephen Wilkinson

Erin Dulin, '*Frankenstein* and the Science of Worms'. This work examines the interchanges between human bodies and worm bodies in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818). It does so by linking contemporary scientific perspectives of the worm using Erasmus Darwin's 'The Temple of Nature' and Linnaeus' 'Systema Naturae' with the depictions of worms in the novel. In drawing these comparisons, a reading of the worm as the beginning of life - evolutionarily and maternally - emerges. This argument hinges on Darwin's invocation of the Greek god Proteus in 'Temple', an ever-changing figure whose name was bestowed upon the pre-evolutionary protozoa. These claims allow a reading of motherhood in the text that departs from previous scholarship that concerns motherhood in 'Frankenstein'. The Frankenstinian worm mother is not only symbolic of humanity's evolutionary beginnings as protozoa, but of Victor's 'life-in-death' philosophy. The paper closes on a discussion of microscopic and geographic discovery in order to connect the small scope of the worm with the larger frame of the novel - Walton's journey to the North Pole.

Erin is a recent graduate from the Romantic and Victorian program at the University of St Andrews. Her academic interests usually lie in the Gothic, aesthetics of decay, and ecocriticism. She currently resides in Edinburgh.

Eleanor McAdam, 'A reflection on the financial privilege of artificial womb technology in science fiction literature'. The concept of Artificial Womb Technology (AWT) evolved from its origins as ectogenesis in J. B. S. Haldane's 'Daedalus' (1923). As AWTs become more technologically viable, there are many positive potential applications. However, these benefits are often weighed against the financial cost of such technologies, which enforce a bias of technology towards the wealthy. Tlotlo Tsamaase's 'Womb City' (2024) depicts an infertile woman enabled to conceive using an artificial womb, though the economic aspect of renting the "Wombcubator" is a financial burden. Anne Charnock's 'Dreams Before the Start of Time' (2017) portrays the societal pressure on wealthy families to choose "remote gestation" over a traditional pregnancy; judging those who cannot afford this, believing they are endangering the child by carrying biologically. In my thesis novel, the extrapolation of our capitalist society enforces workforce efficiency; and companies financially endorse artificial wombs over natural pregnancy, to reduce expenditure of maternity leave. AWTs have the potential to transform fertility and gestational care, but all three texts present the dystopic tendencies of the technology. When it is kept in the control of the rich and/or powerful, it strips the individual of their freedom of choice.

Eleanor McAdam is a Creative Writing PhD student (third-year, part-time) at the University of Liverpool. Their research interests concern science fiction literature, with a specific focus on Artificial Intelligence, the fictionalisation of coding languages, and philosophies on consciousness and the soul. They recently won the 2023 Language Evolves Competition and the winning story, 'Breach', will be published in Interzone Issue 302. Their work can be seen in both University of Manchester and University of Liverpool Anthologies, and they spoke at the Liverpool Literary Festival 2024 about their short story 'The Switch', which win the festival competition

Megan Woodward, '"You wish to go on?": cloning, deferred futures and 'the Child' in Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go'. When Lee Edelman presented 'the Child' in No Future (2004), he attributed the figure's fantastical value, its 'sacred' status, to its embodiment of 'a future continually deferred': the Child represents repetition, sameness, and an indefinitely elongated present. In assigning this value exclusively to the Child born of heterosexual procreation, Edelman failed to account for the disruptive potential of burgeoning reproductive technologies. This paper explores deferred futures and the cloned Child in Kazuo Ishiguro's Never Let Me Go (2005). It argues that in one sense, Ishiguro's clones epitomise Edelman's endless deferral, tethered by the reproductive technologies that create them to the possibility of endless repetition and to elongated life for non-clones. Yet, as the second half of the paper investigates, 'deferral' also names the unprecedented, almost inconceivable chance for a finite extension to the clones' own lives. By revealing the opposing temporalities of deferral associated with the clones—at once indefinite and restricted—I pose questions regarding whose future is at stake as biotechnologies reshape the parameters of the human. In doing so, I highlight the emergent need to critically assess the distinction between the future and the future of the human as ventured in contemporary British dystopian fictions such as Ishiguro's. Edelman, Lee. 2004. No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive. Durham: Duke University Press. Ishiguro, Kazuo. 2005. Never Let Me Go. London: Faber & Faber.

Megan Woodward is a PhD candidate at the University of York, where her research focuses on the interactions between precarious human futurity and Child-oriented futurity in British dystopian fiction from the early 1990s to the present. The project argues the contemporary dystopias of Kazuo Ishiguro, Ian McEwan, P.D. James and Megan Hunger confront an increasingly fragile human temporality that shrinks before the independent temporalities of the environment, planet and cosmos, while resisting the most extreme post- and ahuman tenets of critical pessimist discourse. Alongside her doctoral study Megan is involved in running the 'Representing Reproduction' research network at York. She received her BA and MA, both in English Literature, from University of Leeds, where she subsequently worked for three years in equality of student outcomes and experience, with a focus on underrepresentation, decolonisation, inclusive pedagogy and belonging in Higher Education.

Plenary 2 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 1): Sydney Padua 'Re-animating the Victorians: Research as Play'
Chair: Barri Gold

"To play with" is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as: 'to keep touching and moving something around with no purpose'. Illustrator and animator Sydney Padua has been playing with Victorian science for a decade over various projects, from her webcomic turned graphic novel *The Thrilling Adventures of Lovelace and Babbage* to animating 19th century engravings as artist-in-residence for Constructing Scientific Communities. In this talk she will explore how re-imagining, reanimating, and repurposing of academic sources through creative play can become a means of research, and research can be a form of play.

Sydney Padua is a graphic novelist, animator, and academic. Her animation work includes hand-drawn and computer-generated; independent and mass-media works; most recently she was an Animation Lead on *Mufasa: The Lion King*. Her cult webcomic *The Thrilling Adventures of Lovelace and Babbage* began by accident in 2009 when a joke blog post took on a life of its own. It eventually became a bestselling graphic novel, nominated for two Eisner Awards, and winner of the British Society for the History of Mathematics Neumann Prize. Her animated reconstructions of the proto-computer the Analytical Engine were some of the first visualisations ever done of that extraordinary machine. She is currently senior lecturer in animation at Buckinghamshire New University.

Panel 5.1 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 1): Healing and Harm: Trauma, Science, and Colonial Legacies in Literature
Chair: Richard Fallon

Anton Kirchhofer and Anna Auguscik, 'Repairing the Expedition Narrative? Negotiating Expeditionary Damage in "Etched in Bone" (2018)'. Etched in Bone (2018) is an impressive film documentary, accompanying a group of representatives of people from Australia's Northern Territory on an expedition of sorts: to retrieve the stolen bones of their ancestors, which were brought to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC by 1948 multinational and multidisciplinary expedition, and return them to be buried on their homeground. Our presentation will focus on the different ways in which the patterns of the expedition narrative are employed in the documentary. These range from the expedition as a success story in scientific knowledge production, via the expedition as a 'collateral benefit' of genocidal damage through imperial expansion, to the critical display of the lasting expeditionary damage suffered by indigenous populations. But while the foregoing perspectives are all linked to scientists' voices featured in the documentary, and speaking from different historical and disciplinary angles, there is also an expeditionary pattern that shapes the underlying narrative of the film itself. Our contribution will examine how the film negotiates the possibility of reparation of the damage inflicted on the aboriginal communities by drawing on the pattern of the expedition narrative itself. To what degree are we witnessing a 'reverse expedition', in which items are collected and extracted from the Smithsonian Museum while the 'centre of calculation' (Latour) is relocated to the Australian Northern Territory? To what degree are the voices of aboriginal leaders coopted for the sake of constructing a 'reparative' version of the expeditionary narrative pattern, which will allow us to hold on to the promise of the beneficial expedition? Our analysis will bear on the ways in which these options are interwoven in the narrative of the film.

Anton Kirchhofer is Professor of English Literature at the University of Oldenburg. His research has focused on literature in its discursive environments, including the formations and functions of sexual knowledge in eighteenth-century fiction, the history and genealogy of critical discourse in the ninteenth century, and the genealogy of literature in secular societies. He is a founding director of the interdisciplinary Fiction Meets Science research group at Oldenburg and Bremen, and has published widely on the narrativization of science in contemporary fiction and other public discourses, and the theoretical dimensions of cross-disciplinary engagement. A co-edited volume on Science, Culture and Postcolonial Narratives is forthcoming.

Anna Auguscik is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Oldenburg, where she completed her PhD thesis on the role of literary prizes and book reviewing for the literary marketplace. As a Fiction Meets Science (FMS) research fellow she completed a project on the media presence of the science novel and is currently working on scientific expedition narratives with Anton Kirchhofer.

Sina Schuhmaier, 'The Middle Passage as a Disease (Non-)Narrative'. Scholars have connected contagious diseases to various literary aesthetics and periods (e.g., Rothfield; Höll; Outka). Taking up this understanding of disease as a narrative form, this paper seeks to investigate historical accounts of disease during the Middle Passage, the traumatic and often deadly episode in a trade which "was the crossroads of major diseases" (Walvin 119). Close reading slave-ship surgeon Alexander Falconbridge's abolitionist treatise on the slave trade, An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa (1788), and Olaudah Equiano's Interesting Narrative (1789), I aim to show how the literary figure of disease expands the ostensible realism of the two texts, which present themselves, to varying degrees, as fact-based reports on the horrors of the slave trade. Both are variously framed – Equiano, for instance, through the slave narrative's 'white envelope' (Sekora) – and employ notable means of literary narration. Not only is their representation of disease during the Atlantic crossing mediated through abolitionist and medical discourses, it also casts disease as a stand-in for the Middle Passage and its non-narratability. As I will argue, approached through a Black Atlantic framework, the unbounded quality of contagious disease becomes a figure of the absent and unresolvable narrative of modernity's counterculture.

Sina Schuhmaier is an academic staff member at the University of Mannheim. She holds a PhD in English literature, and her first monograph Changing the Record: Englishness, Popular Music, and the Song Lyric in the 21st Century is forthcoming with Routledge. Sina's current research focuses on Black diasporic literature, on depictions of the British landscape, and on contagious diseases in literature, with a particular interest in conjunctures between the fields of postcolonial studies and material ecocriticism.

