**BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

**International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) Conference**

**July 24-28, 2023.**



**New Scholars Panel Abstracts**

**Directing Performativity: History, Culture, Philosophy, and Myth in the**

**Performance of Dipo – *A. Bernard Adjirackor***

Birth, Puberty, Marriage and Death are the stages of life. In Ghana, like in most other African societies, these stages are marked with elegant celebrations. That the Dipo puberty rites of the Krobos of south-eastern Ghana embodies the philosophy and collective consciousness of the people is indubitable. It is no surprise, therefore, that these rites have endured in the face of modernism. This has piqued the interest of many a scholar who have mainly focused on its role in combatting HIV/AIDS, its potency as a hex of chastity and crime prevention, its historical clashes with Christianity, its changes over time, a mere description of the performance of the rites and its ambiguous and contested meaning. Few studies have concentrated on the artist elements of Dipo in performance with even fewer brushing the surface of its intrinsic theatricality. Understandably, any attempt to embark on an in-depth discussion of the theatricality of Dipo in performance will not only be imprudent and vain but will take several years and volumes to complete. The problem, however, is that the role of the Director, ubiquitous in the discourse of theatricality, is conspicuous by its absence in the scanty conversations about the art, spectacle, and theatricality of Dipo in performance. The contemporary theatre Director unifies various elements of the production to interpret the artistic vision and message of the playwright to an audience. If Dipo indeed embodies the collective consciousness of the Krobo people, then there is indeed a ‘message’ which is passed on to the successive generations of ‘audiences’ through a unified system of arts, symbols and artefacts. Through ethnographic studies, interviews and practical directing, this study proposes to undertake a philosophical and epistemological juxtaposition of the role of the traditional Director of Dipo in performance with that of a contemporary theatre Director. This inquiry hopes to culminate in a unified artistic vehicle that allows history, culture, and contemporaneity to meet, intersect, influence each other symbiotically and be passed on seamlessly.

*Ing. A. Bernard Adjirackor (more popularly known as B. Bana) is a Graduate of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon. His main interests as a Theatre Director include bridging the gap between the silver screen and the stage. An eclectic Director, he has produced and directed numerous made for screen musicals like The Sound of Music, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat and other plays including Langbodo, The Inspection, The Sudden Return, Funny Money, Hell in a Woman’s Heart and Fidelity Farce inter alia. A former advertising executive and a dedicated academic, he is currently pursuing a PhD in Theatre Arts at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon. His current academic research interest lies in the inextricable link among Culture, History, Philosophy, Theatre, and Sustainable Development, and the role of the contemporary Director within this trinity. He is the current Asst. General Secretary of the African Theatre Association (AfTA) and also a member of the local planning and organising committee of the 2023 IFTR conference.*

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**Orature in Theatre Devised for Yoruba Moral Education in Nigerian Secondary School Context: A Differential Analysis of Teacher’s and Students’ Stories**

**– *Ifeoluwa Akinsola***

The conventional mode of teaching the Yoruba moral values has been criticised for its inability to incorporate oral literature, which was a means of achieving moral socialisation among the Yoruba before Western education. This has resulted in a mere moral knowledge acquisition by secondary school students in Nigeria at the expense of practising the values. Therefore, this study was carried out to incorporate orature into educational theatrical plays introduced as an intervention for Yoruba moral education in two public senior secondary schools in the Ibadan metropolis Nigeria, because previous empirical studies have reported the effectiveness of educational theatre as a mimetic approach to knowledge acquisition, negotiation, and transformation into real-life practice. The qualitative explorative research design of the thematic analysis type was adopted. In the first school, the Yoruba teacher provided moral stories for students to rehearse and perform. In the second school, the students wrote their own moral stories. There were pre- and post-theatre workshops in both schools. The play scripts/stories from the teachers and students, the transcripts of opinions expressed during pre- and post-theatre workshops and the videography of the plays were analysed thematically. Findings revealed that both teachers and students wrote their stories using the moral structure of the Yoruba folktales. However, teachers adequately pre-planned orature (songs and chants) in their stories while students sparingly alluded to orature while performing their stories. By implication, the stories students made during their performance were more natural in the use of orature for moral education. Recommendations were made accordingly.

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**Documagery: A Strategy of the Political in Postdramatic Theatre – *Attila Antal***

In my doctoral dissertation, I explore and research the strategies of the political in the context of post-dramatic theatre in the former Yugoslav countries and Hungary. In my presentation, I will briefly set up the framework of my dissertation which revolves around the analysis of socially engaged theatre practices where the aesthetics of responsibility, as described by Hans-Thies Lehmann can be recognised. As I am analysing a wide variety of performances from different countries and socio-historic backgrounds, the structure of my work is segmented into different “strategies of the political”. One of these strategies coincides with the main topic of the congress, thus I will focus my presentation on. Documagery is a strategy where a performance can be fictional and still, stay true to its documentary source material. Through this strategy, theatre makers can interpret intensely personal stories/tragedies in a theatrical format, without becoming utterly tedious, and consequently even create new myths through fictionalizing documents. One of the important characteristics of this strategy is changing the perception of what is known and taken for granted by dislocating facts from their everyday places. To showcase these possibilities of mythmaking, as an act of the political in socially engaged theatre, I will focus on an interactive, immersive performance trilogy, which aims at capturing the spirit of the city, and re-claiming its public spaces, using the very structure of the city: the streets, the squares, the architecture, its hidden and obvious histories to create new, unknown narratives of a city.

*Attila Antal is a theatre and film director, composer and theatre researcher, currently living in Serbia. He is a PhD candidate at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg, Austria. He is working on his thesis "Political in Postdramatic Theatre: Post-Socialist Strategies of the ‘Political’ in the Former Yugoslav Region and Hungary". His field of interest covers experimental, socially engaged, political and post-dramatic theatre. He has worked on a wide variety of performances as director, author, dramaturge, composer, and performer in several countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Email:* [*doktoraat@gmail.com*](mailto:doktoraat@gmail.com)

**When the Greek's Sisyphus Performs on Nigerian Stage: Ojoniyi"s Verbatim Theatre in Perspective – *Oluwafemi Atoyebi***

This paper analyses Ojoniyi's *For the Love of Sisyphus*, a dramatic memoir set to play on the blackmail and defamation of his character in a case of result racketeering in Osun State University. It does so within the theoretical framework of Jean Paul Sartre's theory of existential consciousness and argues that myth, what Carl Jung calls universal bank of consciousness, has inherent redemptive and restorative powers. In essence, beyond being seen as something fictive or ephemeral, myth appears to possess such transcendental power that could heal in the event of traumatic experiences. It thus argues that myths could perhaps serve as tools to reignite and give meaning to life and living often when a sense of meaning and a sense of purpose tend to elude an individual sufferer. In the process, it foregrounds Sartre's claim of human possibility of attaining what he identifies as a state of reflective withdrawal from the casual order. It concludes that the Myth of Sisyphus, as a potent metaphor, is capable of helping and motivating an individual to triumph over struggles and crises against the certain absurdities of life. Finally, it calls for the reconstruction/apprehension of myth within T.S Eliot’s frame of timeline consciousness of time past and time future as being ever contained in time present -timelessness.

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**Semiotics Now! Antagonistic Fields of Encounter – *Naomi Boyce***

My talk explores the notions of antagonistic semiotics and semiotic violence, which describe dynamics of dispute and intervention in contemporary theatre and performance. While semiotic analysis has been primarily used to examine meaning-making in and between production practices and conditions of reception, I claim that a critical return to semiotics is now taking place, requiring new forms of analysis. Audiences and theatre artists are now asking vital questions and engaging in a lively debate about the unique responsibility that comes with the practices of sign and meaning-making. As a result, they now encounter semiotics as a precarious field of potential violence and antagonistic encounter, which holds great political and ethical implications for the theatre. By considering semiotics not only as a meaning-making system but also as a domain of friction, I ask the following questions: a) What forms of semiotic violence exist beyond crude misrepresentation? b) How are these covert forms revealed to the greater public? c) How can forms of antagonistic semiotics become a basis for productive political discussion and debate? To approach these questions, I draw on examples from contemporary central European dance and theatre performances with decolonial histories, practice, and activism.Ultimately, my inquiry into the violent and antagonistic forms of semiotics opens up another way of identifying potential violent dimensions embedded in the theatre, which call––loudly––for our attention.

*Naomi Boyce (New York, 1992) is currently a doctoral researcher at the Collaborative Research Center 1512 “Intervening Arts” at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany within the research project “Participation and Dissociation: Frictions in 20th Century and Contemporary Political Theatre”. Her dissertation project examines the dynamics between contemporary theatrical activism and violence. From 2015-16 she was a Fulbright Fellow at the Freie Universiät Berlin, where she also completed her MA in Theatre Studies with a thesis titled “Violence, Theatre and Other Devised Acts”. From 2018-2022 she worked as a Student Assistant for the International Research Centre “Interweaving Performance Cultures” where she was involved in the copy editing of several edited volumes including “Dramaturgies of Interweaving: Engaging Audiences in an Entangled World“ (2021); “Entangled Performance Histories: New Approaches to Theater Historiography” (2022); and “Performance Cultures as Epistemic Cultures” (2 Volumes, 2023) as well as an upcoming publication on performance related concepts in non-Western European languages. In addition to her academic work, she is also a translator of German-language contemporary plays and performance texts. Email:* [*naomi.boyce@fu-berlin.de*](mailto:naomi.boyce@fu-berlin.de)

**Of Martyrdom/the Mythology of the Tragic Hero: Exploring the Rising Significance of the Chorus in Contemporary South African Adaptations of Classical Greek Tragedy**

**– *Lesego Chauke***

In this paper, I use performance to read the contemporary landscape of South African politics. I begin by first characterising our present understanding of the anti-apartheid struggle as a mythology. I then draw parallels between the dramaturgy of this mythology and Sophoclean dramaturgy, paying specific attention to The Theban Plays (1947). Finally, I offer a dramaturgical analysis of two South African adaptations of Sophocles by Mark Fleishman, namely *Antigone (Not Quite/Quiet)* (2019) and *Oedipus at Colonus #AfterSophocles* (2023); arguing that a dramaturgical shift in focus from the tragic hero toward the chorus is a central defining feature of contemporary South African tragedy. While I employ a critical discourse and performance analysis methodology throughout, the key concepts that anchor the theoretical framework are myth, as complicated by Bruce Lincoln (1999); spectrality as defined by Derrida (1993); and tragedy as expressed by Nietzsche (1872). Of further significance here is that I engage with performance work that emerges out of the Reimagining Tragedy from Africa and the Global South (ReTAGS) project of the University of Cape Town, a research project that, like the present study, is attempting “to understand how tragedy has been refigured in the post-colonial theatre; how moments of tragic excess are enacted outside of the theatre in the course of revolts against neo-colonial establishments and forces; and […] how tragedy might be utilized as a tool for understanding the present regime of time and its performative effects in the global neo-colonial complex” (<http://www.retags.uct.ac.za/RETAGS/Overview>).

*Lesego Chauke is a dramaturg, lecturer, theatre maker and performance scholar. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons. Esq) degree in Theatre and Performance and an MA with Distinction in Dramaturgy from the University of Cape Town. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Cape Town where she has worked as Head of Department, Lecturer and Tutor.*

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**Black Feminist Performance in The Black Plays Archive: Mythic Fugitive Spaces**

**– *Nadine Deller***

This paper is concerned with Black feminist performance spaces produced by the first Black feminist theatre company in Britain, Theatre of Black Women (TBW), within the Black Plays Archive (BPA). I shall discuss the relationship between their ‘mythic’ performance repertoire – that which is considered lost – and the creation of ‘fugitive’ Black feminist performance spaces within the BPA. Drawing on Harney and Moten’s conception of ‘fugitive planning’ (Harney and Moten, 2013) and McKittrick’s characterisation of radical Black feminist spaces as ‘the last place they thought of’ (McKittrick, 2006, p.62), I argue that a spatial Black feminist performance methodology offers an alternative way of examining theatre companies which are predominantly absent from the archive’s privileging of text over repertoire (Taylor, 2003). I argue that the appropriation of unconventional, site-specific theatre spaces, in tandem with poetic aesthetics, can be analysed through a Black feminist spatial methodology that sheds light on the ways TBW’s productions re-spatialised performance spaces, providing ‘alternative paths’ of understanding spaces and covertly rejecting white, patriarchal readings of space through fugitive performance (McKittrick, 2006, p.62). This paper will build on previous analysis on TBW (Abram, 2020; Goddard, 2007; Goodman, 1993) and posit that they re-spatialise the theatre space and offer new readings of ‘the last place they thought of’ (McKittrick, 2006, .162) by disrupting racist-sexist ideations of Black womxn’s subject-hood through their occupation of the archive space, and through disruptive, non-naturalistic rebuttals to white, patriarchal readings of space.

*I am a PhD researcher and lecturer collaborating with the Royal Central School of Speech & Drama and the National Theatre. My research concerns the intersections between spatial politics, race, and gender in the Black Plays Archive, and rethinking the ways that Black womxn’s theatre is preserved. I am also an Associate Lecturer at the London College of Communication (University of the Arts, London). I have written for Sight & Sound, Contemporary Theatre Review, contributed to BBC Radio 3’s New Thinking programme, and worked with the Guild of Higher Education on amplifying the experiences of global majority researchers. I am also the creator and co-host of a podcast on Black theatre history in Britain, That Black Theatre Podcast.*

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**Black Skin, White Characters: Approaching Race in Brazilian Theatre Through Ibsen**

**– *Conrado Dess***

Part of a society moulded through a colonialist and slavery past; Brazilian theatre is still deeply marked by a structural racism that ideologically affects representations proposed by Black performers. Unlike countries such as the United States and South Africa, in which the racial perspective is based on ethnicity or genetics, in Brazil, race is perceived mostly through a chromatic perspective, therefore, people experience racism according almost exclusively to how light or dark their skin tone is (Munanga, 2019). As a section of a doctoral research that aims to investigate how the skin colour of an actor may influence the reception process in contemporary theatre, this presentation turns to a recent Brazilian production of Henrik Ibsen’s 'An Enemy of The People' starred by a multiracial cast in order to identify political, social and aesthetic specificities generated by Black presence. Focusing on the “performative tension” caused by the unexpected physiognomy of the play’s main character, Dr. Tomas Stockmann, played by a Black actor Rogério Brito; in contrast with his brother, Mayor Peter Stockmann, played by white actor Sérgio Mastropasqua, we aim to discuss how the confrontation between the audience’s expectations and what is effectively seemed on stage can become a disruptive procedure capable of adding new social layers to classical drama and of dismantling a certain regard that symbolically “kills” the work of Black actors.

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**Transformations in Swiss Amateur Theatricals Around 1800 – *Katrin Frühinsfeld***

This presentation focuses on Bourgeois Swiss amateur theatricals during political change around 1800. In the course of the French Revolution, Switzerland passed through greater political transformations, especially a shift from the Old Swiss Confederation to the unitary state, the Helvetic Republic. Political change must have had significant impact on Swiss citizens, on their public awareness, their scopes of action, and on civic self-conception. Whereas the European monarchies entertained court theatres as an essential part of their theatre culture, the Swiss theatre landscape was mainly shaped by professional touring companies and by amateur theatre groups or events. Amateur theatre had long been an inherent part of the Jesuits’ school education, but in the 18th century also town citizens started to engage in theatricals.Assuming that civic identity underwent certain modifications due to stately transformations, the investigation asks whether and how the citizens’ theatre activities relate to those changes: Who did engage in amateur theatricals and how did they organize? Where did they perform, what kind of plays did they chose? Can you attach any socio-political or educational agenda to the amateur theatre activities, or did they primarily serve a desire for entertainment and pleasure? One vivid example might be the town Solothurn: Theatricals there were multiple and are richly documented. Archival research will be essential to the investigation, but is still at the outset. The study is part of the ERC-funded research project “Performing Citizenship”, based at Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, Germany, and supervised by Prof. Dr. Meike Wagner.

*Katrin Frühinsfeld works as a PhD candidate in the ERC-funded research project “Performing Citizenship”, based at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. She especially addresses bourgeois amateur theatre in Switzerland around 1800. Katrin worked several years in a historical research group on the Bavarian State Opera during National Socialism and the early German Federal Republic. She graduated in theatre studies (MA thesis on the reopening of the reconstructed Munich National Theatre in 1963) and in music education (ethnographic MA thesis on educational techniques applied in a musical theatre project involving amateurs and professionals), both from Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, Germany. Email:* [*katrin.fruehinsfeld@lmu.de*](mailto:katrin.fruehinsfeld@lmu.de)

**On-Stage and Off the Stage: (Re)Constructing Notions of Body and Identity of Female Travelling Performers – *Sukrity Gogoi***

The body of the performers is at the centre of theatrical performances. This paper will foreground the voices of travelling female performers associated with mobile theatre groups (‘bhramyamaan’ theatre) in the north-eastern Indian state of Assam. As a popular commercial form of theatre, these theatre groups function within the larger politics of cultural economy that leads to increasing commodification of performers’ bodies. Within this performance space, female performers’ bodies become “hyper-visible” on one hand, while also rendering them to the margins. This study has been carried out though a feminist ethnographic approach where in-depth interviews were conducted with the women performers (actors and dancers) associated with the mobile theatre industry. Moreover, a performance analysis of selected plays has been done to draw a nuanced understanding of the gender politics at play. It becomes important then to unpack the notions of gender and sexuality as portrayed through the performances. The paper will address three main questions: How the idea of “womanhood” gets constructed and contested through the performances on the mobile theatre stage? Do the identities on stage reinforce stereotypes regarding caste, class, gender, sexuality, ability or do they subvert these notions? What are the lived experiences of the performers themselves regarding their bodies’ portrayal on stage and their off-stage position within the theatre groups? Analysing the body as a site of resistance and identity formation, this paper will investigate the processes of inclusions and exclusions that take place through the ‘performing self’ on stage and the ‘real self’ off stage.

*Sukrity Gogoi is a theatre scholar and practitioner with an MPhil in Womens’ Studies and is currently pursuing a PhD in Women’s Studies at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. Her research work focuses on the Cultural Production of Mobile Theatre of Assam: Exploring the Question of Gender, Labour and Body Politics in Performance. Sukrity also holds an MA in English and a BA(Hons) in English from the University of Delhi. Her notable publications are a book chapter: "Voices of Change: Spoken Word Poetry in the Indian Context” in Bound by Culture: Essays on Cultural Production Signifying Gender; ed. Selvy Thiruchandran: Women Unlimited, New Delhi, 2020, and another book chapter: "Politics of Performance and Performance of Politics: Analysing Stand-up Comedy in the Indian Context" in Humour and Performance of Power in South Asia: Anxiety, Laughter and Politics in Unstable Times: ed. Sasanka Perera and Dev Pathak: Routledge, New Delhi, 2022. First author.*

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**An Examination of Ghanaian Folktales, Time, and Communal Aesthetics in Ghanaian Theatre: The case of *The Legend of Aku Sika; Retold* – *Kobina Hagan***

This paper discusses the directorial concept for the theatre production *The Legend of Aku Sika; Retold*; an experimental theatre that explores the dynamics of folktales and myth as source material, and how they are used in Ghanaian storytelling through traditional and modern communal aesthetics. Through a reflection on the rehearsal process and the final performance, the paper investigates the use of time and anachronism in Ghanaian folktales, and how they enhance the audience's engagement with the tale and its thematic concerns. It focuses on how the production addresses and reflects on the cultural and historical connections between the legend, *Aku Sika*, other folktales, and certain contemporary Ghanaian practices. This paper aims to offer an insight into the potential of traditional storytelling in contemporary theatre in terms of production aesthetics, audience engagement and cultural preservation, whiles contributing to the ongoing quest to find performance aesthetics rooted in the cultural traditions of Ghana.

*A creative and interpretative artist who preferably wants to be known as Kobina Hagan. Kobina has a clear vision regarding his art. He sees in pictures. His direction is very much connected to the pictures he envisions. He is passion driven and does not compromise for mediocrity. He studied Performing Arts at the University of Ghana where he majored in Directing and Radio, Television and Film. He is currently a master's student at the University of Ghana. He has directed others and self-written theatre productions. He has written for radio and for television and has often freelanced with the University of Ghana, theatre department as a teaching assistant. Kobina is also a performer. He has performed in a number of stage radio and film productions. As an artist, he is more conscious of how sensitive his art is to his culture, and often sewing up the rift between the contemporary and the traditional. He loves art and loves teaching it; propagating the idea that globalization has more to do with access than with emulation. He is a supporter of the thought that art is the pivot on which all education must spin.*

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**I’m Not Going Back to The Township; Re-Imagining ‘Trauma’ As Tragedy**

**– *Thapelo Hlongwane***

In the place of wound, healing must take place. But how do you heal if you’re presently living in a wound? How do you heal if you have lost touch with the other?This research responds to trauma through the tragic form of theatre, it understands tragedy as a means in performance to try to foster healing using the practice of performance as a mode of research. It argues that as a practice, theatre-making in the South African context is affected by traumatic experiences. Engaging with trauma requires social and historical relations to be taken into account.The research focuses on how African oral traditions, myths, modern poetics and music might be used as a process of reimagining the tragic form and utilising it to understand better how theatre-making can hold space and safely lead the process of healing without re-traumatizing the participants.

*Thapelo Hlongwane (Tharaga) is a theatre and filmmaker, a spoken word artist, researcher, and lover of all things art. Thapelo is a master’s candidate in Theatre and Performance and a recipient of the prestigious Mastercard Foundation Scholarship. He is a current Mellon foundation scholar, under the Re-Imagining Tragedy from Africa the Global South (ReTAGS) project with the Centre for Theatre, Dance & Performance Studies at the University of Cape Town. Thapelo’s work looks into interrogating the structural setup of the township as a site of trauma, his practice as research focuses mainly on oral traditions, myths, modern poetics and songs as a process of reimagining the tragic form and utilising it to better understand how theatre-making can hold space and safely lead the process of healing or function as a process of the documenting thereof. Email:* [*thapelo.tharaga@gmail.com*](mailto:thapelo.tharaga@gmail.com)

**Assessing Legislative Theatre as a Politico-Theatrical Tool for the Interrogation of Democratic Myths – *Oluchi Igili***

Myths, both in their primordial and modern expressions, enjoy a pride of place as one of the compelling realities in every human society. They often encapsulate a society’s ideas on the raison d’être of the belief systems, mores and values of the society. Myths usually enjoy the unequivocal approbation of society, a quality which largely precludes them from critical analysis of their rectitude and/or relevance. An instance of myth in its modern expression is the presumption of the existence of democracy in nations that were formerly dictatorships. Quite often in former dictatorships, democracy is perceived as a given in which there are ‘final resting points’ on many issues that bother on the place of the citizens in the democratic enterprise. The overarching argument of this proposal is that democracy should not be regarded as a given. Rather, democracy should be perceived as a continuum capable of moving progressively along the trajectory of an increasingly robust participatory involvement by the citizens. The proposal adopts the conceptual and theoretical frames of democracy, play and Legislative Theatre to argue that democratic myths ought to be evaluated and, where necessary, be rendered socially and politically irrelevant. The proposal further theorises Legislative Theatre as a politico-theatrical play utilisable in the interrogation of the myth of the false end points of prevailing democratic tenets which essentially alienate citizens from qualitative participatory engagement with democratic processes.

*Oluchi J. IGILI is currently affiliated with the University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands where she also belongs to the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis (ASCA). She is a staff of Department of Performing Arts, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Nigeria. Her areas of teaching and research include Legislative Theatre, Theatre for Development, Political Theatre and, Literary Theory and Criticism. Email:* [*o.j.igili@uva.nl*](mailto:o.j.igili@uva.nl)

**A Ritual of Body and Resonance: Voice and Breath as Tools to Explore Embodied Memory, Somatic Movement and Spiritual Connection Experiences within Performance Practice**

**– *Adriana Jamisse***

This paper presentation explores the interplay of body, voice, and memory as a trilogy that is relevant in performance practice and research. Mozambican dance-artist Adriana Jamisse uses the creative process and performance experiences of her work parte das tuas cinzas performed in 2022 in South Africa, to explore some of the ways that voice and breath guide the body, and what they create when doing so. Jamisse briefly breaks down conceptual understandings of body/soma, voice, breath, and embodied memory, through conversing with ideas of scholars in the fields of somatic voice studies, dance, and performance studies, somatics, and somaesthetics. The creative process of the work parte das tuas cinzas was aimed at creating a journey into embodied memory and ancestral lines through the use of breath, voice, and movement.This paper presentation is Jamisse's theoretical reflection and discussion of this process in which she managed to transform her own experience of memory and spiritual connection through performance practice. Jamisse's research into what she calls the body-voice-memory trilogy might be a pathway into a performance practice that is transformative and insightful for the performer, and potentially the audience. Notions of identity, spirituality, and community are explored while acknowledging and incorporating the performer's diverse geographical and cultural influences. Engaging the body-voice-memory trilogy is potentially a tool for the creation of autobiographical performance work that, through the use of breath, also serves as a collective emotional journey of meaning-making between performer and audience.

*Adriana Jamisse is a Mozambican performance artist and a somatic healing practices instructor currently based in South Africa. Her main interests are movement, vocal resonance, holistic well-being, and embodied knowledge using the body (its subjectivity) and the breath as the points of departure for all her practices. Jamisse holds a Bachelor of Social Sciences majoring in Dance, Drama, and Social Anthropology from the University of Cape Town. She has just completed her Honours in Dance degree at the same university. She will continue her research on the body-voice-memory trilogy within performance practice in her MA studies in 2023. Email:* [*jamisse.adriana@gmail.com*](mailto:jamisse.adriana@gmail.com)

**Pan African Networks: Blaxit and the Changing Nature of the ‘Diasporic Pull’**

**– *Nike Jonah***

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the function of cultural intermediaries in the development of a performing arts infrastructure across Pan-African performance networks. The case study - which centres on the practice of Gambian theatre director and playwright Janet Badjan-Young, who has forged a strong and effective Gambian theatrical infrastructure in collaboration with extensive diasporic networks - is led by the research question: what is the role of the diaspora in supporting African performance networks to achieve cultural agency and autonomy in the global context? Weak ties theory (Granovetter, 1973) is used as a lens through which to examine the evolving dynamics of global movements like Blaxit , a modern iteration of the "Back to Africa" movement that has increased the flow of diasporic émigrés to key African countries such as Ghana, The Gambia, and Tanzania. This raises additional questions about the function of theatre practice and its role in the recent upsurge of interest in Africa as well as what methods are employed to support global diasporic movements in their efforts to reestablish ties to their ancestors and uncover what has been suppressed and hidden.Agwanda, Billy, and Basak Ozoral. 2020. 'The Sixth Zone: Historical Roots of African Diaspora and Pan-Africanism in African Development', Journal of Universal History Studies, 3 (1): 53-72.Granovetter, Mark S. 1973 'The strength of weak ties ', American journal of sociology 78 1360-80.

*Nike works in strategic development across the cultural and creative industries worldwide. In July 2018, she launched Pan African Creative Exchange (PACE) in South Africa. The third edition of PACE will take place in June 2023. Between 2017 and 2020 she was a Visiting Research Fellow at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London (Central) which led into her current doctoral research topic of Pan-African Performance Networks. Between 2008 and 2012, she led Arts Council England’s Decibel Programme, designed to support African, Asian and Caribbean artists. Nike is a Trustee on Boards of The Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and The Royal Africa Society and is currently a doctoral research candidate at Central. Email:* [*nike.jonah@cssd.ac.uk*](mailto:nike.jonah@cssd.ac.uk)

**Gender Stereotypes, Myth or Reality: A Comparative Study of Adebowale’s *Lonely Days* and Shoneyin’s *The Secret Lives Of Baba Segi’s Wives* – *Ramada Kumordzie***

“I don’t know what party my wife belongs to, but I know she belongs to my kitchen and my living room and the other room,” and “Next time stay in your war room and pray for your boys or return to your kitchen” are perhaps two of the most sordid vituperations by high profile individuals against rising African women. The first made by the Nigerian president (male) against his wife who dared to offer her two cents in politics and the second made by a Quiz Mistress (female) against an all-girls school that failed, not for want of trying, to advance to the next round of Ghana’s elite science competition – National Science and Math Quiz show how ubiquitous and non-gendered these toxic sentiments are. Gender roles in African traditional societies seem to be fixed; relegating the woman to the kitchen while their male counterparts are free to soar. Beyond the kitchen, patriarchal structures hold a fuzzy glass ceiling firmly in place above the woman. While marriage seems to be the most inimical to the traditional African woman, there seems to be a deafening silence on how gender stereotypes affect women in marriage. Through a performance and character analysis of selected characters in two Yoruba literature – Lonely Days and The Secret Wives of Baba Segi’s Wives, as well as a review of scholarly material and news articles, this paper examines the triad of marriage, polygamy and widowhood through the lenses of one male and one female Nigerian writer; both writing about four female protagonists and how they perform their ascribed roles and/or respond to their society’s antagonism. This paper finds indubitably that gender roles do exist, but they are merely social constructs of a historically patriarchal society and posits without doubt that the gender stereotypes that exist in African societies, find their way into our arts. The two texts under study demonstrate that the hitherto blurry mirror between art and life has become less impervious. Nevertheless, the responses of males and females to the structures that hold the stereotypes in place differ significantly. This paper posits that while men accept these roles, perpetuate and preserve them, women are more averse to them and challenge them in various ways ranging from the restrained to the drastic, sacrilegious, unorthodox, profane and even heretical.

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***Anowa* as a Metaphor for Africa's Renaissance and Tragedy**

**– *Yao Joseph Edem Homadji Ladzekpo***

For a long time, Africa’s playwrights and theatre practitioners have assumed an enviable position in preserving myths, legends and histories of Black Africans and people of African descent. The never-ending desire to promote Africa’s ideals, historicise her past, and represent her culture has seen these Afrocentric playwrights churn literary pieces aimed at redeeming and extolling Africans’ disconcerting challenges. These challenges are not limited to themes of betrayal and disregard for Africa’s culture and myths but the resistance and all forms of oppression that stampede Africa’s freedom. This presentation examines Ama Ata Aidoo’s tragic character Anowa in the eponymous title of the play. The discussion examines the heroine Anowa as a metaphoric matriarch of a distressed African world of culture, myths, history, and enslavement. Through content analysis, it interrogates the enduring relevance of myths, the legendary deeds of Africa’s heroine Anowa, and her tragedies as a means of extrapolating how Ama Ata Aidoo approaches the concept of myth, legend, and Black Africa’s enslavement within the broader themes of culture, love, enslavement, and resistance. Conclusively, it is recognised that an Africa that denudes herself of the myths undergirding it and denounces its past (both palatable and insipid) entirely is bound to meet an unenticing end―a tragic end.

Keywords: Africa, Anowa, Eponymous, Extrapolating Heroine, Tragedy

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**Mythology of Our Time: Art, Ritual and Lighting Symbolism in Ghanaian Contemporary Performance – *Margaret Lamptey***

Historians and sociologists have traced the use of light and lighting to primeval cultures of man. Lighting has served a purpose in various spheres of human life including the theatres. The use of natural and artificial sources of light such as fire flames, and stage luminaries has worked magic during ritual enactment on the Ghanaian stage. Contemporary Ghanaian performances have predominantly showcased African art and for that matter Ghanaian art on stage through the use of symbolic coloured lighting in recent times. The hybridity of natural and artificial technologies of lighting has come to stay. In some way, Rita Kolger Carver in her book Stagecraft fundamentals states that lighting is one department where both old and new co-exist on the stage seamlessly. For the forgoing discussions, this paper would serve as a piece of documentation on how lighting has been symbolically represented on the Ghanaian stage. The paper would seek to arrive at answers to the use of light materials for ritual performance. Also, the use of lighting and coloured lighting in Ghanaian contemporary performances would be examined. Conclusion will be drawn on the symbolic use of light, lighting, and coloured lighting in Ghanaian contemporary performances. Keywords: Art and ritual, lighting symbolism, Ghanaian contemporary performance*.*

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**Doomsday Wrestling in Houston, Texas: Contemporary Myth Making – *Astrid Lange***

Doomsday Wrestling has been a Houston, Texas phenomenon for 20 years. Houston native Greg Vallot, aka Tex Lonestar, is the show’s creator. He first held the show in 2003 in a coffeehouse, after rehearsing with friends in his mother’s backyard. Meant to be an absurd sendup of the pop culture wrestling that he grew up watching on TV in the 1970s, and a “one-and-done” event, this first show drew an audience of 300, who enthusiastically cried for more.Now, each Doomsday Wrestling show is a singular, standalone performance. The audience does not need to keep up with storylines between shows, unlike those organized by the World-Wide Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) and in traditional indie wrestling. Many features of the WWE and Doomsday events are similar - such as the “squared circle” and its transformative matches, babyface/heel/referee/commentator personae, the involvement of the audience, and over-the-top emotiveness. However, significant differences place Doomsday Wrestling in a league of its own that is worthy of study. From the morally ambiguous overarching comedic narratives surrounding each show to the collaborative generation of its uniquely skewed characters and audience feedback on its popularity, one can analyze DDW from multiple lenses. Critic and semiotician Roland Barthes would be an enthusiastic proponent of Doomsday Wrestling and I intend to show why!My paper/presentation draws on theater/performance and anthropological scholarly studies on play, folklore, dramaturgy, and sports. It arises from my (auto)ethnographic engagement with Doomsday Wrestling as the half human, half cockroach character, Roachella.

*Astrid Lange’s Doomsday Wrestling identity is “Roachella - half human, half cockroach, all action!” Her comedic experiences range between Houston, Texas’ absurdist wrestling ring, her published short stories, and her improvisational comedy performances. Her 14-year career as a U.S. and international educator informs her scholarly and creative work. Her most recent degree, an M.A. in Performance Studies from Texas A&M University (expected Spring 2023), builds upon her bilingual education and improv comedy experience in her novel action research. An additional M.S. in Educational Human Resource Development and Organization Change Management, also from Texas A&M University, ground her theoretical approach. Today, Astrid’s creative scholarly research focuses on Doomsday Wrestling’s 20-year influence on local contemporary mythmaking and performance art in a rapidly changing, often contradictory, world. Email:* [*ylangylange@tamu.edu*](mailto:ylangylange@tamu.edu)

**Racialised Media Representation and its Effect on First-generation Caribbean Migrant Identity – *Jenni Lewin-Turner***

My practice-based study is an examination of film through the very medium of film, and I will produce a 60-minute documentary alongside a 40,000-word exegesis. This double-articulation of my research will simultaneously explore both the mechanisms and the impact of historically rooted processes of encoding and decoding in broadcast media texts (Hall, S. 1973).My ‘super’ hybrid model of expository, observational, participatory and performative documentary styles (Nichols, Bill, 2001), examines lapses in knowledge circulation and the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of ethnic minorities (Malik, S. 1998a). My focus is the ‘Windrush’ phenomena – Caribbean communities that arrived in the UK during the era of mass migration of the 1950s and 1960s. This ageing population is now expiring, and

with their passing vital first-hand experience, insight, and transcultural memory will also be irretrievably lost. As the first generation exposed to the historical and cultural forces that defined post-War racialised society in the UK, these communities lived through a period of profound social change and continuities in media representation and can bear witness to them. They also embody the consequences of systemic racialised misrepresentation and media exclusion. My study will therefore examine the fundamental role that media plays in the construction and legitimisation of identity and how the social experiences and sensibilities of Caribbean migrant communities in the UK were communicated in broadcast media texts from the height of the Windrush era in 1963 until 2003. I will also be interweaving the core elements of my positionality; as the daughter and carer of an octogenarian first-generation Windrush migrant who is now in the grips of dementia; and also, as the parent of third generation migrants. My theoretical framework is drawn from across the realms of media studies, visual anthropology, social science, social history, psychology and cultural geography. The research coalesces archive material, oral histories, and expert testimonies with academic theory and critical analysis to explore the correlation between historical and contemporary inclusive practices in the creation and consumption of media and cultural material – capturing behaviours, perceptions and cultural references that would otherwise remain invisible.

