Australasian Association for Literature annual conference, Literature and Technology

11 AND 12 JULY 2016
WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY, PARRAMATTA CAMPUS

Hosted by the Writing & Society Research Centre, Western Sydney University
In the face of continual technological innovation, the ‘end of books’ has been a recurring prophecy voiced by authors and literary critics, from Théophile Gautier in the 1830s to Robert Coover in the 1990s. The expansion of new technologies over the last two centuries has often elicited a certain amount of alarm, but also an equal measure of fascination, both of which have had a significant impact on literature’s thematic preoccupations and formal developments. Technology has also crucially shaped the medium through which we read, teach, and research literature.

Literature today remains at the interface of understanding and giving representational form to new and emerging technologies and the ways in which they pervade and mould our world, as well as make possible literary production, dissemination, and conservation. This conference seeks to explore the complex interrelations between literature and technology through a wide range of literary texts and contexts, as well as across historical and contemporary periods including electronic literature and new media writing.

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the 10th annual conference of the

Australasian Association for Literature. The 1st AAL conference was held at the Parramatta campus of Western Sydney University in 2007 so it is fitting that the conference should return to WSU this year.

Anne Jamison
and Matt McGuire,
Conference convenors
**DAY 1: MONDAY 11 JULY**

Registration from 8:45am - foyer of building EB, ground floor
Welcome/Acknowledgement of Country; 9:15-9:30am

**SESSION 1 9:30-11AM**

**PANEL 1:** Modern Technologies (room EB.G.17)

**CHAIR:** Chris Danta

Roderick Grant (USyd): Kenneth Slessor’s Decomposed Metropolis: Patterns of Self-Definition in Cuckooz Contrey.

Meg Brayshaw (WSU): The Wavering Light of Modernity in Christina Stead’s Seven Poor Men of Sydney.

Elizabeth McLean (Uni of Melbourne): Henry James, Misplaced: Excursion and Revelation in The Ambassadors.

**PANEL 2:** The Infinite Library (room EB.G.18)

**CHAIR:** Anne Jamison

Frank Russo (USyd): Technology and the pursuit of the Infinite Library.


**PANEL 3:** Dystopic Fiction and Interactive Texts (room EB.G.21)

**CHAIR:** Matt Mcguire

Jyhene Kebsi (USyd): An Investigation of the Marriage between Politics and Technology in George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four.

Dr. Craig Johnson (Macquarie): Dystopian Storytelling and Interactive Fiction.


**PANEL 4:** Post-Humans, Cyborgs and Technology As Excess (room EB.G.17)

**CHAIR:** Narelle Ontivero

Angela Andonopoulos (University of Newcastle): Interrogating boundaries of adolescent normativity through the posthuman hybrid subject in Mary E. Pearson’s The Adoration of Jenna Fox.


Dr. Inez Okulska: Lost in the Run Between Emails and Snap-Chat.

**PANEL 5:** Technology and Literary Culture (room EB.G.18)

**CHAIR:** Harry Fairless

Misty McPhail (WSU): Digital Futures: Imagining the Australian literary festival online.

Millicent Weber (Monash): Live and Online Literary Culture: Intersections in Reader Engagement.

**LUNCH 1-2PM**

**SESSION 3 2-3:30PM**

**PANEL 7:** Teaching Literature and Technology (room EB.G.17)

**CHAIR:** Anne Jamison

Kerry Kilner/Jonathan Hadwen (UQ): Adapting a Research Facility to a Teaching and Student Space: Aus-Arts @ AustLit.

Dr. Stephen Abblitt (Open Universities Australia): Halt and Catch Fire: Post-Print Pedagogies.

Christian Griffiths/Jessica Trevitt (Monash): Automation to Innovation: the multiple choice quiz as a method of reading literature. VIA SKYPE
PANEL 8: Contemporary Authors and the Internet (room EB.G.18)

CHAIR: Lindsay Tuggle

Dr. Sanaz Fotouhi (Monash): Digital Literatures of Iran.

Camilla Palmer (UNSW): Zadie Smith and Digital Detox: How Contemporary Novelists Come to terms with the Internet.

Dr. Sashi Nair (Uni of Melbourne): Sapphic Social Networking.

AFTERNOON TEA 3:30-4PM

SESSION 4 4-5:30PM

KEYNOTE – (room EB.G.02)

Prof. Nicholas Daly (UCD, Ireland)

CHAIR: Matt Mcguire

DRINKS RECEPTION/ BOILERHOUSE, 6-7pm

With readings from Fiona Wright and Felicity Castagna

DAY 2: TUESDAY 12 JULY

Registration from 9am - foyer of building EB, ground floor

SESSION 5 9:30-11AM

PANEL 9: Online Authors and New Literary Genres (room EB.G.17)

CHAIR: Chris Danta

Oscar Schwartz (Monash): Can a Twitterbot be called an author?