Antonia MacDonald, 'Obeah: The Science of Harm and Healing in Derek Walcott's Poetry'. This presentation establishes Obeah as a medical science that utilizes herblore, diagnosis and divination, and possession by ancestral African- based deities. In the Caribbean , this West African derived folk practice involves the channeling and controlling of spiritual forces for a variety of ends: biological, socio-cultural and economic. Colonial rule had legislated this practice as incitement to revolt and therefore harmful and criminal. The resultant interpretation of Obeah in exclusively negative terms tends to distract from its healing value. The St. Lucian poet, Derek Walcott, growing up in a island where organized Western religion exists alongside the Obeah practices, creatively engages this doubleness in his two epic poems: "Another Life" and "Omeros". Whereas in "Another Life", in the poem "The Pact," Walcott depicts this practice as one where spiritual forces are negatively harnessed, in "Omeros", he represents, in the figure of Ma Kilman, Obeah as a means of healing the historical wounds incurred from colonialism. This latter iteration allows Derek Walcott to dismantle the negative moral discourse around Obeah, offering instead a poetic vision of a Caribbean region whose religio-cultural practices enables reparation for both the colonized and the colonizer.

Antonia MacDonald is a Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Arts and Sciences, St George's University, Grenada, West Indies. Over the past twenty years, she has been responsible for the development and delivery of courses in Caribbean Studies, Caribbean Popular Culture, Literatures in English and Organizational Communication. She is also the Assistant Director for Research and is an Associate Dean in The School of Graduate Studies. Her areas of interest include the works of Derek Walcott; the novels of Garth St. Omer; the writings of Caribbean Women; Caribbean Literary Theory; Gender Studies; and Eastern Caribbean Folklore and Cultural Studies.

Panel 5.2 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 2): Early Modern Knowledge
Chair: Sharon Ruston

Benedetta Burgio, 'Medical Knowledge and Divine Wisdom in Sir Richard Blackmore's Creation'. The purpose of this paper is to examine the way in which Sir Richard Blackmore (1654-1729) represents the human body in Book VI of his "Creation" (1712), a poem that intertwines scientific observation and theological reflection to argue for the existence of a divine creator. As poet-physician, Blackmore relies on his medical expertise to provide detailed illustrations of the circulatory, digestive, and nervous systems, which he presents as indubitable proof of intelligent design. Informed by the scientific knowledge of his time, the poet extols the complexity of the human body as a manifestation of divine wisdom; hence, his work reflects the English physico-theological tradition drawing on state-of-the-art physiology and anatomy. Unlike other contemporary physico-theological literature in prose, "Creation" uniquely combines medical knowledge with a blend of empirical observation and poetic expression. After introducing Blackmore's life and works, this paper presents the poet's use of mechanical medical theories and his dismissal of Epicurean philosophy by appealing to the human body as an epitome of purposeful creation. Through an overview of Blackmore's depiction of generation theories and bodily systems, this study intends to emphasise the physician's singular contribution to early eighteenth-century physico-theological poetry.

I am a third-year PhD student in English Literature at the Catholic University of Milan. My research explores early 18th-century scientific poetry, with a particular focus on Sir Richard Blackmore (1654-1729). I examine how natural philosophy shaped the relationship between God and nature in Blackmore's physico-theological poem "Creation", contributing to broader discussions on science and religion at the turn of the century.

Felix Sprang, 'Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* and the Poetics of Plain Style'. Reflecting on the process of discipline formation in the seventeenth century, which turned an inclusive field of inquiry, natural philosophy, into increasingly specialized branches of knowledge (cf. Sprang 2024), I will consider style as an important marker of a discipline's merit. As emerging disciplines vied with each other for patronage and recognition as sciences, the so-called plain style, commonly described as a rhetorical technique employed to explore the relation between language and matter (cf. Aughterson 2000), became a truth marker. Identified by Mary Poovey (1998, 42), among others, as a strategy that aimed at 'mak[ing] writing transparent instead of performative,' the plain style thus makes visible an emerging concept of 'disinterestedness', the precursor of objectivity. Ashmole's diachronic anthology, including texts by alchemists from the fifteenth century (e.g. George Ripley) to the seventeenth century (e.g. William Backhouse), reflects the insistence on a plain style. At a time when alchemy was put under extreme scrutiny, the Theatrum re-stylises

and thus reconceptualises alchemical pursuits as plain. In doing so, the anthology significantly contributed to a discourse that conceptualized scientific knowledge as plain in the sense of it being transparent and reliable, regardless of the particular interests of those producing or using it.

Felix Sprang studied English, Biology and Philosophy at Frankfurt, Hamburg and at the Warburg Institute, London. Having taught at the HU Berlin and Munich, he is now Professor of English Literature at the University of Siegen. Since his PhD on the mathematization of the arts and sciences in early modern England, he has worked on the affinity between literature and science across literary periods. He is also interested in the history of social reading practices, the aesthetics of poetry informed by phenomenology, and plant poetics.

Anne Nelmes, 'Scientific Analogies in the Poems of John Donne: How Did He Use Them?' This paper looks at Donne's magnetic imagery in 'Thou Hast Made Me', contrasting two uses. Gilbert, Donne's contemporary, conducted experiments making him think that lodestone, approaching iron, 'awakened' the iron to become a magnet, allowing its participation with the lodestone in the attraction. In line 3, 'I run to death, and death meets me as fast', Fletcher (2005) claims that Donne suggests that the speaker becomes conscious of death and the afterlife as lodestone stirs iron into sentience (p. 13). This is like Newton's third law of motion: for every force there is an equal and opposite reaction. The lodestone 'awakens' the iron to participate in the attraction. There are two objects; the lodestone and the iron attracting each other.

The magnetic imagery continues in lines 8 and 14:

> By sin in it, which towards hell doth weigh.
> [...]
> And thou like ad'mant draw mine iron heart.

In line 14, Donne seems to be stating a one-way attraction. I suggest this is because only one 'object' is being considered. Donne is emphasizing the two forces acting on one person (the pull of sin down towards hell and the pull of God upwards towards heaven). Reference: Fletcher, A. (2005) 'Living Magnets, Paracelsian Corpses, and the Psychology of Grace in Donne's Religious Verse', ELH, 72(1), pp. 1-22.

I completed a PhD in 2006 on the use of bridging analogies for overcoming science misconceptions (Loughborough University). Having now retired from a teaching career (chemistry and physics), I have started on another PhD (part-time at the University of Sheffield) on how scientific analogy was used during the early modern period. Now in my second year, I am researching how John Donne used scientific analogies in his poems. So far, I have looked at how he brought magnetic analogies to his poetry.

Panel 5.3 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 3): The Body of the Author
Chair: Rebekah Musk

Mary Antoinette Smith, 'On Merging Literary and Scientific Genius to Restore the Umbilical Ties that Bind Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley'. In a review of the biographical study titled "Romantic Outlaws: The Extraordinary Lives of Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley" (2016), Lucy Lethbridge observes that the "actual lives of Mary Wollstonecraft and her daughter Mary Shelley intersected only briefly, for Wollstonecraft died of septicaemia in 1797, shortly after giving birth. Yet, as Charlotte Gordon's book makes clear, Shelley's life was inextricably bound to the mother she never knew. How could it not be?" From my purview as a Wollstonecraft/Shelley specialist, this paper will present a convincing comparative analysis of intertextual ties between the mother's "Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792) and her daughter's "Frankenstein, Or, The Modern Prometheus" (1818) as respective nonfiction and fiction works which appear on the surface to have little in common. My analysis will identify parallelisms which reciprocally bind the content of both texts and illuminate, first, how Shelley merges literature and science to assist in her navigation of the estrangement she suffered from her mother's untimely death; second, it will show the interpersonal importance of her innovation of the science-fiction genre as a means of working through traumatic feelings of abandonment; and finally, it will illustrate its relevance as a seeker-text through which Shelley, as daughter-author, yearns to reconnect with her mother-creator, just as the abandoned Creature in her novel seeks reunification with his father-creator, Victor Frankenstein.

Dr. Mary-Antoinette Smith, PhD, has taught at Seattle University for more than thirty years as a specialist of Eighteenth/Nineteenth Century British Literature and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Her scholarship and pedagogies promote intersectionality and praxis-centered race, class, gender, and sexuality theory, and she has an avid interest in the gendered writings of Frances Burney, Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, Jane Austen, the Brontës, and Virginia Woolf. Her Afrocentric publications include her book titled "Thomas Clarkson and Ottobah Cugoano: Essays on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species" (Broadview, 2010), and refereed journal articles, chapters in edited collections, and encyclopedia entries.

Emma Crossey, 'Woolf's Skeletons: Virginia Woolf's X-Ray Exposure'. Imagery of bones (skeletons, ribs, spines, skulls) is rife throughout the works of Virginia Woolf, from her first pieces of writing to her last. My research argues that examining Woolf's skeletal imagery uncovers new understanding about her work and wider contexts. This paper will explore Woolf's skeletal preoccupation within the context of the 1895 discovery of X-rays and the relevant medical experiences of Woolf and her social circle. The discovery of X-rays revolutionised medicine and sparked unprecedented public interest. I argue the extraordinary impact of the X-ray is a pivotal reason the skeletal is prevalent within Woolf's work. Although some criticism has explored the relationship between Woolf and X-rays, the associations are even more extensive than has been recognised. Analysis of Woolf's skeletal provides insight into her conceptualisation of the body and aesthetic methodology. X-ray photography provided a powerful metaphor for modernist aspirations of exposure. Medical professionals embraced the X-ray as the ultimate 'searchlight' and an X-ray imaginary credited the technology with the power to locate something enduring. These parallel Woolf's concerns and method: her efforts to pinpoint and capture that 'essential thing'. This paper focuses most significantly on The Waves, where aspirations of transparency drive Woolf's most experimental form.

Emma Crossey is a PhD student at King's College London whose thesis explores the prevalence of bone and skeletal imagery throughout the works of Virginia Woolf. Emma graduated with a BA in Ancient History and English from the University of Exeter (2014) and an MA in modernism from UCL (2015). Emma has spent the last eight years working mostly in the charity sector, managing Digital Fundraising at organisations such as Unicef UK, Alzheimer's Society and Crisis UK. Returning to academia last year, Emma now works as a Graduate Teaching Assistant and is the Content Editor for the WoolfNotes project (woolfnotes.com).