*Jenni Lewin-Turner is the founding director of socially-engaged arts agency Urbanflo Creative, and she has maintained a long portfolio career as an international creative producer, cultural broker, consultant, researcher and curator. Prior to this she also worked for several years in theatre management. Jenni is a PhD candidate at the Royal Central School of Speech & Drama. Her qualifications include an MA in Cultural Leadership and also an MA in Media Practice for Development & Social Change. In 2010 Jenni was named as one of the national Cultural Leadership Programme’s Women to Watch’, a list of 50 influential British women working in arts and culture. Jenni’s international cultural programmes include collaborations with partners based in the USA, Barbados, South Africa and the UK. Recent UK projects include curating ‘Hope & Glory: Encountering Welcome”, a solo exhibition by award-winning artist Alberta Whittle, for Brighton Festival. Alongside this, as a Brighton Pride ally Jenni also produced ‘Culture ConneX’, a 9-month multi-disciplinary series of performances (theatre, music, dance, comedy & spoken word), visual art exhibitions, film screenings and career development workshops - a programme she strategically devised to promote inclusive practice and intercultural dialogue across different communities.*

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**The Snake Woman from the Dōjōji Temple and Her Life During a Disturbance**

**– *Zhipu Liu***

The legend of the Dōjōji temple tells us of a woman who transforms into a serpent because of unrequited love. It is one of the most well-known legends in Japan and has been adapted into many traditional plays, including noh, jōruri, and kabuki. When the story was adapted into jōruri and kabuki plays during the early modern era, it tended to merge with episodes about the Jōhei-Tengyō Disturbance (931-947). This presentation analyses the jōruri puppet drama script Hidakagawa iriai zakura (The Cherry Trees Along the Hidaka River), first performed at the Takemoto-za Theatre in in 1759, Hōreki 9 as a case study of how the Dōjōji temple legend and the episodes from the Jōhei-Tengyō Disturbance were connected. The Dōjōji snake woman is an onryō (evil ghost), and Taira no Masakado, leader of the rebels of the Jōhei-Tengyō Disturbance, is one of the most well-known onryō in Japan. The combination of two evil ghosts helps to keep the atmosphere of the whole play as one. Although playwrights frequently reused popular episodes from other plays during the Edo period (1603-1869), the Dōjōji snake woman had never appeared in the background of Jōhei-Tengyō Disturbance before this performance, but henceforth, snake women in the Dōjōji temple legend became settled to appear during the Jōhei-Tengyō Disturbance. This paper discusses how the choice of historical background was practical for dramatic effect and how it inspired later dramatic works, and how playwrights in the Edo period combined popular elements to produce commercial entertainment.

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**Chinese Performances in Sydney: Stage and Street Performances from 1900 to 2020**

**– *Shuyang Ma***

This thesis is concerned with traditional Chinese performances (hereafter TCP) staged in Sydney over a span of 120 years from 1900 to 2020. It explores the introduction, reception and localisation of different types of TCP – mainly focusing on the lion dance and Chinese opera (xiqu). The TCP was brought into Australia by Chinese immigrants in the 19th century and attracted much attention. It became a prominent symbol of Australia’s multicultural society. However, the development of TCP and how it changed under the influence of Australian culture has not received much scholarly attention. A more in-depth and systematic study of TCP after 1900 is needed to understand their transformation and significance. In order to address the gap, the study includes the TCP’s introduction in the goldrush era, reception and localisation after White Australia, World War II and the multicultural era. The development of art forms and the roles of TCP in festivals and religious activities, changing identity and many aspects are covered in the project. It argues that the interactions between the Chinese community and Australian society facilitate the localisation of TCP in Australia. The meaning of ‘localisation’ is integrating Chinese performing arts into mainstream Australian performing arts, rooted in Anglo/Celtic-Western traditions. Through archive study, ethnographic interview and observation, the project provides general knowledge on the Chinese cultural study and diaspora study. It offers an interpretation of Australian multicultural society and changing customs of traditional culture through the lens of TCP.

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**DNA New Equations - Humans are Houses: This Body is a House**

**– *Jacqueline Manyaapelo***

This body is a house – true – but for most the body is imperilled. A metaphor for a nation-state, all the more so. But for me, the body is a sacrament, a state of grace, a world universal and particular that grounds and binds one. Performance, the body’s expression, is the means through which I seek to enlarge this state of grace. Not to do so – to perpetuate toxicity and doubt and hate – is to fail oneself, others, this world.My core inspiration comes from Togo and Benin, namely Batammaliba, an agro-pastoral people and vision in which a house is a mirror of the human body, an anthropomorphic picture for human anatomy – the windows are the eyes, the granary the stomach, drainage pipes the penis, terraces the fontanel and cranial opening, the water that wets the earth, blood. This picture is vivid, my grasp a struggle. What are eyes? Do they see? What is a stomach? Does it hold, bind, nurture, cry? Am I a woman with a penis? Is genitalia mere metaphor, or a ruthless truth? As for the ‘mind’ – the third eye, the fontanel? My performance explores this complex: body / house. My purpose – if bodies in performance can be understood thus – is to maintain grace under siege. Because, doubtless, ours is an age of terrible anxiety and rage. Hellbent on destroying ourselves – mostly others – we fail to grasp the dignity and beauty that, still, prevails. The Batammaliba – an African vision alive in the Atakora mountains – is mine – my gift, my contribution.

*Jackie Manyaapelo joined Jazzart Dance Theatre’s three-year Training Programme in 1999 after completing high school. She emerged as a gifted performer and immediately joined Jazzart’s performance company as a professional dancer after completing the training programme in 2001. As a company member, Manyaapelo worked on various Jazzart productions such as Light Beyond The Door with Neo Muyanga, Moya Wa Sechaba with Sibongile Khumalo and Guardian of The Flame under the direction of Alfred Hinkel. In recognition of her artistry and leadership, in 2008 she was selected to participate in Jazzart’s mentorship programme. From 2010 to 2013 she took on the role of Artistic Director at Jazzart Dance Theatre. She is currently teaching at the University of Cape Town’s Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies and holds an MA in Theatre and Performance at UCT. Manyaapelo is an independent dancer and choreographer.*

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**“Not A Performance of Serious Theatre.” Early Modern Dancers Elmerice Parts and Herman Kolt-Oginsky – *Anne-Liis Maripuu***

Estonian modern dancers Elmerice Parts and Herman Kolt-Oginsky caused a scandal in the 1920s with their dance performances. At the centre of the scandal was the use of ‘erotic’ or ‘acrobatic’ elements on theatre stage. Soon after the first performances the local reviewers found themselves in a heavy dispute. Whilst some of them were convinced that the duo’s dance performances were ‘immoral’; the others praised the artists for ‘rejuvenating’ Estonian dance art. One could consider their dance performances as transgressive acts. The sociologist Chris Jenks understands transgression as that which exceeds boundaries or exceeds limits. The meaning of an act, Jenks explains, does not reside solely within the intentionality of the actor; indeed, in most instances it resides within the context of the act’s reception.My presentation consists of two parts. Firstly, I try to create an image of Parts’s and Kolt-Oginsky’s dance performances based on the reviews. How did their dances look like? What kind of movements did the performers use? In the second part I go for the meaning of the act and try to understand what the scandal tells us. Was the scandal created by different aesthetic values between the Estonian and German audiences? Parts and Kolt-Oginsky performed mostly in Germany and supposedly very successfully.

*Anne-Liis Maripuu is a PhD student at the University of Tartu. She is an author of multiple articles dedicated to early modern dance in Estonia. Maripuu organised a symposium on Rudolf von Laban in 2020 in Tallinn (Estonia) and two photo exhibitions: Dancing Free (Tantsides vabaks, 2018 in the Estonian Theatre and Music Museum) and ‘Gerd Neggo: “Dance Only Is Sovereign”’ (‘Gerd Neggo. “Tants ainuüksi on suverään”’, 2021-2022). Her main research interest is early modern dance in Estonia and Germany. Email:* [*anne\_siil@hotmail.com*](mailto:anne_siil@hotmail.com)

**Actresses and Actors Working in Difficult News Ad Scenarios – *Raquel Júlio Mastey***

Theatre artists have played a key role in scenarios of difficult news communications where they train medical residents and graduates on humanized and caring approaches to impart difficult news such as worsening of diseases, mutilations, organ transplants, death, or any other news that impacts the patient's life in society. The Scenario is one of the resources used in Teaching by Simulations, an interdisciplinary practice that uses theater resources in its methodologies. The work of actresses and actors resists political setbacks in the areas of education and health and is one of the didactic and pedagogical supports of practices based on the ethics of protecting the lives of both animals and human beings. The methodology encompasses several research strategies, such as: bibliographic review of documents that discuss education and health, aimed at people who work or have worked in the SUS (Sistema Único de Saúde); qualitative study with interviews directed at artists who, in different contexts, are hired to provide services in the scenarios; technical visits and observations in Simulation Laboratories; development of questionnaires for medical professors, simulation instructors and health students who work with communications protocols; with the specific objectives: to document the work of actresses and actors, suggest exercises and theatrical games, contribute to the improvement of this already existing practice.

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**The Rhetorics of the "Marginal Theatre" In Bergen, Norway – *Grethe Melby***

In my paper, I will discuss how modern rhetorical analysis of public theatre debate can give us insight into the performing arts' role in establishing people's identity and self-understanding.In 1850, Det Norske Theater was established in Bergen, Norway, as the first national theatre with Norwegian as the official language. It was also here that Henrik Ibsen got a job as a stage instructor in 1851. Theatre has therefore been crucial for establishing a sense of nationality in Norway.Over the years, Norwegian performing arts have been characterised by text-based theatre traditions. Literature and language are essential for establishing a Norwegian identity.Later in the 1980s, other theatre practises than those presented at the national theatre were coined “marginal” instead of “mainstream”, as by Norwegian theatre scholar Knut Ove Arntzen in the book “Det marginale teater : et nordisk blikk på regikunst og ambiente forsøk (Arntzen 2007)”. I will present how students from the Department of Theater Studies at the University of Bergen, influenced by Knut Ove Artnzen, represented these new practices when organising a new theatre festival in 1983. The students claimed in interviews their contemporary aesthetics and theatre style should be experienced as a “slap in the face” by the theatre establishment and the citizens of Bergen. Their theatrical interventions opened up a discussion on artistic practices and, of course, taste. The new taste was regarded to be linked to a more international identity.

*PhD-student Grethe Melby did her masters in Media Studies in 2005 at University in Bergen, Norway. She wrote about rhetorics used in discussions on intellectual property and software. She is an art and theatre critic for several Norwegian newspapers. She has worked as a teacher in upper secondary. She has a 15-year-long cross-disciplinary experience in vocational training teaching subjects such as Norwegian language and literature, journalism and media studies, and entrepreneurship and business management. Now she is doing her PhD in Theatre Studies at the University in Bergen, Norway, focusing on the history of Bergen International Theatre - BIT Teatergarasjen and its rhetorical strategies, and how this theatre started as a student festival developing into a well-renowned theatre institution. Email:* [*Grethe.Melby@uib.no*](mailto:Grethe.Melby@uib.no)

**Holographic Simulation on Stage: A Virtual Experience at the Efua Sutherland Studio**

**– *Emmanuel Tei Mensah***

This article explores the integration of animation and live actor performance in a holographic simulation on stage. The main objective of the study is to explore the possibilities of achieving a believable hologram effect on the Efua T. Sutherland stage, thereby creating a new category of technique for theatre practitioners in Ghana. Exploring this new hologram technique was guided by extensive research and fieldwork at the Efua T. Sutherland Drama Studio. The study was further enhanced by experimenting with the available tools, materials and scripts. Drawing on 20 qualitative interviews, the future possibilities of integrating holograms into stage play was explored with leading performers, production staff, audience members, theatre instructors, playwrights, set designers and stage directors. The researcher is especially interested in how the audiences respond to the integration of virtual animations and live actor performances in the virtual representation of liveness on stage. The findings of this study will generate more interest and pave way for the development and introduction of a new technique for theatre practice in Ghana. The findings for this study will further be documented as instructional materials to enhance the teaching and learning of theatre performance in schools. Keywords: Theatre, Performance, Hologram, Animation, Virtual Experience, Audience, Simulation.

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**The Moral Triangle in Berlin – Germans, Israelis, and Palestinians at the Maxim Gorki Theatre – *Johanna Munzel***

How do Germans, Israelis and Palestinians work together in Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin? Through their historical interconnectedness Germany, Israel, and Palestine form what Atshan and Galor (2020) call in their interdisciplinary study the moral triangle. Ongoing conflicts over borders and settlements in the middle east, Germany’s responsibility for Israel and its Jewish citizens after the Holocaust, the large number of stateless Palestinians seeking refuge in Germany after the Nakba – these conflicts often inflicted by racism and antisemitism seem to make it impossible to work together on a theatre play that addresses everyday life under these circumstances.In my presentation I will show the example of The Situation, a semibiographical play by Israelian director Yael Ronen that deals with these conflicts in a humorous way. German, Israeli, Palestinian and Syrian artists created the play together at Maxim Gorki Theatre which is Germany’s self-proclaimed first post migrant theatre and aims at offering marginalised perspectives a space of self-representation against the backdrop of structural racism, sexism, and antisemitism. In the play and during its production the involved artists form new solidarities within the moral triangle across racialized groups and identities. In this way they challenge the dominant ideologies of racism and antisemitism. I rely on the concept of the “implicated subject” by memory studies scholar Rothberg (2019) in order to show the way characters and artists go beyond the binarized either-or notion of victims and perpetrators which is a common framework for subject positions in the moral triangle.

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**Transformative Myths: Arizona State University’s Black Theatre Organization and Belonging – *Crestcencia Ortiz-Barnett***

Black theatre has long served as an art form that reinforces the needs and aspirations of the community by searching for the truth, connecting with family and history, and actively engaging our material and spiritual worlds. This is especially true in environments that are predominantly white (PWI), Because predominantly white environments have often repeated negative tropes surrounding Blackness, African Americans are constantly searching for their sense of belonging. This is acutely true in higher education, with serious consequences. Studies have made clear that African American college students who do not experience a sense of belonging are at risk for reduced persistence and low retention rates in college, and there exists a profound graduation gap between African American and white students.This paper argues that Black theatre organizations assist in the building of community and belongingness amongst Black theatre students at PWIs by offering as a case study, the work currently being done at Arizona State University. The researcher will document efforts to build community through shared experience, the teaching of Black acting methods, such as “SoulWork”, the exploration of theatre concepts and practices of the African continent that are utilized in southwest America, and social engagements with new myths of Blackness. Through such activities, the group is fostering a sense of belonging while collectively imagining new myths of Blackness that will allow the students to achieve their goals and envision new futures.

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**Returning to Myth/Home: Siting Epistemological Collisions as Ritual Aesthetics Aim to Evoke New Spiritual Imaginaries in South African Theatre Performances**

**– *Pumelela Nqelenga***

South African theatre and contemporary performances have been subject to ritual and ritual aesthetic trends which stem from traditional ceremonies and practices. In this paper, I argue that this provocation by South African theatre makers and performers has evoked conversations around ritual aesthetics and it use in theatre through an essentialist lens. A far more expansive and rigours discourse surrounding ritual imaginaries needs to be explored to see its use, reuse and uselessness in South African theatre and performances. In this research project, I question the role of ritual as both process and performance modality and how it functions to create meaning for the modern South African subject. By returning to myth, I see that there is the potential for more openness to play and to imagine the role of ritual differently. Moreover, there is an opportunity to engage with indigenous knowledge systems which enable a more interruptive engagement with the theatricalization of ritual. By utilising both western and African forms of theatrical expressions, we can spark innovative ways of grappling with ritual practices that suit and inform our understanding of the contemporary world. Thus, as a way of exploring this phenomenon, I return home and thereby position home as myth; a story intertwined with memory, ritual and modernity. Key words: ritual, myth, South African theatre.

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**Exploring the Movement Orientation in Natyasastra – *Vaishnavi P B***

A sastra is defined as a text that either dictates or describes the nuances of a specified field, and Natysastra is a text that holds both qualities, leaving scope for umpteen interpretations. This treatise is prominent among dancers and actors, and especially for dancers, chapters on angika abhinaya are widely explored and adapted. The anatomical awareness of the body along with cognitive emotions are the key concepts for a dancer/choreographer/teacher in executing a movement. There has always been a first-hand analysis to understand the body anatomy and movements deciphering the sastras. According to these analyses, the body is divided into major and minor limbs, and the range and multiplicity of its movement are explained, but the qualitative interpretation of these movements is often missed. This paper looks into a detailed study considering qualitative movement exploration drawn from the sutras beyond just the body anatomy. To augment the aesthetics of dance and understand the quality of the movement, an etymological study of the technical terms used to define different movements has been done with respect to the Sanskrit language, which indeed helps to enhance the performative aspects of dance. Being a text and content-based analysis through empirical methods, it leads to an understanding of the concepts such as energy, resistance, space, and directional aspects involved in movement orientation. Since angika abhinaya is a vast area, this paper concentrates on the few important terminologies involving both major and minor limbs of the body.

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**Theatre of Yes: The Power of Beauty to Transform Toxic Myths around People with Mental Health Challenges – *Marina Pallares-Elias***

In this paper, I argue that beauty can be a powerful tool to deconstruct the toxic myths that the mental health community faces. Traditional myths are often linked to gods, heroes, or spirits, creating an unconscious fantasy. However, at the other end of the spectrum, we find thoughts about people suffering from mental health, who have to face many destructive myths that lead to lives full of stigmatization. Also, an applied theatre process can enable participants to share their stories, which can be full of victimization or guilt. As a result, it can be difficult to break the prejudices associated with these. The Theatre of Yes has a methodology that focuses on creating aesthetic theatre pieces based on unheard personal stories of people who must be listened to. The theatre process gives participants the opportunity to assume the role of the protagonist, and through the beauty and quality of this experience, stigma and myths can be challenged. How can the beauty of these stories be a way to break prejudices? How about creating a space where the participants can see the different layers of their accounts using the beauty of theatre? Is it possible to see the dark using beauty in a safe, caring space? By understanding the link between the terms beauty, vulnerability and care, I will explain how the Theatre of Yes provides a language which has the power to reveal the beauty of trauma and can help break these prejudices. I will use a case study from a theatre piece entitled “Keep holding my hand”, involving a group of people with mental health challenges.

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**Agitation as Performance “Pen Down Strike” in Telangana, India – *Sailu Pattepu***

This paper examines the "Pen Down Strike" as a performance, applying the concept and theories of performance. In general, performance indicates an action. Here in this context, performance is not an action activity but a stoppage of action as performance. This paper argues that the stoppage of work or strike also can be a performance. So, here how the strike as performance in social and professional roles (Schechner, 2002) plays an essential role in the agitations in India will be discussed.The struggle for a separate state for the people of Telangana has a history of several decades. The people of the Telangana region fought for their identity and resources, which created many martyrs and miserable lives for the people in the region. After the acceleration of fresh agitation in 2009, the mode of protests was shaped into multiple manifestations. One among them which has widely influenced the system and public was the pen-down strike of the employees in the Government sector. Performing the stoppage of a regular and mandatory action to be performed daily during the official hours by the officials was the idea of the pen-down strike. This paper will look at the performative aspects of performing non-performance as a deliberate act of performance.

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**The Mythic Teatro Oficina: Anthropophagous Desire, Cosmopolitics and Creative Madness in The Heart of São Paulo, Brazil – *Pedro Andres Perez Rothstein***

The aim of this paper is to look at a theatre company’s ability to deconstruct/construct myths in contemporary discourse and performance in at least three levels or domains: first, the use of mythologies in performance-making to create new symbolic meanings and cultural identities; second, past, present, and future mythmaking processes of a city; third, the articulation of myths around mental health. Taking Teatro Oficina Uzyna Uzona as an example -a historic institution in Brazilian theatre-, known for its capacity of devouring and resignifying myths in their tropicalist, anthropophagic and Artaudian-inspired theatrical performances like O Rei da Vela [The Candle King], Bacantes [The Bacchae], Os Sertões [The Backlands] or pra dar um FIM no juízo de deus [To Have Done With the Judgement of God]. Moreover, the essay analyses Teatro Oficina [Workshop Theater] as a disruptive force and political resistance movement in contesting certain ‘myths’ around the city of São Paulo and its efforts to rescue the city’s indigenous origin myths and reimagining a greener, freer, and fairer future for Latin America’s financial capital. Finally, by proposing new relationships between mind, bodies, and places, how can the theatre’s mythic ‘creative madness’ help in shaping renewed dramaturgies and mythologies of urban mental health? The essay draws upon an ongoing PhD research on theatre, cities and mental health in which Teatro Oficina is one of three case studies.

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**A Generation of a Myth of the 1968 Movement in Contemporary Documentary Theatre – *Judith Pieper***

The time around 1968 seems like a myth to a me, a German researcher born decades after the events. I need to reconstruct it in order to understand its implications. For a research topic on political theatre and street politics around 1968, the first approach is to closely read about 1968, which sometimes seems to need decoding. While publications on theatre protests and the politicization of street and stage in the 1960s (Dorothea Kraus, 2007) and a French publication on theatre of intervention since 1968 (Jonny Ebstein and Philippe Ivernel, 1983) exist, another approach is to look at contemporary performances, soundwalks and installations that deal with the 1968 movement in order to see how it is perceived today and what remains. In Germany the myth of those years is still so alive that there is currently quite a lot to investigate. As in the 1960s, approaches of documentary theatre seem to play a big role: for example, in “Kampf um die Häuser” by profikollektion or “Apocalypse Resistance Training” by Theater Grüne Soße, both part of the festival “politics in independent theatre” in Frankfurt on the Main. Other objects of investigation are “Die Spiele müssen weitergehen – München 1972” by dura&kroesinger and “program no program” by Fanti Baum and Sebastian Klawiter, which dealt with the attack on the Israeli team during the Olympic games in 1972, and both of which took place in the city of the events. How do forms of documentary theatre contribute to mythmaking or are they actually deconstructing the myth?

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**The Mythic Powers of the Spirits: Exploring Ζār as a Site of Myth in the Oral Egyptian Tradition – *Tasneem Ramadan***

The very subject of myth has rarely emerged in Ζār studies of the Egyptian culture due to the lack of conventional mythic material. This article, then, looks at how myth emerges in the spirit possession-trance ceremony that is performed in Egypt and recognised as Ζār. Unlike conventional myths, Ζār is a performed event that is accompanied by performers who use music and dance to appeal/exorcise spirits, or Djinn, who possess individuals, mostly women, and cause illnesses and discomfort. A Ζār performance involves food offerings and musical performances that include playing specific, normally rigorous, drum patterns to call forth and further appease Djinn. Ζār performances also include singing original and diverse praises to and about different spirits and their possession of patients. As each song progresses, the speed of the rhythm intensifies, trance deepens, and patients lose sense of themselves allowing the zar (spirit) to enter their bodies, and reveal its identity and wishes to the leader, Kodia, of the zar cult. Emerged in ritual, the performance is unique in each particular spirit manifestation, with myth and mythic subtext communicating themselves in and from the possession ceremony. This communication is further translated through bodily amalgamation of the spirits, collapsing of time and space, and difference between humans and spirits. Guided by tradition, an aetiological origin, and a pantheon of spirits, it is here within the performance of Ζār that myth finds articulation, mediating between binary opposites and transitioning through phases of separation and incorporation.

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**In Purgatory – *Anna-Lu Rausch***

The monstrosity of Naples, cramped between volcanoes and washed by the Mediterranean, promises the fulfilment of Stephen Greenblatt’s desire within his Shakespearian Negotiations (1998): a conversation with the dead. Chosen ones are granted the gift of communicating through trance and dream with anonymous or abandoned souls in purgatory, caught in the transition between earthly and transcendent spheres. Tending to their skulls in conjunction with praying for relief from their suffering, the women\* are rewarded with small benefits - and provide for the "creation of a scenic horizon of - thus becoming aware ofs own historicity. In an effort to write theatre/performance history as a social-anthropological cultural history that is particularly concerned with taking seriously "prior representational acts of speculation, fancy, and conjecture [as the] nature of performance and repertoire" (Davis/Marx 2021, 6), the cult is focused from two perspectives: through the lens of the inner-Italian, anthropological reflection on the South and its mythological rootedness, shaped by the figure of Ernesto de Martino, and as part of a feminist history of performance and knowledge, underpinned by corporeal practices specifically related to the attribution of the magical to the female\* - enabling subversion in the sub-churches of Naples.Davis, Tracy C. / Marx, Peter W. 2021. “Introduction: On Critical Media History” In The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance Historiography. London: Routledge.Van Loyen, Ulrich. 2018. Neapels Unterwelt – Über die Möglichkeiten einer Stadt. Berlin: Matthes und Seitz.

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**The Theatrical Public Sphere in Colonial Bengal: Actress Photographs as Sources of Alternate Historiography – *Tamalika Roy***

The early print culture developing around colonial Bengali theatre (1872-1947)— such as theatre magazines, advertisements, playbills, pamphlets, songbooks, or booklets which according to Christopher Balme, constitute a significant part of the theatrical public sphere have largely been neglected in Indian theatre historiography. This paper uses one such example— photographs of actresses published in a contemporary magazine, Naachghar, which published news, articles, photographs related to theatre, focusing between the years 1926-1931 to explore how the circulation of these images constructed the actress in the theatrical public sphere within the colonial capitalist market structure. The presence of the actress connected the theatrical public sphere to the larger socio-political public sphere of colonial Bengal, since the actress, while fundamental to commercial theatre, also evoked great moral anxiety as one of the first public women in India. Investigating these images through the lens of feminist historiography, my paper would analyze their costume, posture, or figuration, uncovering the codes of contemporary sexual lexicon embedded in them. It will probe how the aesthetics, politics, and subjectivities of their characters on stage can be juxtaposed with the vibrant theatre culture which strategically commodified these actresses. While existing histories of Bengali theatre have been based on the literary dramatic culture, shifting the focus to the theatrical public sphere and its circuits extends theatre historiography to networks and communities. My paper argues that the alternate critical historiography charted out through such sources provides insights into a performance culture which disrupts any monolithic nationalist historiography concerning both women and theatre.

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**A Hermeneutic Study of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* – *Iveren Sambe***

The study sets out to show the relevance of hermeneutics to the practice of interpretation as well as the analysis of dramatic texts with particular reference to the analysis of Samuel Beckett’s Waiting for Godot within the framework of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s perception of hermeneutics. There is no doubt that attempts have been made by scholars, notably Lee A. Jacobus, Oscar G. Brockett, and Martin Banham to interpret Waiting for Godot. However, the researcher is drawn particularly to Gadamer in that he is the decisive figure in the development of twentieth century hermeneutics. His theory emphasis the conditions in which understanding occurs to the interpreter. Consequently, the study explicates Beckett’s Waiting for Godot along the paradigm of synopsis, setting, philosophy, thematic content, characterization, and language as a precursor to understanding the whole text from the interpreter’s stance in accordance with the Gadamerian central hermeneutic theory and the central hermeneutic principle of part and whole. The findings of the research reveal that hermeneutics which began originally as a methodology for interpreting the Bible and ancient manuscript of texts has through the development of Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics shifted its focus to uncovering the nature of understanding. The conclusion reached is that Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics offers a more objective way of describing in practical terms the way understanding occurs in the experience of art. Therefore, it is recommended as a tool for providing fresh insights into texts and unmasking meanings attached to texts which present challenges of interpretation to the interpreter. *Email:* [*lovelyivy2@gmail.com*](mailto:lovelyivy2@gmail.com)

**Formidable (A Devised Stage Play on Toxic Masculinity & Prejudice Against Effeminate Men) – *Gerald Sarbah***

As the central focus of the presentation, the devised play *Formidable* addresses instances of unhealthy socialization of a male child trained to feel less or mask emotions, reminding us all that males are also capable of emotional intelligence and expression. It also seeks to validate all forms of masculinity, bringing awareness to the spectrum in which the concept of masculinity manifests in various theatrical modes. *Formidable* touches on mental health, stigma, prejudice, and toxic masculinity.Sampson, a young man who happens to be in touch with his feminine side, takes an interest in things his family believes should not be associated with his gender. His community also criticizes him for having visibly obvious feminine traits. Despite his Internal and external battles, he realizes he has always had the capability and intense power to inspire respect for his aspirations. The piece in a nutshell depicts the power that some negative societal pressures hold over us as individuals and is inspired by my personal life experiences. My presentation will be on the untold mental health struggles of effeminate men because of toxic masculinity, as well as the impact of prejudice against them within our society. The fundamental intent working this piece is to provoke a positive audience response and reaction by appealing to the sentiments of anyone who can relate on any level, directly or indirectly. As this work was inspired by my real-life personality and experiences, I have certain lines, actions and characters who actually exist or which at some point played out in my life. So, the work is inspired by my story, with me as the central character and some fictional scenes to adequately convey to the audience the various nuances in the characters' experience.

*I have volunteered as a student journalist for the university's radio station, Radio Univers 105.7. I have created and directed two plays, Formidable and A Quest for Freedom. Also, I featured in over ten Theatre Arts departmental productions including Hogbe, Funny Money as Sargent Slatter and played multiple roles in Chief Moomen's Mansa Musa and the Trail of Lost Gold. My specialties are directing, singing, acting, voice acting and make up. Email:* [*sabagerr@gmail.com*](mailto:sabagerr@gmail.com)

**History's Ventriloquy: Unpacking Narration and Caste Violence in V. Geetha's Sudalayamma – *Venkateswaran Seshadri***

In 1977, two years after the declaration of National Emergency, one of the darkest periods in modern Indian history, Seeralan (a radical Left political activist from Tamil Nadu) was branded as a Naxalite and brutally murdered by the police. V. Geetha's Sudalayamma (2014), a monologue, stars a lone dalit woman who recalls this murder, and re-members for us the horrors perpetrated on Seeralan, those which the police continually blackmail her to forget. She tells us what this memory and his memory means to her and her people in their struggle against oppression, as we (being her audience) bear witness. She gives a voice to a history whose memory the state seeks to erase.My paper centres around the loaded processes of narration that form the core of Sudalayamma's engagement with memory and political violence, and how the questions "who is the narrator?" and "who is the narratee?" take on grave new meanings within them. My enquiry draws on the performance strategies deployed by Geetha, the play's director A. Mangai, and activist Prema Revathi who played Sudalayamma in the 2014 production. These elements and their implications on "narration", memory, and violence within the socio-political circumstances of caste Hindu society will ground my paper. Milija Gluhovic's (2020) explorations into the performance of memory and Marla Carlson's (2010) conceptualisation of 'pain' as an element of performance (as an indicator towards the biopolitical regime with which such performances engage) will frame my exploration into Sudalayamma as an engagement with memories of historical violence.

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**A Performance of Democracy? Investigating Swedish Amateur Theatre between 1780 to 1850 – *Julia Stina Skoglund***

For a long time, theatre historiography has been focusing on professional theatre practices, mostly disregarding amateur theatre practices. My doctoral research project sets out to investigate the role amateur theatre played in Sweden from 1780 to 1850. Specifically, I research two strands of amateur theatre practices: theatre played in country houses and in order societies. Amateur theatre groups within the latter oftentimes followed the order societies’ pursuit to educate their members as well as friends and relatives through culture. Country house theatre, on the other hand, is often overlooked as a purely recreational activity. In my paper, I argue that this does not necessarily hold true, presenting the case of Löfholms theatersällskap: this amateur theatre group of around 60 women and men was running a small theatre in a shed on the countryside right outside of Stockholm. The activities of the group not only consisted of setting up an impressive 18 plays over the course of three years, but also of publishing their own magazine with amongst others theatre reviews. The group’s meticulous archive is a document of the group members’ ambition and historic awareness and gives an insight into heated debates and a conscientious democratic association structure. Thus, I argue that Löfholms theatersällskap is one example of how theatre was used to negotiate and ‘rehearse’ citizenship, and thus played an important role in the forming of a modern democratic civil society in Sweden.

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**Interrogating the Play*, In The Chest of A Woman* (2008), As An Artistic Impression Of Yaa Asantewaa, Akan Masculinity And Female Cross-Dressing – *Sylvia Tetteyfio***

In this study, I interrogate and analyse how symbolically Efo Kodjo Mawugbe criticises the Akan contention of masculinity in his play, In the chest of a woman. The starting point for this paper is the play's prologue, which acknowledges that some events referenced Yaa Asantewaa and the British invasion. Nana Yaa Asantewaa is a historical figure who many believe was a queen who led the Asantes to fight against the British in 1901. The methodology of this study is rhetorical analysis. Context is examined from the social, political, and cultural backgrounds that use clothing to re-enforce or legitimise the patriarchal systems of male dominance. Notably, the context where some female leaders are required to cross-dress for 'manly' tasks. The interrogations and analysis also stem from some artistic impressions of Nana Yaa Asantewaa's costume, which appears to contradict her physical involvement on the battlefield. The costume is known as densinkran, a female costume claimed to be inappropriate for war. By arguing for Yaa Asantewaa, Mawugbe adopts a female character who adorns the densinkran costume to fight a man in the play. He further explores female cross-dressing to challenge Akan's notion of masculinity, which appears to fuel Yaa Asantewaa's physical involvement. The paper contributes to scholarly discussion on Efo Kodjo Mawugbe, cross-dressing, Akan Masculinity and Mythology.

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**Deconstructing/Constructing Myths and Legends in Video Performances of Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria – *Susan B. Tanwie***

The deconstruction and construction of myth and legends in video performances by internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria is a unique and insightful process that showcases the experiences, perspectives, and cultural identities of this marginalized community. Through their performances, these IDPs engage with traditional myths and legends, reinterpreting and retelling them in ways that reflect the challenges and realities of their displacement. This process serves as a means of resistance, empowerment, and healing for them, as they assert their cultural identities and use the power of storytelling to challenge dominant narratives and express their own experiences. With the use of performance ethnography, the study critically examined traditional cultural myths and legends in a contemporary context. The study applies performance and trauma theories to examine how Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria use video performances to deconstruct and construct new narratives and meanings around myths and legends, in light of their experiences of displacement and other cultural, historical, and political factors. By deconstructing and constructing myths and legends in this way, IDPs are not only able to preserve their cultural heritage, but also to create new and empowering narratives that reflect their unique perspectives and experiences. Through these video performances, they bring attention to the important issues faced by displaced communities and contribute to a more diverse and inclusive cultural landscape.

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**Men of Honour? The Controversy Between Laura Kieler and The Men of The Cultural Elite – *Julia Tonsberg***

The Danish/Norwegian playwright Laura Kieler's (1849-1932) *Men of Honour* premiered at the Casino Theatre in Copenhagen in May 1890. Before the premiere, Kieler’s play had been rejected by the Royal Danish Theatre and this became the starting point for a public debate between Kieler and the director of the RDT Edvard Fallesen. The title of Kieler’s play, as well as her male main character, was widely interpreted as referring to named influential male intellectuals dominating the public discourse in the Nordic countries during the last part of the 19th century. By opponents of the cultural radicals Kieler was praised for her bravery in exposing the hypocrisy in the intellectual elite and the fuss around the play was considered evidence of nepotism on administrative levels in The Royal Danish Theatre. In this paper, I will investigate the conflict between Kieler, Fallesen, and the intellectual elite arguing that the case is an example of the barriers particularly women who were critical towards the cultural elite encountered when trying to enter the national stage. In a period where debates about gender, sexuality and equality was taking place with the cultural elite on one side and the Women’s Movement on the other, Kieler was a public figure who expressed her views on these subjects using various medias. Still, she today remains in the shadows of the literary men she was up against. I will investigate how Men of Honour can widen an understanding of the democratization process in late 19th century Denmark.

*Julia Tonsberg is a Ph.D. Scholar at the University of Aarhus, Denmark investigating female playwrights during The Modern Breakthrough in the Nordic countries. She specifically focuses on how women participated in the public sphere via the stage and how the national stage took part in the democratization process in Denmark. Practices of censorship, self-censorship and institutional frames are also considered asking how these influenced the artistic expressions. She holds a MA in Dramaturgy and is currently a student representative in the EASTAP Executive Committee. Email:* [*julia.tonsberg@cc.au.dk*](mailto:julia.tonsberg@cc.au.dk)

**At the Edge of a Forest: Myth, Agency and the Power of Imagination in Maggie O’Farrell’s Hamnet (2020) – *Sophie Totz***

“This is the story, the myth of Agnes’s childhood. She herself might tell a different story” (O’Farrell 2020, 51) proposes the central aspect of this paper. Maggie O'Farrell's novel Hamnet is the fictionalization, interwoven with biographical elements, of the life (and later death) of the eponymous son of playwright William Shakespeare. However, the narrative focuses on Agnes, the mother of Hamnet. Her nonconformist upbringing in the woods around the town beyond social categories does not only give her ‘supernatural’ abilities and knowledge to cure illness, but through that also a form of female\* agency and independence. She tells her own story, as indicated in the quote above. This abstract will critically discuss the myth of women\* in and at the edge of the forests and how this perception can also be traced in Shakespeare’s plays, especially in A Midsummer Night's Dream and As you like it. Moreover, the novel literally ends in the theatre, where Agnes hesitantly watches a play written by her estranged husband with a title that bears the name of her dead son. This scene will be examined under the perspective of female spectatorship and the power of imagination that theatre creates. As Stephen Greenblatt puts it: “Her husband has brought him back to life, in the only way he can [...] through the power of art [...]” (2021). Following Stephen Greenblatt’s metaphor of speaking with the dead in Shakespearean Negotiations (1998), this paper will examine the close interrelation between Hamnet and the mythologies surrounding death, theatre and the power of imagination but also women\* inside and aside from forests.