Umit Kennedy (WSU): Vlogging on YouTube as a contemporary form of autobiography: An analysis of Australian mummy vlogging.

Don Silence (Macquarie): ‘Why speculate when we can prototype?’: the technology of literature and the future of fiction.

PANEL 10: Poetry and Technology (room EB.G.18)

CHAIR: Chris Conti


Benjamin Laird (RMIT): Representing the Biographical Subject in Poetry in Print and Programmable Media.

Dr. Lindsay Tuggle (WSU): The Afterlives of Specimens: Walt Whitman and the Army Medical Museum.

PANEL 11: Reading in the Digital Age (room EB.G.21)

CHAIR: Anthony Uhlmann

Dr. Simone Murray (Monash): Literary Reading in Online Environments: Technologies, Practices, Implications.

Dr. Tully Barnett (Flinders): What is Reading Now? Literary reading in digitised environments.

Lauren Alice (Macquarie): Books of Numbers: Reading, Writing, Forgetting and Dying in the Internet Age.

LUNCH 1-2PM

SESSION 7 2-3:30PM

PANEL 14: American and Australian Fiction (room EB.G.21)

CHAIR: Chris Andrews

Dominic Williams (Federation University Australia): Speculative technology: becoming the fungal-percepts of grey cap technology in Jeff Vandermeer’s “Ambergris”.

MORNING TEA 11-11:30AM

SESSION 6 11.30-1PM

PANEL 12: Technologies Of Reading And Writing (room EB.G.17)

CHAIR: Chris Conti

Dr. Chris Conti (WSU): The technology of metaphor: Hans Blumenberg.


Siobhan Lyons (Macquarie): Beyond Luddism: Typewriters and the Return of Pre-Digital Writing.

PANEL 13: Sci-Fi, Utopia and Technology (room EB.G.18)

CHAIR: Lindsay Tuggle

Claire Corbett (WSU): Nowhere to run: The Irreality of Australia from Crabs to Mad Max 4.

Melissa Rooney (Macquarie): Technology in the Radium Age.

Chris Harrington (Uni of Melbourne): “The bombs dropped”: can poetics keep up with technologies of violence?
DAY 1: PLENARY

Prof. Nicholas Daly (UCD, Ireland)

‘Cabin Pressures and Missed Connections: A Short History of Transport Interiors’

In this talk I want to offer a whistle-stop tour of transport interiors in literature and other cultural forms. From Dombey and Son (1846-48) to Up in the Air (2009) the representation of life as a passenger has allowed us to think about the impact of specific transport technologies (e.g., trains, omnibuses, cars, planes) as well as the more general relationship between people and technology from the first industrial revolution to the third. But also, I will suggest, the passenger scene, with its enforced intimacy, sometimes works as a chronotope that allows us to think about human relationships under the sign of modernity.

Professor Nicholas Daly: Professor of Modern English and American Literature at University College Dublin, and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. His publications include the books Modernism, Romance, and the Fin de Siècle (1999), Literature, Technology and Modernity (2004), Sensation and Modernity in the 1860s (2009), and The Demographic Imagination and the Nineteenth-Century City: Paris, London, New York (2015). He serves on the advisory boards of the Journal of Victorian Culture, Victoriographies, Novel, and the Irish University Review. Currently he is working on a project on Ruritanian fiction, drama and film, from The Prisoner of Zenda to The Princess Diaries.

DAY 2: PLENARY PANEL

Dr Rachel Franks (Sl NSW)

‘Check Shelf (and/or) Online: Physical and Digital Literary-Focused Collections’

“Check Shelf” is utilised in library catalogues around the world: the term indicates that a reader should physically check the shelf for the item they are seeking. In a technology-based age, libraries (of many different types) also feature the term “Online” within their catalogues, thus facilitating a significant shift from the physical to the digital. An obvious focus for various digitisation programs are the visual materials that collecting institutions hold with drawings, maps, paintings and photographs often taking centre stage of such initiatives. Yet, digitising literary resources – from manuscripts to published materials, from contextual correspondence to ephemera – is also a vital area for digitisation. Indeed, this is critical in encouraging engagement with literary culture and literary history. This paper argues for the mass digitisation of literary collections, utilising the work in this field at the State Library of NSW as a case study. Moreover, this paper outlines the great value for researchers of both...
physical and digital literary collections, including ways in which the physical and digital can complement each other, suggesting that digital surrogates are supports to, rather than simple substitutes for, original materials. Check Shelf and Online present important and/or options for researchers allowing accessibility, flexibility and playfulness.