Olivia Krauze, 'On Being and Not Being Ill: Health, Englishness, and E. M. Forster'. 'He is ill and he is not ill,' posits the Indian barrister Hamidullah in E. M. Forster's A Passage to India (1924), 'And I suppose that most of us are in that same case'. Modernist novelists – Lawrence, Woolf, Rhys, Mansfield – have long capitalized on the transformative psychosomatics of illness in their works. Critics have commented in turn on the diagnostic dimensions of modernist literature, as propelled by the development of new nosological taxonomies in the early twentieth century. Forster stands at a skeptical distance from these experiments. His fiction persistently works to overturn the perception that '[i]ll-health was [...] something perfectly definite' (Howards End, 1910). The ubiquitous presence of doctors across Forster's writings further bears on the question of diagnostic incapability in his works. Crucially, apart from Dr Aziz, the ill/not ill subject of my opening quotation, all of these doctors are English. This paper foregrounds the importance of Englishness to understanding the precarity of the health-illness continuum in Forster's fiction. It argues that the reason characters cannot determine whether they or others are ill is because they are in the process of challenging the language and socio-behavioural norms on which nationally constructed conceptions of the ill self are based.

Olivia Krauze is Assistant Professor in English at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge. Her research interests include the history of emotions, affect theory, the medical humanities, and the novel tradition in England and Russia. She is on the executive committee of the BSLS.

Panel 5.4 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 4): Authority, Healing, and Knowledge: Bodies and Beliefs in Medicine and Literature.
Chair: Jordan Kistler

Brian Hurwitz, 'The Aesthetics of Graeco-Roman Sham Treatments and Modern-day Placebos'. Accounts of Graeco-Roman therapeutic pretences disclose a wide range of medical trickeries by healers professing skills patients are taken in by, while readers are entertained to prestidigitations patients are unaware of. To the extent that such trick manoeuvres imitated established treatments and accepted models of bodily dysfunction and disease causation, they enacted the interplay of medical power

and patient gullibility to an aesthetics of therapeutic expulsion. Undertaken by Hippocratic physicians, market square pedlars and diviners, faux treatments engendered catharses: felt extractions, excretions and discharges of something identified with the cause of an ailment, which the treatment uncovered and dramatically removed from the body. Accounts of such bogus procedures convey notes of excitement in the voice of narrators, who detail therapeutic performances undertaken with the gusto of comic turns, enlivened by the reactions of onlookers. This paper compares Graeco-Roman and Arabic accounts of medical pretences with accounts of modern-day placebos: what do placebos owe to the tightly choreographed jugglements found in medical texts of Antiquity? Do placebo therapies conform to a similar imitative template of deception; and are the illusions placebos provoke in patients recounted in comparable affective registers?

I trained as a medical practitioner and worked for 27 years in an inner London NHS practice. In 2008, I co-founded and directed the Centre for the Humanities and Health at King's College London, a multidisciplinary research unit offering masters, PhD and postdoctoral education for humanities scholars, bioscientists and health professionals. Based in the English Department at King's, my research interests include narrative studies in relation to medical practice, ethics, fraud, law, and the logic and literary forms of case reports and anecdotes. I am now Emeritus Professor of Medicine and the Arts and publish in humanities, medical and interdisciplinary fora.

Emilie Taylor-Pirie, 'The Nobel Laureate Versus the Anti-Vaxxers: Authority, Expertise, and 'Bodies' of Knowledge'. In January 1915 British weekly magazine Punch published a cartoon featuring a would-be soldier negotiating a turnstile labelled 'inoculation' in order to access the recruiting office. The caption reads: 'Dr Germ-hun bars the way'. Sponsored by the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, the cartoon was accompanied by a full page piece calling out 'medical tyranny', suggesting that cause-of-death statistics were being concealed, and tacitly encouraging soldiers to refuse inoculation. The cartoon received considerable backlash, especially from the medical community, and Punch quickly printed an apology. The incident sparked discussion about the role and responsibilities of the media during times of crisis, in turn shining a spotlight on the tense relationship between expertise, consensus, and opinion—an anxious dynamic articulated in our own time by the faultlines of the COVID-19 pandemic where "do your own research" became a common directive online. In this paper I use British Nobel laureate Ronald Ross to investigate the politics of authority that assert themselves with medical knowledge goes public. From Ross's early attempts at writing back to the ethics of the discipline through fiction, to his Nobel-prize winning medical poems, to his many spirited exchanges with the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, I tease apart threads of literature and science to examine who we trust to 'know' and what it means when we don't.

Emilie Taylor-Pirie is a Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellow at the University of Birmingham. She works broadly in the medical humanities and has particular research interests in gut health, tropical medicine, and the public understanding of science. In 2023 her first book "Empire Under the Microscope" won the BSLS book prize. Her current project entitled "The Poet Who Conquered Malaria" examines the role of the creative imagination in histories of medicine and health via Britain's first Nobel laureate, Sir Ronald Ross.

Keith Williams, "'Ground Control to Reverend Tom?": Nineteenth-Century Science Fiction and the Great Moon Hoax'. This paper recounts the biggest 'fake news' story of the nineteenth-century, the Great Moon Hoax of 1835. It considers the Hoax as a satire of Creationist astronomy and its legacy in Nineteenth-Century Science Fiction, particularly in the themes and techniques of 'lost' Scottish-American SF writer, Robert Duncan Milne. The Great Moon Hoax refers to sensational newspaper articles headlined 'Great Astronomical Discoveries'. They described an ecology and civilisation observed on the Moon through a new super-telescope, projected as moving images across space. The Hoax tested the global parameters for media credibility in the pre-telegraphic age. The *Sun*'s editor, Richard Adams Locke, later admitted writing the articles, not just to boost ailing circulation, but satirise Creationist speculations in books by the Rev. Thomas Dick, one of the most popular authors on astronomy both sides of the Atlantic. Dick speculated about 'unfallen' beings populating other planets with, since only Earth was subject to original sin and no aspect of Creation was without divine purpose. At the time, astronomy was still a 'safe' science for orthodox theologians, whereas geology and biology were beginning to challenge Creationist cosmology. Hence the Hoax is a milestone in scientific and cultural history, but also for SF. It's a springboard for the impending showdown between the faith and science; for the growth and power of modern media and their relationship with public trust, facts and imagination. Rival editor James Gordon Bennett credited Locke with inventing 'A New Species of Writing' - 'the scientific novel.' Despite Locke's satire, theologically-inclined SF persisted into the late Victorian period, striving to square the circle between science and belief, for example *Aleriel, or A Voyage to Other Worlds* (1883) by curate Wladislaw Somerville Lach-Szyrma. However, researching the work of 'lost' Scottish pioneer' of American SF, Robert Duncan Milne, at Dundee, we have found evidence he was inspired in the opposite direction by the Hoax controversy, as 'son of the

manse' himself, growing up in Cupar a dozen miles from Dick's observatory in the 1840s. Milne's tales of astronomical discovery from the 1880s and 90s using fantastic inventions recall Locke's tale of Lunarian civilisation. The Hoax provides a rich intellectual context shaping Milne's nascent imagination and interest in creative tension between scientific secularism, new visual technologies and conventional belief, as well as a method for giving plausibility to thought experiments suspending readerly disbelief.

Keith Williams is reader in English, University of Dundee. He has published widely on early 20C SF, including *H.G. Wells, Modernity and the Movies* (2007). He specialises in relations between modern writing and technological media. His last monograph was *James Joyce and Cinematicity: Before and After Film* (2020). Dr Williams leads a project to recover a Scottish-American contemporary to Stevenson and Doyle. The first critical edition of a selection of his work (co-edited with Ari Brin) is *The Essential Robert Duncan Milne: Stories by the Lost Pioneer of Science Fiction* (Bloomsbury, 2025). A collaborative graphic novel adaptation is also underway.

Panel 5.5: (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 5): The Future of Human Reproduction II: Context and Terminology in Future Reproductive Technologies
Chair: Aline Ferreria

Georgia Walton, 'Reanimating Frankenstein in Contemporary Film'. In recent years there have been several films which develop intertextual relationships with Mary Shelley's classic novel Frankenstein (1818). Laura Moss' Birth/Rebirth (2023), Jorgos Lanthimos' Poor Things (2023) and Zelda Williams' Lisa Frankenstein (2024) all riff on Shelley's tale of Promethean ambition and unauthorised parenthood. These titles are to be joined in 2025 by two high-profile adaptations: Maggie Gyllenhaal's The Bride and Guillermo Del Torro's Frankenstein. While Shelley's novel has been reimagined countless times in a myriad of forms, this recent glut of cinematic adaptations is notable. This paper asks why a two-centuries-old story has captured the current zeitgeist? I suggest that the fraught act of creation at the centre of Frankenstein speaks to our own moment of reproductive anxiety. In addition to this, I see fantasies of reanimation as a product of the inescapable yet suppressed atmosphere of bereavement created by species loss and the pervasive sense of an imperilled future. At once a story of unnatural procreation and of resurrecting the dead, Shelley's novel brings together ecological loss with the politics of future reproductive technology. By looking at recent cinematic reworkings of Shelley's novel, I explore the intersections between novel reproductive technologies and environmental politics, making visible the cognitive dissonance of a reproductive futurism that is not built upon an altered relationship with nature.

Dr Georgia Walton is Research Associate on The Future of Human Reproduction project at Lancaster University. Her background is in US literature and culture from the nineteenth century to the present. She is currently writing a monograph which looks at the legacies of the American Renaissance in contemporary literature and her work has appeared in the journals English, English Studies, and The Irish Journal of American Studies. Current research interests include contemporary African American fiction, queer theory, science fiction, and representations of amusement parks.

Dominic O'Key, 'Silence of the Lambs, or, Human Reproduction's Animal Unconscious'. This paper offers a close reading of a work of horror cinema, Valdimar Jóhannsson's Lamb (2021), in which a bereaved sheep-farming couple adopt a humanimal lamb-child. It does so in order to think through some of the politics of species that currently attend discourses of motherhood and the futures of human reproduction. In recent years there has been an explosion of scientific and cultural interest in human reproduction. This has reignited a debate in the feminist medical humanities about the technological possibilities, political valences and ethical implications of novel technologies in biological reproduction. Yet whether celebratory or critical, this debate has remained narrowly anthropocentric, largely untroubled by the use of animals whose bodies become legitimised as the killable test subjects of medical progress. I turn to Lamb, therefore, in order to trouble this animal unconscious, as the film's plot – in which a bereaved sheep-farming couple adopt a humanimal lamb-child – blurs the species hierarchies. Yet this is not a story of posthumanist kinmaking. Adoption is recast as abduction, and nature will exact its revenge on a baleful humanity. Lamb thus refuses both the violence of anthropocentrism and the romanticism of nature idolatry, modulating the aesthetics of genre to give form to the horrors of human–animal relations.