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**“Shivaji Is Our Brother”: Theatre as a Behavioural Vortex for Anti-caste Historical Memory Activism in India, The Case of Shivaji Underground in Bhimnagar Mohalla**

**– *Aishwarya Walvekar***

From colonial period to the present, Shivaji, the seventeenth-century Maratha king from Western India, has been caught in historical memory wars between contesting ideologies of Hindu nationalism and anti-caste movements through history writing, novels, and performances. Although the exercise of history writing in India has been undertaken by upper-caste Hindus, the ballad performance tradition of Maharashtra - powada, has been traditionally performed by lower castes enabling formations of alternative historical memories through bodily repertoire, narratives and music. This paper examines the critically acclaimed play *Shivaji Underground in Bhimnagar Mohalla* (performed since 2013) written by Rajkumar Tangade which, I argue, surrogates (Roach, 1996) Shivaji into cavities created by suppression of lower castes and loss of democratic values through satire. By employing the concept of ‘behavioural vortex’ (Roach, 1996) to examine theatre as a site of memory to flout the hagiography of Shivaji, this paper argues that *Shivaji Underground in Bhimnagar Mohalla* intervenes the Hindu nationalistic history with anti-caste memory activism (Gutman, 2017). Claiming Shivaji as the brother of lower castes and religious minorities, I explain how the play employs the mnemonic reserves of music and narratives from powada and Jalsa, a folk performance tradition borne out of the anti-caste movement started by Jotiba Phule to assert Dalit and minority identities. Approaching anti-caste music through the dual lens of ‘singing/thinking’ (Maitreya, 2021), I examine the consequences of shifting Jalsa from its lieux de memoir (chowks, Dalit ghettos) to milieux de memoir (Nora, 1989) of modern theatre coalescing the archive with performative repertoire.

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**Constructing *A Wicked Silence*: A Choreoplay – *Alexandra Warren***

On September 17, 2021, *A Wicked Silence* premiered in the Downtown Parks of Greensboro, North Carolina. This first part of three works explores the history and consequences of the Eugenics program in North Carolina. From 1919-1977, North Carolina forced sterilization of patients of public-funded institutions that were judged to be 'mentally defective or feeble-minded' by authorities”, which later evolved into impoverished populations.Presented as a 'choreoplay', A Wicked Silence conveyed its narrative through a series of scenes in two acts that moved locations throughout the Greensboro Downtown Parks: LeBauer and Center City Parks. This choreoplay employed multiple art forms, including choreographed movement, spoken word, dramaturgy, music and song, immersive audience participation, and visual art/design. This multimodal piece brought together artists from across the community to tell a story as layered as the history on which it is based.The concept of the work overall is broken down in three parts which follow the experiential learning cycle, a well-known reflection model developed by Rolfe et al (2001) and is based upon three simple questions: What? So what? Now what?This paper will discuss the process and outcomes of the director/choreographer/playwright in the creation of this site-specific choreoplay. This paper will outline strategies in cultivation of an audience for this work and collaboration with the presenter in the parks, a dramaturg, poet, visual artist and the Piedmont Blues Preservation Society on music consultation.

*Alexandra Joye Warren is the Founding Artistic Director of JOYEMOVEMENT. Her most recent projects include Love Notes (Artistic Director and Choreographer) Head Over Heels (Choreographer), Womanifesto (Performer, choreographed by Amelia Renee Byrd) 42nd Street (Director), A Wicked Silence: A Choreoplay (Playwright, Director, Choreographer), and Movin On’ (Choreographer) a new work in development by Julio Matos Jr. and John Franceschina. She was selected as a 2022-2023 Artist-In-Residence for the North Carolina Dance Festival. Alexandra Joye Warren is currently an Assistant Professor of Performing Arts at Elon University, Director/Choreographer for the Music Theatre program. Email:* [*awarren14@elon.edu*](mailto:awarren14@elon.edu)

**Actor Training, Political Economy: The Embodied Realm of Epistemic Violence**

**– *Anthony Woods***

This paper argues that actor training forms a contributing factor in the construction and maintenance of those structures of violence which operate within and sustain the late capitalist epoch. Recent years have seen significant instances of violence in drama schools, from sexual assault to racial misconduct, but research in these areas rarely steps beyond the interpersonal and subjective realms. This research utilises an affective methodology, based in auto theory and affect theory, to blend autobiographical data from my own training as an actor with observation and conversation under the theoretical frameworks offered by those such as Erin Manning, Brian Massumi, and Giles Deleuze. It is the position of this paper that arts training is not exceptional but is as dependent upon the structuring forces of the political economy as any other sector. As such, this research demonstrates a journey from the interpersonal politics of the pedagogical encounter, through the bureaucratic structures of organisation and institution, to the political economy, and back, in which said organisational structures are based in originating and ongoing material processes of violence with epistemic consequences. I conceive of training in this fashion as epistemic violence, drawing on Spivak and Bruner, within conceptualizations of political economy and its intersection with theatre and training (Marx, Harvey, Boyle). The paper will argue that actor training enacts an embodied form of epistemic violence which corresponds with the violent demands of the political economy and asks what education’s ethical mandate might be in the face of its contribution to such structures.

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**A Dramaturgy of Precariousness: Choreographing Sex in Dead Centre’s Good Sex**

**– *Huayu Yang***

Precariousness, according to Judith Butler, is “the joint of our nonfoundation”, the inescapable vulnerability and interdependency following from “our social existence as bodily beings” (148). Based on the idea of the precarious interrelatedness in theatre and embodied experience in general, this paper would investigate the dramaturgy of precariousness in Good Sex (2022). Good Sex, premiered as part of Dublin Theatre Festival 2022, is created by the Irish theatre company Dead Centre and writer Emilie Pine. Each of the show’s six performances puts on stage two new, unprepared performers. Without rehearsal, they deliver the lines and carry out the actions that they receive from their headphones, dictated real-time by two matching narrators in a sound booth upstage, and their performance of sex is coordinated by an intimacy director, in line with which the stagehands gradually build up the setting of the story. My presentation would focus on how the dramaturgy of precariousness in Good Sex creates an interface between theatre and sex, which is inextricably both a postdramatic exploration of the theatrical mediality and a subversion of the discursive normalities of sex. Departing from the cultivation of spectatorial uneasiness and its kinesthetic alignment with the performers’ untamable corporeality through the metatheatrical choreography of sex, this paper would examine how the experience of precariousness in the theatre event as a carnal encounter creates a sphere in which the ambiguous ethics of staged sex and staging sex with real people converges with the dangerous liveness of theatre in the all-too-human desire for connectedness.

*Huayu Yang is a PhD student in the Department of Drama, School of Creative Arts, funded by the Trinity College Dublin - China Scholarship Council joint scholarship programme. She received her B.A. in English from Shandong University in China and her M.A. in Comparative Literature from University College London. Her current research project focuses on the Irish theatre company Dead Centre. It looks into the company’s postdramatic (re)configuration of the dramaturgical dynamics of text, body, sound, space, etc. to stage the “unstageable” real. She is interested in how they subvert, play and negotiate with the dramatic framework to create an interface between the fictive and the real as a self-reflexive approach to theatre’s mediality, how these dramaturgies lead to a posthuman understanding of liveness, (co)presence, and perception, as well as how the company’s aesthetics is informed by and in constant dialogue with other Irish theatre companies including Pan Pan, ANU, Brokentalkers, and the contemporary Irish theatrical avant-garde in general. Email:* [*yanghu@tcd.ie*](mailto:yanghu@tcd.ie)

**Collectiveness, Fanaticism and Nostalgia: The Politics of Chinese National Identity in Revolutionary Model Opera – *Zoe Zhang***

This paper will investigate the Chinese national identity (CNI) within the performance and appreciation of 'yangban-xi' (revolutionary model opera), the only shows permitted during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) in China. I will examine the ongoing dialogue between 'yangban-xi' as a cultural form that transcribes political conflict, nostalgia, cultural ambivalence, and identity anxiety, and the social discourses that have shaped Chinese national identity as it is lived in post-Maoist China. By telling stories of China’s revolutionary struggles against foreign and class enemies, 'yangban-xi' was developed as a modern appropriation of 'jingju' (Beijing opera) and considered revolutionary and contemporary in terms of thematic and melodic features. Built on the social identity theory and the psychological approach to theatre, this paper will demonstrate the cognitive effects of 'yangban-xi' as a medium of Chinese identity performance that negotiated a space between personal identity and national ideology and thus, fill in the gap of the micro-sociological and psychological study of how the CNI is lived and performed in both the theatrical and societal practices of 'yangban-xi'. I will argue that Chinese people have formed, reshaped, and consolidated their national identity by constantly adjusting the memories, symbols, values, and traditions through the involvement of 'yangban-xi'. This paper will explore the discourse, discipline, and power system underlying 'yangban-xi', and the complex interrelation between cultural consumerism, political propagation, and national identity construction. It will generate an original critique of 'yangban-xi' as a conjugate of official state-sanctioned rhetoric and unofficial representations of Chineseness.

*Zoe Zhang is a PhD candidate at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, where she completed the MA in Writing for Stage and Broadcast Media. As a new scholar, she studies Chinese opera and contemporary political practices in post-Maoist China. As a playwright, her plays include Hurlyburly World (Penghao Theatre, Beijing 2017), which won the first prize in the 2017 Beijing Youth Dramatic Writing Competition, and The Blue Sun (Platform Theatre, London 2023). She regularly scripts and develops interactive fiction for Theatre 371. Email:* [*zhangyizoey1998@gmail.com*](mailto:zhangyizoey1998@gmail.com)

**Papers and Panels Abstracts**

**Playwrights and Folktales: An Analyses of Osofisan’s *Morountodun* and Afolayan’s**

***Once Upon an Elephant* – *Femi Adekunle Adedina***

From time immemorial, folktales have been a source of entertainment and lesson for many. While somepeople water down the originality of folktales, their benefits transcend what many people assume theystand for. Folktales are tales that are part of the oral tradition of a people or a place. They are creativelywoven to appeal to different senses of the listeners. Traditionally, folktales are verbally told, but to make their messages go around and to preserve them for generations to come, they are written down. There is a lot to learn from the folktales of a particular community. The lessons from these tales if we apply them, can go a long way to bring orderliness into the world, even though their credibility may be questionable. To preserve folktales and make them accessible to everyone, dramatists try to weave folktales into the plots of their stories. This way they can tell powerful stories which lessons can be applied to solve contemporary problems. Two of these dramatists are Bose Afolayan and Femi Osofisan. In Afolayan’s *Once Upon an Elephant* and Osofisan’s *Morountodun*, folktales are used as the bases of their storylines. This paper sets out to look at the utilization and functions of folktales in the two texts and how relevant they are to contemporary situations.

*Femi Adedina is an Associate Professor of Film Studies, Creative Writing and Dramatic Literature at the Department of Theatre Arts, Lagos State University of Education. A teacher, Media Expert, Playwright, Essayist, Short Story Writer, Novelist, Poet, Television and Stage and Film Director. He was the former Deputy Provost of Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Oto/ Ijanikin and the foundation Ag. Dean of College of Humanities Education (COHED) of Lagos State University of Education, Oto/Ijanikin.*

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**The Butcher Babes: Making a Myth of the Brutal Murder of an African Brother**

**– *Bisi Adigun***

When the dismembered body of Kenyan immigrant Farah Swaleh Noor was first discovered in a sports bag in a canal in Dublin in March 2005, the police initially thought it was an act of ritual killing. A few months into their investigation, however, the story changed. It turned out that the brutal murder and decapitation of Noor was the handiwork of Irish siblings, Charlotte and Linda Mulhall, now famously known as the Irish Scissor Sisters. Although Noor’s decapitated body had since been buried; and Linda had served her five-year jail term, while her younger sister, Charlotte, still remains in prison serving her life sentence, the myth of what happened on the fateful night the barbaric murder and decapitation of Noor took place in a Dublin inner city house has since inspired a tragicomedy, The Butcher Babes. The reason is that in some parts of Yoruba land in western Nigeria, it is believed that if a person dies such a ritual-like death, rather than go to rest, the spirit of that person will continue to haunt the living until appropriate purificatory rites are carried out. This paper examines how The Butcher Babes is a theatrical ritual inspired by Soyinka’s theory of the Fourth Stage which he propounded based on the myth of Ogun, the Yoruba god of war and iron, to demonstrate his conviction that the fates of the Yoruba gods, “are in myth and their creative exploiters” (Soyinka, Wole. 1995. Myth Literature and the African World. Cambridge University Press, 30).

*Bisi Adigun is a performing artist, dramatist, and theatre producer/director. Before joining Bowen University (of the Baptist Convention), Iwo, Osun State, Nigeria as a senior lecturer in October 2019, Adigun was an adjunct lecturer of African Theatre and Performance Studies at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, where he earned his PhD in Drama in 2013. Between 2000 and 2003, Adigun was a co-presenter of MONO, RTE’s flagship intercultural television magazine programme. Then, in 2003, he founded Arambe Productions, Ireland’s first and only African theatre company, for which, as its Artistic Director for over 16 years, he produced and directed over 25 productions in Ireland, Nigeria and America. Adigun’s first volume of plays, An Other Playboy, The Butcher Babes and Home, Sweet Home (Three Plays), was published by Universal Books UK in 2018. He is also the co-editor, with Duro Oni, of The Soyinka Impulse: Essays on Wole Soyinka (BookCraft, 2019). Adigun is also the editor of Remembering Ola Rotimi: A Complete Man of the Theatre: Essays and Tributes (Bowen University Press: Iwo, 2022); he is also working on his adaptation of Brian Friel’s Philadelphia Here I Come! Email:* [*Bisiadigun@gmail.com*](mailto:Bisiadigun@gmail.com)

**World-Making with Stories: The Animal in Postcolonial African Narratives**

**– *Henry Ajumeze***

Among the Igbo in Nigeria, a popular proverb — “mbe ako na inu” — expresses an imagined ubiquity of the tortoise in narratives: emphasising the animal’s overwhelming presence in the ecosystem of fables. In fact, the myth manifests itself as human critique of the creature’s many unbearable tricks, marked by figurations of (anti-) heroic exploits in the world life of the Igbo expressive cultures. So too, from a similarly ontological worldview: other animal species in African narratives are framed by impulses that conjure up optics of unequal relations of planetary power framed through historically enabled authorial hegemony.  This paper examines West African literary and performance traditions to unpack the human and animal relations in ways that probe questions of power, coloniality, ontology; and suggesting the need to forge new ways of world-making with stories -- as Donna Harraway admonished -- to "change the story"

*Dr. Henry Ajumeze is a Lecturer in Theatre Studies at the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, University of Manchester.  He studied at the University of Ghana and the University of Cape Town in South Africa and has been a fellow/awardee of several prestigious organizations including the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), African Humanities Program (AHP) of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) — Carnegie Corporation of New York and Consortium of Humanities Centres and Institutes (CHCI). His research is in the intersection of postcolonial theatre and environmental humanities and the performance culture of ecosystems in the politics of resource extraction.  Email:* [*henjumez@hotmail.com*](mailto:henjumez@hotmail.com)

**Mythology and Culture: Implication of Female Genital Mutilation in Urhobo Land**

**– *Hannah Akpodiete***

Female genital mutilation (FGM) has attracted international attention in recent times, and the formulation of new laws against the practice in Nigeria. While there have been little changes in the frequency of the exercise in many parts of the country there is evidence of prevalence among young people in Urhobo land in the rural areas. There has been lower presence among daughters of educated mothers in the urban areas in Urhobo land. This challenge has necessitated the increasing research and policy changes to address these issues. Proponents of FGM in Urhobo land believe that there is a myth behind it and should therefore not be questioned nor stopped. They itemised social, psychological, and cultural benefits of which include conformity to social pressure and peers; raise a girl properly and prepare her for adulthood and deliver her from marital failures; reduces women sexual desires thereby preventing promiscuity; religious beliefs; sexual restraints; cleanliness, neatness and beautifying of females’ sexual organs. Global outcry against FGM condemn the practice believing that it has no health benefit since (i) it is violent against women as it leads to childbirth complications. (ii) death rate of babies such as neonatal death. (iii) sexual problems. (iv) outbreak of infections and could lead to Cervical cancer. The paper employed the qualitative research methodology and focus group discussion to achieve the objectives of the study.Key words: Mythology, Culture, Implication, Female Genital Mutilation, Urhobo land.

*Dr. Hannah Modupe bagged a PhD degree in Theatre Arts from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria; presently is a Lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts, Delta State University, Abraka. I started my career at the University in November 2018 as Lecturer II, and through a dint of hard work was promoted to Lecturer I in 2022. As a Lecturer, I have served in various capacities in areas of teaching, research, and community services. In teaching, I have served on disciplinary committees, level advisers among others. I have taught in areas of Children’s theatre, Costumes, make-ups, Theatre management, Cultural issues, Community theatres, mythology, and fictions; to students of various levels 100, 200, 300, 400 and diplomas respectively. I have equally participated in several conferences both locally and internationally with publications in local and international journals. I am married to an Urhobo man and have equally lived among the Urhobos for over 22 years. Having interacted with the Urhobos for several years, I am prompted to carry out the study on female genital mutilation taking into consideration the mythology and cultural implications.*

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**ME & DIONYSUS: Theatre, Re/Evolution and Ecstasy – *Judyie Al-Bilali***

‘Me & Dionysus: Theatre, Re/Evolution and Ecstasy’ illuminate the classic Greek drama The Bacchae as a guiding myth for the early 21st century through the 40+ year romance between myself and the divinity of theatre, Dionysus. Attending the Living Theatre’s seminal production, 'Dionysus in 69' as a high school student, I experienced a freedom in theatre-making that remains indelible. Thirty years later I directed Wole Soyinka’s 'Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Rite', setting the production in America’s 1960s Black Liberation movement. In 2019, when asked by my department to direct a version of The Bacchae, I set the play’s ‘Time’ in 2020, only nine months in the future. The ’Place’ for the production was Gaia, the mythological Greek name recognizing Earth as a sentient goddess. What do my prescient artistic choices tell us about where we are at this pivotal point in human history? How can the divinity of Theatre and the magnificent Bacchantes chart our course for survival as a species? Artists are the antennae for society and as we reimagine Euripides’ myth of Dionysus, we address our need for balance between reason and passion. This timeless play tells us where to look for balance in a world twisted by the desire for power and control disguised as reason – rather look to ecstasy, to creativity, to beauty, to joy. Lose control. The timing is divine for the return of Dionysus as we find our way forward in the temple of Theatre.

*For over four decades, Awotunde Judyie Al-Bilali has been an innovator in the fields of performing arts, arts education, and applied theatre. An actor, director, playwright and producer, she has worked off-Broadway and in regional theatre. She taught at NYU's Educational Theatre Program, the MA Applied Theatre Program at CUNY, Amherst College, Hampshire College, and the University of Virginia's Semester at Sea program. She is currently an Associate Professor of Theatre for Social Transformation at UMass Amherst. Al-Bilali received her BA Cum Laude in African American Performing Arts and an MFA in Theatre. She was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa where she created Brown Paper Studio, an applied theatre methodology. Her work is featured in Black Acting Methods: A Critical Approach. She is the author of For the Feeling: Love & Transformation from New York to Cape Town and Halcyon Days, a book of haiku. She is the recipient of numerous awards including grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Kentucky Arts Council, the Marion and Jasper Whiting Foundation, the UMass President’s Creative Initiatives Fund and MacDowell Colony.*

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**The Women. They Were Plotting Too: Declaring Our Independence in the Spirit of Sankofa – *Barbara Asante***

This paper explores the key concepts and processes that underpin Barby Asante’s ongoing performance work Declaration of Independence. This iterative performance work is grounded in decolonial Black feminist thinking and practices that draw on Asante’s interest in reconsidering the Akan Adinkra principle of Sankofa not just as a way to reflect on and address the past, but also a practice of care that calls on that which came before, to speculate on otherwise possibilities for the future. Asante examines the Declaration of Independence as an artwork, a performative forum, a study group, a circle, and a community resource that brings together groups of black and womxn of colour to reflect on how the political affects the personal, when considering the continuing impact of historical legacies of slavery and colonialism. Central to this work is re-calling Ama Ata Aidoo’s poem, As Always, a Painful Declaration of Independence from her 1992 collection An Angry Letter in January as a core text in the works process of doing undoing. The poem is the call to which contributors to Asante’s project respond, to develop an artwork that centres their experiences, not just as performers but as creators of their own resources, communities, stories, and agendas.

*Barby Asante is a London-based artist, curator, and researcher.  With a deep interest in black feminism, decolonial methodologies, and what writer and scholar Dr Ebony Coletu describes as descendent epistemology. Asante draws from her Akan heritage, family stories and the histories that have created an African Diaspora to explore the politics of place, space and the ever-present legacies of slavery and colonialism. She is interested in how these legacies persist and inform the realities we live in today and how we undo them through imagining and enacting practices of liberation for otherwise ways of living.  Exploring how we remember and the limits of the archival through the Akan principle of Sankofa, Asante also embeds within her work notions of collective study, countless ways of knowing and dialogical practices that embrace being together and breathing together. She explores this through works and processes using performance, film, collective writing practices, re-enactment and creating spaces for transformation, ritual and healing. Email:* [*info@barbyasante.com*](mailto:info@barbyasante.com)

**Mythologizing the Musical-Theatrical Global South – *Masi Asare***

While the term “global south” has gained currency over the past decade among thinkers and policymakers in economics, political science, and sociology, for example, it is rarely discussed in North American musical theatre study and practice. More than merely a cartography of regions in some ways aligned with areas previously framed as the “Third World,” the concept also usefully activates solidarity among geographically disparate places similarly subject to exploitation by wealthier nations and populations. This paper will present initial findings on a project that seeks to mobilize the organizing principle of the global south to catalyse productive conversations about musical stages and screens beyond the mythic and hegemonic spaces of Broadway, Hollywood, and the West End. Throughout the global south Cuban zarzuelas, South African jazz operas, and a dazzling array of musical comedy films emanating from culture hubs in Mumbai, Cairo, and Mexico City have long thrived alongside imports from New York, Los Angeles, and London. A consideration of the musical-theatrical global south flips the script on longstanding narratives and sounds of exoticization that Broadway-style musicals so often mythologize in shows purporting to represent the global south. The broader themes of this paper are the topic of a special issue of the journal Studies in Musical Theatre co-edited by Masi Asare (Northwestern University, USA) and Emilio Méndez (UNAM, Mexico). Approach to the topic is also informed by my work as a Broadway songwriter, with current work (Monsoon Wedding the Musical) developed in India and recently produced in Qatar.

*MASI ASARE is Assistant Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies at Northwestern University, where she is also affiliated with the Sound Arts and Industries Program. She is a Tony-nominated lyricist whose work includes Paradise Square (Broadway, Chicago) and Monsoon Wedding (Off-Broadway/St. Ann’s Warehouse, Doha/Qatar Creates). As a composer and/or dramatist, she has also been commissioned by Theatre Royal Stratford East, the Lilly Awards, and Marvel. Masi’s voice students have performed on Broadway and around the globe, and her scholarly book Voicing the Possible: Technique, Vocal Sound, and Black Women on the Musical Stage is forthcoming from Duke University Press. She is presently co-editing a special issue of Studies in Musical Theatre on “The Musical-Theatrical Global South.” Masi holds degrees from Harvard and New York University and has published with Concord Theatricals, the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization, Journal of Popular Music Studies, TDR, The Routledge Companion to Musical Theatre, and Performance Matters. Email:* [*masi.asare@northwestern.edu*](mailto:masi.asare@northwestern.edu)

**The Escape of Quetzalcóatl: The Transformation from Theatre Back to Ritual**

**– *Nelya Babynets***

The Escape of Quetzalcóatl (La huida de Quetzalcóatl in Spanish) is a play by the well-known Mexican dramatist Miguel León-Portilla. It explores the myth surrounding the figure of Ce Ácatl Topiltzin Quetzalcóatl, a mythical priest and king of Tula who is revered in Nahuatl culture as a great protector, developer of the arts, and spiritual leader. This play, directed by Monica Raya, was first staged on October 20, 2017, at the Cultural Centre Theatre of the National Autonomous University of Mexico. In this adaptation of Leon-Portilla's play, Monica Raya returned to the origins of Nahuatl culture to explore the unique Mesoamerican understanding of time that recognizes only the present. This is not unlike the emphasis on living in the present moment in Buddhism, coincidentally or not. In my paper, I will briefly analyse the Mesoamerican conception of time and the importance of ritual in ancient Mexican society, which served as a tool to blur the boundaries between reality and performance, unify spectators, and turn them into active participants in sacred celebrations. I argue that Raya's adaptation relies on the image of *tlachialoni*, a mirror that the god Tezcatlipoca used to contemplate everything happening on earth and share those images with his followers during sacred ceremonies. Unlike the common approach to myth, which is intended to interpret human experience, Raya's adaptation is highly sensory: costumes, music, dance, and the sound of nature engage all the senses and invite spectators to experience the flow of time in the present. Thus, I argue that The Escape of Quetzalcóatl transforms from theatre back to ritual in order to offer spectators an authentic cultural experience that is inherent to the Mexican cosmovision and is still widely practiced in many indigenous communities throughout the country.

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**Roland Barthes' "Mythologies" of Performance – *Michael Bachmann***

Many of Roland Barthes’ mythologies, published between 1953 and 1959 (not all collected in the seminal 1957 book version), are dedicated to theatre and performance. Whereas the authors’ theatre criticism of the 1950s remained invested in theatre as a literary institution, the mythologies analyse performance across a wide variety of media and genres: from actors’ publicity photographs to glamour magazines and film, from wrestling to the music hall, and from Racine to Canadian hypnotist Le Grand Robert. This paper revisits Barthes’ mythologies of performance against the wider context of 1950s theatre criticism, arguing that their interplay between myth and demystification allowed for an expanded conceptualization of theatre and performance than was typical at the time.

*Dr Michael Bachmann is Senior Lecturer in Theatre Studies at the School of Culture and Creative Arts, University of Glasgow. He is a theatre and media historian with a focus on the nineteenth and twentieth century and on contemporary European performance. His main interest is in the relationship of theatre and performance to other art forms and institutions (including radio, film, literature, museums/archives, legal discourse and the digital). Recent publications include: "Body and Mask: Dramaturgies of the Face in Roland Barthes" (in: Rethinking Roland Barthes through Performance, ed. H. Wilson and W. Daddario, 2023) and Live Art Data: New Strategies in Theatre Archiving (ed. with A. Wolfsteiner, A. Heinrich, and E. Trachsel, 2021). Email:* [*michael.bachmann@glasgow.ac.uk*](mailto:michael.bachmann@glasgow.ac.uk)

**Dialectics of Myth and Theatre Performances in Nigeria: Femi Osofisan's *Adventure in the Forest of a Thousand Daemons* – *Babatunde Allen Bakare***

The study examines the dialectics of myth and theatrical performances in Nigerian Theatre and Drama, using Femi Osofisan’s *Adventure in the Forest of a Thousand Daemons* as its perspective. The study shows how myths, legendary, folklore and folktale among the Yoruba people, are used to create philosophical ideas, worldviews, and moral standards in the selected Osofisan’s drama. The study concludes that theatrical performances remain potent tools and vehicles to propagate mass sensitization and dissemination of vital information to the general populace. In addition, myths, legends, and folklore, when adequately theatricalized, can build a close relationship between theatre and its audience, so as to provide the society with new and wider intellectual and aesthetic understanding of our collective existence.Key words: Myth, Legends, Theatre, Performance, Folktale, Folklore, Yoruba

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**Legitimizing Theatre in The Post Colony: Six Myths – *Christopher Balme***

Why did/do postcolonial nations need theatre on the Western model? This question can be answered from different perspectives: political, aesthetic, and institutional. This paper attempts the latter. Drawing on neo-institutional theory it will discuss the central concept of “myths of legitimacy” underpinning institutional research since the 1980s. Legitimacy can be defined as a set of beliefs by which collectives not only accept rules and constraints but bring their organizational practices in line with these rules and beliefs. Such myths are central for any institutional framework because they provide the means to engage in public debate with funders, policy makers, academics, and artists. The paper will discuss how such myths were imported during the process of decolonization and adapted for new environments. They merge existing myths with new ones to make theatre “fit for purpose” in the post colony. Historical in orientation, the paper will conclude with remarks on the current situation. It will draw on research gathered in the course of the ERC project “Developing Theatre: Building Expert Networks for Theatre in Emerging Countries after 1945” –

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**Reenacting Mythic Material on The Hungarian Stage – *Katalin Ágnes Bartha***

The Awakening of Árpád by Mihály Vörösmarty was premiered at the opening ceremony of the Hungarian Theatre in Pest in August 1837. Each thematic unit of the prologue play is timeless and suitable for performing cultural memory: critically painted political and social environment in which the first Hungarian theatre building in Pest opens its doors; a divided audience; the role of theatre art in society, the art turned into a national cause by the raised from the dead mythical and country-founder leader Árpád. The play establishes connections between theatre opening, national history and contemporary public discourse, classical dramaturgy inspired by Greek and Roman mythology and everyday characters, medieval allegories, and supernatural and magical figures of European folklore. By making use of Diana Taylor’s concepts of written- and embodied culture, archive and repertoire, the study examines the performative power and impact of the premiere, as well as subsequent 19th and 20th-century festive reenactments and remakes of the play in both Pest and Cluj (1887, 1927, 1937). By considering the scenario of the play as well as the narrative the focus is on how particular traditions have been introduced and challenged in various historical moments. The main question is how theatre as medium develops ways of viewing, living, and recycling the mythic material? In addition to the typical sources of performance the presentation uses sources related to the acting practice of different actor generations, thus leading to those aspects of embodied knowledge which periodically challenge the dominant discourse on theatre.

*Bartha Katalin Ágnes is university lecturer and vice-dean at the Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of Theatre and Film. She earned her first PhD in philology (2007) and the second one in theatre and performance studies (2022) at Babeş-Bolyai University. Between 2007-2018 she was visiting lecturer at the Department of Hungarian Literary Studies, B-BU, and since 2003 she coordinated research projects on 20th century Hungarian minority culture at the László Szabédi Memorial House. She has completed research fellowships in theatre studies at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and the University of Debrecen (Hungary). She published various articles on theatre culture within the Central and Eastern European region and also edited several books dealing with intercultural relations, theatre historiography and literary elites. Her publications include Shakespeare Erdélyben [Shakespeare in Transylvania. The Hungarian reception of Shakespeare’s works in the 19th century], Argumentum, Budapest, 2010; Egy nemzetiségi könyvkiadó a diktatúra évtizedeiben [A Book-Publisher for Minorities in the Decades of Dictatorship (1969-1989)], Polis-ISPMN, 2020. Email:* [*bkagnes@yahoo.com*](mailto:bkagnes@yahoo.com)

**Myth as Method of Enquiry in the Diasporic Performance, Representation, And Futurity: *The Case of Buto/Buto: Bones Are Seeds*, *Alunsina’s Love*, and *Museum of Migration* – Allen Baylosis**

We turn to the methodological conceptualization of migration performance's ethics, politics, and aesthetics by examining myth as a method of migratory enquiry and diasporic study. By responding to the questions: “What is it about myths that seek to exclude or differentiate between races and people? If, as Percy Cohen suggests, myth anchors the present in the past, how might prophesy – as ‘a sort of myth in reverse’ – aid in creating new myths for a desired future?”, we seek to interrogate myth as a portal of critical discourse in performing migration and theatricalizing the lived histories of (im)migrating in a foreign land. In a sense, we unpack the processes of examining displacement, estrangement, and settlement by Filipinos in the diaspora – in particular those who are located in Canada and United Arab Emirates – through an exploratory analysis of three theatrical projects, namely, *Buto/Buto: Bones are Seeds*, *Alunsina’s Love*, and *Museum of Migration* produced by (im)migrants and created by the authors of this paper, as case studies of historiography of community formation, identity (re)making, and human-ecology relationality. We have chosen Canada and UAE as sites of geographical inquiry not just because of their extreme geographical differences (one is filled with snow in winter and the other is covered with sand dunes with almost no precipitation) but due to the flow of Filipinos in these two countries in recent histories. While myths birth stories, our paper contributes in expanding its logic to mobilize multiverse realities along the epistemology embedded in these realities that ritualize modes of thinking about diasporic narratives, migratory, and immigrants’ contending politics with race, gender, and class. In shaping the contours of our discourse, we combine autoethnography, applied theatre, performance studies, and race theory to deliberate analysis on representation, coloniality, and futurity of (im)migrant lives in diaspora in which myth as the centre point of analytic, creative, and ethical enquiry.

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**Theatrical Utterances as Events – *Michael Y. Bennett***

There is a vast field of study about events, but almost without exception, the focus of philosophers and linguists (and all in between, or beyond) is on defining what is an event or how to refer to an event. The two main questions pondered are, 1) how do we describe the ontology of an event? and/or 2) how do we describe and/or understand the language about, or referring to, an event? But what if the utterance of a statement containing a proposition is an event, itself? There exists a presumption, regardless of the naturalness or experimental nature of the language within a play, that the language within a play operates in the same manner that it does in our world. This is not the case, though, in theatre. The artifice of theatre is that the propositional content contained in the play text functions as an extended indexical that directs us/situates us/points to an extended counterfactual condition, which is the fictional world of the play. The reality of theatre, however, is that the utterances of the propositional content in statements contained in the play text function as and is the event of theatre. That is, the words and statements that create and constitute the propositional content of theatrical utterances within in theatre function as subjects, predicates, as modals, etc. within the fictional world of the play. However, outside of the world of the play – to

the audience—the utterances of the propositions contained in theatrical statements function as, and are, the theatrical event, itself.

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**Ibitekerezo: Traditional Creation Myths Through Colonial Lenses and in Resonance with Our Own Familial Myths – *Ramona Benveniste***

Your call for “The Stories We Tell: Myths, Myth Making and Performance” corresponds with our Collective’s engagement with myth, health and oral histories. Since 2018 we have been exploring the recently rediscovered Ibitekerezo, precolonial wisdom tales of the Rwandan oral tradition, in resonance with our personal and intergenerational stories of migration, dislocation, genocide (Rwandan, Israeli, German) and our search for wellbeing. The first set of Ibitekerezo tales recalls the mythical journey of Kigwa, the first Rwandan who slowly wandered the land, mapping it through intermarriage and trade relationships. The land, the lore outlining its stewardship, and the kinship stories between mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, and their powers provided us points of entry. We also draw inspiration from nature’s cyclical power expressing itself through a river’s resilience near our studio and add images, associations, and objects to our process of making piles, which become the basis for our creative work. Introducing myths into this process of gathering has provided us with what we call stop points: moments in our performative telling that spark relatability and possibilities. For this conference we are planning a performative presentation that weaves between myth, story, and an introduction to the creative processes we have developed. We hope to build a story-myth-in-the-making performance presentation that aims to rescript possibilities as a resilience-making proposition; reaching from the Rwandan stories, to the teachings of the river outside our studio, to our own familial tales.

*Ramona Benveniste is a multi-disciplinary artist, researcher, organic farmer, and a mother, developing techniques to invite participation into events that host and foreground belonging. Using elements in nature and architecture, she likens her practice to creating ‘landing sites’, sometimes coordinating the process into co-productions within communities as a place-making engagement. Since 2018, she has been a part of the Seeding Collective exploring healing through performance and oral history. She was a visiting researcher at the SenseLab (Concordia University, Montreal), collaborating and presenting internationally on techniques for social inclusion. She is also a participating member of a food security organization (Santropol Roulant), farming and introducing social engagement and arts-based methods to their programming. Ramona has been designing environments for the public and the workplace, as well as places for learning and for rest. Email:* [*ramona.benveniste@gmail.com*](mailto:ramona.benveniste@gmail.com)

**Historical Drama by Catherine II and Gustav III: Theatre and Myth During Enlightened Absolutism – *Maria Berlova***

Russian Empress Catherine II and Swedish King Gustav III were not only related by being cousins, but also because they both shared status as 18th-century enlightened monarchs, as well as royal playwrights and stage directors who significantly contributed to the development of their respective country’s national theatre. Both monarchs wrote historical plays that featured their ruler-predecessors from bygone epochs as main characters. By re-imagining the past through a prism of the Enlightenment and presenting national heroes skewed to represent their own political views in order to serve current political agenda, both Catherine II and Gustav III fabricated their own political myths. Using Roland Barthes’ notion of how political myths transform history into ideology, I analyse the historical writings of the two monarchs as prime examples of state ideology and their national theatres as Ideological State Apparatuses, in accordance with Louis Althusser’s theory. Because theatre had been used as a school of morals during the Enlightenment and was amplified by the period’s highly visual aesthetic (especially when Catherine’s and Gustav’s historical plays were staged as operas), the impact of their productions cannot be underestimated. These performances not only instilled royalist ideology into beholders, but also prove the potency of political myth based on national history, especially when embodied on a theatrical stage.