Rachel Franks: Coordinator, Education & Scholarship, State Library of NSW and Conjoint Fellow, University of Newcastle. Rachel's PhD is an investigation of class, gender and ethics in Australian crime fiction. An award-winning writer her work can be found in books, journals and magazines as well as on social media.

Prof. Kerry Mallan (QUT)
‘At the Crossroads: When Digital Meets Story’
This paper uses the metaphor of the crossroad as a means to examine two digital storytelling projects that are ongoing outcomes of a current ARC Linkage grant. Specifically, it considers how two storytelling websites (Storyelling and Pittsworth Stories) can be examined in terms of digital rhetorics. By applying an expanded understanding of rhetoric to these websites and their diverse personal and community narratives, I want to consider what this kind of meeting between theory and practice offers to these particular projects and, more broadly, to digital humanities. I will also raise for discussion further crossroads that form for other digital projects (archives, repositories) and the meeting points between obsolescence and sustainability, teaching and research, historical record and present-mindedness.

Professor Kerry Mallan: Kerry is the Director of the Children and Youth Research Centre at QUT. Her work is cross-disciplinary and focuses on children’s literature, youth and popular culture, digital media texts and practices. Her particular research strengths are in textual analysis in relation to film and literary texts, and in the application of feminist and queer theories to the study of texts. Her co-edited book, Youth Cultures: Texts, Images and Identities won the Honour Book Award by the International Research Society for Children’s Literature, 2003. Her most recent books are Secrets, Lies and Children’s Fiction (2013) and an edited collection Picture Books and Beyond (2014).

Prof. Julian Murphet (UNSW)
‘Writing, Machine, Complex’
Writing is never just writing. As a techne, literature has long been enmeshed in and sustained by broader technological and practical horizons – of printing, duplication, distribution, archiving, illumination, adaptation, illustration, exegesis, commentary, etc. – and, since the mid-nineteenth century especially, has further had to recalibrate its techniques and modus operandi in the face of mounting pressures from other media institutions. This brief paper proposes a simple thought experiment: to conceive of writing as a complex technological matrix capable of constant innovation and platform-migration, whose innermost logic is one of adaptation to the constantly changing infrastructural horizon of capitalist modernity. Writing is, in that sense, not only not a ‘thing’ or an essence, and not merely a social institution, but a vast semiological machine with an array of ever-changing, overlapping applications whose susceptibility to strategies of aesthetic capture or subtraction can never be predicted or prescribed. Literature is an ever-shifting tactic of presenting writing from within this diachronic technological complex, that adduces from it certain ‘truths’ – not about ‘the world’ as such, but about the ways in which writing fashions worlds out of its technological complicities with the ways things are.

Professor Julian Murphet: Scientia Professor at the University of New south Wales, Director of UNSW’s Centre for Modernism Studies and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. Julian is the author of numerous books including Multimedia Modernism: Literature and the Anglo-American Avant-Garde (2009), Narrative and Media (2005), Bret Easton Ellis’ American Psycho (2002) and...

DAY 1: 6-7PM @ THE BOILERHOUSE
DRINKS RECEPTION WITH READINGS BY:

Felicity Castagna
Felicity Castagna is the author of The Incredible Here and Now (Giramondo, 2013), which won the Prime Minister’s Literature Award (YA) and has been shortlisted for the NSW Premier’s Literature Awards, the WA Premier’s Book Awards, The Adelaide Festival Literature Award and The Children’s Book Council of Australia Book of the Year Award. She is also the author of the short story collection, Small Indiscretions: Stories of Travel in Asia (Transit Lounge, 2011) and A Brief History of The Boat (forthcoming, 2016).

Her work has been produced for ABC Radio National and ABC television. She has also written for journals and newspapers such as Heat, The Age, The Sun Herald, Island, Wet Ink and Award Winning Australian Writing.

Felicity is a former high school English teacher who has many years experience in teaching creative writing workshops in schools, writing centres, universities and other institutions and also works as a community arts worker, editor and writing mentor. Felicity recently completed a PhD in Australian Literature and Creative writing at Western Sydney University’s Writing and Society Research Centre.

Fiona Wright
Fiona Wright is a writer from Sydney. Her collection of essays Small Acts of Disappearance was published by Giramondo in 2015, and has been shortlisted for the 2016 Stella Prize and the NSW Premier’s Douglas Stewart Prize for non-fiction, and long-listed for the Kibble Award for Australian Women’s Life Writing. Her poetry collection Knuckled (Giramondo) won the Dame Mary Gilmore Award in 2012.

Fiona has recently completed a PhD at Western Sydney University’s Writing and Society Research Centre, examining the suburban poetry of Gwen Harwood and Dorothy Porter.

She is a member of SWEATSHOP, the Western Sydney Literacy Movement, and has performed with the collective at a number of writers’ festivals and showcases.

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