Dr Dominic O'Key is a Lecturer at the University of Cambridge. He is the author of Creaturely Forms in Contemporary Literature: Narrating the War Against Animals (Bloomsbury, 2022), as well as articles on extinction, museums, and book prizes. His new project tracks the cultural politics of postcolonial wildlife conservation.

Laura O'Donovan and Dr Nicola Williams, 'On Babies in Bottles, and Foetuses in Flasks: Reflections on Representations of Ex-Utero Gestation and its Subjects in Ethics, Law, and Literature'. Within scientific, ethico-legal, and fictional representations of technologies designed to facilitate the development of a fetus outside of the human body, numerous terms have been used to refer to both the technology itself and the entity developed therein. In this paper, we develop a timeline of the different terms used in fictional and academic texts to refer to both. Given the nature of ex-utero gestation and the benefits/challenges it poses, the terminology used to refer to it and its subjects matters as it expresses and shapes perspectives and attitudes towards it. For instance, just as the development of technology itself is value laden, so too are the terms used to refer to it and its users/subjects. Through an exploration of the terminology used to refer to the technology and its subject over the past 100 years, we consider and reflect upon the importance of linguistic choices and the impact of lexical innovation (such as neologisms) on social understandings of/responses to the technology. Through this we also explore how these represent and reflect the anxieties and normative commitments of their authors, and how these may map on to broader social perspectives regarding the development and use of this technology.

Dr Laura O'Donovan is a Lecturer in Law at the University of Sheffield. She researches healthcare law and bioethics with a particular interest in the following areas: (i) reproduction and the body; (ii) organ donation; and (iii) health inequalities with a particular focus on the gender health gap.

Dr Nicola Williams is Wellcome Lecturer in The Ethics of Human Reproduction in the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University. Her research background is in the fields of Philosophy and Politics and her primary research interests concern questions of reproductive ethics, transplantation ethics, and intergenerational justice.

Saturday, 12th April

Panel 6.1 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 1): Ecology, Education, and Imagination: Science and Storytelling in Children's Literature
Chair: Rebekah Musk

Andrew Mitchell, "The Brontës and Dyslexia". In my study of the spelling patterns of Charlotte, Emily, Anne and Branwell Brontë in late adolescence and early adulthood I wished to establish whether there might be any indication of consistent errors symptomatic with a learning difficulty. An analysis was also made of the Reverend Patrick Brontë's spelling patterns and his wife Maria's sole extant document 'The Advantages of Poverty in Religious Concerns'. Research included primary sources and published transcriptions of error lists. Results were compared with the spelling error patterns of two controls, George Eliot and Mrs Gaskell. Findings were a consistent error pattern most evident in the writing of Branwell and Emily. Branwell was found to be dyslexic. Writing, drawing and other biographical issues, would suggest that Emily whilst less dyslexic than Branwell, was left hand dominant and probably fine motor dyspraxic on her right side. There is clinical evidence to suggest that many dyslexics have spatial and narrative orientations above the average in the population. Conditions are genetic in origin and the gene pool ensures each person is different. The probable genetic origin of the dyslexic tendency was the mother, whose sole extant document contained the same errors as her children.

Andrew Mitchell is a poet and independent scholar. Formally a lecturer in English and Psychology, he tutored his dyslexic and dyspraxic son for ten years. Between 2017 and 2019 he was Honorary Fellow in Creative Writing at the University of Leicester's Centre for New Writing. He has opened international conferences, marked important literary centenaries and bicentenaries. Performance venues have included: The British Library, London; Keats House, London; Keats-Shelley House, Rome; The Shakespeare Theatre, Gdansk. Publication and archives include poetry presses, academic journals and the V&A International Archive, Text and Illustration (with Mary Kuper). Editor to the Taking You Home Project on Iain Crichton Smith and Derick Thomson, which has the support of senior staff at the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh,

Glasgow and St Andrews. Other credits include: BBC Radio 3, research, interview, edit and present, Pick of the Week; BBC Television, The One Show. His poem biography of John Keats has extracts from its 1200 lines in the American Keats-Shelley Journal's Commonplacing volume 3, published on the internet 11/ 2024: K-SJ+ Special Issue Volume 3. Read it here: https://www.k-saa.org/commonplacing-special-issue-vol-3 . Website: www.wordworthy.com

Georgina M. Montgomery, "Beatrix Potter and the History of Ecology". This talk will examine Beatrix Potter as a woman in both science and literature and focus on a specific case study, namely Potter's influence on the so-called "father of ecology," Charles Elton. In Elton's personal papers and diaries, he noted: 'All of my life since I first read Squirrel Nutkin about 1904-1905, the feeling of Lake District country had gradually soaked into me, from the pictures in her books.' Beatrix Potter's influence on the page was amplified by Elton's childhood trips to the Lake District. At another point, discussing his soft toy animals, which included a squirrel called Nutkin and a frog called Jeremy, Elton reflected that: 'What with all these and all the characters in Beatrix Potter, and the early natural history investigations of my brothers, there was no shortage of animals to fill a certain void in my human companionship.' Elton's recognition of the influence of Beatrix Potter on his development is in sharp contrast to her own treatment by the scientific establishment of the time. Although a gifted scientific illustrator and scholar of lichen and fungi, Potter was rejected by scientific institutions of her day.

Dr. Georgina Montgomery is full professor at Lyman Briggs College, a science and society college at Michigan State University, USA. Dr. Montgomery's teaching and research focuses on the contributions of women and other marginalized groups to science, with a particular focus on long-term field studies of animal behavior. She is currently writing a history of Wytham Woods, a long-term ecological site in Oxford, U.K.

Georgina Kosanovic, "A Harry Potter for Science?: Why and How Science-Focused Fiction Inspires Young Readers". A cat, a young boy, and an elderly lady – not together, but in three separate science-based American fictional series for children from the 1950s to the 1980s: Space Cat, Danny Dunn, and Miss Pickerell. Running concurrent to the Cold War, and to some extent inspired by the anxiety in the United States about falling behind the Soviet Union in the Space Race and in scientific and technological advancement more generally, these series sought to combine scientific enquiry and exploration with a spirit of adventure and fun to engage young readers. Over the past twenty years, popular fictional series for children and teenagers have been more likely to focus on fantasy than on the factual, however exciting the latter may be. Furthermore, important recent attention paid to greater inclusivity in children's and YA literature has tended to be accompanied by content related to social justice issues, or dealing with emotional and mental health challenges, rather than science and technology. This paper examines the three aforementioned series within their historical contexts, and also more recent attempts to combine STEM topics within a children's series format. Finally, it suggests ways forward for future writers interested in communicating scientific fact through young people's fiction.

I have worked in secondary education in England and in Canada for over 30 years, both as a teacher and as a school librarian. Holding a postgraduate degree in English Literature from the University of Guelph in Canada, I have more recently completed an MSc in Geography from Birkbeck, University of London. In my current position, I have, on a voluntary basis, worked as a teacher sponsor for science-related enrichment groups at my school, such as the Crest Awards. Working with young people for so many years, I am interested in advancing links between science and the arts and humanities.

Panel 6.2 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 2): Climate Catastrophe
Chair: Anna Auguscik

Meera Vinod, 'Casteist Nature: Climate Catastrophe and Caste Politics in "Leila" by Prayaag Akbar'. "Purity," is a phrase that has been repeated fifty-three times across two hundred and sixty-three pages by various characters, in various circumstances, with various degrees of conviction in the novel "Leila" (2017) by Prayaag Akbar. However, "Leila," is at its core, the story of a mother's quest to find her missing daughter in the backdrop of a dystopian society facing rapid climate-change—a culture that has subsequently become obsessed with notions of community and belonging, at the expense of human inclusion. This shift results in a "skydome," an invention that

advertises pure air to its upper-caste gated community residents. The purity here does not refer to only the contents of the air, but rather the fact that such air is not shared, and therefore polluted by other communities. Additionally, the structure dumps the residue of the purification process on the slums outside the walled upper-caste habitations. The example presented here marks a departure from the current discourse of ecological exploitation by neoimperial powers, and shifts focus on subaltern ecological relations within the Global South. My paper undertakes an analysis of the various dimensions of caste that inform dystopian storytelling, and delineates the manner in which climate fiction (cli-fi) as a subgenre of dystopian fiction acts as a powerful medium to depict the reality of Indian social fabric vis-à-vis ghettoisation and renewed modes of untouchability. This paper also opens up discussions on caste and climate-change politics while exploring the genre of dystopian fiction and its take on detrimental state policies affecting the marginalised in events of climate catastrophes.

Meera Vinod is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of English Literature at The English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad, India. She holds a Junior Research Fellowship (UGC-JRF) awarded by the University Grants Commission (UGC), Government of India in 2020. Her doctoral project examines the intersection of postcoloniality and biopolitics in the tradition of Indian science fiction writing with special emphasis on caste and gender. She has co-authored a research article on postcolonial anxiety in an Indian dystopian setting in a national journal (doi:https://doi.org/10.12724/ajss.46.5). She has also presented her research at various national platforms.

Ewa Wisniewska, 'Apocalyptic Futures and Environmental Visions in N.K. Jemisin's The Fifth Season'. In The Broken Earth Trilogy, a medley of science fiction and fantasy, consisting of The Fifth Season (2015), The Obelisk Gate (2016) and The Stone Sky (2017), its author, N. K. Jemisin, offers inventive world-building and explorations of the theme of transformation. The transition within the tales is inextricably linked with the environmental aspects of the world presented, which is surprisingly called "Stillness". It is manifested in the occasional periods of seismic instability and natural disasters known by the inhabitants of "Stillness" as "Fifth Seasons". The very name marks a cyclical nature of the events, highlighting the inevitability of the catastrophes that the inhabitants of the land must endure. As the story unfolds, a predictable pattern contributing to the collective memory that shapes the understanding of the world, is revealed. The characters struggle with existential questions regarding the meaning of their lives, as well as the (im)possibility of breaking off the cyclical pattern that dooms their lives to failure. In The Fifth Season, Jemisin presents a haunting and intricately layered vision of the future, where constant environmental upheaval forces humanity to adapt in order to survive. The future the author imagines is one where human resilience, resourcefulness, and the ability to harness the forces of nature are essential. In this world, the boundary between human agency and environmental destruction is dangerously thin, and issues of power, injustice, and exploitation are deeply interwoven with the planet's fate.