*Maria Berlova, an independent scholar, holds two PhDs, from the Russian Academy of Theatre Arts (GITIS, Moscow) and Stockholm University, Sweden. In 2018, Berlova published her book, Theatre of the King. Gustav III and the Formation of the Swedish National Stage in Russian. In 2021, Routledge published Berlova’s second book, Performing Power: The Political Secrets of Gustav III (1771-1792). It focuses on the tight link between theatre and politics during the Enlightenment in Sweden and other European countries. Berlova specializes in 18th and 19th-century European and Russian theatre, as well as theatre perception.*

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**Decoloniality and Performance Practice: A Theoretical Overview – *Rustom Bharucha***

In this introduction to the panel titled ‘Decoloniality and Performance Practice: three case-studies from Brazil’, I will attempt to frame the diverse practices represented by Escola de Teatro (São Paulo), UNICAMP (Campinas) and Transformance Institute (Marabá) within the theoretical discourse on decoloniality, as it has been articulated in the Latin American context. Making a case for how ‘decoloniality’ gets differentiated from ‘decolonization’ at discursive levels in many cultures of the South in Asia and Africa, I will attempt to frame how the legacies of coloniality, race, slavery, and the struggles of indigenous peoples have gained new intensities within the institutional and pedagogical frameworks of performance practice in Brazil. What are the new strategies required by theatre directors and teachers to engage with the contentious debates on decoloniality relating to social inclusion, sexual difference, and larger ecological concerns? Each of the three speakers in this panel (Rodolfo García Vázquez, Veronica Fabrini and Dan Baron Cohen) will contextualize their interventions within specific histories of struggle and experiment. What I hope to provide is a conceptual framework in which transhistorical understandings of decoloniality and decolonization, within and beyond Brazil, may find some common ground across different contexts of performance practice.

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**Of Myths and Men – The Acala Deity and the Danjūrō Family – *Tove Bjoerk***

Japanese performance arts contain ritualistic elements to ward off evil spirits causing illness since ancient times - often performed by the actor enacting a deity. When commercial theatres were established in the urban centres in the 17th century, the performances were staged with the ulterior motive of commercially promoting prominent temples and shrines.The Buddhis deity Acala (Fudō Myōō), possessing the power to save souls from hell, prevent fires, and cure fever sicknesses, soon became the most popular deity on the Kabuki stage in Edo (Tokyo). Kabuki actor Ichikawa Danjūrō I (1660-1704) not only successfully performed the deity, but introduced his son, Danjūrō II (1688-1758) to the Edo audiences as the ‘wish child of Acala.’ Danjūrō II continued the acting of the deity after being cured from a fever sickness in 1734, and his ferocious nirami glare, mimicking the Acala deity’s facial features, were rumoured to possess healing qualities. Later, actors’ prints depicting Danjūrō VII was supposed to protect its carriers from measles, amongst other things.This presentation analyses, how, despite that the generations of Danjūrō actors never claimed to possess any magical powers, the popular press kept promoting this feature, and how this commercially useful connection between the Acala deity and the Danjūrō family is kept alive even today, as Danjūrō XIII’s nirami, performed at his name-taking ceremony at the Kabuki za theatre in Tokyo in November and December 2022, is subconsciously promoted a marker of the end of Covid-19 by the Shochiku Company.

*Tove Bjoerk is an associate professor at Saitama University. Her PhD is in Japanese Literature, and her research focuses on the diary of the Edo Kabuki actor Ichikawa Danjūrō II and the development of the early modern entertainment industry. Her publications include such works as ”The Economic Structure of Edo Kabuki Theatres – Ichikawa Danjûrô II as a Kyôhô Period Manager” in Japonica Humboldtiana (Vol 16, 2013), Annotations and Commentary on the Diary of Ichikawa Danjûrô II (I-III)), Saitama University Review (Faculty of Liberal Arts, Vol. 52-53 (2016-2017) and “Kyōhō period Edo Kabuki as seen in the Diary of Ichikawa Danjūrō II (『二代目市川團十郎の日記にみる享保期江戸歌舞伎』Nidai me Ichikawa Danjūrō no nikki ni miru Kyōhō ki Edo Kabuki (Japanese), Bungaku Tsushin Publishing, 2019)”. Email:* [*bjoerktove@gmail.com*](mailto:bjoerktove@gmail.com)

**Corporate Mythmaking: British Drama Schools and Workplace Training**

**– Jaswinder Blackwell-Pal**

The major expansion of British drama schools in the early 20th century was a response to a theatre in crisis, with existent modes of training no longer able to provide a workforce suitable for an industry seeking greater ‘authenticity’ and realism on stage. These new drama schools became central to the reproduction not only of a professionalized workforce, but also traditions and myths surrounding emotional authenticity and Stanislavskian realism, forms whose dominance they helped to cement. Today, British drama schools face a crisis of their own, as marked by the recent closure of schools including ALRA and Drama Centre. A system of performer training based on the model of the cohesive, knowable subject is increasingly under threat from a number of angles: artistic, financial, and ideological. In response, some drama schools are looking outwards to other industries where this model has appeal. This paper will look at how two major drama schools, RADA and Central School of Speech and Drama, have begun importing their work into the world of corporate training. In these contexts, the skills of professional performers become bound up in corporate mythmaking. Organizations turn towards drama schools in the hopes of enabling employees to create confident professional performances from their ‘inner material’ and seeking to unleash employee ‘authenticity’ via methods originally developed for performers – all in the service of corporate character. This paper will consider the history of these forms of workplace training and suggest that they mark a significant turning point for British actor training.

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**Myths of the Commons: Performing the Village Green – *Julia Boll***

The myth of the village green has occupied, in British theatre and culture, a dual position between the wistful vision of the rural anchored in the public imagination as a nostalgic image of past common life, and a potentially revolutionary space of resistance against capital power relations and homogenisation; a place of non-utilitarian living and whimsical relational politics. As such, it has become a potent undercurrent for artistic impulses and political thinking of both the left and the right. This paper will examine recent examples of this proto-democratic notion of co-constitutive identity in British theatre and public culture. It will address Matt Hartley’s "Here I Belong" (2016), Rory Mullarkey’s "St George and the Dragon" (2017), contemporary productions of mystery cycle plays and their function as community theatre, as well as "The Great British Bake-Off", and consider what they suggest about the political and cultural potency of this myth in the contemporary world.Based on Svetlana Boym's understanding of nostalgia as an idealisation of the past and investment in a utopian future, and drawing on a theory of the commons as proposed by scholars such as George Caffentzis and Silvia Federici, we will analyse these examples of constructed communalism and demonstrate how the myth of the village green imbues the performativity of the commons with conceptual markers of neoliberalism such as "social capital" and "civil society” while also containing the possibilities of its undoing.

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**“But What About Accuracy?”: History and Myth in Jefferson’s Garden, by Timberlake Wertenbaker – *Paola Botham***

In Jefferson’s Garden (2015), British-based dramatist Timberlake Wertenbarker returned thematically to her country of birth, the US, to explore what one reviewer called the great ‘American conundrum’: “how the Founding Fathers could advocate for liberty while holding others in personal bondage” (Tomchick 2018). The play premiered in Watford, a small town north of London, a week before Lin-Manuel Miranda’s acclaimed musical Hamilton opened off-Broadway, reigniting interest in the history of the American Revolution on a global scale. Jefferson’s Garden arrived in Washington D.C. three years later, playing at the Ford’s Theatre (where Abraham Lincoln was assassinated) to a mixed reception.This paper will examine Wertenbaker’s fictionalised retelling of Thomas Jefferson’s betrayal of the ideals behind the revolution in the context of the twenty-first-century British revival of the history play, where mythmaking and demythologisation somehow coexist. With her characteristic penchant for meta theatricality, Wertenbaker creates a collective chorus that interrogates the dramatization of history itself on stage, asking questions such as: “but what about accuracy?” (26). At the same time, I will attempt to place this transatlantic production in the political context of the last decade, when the persistence of racial violence in the US led to an international groundswell of activism.

*Dr Paola Botham (née Sotomayor) is Lecturer in Drama in the Acting department at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University, UK. Her research focuses on modern and contemporary political theatre in Britain, although she has an interest in Latin American drama as well. She is a former convenor of the Political Performances Working Group at IFTR and co-editor of their collection World Political Theatre and Performance: Theories, Histories, Practices (Brill, 2020). She has also published on topics including documentary drama, the contemporary history play and feminist dystopian theatre.*

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**Taylor Sheridan's Relentless Performances of Manifest Destiny – Sara Brady**

Since its premiere in 2018, the five-season narrative series Yellowstone has managed to garner mainstream audiences with record-breaking ratings in the saturated streaming age of television. A fantasy contemporary Western set in Montana, Yellowstone performs a righteous and entitled reboot of Manifest Destiny. Patriarch John Dutton (Kevin Costner) wants to save his home—the massive family ranch—by any means necessary. The Yellowstone ranch borders both the national park and a fictional Native American reservation. Both are admirable neighbours for the Duttons and, for the most part, do not present the greatest threat to the fictional largest ranch in the US. The real antagonists are developers, hedge funds, and billionaires who want to play on and abuse the precious land. Beneath that relatively simple surface the show operates in a continuous loop of whatever works to cover as much literal and figurative ground as possible. The show’s creator, Taylor Sheridan, writes cool, clever characters with sharp tongues and quick wits who tick every box: strong female, fierce native, gentle male, lonely orphan, vengeful sibling, level-headed politician, and on and on. The show is very now, demanding recognition of today’s cowboy, yet worships the past as a rich mythic archive to perform. The land, of course, means everything in Yellowstone, but only a select few are worthy. Viewing the series through a performance studies lens reveals how the story really operates: rather than being about Dutton’s struggle to save home and keep the land, the show instead performs a myth in order to justify this family’s—and by proxy, white settler US Americans’—acquisition and retention of land that is anything but theirs.

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**Between High Hopes and Cynical Concessions: Myths of Moved Mountains in the Performance Art of Zhang Huan and Francis Alÿs – *Flora Brandl***

This paper brings together two contemporary performance artworks through their connection to ancient myth. In 1995, Chinese artist Zhang Huan piled a stack of nude bodies onto the peak of a mountain in the Miaofeng region for his piece "To Add One Meter to an Anonymous Mountain". In 2002, Francis Alÿs enlisted some 500 volunteers to displace a dune of sand in the deserts of Peru, calling his work "When Faith Moves Mountains". Similarly lyrical in tone and soaring in aspiration, these two performances come out of vastly different political contexts: One is created in the immediate aftermath of the Peruvian Civil War by a Mexican-based Belgian artist, the other in the avant-garde artistic circles of the Beijing East Village Group working during post-Tiananmen China. Despite such geographic and contextual distance, the works can be connected through their shared recourse to myth—specifically to the ancient Daoist myth “Yugong Yishan”, about an old man who moved mountains with humble means yet unshakeable will. Recognizing the displacement of the natural landscape as a trope, this paper will probe the myth-making capacities of performance art in the contemporary era. Through their commitment to storytelling, the paper will argue, both artworks straddle the line between a utopian metaphor of collective agency and a concession to the futility of human intervention. It is precisely through this ambiguity, or through their wavering faith in the power of performance, that both works interrogate the possibility of collective action during sustained political crisis.

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**“A Wimp Who Condemns His Fate and Seeks Consolation in Memories.” Playful Practices of Dealing with The Myths of Central European Inter-War Nationalism**

**– Micha Braun**

The experience of WWI shattered many national myths and images of history, not only in Europe. The literature and theatre of the inter-war period were therefore characterised by a wide range of modernist-progressive, but also romantic-reactionary narratives that gave expression to this shaking. Especially in the theatre avant-gardes, a variety of positions were tested that critically questioned the modern myths of capitalism, industrialisation, and emancipation of the bourgeois subject. At the same time, in Central European countries of the former Habsburg Empire, the newly won national sovereignty was consolidated by recourse to diverse local narratives and folkloristic elements. Thus, avant-garde theatre in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary also dealt with such local myths, romantic narratives of the national or ethnic past and, especially, their linguistic sovereignty over the former German-speaking rule. However, as transmedial and body-bound interrogations of a concrete time and place that simultaneously transcended the purely contemporary, they also offered methods of critical reflection and ambiguous meaning-making.Using the specific example of the Prague Liberated Theatre, I will take a closer look at their playful approach to national and local myths of a Bohemian sovereignty as well as the challenges posed by the aggressions of fascism, the world economic crisis and the new encounter with the foreign. The theatrical works of the artist duo Voskovec & Werich, which were influenced both by commedia dell’arte and the latest aesthetic trends of revue and epic theatre, also offer interesting starting points for theatrical approaches to the challenges of our current, increasingly unstable world experience.

*Micha Braun, Dr. phil., is Associate Lecturer at the Institute for Theatre Studies and Academic Coordinator of the Centre of Competence for Theatre (CCT) at Leipzig University. Before that, he was part of the DFG-funded research project “The Theatre of Repetition” (lead by Günther Heeg). Micha earned his MA in Theatre Studies and Political Science in Leipzig, before he went for a while into film production. A four year-stipendiary at the DFG Graduate School “Critical Junctures of Globalisation” got him back to Leipzig, where in 2011 he finished his dissertation on history and storytelling in Peter Greenaway‘s artwork (“In Figuren erzählen”, Bielefeld 2012). His main research areas are strategies and practices of repetition and remembrance in the arts, theatre, and film of the 20th and 21st century with a key focus on Central and Eastern Europe. Since 2019, he is Vice President of the International Brecht Society and was guest editor for the “Brecht Yearbook” 45 & 46 (2020/21). Further publications comprise: „Rekonstruktion und Reenactment. Das Theater der Wiederholung II“(with H. Wölfl, forthcoming); “Die Praxis der/des Echo. Zum Theater des Widerhalls” (Frankfurt, Bern, New York 2015, with V. Darian, J. Bindernagel, and M. Kocur); “Reenacting History: Theater & Geschichte” (Berlin 2014, with G. Heeg, L. Krüger, and H. Schäfer).*

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**Kenyan Rock Art: Protecting the Past, and Facilitating the Future – *Selina Busby***

This paper will explore how digital technology combined with applied theatre was used in 2023 to create a virtual reality "Rock Art Safari" and theatre experience for the children of Korogocho (an informal housing settlement in Nairobi). The project brought together partners from a London University, a UK-based arts and technology company, The Trust for African Rock Art, the National Museum of Nairobi, and locally based drama practitioners in Nairobi. The project focused on capturing, curating, and disseminating immersive digital access to twelve sites across Kenya that showcases Kenya’s various rock art traditions, which are inaccessible to the majority of young Kenyans today. The theatre workshops that accompany the immersive experience focus on how young people in Kenya today may interrupt the stories, myths, and rituals of the past and create their own dramatized myths, stories, and rock art for 2023, while providing an educational experience that explores those of the past, to create their own myths in reverse (Cohen). This paper will theoretically explore this work through de Sousa Santos’ call for an end to the cognitive empire, the epistemologies or ways of knowing, that de Sousa Santos associates with the north, dominate other knowledges, squeezing or purging them out. Epistemologies of the south avow forms of knowledge that “allow the oppressed social groups to represent the world as their own and in their own terms” (de Sousa Santos). The paper will consider how myths of the past and present can be utilised through theatre and how as Applied Theatre practitioners we should be placing epistemologies of the south at the centre of our work if our raison d’etre is focused on social spatial and cognitive justice.

*Prof Selina Busby is an academic and theatre practitioner who makes performances with community groups and a National Teaching Fellow. She is professor of applied and social theatre at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama where she is also the Course Leader for the MA Applied Theatre and Chair of the Research Ethics and Integrity Committee. Her research and practice focus on theatre that invites the possibility of change. She uses participatory and emancipatory research methods, and has worked in prison settings, youth theatres, and with people living in adverse conditions both in the UK and internationally. Her research investigates applied theatre with marginalised communities undertaking in partnerships with theatres, ngos, youth groups and grass roots practitioners. Current projects include work with communities living in informal housing settlements and those living with gender-based violence in India and a cultural heritage project in Kenya archiving African Rock Art in order to create a digital learning resource and drama package for schools in partnership with local practitioners and UK based C&T. Recent publications include Applied Theatre: A Pedagogy of Utopia (2021) Methuen and The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Young People. Co-edited with Kelly Freebody and Charlene Rajendran. (2022), Routledge.*

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**Max Gluckman and the Social Theoretical Underpinnings of Performance Theory – *Pannill Camp***

In the fifty years since performance studies emerged, its origin story has coalesced into a recognizable mythos. In one version of this story, a diverse set of mid-twentieth century ideas and experimental arts gave rise to a powerful insight connecting the social function of embodied culture to the idea of theatrical performance. In another, tidier, version performance studies sprang from the marriage of avant-garde theatre practice and symbolic anthropology. Like any mythos, these stories select a satisfying, coherent principle from a complicated reality. Social theory, especially the Durkheimian tradition, played a formative and underappreciated role in the development of performance studies. The notion that embodied behavior produces social facts, propounded with great influence by Richard Schechner, did not originate suddenly in the mid-twentieth century. Victor Turner’s symbolic anthropology inherited a composite of social theories dominated by Émile Durkheim and including significant engagement with Marxist thought. This aspect of the intellectual history of performance studies involved the transmission of specific techniques—in this case research methods. This paper will examine one such set of portable techniques. Max Gluckman, Victor Turner’s mentor, adapted Durkheimian structural functionalist anthropology to the observable stream of social life in his field work in Zulu South Africa in the 1930s. Here emerged novel research techniques, including the “extended case study,” and analysis of “social situations,” encompassing ceremonies and mundane interactions, within a segregated colonial society. The legacy of these methods includes both the concept of cultural performance, and enduring ways of thinking about performance and social change.

*Pannill Camp is Associate Professor of Drama at Washington University in St. Louis. His book The First Frame: Theatre Space in Enlightenment France received an honorable mention for the ATHE Outstanding Book Award and was short-listed for the Kenshur Prize in eighteenth-century studies. his work has been published in Theatre Journal, The Journal of the History of Ideas, The Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism, and other journals. He is a co-host of On TAP: A Theatre & Performance Studies Podcast.*

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**Myths of the Momentary in Transnational Tea Performance – *Michelle Liu Carriger***

A foundational (if contested) myth of Performance Studies approaches to live art is encapsulated in Peggy Phelan’s (in)famous line from Unmarked: “Performance becomes itself through disappearance” (146). Phelan writes, “Without a copy, live performance plunges into visibility– in a maniacally charged present– and disappears into memory, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control” (148). Popular descriptions of chado (a traditional art practice typically called “Japanese tea ceremony” in English parlance) in the 20th and 21st century use strikingly similar descriptions, touting the uniqueness of each moment in the tea encounter. A beloved phrase that encapsulates Tea’ focus on the fleeting present is ichigo ichie - “one time, one meeting.” In this presentation, I will begin to outline the ideological and artistic stakes of how both “classic performance studies” and “the tradition of Tea” conceive of the primacy of disappearance in their practices. The significant canon of academic responses to Phelan’s brand of performative presence (which, ironically perhaps, can also be called disappearance), including works by Rebecca Schneider, Philip Auslander, Diana Taylor, Jon McKenzie, will provide one platform through which I will examine the specifics of the case of chado.

*Michelle Liu Carriger is an associate professor of Theater and Performance Studies at UCLA. Her first book project focuses on clothing controversy in 19th century Britain and Japan. Her second book project looks at Performance Studies and the Japanese tradition of tea. Her articles on fashion, subjectivity, cultural appropriation have been awarded the Gerald Kahan Prize and the ATHE Outstanding Article Award.*

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**“We’re Gonna Sing It Again”: Dramaturging the Recreation of Myth in *Hadestown***

**– *Kenneth Cerniglia***

Myth offers a bottomless well of mystery, both human and divine, that makes it rich for revisitation across millennia. Anaïs Mitchell’s Tony Award-winning folk-rock musical HADESTOWN reinvents and blends Greek myths “of gods and men” for 21st-century audiences. Its characters of Hermes, Orpheus, Eurydice, Hades, Persephone, and the Fates share traits with their ancient forebears yet seem to exist in the more recent past, ephemeral present, and imminent future. As if tempting insanity by its mere existence, HADESTOWNs “sad song” is destined to be sung again each night, “as if it might turn out this time.” Its familiarity and foreignness approach and retreat simultaneously. Engaging myth on stage, especially through music, briefly anchors mystery – in the body, in time, and in space – for closer examination. This paper interrogates modern theatrical mythmaking through a first-hand account of the dramaturgical challenges and opportunities of bringing HADESTOWN to the stage.

*Ken Cerniglia is a dramaturg, writer, creative consultant, and organizational leader. His dramaturgy is most prominently reflected in the Broadway hits Hadestown (8 Tony Awards, including Best Musical) and Peter and the Starcatcher (5 Tony Awards). During his 16 years with Disney Theatrical, Ken developed over 70 titles for Broadway, touring, international, and licensed productions, including The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Freaky Friday, Aladdin, Newsies, The Little Mermaid, High School Musical, and Tarzan. He adapted several Disney librettos for young performers; conceived and developed Marvel Spotlight plays for teens; and edited Peter and the Starcatcher: The Annotated Broadway Play (2012) and Newsies: Stories of the Unlikely Broadway Hit (2013). Ken’s freelance dramaturgy credits include the new musical the chamber opera Blood Moon (2020 PROTOTYPE Festival, NYC); the new musical Bridges (Berkeley Playhouse); and OLIVERio: A Twist on Dickens (Kennedy Center). Ken is past president of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas (LMDA), co-founder of the American Theatre Archive Project, former convenor of the IFTR Historiography Working Group, and Artistic Director of Two Turns Theatre Company. He serves on the boards of New Light Theater Project and VideoOut and holds a Ph.D. in theatre history and criticism from the University of Washington. Email:* [*ken.cerniglia@gmail.com*](mailto:ken.cerniglia@gmail.com)

**The Storytelling State: Performing Precarity and Precarious Performance-Making in Singapore – *Nien Yuan Cheng***

Singapore is a mythic nation. The teleological Singapore Story ‘from Third World to First’ is the meta-myth underpinning our narratives, charting Singapore’s meteoric rise to economic superpower despite the odds. Over the last decade, a phenomenon I call the storytelling state has emerged, in which bite-sized life stories are proliferated through Singapore’s mediascape. These performances commonly feature the marginalized and the overlooked – their resilience amid precarity. The storytelling state facilitates a way of refiguring The Singapore Story onto bodies, through the affective telling of personal, precarious lives that congeal into normative ways of being and belonging. In this paper, I examine *ubin* (2022), a site-specific performance by Drama Box which tells the stories of precarity among the thirty-odd residents in Singapore’s last island community in Pulau Ubin. Produced in the context of the storytelling state, it overturns many of its conventions. While the storytelling state often engenders latent and insidious effects, the case of *ubin* brings out its potential to open new avenues for speculation and dialogue. Interwoven with my analysis of the performance are my ethnographic observations of its creative process: precarity is not only embedded in the performance’s subject but also in the very making of the work. Such vulnerable entanglements, as this paper argues, is characteristic of Singaporean theatre making. Like Ubin’s residents, however, theatre practitioners in Singapore employ strategies of their own to tell the stories they want to tell.

*CHENG Nien Yuan (she/her) is a Singaporean performance scholar, educator, and dramaturg. She is currently Faculty Early Career Award Fellow at the Singapore University of Technology and Design. Nien’s work involves the politics and poetics of storytelling in the digital age. Her research has been published in Critical Stages, Studies in Theatre and Performance, Oral History Review, and Performance Paradigm. She is a Future Advisory Board member of Performance Studies international. Email:* [*nienyuan\_cheng@sutd.edu.sg*](mailto:nienyuan_cheng@sutd.edu.sg)

**Communication and Visualization Strategies for the Proposals of Scenic Design in Chile – *Pablo Cisternas***

The presentation corresponds to a sub-theme of the research "Theory and practice of stage design in Chile: national concepts and methodologies", financed by the Ministry of Cultures, Arts and Heritage, which delves into the understanding of the creative methodologies used by theatre designers to approach their work, and the way in which they contribute to the realization of theatrical productions.In the framework of the IFTR conference, we will explore typologies of forms used by theatre designers to present and communicate their proposals to the other members of the artistic teams, observing the particularities of the strategies used from visual media (graphic notation, sketches, mood boards, etc.) and verbal media (descriptive dimensions, diagrams, etc.). It also explores how this type of documentation evolves during the process and has an impact on the particular poetics and the reflection established between the different roles of the creative team, in order to achieve the final realization of the work.This study is based on a sample of at least 16 interviews with Chilean creators who work in the areas of stage design, costume design, lighting design and new media; based on the communication practices of their proposals, it is possible to reflect on the dimensions that they emphasize to account for a creative process, considering the textual and visual imaginaries that stand out so that their proposal can be understood, and mark a line of study to be developed materially in the work. In this way, the presentation delves into the construction of meanings given to the practice of stage design, and the codes used to transmit it to fellow artists.

*Pablo Cisternas Alarcón (Santiago, 1984): is a theatre researcher, and he works in different roles in theatre creation. Sociologist, master’s in media arts, with studies in theatre, art history and data visualization, in the University of Chile and The Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. Now, is a master student of Theatre Studies in process creation in the Institut del Teatre of Barcelona. Is a researcher of Millennium Nucleus in Art, Performativity, and Activism (NMAPA), member of the theatre company De Subsuelo, teacher of Theatre Department of University of Chile (DETUCH), and member of The Network of Latin American Performing Arts Studies (REAL). His lines of research include Artistic research methodologies; Analysis of artistic creation processes; Theatre and New Media; Theatre production and Management; and Artivism. Email:* [*pablo.cisternas@uc.cl*](mailto:pablo.cisternas@uc.cl)*, websites:* [*http://pablocisternas.blog/*](http://pablocisternas.blog/)

**Migration, Myths, and Foodways – *Laurie Beth Clark***

Food figures in mythologies across the world, frequently as the “magical” appearance of abundant food with little effort, or the transformative power of specific foods. As communities relocate, they take with them many facets of food culture, not only recipes and methods but also myths (stories) and mythologies (ideologies). Embedded in food’s habitus are a wealth of information about desire, pleasure, nostalgia, optimism, hunger, terror, mourning and loss. The food of the old place can take on mythic proportions, defining cultural identity. Foods eaten “on the road” or foodways adapted to new environments likewise may become entwined with narratives of journey and resettlement. In a world increasingly defined by epic displacements and resilient diasporic placemaking, foodways carry a weight of memory, affect, and self-definition that can function as a mythos of self and others.Arts collaborative Spatula&Barcode propose to host a “performance discussion” in Accra about how migration and food mythologies influence each other, with a specific focus on West African narratives. Pursuing embodied scholarship, the conversation will be held while sharing foods associated with these migrations, bringing together the expertise of scholars, activists, and chefs to think about how food as materiality and as mythology is both imported and exported. What new foodways have been introduced in Ghana with waves of immigration? How have West African foodways traveled the world with historic emigrations (including the forced migrations of the transatlantic slave trade)? What myths have traveled with these foods and how are these foods mythologized?

*Spatula&Barcode creates art which performs place and hospitality. While most projects involve food in some way; their Foodways series has directly explored the movements of food and food culture in locations around the world. After events in Europe, Australia, North and South America, and Asia, Spatula&Barcode’s Foodways series will have its final iterations in Africa in 2023. This proposed event is partnered to a similar event in Johannesburg that has just been confirmed to coincide with the annual conference of Performance Studies international, bringing together the IFTR theme of myths with the PSi theme of mobilities. Spatula&Barcode was founded in 2008 by Laurie Beth Clark and Michael Peterson (faculty in Art, University of Wisconsin) as an extension of their own practices in performance studies and performance making. They have produced projects all over the world, in theatres, museums, soup kitchens, public markets, libraries, universities, think tanks, and back yards. Most recently, they were scholars in residence at De La Salle University in the Philippines, working on hunger action. Among their other strands of work, Spatula&Barcode have a strong track record of making interactive projects in the context of scholarly conferences.*

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**The Myth of Exodus and the Representation of African Asylum Seekers on the Israeli Stage – *Sarit Cofman-Simhon***

A major thematic concern of Israeli theatre is its response to the experience of migration which is part of the collective memory of almost all of its spectators: nearly every Israeli citizen has experienced displacement—if not they themselves, at least through their parents. For Israeli Jews, to tackle migration means triggering both the myth of the Exodus from Egypt and the memory of the devastation of the Holocaust. Universalizing both the founding myth of Exodus, and the Holocaust, artistic activism urges practices of cultural participation. I would like to explore here three cases of representation of African asylum seekers on the Israeli stage.Yaffa Schuster was one of the first theatre directors in Israel to initiate shows about and with asylum seekers. In 2010 she founded the African-Israeli Stage, an NGO with the declared intention of staging a repertoire that, among other issues, portrays the experience of African immigration. Another Israeli theatre director, Chen Alon, together with filmmaker Avi Mograbi, formed the theatre company Holot Legislative Theatre (HLT), with a group of illegal African asylum seekers from Holot (Sands) detention center.The last case I would like to explore invests the stage with a more symbolic rendition of the refugee issue: in 2019, Maya Buenos staged a production about and with asylum seekers: Hof Mivtahim, concerto l'palit ve'tizmoret (Safe Shore, Concerto for Refugee and Orchestra), in collaboration with the Raanana Symphonette Orchestra.

*Dr. Sarit Cofman-Simhon is a theatre researcher interested in performative practices in diverse Jewish languages, communities, and historical periods, and has published extensively on these topics. She is based jointly at the School of Performing Arts, Kibbutzim College, Tel-Aviv and Emunah Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, Jerusalem, where she is Head of Theatre Department. She holds a PhD in Theatre Arts from the University of Minnesota, USA. Her book on Jewish languages in Israeli theatre is forthcoming in Hebrew. Email:* [*saritcofman67@gmail.com*](mailto:saritcofman67@gmail.com)

**Aesthetic Metamorphosis: Iyabo Ogunsola’s Embodiment of Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà**

**– *Funmilola Cole***

The ethereal connection between early Yoruba professional theatre and mysticism culminates in the common perception of the artist as a transcendental being. Hence the actor’s representation of characters, especially those who evince supernatural competencies on stage are erroneously regarded by the spectators as truthful, and the actor is misconstrued as an occultic initiate or possessing otherworldly capabilities. The birth of traditional Yoruba theatre from the cult of the Egungun, and its rebirth in the modern form, emerging from the Church, plagues the profession with ghosts of its religious origin. Akin to other theatrical cultures that have advanced from their origin of sacred ritual, modern Yoruba theatre has also experienced significant transformation beyond its elemental roots of religious rites into professional aesthetic practice. However, there remains a conflation of the contemporary aesthetic practice with its elemental roots. Whereas the association of actors to certain types of roles is common in any theatrical culture, for some actors in Yoruba professional theatre, this ghosting often transcends the actor’s previous performances into their personal lives. Within Carlson’s framework of theatrical déjà vu, this paper explores the spectator’s conflation of Iyabo Ogunsola’s personality with the personage of Efunsetan Aniwura as portrayed in the play by Akinwunmi Isola. Through a juxtaposition of the transcendental competencies, regard for God, and the use of Àṣẹ by Iyabo Ogunsola and the character of Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà this paper accentuates Iyabo Ogunsola’s embodiment of Ẹfúnṣetán Aníwúrà as a purely artistic enterprise.

*Funmi Cole is an Applied Theatre scholar and practitioner who is impassioned about facilitating personal storytelling for human development. She has successfully organized and executed several projects using drama/theatre techniques for the mental and emotional well-being of participants. Funmi Cole has facilitated drama therapy projects with participants of diverse age groups and varying abilities. In her most recent personal storytelling project, she facilitated participants constituted of select University of Toronto’s international students to construct and process their experiences of studying from home via zoom through storytelling. Funmi Cole holds two Bachelor’s Degrees (in Mass Communication and Theatre Arts) from Nigeria, Two Master’s Degrees (in Drama Therapy and Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies) from the United States and Canada, and is currently working on her Ph.D. degree in Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies, University of Toronto. Her Ph.D. research is focused on using playback theatre with first-generation sub-Saharan African immigrants in Toronto. Email:* [*asakecole05@gmail.com*](mailto:asakecole05@gmail.com)

**European Migration, and National Theatre in Argentina (1850-1918): From the Myth of the Promised Land to the Struggles for Legitimation – *Vanesa Cotroneo***

This paper focuses on the processes of mass migration from Europe to Argentina during the second half of the long 19th Century (1850-1918), with a particular interest in the role of theatre makers during the period. My hypothesis proposes that, while theatre in Argentina was still under the official institutional power, the contact with European migrant artists brough the impulse for an independent theatre, merging local and international artists in a new and intercultural scene. Overpopulation and economic crises in Europe, had led to the migrants’ decision of leaving their countries searching for a better future. Simultaneously, projects of Nation building were taking place in the Americas, from North to South. Therefore, the United States of America, and Argentina, were important countries of reception for European migration. In the case of Argentina, different policies — including the Immigration and Colonization Law of 1876 — created the image of a prosperous country, a wished destination for many Europeans. Thus, the myth of the promised land can be understood as a physical and a metaphorical space for overcoming adversities, noting that high expectations on this Latin American territory implied struggles for legitimation, difficulties in the circumstances of arrival, or in the possibilities of working, eventually represented in theatrical plays. Finally, it will be shown that the creation of networks, and different kinds of contacts between local artists and European theatre makers were the right steps toward an alliance for the foundation of a national theatre in the aforementioned South American country.

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**Supernatural Mythologies: Constructing Pseudo-Spiritual Realities Through the Irish Theatrical Tradition – *David Cregan***

Part of the mythos of Ireland has been consistently constructed on the supernatural premise that Ireland is an ancient island of ‘Saints and Scholars’. The landscape is imagined through its patchwork of green and its jagged cliffs majestic trees. These symbolic visuals capture the mystical imagination of citizens and non-citizens alike. This is perhaps most dramatically imagined in the vague historical memory of the bold, powerful, dynamic construct of the ancient Celt: a mythological vision that inspires imitation and visual imagery even today. This paper will trace historical and psychological myths of Ireland in order to establish the construction of aetiological mythologies embodied through the rather short history of the Irish Theatrical tradition. My specific aetiological inquiry is aimed at religious, spiritual, or supernatural representation in dramatic literature. An aetiological myth has as its central aim the desire to explain why a particular reality exist, for example the ubiquitous persistent reality that Ireland is a land naturally inclined toward the spiritual and the academic. In this paper I will explore how in Irish drama the arc of the supernatural has been constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed on stage repeatedly. I will do so by using mythology studies in analyzing the spiritual realities in canonical Irish dramatic narratives in order to reflect the gestation of Irish supernatural mythologies.

*David Cregan is an Associate Professor of Theatre and Associate Dean in the College of Professional Studies at Villanova University. His area of research is Irish dramatic literature. He earned his doctorate from the Samuel Beckett School of Drama at Trinity College in Ireland. He also has an M.A. in Irish Studies from the Catholic University of America, an M.Phil in Irish Theatre and Film from Trinity, and an M.Div. from the Washington Theological Union. David began the Philadelphia Theatre Research Symposium at Villanova University in which he has created an opportunity for new scholars to present their research and publish their work in the areas of theatre and performance. Email:* [*david.cregan@villanova.edu*](mailto:david.cregan@villanova.edu)

**“By George!”: Dragon Play in Ritual Combat – *Tracy C Davis***

When St. George was recognized by the Church in 1415, miracle plays in his honor sprang up across Europe. How did the myth’s plot points—the dragon holds a North African city hostage, a princess is offered in sacrifice, a passing Christian knight subdues the dragon and forces the city to convert—give rise to enactment? This paper addresses the historiography of the myth as a problem of technology allied to artistic enactment. Pictorial renderings of an upstanding St. George proliferate—a small inert beast at his feet—yet these are terrible clues to the performance tradition and threat inherent to the tale. Wooden sculptures of the mounted St. George suggest the equestrian choreography, yet not how to embody a moving dragon. Later remnants provide ideas of an ongoing tradition. A charming 17thC polychrome sculpture at Seine-et-Marne depicts a supine dragon, spear-tip at its throat, looking remarkably like an adult in a dragon outfit. Did this suffice for early modern revels to achieve the ritual expulsion of satanic evil? Imagination can put observation at variance with reality, as with Ducrow’s presentation of the tale at Astley’s Circus (1834): the horsemanship was lavishly praised yet Figaro drew a decidedly dumpy-looking beast. Evidence of operatic dragons (Siegfried and Die Zauberflöte) document technical possibilities yet contrast with the preserved carcass of Snap (a 19thC Norwich dragon) and the ongoing tradition of the Ducasse at Mons, both examples of human manipulation of puppets.