Ewa Wisniewska holds a doctoral degree in literary studies. Her research examines feminist perspectives in contemporary fantasy and science fiction, exploring the relationships between gender, posthuman studies, and the histories of women. ORCID: 0000-0002-2387-2376

Gemma Curto, 'The Scientific Legacy of Rachel Carson in Margaret Atwood's *In the Wake of the Flood*'. This paper examines the connections between Rachel Carson's environmental warnings and Margaret Atwood's ecological themes, focusing on the documentary In the Wake of the Flood (2010), which chronicles Atwood's international tour to promote The Year of the Flood (2009) and highlights an innovative theatrical adaptation of the novel. Drawing on the third draft of the performance script and related correspondence from Atwood's Collections at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library in Toronto, I will argue that Atwood's ecocritical approach reflects Carson's insights regarding pesticide use and biodiversity loss, emphasising the impact of human actions on the environment. Through her tour, Atwood combines art and activism, staging performances to raise awareness about conservation, especially for endangered bird species, supporting BirdLife International. The documentary illustrates Atwood's commitment to Carson's legacy, showcasing personal reflections and environmental advocacy that extend beyond the novel. It juxtaposes urban desolation in places like Sudbury with revitalisation efforts, revealing themes of hope and resilience amid ecological disaster. Atwood's characters embody Carson's principles by opposing harmful agricultural practices, underscoring the relevance of Carson's work today.

Gemma Curto is a PhD Candidate in English Literature at the University of Sheffield, where her research investigates the intersections of literature, scientific methodologies, and ecological thought. She has published an article in Green Letters that analyses representations of floods in biocentric graphic novels and contributed a book chapter titled 'Kathy Acker's Voice in Blood and Guts in High School and Deleuze and Guattari's "Desiring-Machines"' published by Bloomsbury Academic.

Panel 6.3 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 3): Quantum Physics
Chair: Michael Whitworth

Nicola Giansiracusa, 'Finding Harmony in the Wave Function: The Quantum Aesthetics of Paul Valéry's *Mon Faust*'. While being one of the most celebrated French poets of his time, Paul Valéry (1871-1945) had a life long interest for physics, and discussed it with the insiders. He was indeed close to some of the main protagonists of the 20th-century physical revolution, including Jean Baptiste Perrin, Albert Einstein, and Louis De Broglie. Indeed, his personal interpretation of physical phenomena was foundational for the development of his though (on aesthetics and beyond) as demonstrated at least since the work of Judith Robinson (e.g., 1963; 1983). Nonetheless, Valéry's relationship with quantum theory seems conflictual, because of the problems that it posed to the imaginability of physical phenomena. I want to reconsider the latter issue by analysing Valéry's last work, the unfinished play Mon Faust ("My Faust," 1940-45). I argue that Valéry reinterpreted quantum physics, and especially the wave function, in order to describe and reflect on aesthetic reception. Presenting the experience of the harmonical play of possibilities opened up by an artwork, what he called les harmoniques, Valéry reconsidered the wave function as an abstract state, stolen from time, and close to the highest experience of love. His theory (reflected through the Mon Faust) engenders novel interpretations for modern poetry and fiction. Robinson-Valéry, Judith. 1963. L'Analyse de l'esprit dans les Cahiers de Valéry. Paris: Librairie José Corti. Robinson-Valery, Judith (ed.). 1983. Fonctions de l'esprit. Treize savants redécouvrent Paul Valéry. Paris: Hermann.

Nicola Giansiracusa holds an MA in Italian studies from the University of Bologna, and a PhD in Comparative Studies from the University of Lisbon. His recent PhD dissertation focused on the relationship between theoretical physics and modernism in the works of Virginia Woolf, Paul Valéry, and Carlo Emilio Gadda, through the framework of Fictional Worlds Theory. He has published articles on Paul Valéry in *il verri* and on Primo Levi in *Complit. Journal of European Literature, Arts and Society.* His current research topic is the study of literary space in non-mimetic literature from the perspective of literature and science.

Alkisti Kallinikou, 'Quantum Grief: Navigating Loss through the Multiverse in The Many Worlds of Albie Bright'. This paper examines Christopher Edge's The Many Worlds of Albie Bright and its use of quantum mechanics to address grief. Following his mother's death, Albie, inspired by her scientific work and ideas like Schrödinger's cat and the multiverse theory, begins to search for a parallel world where she is still alive. Grounded in Seymour Papert's constructionism theory, the paper argues that Albie's quest for alternate realities becomes an active meaning-making process, where scientific inquiry facilitates emotional healing.
Drawing on grief studies, the paper analyzes how Albie's emotional journey reflects children's unique experiences of bereavement and the complex, often nonlinear, progression of grief. Pairing this analysis with narrative theory, the paper suggests that the multiverse provides a landscape for Albie to safely process anger, sadness, denial, and ultimately, acceptance, as he attempts to "re-author" his life and reality. Through close readings of pivotal scenes, the analysis demonstrates how The Many Worlds of Albie Bright uses quantum theory as a vehicle for navigating grief, blending science with personal growth. Edge's work thus offers readers insight into the complexities of death, showing how loss can lead to a reimagined connection to both the past and future.

Alkisti Kallinikou is a PhD researcher at the University of Edinburgh. She holds a BA in English and a MA in Creative Writing. Her current work investigates identity and otherness in children's and young adult literature, whilst her research interests span literature and science, history of science, fantasy literature, nonfiction, and differential psychology. Alkisti is an associate editor for the International Journal of Young Adult Literature. She is a writer and essayist and leads workshops on children's literature and creative writing.

Lingchen Huang, 'Conceiving Subjectivity in Clarice Lispector's Quantum Universe: Spinozan Affect, Intra-action and the Philosophy of Mind'. Traversing Clarice Lispector's debut novel, Near to the Wild Heart (1943) and her later works, The Passion According to G.H. (1964) and Água Viva (1973), I explore how she envisions subjectivity as an emergent phenomenon, an instantaneous crystallisation arising from the web of random quantum processes. In doing so, I will argue that Lispector's sketch of the place of self in the world is akin to scientists' development of quantum mechanics, which, by accentuating the nature of contingency, yields insights into metaphysics. Through her lifetime's arc of writing, Lispector shifts from a deterministic conception of subjectivity based on Spinoza's conceptualised architecture of the

universe in the Ethics, to one based on probability distribution, extending beyond the scientific discourse on human consciousness. In Passion, the narrator finds herself in a world like a laboratory of discoveries, declaring that she will substitute fate for probability while acknowledging the necessity of what she names the fabric of life. This idea is refined in Água Viva, through the protagonist's experiments with metaphors for human conditions not yet available in language. The protagonist-artist views her participation in the world as an energetic action arising from the exchange of electrons, protons and neutrons.

Lingchen Huang is a DPhil student in Medieval and Modern Languages at the University of Oxford. Her doctoral project focuses on modern Brazilian literature, affect theory and literary modernism and she is currently working on nonhuman phenomena in Clarice Lispector's writing, with an emphasis on the early novels. Her other research interests include postcolonial studies, gender and sexuality, and continental philosophy.

Panel 6.4 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 4): Public Engagement and Practice
Chair: Adele Guyton

Jordan Kistler, 'Who is science for? Class, education, and the Victorian museum'. In Elizabeth Gaskell's Mary Barton (1848), Job Legh is one of a 'class of men' in the 'the manufacturing districts of Lancashire' who, despite their poverty and lack of formal education, 'may claim kindred with all the noble names that science recognises' (ch. 5). Job's natural aptitude for science stands in contrast to the course of study that Mr. Thornton undertakes in North and South (1854). Though Margaret scornfully wonders 'What in the world do manufacturers want with the classics, or literature, or the accomplishments of a gentleman?' (ch. 4), these subjects are explicitly positioned as a means of class advancement for the mill owners of the region. Job and Thornton reflect the wider conception of science and the arts at the mid-century, embodied in the presentation of these subjects in the British Museum. The 'curiosities' of the natural history collections were believed to appeal only to the working classes, who sought entertainment not education. The antiquities, in contrast, were great works of art which appealed to the 'higher feelings' of the upper classes. This paper will consider the way the sciences and the arts were positioned in terms of class and education at the mid-century, just before the radical shift that came with Darwin's Origin.

Jordan Kistler is a lecturer in English at the University of Strathclyde. She is currently working on a cultural history of the British Museum across the nineteenth century, exploring questions of access, organisation, and the construction of knowledge during this period.

Zoë Lehmann Imfeld, 'Poetics of Mars: Popular science writing and human transcendence'. The context in which new scientific knowledge is produced is fundamentally changing, and crucially, so too are the ways in which it is publicly communicated and understood. The discourses of the planetary sciences in particular are being reframed and transformed, and discourses surrounding Mars colonisation are becoming reframed not only as desirable, but as inevitable and necessary – a 'solution' to an unhabitable Earth. Jens Temmen has recently argued that even the NASA Mars rover missions are framed by a discourse that promotes the liberating and moral quality of technology. The scientific sources of authority on space exploration are also changing, as explorative activity is increasingly performed by the private sector. Here too, the discourses of human transcendence are reiterated. This points to a shift in the rhetoric of knowledge production, as scientific activity becomes entangled in the loaded narratives that are shaping it. This paper will examine the ways in which popular-science writing on Mars exploration is informing and is informed by conceptualisations of Mars, and will investigate some of the narrative strategies at work in writing about Mars and the human endeavour to reach Mars. I will draw on publications such as Sarah Stewart Johnson's The Sirens of Mars (2020), Scott Hubbard's Exploring Mars (2011) and Simon Morden's The Red Planet (2021).

PD Dr Zoe Lehmann is currently deputy to the Chair of Modern English Literature at the University of Bern, Switzerland. Her research and teaching is primarily focused on interdisciplinary exchanges in literature, including literature and science, literature and philosophy, and literature and theology. Primarily based in literature departments, Zoë has also held fellowships at the Centre for Space and Habitability (planetary sciences) at the University of Bern, and on the NASA funded project, 'The Societal Implications of Astrobiology' at the Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton.

Roxanne Korda, 'Librettising science: Anthropomorphising subject, performer and audience in investigations towards creating contemporary opera'. This practice-based, post-qualitative, research presents scientific concepts and research in the operatic platform through an interdisciplinary and collaborative process. It focuses on libretti writing and performance, using tools such as anthropomorphism, archetype and mythological analysis, to engage participants and the audience with the scientific subjects on stage. The work explores creating experiences which enable an emotional and creative expression of the reality of the science presented. This in turn makes the audience, performers, and creative practitioners complicit in the existence of the science being performed. Performativity and embodiment play key roles in shaping the final piece during the process of production towards cyclical presentations of the work.
This presentation will focus on the comparison between the methods and outcomes of two major collaborative projects:
1. The Flowering Desert. An opera about the discovery of the TRAPPIST-1 planetary system, written specifically for planetaria. This involved working with philosophical and scientific concepts relevant to the discovery of new exoplanetary systems and the field of astronomy and astrobiology.
2. Lipote: An Interconnected Journey. An opera/musical about deforestation due to intensive agriculture. Set in the soil from the perspective of the roots of trees this piece explores integration of scientific with traditional knowledge systems.

Roxanne is an opera singer and librettist. She likes to explore; presenting new opera, on esoteric subject matter, in unique spaces, to different audiences. She co-founded the company Infinite Opera in order to combine her love of science, philosophy and music. She has recently completed a practice-based PhD with the Midland4Cities Doctoral Training Partnership at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, exploring how to use science in creating new operatic characters and narrative. Roxanne also works in outreach, delivering workshops to adults and students in Higher Education on devising techniques, singing and creative writing.

Panel 6.5 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 5): Other Experience.
Chair: Sara Cole

Lucia Dodaro, '"The Birth of the Nut" and other such Tales: Literary Styles and Rhetorical Devices in Romantic-era Obstetrics Texts'. This paper will discuss the literary styles and rhetorical devices in the publicly accessible advice to women and families in the essays of Martha Mears and the works of Dr. Thomas Denman and Sir Richard Croft. All three were midwives practicing during the lifetime of the canonical British Romantic poets, including PB Shelley.

Lucia Dodaro is a fourth-year PhD Student in English Literature at Lancaster University. Her thesis work focuses on obstetric history, language, and metaphor in Percy Bysshe Shelley's works.

Yi-Ching Teng, 'Blakean Ecologies and Mystic Imagination in Dickinson' Dickinson's imaginative power, mysticism and originality in her insights into nature and life have frequently encouraged the critics to compare her poetry to William Blake's. William Blake once intriguingly declared, "The Eternal Body of Man is The Imagination: that is God himself." For him, "Imagination" is "the real and eternal world." While revisiting the Blakean notions related to imagination, God and nature, this paper seeks thus to rethink mystic imagination and its relations to the spiritual ecologies in Emily Dickinson. We intend to argue that the spiritual ecologies that we detect in Dickinson profoundly resonate with those embedded in Blake. While helping envision a mythic reunion with Nature, the imaginative One, the spiritual ecologies in both authors emanate an innate understanding of the natural harmony that exists within the ecosystem. They embody subtle attempts to awaken and activate our imagination of living in a spiritual connection to the environment around us, propelling us to explore within, the forgotten but ever-present faculty of seeing things with an "inward eye," the intuitive eye of "a simple child." Their poetic creations stand as beautiful, yet cryptic manifestations of the unity and interconnectedness within the natural world that everlastingly invite to be deciphered further.

Ms. Yi-Ching Teng is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of English Instruction of National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan. She obtained her PhD in English Language, Literature and Civilization at the Université de Nice-Sophia Antipolis in France. At present, her research projects center on Romanticism and Modernism, the works of Oscar Wilde and their trans-linguistic relations with other arts. Her newfound interests are in the studies related to inner reality

Constantin Canavas, 'In search of the 4th state of matter: Spiritualism encounters science in Christine Wunnicke's novel "Katie" (2017)' In 2017 the German writer Christine Wunnicke published her novel "Katie", referring to encounters of science and spiritualistic practices in the second half of the 19th century in Victorian London. The historical background of the novel is formed by actualising the interest of several scientists in that period for spiritualistic séances, as well as their ambitions to yield rational interpretations or comments on the outcome of such performances in conjunction with their on-going scientific studies on electricity, electro-magnetism, and radiation of certain materials. The fascination of the press and the general public for phenomena such as telekinesis and materialisation of spirits enacted in such séances opened new stages for the public perception of the scientists involved. In this context the novel focuses on a special case in the 1860s-1880s that involved the physicist William Crookes, the medium Florence Cook and the materialised spirit of Katie King. In fact, the case has been reported by Crookes himself, as well as by contemporary authors such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The claim of this paper is that the specific narrative patterns of the novel and the choice of different perspectives (reported ones such as that of Crookes, or fictitious such as those of the medium and the materialised spirit of Katie) deconstruct the scientific ambitions of the rationality-orientated discourses, and create a fictional frame to host the fascination of scientists for such experiences.

Constantin Canavas holds a Diploma on chemical engineering and a Dr.-Ing. on system dynamics and control. He has also followed studies on comparative literature, philosophy, and history of science and technology. From 1993 till 2022 he has been Professor at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences in the fields of control, technology assessment, as well as history and philosophy of technology with a special focus on literary repercussions of scientific and technological issues.

Plenary 3: (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 1): Kanta Dihal, 'A Mythology of AI'
Chair: Laura Ludtke

Discourse around artificial intelligence (AI) is complex and contradictory. It tends to be dominated by extremes, from the wildly utopian to the depressingly dystopian. It spans all imaginable media and cuts across conventional distinctions such as fiction and nonfiction, news and speculation, present-day technology and futuristic sorcery. This discourse embeds and perpetuates the values of the societies from which it stems, and shapes the decisions of actors across sectors, including engineers, users, and policymakers. For these reasons, I argue that narratives around AI are best understood as a mythology. To elucidate this, I offer a four-part definition of myth, showing how AI discourse meets these criteria. I then argue for the usefulness and importance of seeing narratives of AI in this way. Finally, I offer examples of some of the most prominent AI myths.

Dr Kanta Dihal is Lecturer in Science Communication at Imperial College London – where she is Course Director of the MSc in Science Communication – and Associate Fellow at the University of Cambridge. Her research focuses on science narratives, particularly science fiction, and how they shape public perceptions and scientific development. She is co-editor of the books *AI Narratives* (2020) and *Imagining AI* (2023), co-author of *A Mythology of AI* (2025), and has advised international governmental organizations and NGOs. In 2018, she obtained her DPhil from Oxford, on the communication of quantum physics, supervised by Professors Sally Shuttleworth and Michael Whitworth.

Panel 7.1 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 1): Interrogating Technologies
Chair: Paul Hamann-Rose

Daniel Joe Bowman, '"It is my pony": Equines and Indigenous Automobility in *The Powwow Highway*'. Focusing on literary representations of automobiles and equines in Huron-author David Seals's novel *The Powwow Highway* (1979), this paper explores what Indigenous road narratives can reveal about the significance of both equines and automobiles to Indigenous identities in both intertribal and tribally specific senses. *The Powwow Highway* features Cheyenne characters adopting and adapting the automobile, stripping back those symbolic qualities attributed to it in settler media, and reconstructing it as a vehicle for Cheyenne cultural reaffirmation. This

understanding of the car as an Indigenous technology elevates and reinscribes its everyday associations, transforming it into a symbol of Cheyenne cultural continuity through its metaphorical associations with the horse. In the novel, Philbert's car is continuously referred to as a "war pony," another example of the successful appropriation of what was originally a settler mode of transportation by the Cheyenne people. American car companies continue to draw upon the symbolism of numerous equines and Indigenous people(s)—from the Mustangs, Colts, Pintos, and Broncos to the Pontiacs, Cherokees, Winnebagos and Cheyennes—to sell a nostalgic return to the imagined pre-modern frontier. This paper argues that Philbert's attribution of equine characteristics to his car challenges such appropriation by situating the automobile within a story of ever-evolving Cheyenne cultures, demonstrating how the car can work *with* Indigenous peoples instead of their identities being made to work *for* car culture.

Daniel Bowman is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral researcher and lecturer in English Literature at the University of Stavanger, Norway. His Horizon Europe project Nation of Mechanics (NOMECH) explores how Indigenous American authors represent the relationship between automobility and the nonhuman world. Daniel's broader research interests are at the intersection of literary, animal, automobility, and ecocritical studies, and his first monograph *Horsepower: Literature, Animals, and American Automotive Culture, 1890-1940* is forthcoming with Michigan State UP.

Kate Foster, 'Technology and the Human-adjacent: Dracula's Posthumanisms. Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897) is surely one of the most frequently adapted Victorian novels, the story of a being which transcends traditional human limits. Simultaneously alive and dead, biological and supernatural, much of our fascination with Dracula results from his blurring of otherwise incontrovertible boundaries. For their part, the Crew of Light (the vampire hunters Van Helsing, Dr Seward and others) make use of several technological innovations during their observation and eventual defeat of the vampire, including phonographs, typewriters, blood transfusions and steam trains, which allow them to enhance and surpass their own human 'limitations'. My paper will examine how these different ways of augmenting or transforming the human predict and perform twentieth- and twenty-first-century theories of the posthuman. I want to ask how the vampire's liminal status between human and other relates to the critical posthumanism (as a deconstruction of humanism) expounded by Rosi Braidotti. Conversely, how does the human-technology interface experienced by the Crew of Light – particularly when deployed against Dracula – intersect with more technologically-focused posthumanisms of Donna Haraway and N Katherine Hayles? Finally, how does the text's presentation of these forms of posthumanism reflect Stoker's own ambivalence towards both societal and technological progress?

Kate Foster is Lecturer in French Studies at the University of Reading, and Conference Officer for the Society for French Studies. Her research focuses on the relationship between human bodies and technology from the 1880s to the 1930s in France, Germany and the UK. As well as publishing on androids and cyborgs, she has written about mannequins in Surrealist art, and in Emile Zola's fiction. Kate is currently working on a monograph on androids and cyborgs in literature and visual culture, an edited volume on automation, and is developing a new project on technology, disease and cultural history.