*Tracy C. Davis is Barber Professor of Performing Arts at Northwestern University, USA. Her most recent books are Liberal Lives and Activist Repertoires: Political Performance and Victorian Social Reform, The Routledge Handbook to Theatre and Performance Historiography (co-edited with Peter Marx), and Uncle Tom's Cabins: The Transnational History of America's Most Mutable Book (co-edited with Stefka Mihaylova). The Cambridge Guide to Mixed Methods Research for Theatre and Performance Studies (co-edited with Paul Rae) is forthcoming. She is editor of the monograph series Cambridge Studies in Theatre and Performance Theory (CUP) and co-editor of the monograph series Transnational Theatre Histories (Palgrave). Email:* [*tcdavis@northwestern.edu*](mailto:tcdavis@northwestern.edu)

**Patrice Lumumba – The Person and the Myth on Stage: Who Gets to Perform Lumumba? – *Piet Defraeye***

Casting the role of Patrice Lumumba is not self-evident. In the Chinese cycle Battle Drums on the Equator (1965-66), Lumumba is mythologized through banners and portraits, while there is abundant black-face (and black-skin) for the huge cast. Lumumba impersonator Cameroon-born Samuel Fosso does a remarkable job in his series of photos of black leaders. Conor Cruise O’Brien’s Murderous Angels in Berlin (1971) was the first time a German audience saw a black man on stage. In the same year, its French production, directed by Joan Littlewood, cast Wole Soyinka as Lumumba with linguistic complications.The challenges are numerous. Lumumba became an iconic figure and theatre productions decided not only skin colour, but also physical and age resemblance. Jean Leroy’s Les Funérailles de Monsieur Lumumba (2007) cast a rasta-dreadlocked actor in the role, while the youth branch of New York’s Castillo theatre has four kids (two boys/two girls) cast as Lumumba in a 2009 production of A Season in the Congo (Aimé Césaire). The same play saw West-End actor Chiwetel Ejiofor famously cast as Lumumba in Young Vic’s 2013 production. Casting got complicated in Hamburg’s 1968 production of Césaire’s play (in a translation by Heiner Müller!), where they opted for a white actor in the role of Lumumba. Using archival material and reviews, I will look into how the Lumumba myth has been enacted on stage over the last six decades, and what the repercussions and complications are of the choices that are made on the construction of Lumumba myth.

*Piet DEFRAEYE: (Full) Professor Performance Studies (University of Alberta). A scholar, theatre director, and dramaturg; he researches strategies of stage provocation. He has toured internationally with several productions, including an award-winning production of Evelyn de la Chenelière’s Bashir Lazhar (Edmonton, Antwerp, Munich, Dresden, Innsbruck, Kiev, London, Edinburgh, Kitchener-Waterloo). His recent publications include Brussels 1900 Vienna (Brill, 2021), and (co-edited with Lily Climenhaga) a special issue of Theater (Yale, 51.2.) on Milo Rau. He has published on the Rwandan genocide and is at the apex of an interdisciplinary research project on the figure of Patrice Lumumba, the assassinated first Prime Minister of the Congo, as he appears in cultural discourse and practice. He was a Guest Professor for extensive periods of time at several European universities. Email:* [*defraeye@ualberta.ca*](mailto:defraeye@ualberta.ca)

**Antigone, The Right to a Just Burial, and The Silence of Others – *Maria Delgado***

On 24 October 2019, the remains of Spain’s former dictator Francisco Franco were moved from the Valley of the Fallen where he had been buried in 1975 to the Mingorrubio-El Pardo municipal cemetery, north of Madrid. In considering the reburial within the context of the Greek myth of Antigone as well as the 2018 documentary, ‘The Silence of Others’, I examine issues of mourning and grief within the wider context of Spain’s 2022 Democratic Memory Law and how the latter addresses at institutional level, the injustices and abuses perpetrated by the Nationalist forces (1936-39) and the dictatorship put in place when Franco won the Civil War (1939-75).

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**A New African Mythology: Rewriting Old Myths to Create New Myths for Today in the Work of Hakim Bah – *Heather Denyer***

Achille Mbembe presents the impossible task of Africans to re-define themselves outside of the contexts of European definitions and influences, even while existing according to the terms created by and continually reinforced by the Global North. He provocatively suggests that “the dismembered body of the continent’s history is therefore reconstituted in the light of myth.” This mythology exists through “an attempt […] to locate Africanity and a set of specific cultural characteristics that ethnological research is expected to provide” (Mbembe, p. 255). Contemporary plays from West African countries illustrate the uses of older myths—European and African—to renegotiate realities of today. Wole Soyinka’s The Bacchae connects the Greek myth to Yoruban tradition. Werewere Liking’s Sogolon refocuses the myth of the founder of the Malian Empire to centre on his mother. The retelling of ancient myths maintains traditional stories. Nevertheless, with every retelling, the myths are adapted to address new realities. This paper looks at the work of one of Africa’s most poetic playwrights today: Hakim Bah. Analysing several plays, we can see how he reappropriates myths from Ancient Greece (Ticha-Ticha), Rome (Convulsions), and from his native Guinea (Sur la pelouse), to develop new myths. These myths resonate powerfully with the realities of Africans in the present world. The plays offer profound reflections of African experiences, while rejecting a generalized identity of “Africanity” by shifting to the shared realities that shape individual identities. Mbembe, J.-A. 2022. “African Modes of Self-Writing.” Translated by Steven Randall. Public Culture 14.1 (Winter 2022), 239-273.

*Assistant Professor Dr. Heather Jeanne Denyer teaches world theatres, dramaturgy, and puppetry at California State University, Fullerton. There, she has begun developing a dramaturgical practice in support of the department’s productions, and co-led the Representation, Equity, and Inclusion Committee from 2020-2022. Her research focuses on French-speaking theatres, women, and puppetry in West Africa. Among other things, she has written on #Mêmepaspeur, an African #MeToo movement, on the repatriation of African objects from European museums, and on African women theatre makers. She is the recipient of the Nancy Staub Award for Excellence in Writing. As a translator focused on translating African plays written in French into English, she delivered a keynote on the ethics of translation for the Oregon Society for Translators and Interpreters Conference and was an invited speaker at the Washington University Translation Conference, both in 2022. Her translation of Aristide Tarnagda’s Musika, (published in PAJ in 2019), earned Honorable Mention for the first ever Translation Prize at ASTR. She is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, having served in Cameroon from 2003 to 2005. She has a BA from Northwestern University, an MFA from Columbia University, and a PhD from The Graduate Center, CUNY. Email:* [*hdenyer@fullerton.edu*](mailto:hdenyer@fullerton.edu)

**All Fall Down: Heroification, Jenga, and the Contestation of Selective Myth-Making in Contemporary Actor Training Textbooks – *Paul Edwards***

In her 2009 text About Jenga, Leslie Scott, the game’s inventor, claims its origin in a stacking game played by her family while living in Accra in the 1970s, using a set of wooden blocks purchased in Takoradi. In failing to mention the game’s obvious similarity to the Ghanaian building game Takoru, Scott minimises its cultural heritage, centring herself in a new, simplified mythology (conveniently less open to accusations of cultural misappropriation). These actions provide an example of heroification (Loewen 1995, Kuzmic 1999) a process through which historical events are simplified to centre around the actions and perspective of individual figures, eliding contradictory or alternate perspectives to leave a simplified and often factually inaccurate narrative, popularised and codified through mass production and textual dissemination. This paper uses heroification as a framework through which to explore how narratives surrounding the history and practice of acting techniques are subject to selective myth-making. Specifically, it examines how the origins and evolution of the naturalistic technique of actioning have been heroified by the increasing tendency for UK-based authors and academics to attribute the technique’s origins to individual British practitioners rather than honouring its collaborative history. Through a practical exploration of the manufactured realities of Jenga it also considers the use of crisis as an erasive tool and how heroification, like Scott’s appropriation of Takoru, replaces complexity and diversity with simplicity and homogeneity, disguising doxic belief as epistemic knowledge, all in the service of building a tower which is always and only destined to fall.

*Paul Edwards is a director, educator and postgraduate researcher at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.  Paul initially trained in Birmingham, before working extensively as an actor in Theatre in Education and Theatre for Young Audiences and was a founder member of Hanyong Theatre Company with whom he toured Korea and the UK, and performed at ASSITEJ 2008 in Adelaide and Kijimuna Festa in Okinawa. As a director and educator, Paul specialises in working with emerging artists, community groups and teaching across Further and Higher Education settings, and has taught at RCSSD, Brunel University, Arts Ed, Italia Conti and Buckinghamshire New University. Paul has staged work with the Almeida Theatre, Old Vic, Lyric Hammersmith, Southwark Playhouse and National Youth Theatre. Email:* [*paul.edwards@me.com*](mailto:paul.edwards@me.com)

**Staging Aimé Cesaire's *The Tragedy of King Christophe* with Students: Ideas To Decolonize The University, A Contribution For The Curated Panel Decoloniality And Performance Practice: Three Case-Studies From Brazil – *Veronica Fabrini de Almeida***

Year 2022. How to deal with ethical-racial quotas, assumed in recent years by Brazilian universities – mostly white? What memories do the lands of Campinas (where Unicamp is located) hold, the last city in the country to sign the abolition of slavery? Lands that, before the arrival of the bandeirantes, were inhabited by the Tupi-Guarani people.In 1492, Columbus disembarked in what is now Haiti and, in a few years, the indigenous population was decimated. And others came to prey: Spaniards, French, English. And others came, enslaved, from Guinea, Angola, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, from the Gulf of Benin. All for sugar, to sweeten the palate of the metropolises.In 1804, on January 1, the independence of Haiti was proclaimed, the first Black Republic of the Americas, the first Latin American country to gain independence. Yes, the Haitians defeated Napoleon's army, but colonialism won, and America was built on a huge cemetery. Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité... for whom?Today, descendants of so many genocides, of so many epistemicides, are in classrooms. Black students, indigenous students enter the colonial castle of Brazilian universities. They have the right to retell the story. Staging Aimé Cesaire's play, *The Tragedy of King Christophe*, written in the early 60's, was our strategy. Living in bodies activated by the imaginary, the silenced history of Haiti, listening to the Loás and allowing oneself to be fertilized by other narratives, as the conquest of the imaginary cannot be separated from the conquest of the territory and bodies.

*Actress and director, Bachelor in Performing Arts (1990) and Master in Arts (Directing, 1996) at State University of Campinas (UNICAMP), PhD in Performing Arts at State University of São Paulo, USP (Dramaturgy and Directing, 2000), with a Post-Doctorate in Philosophy (Theatre and Philosophy, 2005/2006) at the University of Lisbon and Associate Full Professor in Body Arts (UNICAMP, 2021). Professor at the Institute of Arts, UNICAMP, since 1991 (effective in 1996), Pedagogical Coordinator of the BA in Performing Arts (2000 to 2005) and Coordinator of the Post-Graduate Program in Arts (2006-2010). Artistic director and actress-researcher at BOA COMPANHIA (1992/2021), Coordinator of ROSA DOS VENTOS (since 2008), a free nucleus for creation, artistic research and community action. Collaborator of the Research Group PINDORAMA/UNICAMP (Brazilian Traditional performances) and IMAM/UFG (Image and Myth in Performing Arts). Co-creator of ENCONTROS ARCANOS, dedicated to the study of the imaginary and its interfaces with the performing arts, anthropology and depth psychology. With an emphasis on Creative Processes, works mainly on the following themes: acting (M. Chekhov), stage dramaturgy, studies of the imaginary, symbolic imagination and material imagination, surrealism, decolonialism and feminist studies. Email:* [*vefabrini@gmail.com*](mailto:vefabrini@gmail.com)

**Myth and Tragedy in Africa - Oedipus at Colonus: #aftersophocles – *Mark Fleishman***

Tragedy as a form arose at a time of political transition in Athens when a gap was opening between the old traditions of the past, defined by myth and heroic figures, and an emergent political system in the present, based on a framework of man-made laws. In his book Tragedy, the Greeks and Us (2019), Simon Critchley argues, following Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, that tragedy was a modern form for the Greeks – “an ancient version of modernity” (44) - that problematised myth and the heroic figures that populate myths. In fact, tragedy renders the heroic a problem. He goes on to suggest that the true subject of tragedy is not the fate of the hero but “the political thought of the democratic city-state” (45).In this paper I will explore these ideas in relation to a production I created with colleagues in early 2023 - Oedipus at Colonus: #aftersophocles. The production is part of the ReTAGS project that aims to reimagine tragedy from a perspective in Africa, in the aftermath of colonialism and apartheid.I argue that the production engages myth in a number of ways, specifically:

* It draws on mythic stories from both the Ancient Greek and African contexts in its quest to deal with the problematic nature of the heroic figure;
* It counters myths of universality associated with classical European texts and their reception;
* It challenges the myth of freedom in the aftermath of the dismantling of discredited systems of control, particularly the myths associated with the transition from apartheid to a democratic dispensation in South Africa.

In this sense, as Critchley puts it, “myth [is] both in tragedy and rejected by it” (14-15).

*Mark Fleishman is Professor of Theatre in the Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies at the University of Cape Town. He is also a co-artistic director of Magnet Theatre, an independent theatre company established in 1987. He has created and directed many performance works for the company that have been performed nationally and internationally over the past 35 years and is involved in development projects in urban townships and rural communities using theatre as a tool for social justice and transformation. His articles have appeared in the South African Theatre Journal, Contemporary Theatre Review and Theatre Research International as well as in numerous edited collections, most recently in The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Politics (2019), International Performance Research: The Unconditional Discipline? (2017), and Magnet Theatre: Three Decades of Making Space (2016). He is editor of Performing Migrancy and Mobility in Africa: Cape of Flows in the Studies in International Performance series at Palgrave (2015) and two special issues of the South African Theatre Journal on Translation & Performance (2019 & 2020) that emerged from a multi-year collaboration with colleagues in the Netherlands and India. He is currently principal investigator on the project Re-imagining Tragedy from Africa and the Global South funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Email:* [*mark.fleishman@uct.ac.za*](mailto:mark.fleishman@uct.ac.za)

**Circus Artists from Africa: At the Crossroads of Race, Cosmopolitanism, And Migration – *Aastha Gandhi***

Migration is perpetual in circus troupes across Global South. More often than not, it is the economic precarity which forces artists to migrate. Among these artist migrants, those from Africa have always had a prominent presence in international circuses but have been limited to certain ethnic presentations. Any critical work on circus artists from Africa is largely absent. In this paper, I trace the networks of circus artists which make a seasonal migration to other regions in the global south and global north, using network theories to trace the reach of these performers and their performance circuit across different geographies. This research encompasses various circus artist troupes from Ethiopia and Kenya which perform in Indian circuses, and also Kenyan troupes that perform within Kenya and travel abroad. I analyse and compare the training received by these groups and the varied repertoire performed in their home grounds, both in India and in Europe. Through the lens of migration and race, and using Harvey Young’s work in this area, I analyse the performance and observe if they reinforce racial representations or if they create a more cosmopolitan identity. This leads to crucial questions about how artists negotiate between different realities of race, class, gender, and nation through their performance. How do you read the performer’s body placed at the binary of a colonial-postcolonial context but performing a very international form? I use a postcolonial critique to examine how the local body gets interspersed into the global form and at what point does it distinctly re-establishes itself to mark its own identity.(This paper is intended to be a part of General Panel- ""Telling Stories of Migration in a Globalized World")

*Dr. Aastha Gandhi holds a Ph.D. in theatre and performance studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and was a Doctoral Fellow at the Temporal Communities Cluster of Excellence program, Freie University, Berlin. Her area of research engages with the circus, networks, laws, and discourses of the performing body. Aastha’s degree in law adds to her research which investigates negotiations of citizenship between state and judiciary and places the circus at the centre of the debate of child labour and animal rights. She currently serves as the Elected Student Member on the Executive Committee of International Federation for Theatre Research, a Member on Academic and Creative Committee for Circus and Its Others and is an editor for the Routledge Historical Resources project on Circus and Sideshow in the Long Nineteenth Century (2024). Dr. Gandhi’s published essays include: From Postcolonial to Neoliberal: Identifying the Other Body in Indian Circus (Performance Matters, 2018), Laws and Marginalized Bodies: Sex Trafficking, Child Labour and Circus as a Site of Negotiation (Gendered Citizenship: Manifestations and Performance, 2017), while forthcoming publications include The Indo-Soviet Circus Exchange amidst the Cold War: a state propaganda or a people’s art form? (Routledge, 2023) and Indian Circus: A melting-pot of migrant artists, performativities, and race (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023). Email:* [*aastha.odc@gmail.com*](mailto:aastha.odc@gmail.com)

**Theatre, Performance and the Myths of Translation – *Avishek Ganguly***

This paper explores the possibilities of thinking translation in and as performance by way of some examples from twentieth century theatre including the work of British playwright David Edgar, Irish playwright Brain Friel, and Nigerian author Wole Soyinka among others. Translation is staged in theatre most frequently in terms of its Judeo-Christian founding mythology of the Tower of Babel and the related myth of its constitutive insufficiency i.e., something is lost in translation, it's a derivative act, always incomplete if not downright impossible. While the originary myth had to do with speaking each other’s language, most contemporary theoretical insights about translation are offered on the basis of reading prose fiction i.e. the novel. Instead, I would argue that an examination of translation vis-a-vis theatre - since it’s a visual-aural form that is not just about the text but also involves gesture, song and movement - challenges some of these dominant assumptions and signals towards its fundamental rethinking as something more expansive, multi-modal, transmedial; thought after this fashion, translation further emerges as an embodied act even as performance becomes translational; theatre thus makes it possible, imperative even, to question the myth of the untranslatable by insisting on incessant even if inadequate translation.

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**Decolonial Theatre in The Urban Territory: The Case of Satyros in Roosevelt Square, São Paulo – *Rodolfo García Vázquez***

My presentation is one of the three case-studies from Brazil of a panel on 'Decoloniality and Performance Practice.' I will focus on my role as a director of avant-garde theatre group Os Satyros which relocated to Roosevelt Square in São Paulo in 2000. The company worked hard with the local community consisting of drug dealers and trans prostitutes. This situation compelled us to change our own theatre approach in dealing with the economic, social and sexual differences of marginalized communities. Educated in a Eurocentric perspective, I was forced to reconsider my beliefs. With the urban transformation of the area, the government invited the company and other collectives to run a public school. SP Escola de Teatro runs 8 regular courses and 20 extension courses for 2000 students yearly. The school is based on three pillars: Paulo Freire, Milton Santos and Fritoj Capra. From Freire, we assumed that learning is an experience in which the students develop the capacity to think and act independently. From Milton Santos, we understood the school as part of a territory in which relations of domination and power happen. From Capra, we assimilated the holistic perspective for a school as a living organism interconnected to its environment. From these experiences, I developed a decolonial view on theatre whose power can only be realized if embedded into the society´s dynamics critically. As a director, I am required to forsake the hierarchical vision of the craft and adopt a decolonial perspective, empowering the artists and the audience.

*Rodolfo García Vázquez is a theatre director and playwright born in São Paulo. In 1989, he founded Os Satyros theatre company with Ivam Cabral. Throughout his career, he directed theatre and film and performed in over 20 countries. Among his main works, there are the Libertine Trilogy, based on Marquis de Sade (Philosophy in the Boudoir, 120 Days of Sodom and Justine), the People Trilogy (Perfect People, Sublime People and Brutal People) and Roberto Zucco (by the French playwright Bernard-Marie Koltès). He was also the co-founder of the largest theatre education school in Latin America, the SP Escola de Teatro. He directed artists from over 25 countries in a digital play via zoom, called The Art of Facing Fear. He has been teaching in European universities in the last decade. Email:* [*garciarodolfo@uol.com.br*](mailto:garciarodolfo@uol.com.br)

**Aesthetics and Myths at Border Crossings: Perspectives from *Deadly Voyage* (1996) – *Francis Gbormittah & Joyce Osei Owusu***

Border crossings, journeys, migration, and displacements have long been subjects of interest in African and diaspora cinemas. The pervasive nature of borders and how they are perceived and experienced makes them spaces of cultural, societal and human contestations. This paper seeks to examine how Deadly Voyage (1996), a film about six African stowaways aboard the cargo ship MC Ruby, produces representations of the effects of Africa’s economic realities and issues of inter-continental freedom of movement by examining aesthetics, myth of frontier spaces, and illegal border crossings. Thus, the film portrays and serves as a good example from which these subjects can be explored. To do this, we draw from discourses around free movement and border crossings and employ a thematic analysis approach. The paper argues that individual experiences of border crossings as they emerge in this film are constrained by institutional, cultural, economic, and societal barriers. The paper further posits that myth and aesthetics elements of frontier spaces are appropriated to heighten the dangers of illegal border crossings. Keywords: Border crossing; Cinema, Illegal migration; Representation; Contestation.

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**New Myths in Old Institutions – *Aneta Glowacka***

My presentation will focus on recent transformations in Poland's institutional theatres. These transformations concern not only the management culture but also the definition of the role of theatre in society; thus, they produce new myths and narratives. They are also closely linked to the critique of patriarchy worldwide and the appreciation of the role of women in society and their methods of cooperation. The #MeToo movement has provoked discussions in Poland about power relations in art institutions (run mainly by men), their hierarchical nature, management models and the conditions of art production. Subsequent call-outs taking place in the pages of newspapers or on social media have made it clear that disclosing violent behaviour (including bullying and harassment) by theatre directors or even art school educators is not an uncommon practice. On the contrary, they are, as it were, part of the system that values outstanding individuals. Much is being said today about the need to move away from the myth of the master artist, who has a privileged position and, thanks to that, very often unlimited power, towards a relationship of equality that values all participants in the creative process. In theatre institutions, models of management other than one-person management are being tested, opting for collective management of the theatre and involving the staff, artists and audiences in the decision-making processes. The aim is to create a socialised, democratic and ecological cultural institution, free of violence and open to young creators and audiences. This is extremely important and at the same time difficult in a country governed by right-wing populists who have been trying to use culture for political purposes.

*PhD in Humanities (2015), professor at the Institute of Culture Studies of the Silesian University in Katowice. Her research interests focus on aesthetic transformations in theatre and drama of the 20th and 21st centuries, theatre criticism and essays, political theatre in Poland, the relationship of theatre with local and Indigenous cultures, and institutional and non-institutional forms of theatre in Poland. She has been the leader of the Trans-Indigena research team since 2020. Since 2022 she has been pursuing a research grant funded by the National Science Centre to study democratisation processes in theatre institutions in Poland. As a theatre critic and publicist, she collaborates with ‘Teatr’ and ‘Didaskalia. Gazeta Teatralna', and 'Theater heute'. She is the author of many articles published in Poland and abroad, and co-editor of collective monographs, including books: El Cuerpo Del Espectador, ed. Carlos Dimeo, Aneta Głowacka (2022). Piszący z ziemi. Teatr indygenny Floyda Favela [Writing Indigenous Theatre from the Ground by Floyd Favel], ed. Aneta Głowacka, Eugenia Sojka (2021). Narracje współczesnego teatru [Writing for the Stage - Narratives of Contemporary Theatre] (2019). Teatr historii lokalnych w Europie Środkowej [Theatre of Local Histories in Central Europe] (2015). Email:* [*aneta.glowacka@us.edu.pl*](mailto:aneta.glowacka@us.edu.pl)

**Performing the Silk Road Imaginaries: Winding Between Myth and Politics**

**– *Milija Gluhovic***

Launched in 2013 and hailed as the largest geoeconomics initiative in history, China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been framed in Chinese official political rhetoric as the ‘revival of the Silk Roads for the 21st Century.' In the process of placing its economic investments and establishing new kinds of political influence, China has created a vast platform for cultural cooperation and production encompassing various regional and national histories, existing regional and geographic alliances, and oceanic spaces and routes. The paper explores the forms and resonances of these social and cultural processes, their historical references and potential for political mobilisation, especially as a growing number of nation states, regions, and institutions begin to engage with the geocultural politics set in place by the 'new Silk Road' imaginaries (Winter 2019; 2022).It sets the scene with Gansu Dance Theatre’s The Legend of Dunhuang, a triumphant tale of honour, love and international friendship, which transports the audience to the height of the Silk Road trade, offering a romanticised, grand narrative of pre-modern globalisation as exchange, trade and cross-cultural encounters. Then it moves across the border to Kazakhstan, to examine the staging of Karel Capek’s Genius Galen by The Uyghur Comedy Musical Theatre in Almaty (2022), in the context of the contemporary Chinese colonization of the Uyghur Muslim minority group in the northwest autonomous region of Xinjiang, an important element in BRI and China’s future (Hayes 2020; Byler 2022). Finally, it examines the fundamental intermixing of Silk Road pasts with Belt and Road futures in the Balkan region, which has become the ‘first entry point’ for China’s flagship projects in Europe, asking which social landscapes, ecological geographies, and cultural imaginaries are shaped by the structures built and economies fostered by China in the Balkans.

*Milija Gluhovic is Reader in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Warwick, UK. His research is in the area of modern and contemporary theatre and performance with published work in the areas of memory studies and psychoanalysis; discourses of European identity, migrations and human rights; religion, secularity, and politics; and international performance research and pedagogy. His work has been published in Modern Drama, Studies in Theatre and Performance, Research in Drama Education, New Polish Perspectives, and Teatron, among other journals. His books include A Theory for Theatre Studies: Memory (Bloomsbury, 2020), Performing European Memories: Trauma, Ethics, Politics (Palgrave, 2013) and co-edited volumes The Oxford Handbook of Politics and Performance (OUP, 2021), International Performance Research Pedagogies: The Unconditional Discipline? (Palgrave, 2018), Performing the Secular: Religion, Representation and Politics (Palgrave, 2017), and Performing the 'New' Europe: Identities, Feelings and Politics in the Eurovision Song Contest (Palgrave, 2013). Currently he leads a collaborative project ‘Performance and Politics on the New Silk Roads,’ funded by the Institute of Advanced Studies at Warwick. He serves as an elected member of the IFTR Executive Committee and as a co-opted member of the EASTAP Executive Committee. He is also the Editor in Chief of Brill’s ‘Themes in Theatre’ book series and serves on the editorial board of the European Journal of Theatre and Performance. Email:* [*m.gluhovic@warwick.ac.uk*](mailto:m.gluhovic@warwick.ac.uk)

**Kimunteatro: Negotiating Indigenous and Western Cosmogonies for a Plurinational Theatre – *Milena Grass***

In 1492 began de Conquest of America by the Spaniard Crown. In 1541, the foundation of Santiago del Nuevo Extremo initiated the colonization of Chile and the war against the Mapuche. Almost 500 years have passed, and the sovereignty of the first nations peoples is still pending. In 2022, the draft of a new Constitution turning Chile into a plurinational state was rejected thus increasing the militarized confrontation in the South part of the country. In this context, I will analyse the work of the intercultural company KIMUNTeatro and its attempt to defy Western canonical theatre traditions by embedding Mapuche culture and imaginary into it. KIMUNTeatro first production (Ñi Pu Tremen - Our Ancestors, 2009; turned into a film documentary, 2022) set a Ruca -Mapuche house- outside an emblematic Cultural Centre in capital city, and small audience was invited to sit around the fire and hear the life stories told by the Mapuche grandmothers. Trewa (2019) deals with state and international corporations’ violence to expropriate and exploit ancestral lands while exploring the possibilities of a blended theatre poetics that looks into a future were overt recognition of past crimes results in a new socio-political pact. Feminist at heart, director Paula González Seguel’s works brings on stage Indigenous and Western cosmogonies and practices, Winka professionally trained performers and Mapuche people side by side thus subverting colonial power relations to propose a plurinational theatre.

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**Atelier Les Voyageurs: Valorising Togolese Oral Tradition Through an International Project of Performing Arts, Social Theatre and Mask Making – *Martina Guerinoni***

In our paper we present the social theatre project "Atelier les Voyageurs" promoted by the voluntary association Oltre i Confini and the theatre collective Centocani (Milan, Italy), in synergy with the associations JED Togo and JED France. The project consists in the development of a stable theatre atelier in the village of Yokélé, on the Togolese plateau. Since 2018, various ensembles of international performing arts professionals, led by the founders of Centocani Collective, have been working with Togolese artists. The atelier takes place in the secondary school of the village, engaging the youths in the process of artistic creation, both as authors and actors. Oral tradition, myths, popular culture and masks (both local and European, both historical and contemporary) are the pillars of the whole process. The artists help the children gather old folktales passed by in their family circle. These stories are then explored, developed and performed by the children themselves with the guidance of the ensemble, donning theatrical masks created by local artisans or by Centocani. The final performances thus developed are held in the Ewe language in an open-air site, preceded by a parade through the village streets, resulting in a festive event for the whole community. We aim to detail how the mix of traditional African arts and social theatre methodologies and techniques can strengthen community ties and kickstart the creation process of a contemporary mythology, valorising on an international scale the cultural practices of West Africa and representing a blueprint for similar future projects.

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**Myth as Method of Enquiry in the Diasporic Performance, Representation, And Futurity: *The Case of Buto/Buto: Bones Are Seeds*, *Alunsina’s Love*, and *Museum of Migration* – *Dennis Gupa & Robert Deguzman***

We turn to methodological conceptualization of the ethics, politics, and the aesthetics of migration performance by examining myth as a method of migratory enquiry and diasporic study. By responding to the questions: “What is it about myths that seek to exclude or differentiate between races and people? If, as Percy Cohen suggests, myth anchors the present in the past, how might prophesy – as ‘a sort of myth in reverse’ – aid in creating new myths for a desired future?”, we seek to interrogate myth as a portal of critical discourse in performing migration and theatricalizing the lived histories of (im)migrating in a foreign land. In a sense, we unpack the processes of examining displacement, estrangement, and settlement by Filipinos in the diaspora – in particular those who are located in Canada and United Arab Emirates – through an exploratory analysis of three theatrical projects, namely, buto/buto: bones are seeds, Alunsina’s Love, and Museum of Migration produced by (im)migrants and created by the authors of this paper, as case studies of historiography of community formation, identity (re)making, and human-ecology relationality. We have chosen Canada and UAE as sites of geographical enquiry not just because of their extreme geographical differences (one is filled with snow in winter and the other is covered with sand dunes with almost no precipitation) but due to the flow of Filipinos in these two countries in recent histories. While myths birth stories, our paper contributes in expanding its logic to mobilize multiverse realities along the epistemology embedded in these realities that ritualize modes of thinking about diasporic narratives and the migratory lived experiences in contending politics with race, gender, and class. In shaping the contours of our discourse, we combine autoethnography, applied theatre, performance studies, and race theory to deliberate analysis on representation, coloniality, and futurity of (im)migrant lives in diaspora in which myth as the centre point of analytic, creative, and ethical enquiry.

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**“So I Go Hunting for Witches.” Myths Of Womanhood in German Contemporary Independent Theatre – *Ulrike Hartung***

This paper makes the immanent connection between working conditions and aesthetics within German contemporary independent theatre a subject of discussion. It specifically highlights female artists and the questions of physical autonomy and integrity, motherhood and related reproductive rights as well as of gender-based discrimination they raise – by and within their work. Receiving the least amount of financial contribution and essentially as short-term, project-based funding for independent theatre makers it is equally important to demonstrate “aesthetic innovation” and “social relevance” of their work. Looking at two concrete examples deriving from different performative aesthetics – music theatre and performance – we would like to trace the extent to which these questions are dealt with on and off stage.

1. In September 2020, the feminist collective She She Pop released “Hexploitation”: “Loosely based on Hollywood”. The production deals with the fear of the ‘hag’ - the old woman and her unproductive body. Around the horror and distorted images of ageing acting divas, the US film industry Hollywood developed a specific horror genre, founded in 1962 by the film "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?". The collective transfers this setting to the stage, makes its own ageing body the object of contemplation and reflection in order to deconstruct the figure and the myth of the witch. In doing so, the collective borrows from the cultural-historical analysis "Caliban and the witch. Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation" (2004) by Silvia Federici. The production also focuses on a critical examination ofs own working conditions in a patriarchal social context: "If I hadn't created a job for myself, I would have disappeared from this stage.”
2. The independent production of “Dein Oxy” (“Your Oxy”) refers to Oxytocin, a natural hormone that manages key aspects of the female (and male) reproductive systems, including labour and delivery and lactation, as well as aspects of human behaviour. The piece was developed and produced collectively by a team of 13 female artists in Hamburg, problematizing the topics of womanhood already mentioned on stage as well as in their production practices. Being what we claim to be postdramatic music theatre it does so by also questioning conventional practices of the female singing voice and women’s physical performance in general. Elaborating on specific feminist methods of music theatre making we will discuss to what extent.

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**Provincializing Europe? The Migratory Aesthetics of Milo Rau’s *Empire* (2016) and *Orestes in Mosul* (2019) – *Janine Hauthal***

With global mobilities increasing and diversifying, mobility, and migration (within and beyond Europe) have become a central theme of artistic production around the globe, giving rise to intercultural and/or transnational performance practices that reflect the changing realities of our lifeworld. This paper concentrates on Milo Rau’s reinvention of the traditional city theatre at the NT Gent (Belgium), whose artistic director he became in 2018, to further explore the complex relation between migration, theatre, and (the ethics of) form. The paper will focus on two of Rau’s productions which address mobility and migration on a European scale. While Empire (2016) serves to introduce and examine the entanglement of ethics and aesthetics in Rau’s theatre that culminated in his Gent manifesto (2018), Orestes in Mosul (2019) is explored as a controversial realisation of the ‘city theatre of the future’ and the ‘global ensemble’ that Rau’s manifest outlined. Both works critically scrutinize Europe’s relations to its ‘Others’ and ‘provincialize Europe’ in the sense of Dipesh Chakrabarty in their use of intercultural adaptation, multilingualism, post-epic narration as well as live and recorded video. The entanglement of documentary and reflexive forms (as evidenced by the intertextual references to Greek classical drama) with transmedial storytelling allows to delineate an ethics of acting and spectating which ultimately reveals that Rau’s theatre is not just about migration but itself migratory as it is ‘anchored in movement, not just of people, but also of media, of images, and of voices’ (Bal 2007, 24).

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**With Myth Against Myth Brecht's Undermining of History Myths in *The Trial of Lucullus* – *Günther Heeg***

Historical myths are booming in the preparation and justification of wars of aggression. What we experienced last year in Ukraine is particularly true of the ideological preparation and execution of the German Wehrmacht's criminal war of aggression. A few weeks after the invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany, Brecht writes the radio play The Trial of Lucullus. In it, Brecht undermines the historical mythical narrative of the civilising effect of warlike conquests that created great empires, which thereby increased the prosperity of all and brought progress in all fields. Against the myth of the glory of the conquerors and the beneficial effect of their conquests, Brecht brings another, religious myth into play: that of the judgment of the dead, such as was found in Egypt. My lecture sets out the practice of the theatrical deconstruction of myth through myth. The focus is on the particularly difficult conditions of writing in exile. In the face of blitzkrieg and the seemingly unstoppable triumphant march of the German Wehrmacht, Brecht finds no authority that could pronounce judgement on this than that of the dead. The dead in the underworld exist in an in-between space. Their precarious transit existence resembles that of the fugitive Brecht. Brecht's theatrical decomposition of the myth can be taken as a model for his migrant writing in war.My presentation can form a panel with the contributions of Micha Braun and Sophia Charlotte Reiser.

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**Young Talent as Legitimizing Myth. Constructing Future Prospects for Theatre Institutions through Education and Promotion – *Benjamin Hoesch***

Around the globe, young talent is summoned to solve the problems of industries and institutions and avert existential dangers to societies. In moments of crisis and decline, the education and promotion of young talent as human resources for a societal branch is not reduced, but rather reinforced. This can be observed very clearly in theatre, which is threatened by economic, representational and political crises in many countries – but responded with more academic degrees, prizes and festivals for young artists, clinging to an institutional future. Young artistic talent (which could never be identified or trained beyond dispute) serves as a crucial legitimizing myth for contemporary theatre in multiple ways: delivering emerging artists with new ideas and styles; proofing the persistent interest of a younger generation in the medium of theatre; upholding for theatre institutions a belief in their own future; securing an oversupply of artistic labour and lowering wages by replacing a fair compensation in the present with future prospects. The myth of young talent in the arts attracts many more students to performing arts careers than theatre industries could ever employ. In many cases, it makes false promises and deems individuals themselves responsible for their failure on a fiercely competitive market. In recent years, however, this undisputed belief in young talent has been challenged by artists themselves, both in political associations and in their stage work, reflecting aesthetically on the social construction and exploitation of talent.My paper aims to instigate a deconstruction of the legitimizing myth of young talent and its many usages in the performing arts, discussing its power effects on those recognized as talents and their resistance in performance.