Curtis Runstedler, 'Confronting Techno-Orientalism and Anti-Asian American Racial Stereotypes in Alexander Weinstein's "Saying Goodbye to Yang"'. Alexander Weinstein's short story "Saying Goodbye to Yang" investigates and critiques techno-Orientalist views and persistent Asian American racial stereotypes, such as the "yellow peril" and the "model minority" myth. The story depicts a white, American, middle-class couple who adopt a Chinese daughter as well as Yang, her robotic Chinese "older brother." After Yang malfunctions, the narrator/father brings him to an android mechanic (Russ Goodman), who expresses racist remarks about Yang's physical appearance and is shown to support eugenics. While Yang's Chinese appearance initially evokes techno-Orientalism, I argue that the story subverts these clichés by addressing the difficulties of accepting non-white AI and the omnipresence of racial biases in society. Yang's malfunction prompts both the narrator and the reader to confront their racial prejudices. By presenting a techno-Orientalist character, the story challenges lingering colonial and AI-related biases, advocating for their elimination. This paper draws upon critical race theory, literary analysis, and postcolonial theory to show how the short story critiques the intersections of race and technology, and revealing how even progressive views can harbour latent racism. This presentation also highlights how AI development often prioritises "whiteness" while paradoxically emphasising the necessity for greater inclusivity and cultural sensitivity in AI technologies.

Curtis Runstedler is a postdoctoral researcher with the Interchange Forum for Reflecting on Intelligent Systems (IRIS) at the University of Stuttgart and based in the Department of English Literature. His current research examines contemporary depictions of literary AI narratives in the English novel. His first book Alchemy and

Exemplary Poetry in Medieval English Literature was published with Palgrave Macmillan's New Middle Ages series in 2023. He has also published on medieval werewolves, Game of Thrones, and has forthcoming publications on Stephen King and vampires, Klara and the Sun and AI compliance, and the connections between medieval literature and ChatGPT.

Panel 7.2 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 2): Science, Literature, and the Human Mind
Chair: Jerome de Groot

Mette Leonard Høeg, 'Coming to insight through affection: Affective awareness in literature and psychedelics and its moral value'. One of the main interests in contemporary psychedelics research is the potential of using psychedelics for moral enhancement and improvement of well-being. This springs, in part, from an abundance of first-person reports of increased and lasting pro-social attitudes and behaviour resulting from psychedelics use. Similar claims have been made in relation to literature. Martha Nussbaum argues that literature cultivates the human capacity for empathy and is essential for developing moral imagination. Devenot and Erving argue that literature invites readers into modes of experience that challenge standard conceptual frameworks for understanding the world. And Cora Diamond points out that literature can facilitate a certain style of affectionate interest in the world and imaginative engagement with it, arguing that this affective experiential mode has moral value in itself. In this paper, I explore this affinity between the forms of moral and psychological awareness and experiences facilitated by psychedelics and literature, in terms of a specific affective awareness and its moral value. And I argue that further comparative studies of psychedelics and literature and their specific forms of awareness and effects hold significant potential for advancing our understanding of the complex nature of psychedelics and for bringing to light under-recognised features and effects of literature and its value for consciousness studies and moral philosophy.

Dr. Mette Leonard Høeg is a Carlsberg Foundation postdoctoral researcher at the Interacting Minds Centre, Aarhus University, and Academic Visitor at the Oxford Uehiro Centre, University of Oxford. With a background in literature and narrative studies, her work currently focuses on neuroscience, neurophilosophy and psychedelics. Her publications include "The Value of Literature for Consciousness Research and Ethics" in Journal of Consciousness Studies (2023) and Uncertainty and Undecidability in Twentieth Century Literature and Literary Theory (Routledge, 2022). She is co-editor of the Neuroethics special issue Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Consciousness (2024). She has also published extensively on neurophilosophical and -existential issues in various cultural public media and magazines.

B L Jayadev, 'Narrative Neurobiology: Bridging Lived Experience and Scientific Inquiry in Addiction Discourse'. This paper explores the convergence of scientific and personal narrative in the understanding of addiction, focusing on the memoirs - "In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts" by Gabor Maté and "Memoirs of an Addicted Brain" by Marc Lewis. Both works critique reductionist, purely medical models of addiction, proposing a more nuanced approach that accounts for the roles of trauma, unmet developmental needs, and sociocultural factors in the development and persistence of addictive behaviours. Maté, a physician with extensive experience in addiction treatment, underscores the impact of adverse childhood experiences in shaping vulnerability to addiction. He posits that addiction functions as a maladaptive coping mechanism, originating from unresolved trauma and emotional distress rather than solely as a physiological disease. Complementing Maté's insights, neuroscientist and former addict Lewis, through a blend of personal anecdotes and scientific analysis illustrates how the brain's plasticity enables the establishment and reinforcement of addictive patterns over time. By juxtaposing Maté's trauma-informed framework with Lewis's neurobiological perspective, this paper demonstrates how first-hand accounts by experts can bridge the divide between scientific understanding and personal experience of this pervasive ailment. Their works reveal the interplay of personal history, societal influences, and neurobiology in addiction's etiology and trajectory Ultimately, this analysis advocates for an empathetic, individualized approach to addiction treatment, emphasizing the importance of recognizing each person's unique narrative as essential to their recovery journey.

B L Jayadev is a Research Scholar at the Department of English Literature, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India. He is currently researching addiction narratives, aiming to explore the complex relationships between addiction, language, and identity. His interdisciplinary research interests draw from literature, psychology, and health humanities. B L Jayadev's work seeks to understand how individuals construct and communicate their experiences of addiction and how cultural

and social factors shape these narratives. His work on the intersection between addiction studies and health humanities is under review for publication at Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Arunima A V., 'Re-establishing Agency through Narrative Resistance: A Study of the 'Alternative Rationality' in Select Writings of People with Schizophrenia'. This paper aims to look at the case of publishing first-person accounts in Schizophrenia Bulletin, written for the medical community studying schizophrenia, to facilitate learning. I contend that schizophrenic writing ought to reveal an 'alternative reality' through the lens of an 'alternative rationality', but this gets compromised when these accounts are bound to follow the publication rules. Subsequently, it would fail the purpose of such an activity; hence, the idea of learning from these narratives becomes a mere academic facade. This study analyses two accounts, one which resists the rules and the other which complies with them. One of the repercussions of these rules that I deem menacing is the patient's added and unwarranted responsibility to explain their nonconforming inner world to people who are to do the same or simplify this job so that the higher goal can be to enlighten a layperson. The paper aims to demonstrate how the patient's writing resists the general demand to make sense to a larger audience by not conforming their narratives to the standards set by common sense and clinical interventions. Therefore, I aim to draw on theories about rationality in general and concerning schizophrenia to arrive at the concept of 'alternative rationality' and further analyse the accounts, taking into account the nuances of ethics within the scope of this paper.

Arunima A V is a PhD scholar in the Department of English Literature at English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. She did her M.A. in English from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her research interests are Medical Humanities, Cognitive Humanities, Gender Studies, and Caste.

Panel 7.3 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 3): Nature, Observation, and Climate: Scientific Inquiry and Literary Expression in the Long Eighteenth Century.
Chair: Greg Lynall

Brycchan Carey, 'Writing the Book of Nature: The Literary Lives of British Clerical Naturalists in the Long Eighteenth Century'. The figure of the clerical or 'parson' naturalist is superficially familiar to scholars of Enlightenment science through individuals such as Gilbert White, the celebrated author of The Natural History of Selborne (1789). Until now, however, clerical naturalists have been the subject of only one study: Patrick Armstrong's problematic The English Parson Naturalist (2000). In this paper, I share research from my British Academy/Wolfson-funded project 'The Parish Revolution' in which I examine the personal, rhetorical, and cultural history of clerical naturalism as it was practiced in the British Isles and Empire between 1660 and 1859. Drawing on data I have collected on over 1100 clerical naturalists, I will offer a brief prosopographical analysis of their collective clerical and scientific careers, demonstrating their enormous diversity and productivity, before assessing their impact on literary culture. Some notable authors such as Jonathan Swift, Christopher Smart, and Charles Kingsley were also both clergymen and naturalists. Some clerical naturalists such as Gilbert White, William Paley, and David Landsborough chose to present their research in literary forms. Blending the forms and styles of science, theology, poetry, and the novel, I argue, made clerical naturalists uniquely effective communicators of the developing life sciences in the long eighteenth century.

Brycchan Carey is the Wolfson Professor of Literature, Culture, and History at Northumbria University. He is the author of numerous books and articles on topics including slavery, abolition, religion, animal studies, and natural history, including three monographs: British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility (Palgrave, 2005), From Peace to Freedom: Quaker Rhetoric and the Birth of American Antislavery (Yale, 2012), and The Unnatural Trade: Slavery, Abolition, and Environmental Writing, 1650–1807 (Yale, 2024). He is currently in receipt of a 3-year British Academy/Wolfson Professorship to research the history, literature, and culture of clerical naturalists in the period 1660–1859.

Nayani Jensen, 'How to write a climate event: British Meteorology, Romanticism, and the summer of 1816'. The 1815 eruption of Mount Tambora caused disastrous weather across the northern hemisphere, an infamous 'year without a summer' in 1816, and fears of the sun going out. While Romantic literary visions produced in these years (Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Byron's Darkness) continue to hold enormous influence in popular and scholarly imagination, the response of meteorologists has been less closely examined. The early 19th century was a crucial period for the still-emerging field, with increasing standardized record-keeping and efforts to find laws

regulating the weather — all of which were challenged by the Tambora climate events. In contrast to narratives of environmental disaster, many practitioners of meteorology incorporated data from these years into arguments for the stability of the climate, which were frequently published alongside popular and literary narratives filling periodicals and daily papers. Focusing particularly on the work of 'father of meteorology' and namer-of-clouds Luke Howard, I argue that extreme weather events of the Tambora years — and popular and Romantic literary responses — prompted practitioners to actively define an 'objective' rhetoric for meteorology, and contributed to the move towards a more mathematized, quantitative approach to the field. These developments continue to shape our current approach to communicating about weather and climate.

Nayani Jensen is a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto, studying the rise of climate studies in the 19th Century. After studying Mechanical Engineering (BEng) and working on climate research projects, she received a Rhodes Scholarship and studied English Literature (Senior BA) and History of Science (MSc) at the University of Oxford. She is also a writer, and in both her academic and creative work she is interested in merging arts and sciences in interdisciplinary approaches to history, climate and fiction. She received the 2024 Bronwen Wallace award for emerging writers from the Writers' Trust of Canada.