*Benjamin Hoesch is a researcher at the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies and member of the interdisciplinary nationwide research network „Configurations of Crisis in the Performing Arts“, a group of scholars from theatre, politics and economics with Christopher Balme as their spokesperson, funded by the German Research Society (DFG). Since completing his dissertation on festivals for young artists („Nachwuchsfestivals“), Hoesch is working on institutional change in academic theatre education. Publications include “Young artists, international markets. Legitimizing myths and institutional strategies”, in: Ulrike Garde/John Severn: Theatre and internationalization. Perspectives from Australia, Germany, and beyond, Routledge 2021; „(Non)curating the creative city. From 100 Grad to Performing Arts Festival Berlin,” in: Forum Modernes Theater 32 (1). His own stage work was produced – mostly collectively – at independent as well as municipal and state theatres and toured both nationally and internationally. After presentations as a New Scholar in 2018 and in a joint panel in 2019, this paper is his first contribution to a General Panel at the IFTR. Email:* [*Benjamin.Hoesch@theater.uni-giessen.de*](mailto:Benjamin.Hoesch@theater.uni-giessen.de)

**The Lost Kings of the Theatre? Remembering the Ancient Satyrs in Contemporary Dance and Performance Discourse – *Johanna Hӧrmann***

Myth, theatre and performance are an ancient constellation that I would like to examine more closely in this paper using the figure of the Greek satyr. The satyr embodies a transcultural phenomenon of Greek dance and theatre culture around 500 BC that is almost forgotten today. This hybrid figure, which emerged from the practice of ritual dances, is closely interwoven with myth-making, theatre practices, gendered performance, wildness, cultural memory and rural community. With the rise of a politically and institutionally powerful theatre system in Athens, the satyrs were first introduced as a wild chorus and then – little by little – disappeared from the ancient stage. The significance of the satyr performer for the various cultures of knowledge in Europe and beyond is still little researched in theatre studies as a result of the demonization of the figure in the early modern period. Why is the satyr as a theatrical and mythological being still relevant to us today? I will argue that these ancient non-human performers shed new light on current debates about ancient etymologies and narratives, cultural enactments of 'otherness', marginalised concepts of masculinity and the relationship between humans, animals and other forms of being-in-the-world. In my lecture, I will rethink and discuss the mythological figure of the satyr through a feminist lens in contemporary discourses on theatre, dance, performance, philosophy, pop culture and gender representation.

*Johanna Hörmann is a dance and theatre scholar. From 2018 to 2022 she was a research assistant and doctoral student at the Department of Musicology and Dance Studies at the University of Salzburg. Since October 2022 she has been a member of the Doctoral Programme PLUS "Gendered Body Politics". In addition to her academic endeavours, she is engaged in artistic research projects and works as a dramaturg. She is particularly interested in the connections between myth-making and historiography and explores alternative narratives and marginalised perspectives, both in historical context and in the present. Her doctoral thesis focuses on the Greek satyr and the resonance of this mythological figure in contemporary dance and performance discourses. Email:* [*johanna.hoermann@sbg.ac.at*](mailto:johanna.hoermann@sbg.ac.at)

**Between Ceremony and Entertainment: Urban Theatre in Qing Dynasty Suzhou**

**– Kim Hunter Gordon**

This paper examines how ceremonial and religious functions became intertwined with entertainment in kunqu performance, focusing on urban theatre in Suzhou during the Qianlong, Jiaqing, and Daoguang reigns (1735-1850) of the Qing dynasty. It explores three key aspects of the development of commercial theatre in Suzhou during this period: the hiring of troupes to perform on ceremonial occasions and religious festivals, the interchange of actors to and from the imperial palace in Beijing, and the influence of internal mythologies and superstitions within theatre troupes on their outward repertoire and performance practices. While the function of Chinese theatre has from its very beginnings blurred distinctions between ceremony and entertainment, the case of Qing dynasty Suzhou provides a particularly interesting window through which to observe this dynamic. Furthermore, the intertwining of ceremonial and religious functions with entertainment in Suzhou is visible as part of the inheritance of kunqu performance that has been directly transmitted to the current day by the Chuanxisuo school of perpetuation and the nationalised troupes of the PRC. Finally, I note that a blending of ceremony and entertainment continues to shape new kunqu productions in current times.

*Kim Hunter Gordon is Assistant Professor of Chinese and Performance Studies at Duke Kunshan University, where he teaches performance studies, translation and late imperial Chinese history. Earning his PhD at Royal Holloway, University of London in 2017, he studied the sheng role under Qian Zhenrong at the Jiangsu Kunju Theatre and qu singing practice with Xie Yufeng at Nanjing University. He is the current translator for the Jiangsu troupe and regularly sings on the avocational kunqu circuit in China and beyond. His research examines the historiography of kunqu and the dynamics of embodied practice and archival culture.*

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**Exhibiting Emptiness: An Examination of The Function and Impact of Exhibiting the Abandoned Clothing of Refugees and Migrants in Europe – *Alison Jeffers***

This paper uses as its starting point two art installations, Safe Passage (2016) by Ai Weiwei and Suspended (2017) by Arabella Dorman. The artists who created both pieces make use of abandoned items of clothing found on the shores of islands off the coast of Greece: Dorman exhibits items of clothing and Ai Weiwei uses multiple life jackets. All of these items have been abandoned by refugees or forced migrants, left on these Greek beaches following perilous journeys in small boats across the Mediterranean. Using theories around clothing and costume from theatre studies and combining this with ideas from design theory and museology, I examine these exhibitions to investigate the ways in which artists have made meaning from the empty clothes of refugees and migrants left on the shores of Europe. I will consider how these artists have used the acts of sorting, editing and curating the abandoned clothes of migrants in order to push against dominant narratives which seek to demonise and dehumanise migrants arriving in Europe in recent years. However, I will also ask whether these exhibitions might not also have the opposite effect of further turning spectators against the very subjects that the artists hope to represent in a sympathetic manner. This paper approaches the subject of the conference, myth and mythology, from the perspective of thinking about the mythology of protection in European countries and the ways in which myths around refugees are manipulated to protect privilege.

*Alison Jeffers is a Senior Lecturer in Applied Theatre and Contemporary Performance at the University of Manchester. She has researched and written widely on the subject of theatre and migration focusing on applied theatre and participatory arts practices with groups of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. Her monograph 'Refugees, Theatre and Crisis: Performing Global Identities' was published in 2012 and she has made many contributions to journals and other edited collections on this subject. She is currently working with PhD researcher Ambrose Musiyiwa, in collaboration with Community Arts Northwest, on the work of refugee artists in the UK. Email:* [*alison.jeffers@manchester.ac.uk*](mailto:alison.jeffers@manchester.ac.uk)

**‘Let’s Not Be Like Creon. Let’s Be Like Antigone’: Ecologies of Freedom from the Spirit of Myth and Ritual – *Silvija Jestrovic***

The quote in the title of this paper comes from indigenous actress Kay Sara who plays the lead of Milo Rao’s Antigone in the Amazon (2023). Rao engages indigenous actors and a landless workers activist group in this artist/ activist performance where mythological material turns into allegory of government’s exploitation of the Amazon and its communities’ fight for justice. Theatre de Complicite also turns to adaptation in staging Olga Tokarczuk’s Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead (2023), combining William Blake’s poetry, mythology of the Wolf and the Fury, and astrology – to tackle questions of human will and ethics, animal rights, human, as well as non-human agency. Moreover, in a small Bosnian village of Krusnica, local women use their own bodies in ritualistic, performative sit-ins to stop the building of dams on their local river – they turn into an activist group and become known as ‘The Brave Women of Krusnica’(2017). Through these three case studies, I will argue that the mythological trope of Antigone, either directly evoked or unintentionally echoed, emerges as a figure of ecofeminism. The paper will explore how mythological tropes become utilised in eco-activism and theatrical practices as means of claiming the rights of non-human entities and eco-systems. The notion of worksites of freedom will be used as a conceptual framework that lays bare the intrinsic connection between unfreedoms of natural environments due to extractives practices and the unfreedoms of communities entrenched in inequalities class, ethnicity, race, and gender.

*Silvija Jestrovic is Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Warwick. She is the author of Theatre of Estrangement: Theory, Practice, Ideology (UTP, 2006), Performance, Space, Utopia: Cities of Wars, Cities of Exile (Palgrave, 2012), and The Author Dies Hard (Palgrave 2020).*

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**In the Footsteps of the Macaques: A Roadmap of De/Re-Constructing Anthropocentric Myths through Performing Arts – *Dorothea Mercedes Kaiser***

The overlapping of living spaces of the Macaca Maura (a primate species native to Sulawesi Island of Indonesia) and of the people who live in or travel through the National Forest which the macaques call their home, not only calls for a new approach to explore human’s relationship with the endangered macaques as co-inhabitants of their natural environment but presses for the deconstruction of the myth of an endlessly available and ultimately disposable natural environment which has landed us in the Age of the Anthropocene.As a cooperation between German and Indonesian scholars of performing arts, Indonesian artists, education professionals, and natural scientists from Indonesia, Germany and the UK, the interdisciplinary pilot project “Conservation and Performing Arts” seeks to develop and implement a practical education program by combining methods from life sciences and evolutionary anthropology with approaches and cultural practices from the application-oriented performing arts.Via the use of storytelling, regional and glocal / glocalized theatrical practices and by encouraging the participants to roleplay as scientific researchers, CPA aims to prove that performing arts provide an ideal playground to develop a narrative in which young people view the macaques and their habitat as equal and vital to their own life-world.Since the intense research for this project has exposed us to various interesting myths and stories (e.g., the Cosmology of Bugis, an indigenous cultural group on South-Sulawesi, or ritualistic performances that explore and engage humans in natural phenomena), we would like to use this panel to showcase the ever-growing roadmap of our findings.

*Dorothea Mercedes Kaiser completed a Bachelor's degree in Theatre and Media Studies and American Studies at the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg before finishing up her Master's degree in Theatre Studies Transcultural at the University of Leipzig in 2021. Since March 2021, she has been working as a research assistant at the Centre of Competence for Theatre (CCT) in the BMBF research project "HeimatWeltBühne/HomelandWorldStage", where she deals with concepts and practices of a "theatre by all for all", specifically with amateur theatre as a place and amateur theatre practices as a medium of cultural education. In June 2022 she took up the position of project leader for the “Conservation & Performing Arts” pilot-project at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology Leipzig, linking concepts and methods from the natural and life sciences with approaches and cultural practices from the application-oriented performing arts. Besides her scientific endeavours, she pays the bills by working as a costume tailor and dresser at the Staatstheater Nürnberg and as a peer mentor for young theatre enthusiasts at the Gostner Hoftheater and nourishes her interest in and fascination for Popular Culture, Trash-Theory and -Practice and the Art of Failure (on screen and on stage) in her free time. Email:* [*dkaiser91@googlemail.com*](mailto:dkaiser91@googlemail.com)

***Buke Barane*: A Kurdish Theatrical and Mythological Ritual – *Mobin Khedri***

Buke Barane is a theatrical ritual with mythological roots that is one of the most common rain rituals in Kurdistan. This tradition is carried out by children, particularly adolescent girls, in the form of a mythological drama procession during the rainy seasons of autumn and spring. During this ritual, a crucifix puppet dressed as a Kurdish bride. *Buke Barane* means "rain bride”. Children carry the stick puppet, singing a song. spraying water on the figure, People perform this rite by pinning pins on the puppet's chest and putting eggs in the children’s baskets. The figure is eventually placed in a holy place, such as a mosque, and men pray for rain. Most Kurdish folklore is passed down orally. In addition to library research, field research has been conducted. According to these findings, the origin of this ritual can be traced back to ancient religions of the Zagros region, beginning with Mithraism and merging with Zoroastrianism. There are two major beliefs about the origin of this ritual practice: one is that it was created to ask the god of the skies for rain by offering him a bride, and the other is to pay tribute to Anahita, the queen of the waters. This ritual was not abolished with the rise of Islam, but rather Islamized, with its originality preserved while accepting Islamic elements. Buke Barane is still performed, but its future is in jeopardy of becoming obsolete, and given its theatrical capabilities, it could be revived and recreated as a performance.

*Mobin is a 21-year-old Kurdish student majoring in dramatic literature who lives in Iran. Finding out his passion for art and theatre, he decided to study at The University of Tehran, one of the country's top academic institutions. He has several experiences in theatre and cinema as a performer, director, and author. Having just been 17 years of age, he had already participated in some festivals; an example would be "Lift-Off Global Network First-Time Filmmaker." Entering university, he realized his interest in research and academic articles and proceeded to work on Kurdish culture and its forms of theatre and performance. Kurds are an ethnic group without any organization or government, so he, as a part of his community, is willing to present his society and its characteristics to the world. He claims the practicality of his ideas for his research. Email:* [*mobinxdr@yahoo.com*](mailto:mobinxdr@yahoo.com)

**Identity Formation in The Mythical Realm Of Norse Trolls And Legends—Henrik Ibsen’s Peer Gynt – *Faustina Aba Koomson***

In 1867, Henrik Ibsen’s Peer Gynt retold the story of Per Gynt, a local legend said to have lived in the Gudbrandsdalen valley in Norway at the end of the eighteenth century. This paper aims to show Ibsen’s intriguing blend of the adventures of Per with classical Scandinavian mythical figures like trolls and the Bøyg, to create a narrative framework that performs an ontological evaluation of identity formation at a national and personal level.Politically, nineteenth-century Norway was charged with the urge to create an authentic national identity after centuries of Danish cultural and political subjugation. State-sponsored scholars and artists led this national agenda through the rediscovery and distribution of myths, ballads, folk music and lore. Ibsen satirically participated in this national romantic agenda by retelling the story of Per with the flaws he thought marred the new national identity being fostered. On a personal level, Ibsen equally had doubts about the authenticity of his identity, one marked by irreconcilable dialectical force. He perceived these forces as trolls perpetually at war within himself, thus creating a sense of disharmony in the self. Ultimately, this paper aims to offer a new perspective on the discourse on national and individual identity formation by showing the place of myths and folktales as a metaphoric vehicle for communicating the unconscious on theatrical stages, a trait which allowed Ibsen to perform a double criticism of Norway’s national identity and by extension his own exile identity.

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**From Sacred Rituals to Nationalist Tools: Reinvention of Kashmiri Myths in India**

**– Ayushi Koul**

Kashmir, a Muslim-majority region became a part of India after the signing of the Instrument of Accession by Maharaja Hari Singh under controversial circumstances during the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. The unkept promise of plebiscite of the region based on the will of people, curtailment of democratic and human rights led to an armed struggle in the late 1980s which changed Kashmir into a conflicted land and the most militarized zone in the world. To establish control on the region the Indian state does not solely use military force rather promotes creation of myths about “Akhand Bharat” or United India with Kashmir as an integral part of the Indian state. In my presentation, I will look at two religious events belonging to and celebrated by Kashmiri Pandits, the minority Hindu population of Kashmir which were hijacked and appropriated by the right-wing Hindu political parties of India to assert and re-establish the myth of Kashmir as part of Hindu Rastra or Nation. The two religious annual events, Amarnath Yatra and Zed Athem rooted in the myth of Nagas and Shaivite philosophy held significant religious and cultural associations with the landscape of Kashmir. The current political situation and creation of new myths has now given a different facet to these religious events for re-historicization of the region as part of the Indian identity which this paper will try to understand.

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**Urban Poor and Citizenship in The Works of Anuradha Kapur’s *Nale Wali Ladki***

*–* ***Raman Kumar***

One of the important dimensions of exploring disjunctures between economy, culture and politics that Arjun Appadurai identifies is ethnoscapes, constituted by the mobile landscape of people such as tourists, refugees, immigrants, exiles, laborers, who constantly challenge, contest and shape or get shaped through their intricate networks and relations. In the Indian scenario, the works of select women directors such as Anuradha Kapur, Amal Allana, Maya Rao, Neelam Mansingh and others from urban India, have also delved deeper into the ever evolving urban social and cultural categories intersecting with gender, body and space in complex ways.For the given paper, I am particularly looking into one such category of urban poor through Anuradha Kapur’s *Nale Wali Ladki (The Girl by/of the Drain, 2018*), a devised play, chronicling the ordeals of a mother, Guddo, fighting for justice for her daughter who was raped and thrown in the open drain. Defiant and determined Guddo goes to an extreme to rent out a printing press to expose state and police, thereby igniting the act of civil disobedience. Kapur’s exploration of this individual story is a way to channelize and showcase the struggles of performing citizenship by urban poor. Often designated as Population as Partha Chatterjee points out, the urban poor is seen as model target for the various spheres of administration, management, and policing. My paper challenges this notion through Kapur’s work, where not only urban poor seems to constantly negotiate with different materialities of the city but also continue to make and expand their claim to full citizenship.

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**Illuminating Ecological Issues Using Mythologies: Marisela Treviño Orta’s Somewhere – *Yuko Kurahashi***

Latinx playwrights and their retelling of Greek tragedies and mythology have been well known.  Representative works include Luis Alfaro’s trilogy—*Electricidad, Oedipus el Re*y (2010), and *Mojada*(2013),Caridad Svich’s *Iphigenia Crash* (2004), Carlos Morton’s *La Malinch*e (1995), Cherríe Moraga’s*The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea*(1995), and more (like Marc Pinate’s *Antigone at the Border*(2020))*.*  These writers illuminate contemporary social, cultural, and political issues that their communities have faced/face through their renovated, recolored, and reshaped versions of the histories and mythologies of the ancient Greeks. As Alfaro states, “The Greeks are so primal” that “they get to the essence” and could explain “why we hurt each other” and are unable to forgive. Using the “popularity” of above mentioned ancient Greek tragedy-remix dramaturgy as a larger context, I will discuss a newer play--Marisela Treviño Orta’s *Somewhere* (2020). My encounter with Treviño Orta is through Kent State University School of Theatre and Dance production of *Somewhere* in April 2023. Prior to the production, I read the play and was intrigued by her use of two pairs of siblings who resonate with several siblings in ancient Greek tragedies. One pair—Cassandra and Paris—mention their family including their mother Hecuba. A dystopian play, *Somewhere* addresses environmental destruction and human reactions through six characters who try to find different ways to survive.Rather than faithfully following the plot of an established mythological play as Alfaro, Morton, Svich, and Moraga have often done, Treviño Orta uses mythologies as spices and a gentle reminder of the issues’ universality.  I will examine how Treviño Orta plays with mythologies to highlight her dramaturgical points by referring to such articles as Kristin Idaszak’s “Why Were You Drawn to Write and Create Theatre about Environmental Issues,” Amelia French’s “The Environmental Issue,” and Arden Elizabeth Thomas’s “Poisoning The Mother/Land.”  Capitalizing on the production opportunity, I will also include the staging (set/costume/music) of the KSU production.

*Yuko Kurahashi is a tenured professor of theatre in the School of Theatre and Dance at Kent State University.She is the author of Asian American Culture on Stage: The History of the East West Players (Garland, now Taylor & Francis, 1999), Multicultural Theatre (Kendall/Hunt, 2004 & 2006), and The Interdisciplinary Theatre of Ping Chong (McFarland,2020). Kurahashi was a recipient of the 2021-22 NEA Big Read that allowed, in collaboration with other units including the Wick Poetry Center, to invite Poet Laureate Joy Harjo to Kent State University. Kurahashi is the president of the Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islander Faculty and Staff Alliance and an executive member of the American Association of University Professors-KSU (AAUP-KSU). Email:* [*ykurahas@kent.edu*](mailto:ykurahas@kent.edu)

**Hamlet, Hamilton, Jackson and Marcos: Race, Celebrity and the American Mythology – *Kevin Landis***

The Public Theatre in New York is, arguably, the most widely known theatre in the United States and is sometimes considered a “de-facto national theatre.” With that as a premise, the paper addresses how the Public inscribes the mythology of the American dream within recent works that have transferred to Broadway. By considering the output of the Public as what UN Ambassador Samantha Power considers an exemplar of “soft power,” those productions will be considered through this lens.In 2023, two productions will transfer from the Public to Broadway: "Fat Ham," James Ijames’s Pulitzer Prize winning contemporary retelling of "Hamlet" at a backyard barbeque of a Black family, and the David Byrne musical, "Here Lies Love," that chronicles the life of Imelda Marcos through the lens of American celebrity culture. There are multiple curious similarities in the offerings that the Public presents the broader tourist-centric Broadway houses (including "Hamilton," "Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson" and "Girl from the North Country" in the recent past). The thesis here is that the Public uses American celebrity culture as a tactic for exploration of race in a new-visioning of American mythology. Whether this is deliberate will be explored in interviews with Byrne, Ijames, Saheem Ali (director of "Fat Ham") and Oskar Eustis, the artistic director of the Public Theatre, among others.If the Public is indeed America’s national theatre, the contemporary myths that it creates spark many questions about how America is reflected both to its people, and to the international tourists who flock to Broadway houses.

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**Affective Representations of Trauma. A Review of The Documentary Theatre of Lola Arias – *Javiera Larrain***

The production of Argentina’s Lola Arias has highlighted, during the last decade, her documentary work on the frictions between history, memory and archive. It is from this place of enunciation that "Minefield" (2016) takes place – this is play that explores the marks left by the Falklands war on its surviving soldiers, on the relationship between experience and fiction, and on the myriad forms of representation of memory. Likewise, in her previous plays (“Mi vida después”, "El año en que nací"), Arias explores the trauma of the Argentine and Chilean dictatorships respectively, but from the perspective of the children of those who lived through that history.The present paper aims to investigate the existing relationships between the constitutive configuration of the trauma and the affective condition of the memory in the aforementioned works. Arias articulates a contradictory scene –a spectacle that seeks to represent violence without violence. For this purpose, the gestures and voices of the performers are vital, as are the audiovisual and objectual work of the play.The bodies of the performers are exposed in a disruptive way to the presence of memory and the absence of oblivion; which are characteristics of the logic of the traumatic symptom, which is represented by a halo of everyday life that seeks to permeate the interpreter’s experience of a false monotony (or a silenced trauma). Consequently, Arias confronts different visions of a conflict that persists in historical memory in order to account for the spectacular nature of trauma and post-traumatic memory.

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**Who Steal ‘Our Myth’? Reflection on Truth and Myth Creation in The Theatre**

– ***Bashiru Akande Lasisi***

From the 5th Century BC when western theatre evolved till date, myths have remained a significant source of content creation for theatre practitioners. While many studies have focused on the use of myths in drama and theatre performance, limited attention has been paid to similarities in myths from different locations and its implication on the concept of truth. The objective of this study therefore is to analyse the similarities in myths from different locations with the view to assess their truthfulness or otherwise. The pragmatist approach is adopted to analyse the selected myths from different locations. Creation related myths from Europe, Asia, America and Africa that have been adapted or influenced the content of a drama text were selected and subjected to content and critical analysis using similarity index and ‘truthfulness’ test. Findings showed that social interactions through travels and communication contribute significantly to the spread of myths from one location to the other while oral transmission distorted basic facts including the origin and source of such myths. Myth-making process by dramatists contributed to falsification of facts relating to sources of most myths while similarity in creation-related myths does not respect spatial order. The study concludes that myth is an antipodal to truth and seeking truth from myth is like chasing the shadow. Therefore, we should be more focused on what values myths add to humanity as a collective rather than contesting ownership.

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**Myths of the “Orient”: World Fairs, Nationalism, and Agency – *Esther Lee***

At World Fairs and other theatrical exhibitions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the “Orient” was conjured and staged by impresarios in the likes of P. T. Barnum. It is widely acknowledged that such theatrical representations created stereotypes of Asians that continue to circulate in the twenty-first century. Examples include exotic and even freakish bodies that were gendered and racialized in the name of cross-cultural encounters. What is less known is the extent to which Asian impresarios, financiers, and artists were instrumental in creating and staging exhibitions that conjured the “Orient” and contributed to the creation of myths around Asian cultures and customs. What they staged around the world were subsequently imitated by European and Euro-American theatre producers and performers in plays, musicals, and operas, many of which have been criticized for perpetuating Orientalist stereotypes. The role of Asians in such criticisms are often ignored and excluded in theatre history. In fact, the agency of Asian impresarios, financiers, and artists is not a factor in our current scholarship. The proposed paper examines Kushibiki Yumindo and other Asian impresarios who organized exhibitions of Asia in Europe and the U.S. The paper explores how the rise of colonialism, nationalism, and racial discourse around the world provided a complex and even contradictory context for the creation of myths of the “Orient.”

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**Mythologize the Chinese Opera Body in Migration – *Daphne Lei***

As scientists know that DNA is one of most secured and efficient way to store and transmit information, embodiment is how the mythologized tradition can be sustained from generation to generation. This paper discusses how Chinese opera can be sustained through embodiment in different locations, cultures, and political environment. What the West calls “Chinese opera” is both an “oral and intangible heritage of humanity” defined by UNESCO and an Orientalized artistic Other imagined by the West. Chinese opera—either as an unchangeable tradition or perpetually foreign form is always mythologized by outsiders. This paper challenges such myths by examining two types of migrated Chinese opera: the transplanted jingju from China to Taiwan in 1940s, and the imagined tradition of Chinese opera in Asian American theatre. In Taiwan, the old jingju was reborn as an innovative and alternative art form in the new millennium, embraced by the young generation. Through deconstruction and wild experimentation, artists of Taiwan jingju understand that only the essence—embodiment—is worth saving and the new form continues to thrive because of its “updates.” Only change can preserve the eternal value of the art. The migration of Chinese opera to Asian America is a different story. While the artistic DNA was carried by the actors who migrated to Taiwan, it is the mythologized DNA that migrated into the minds of Asian American playwrights. The embodied DNA is organic but the mythologized one is sterile and lusterless.

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**Fairground Theatre: Between Reality and Myth – *Paula Magalhães***

During the second half of the 19th century and the 20th century early years, funfairs and their entertainments were one of the most sought-after manifestations of popular culture in Lisbon. The historical narratives told us that among the attractions, there was theatre, but only around 1870, when the companies were already following the city’s theatre venues shows. Previous practices provided little subject regarding theatre. We realize, however, that the mountebank’s tradition was praised by an erudite minority. It was described as an historical monument, preserving the tradition of ancient times, with eclectic shows, mixing gymnastic and acrobatic exercises, pantomimes, comic scenes, and songs. The fairground theatre narrative turned out to be between reality and myth. The purpose of myth, according to Levi-Strauss, is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction. Myths are stories we tell ourselves as a culture to banish contradictions and make the world understandable, and therefore habitable. The description of fairground theatre ended up dominated by the discourse of those who recognized it only as a replica of the city's venues, not identifying the practice of mountebanks. According to Roger Chartier, representations are always determined by the interests of the groups that forge them. The perceptions of social reality are not neutral discourses, they produce strategies and practices that tend to impose an authority. Therefore, this paper pretends to relate the speeches to the position of those who use them, identifying how and why one speech ends up prevailing over another.

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**Stories We Tell: Narrating Draupadi in Bharatanatyam – *Nidya Shanthini Manokara***

In the Classical Indian dance form bharatanatyam, a soloist performs a narrative by toggling between different characters, including a narrator who preaches the story’s moral. One of the authors, a trained practitioner, performed the chalameh varnam, where Draupadi, from the Sanskrit epic Mahabharata appears in the disrobing scene, which is used to highlight the benevolence and omnipotence of Lord Krishna. The performative gesture is Draupadi’s outstretched palms as a sign of her devotion to Krishna, who then blesses her with never-ending fabric to protect her modesty. The patriarchal message is conveyed through the established dance lexicon, which includes body postures and mudras (hand gestures). The scene moralizes to Indian women the importance of being subservient and reliant on a male saviour and reduces Draupadi to an agentless devotee. This raises the following questions: How can contemporary bharatanatyam female performers continue to perform a narrative that celebrates patriarchy? Instead of the stories that have been traditionally passed down, what stories should instead have been told? And how might these newer stories be told whilst still adhering to the conventions of bharatnatyam?By examining alternative bharatanatyam stories about Draupadi, including performances by Wandering Women, we consider how these less traditional performances can be viewed as sites of myth-making, so that bharatanatyam can find relevance with the modern woman as a marker of “feminine respectability” (O’Shea 2007). The repurposing of mudras and other theatrical devices, we show, must be understood as metatheatre – a concept that requires deeper investigation (Paillard and Sueli Milanezi 2021).

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**Carnivalizing Silence: Dance in Fatḥiya al-ʿAssāl’s Theatre – *Tiran Manucharyan***

Dance as a performing art form that does not rely on words seems to dictate itself to the Egyptian playwright Fatḥiya al-ʿAssāl’s (1933-2014) theatre. The recurring references to dance in al-ʿAssāl’s plays are in line with the dramatisation of silence the playwright cultivates in her work as the most precise denotation of women’s voiceless state predetermined by patriarchy in a manner that the dramatisation of silence within the context of gender-based hierarchies is hard to describe as allegorical. Often devoid of any hint that it expresses joy for her female characters, dance is imagined by al-ʿAssāl as a medium that enables women to cope with the hardship that they experience in their everyday life. When the words are not allowed or heard by others, women are left with only their body language and movement to express themselves. Considering the frequent uses in Egyptian theatre, specifically in the plays by male playwrights, of dance, such as the zār—a traditional ritual practised in North Africa for exorcising demons—as spaces that allow women to enjoy relative freedom, al-ʿAssāl’s dramatisation of women dancing oppression is striking. These adverse representations of dance by male writers and a female writer suggest that even the most committed attempts by male writers to represent women’s reality are often restricted by the male gaze. In this paper I examine the role of dance in al-ʿAssāl’s play Nisāʾ bi-lā aqniʿa (1975, ‘Women without Masks’). I argue that the playwright interprets dance scenes as spaces that highlight restriction of freedom for women in a manner that paradoxically dance is still a way for them to express what otherwise their silenced state does not allow them to do. If there is a level of liberation in dance as imagined in al-ʿAssāl’s theatre, it is achieved through painful efforts and suffering.

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**A Burning Fascination: Mythical Tales and Creatures, Pyrotechnics and the Power of Fire – *Peter W. Marx***

Official celebrations in the Early Modern period experienced a new high-light in form of the global spread and circulation of fireworks. Not merely the fascination of illuminating the dark sky but rather small scenes and allegorical figures that appeared in the ephemeral form of flickering flames.Be it as part of mock battles, be it in forms of mythical creatures like dragons, monsters, or diabolic beings, fireworks provided an effective appearance and created a momentary sensation of fascination but also of danger and violence. It is also important to acknowledge that those who performed these pyrotechnic scenes were highly skilled specialists whose trade did not only include aesthetic effects but also warfare. Gunners usually doubled as pyrotechnicians for fireworks – and their spectators surely realized the ambivalent nature of their art.Piggybacking on the global circulation of warfare, fireworks and their performers soon constituted a global art – but also a global vocabulary of mythical creatures and scenes that travelled across cultural and political borders easily. The paper tries to sketch this complex situation of a connected history in the triangle of spectacle and sensation, a complex technology that oscillated between the arts and the battlefield, and a mythological vocabulary that fostered this circulation.

*Prof. Dr. Peter W. Marx holds the Chair for Media and Theatre Studies at the University of Cologne. He is also director of the Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung Cologne, one of the largest archives for theatre and performance culture in Germany. His focus of research is theatre historiography, Shakespeare in Performance and the formation of theatre as a cultural practice in the Early Modern Period. In 2018, he published Hamlets Reise nach Deutschland. In 2020, he published his monograph Macht|Spiele: Politisches Theater seit 1919 and edited the volume Dokumente, Pläne, Traumreste, a comprehensive catalogue and essay collection, celebrating the centenary of the Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung. In fall 2020, the Handbook on Theatre and Performance Historiography (co-edited with Tracy C. Davis) was published with Routledge. In 2020, the Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung, together with partners at the DFF Frankfurt/Main and the Filmuniversität Babelsberg, acquired the collection fo Werner Nekes, one of the world’s largest collections of objects and apparatus of Visual Culture since the Early Modern Period. Peter W. Marx received his PhD from Mainz University in 2000. He held a Junior Professorship in Mainz from 2003-2008. He was a Visiting Scholar (Feodor-Lynen-Fellow) at Columbia University in the City of New York and held Visiting Professorships in Vienna, Hildesheim, and at the Freie Universität Berlin. From 2009-2011 he was an Associate Professor for Theatre Studies at the University of Berne (Switzerland).*

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**100% City – a Détournement of the Spectacle of Chorus – *Ljubisa Matic***

Aristotle supposed that a good polis should be 'eusynoptos': its populace, like its territory, should be capable of being taken in at a glance. This presentation will examine contemporary reverberations of the myth of the chorus (both live-performance choral frameworks and the 'choregia' behind them) as a specifically democratic system. It will do so by following Chiara Bottici’s influential work on ‘imaginal politics’ that strives to reinvigorate our weakened capacity to envision and experiment with political alternatives. As its case study, it will analyze the various instances of Rimini Protokoll’s "100% City" (2008, the mere spectacle of pie wedges, bars and curves – relax the subservience to a common flow and prismatically generate multiple coexisting forms of spectatorship/collectivity, thus potentially launching new “distributions of the sensible?”

*Ljubisa Matic is an independent scholar originally hailing from Belgrade, Serbia. He earned an MFA degree in Theatre Directing from the University of Arts in Belgrade and a PhD degree in Theatre and Performance Studies from Stanford University. He taught theatre courses, most recently at University of North Dakota and University of Maine. Email:* [*ljubisamatic@gmail.com*](mailto:ljubisamatic@gmail.com)

**The Reclamation of Stolen Memory Through Myth, Memory and Theatre Making**

**– *Mandla Mbothwe***

As a storyteller I draw my methods, my processes, my themes, spiritual and political concepts, from old and current myths and from the dreams of the waking and sleeping time. My driving purpose has always been to search for healing through processes of making theatre and performance, in collective meaning-making. In my paper presentation I intend to use two of my recent productions, characterised by collective/choral performance, to explore myth and memory in contemporary South African theatre-making. My work has always engaged with real stories that are fast becoming myths and some that have become myths already. The first production, *Ikrele leChiza … the sermon*, is based on a fragment from Homer’s Odyssey and, while based on an old mythical story from elsewhere, it proceeds to engage in new myth-making in search of the herbs that will wake us up or progress society in the dream-like condition of a currently collapsing state. The second production, *Nguvu yaMbengu*, is based on an historical story that is far less known, the story of Enoch Mgijima, the prophet and leader of the Israelites who led his followers into battle against the colonial forces at Bulhoek in May 1921. In the massacre that followed, approximately 200 people were killed and more than 100 injured and arrested. Through recreating his character and the village/chorus together, collectively with the creative team, we excavated the buried narrative, and we recreated the story by creating a mythical world of the prophet as a means of engaging prophecy as reclamation

*Mandla Mbothwe is a senior lecturer at the Centre for Theatre, Dance & Performance Studies at the University of Cape Town. He is an acclaimed South African theatre-maker, a playwright, researcher, director, and teacher. Over the years he has created and presented theatre productions of high quality, which have been staged in South Africa and abroad. He is a Founder and Artistic Director at Mud and Fire Parables; Co-Artistic director at Magnet Theatre; and co-Artistic director at Mbothwe and Doni Collectives. He completed his Masters Degree in Theatre and Performance with distinction at the University of Cape Town. Before returning to academia, he served as Creative Manager at ARTSCAPE Theatre Centre and was artistic director at the Steve Biko Foundation in Qonce (King William’s Town). He has won multiple awards such as the Handspring Puppetry Award for Best Visual Theatre (2010), Fleur du Cap Award with Mark Fleishman and Jennie Reznek for Innovation in Theatre (2010), and Eastern Cape Arts & Culture Award for Outstanding Contribution in Drama (2013). Email:* [*mandla.mbothwe@uct.ac.za*](mailto:mandla.mbothwe@uct.ac.za)

**Ephemeral Monuments to Futures Past: Reading Unboxed Festival 22’s Seemonster Through The 1951 Festival of Britain’s Skylon – *Caoimhe Mader McGuinness***

This paper will examine the coastal installation Seemonster which formed one of the ten projects showcased at the Unboxed Festival UK 22 (informally dubbed the Festival of Brexit) – and arguably one of its most spectacular undertakings. The installation consisted of a mix of gardens, activities and viewing platforms integrated to a decommissioned gas platform transported from the North Sea to the shore of Weston-super-Mare, its expressed purpose being ‘to inspire global conversations about reuse, renewables and the great British weather.’ I will analyse this work of public art in relationship to the general brief of Unboxed in its celebration of British identity but also with regards to its historical predecessor the Skylon which formed the centrepiece of the event that inspired Unboxed, the 1951 Festival of Britain. An upright steel cigar which towered over the Thames, the Skylon was both marvelled at for and derided as an entirely pointless gesture. In this the Skylon offers a productive parallel in light of which to read Seemonster. Indeed, both constructions might be read as interesting metaphors for the discrete political and economic context of national change in which both were created. Both works’ positioning next to bodies of water point to Britain’s shifting imperial and mercantile past, but it is also their monumental yet fully ephemeral existences which might further speak to the contradictions at play in seeking to harness consensual contemporary grand-scale artistic evocations of Britishness.

*I am a senior lecturer in drama at Kingston and also teach on the English Literature MA at Kingston. My research and publications look at the politics of reception (spectatorship, criticism and institutional identities) of contemporary theatre and live art through a Marxist, feminist, queer and post-colonial lens. I broadly focus on the specific histories of Western imperialism and its liberal afterlives as these apply to theatrical production and reception in contemporary Britain and France. Further interests are social reproduction in feminist performance, the 1951 Festival of Britain and Marxist approaches to theatre and performance. Email:* [*c.madermcguinness@kingston.ac.uk*](mailto:c.madermcguinness@kingston.ac.uk)

**Telling Stories of Political Exile: On the Guilt of Compassion and Anti-War Protest**

**– Yana Meerzon**

In her 2023 article “Russian Political Exiles: The Challenges of Forging an Anti-War Movement”, Gulnaz Sibgatullina summarized challenges Russian liberal opposition faces since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Not only Russian political exile “remains divided across political, ethnic, and generational lines”; it also confronts ethical questions of their ethical right to speak on behalf of those who remained in the country (Sibgatullina 2023). The toll of the war weighs heavy on those artists political exiles and activists who fled their country in fear for their personal safety, due to the loss of employment, and overbearing censorship. In exile, they rushed to document, share, and reflect upon on the impact of Putin’s war in Ukraine, which ended the history of post-Soviet Russia and created a new world, in which compromise and conformism remain the only choices for survival. Questions of compassion, unredeemable guilt, loss and trauma of war filled pages of their new plays and stages of their productions. These works marked the Russian political exile today as a unified movement of resistance and protest, something that the post-Soviet migration have not yet seen or produced before. To illustrate this statement, I examine three Russian theatre works - Ester Bal’s [Asya Voloshina]s Crime/#AlwaysArmUkraine (Israel), Nana Greenstein’s Lost Man (Yerevan), and Anastasija Patlay’s In a Glass Jar. Voices from Russia (Spain) – all produced in the year of 2022, in the gesture of anti-war protest against Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

*Yana Meerzon is Professor of Theatre Studies at the University of Ottawa. She is the author of three books, most recently Performance, Subjectivity, Cosmopolitanism (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). She co-edited nine collections of articles, including Handbook on Theatre and Migration (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023; with Steve Wilmer). Her current research project is entitled ‘Between Migration and Neo-Nationalism(s): Performing the European Nation — Playing a Foreigner,’ which has been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Email:* [*ymeerzon@uottawa.ca*](mailto:ymeerzon@uottawa.ca)

**Migrant Myths: Refugees and the Golden Venture – *Sean Metzger***

This essay examines the myth of a better future articulated through Chinese refugees to the US. The specific focus is on the case of the Golden Venture, a cargo ship that ran aground off the coast of NY carrying several hundred Chinese migrants. The legal battles that followed rearticulated the basis from which political asylum could be sought. The paper examines Peter Cohn’s 2006 documentary Golden Venture as well as relevant case law such as Yang v. Reno and You Yi Yang v. Maugans in relation to the UN’s Palermo Protocols. Such discursive and cinematic performances lead to the acts of the migrants themselves who created origami sculptures during their detainment; these materials then circulated as museum installations used for publicity and to demonstrate the value of these Chinese refugees to US legislators.The case study is articulated in relation to questions about refugees motivated by repressive regimes, with a focus on the biopolitical management of sexuality. The would-be asylees petitioned in part based on China’s one-child policy. The relation of both China and the US to the situation of the Golden Venture produce what I call ambivalent states. The essay thus forms part of a larger book project that brings together critical refugee studies and performance studies. How and to what effects are refugee lives staged, both literally in terms of camps and detainment centers and artistically in terms of theatre and other representational means? In what ways is the refugee performative?

*Sean Metzger is Professor and Associate Dean for Faculty and Students in the UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television. The author of Chinese Looks: Fashion, Performance, Race (2014) and The Chinese Atlantic: Seascapes and the Theatricality of Globalization (2020), Metzger currently co-edits Theatre Journal. His other co-edited works include Embodying Asian/American Sexualities (2009); Futures of Chinese Cinema: Technologies and Temporalities in Chinese Screen Cultures (2009); Race, Space, Place: The Making and Unmaking of Freedoms in the Atlantic World (2009); Islands, Images, Imaginaries (2014); Awkward Stages: Plays about Growing Up Gay (2015); Expressions of Asian Caribbeanness (2019); and Transient Performance (2020). His a past president of PSi. Email:* [*smetzger@tft.ucla.edu*](mailto:smetzger@tft.ucla.edu)

**Animidzimu Now! – Rehearsing New Mythologies from Yesterday’s Paradise**

**– Neo Muyanga**

The web platform, Afropolis.org, founded by Lagos-based choreographer and thinker, Qudus Onikeku, launched into cyberspace in July of 2020 by posting a cautionary message: ‘In this age of animism, data is everything’. The dramatic statement described how trends in virtual and augmented reality, algorithmic science and artificial intelligence signal a new global animism which possesses the power to ‘see what isn’t there, both in space and time’. (2020) By skilfully deploying the language of the new tech paradigm – a hacker is equated to a witch; algorithms are likened to occult initiations; and the babalawo or iyalawo (traditional healer) is styled as a ‘data security agent’ - Afropolis deftly exposes some of the new programming mythologies governing the African psyche today while simultaneously superimposing over them aspects of ancient belief systems. If we take ‘myth’ to signify the stories of who we are, and ‘logos’ to signify meaning then, I argue, the missive by Afropolis broadcasts key features of the new mythology from an African perspective. In this paper I set out to interrogate what Afropolis postulates in contrast to findings made during research I conducted in Cape Town, South Africa, during 2022-2023 involving a cohort of young theatre makers. I consider the views of my interlocutors concerning new myths and scenarios encountered in the Greek tragedies of Sophocles, Euripides and Soyinka and examine how these texts reflect struggles that haunt us today. Keywords: Animism, Technology, Music Theatre, Greek Tragedy, African Adaptation.

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**Unleashing the *Homo Ludens*: The Transformative Power of Identity Cabaret**

**– Jüri Nael**

This presentation explores the transformative power of identity cabaret in the context of performing arts education. Identity cabaret is a playful and politically charged solo performance format that borrows elements from drag shows. Since 2013, I have used this format with undergraduate and postgraduate performing arts students in the UK and Estonia, challenging them to question and challenge their own understandings and definitions of themselves by literally dragging their identities to the extremes. The presentation examines the reasons and mechanisms that make identity cabaret so effective in enabling young performers to access and release their inner beasts, fairies, demons, and guardian angels. Through carefully designed cabaret personas, lip-syncing (ritual), extensive use of makeup and costume (mask), students can find, (re)discover and tell stories that go beyond their current memories, experiences, societal expectations, and (re)discover the territories of a playful human, homo ludens. The power of identity cabaret in promoting self-discovery, creativity, and self-expression, as well as its ability to facilitate social and political critique, will be analysed. The presentation also discusses the practicalities of implementing identity cabaret in performing arts education, including its potential to foster a sense of community among students and to provide a platform for marginalised voices. Ultimately, the presentation argues that identity cabaret is a powerful tool for promoting personal growth, artistic development, and social change. Its incorporation into performing arts education can have a transformative impact on young performers, providing them with a space to explore their identities and tell their stories in a playful and politically charged manner.

*Jüri Nael is a leading professor of contemporary performance at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, where he is running the international Master of Arts program in Contemporary Physical Performance Making (CPPM) and teaching movement and physical performance to BA Acting students. Professor Nael's academic background includes a Bachelor's degree in Choreography from the Viljandi Culture Academy. He holds an MA in European Dance Theatre Practice from Trinity Laban in London, an MA in Text and Performance Studies from King's College London, an MA in Theatre Studies from the University of Amsterdam, and an MA in International Performance Research from the University of Warwick. Professor Nael's interests are broad and diverse, with a focus on the psychophysical training of performers and actors in the context of higher education. As a visiting professor, he is teaching at many renowned institutions around the world, including the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) and the Royal Central School for Speech and Drama (RCSSD) in London, Jacksonville University in Florida, USA, and the University of Tampere in Finland. As a choreographer and movement director he has worked on over 100 international productions in some of the most prestigious theatres in Europe, including Burg Theatre in Austria, Thalia Theatre in Germany, the Royal Shakespeare Company in the UK, Bolshoi Drama Theatre in Russia, Helsinki City Theatre in Finland, Theatre NO99 in Estonia, and Kaunas State Music Theatre in Lithuania. Email:* [*juri.nael@eamt.ee*](mailto:juri.nael@eamt.ee)

**Stories to Think and Create With: Reclaiming Archival “Collections” of Ancient Rwandan Creation Myths, in Resonance with Our Own Stories. A Performative Presentation by The Three-Member Seedings Collective (Montreal) – *Lisa Ndejuru***

“The Stories We Tell: Myths, Myth Making and Performance”, aligns with our ongoing work with myth, being-at-home in the world, and oral histories. Since 2018 our three members have been exploring Ibitekerezo – Rwandan precolonial wisdom tales – in resonance with our diverse intergenerational stories of migration, dislocation and genocide (Rwandan, Israeli, German), and our search for wellbeing. Among the hundreds of Ibitekerezo are accounts of the mythical journey of Kigwa, the first Rwandan. He wandered the land, inhabiting it through alliances and intermarriages. We discover our entry points in the description of intimate relationships to an existing physical environment, in traces of its careful stewardship, and in the many stories of the archetypal female powers of mothers, daughters, sisters and wives. In the spirit of traditional Rwandan ontology – kuba, kubaho, kubana (the qualities of being, being in space and time and being in relation with others) – we draw inspiration from the cyclical power of the Yamaska River near our studio in rural Quebec and add images, associations and objects to our process of “making piles”. In weaving myths and stories into our process of gathering, new opportunities for stop points emerge – moments in our performative telling that spark relatability and creative possibilities. Our performative presentation will navigate between myth, story and an introduction to the research-creation processes we have developed. We will awaken a proposition for resilience and care, spanning the Rwandan tales, the teachings of the river, and our own familial histories.

*Lisa Ndejuru PhD is an artist, multidisciplinary scholar, licenced psychotherapist, and mother who explores silences, genocide and dislocation through research-creation, storytelling and play. Since 2018, she has been a part of the Seedings Collective, working to activate archives of Rwandan precolonial tales. In 2019, they created and performed Une maison en carton (Festival du Jamais lu, Montreal) and Seeding Futures (Ubumuntu festival, Kigali). Here is a video link to a 2022 telling of the story of Kigwa for Postmarginal’s Arts council of Canada funded project The Center Cannot Hold. A dual citizen of Rwanda and Canada, Lisa also works with community-based, non-medicalized approaches to wellness and resilience using improvisational theatre and other arts-based methods. She fosters international capacity-building and collaborations related to Afro positive arts-in-health research and practice. She currently is the principal investigator of a 3-year community-university research project funded by the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, entitled Centering Community Knowledges: Fostering Black Wellness in Montreal. Email:* [*lndejuru@gmail.com*](mailto:lndejuru@gmail.com)

**Ibitekerezo: Traditional Creation Myths Through Colonial Lenses and in Resonance with Our Own Familial Myths – *Ursula Neuerberg-Denzer***

Your call for “The Stories We Tell: Myths, Myth Making and Performance” corresponds with our Collective’s engagement with myth, health and oral histories. Since 2018 we have been exploring the recently rediscovered Ibitekerezo, precolonial wisdom tales of the Rwandan oral tradition, in resonance with our personal and intergenerational stories of migration, dislocation, genocide (Rwandan, Israeli, German) and our search for wellbeing. The first set of Ibitekerezo tales recalls the mythical journey of Kigwa, the first Rwandan who slowly wandered the land, mapping it through intermarriage and trade relationships. The land, the lore outlining its stewardship, and the kinship stories between mothers, daughters, sisters, wives and their powers provided us points of entry. We also draw inspiration from nature’s cyclical power expressing itself through a river’s resilience near our studio and add images, associations and objects to our process of making piles, which become the basis for our creative work. Introducing myths into this process of gathering has provided us with what we call stop points: moments in our performative telling that spark relatability and possibilities. For this conference we are planning a performative presentation that weaves between myth, story and an introduction to the creative processes we have developed. We hope to build a story-myth-in-the-making performance presentation that aims to rescript possibilities as a resilience making proposition; reaching from the Rwandan stories to the teachings of the river outside our studio, to our own familial tales.

*Ursula Neuerburg, Ph.D., from Cologne, Germany, educated in Berlin (FU, Fischer-Lichte) and New York (NYU, Performance Studies), is Associate Professor of Theatre at Concordia University, Montreal. In her research and practice she attempts to connect her commitment to ecology, de-colonization, history, and feminism with her work as member of the Seedings Collective (Rwanda, Israel, Germany), in the Somatic Engagement Working Group (Canadian Association of Theatre Research, co-hosted with Christine Bellerose), and the performance of space and place, particularly in the meeting of Indigenous and non-indigenous world views. The latter through a long-term collaboration with Floyd Favel, Cree theatre maker and traditionalist from Poundmaker SK. As a performer /director she co-founded two companies, Theater Zerbrochene Fenster in Berlin, and Richard Schechner's East Coast Artist, NY. She is a certified Rasaboxes instructor, and volunteers regularly at the Bread & Puppet Theater. Aside from her practice as performer, director and collaborator, she has published widely in English and German.* [*https://dwellings-performance.net/*](https://dwellings-performance.net/) *Email:* [*ursula4711@yahoo.com*](mailto:ursula4711@yahoo.com)

**Echoing Untold Stories: Mythicising and Demythicising Criteria for Promotion for Performing Arts Educators in Ghana – *Promise Nyatuame***

Academic promotion in the performing arts reflects the nature and quality of previous works done. This affords the basis for anticipation of continued success in employment (Sox & Schuster, 2020). Promotion of Performing Arts Educators (PAEs) in Ghanaian public universities has come a long way. Until recently, the specified criteria for promoting PAEs in Ghana appears to have relied mostly on the traditional mode of assessment, privileging only peer reviewed papers at the expense of creative activities. However, institutional policies regarding best practices for promotion of PAEs take into consideration traditional and non-traditional criteria for assessment, where evidence of creative activities is recognised (Pellegrino, Conway & Millican, 2018). A ‘myth’ is thus generated against the use of creative scholarly activities for promotion in the Ghanaian academy. Therefore, we explored existing criteria for promotion of PAEs in Ghanaian public universities. Using institutional theory, purposive and snowball techniques, 15 participants were sampled for interviews from University of Ghana (UG), University of Cape Coast (UCC), University of Education, Winneba (UEW), and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). Policy documents on academic promotion criteria for the selected universities were also reviewed through content analysis. Findings revealed that UG has recently made attempts to recognise creative activities for promotion, whiles UCC, KNUST, and UEW do not. Considerations for rethinking criteria for promotion of faculty to be consistent with best practices, and capacity building workshops, are recommended to improve promotion criteria and institutional policy, research, and practices in performing arts education in Ghana.

*Promise Nyatepeh Nyatuame (PhD) is currently a Lecturer in the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. He is a Fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) for the African Humanities Program (AHP), and CCNY of ASA. He is also a development communicator. His areas of research include Theatre Education, Applied Theatre, and Theatre for Development. He has published in international journals and presented research papers at seminars, local and international conferences. He is a B. A. Theatre Studies, an MFA Theatre Arts, and a PhD Arts and Culture graduate of University of Cape Coast, University of Ghana, Legon, and University of Education, Winneba, respectively, in Ghana. His Doctoral Thesis explored Theatre for Development Education and Philosophy of Art in Ghana. Promise is not only a passionate theatre educator but also a member of ITI in Ghana, and IFTR. Email:* [*promise.nyatuame@ucc.edu.gh*](mailto:promise.nyatuame@ucc.edu.gh)

**Storytelling and Myths: Specifications Exploration in Select Cultural Policies in West Africa – *Osedebamen David Oamen***

The intent of this study is an exploratory on the specifications in select cultural policies in West Africa for storytelling and myths. It is aimed at interrogating cultural policy support for storytelling and myth within the select cultural policies. The objective is to identify the specifications of cultural policy recognition for storytelling and myths in relation to appreciating its value within West Africa where storytelling has dominantly played great roles in creativity and performance within the select cultural policies. This is with a view to ascertain cultural policy implementation provision for the sustenance of storytelling and myths. It is on this ground that the following research questions become necessary; were storytelling and myths recognized by the select cultural policies? What roles and uses were storytelling and myths assigned within the cultural policies? How do the select cultural policies intend to sustain storytelling and myths? The findings of this discourse shall be derived from the argument within the research questions. The recommendations of the study shall be drawn from the findings of the study. The conclusion of the study shall highlight the relevance of the findings to knowledge, close research gap, and serve as source to future cultural policy planning and review. It will also define and situate the import of storytelling and myth within the cultural policy in contemporary time.

Key words: Cultural policy, West Africa, Storytelling, Myths, Specifications.

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**Artificial Intelligence, Amateurism, and Theatre Scholarship or: “How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love ChatGPT” – *Finian O’Gorman***

In November 2022, a new version of the artificial intelligence (AI) program ChatGPT was released on the internet by the tech startup OpenAI. By January, it had amassed 100 million users, becoming one of the fastest-growing applications in history. Following the launch of ChatGPT, media outlets and networks abounded with examples of its various applications, from computer coding to writing Hollywood screenplays. Of particular concern to those working in higher education in the humanities is the fact that it can generate a highly-informed, grammatically perfect and accurately-formatted essay in seconds. This paper provides an overview of the points of discussion that have emerged in relation to AI and scholarship in the wake of the release of ChatGPT. It identifies elements of the wider debate that apply to theatre research and lists the main challenges and opportunities that AI applications present to theatre scholars. Drawing on research on the historical emergence of amateur theatre – and inspired by the ‘love’ (amāre) at the heart of amateurism – this paper encourages theatre scholars to reaffirm their expertise by focusing on the ‘feel’ that they have for their chosen subject. The feel, or feelings, that we have as human beings represent a clear point of departure between artificial and ‘real’ or ‘sincere’ intelligences. By reflecting on the space between those intelligences – on the difference between what is known and what is felt – we have the opportunity to redefine the labour of love that is theatre scholarship.

*Dr Finian O’Gorman is an Irish Research Council (IRC) Postdoctoral Fellow in the School of English, Trinity College Dublin. His published work has featured in Review of Irish Studies in Europe (2021), Irish Drama and Theatre Since 1950 (Bloomsbury, 2019), The Theatre of Enda Walsh (Carysfort, 2015), the Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (2015), New Hibernia Review (2013), and Irish Theatre Magazine (2013). Dr O’Gorman was previously an IRC Postgraduate Scholar at the University of Galway. He is the incoming Early Career Researcher (ECR) Support Officer for the Irish Society for Theatre Research (ISTR) and is currently working on a book on the amateur theatre movement in Ireland. Email:* [*fogorman@tcd.ie*](mailto:fogorman@tcd.ie)

**T’orin, T’ijo, T’ilu In Wole Soyinka’s *Death and The King’s Horseman***

**– Adeolu Ogunsanya**

Among the Yoruba, the concept ‘music’ is made up of performative sonic descriptors known as t’orin, t’ijó, t’ìlù (singing, dancing, drumming) that have overlapping similar functional principles which bring out the composer’s intended meaning. These tripartite arts are herein referred to as musical motifs and are performed either singly or in varied combinations during any socio-cultural events including dramatic works of playwrights such as Wole Soyinka. These are exposed in his plays such as the ‘Death and the King’s Horseman’ through which he dramatizes the bravery of one man who tried to stand up against the British Imperialists for reaping the centrality and essence of his people’s socio-political and cultural beliefs. However, only a few of these works have musical motifs being largely inserted into them directly by Soyinka himself, while many others only have directorial instructions on what, where, and how musical motifs should occur through the ingenuity of the concerned play director. Consequently, this may explain why some play directors, shy away from directing these works as they may then be required to expend extra mental energy and artistic manipulations of infusing the right musical motifs to put up a good interpretation of the works. Therefore, in this paper, using the ‘Death and the King’s Horseman’ as our illustrative texts, we shall show how Tunde Awosanmi, a play director, was able to employ the evocation of the foregoing musical motifs do justice to the interpretation of the playwright’s dramatic intentions within the play. Keywords: Musical motifs, Wole Soyinka, T’orin, T’ijo, T’ilu, cultural imperialism

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**Make-Up Aesthetics: Metaphor and Philosophy in Krobo Dress – *Fabiola Opare-Darko***

This study investigates dress of the Krobo of the eastern region of Ghana, and interrogates how metaphor and philosophy, as intangible aspects of Krobo culture, influence how the society determines what should be the appropriate outward appearance of members of their community. The purpose of this study is to discuss some Krobo cultural and philosophical ideas on their identity and see how they can provide an understanding to its visual manifestations. Using aesthetics as a methodology and a framework, the study investigates the perceptions, cultural symbolisms, and significance inherent in the art of Krobo body adornment. The methods of research are mainly qualitative. The findings demonstrate that, it is evident the Krobo believe it is part of God’s essential plan for the Krobo to ‘shine’. Where shining is an embodiment of, good character speaking well and dressing well.

*Fabiola Mamle Opare-Darko was educated at Accra Girls Secondary School from 1979-1985 and continued to train at Leo Fashion School, majoring in bridal wear (1985-1989). After her completion, she started a school where young men and women were taught the skills of dress making, modelling and beading. She eventually entered the school of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon (2004-2010) and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Dance Studies and an MFA in theatre studies-Dance (Costume Design). After teaching at the University for some time, Fabiola gained admission to the Institute of African studies in the 2015/2016 academic year and has since been awarded Doctor of Philosophy in African Studies. Her research interests include adapting theatre costumes of Africa (e.g. Egungun masquerades of Nigeria, Dipo Costumes of Ghana, Traditional Dance costumes, etc.) for the contemporary stage, costumes of Ghanaian masquerades, to find a theory for “African costume” and sustainability in fashion and stage costume. Fabiola loves animals and has two dogs. She also loves going for long quite walks along the beach. Email:* [*mfopare-darko@ug.edu.gh*](mailto:mfopare-darko@ug.edu.gh)

**Dipo Rites as Communal Theatre: Identifying Form, Structure and Other Dramatic Elements – *Joshua Otabil***

Although rituals and theatre have distinct uniqueness in their rights, the line separating them can sometimes be so thin to be unnoticed. Their dichotomy brings to the fore varying perspectives which express the real essence of Dipo puberty rites and their theatrical elements. Dipo rites demonstrate the indigenous performing art of the people of Krobo and theatrical elements, which are worth considering. This paper explores the form, plot, structure, and other theatrical elements during the performance of Dipo by the people of Krobo Odumasi in the Eastern region of Ghana. Literature was reviewed on the Abydos festival in Egypt, the Yoruba rituals in Nigeria, and the Guro rituals in Ivory Coast. This was done through careful scrutiny of the plot, structure, and theatrical elements. A qualitative methodology, a one-on-one interview was used as primary data. Scholarly journals, books, and e-books formed the core of secondary data. Findings revealed that Dipo puberty rites begin with a series of ritual activities and have a middle and end. Apart from affirming that the Dipo is a vital initiation rite, it emerged that the performance of the traditional events unfolds sequentially. Each stage of the performance has its own activities that are specially performed. There is a fundamental struggle of the girls when they go through the various stages of the event. Keywords:  Ceremonies, Dipo, Events, Festivals, Rituals, Religion, Society.

**My Image, My Conscience, My Story: Image Theatre as a Conduit for Academic Research – Felicia Owusu-Ansah**

In the last few decades Africa has seen an upsurge of the use of applied theatre in addressing individual and community issues in diverse paradigms. However, fewer studies have examined its potential beyond sensitisation, awareness creation campaigns and general education through playlets and post-performance discussion. This paper discusses how some aspects of applied theatre were used for intervention purposes in connection with Irregular Migration in Ghana. I base the discussion on how I used Applied Theatre, specifically, Augusto Boal’s Image works on the platform of Testimonial Theatre as an investigation tool in academic research. It also discusses the ripple effect of breaking the silence among returnee-irregular migrants in Ghana. Performance as Research was considered for this investigation. The findings reveal that applied theatre has high potential of serving a larger purpose in eliciting underlying information in academic research in Ghana.

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**Myth Storytelling and Democratic Practice: Exploring the Gestural Mode of Kathaprasangam – *Ameet Parameswaran***

The present paper explores how the action of storytelling and its worldmaking wades through and troubles the categories of myth and history. Moving away from conceptualizing myth as simply a source for storytelling, or in the framing in the global discourse of postdramatic theatre where story is deemed as a politically insignificant mode, I investigate gestural mode of worldmaking process in storytelling. I analyse Kathaprasangam (lit: katha means story, and prasangam means speech/ discourse, as one that is given on a podium) in the South-Indian state of Kerala that involves a storyteller, with the accompaniment of instrumentalists, narrating a story interspersed with a lot of songs. Analysis of Kathaprasangam necessitate a move away from those perspectives on modernity where a clear disjunction between the pre-modern and the modern is posited. I focus on kathaprasangam performances of iconic star performer Sambasivan (1929-96), probably one of the most popular performers to emerge from Kerala with his fifty-five kathaprasangam stories spanning fifty years including adaptations of works (Malayalam poetry, important international play-texts and other literature) from widely differing genres as well as original stories and biographies of historical personalities. While analysing the ways in which mythic events are used as anecdotes in his larger oeuvre, I specifically analyse worldmaking process in his rendition titled, Vyaasanum Marxum (1987) that brings together the ‘biographies’ of Vyasa (Mahabharata as story of Vyasa’s clan) and Marx within the larger perspective of anti-war ethos and specific reference to the moment of call for Nuclear Weapons Treaty by Gorbachev.

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**Performing National Imaginaries: Between Myth, History and Politics (Curated Panel) Theatre’s Challenge to The Indian Nation’s Imagination – *Bishnupriya Paul***

Partha Chatterjee in Nation and its Fragments, have emphasized the complicated relationship between myths and history, including the theatrical context, where performing histories was and still is an integral aspect of imagining the Nation. Following up on Chatterjee’s conceptualization of an inner domain, where differences with the ‘modular’ (national society propagated by the modern west) has resulted in the most creative results of the nationalist imagination in Asia and Africa, we find its manifestations in some of the theatre practices in recent past - which successfully challenges and counters growing tendency to distort histories, historicize religious myths and mythicize histories. The complexities between myths and history are particularly complicated by two plays I would like to focus on; an adaptation of a nineteenth century novel, Bener Meye (Mercharnt’s Daughter) by Haraprashad Shastri dramatised by Chatterjee– publicly read by the dramaturge/historian on 11 January 2023 and a well-known Indian classic, Surya Shikar (Hunting the Sun 1970), two productions running in Kolkata now. Focusing on ancient India, an important thematic within the problematics of nationalism (Chatterjee), the theatrical re-interpretations can be regarded as what Freddie Rokem regards as embodying historical energy by performing forgotten histories (and not history as myths). Rokem’s theatrical energies I will argue can unfold and substantiate political and aesthetic possibilities where performing histories, a political task in post-colonial India has assumed a different mode of urgency under the right-wing regime with its instrumentalization of religion (mythicizing histories).

*Bishnupriya Dutt is Professor of Theatre and Performance studies, in the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi India. Her area of research includes politics and theatre, feminist readings of Indian Theatre and contemporary performance practices and popular culture. Her recent publications include Maya Rao and Indian Feminist Theatre (Cambridge, 2022), ‘Performing Gestures at Protest and Other Sites’ (The Oxford Handbook of Politics and Performance, 2021), ’Rethinking categories of theatre and performance; archive, scholarship and practices (a post-colonial Indian perspective)’(The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance Historiography , Routledge 2020), Gendered Citizenship: Performance and Manifestation (co-edited with Reinelt and Sahai) (Palgrave Macmillan 2017), Protesting Violence: Feminist Performance Activism in Contemporary India (in Diamond, Varnay and Amich eds: Performance, Feminism and Affect in Neo-Liberal Times, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. She has also led a number of international project collaborations with University of Warwick, Freie Universitat, Berlin and University of Cologne. She is currently the Vice President of the International Federation for Theatre Research. Email:* [*bishnupriyapaul@gmail.com*](mailto:bishnupriyapaul@gmail.com)

**A Traveling Myth About Migration: A Holocaust Cabaret and Its Journey to South Africa**

**– *Lisa Peschel***

As the IFTR 2023 Call for Papers points out, global and local crises may call for the ‘creation of new myths that embody our aspirations for (and fears of) the future’. This paper traces the evolution of a ‘new myth’ from 1930s Prague as it migrated to a World War II Jewish ghetto in 1943 then to a South African university in 2017. Performances of this myth, a cabaret featuring a trickster pair, satirical yet optimistic humour and jazz music, embodied a succession of aspirations and fears. In the Liberated Theatre of Czechoslovakia, the myth embodied both the cultural aspirations of the new state and fears regarding the rise of fascism. Performed by an amateur troupe in the Jewish ghetto at Terezín/Theresienstadt, it satirised the young Czech Jews’ experience of anti-Semitism and corruption and embodied their fear of the forced migration that awaited them. In Communist Czechoslovakia, their version of the myth disappeared – except for a brief reappearance in the 1960s due, indirectly, to newly independent Ghana. In 2017, a project called Performing the Jewish Archive drew upon traces of the 1943 production – a souvenir poster, a collection of songs, and fragments of survivor testimony – to re-imagine and restage the Terezín/Theresienstadt performance in Australia and South Africa. This paper focuses mainly on the development process at Stellenbosch University, where the myth enabled a multiracial student cast to confront their own history of racism, corruption and forced migration, and to explore a present-day high-stakes issue on their campus: cultural appropriation.

*Dr Lisa Peschel is a senior lecturer (associate professor) in theatre at the University of York, England. She has been researching theatrical performance in the Terezín/Theresienstadt ghetto since 1998. Her articles on survivor testimony and scripts written in the ghetto have appeared in theatre- and Holocaust-related journals in the US and the UK and in Czech, German and Israeli publications. She has lectured and conducted performance workshops at institutions in the US and UK, in Europe, South Africa and Australia. Her anthology of rediscovered scripts, Performing Captivity, Performing Escape: Cabarets and Plays from the Terezín/Theresienstadt Ghetto, was published in 2014 (Czech- and German-language edition 2008), and the volume Performing (for) Survival: Theatre, Crisis, Extremity co-edited with Dr Patrick Duggan was published in 2016. She edited A Holocaust Cabaret: Remaking Theatre from a Jewish Ghetto, forthcoming from Intellect Books in autumn 2023. Awards include a Fulbright grant in the Czech Republic and fellowships at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University and the Jewish Museum in Prague. From 2014 to 2018 she was a co-investigator on the £1.8 million project 'Performing the Jewish Archive' funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. Email:* [*lisa.peschel@york.ac.uk*](mailto:lisa.peschel@york.ac.uk)

**Staging Contemporary Stories. Rimini Protokoll’s *"100% Narva”* – *Madli Pesti***

On the Estonian national Independence Day, the 24th of February 2022, Russia started war in Ukraine. On the 18th of December 2022 Rimini Protokoll staged its production format *„100% City“* in Estonia. The border town Narva is situated between two civilisations: it is only a winding river that divides Estonia from Russia. Narva has a unique socio-political status: once a beautiful example of Baroque architecture in Europe, the town got almost totally bombed in the Soviet air raid during the Second World War. After that Soviet immigrant moved in and now only 5% of the inhabitants are Estonians. In "100% Narva", one hundred Narva people are on stage. The production revealed conflicts between Estonian and Russian-speaking people that became intensified in the context of the war. On could interpret it as a conflict between two myths. My presentation will look into the contemporary myths that the performance revealed and shows how the audience made the greatest contribution to the composition and emotional memory of the production. The performance gave a platform to those who are not usually represented. I will show how individual and national pasts, presents and futures mingle, connecting the local and the global myths and stories. I will investigate what strategies were used to stage the myths, how theatre can be a field of transforming myths and how contemporary performance can help to deconstruct myths.

*Madli Pesti has a PhD in theatre research at Tartu University, Estonia (dissertation “Political Theatre and its Strategies in the Estonian and Western Cultures”, 2016). She has studied at the University of Aarhus, at the Humboldt University and Free University Berlin. Pesti is working as a senior researcher in the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre and runs the practice as research PhD programme. Her research areas are performance analysis and theory, political and applied theatre. In 2018 she published “100 Years of Estonian Theatre”, an overview of Estonian theatre in the past and today. She has also been writing theatre reviews since 2002, winning the award as the best theatre critic at the Estonian Annual Theatre Awards in 2019. She was head of the Estonian Theatre Researchers’ and Critics’ Association (2015) and curated the programme of the performing arts centre Open Space (Vaba Lava) in Tallinn between 2015 and 2017. Pesti is a member of IFTR and EASTAP. Email:* [*madli.pesti@gmail.com*](mailto:madli.pesti@gmail.com)

**The Myth of Becoming Anglo – The Creation of Miss Brexit – *Alejandro Postigo***

In post-Brexit England, international theatre artists based in the UK regularly need to negotiate and even learn to conceal their foreignness, often determined by their cultural knowledge and their speech patterns as second-language users. Responding to this post-colonial situation, a group of young migrant actors have devised a new show that speaks to their experience. Miss Brexit takes a diverse group of European contestants through a set of challenges in which each national stereotype morph into a British myth while exploring what it takes to become something you are not. In our show, only the winner of Miss Brexit is allowed to remain in the UK and pursue the Anglo-American dream. But who is capable to completely erase their identity and talk, think or live like a Brit? Who can willingly forget their cultural existence in pro of a promise of prosperity? Miss Brexit is a satire that explores the struggles of the post-Brexit migrant and reveals some effects of cultural assimilation for our future generations. The show explores the complexity of barriers that migrant artists experience, as they search for practical alternatives to survive in an Anglophile world, turn their difference into an asset, and respond creatively to the myth of cultural exchange in an increasingly global world, where the UK is one of the leading hubs for multicultural theatre. This article will hopefully highlight sensitivity towards second language speakers and migrant theatre artists, as these navigate their artistic identities and continuously fight to raise awareness and visibility.

*Dr Alejandro Postigo is Senior Lecturer in Musical Theatre at the London College of Music, University of West London. His practice-based PhD from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (2019) explored the intercultural adaptation of Spanish copla songs in international theatre settings and produced The Copla Musical (2014-22), seen in Europe and America. Recent research has led him to address the cultural and linguistic barriers found in Anglophone theatre contexts and to champion the artistic contributions of audible minorities, culminating in Miss Brexit (2022). Alejandro’s practice-research applies musical theatre revisionism, queer and intercultural critical frameworks to his theatre work. Email:* [*alejandropostigo@gmail.com*](mailto:alejandropostigo@gmail.com)

**The Myth of Afghanistan: “The Grave of Empires” on British Stages – *George Potter***

In the introduction to his history of Afghanistan, Games without Rules, Tamim Ansary makes note of the often repeated claim that Afghanistan is a “graveyard of empires,” writing that the “tough terrain and fractious people do present a special challenge to would-be conquerors, and yet Afghanistan has in fact been conquered many times,” before noting the success of Aryan, Persian, Greek, Buddhist, Mongol, Arab, and Turkish invaders who left linguistic, religious, and cultural imprints on the country (4). Similarly, in Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History, Thomas Barfield poses the question of why nineteenth and twentieth-century wars in Afghanistan failed while previous empires succeeded (2). Ansary’s corrective and Barfield’s question are important ones for those who would write about Afghanistan, as they should lead those in Britain and the United States to ask questions about the nature—and failures—of (neo)colonial military interventions. However, the very plays that protest these interventions—here, Tony Kushner’s Homebody/Kabul, the Tricycle Theatre’s The Great Game, and the spinoff J.T. Rogers play Blood and Guts—often work to replicate the myths of Afghanistan that colonizers use in justifying their military actions. These include the replication of the “grave of empires” myth, exotic portrayals of Afghanistan, superficial good/bad Muslim binaries, and an ahistorical presentation of Afghanistan that hinges on Western contact.

N.B.: I know Afghanistan is an awkward fit with Arab theater, but my previous collaborations with this working group—and our shared concerns and methodologies—make me think this might be the best placement.