Panel 7.4 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 4): Nineteenth-Century Bodies and Minds
Chair: Sharon Ruston

Yixuan Jiang, 'Of Delicate Fingers and Weak Brains: The Pathologization of Racial Hybridity in Dinah Craik's *The Half-Caste*'. Dinah Craik's The Half-Caste (1851), a bildungsroman of an orphaned half-caste girl named Zillah, has received minimal scholarly attention until its recent 2016 Broadview edition. Moreover, the few critics writing on the novel including Angharad Eyre and Kiran Mascarenhas have solely focused on themes of imperialism from cultural standpoints; however, given the Victorian rise of racial sciences and the increasing attention to "degenerative" miscegenation, scholarship has often overlooked the importance of Zillah's biological hybridity. Whether it be her limited cognitive capacity, susceptibility to disease, or unusual "Hindu hands," the book presents a compelling study of nineteenth-century debates on hybrid races. To address this gap, I examine works from nineteenth-century scientists including Robert Knox, Samuel Morton and J.C. Nott to understand how theories of anatomy, phrenology, and medicine influenced Craik's portrayal of Zillah's body. I argue that Zillah's biological hybridity becomes pathologized as a physical disease fragmenting her mind and body, and she must rid the Indian contagions from her body to fully integrate into the British social sphere. By intersecting postcolonial interpretations of Zillah's cultural hybridity with scientific readings of her biological hybridity, I aim to uncover how Victorian medical discourses surrounding miscegenation reflected deeper colonial insecurities about national purity.

Yixuan Jiang is an English Ph.D. candidate at the University of Washington. Her research focuses on 19th-century British fiction through the lens of postcolonialism, feminist studies, and the study of science and literature. Her current dissertation project examines Victorian literature in relation to scientific theories to understand how the concept of "hybridity" circulated in the British empire (specifically, the colonies of the "East Indies") as a pervasive, contentious, and sometimes threatening concept that unsettled classifications of race, ethnicity, and nation.

Mila Daskalova, 'Between Literature and Science: Writing and Re-Writing Psychiatry as a Scientific Discipline in the Nineteenth-Century'. Early psychiatric writings demonstrate physicians' reliance on literary language and references to illustrate their points and establish their professional expertise in insanity. With psychiatry's professionalisation and its leaning towards scientific positivism, however, there was a rift with literature. As Susanna Blumenthal (1995) argues, 'psychiatrists put down their copies of Shakespeare's works and repaired to the laboratory and the clinic.' This was not a quick, simple or even clearly successful process: tensions between fact and fiction, reason and the creative imagination continued to torment medical practitioners as they sought to distinguish the scientific from the literary. In this paper, I will focus on the first psychiatric journals, launched in the 1840s-50s, and some of the general publications which alienists contributed to (such as the New Edinburgh Review edited by Dr Richard Poole) to further explore the rise of 'mental science'. I will propose that early alienists saw their indebtedness to literature as natural, even inevitable because their medical practice was harmoniously complemented by their role as readers and, quite often, as literary editors, contributors and reviewers. With the professionalisation not only of psychiatry, but also of literary writing and criticism, the dialogue between the disciplines was subdued, though far from interrupted.

Mila Daskalova is a British Academy Postdoctoral & Lord Kelvin / Adam Smith Fellow at the University of Glasgow. She completed her PhD on nineteenth-century asylum periodicals at the University of Strathclyde in 2022. Winner of the Sally Mitchell Dissertation Prize of the RSVP (2023), she is developing her thesis into her first book. She has contributed to the expansion of RSVP's Curran Index and the 'Piston, Pen and Press' database. Her new project, 'Reading Madness: The Literary Origins of Nineteenth-Century Psychiatry,' explores the early development of psychiatry in conversation with literary culture.

Merrilees Fay Roberts, 'P.B. Shelley's *Alastor* and physiology of inflammation'. This paper will examine the depictions of physiological illness in P.B. Shelley's Alastor (1817) as a manifestation of a kind of "shock fatigue". I will present a reading which interprets the strangeness of the poet-figures' unexplained and prolonged wastage and death as demonstrating an incipient awareness on Shelley's part that our psychological lives can be structured by lingering physiological causes determined by what literal and conceptual nourishment we feed ourselves. Metaphysical 'doubts' about the immortality of the soul are experienced in terms of the circulation of the blood ('a sudden tide flowed on his heart'), producing 'insatiate hopes' which turn into 'despair' as they sting the 'brain' into torpor whilst, curiously, both arousing and pacifying the imagination. The equally curious statements in the preface that the poet who begins with an 'inflamed', but also 'purified' imagination ends up 'morally dead' when the Faustian desire for sympathy with transcendental forms dulls the capacity for 'human' feeling can be usefully understood through historical physiological models. I will use the medical theories of John Brown (1780) and John Hunter (1794) to draw out the idea that, for Shelley, death fails to be shocking when we consider it as another stage of organic life.

Merrilees Roberts teaches Politics and Literature at IES Abroad and Queen Mary University of London. She is the author of Shelley's Poetics of Reticence: Shelley's Shame (2020) as well as other articles on Romantic poetry, affect theory and philosophies of sympathy. Her current research interests lie in theories of eroticism, intersections between literature and science and the creative potential of negative affect. She was an organiser of 'The Shelley Conference 2024, Posthumous Poems, Posthumous Collaborations', Keats House, Hampstead, London and is a member of the steering committee for the Queen Mary Centre for the Study of the Nineteenth Century and its Legacies.

Panel 7.5 (George Fox Building, Lecture Theatre 5): Machines, Gender, and the Reconstruction of Self: Narratives of Technology and Domesticity
Chair: Lucy Davies

Grace Anne Paizen, '"Handle Me Gently": The Edisonade, the Steam Man, and the Lineage of Gendering Companion Machines'. A genre emerging from the success of, and in conversation with, Jules Verne's translated works, the Edisonade (c.1868-1914), named after Thomas Edison, exaggerates real-life inventions and dramatizes these mechanical toys. In this genre, machines are created for the amusement of their inventor and become weaponized by the end of the narrative. In these works, technological advancement was seen as progress, but the inventions of both factual and fictional Edisons did not actually signal human progress, contributing only to the mythology of American industrialism and ultimately imperialism. The narratives of these imagined machines merely carried problematic cultural constructs with them instead of using the text to study or propose a resolution to these issues. Moreover, humanoid machines in the genre are invariably gendered and are consequently feminized by the characters in the text, even if outrightly gendered "male." The main text I focus on in this paper is Edward S. Ellis' The Steam Man of the Prairies (1868), which has been deemed the "ur-Edinsonade" of American literature. I posit that placing machines into culturally established gender roles is one of the ways unresolved social problems are perpetuated in tech under the guise of technological progress.,

Grace Anne Paizen is currently a PhD in English Literature at the University of Glasgow. Specializing in Literature and Science studies, her research focuses on the scientific masculinities of gendered technology in literature of the nineteenth century, specifically the gendering of machines. She moonlights as the only woman sports editor at one of the last free press newspapers in Canada.

Richard Snowden-Leak, 'The Stories We Tell Ourselves in Nicola Barker's H(A)PPY: A Ground-Up Reconstruction of the Self'. In Legacy Russel's Glitch Feminism, the incorporeality of the internet is a freedom from the 'middle school heteronormativity', of having to be buried in a body 'systematically erased, edited out, ignored' by white patriarchal forces (2019: 5). Nicola Barker's H(A)PPY predicts a far grimmer internet-future: the self, pinned down and conditioned by a sea of Other Selves. The protagonist, Mira A, is driven mad because of this revelation, that she is not Others, but is in fact an individual, when she disconnects from the internet, to find 'To be exclusive is to exclude' (Barker, 2017: 10). Barker thus finds a self-lessness horrifying. Combining Thomas Metzinger and Richard Dawkins, though, I will argue the opposite, that Barker's depictions of the online space could create a second-person subjectivity that privileges both the self and other. If, as Dawkins says after all, 'we are born selfish', then we must build 'a society in which individuals cooperate generously and unselfishly towards a common good' (2016: p. 30). By understanding where the online space went wrong in Barker's text, I will examine where the self has gone wrong as well, and how best one's sense of individuality can work in ceremony with other selves.

Richard Snowden-Leak's AHRC-funded PhD studies the benefits that New Weird fiction has on mental health, both in the creation of this fiction and the reading thereof in groups, especially in online forums. This thesis covers the intersections of the sciences with literature, the enmonstering realities of white hegemony, and the nightmarish horrors of capitalist (sur)realism. He has been part of several research teams studying medical humanities, such as SHARED and LivCare, which collect data from across Liverpool and the international community on how charities and arts-and-health-based practices have come to help the ailing mental health of those in marginalised communities.

Faye Lynch, 'Contemporary Depictions of Domestic Labour in Fembot Narratives'. In her work on the digital future of hospitality Lindsay Anne Balfour notes the connection between gender, technology, and domestic work, 'the technologies of domestic space (...) are feminized not in their function but in their reproduction of domestic labour roles traditionally assigned to women' (Balfour, The Digital Future of Hospitality, p. 53). The gendering of these types of technology finds its logical extreme in the SF portrayal of the domestic fembot, a robot created to resemble a human woman that is designed to perform domestic labour. The most infamous depiction of the domestic fembot is likely in Ira Levin's 1972 novel The Stepford Wives, however, this paper examines the domestic labour of fembots in two contemporary texts: Ros Anderson's The Hierarchies (2020) and Kazuo Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun (2021). These texts depart from Levin's concept of the robotic housewife, and instead depict the domestic fembot as something more akin to a member of household staff. This paper asks to what extent these texts are thoughtful re-examinations of the gendered nature of domestic work, and to what extent they are simply recapitulations of harmful gendered stereotypes.

Faye Lynch is a second year PhD student in the Department of English at the University of Liverpool, where she is developing her thesis on depictions of the 'fembot' in post-1930 Anglosphere Science Fiction, considering how these depictions illuminate our changing cultural perceptions of technology, gender, and sexuality. She is one of the co-organisers and social media manager of the Current Research in Speculative Fiction (CRSF) Conference at the University of Liverpool. Faye's other research interests include Contemporary American Fiction, The Cold War in Literature and Visual Culture, and Twentieth Century Poetry.