*George Potter is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at Valparaiso University. He has published in College Literature, The British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Arizona Quarterly, The Journal of American Drama and Theatre, and multiple book collections. His current research focuses on Islamophobia in liberal responses to the war on terror. His directing credits include a production of Jamil Khoury's play Mosque Alert at Valparaiso University and a staged reading of Fawzia Afzal-Khan's play Jihad Against Violence: Oh ISIS Up Yours! at Silk Road Rising in Chicago. Email:* [*george.potter@valpo.edu*](mailto:george.potter@valpo.edu)

**The Myth and Stories of Ghanaian Traditional Dance Performance – *David Quaye***

The traditional dances we perform are filled with narratives of traditional cultural practices, myths, and historical narratives. These narratives give information about the traditional dances performed in Ghana. Using the Adowa dance from the Ashantis, Kpatsa dance from the Ga-Adamgbe, Bamaya dance from the Dagbon and Agbekor dance from the Anglo of the Volta region of Ghana. This research paper investigates the type of stories that are exhibited in the traditional dances we perform and the information that is projected through these dances. Through an ethnographic qualitative study, the study is underpinned by different interpretation of the various myths that reinforces the narratives in the traditional dances we perform. Using both primary and secondary sources the study will find out whose narrative do we pay attention to or do we project through our dances. The study, therefore, intends to investigate whose narrative the traditional dance projects and how are this narrative disseminated. Almost all the traditional dances have more than one myth or narrative to its origin and historical antecedents. The paper finally will propose that there should be an acceptance of all the stories there are since they are a reflection of who the people who own the dance believe in. Furthermore, these stories of the dances add to the concept of family resemblance of the movements that the dances project in the performance.

*Currently awaiting PhD degree award in African Studies from University of Ghana. My research area is Dance Pedagogy. I hold an MFA in Theatre Arts with a major in Dance Choreography and I teaches various subjects in dance such Indigenous African Dance, Dance Forms of Ghana and Africa, Music for Dance, Lighting Design, Stagecraft, Orientation to Dance and the Theatre. In May 2022, I choreographed a dance piece Newmantics as part of staff production and in November 2022 I led a dance workshop for developing dance curriculum for Technical Vocational and Educational Training (TVET). In July 2022 I participated in the Next Level Dance workshop organised by the US embassy. I also supervise students’ project and long essays. I have attended and participated in various local and international; conferences SPA conference in 2017, ICTM conference in 2019, Chord conference, 2010 and 2013, 2011 Conference, Guaten, South Africa, American Dance Festival, Durham 2002-2006, Jacob's Pillow, Massachusetts, USA 2002. Publications. Enhancing Dance Production through Lighting: A Tool for the Designer published in a special edition of Eyo Journal of the Humanities (EJAH) Vol. No. 1 2022. Analysing the Traditional Dance on Stage within the University: In close reference to Opoku's Legacy; SPA Journal of the Arts, 2011. Bird of the Wayside published in the Theatriks- Department of Theatre Arts Magazines 2012. Email:* [*dequaye@ug.edu.gh*](mailto:dequaye@ug.edu.gh)

**Kaneza Schaal’s *KLII: a Postcolonial Rant for Action* – Abigail Quaye**

New York City-based artist Kaneza Schaal’s one-act play, KLII, was part of the recent Under the Radar Festival (Jan. 2023 – it premiered at the REDCAT in Los Angeles in 2022). In its exploration of the social and psychological repercussions of Belgium's colonialist project on black history, the play uses a metisage or collage technique combining various sources, and genres including dance, archival filmic recordings, 19th-century opera and text-based documents. She uses Mark Twain’s King Leopold’s Soliloquy (1905), the (in)famous independence speech of Patrice Lumumba (1960), Aimé Césaire’s Discourse on Colonialism (1967), and filmic documents like André Cauvin’s documentary on the Belgian king’s visit to Congo, Bwana Kitoko (1955). What emerges is a startling investigation of the residues of colonialism in our times and a deconstruction or splintering of various myths on stage (Leopold II, Lumumba, Césaire, Twain, etc…). Using Al-Kassim (2010) and Reuter V. (2020)’s critical proposal on the genre of the literary rant, I will discuss KLII as a Postcolonial performance rant, in which the performer is a dispossessed subject who engages in perlocutionary rhetoric to evoke and empower political actions in the audience. In doing so, I will particularly focus on design elements, like the elaborate costume that combines a variety of clashing iconography, including Ghanaian/African wax prints and Christian symbols.

*Abigail Ameley Quaye: (PhD Student in Performance Studies (University of Alberta). A playwright, and dramaturg; she researches on Women and negotiated performance spaces through the lens of postcolonial resistance. As a playwright, she experiments on Automatic Writing as an unconventional writing methodology and the aesthetics of subconscious processes. She also investigates on decolonised data representation methodologies such as Poetic Inquiry. She has been working closely with Prof. Piet Defraeye on Patrice Lumumba. She is currently collecting poems written by Ghanaians from the 1950s and 1960s about Lumumba. Email:* [*aquaye@ualberta.ca*](mailto:aquaye@ualberta.ca)

**The Theatre Trap – Paul Rae**

From 'Agamemnon' to 'Hamlet', the spider tales of the West African Anansi tradition to the theft of Sita in the 'Ramayana', traps and capture feature in many myths worldwide. They provide the delineation of good and evil, the occasion for quests or wars, and opportunities to showcase the bravery of the hero or cunning of the trickster in resolving the situation. In theatre, there is pleasure for an audience in seeing a trap set or sprung. And that pleasure is itself captivating, especially when the scenographic, narrative and formal mechanisms of the theatre are on display. In this paper, I focus in particular on those theatrical experiences that double the representation of capture on stage, with the captivation of the audience in the theatre - in other words, where theatre itself is a trap. I make reference to a number of examples, including Hamlet and Agatha Christie's long-running 'Mousetrap'. But my main example will be the Balinese dance-theatre form of legong. 'Legong Lasem' tells the story of a princess who has been captured by a king and yearns to escape. The distinctive telling of the story, in which, dressed identically, the two performers are almost indistinguishable for large parts of the performance, means that the audience, too can become trapped in the tiny differences between the performers. I take this analysis as a starting point for a series of reflections on theatrical capture, as a key feature of theatre's contribution to the sustaining and functioning of myth.

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**Mythology Needs Technology-Technology Leads Mythology: A Case Study of Surabhi Theatre Group – *Sindhe Ramesh***

Mythology and technology seem two different poles; it is hard to imagine that mythology and technology go together. But interestingly, this mythology and technology have been the backbone of the Surabhi theatre group located in the Telugu region of the Indian subcontinent. Surabhi theatre is one of the best professional family theatre groups in the world. This is the rarest of the rare case in the world which has been running a professional family theatre for the last 138 years, despite all the oddities created by electronic media. In this 21st-century in the field of performing arts, many theatre groups in India are performing mythological and social plays but struggling to sustain themselves in the field. In Telugu theatre driving the audience to the theatre became a challenging job for other theatre groups; moreover, with a known story, it is very tough. At the same time, Surabhi theatre continues with only mythological performances till today. This paper discusses why Surabhi theatre has been using only mythological themes for their performances? How has Surabhi theatre been using well-known stories from mythology as a weapon for grabbing the audience? How is technology going with mythology? What are the strategies that Surabhi theatre has been following? In this paper, it is discussed that whether mythology needs technology or technology leads to mythology in Surabhi theatre performances. How has technology been an add-on to the mythological performances in Surabhi theatre?

*Sindhe Ramesh is a theatre practitioner and independent scholar; born into the SURABHI professional family theatre in Hyderabad, India. Being a Surabhi Theatre member, the stage has become his first playground; his passion and experience are stage centric. He did M.A and M.Phil. in theatre arts and is the first PhD scholar from this theatre group. He has been awarded his doctoral degree from the department of theatre arts, Potti Sri Ramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad. He Participated in IFTR 2019 World Conference, STA Shanghai, China. He is an adept artist and Trainer who has participated several national and international conferences and performed in theatre festivals. He has been a Radio Jockey and Drama Artist at All India Radio, Hyderabad for the past fifteen years. He is the founder President of Surabhi Kalakshetram Theatre Group. Apart from stage shows, technical aspects have always been his areas of interest. Email:* [*surabhirameshs@gmail.com*](mailto:surabhirameshs@gmail.com)

**Atelier Les Voyageurs: Valorizing Togolese Oral Tradition Through an International Project of Performing Arts, Social Theatre and Mask Making – *Federico Lorenzo Regonesi***

In our paper we present the social theatre project "Atelier les Voyageurs" promoted by the voluntary association Oltre i Confini and the theatre collective Centocani (Milan, Italy), in synergy with the associations JED Togo and JED France. The project consists in the development of a stable theatre atelier in the village of Yokélé, on the Togolese plateau. Since 2018, various ensembles of international performing arts professionals, led by the founders of Centocani Collective, have been working with Togolese artists. The atelier takes place in the secondary school of the village, engaging the youths in the process of artistic creation, both as authors and actors. Oral tradition, myths, popular culture and masks (both local and European, both historical and contemporary) are the pillars of the whole process. The artists help the children gather old folktales passed by in their family circle. These stories are then explored, developed and performed by the children themselves with the guidance of the ensemble, donning theatrical masks created by local artisans or by Centocani. The final performances thus developed are held in the Ewe language in an open-air site, preceded by a parade through the village streets, resulting in a festive event for the whole community. We aim to detail how the mix of traditional African arts and social theatre methodologies and techniques can strengthen community ties and kickstart the creation process of a contemporary mythology, valorizing on an international scale the cultural practices of West Africa and representing a blueprint for similar future projects.

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**Im-Possibility of Female\* Speech. Re-Reading the Mythical Figure of Echo Based on Ovid and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak – *Sophia-Charlotte Reiser***

With G.C. Spivak, a critical re-reading of the myth Narcissus and Echo in its occidental-hegemonic origin after Ovid can expose a thinking of the im-possibility of female\* speech. Instead of chaining Echo to the fate of Narcissus, her own voice and subjectivity through resistant speech is focused on. Echo’s repetitions elude any answer to the question “Who speaks?” to transform it into another “Who is heard?” In her repetition, Echo finds her own articulation, reveals subversive-transformative practices and performs changes of meaning. It is striking that Echo maintains a provocative presence in contemporary artistic productions and scientific reflections. She demands a localization of one’s own research perspective and practice as well as a critical examination of existing normative and hegemonic knowledge structures. The figure emanates a productive potential of engagement with questions of re-presentation, the relationship to history and origin as well as questions of reflexive research practices between arts and sciences. Echo points both to the marginalization of female\* (subaltern) voices and to the possibility of making themselves heard through her subversive practices. My paper aims to discuss, on the basis of some artistic practices, to what extent and in which specific ways Echo as a figure of female\* speech forms the constitutive outside of the respective Eurocentrist male-coded culture of speaking and writing, how she reflects the effects of exclusion and gives new perspectives to the question of representation in postcolonial discourses on language and identity.

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**Myth and Cult: Portuguese Performers of the Portuguese 18th Century – Marta Rosa**

In mid-eighteenth-century Portugal, women still lived a very secluded life, especially in the higher classes. Their role should be restricted to motherhood and domestic care; they should not make themselves noticed, have opinions or knowledge beyond the necessary for them to exemplarily manage the family home. In contrast to these women, there were female artists: singers, actresses and dancers who exposed themselves to the public eye, expressed feelings and opinions through their characters, had eccentric behaviours, and appealed to the public imagination. It is within this historical and cultural context that I propose to focus on two female performers, Anna Zamperini (1745?-1776), Italian, and Luísa Todi (1753-1833), Portuguese, who became two memorable names of the Portuguese theatrical scene. The scandals of the first originated the ban of female performers from stage for twenty years; and the recognition of the latest opened the door to the cult of the first Portuguese international performer. Anna Zamperini left a trail of rumours, bankruptcy, and fashion. She was expelled from Portugal, but her myth and trends remained. Luísa Todi, on the other hand, found better working conditions outside her country of origin but was able to maintain a faithful audience at home. Following the ongoing project “The feminine paradox in the Portuguese eighteenth century theatre”, I will focus on the creation of the myths and cults surrounding these two performers and how they influenced coeval society, and the way female theatre performers were perceived at the time.

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**Abstract Title: Stories We Tell: Narrating Draupadi in Bharatanatyam**

**– Nora Anny Samosir**

In the Classical Indian dance form bharatanatyam, a soloist performs a narrative by toggling between different characters, including a narrator who preaches the story’s moral. One of the authors, a trained practitioner, performed the chalameh varnam, where Draupadi, from the Sanskrit epic Mahabharata appears in the disrobing scene, which is used to highlight the benevolence and omnipotence of Lord Krishna. The performative gesture is Draupadi’s outstretched palms as a sign of her devotion to Krishna, who then blesses her with never-ending fabric to protect her modesty. The patriarchal message is conveyed through the established dance lexicon, which includes body postures and mudras (hand gestures). The scene moralizes to Indian women the importance of being subservient and reliant on a male saviour, and reduces Draupadi to an agentless devotee. This raises the following questions: How can contemporary bharatanatyam female performers continue to perform a narrative that celebrates patriarchy? Instead of the stories that have been traditionally passed down, what stories should instead have been told? And how might these newer stories be told whilst still adhering to the conventions of Bharatnatyam? By examining alternative bharatanatyam stories about Draupadi, including performances by Wandering Women, we consider how these less traditional performances can be viewed as sites of myth-making, so that bharatanatyam can find relevance with the modern woman as a marker of “feminine respectability” (O’Shea 2007). The repurposing of mudras and other theatrical devices, we show, must be understood as metatheatre – a concept that requires deeper investigation (Paillard and Sueli Milanezi 2021).

*NORA SAMOSIR has been a professional theatre practitioner since 1984, acting in more than 100 stage productions and appearing in films. Since 2018, she has been part of the duo Wandering Women with Bharatanatyam dancer Dr Nidya Shanthini Manokara. They performed Wandering Women: From Kurukshetra to Magdala in 2019 and are currently developing another iteration of their practice research performance project based on the lives of Draupadi and Mary Magdalene. As a teacher, previously at the National University of Singapore, her two main areas of specialty in Theatre Studies were voice studies and acting. Currently at LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore, she is the sole Voice specialist in the BA Acting and BA Musical Theatre programmes of the School of Dance and Theatre. Aside from her voice work with actors, she has conducted voice workshops for the general public.*

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**From Reality to Literary Myth: Aimé Césaire’s *A Season in The Congo* and Aristide Tarnagda’s *Sank, Or The Patience Of The Dead* – *Fatou Ghislaine Sanou***

In his treatise on Black African theatre, Barthélemy Kotchi emphasizes that “it seems above all essential to us to valorize the function of African art, in particular theatre, as one of the most important aspects of culture” (Kotchi 1971, 11). He interprets this as a pedagogy of consciousness. According to Romanian historian Mircea Eliade’s definition, the myth is “a true story from the beginning of time which serves as a model of human behavior” (Mircea Eliade 1957, 22). Drawing on these two notions, this paper proposes a reading of two plays: A Season in the Congo by Aimé Césaire and Sank, or the Patience of the Dead by Aristide Tarnagda. The first focuses on three months when Patrice Lumumba was in power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He is a hero carried by two ambitions: to unite the Congolese peoples across ethnic and political divisions and to unite a decolonized Africa. The paper asks how myth forges a foundational identity through collective conscience. After his death, Lumumba became for Césaire the torch-bearer of a myth of becoming. In the same way, in the second play, the figure of Thomas Sankara emerges as a symbolic figure to shed light on the history of his country, Burkina Faso, which he pulls out from under the imperialist thumb of France. The universal myth of the post-death prophesy of both icons—symbols of the Congolese and Burkinabè societies—revives, through the theatre, the concept of rewriting history through literary mythology.

*She is a lecturer in African Literature. She is a member of the Literatures, Arts, Spaces and Societies Laboratory (LLAES) at the University Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Burkina Faso, where she defended her thesis on The Burkinabe novel character between myth, history and fiction (2016). She has recently co-edited two books, Critical Perspectives on African Literature (2021) and African Cultural Studies: Critical issues, approaches and horizons (2021). Her current research focuses on the issues of the suffering body, the relationship between literature and society (instances of production and instances of sociability) as well as on the problematic of publishing in Burkina Faso. Email:* [*sanoufaghi@gmail.com*](mailto:sanoufaghi@gmail.com)

**Counter- Culture Myths in Theatre & Performance: The Arts Council’s Regional ‘Gatherings’ 1969-1970 – *Graham Saunders***

A key outcome of the Arts Council’s New Activities Committee, set up in October 1968 to assess the burgeoning ‘alternative’ arts scene were the eight English regional ‘Gatherings’ that were held during 1969-1970. These set out to assess the concentration, diversity and quality of experimental practice and to additionally provide a network for likeminded artists. While the Yorkshire ‘Awake’ Gathering at Hebdon Bridge in May 1970 has been extensively cited as pivotal in enabling a trajectory for alternative performance and drama to establish itself in the UK, to date no serious attention has been given to the other seven Gatherings such as East Anglia’s ‘Meristem’ or the Southeast region’s ‘South Sea Bubble’. These provide important alternative stories that reflected geographical, cultural and historical differences. Drawing extensively on the Arts Council of Great Britain’s archives, this paper aims to provide an overview of the Gatherings impact, together with a reassessment of Hebdon Bridge’s claim to being a genuine showcase for radical performance (where for instance the likes of The John Puncture Repair Kit incongruously shared the bill with The Royal Coln Morris Dancers). The paper will also outline the concerted opposition and hostility the Gatherings attracted in the national press, from the general public and also those within the Arts Council, together with factions represented by the fringe artistic community itself. The paper will attempt to assess how important the Gatherings were to future Arts Council policy towards experimental work as well as how far the festivals could be seen as manifestations of John Maynard Keyne’s original vision for the Arts Council being the organ that would enable ‘Every part of Merry England be merry in its own way.’

Graham Saunders is the Allardyce Nicoll Professor of Drama in the Department of Theatre and Drama Arts at the University of Birmingham. He is author of Love me or Kill me: Sarah Kane and the Theatre of Extremes (Manchester: MUP, 2002), About Kane: the Playwright and the Work (London: Faber 2009), Patrick Marber’s Closer (Continuum, 2008) and British Theatre Companies 1980-1994 (Methuen, 2015). He is co-editor of Cool Britannia: Political Theatre in the 1990s (Palgrave, 2008); Sarah Kane in Context (MUP,2010) and Arnold Wesker: Fragments and Visions (Intellect, 2021). His latest mongraph, Elizabethan and Jacobean Reappropriation in Contemorary British Drama: ‘Upstart Crows’ was published by Palgrave in 2017. He is co-series editor (with Professor Maggie Gale, University of Manchester, UK) for Routledge's Modern and Contemporary Dramatists - Stage and Screen and the Palgrave Studies in Censorship series (with Anne Etienne, University College, Cork, Ireland).

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**In the Footsteps of the Macaques; A Roadmap of De/Re-Constructing Anthropocentric Myths through Performing Arts – *Stephan Schnell***

The overlapping of living spaces of the Macaca Maura (a primate species native to Sulawesi Island of Indonesia) and of the people who live in or travel through the National Forest which the macaques call their home, not only calls for a new approach to explore human’s relationship with the endangered macaques as co-inhabitants of their natural environment but presses for the deconstruction of the myth of an endlessly available and ultimately disposable natural environment which has landed us in the Age of the Anthropocene. As a cooperation between German and Indonesian scholars of performing arts, Indonesian artists, education professionals, and natural scientists from Indonesia, Germany and the UK, the interdisciplinary pilot-project “Conservation and Performing Arts” seeks to develop and implement a practical education program by combining methods from life sciences and evolutionary anthropology with approaches and cultural practices from the application-oriented performing arts. Via the use of storytelling, regional and glocal/glocalized theatrical practices and by encouraging the participants to roleplay as scientific researchers, CPA aims to prove that performing arts provide an ideal playground to develop a narrative in which young people view the macaques and their habitat as equal and vital to their own life-world.

Since the intense research for this project has exposed us to various interesting myths and stories (e.g., the Cosmology of Bugis, an indigenous cultural group on South-Sulawesi, or ritualistic performances that explore and engage humans in natural phenomena), we would like to use this panel to showcase the ever-growing roadmap of our findings.

*Stephan Schnell studied Applied Theatre Studies in Gießen. He then went for directing jobs at the German state and municipal theatres in Oldenburg, Ingolstadt, Coburg and Erlangen, among others. In parallel, he worked as a workshop leader and artistic advisor in political and cultural youth education projects focusing on migration, Europe and the Global South. Since 2011, he has worked as deputy managing director for Bund Deutscher Amateurtheater e.V.. As a consultant for education and international affairs, his responsibilities include the development of funding and festival formats. Since 2015 is a Research Associate at the CCT in the research projects Fremde spielen. Amateur Theatre as a Medium of Informal and Non-formal Transcultural Education and HeimatWeltBühne. Amateur Theatre in Peripheral Areas of East Germany, Weltoffene Heimat (all directed by Prof. Dr. Günther Heeg). He is member of the research group “Conservation and Performing Arts” a joint project of CCT, MPI Leipzig, ISI Yogyakarta and ISBI Makassar (Indonesia). Email:* [*stephan.schnell@uni-leipzig.de*](mailto:stephan.schnell@uni-leipzig.de)

**Abstract Title: Tense and Tender Travels: Mythopoetics of Labor Migration on Philippine Theatrical Stages of the 21st Century – *Oscar Serquiña***

In this presentation, I explore the role of Philippine theatre in scripting and staging the lives of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and the topic of labour migration in the 21st century. It focuses on two plays, namely The Silent Soprano (mounted by Dulaang Unibersidad ng Pilipinas in 2007) and Care Divas (produced by the Philippine Educational Theatre Association in 2010). These theatrical productions feature two different depictions of gendered Filipino migrant subjects: the former centres on a Filipino domestic helper-turned-global superstar in Hong Kong, while the latter features undocumented bakla or homosexual care givers-turned-entertainers in Israel. Both plays, I argue, demonstrate the varied ways Philippine theatre has served—and continues to do so—as a creative site where artists and their audiences may collectively gather, make sense, and examine the realities of labour migration and their attendant concerns around identity, struggle and sacrifice, belonging, and bodies in transit. Furthermore, these melodramatic and musical plays lay bare how the theatre might function as a condition of possibility for certain representations of migrants and certain critiques about labour migration to take position in the world. Lastly, The Silent Soprano and Care Divas bring to the fore how theatre makers have deployed their artistic outputs to initiate encounters where various publics may rethink the history of migration and refocus the narrative of the Philippine nation on the figure of the othered, displaced, and marginalized Filipino migrant.

*Oscar Tantoco Serquiña Jr. is a faculty member in the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts at the University of the Philippines. He obtained his PhD degree in Theatre Studies from the University of Melbourne. His essays have appeared in Theatre Research International, Performance Research, Humanities Diliman, Kritika Kultura, Kasarinlan, the Philippine Political Science Journal, and the Philippine Humanities Review.*

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**Towards an African Theory of Scenography: The Alternative Theatre System and Structure – Nkululeko Sibanda**

In this paper, I identify seven aesthetic pillars of Zimbabwean popular theatre performance to create a patterned design model which I theorise into an African theory of scenography. Through a critical analysis of the Amakhosi Theatre Productions and Rooftop Promotions’ aesthetic design process, I identify and theorise on the (i) aesthetic process curvilinear (in performance), (ii) integrated performer-spectator staging (communitas), (iii) fluid and organic rehearsal-aesthetic design approach, (iv) use of everyday functional properties, (v) sets and costumes, (vi) polyvocal aesthetic designs, and (vii) site of ideological and hegemonic resistance (agency). I conclude characteristically defines what could be called African alternative theatre practice. The major characteristics of alternative scenographic practice, upon which an African theory of scenography is constructed.

*Nkululeko Sibanda holds a PhD in Drama and Performance Studies from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Nkululeko’s research trajectory is anchored on a post-structuralist theoretical and critical cultural studies framework that seeks to destabilize the assumed primacy of Western epistemological and ontological modern structures and strictures of visual language, knowledge, and semiotic models. His research is concretely anchored in exploring the politics of cultural production within African performance practice. Consequently, the need to develop a formidable, relevant, and effective cultural production theory and practice model within African performance practice (from an African paradigm) sits at the base of his research endeavours.*

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**Stories of Riches: The Developing Discourse and Representation of Wealth Around the Rise(s) and Fall(s) of the Icelandic Economy in the 21st Century – *Sigrirdur Lara Sigurjonsdottir***

Stories of riches: The developing discourse and representation of wealth around the rise(s) and fall(s) of the Icelandic economy in the 21st century. In the beginning of the 21st century Iceland was quickly becoming one of the richest countries in the world. The discourse around the super-rich in the society went through a very interesting turn, from the height of the boom over to the financial crisis that hit in 2008. In this paper the project selection in the biggest theatres in Iceland, the National theatre and the City theatre, will be looked at through the lens of the financial situation of the country, especially in the height of the boom, 2004 – 2008 and the first years after the financial collapse, 2009 – 2012. The questions I will endeavour to answer are:

* Is there a visible difference in the selection of plays performed in the bit theatre’s in the boom and in the crisis?
* Is there more or less difference when it comes to Icelandic or translated plays?
* The focus has shifted. How is the middle class represented in Icelandic theatres? Or the poor?

And the theory I am working towards here is that there was a cool factor in wealth before 2008 that has not quite taken flight since.

*Sigridur holds a B.A. and an M.A. degree in comparative literature from the University of Iceland, as well as a second M.A. degree in publishing. A PhD student at the University of Iceland since 2009 (on leave since 2012) studying the protest performance in Iceland after the economic collapse of 2008. She is also a playwright and has worked extensively with amateur theatre groups in Iceland. Currently she is teaching Icelandic literature, philosophy and sociology at the high school of Egilsstaðir, where she lives. Email:* [*siggla04@gmail.com*](mailto:siggla04@gmail.com)

**Orality, Myth, Performance: Aesthetic Evolution of Saang Theatre of Haryana – *Ajeet Singh***

‘Myth’and ‘Performance’ has always been two essential aspects of any creative or artistic work produced on the axis of orality. Orality may be considered as the defining element of Indian intellectual tradition and culture. Therefore, it won’t be surprising that all possible discourses of an oral tradition would be mythical and performative in origin. Folk traditions of India have been founded on these three basic elements i.e. ‘Orality’, ‘Myth’, ‘Performance’. And the aesthetic structure of different folk theatres of India is the reflection of these three dimensions of culture. Saang theatre of Haryana exemplifies a performance tradition which was evolved aesthetically and culturally as a mouthpiece of common peoples’ sense of life. It is a unique form theatrical performance which amalgamates these three elements into the aesthetic structure. Saang as a form of theatre entertains people of northern India since twelfth century to present day. This paper discusses the aesthetic evolution of Saang along the lines of ‘Orality’, ‘Myth’, ‘Performance’. The paper argues that the dynamics of myth and performance generates a performative structure which creatively expresses the core essence or ethos of a culture.

*Dr. Ajeet Singh earned his Ph.D. from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and wrote his doctoral thesis on European Experimental Theatre and Ancient Indian Theatre. He has been teaching as Associate Professor since August 2008 in the Dept. of English, BPSMV, Khanpur Kalan, Sonipat, India. His teaching experience ranges from undergraduate to postgraduate levels covering varied fields of literary studies like Contemporary Literary Theory, Indian Poetics, Cultural Studies and Western Literary Theory and Criticism. He has been actively involved in guiding research and other academic activities. As an academic, along with intensive teaching work, he has been doing research work in terms of publishing research articles in different research journals and presenting research papers in different national and international conferences. He has presented his research paper based on a comparative study of Indian theatre and Brazilian theatre in IFTR-2017 Conference, Sao Paulo, Brazil. As an invited speaker, he has also participated and presented his papers in another two important Conferences i.e., IFTR-2018 Conference in Belgrade, Serbia and LMU, Munich, Germany. In July 2019, participated in IFTR-2019, Shanghai, China and presented his research and chaired one of the technical sessions in the conference. Recently, invited to participate and chair one of the technical sessions in ADSA-2020 annual conference held in UNSW, Sydney, Australia. Email:* [*berwalajeet@gmail.com*](mailto:berwalajeet@gmail.com)

**The Ring Is Closed. Wagner’s Variation on Nibelung-Myth as Animator-Director Staged It In 2015-2022 In Budapest Opera House – *Ildikó Sirató***

The Nibelung-Myth on Wagner’s scene served as a national-romanticist (hi)story, The recent Hungarian interpretation of the Ring tetralogy gives us a new context in an industrial-entertaining global culture. The characters of Gods, heroes are transformed into comics’ figures, the fictive spaces of ancient mythology turned contemporary (in)human industrial and commercial environment. What happens with heroes in our non-heroic times? How could operatic framework of the myth work today? How the performance of well known (and in a way cult) opera could change in a new visual interpretation? Who owns the main line of performance of Ring? Is it Wagner even today – as he aimed in his time? Or is it the stage director? Could the Ring tetralogy, an (four) opera change into a contemporary theatrical event? The Hungarian Wagner-cult is the second strongest in the world (after the German one of course). The tradition of performance and playing solutions of Wagner’s operas are very strong on Hungarian stages. We have a summer Ring-tradition in Bartók Béla Concert Hall last decades with international stars, but for quite a long time the first Ring was performed in Budapest Opera house last years. The paper gives an overview, and some thoughts on performance analysis with pictures and videos on performances directed by Géza M. Tóth and offers some questions to think about possible recent position of a European / German myth used by Wagner in 1854-1873.

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**The Myth of Mahié in Zadi Zaourou's *Women's War*; A Dynamic Symbol of Post-Generic Society – *Lou Touboué Jacqueline Soupé***

The rewriting of the myth is a widespread practice in the theatre of Zadi Zaourou. The primordial event that gives birth to the dramatic fable is often a myth. This is the case with the myth of Mahié in her play entitled La guerre des femmes (2001), the central subject of which is the feminist struggle. In this theatre book, the myth of the origin of the Bété country of the Côte d’Ivoire rubs shoulders with the theatrical text to tell how, in ancient times, the city of women, separated from that of men, with whom it was in conflict, are finally united. One of the specificities of this piece lies in the dramatic progression, which is based on the various metamorphoses of initiatory value of the mythical character. Mahié is indeed embodied in four different bodies: Zouzou, Gôpo, Mamie Wata and Shahrazade, physical male, female and spiritual bodies half-female, half-animal. These changes of state, status or identity place the mythical discourse of Zadi Zaourou in a dynamic perspective that gives life to new myths. This communication aims to analyze how, placed in the evolution of the current world of social networks, physical or virtual transformations, feminist fights and struggles for freedom, the metamorphoses of Mahié find a new explanation. Jointly soliciting sociocritical and dramaturgical methods, this analysis shows that in this interconnected world, of sexual ambiguities, of the porosity of generic borders, the mythical figure of Mahié crosses space and time to express another dimension of universal man free.

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**Slithering in Jakarta: Teater Koma's White Snake – *Josh Stenberg***

First produced in 1994 at Taman Ismal Marzuki, Ular Putih (White Snake), is one of a number of Sino-Indonesian narratives that have undergone very substantial change in the hands of Jakarta’s Teater Koma. The troupe has long been a mainstay of Indonesian theatre, adopting an eclectic, always humorous, absurd and bawdy approach to narratives ranging from Shakespeare to Brecht to (as in this case) Chinese folk traditions but never far away from Indonesia’s sociopolitical concerns either. It is natural to look at shows with Chinese background and see in them reason to celebrate Indonesian pluralism, but that clearly cannot account for the entirety of the impetus, since director Riantiarno already began including Chinese elements in the 1990s, when Sino-Indonesian hybridity was not a politically acceptable stance. Rather, this iteration of the White Snake legend is best understood initially as a satire of restrictions on Chinese-Indonesians in the late New Order. Upon revival in recent years, it has become redirected to a study of the limits of democracy and a comment on corruption. Chinese narratives in Indonesia, uninhibited by anxieties of appropriation, can become powerful comic comments on the challenges of Indonesian politics and society.

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**When the Broadway Musical Became in The Legend of the Japanese Kabuki Actor: Matsumoto Hakuō’s *The Man of La Mancha* – *Rina Tanaka***

Matsumoto Hakuō II (born in 1942, a.k.a. Ichikawa Somegorō VI; Matsumoto Kōshirō IX) is a Japanese kabuki actor, whose lineage since the seventeenth century has been closely connected to the prestigious Danjūrō family in the kabuki history. Carrying the traditional family history on his back, Hakuō has been versatile not only in kabuki. Since 1965, Hakuō has been starred in several Broadway musicals in Japan, including “his” legendary production, *Man of La Mancha*.

In Japan, this 1965 musical inspired by Miguel de Cervantes and his novel *Don Quixote* has been known as one of Hakuō’s life’s works—as if Cervantes/Don Quixote were the important role in the kabuki play, so that a kabuki actor could spend his whole life playing it—rather than as a classic Broadway musical. The legends consist of Hakuō’s long dedication to the Japanese production. He has played the leading role for 53 years in more than 1300 performances (and has been directed the production since 2002). Additionally, the “authorities” have given him a symbolic honor, namely the tribute from the Autonomous Community of Castilla-La Mancha (2005) and the twentieth Tony Award trophy for the Best Musical (1966), which was passed to Hakuō after the death of Dale Wasserman. This presentation discovers how it came to be believed in Japan that *Man of La Mancha* is completely Hakuō’s production by analysing the role of legendary episodes and symbolic seals that were told by Hakuō and have been continuously represented in the mass media.

*Rina Tanaka is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Cultural Studies, Kyoto Sangyo University and was a visiting fellow at the Department of Music Sociology at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. Her research interests include sociocultural history of popular musical theater in and between German-speaking countries and East Asia since the twentieth century. In 2019, she was awarded to the Helsinki Prize from the International Federation for Theatre Research. Her contribution appears in The Routledge Companion to Musical Theatre (coauthored, 2022), Milestones in Musical Theater (Routledge, forthcoming in 2023).*

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**Ephemeral Ecosystems in Mythmaking: Representing Moby Dick’s Phantom Habitat**

**– Susan Tenneriello**

In chapter 1 of Herman Melville’s Moby Dick (1851), Ishmael renders the speculative expanse of the sea as “the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is key to it all.” Thus begins his mythic journey aboard the Pequod. The material, scientific, and phantom habitat of the whaling voyage—and of the mythic white whale Moby Dick--is the subject of a vast assortment of storied imagery found in text, visual culture, and performance. My paper explores this figurative realm inspired by Moby Dick represented in visual storytelling and performance as an ephemeral ecosystem of mythmaking. I focus specifically on French-Norwegian director Yngvild Aspeli’s recent production of Moby Dick (2020), which featured 50 puppets and a wide-range of visual techniques: from the panoramic to the cinematic. The production by the theatre company Plexus Polaire of which Aspeli is the artistic director crafted a visual world that often displaces human-centred storytelling to provoke interaction with nonhuman ecology. I foreground Plexus Polarie’s representation of Moby Dick as an ephemeral form of trans-species encounter between human and nonhuman. In considering the production as a portal into both the nonhuman habitat and earlier visual references inspired by the novel, I wish to explore the transformative dimensions in which visual and performance imagery of Moby Dick “ungraspable phantom” places mythmaking in dialogue with nonhuman ecologies.

*Susan Tenneriello is Associate Professor of Theatre in the Fine and Performing Arts Department at Baruch College, CUNY, where she currently serves as Deputy Chair of the Theatre Program. Her scholarship takes an interdisciplinary perspective, often focusing on spectacle entertainments and strategies of display in performance culture. She is the author of Spectacle Culture and American Identity: 1815-1940 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), a study of the growth of immersive entertainments, such as panoramas and site-specific performance, in U.S. history. Related publications include a chapter on “Panoramas,” in Herman Melville in Context (Cambridge University Press, 2018) and “Staging Sochi 2014: the Soft Power of Geocultural Politics in the Olympic Opening Ceremony” appearing in Theatre Research International (2019). Her current book project, Global Spectacle in the Making: A History of the Modern Olympic Opening Ceremony, 1896-2016, examines the history and development of Olympic Opening Ceremonies in relationship to transnational performance.*

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**The Cliché as Post-Modern Myth. A Semiotic Tool in Contemporary Theatre – *Alexandru Marius Teodorescu***

Contemporary theatre is characterized by rapid changes in semiotic meaning of each theatrical sign. Unlike classical theatre, where one object was maintaining its meaning throughout the performance, nowadays, given the great influences of storytelling and post-modernist practices on theatre, the same object comes to bear different meanings during the performance, based on the way it is utilized by the performers. Thus, the audience must be able to make very quick and correct assumptions about the meanings of each sign, in order to be able to understand what is presented on stage. One of the most useful tools that a content creators have at their disposal is the cliché, viewed as a sign in which the link between signifier and signified has become rigid due to extensive use, and gains a purely iconic or denotative value. Using cliches enables the show’s author to quickly assert important aspects of the narrative, such as rapid changes in the location where the action takes place, in order to allow the audience to follow complex narratives. In this way, the cliché fulfils the function of the myth in classical theatre, by creating a common reference-point for the audience to be able to decode the show. Micro-usage of cliches is especially valuable for performances and happenings, which require a fast pace in the changing of conventions inside the show. In post-modernist performance art, using cliches is a pre-requisite of the fluidity and speed of contemporary artistic discourses, no longer a mark of bad artistic taste.

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**Restaging Colonial Mythmaking: Metatheatricality in Jackie Sibblies Drury’s *We Are Proud to Present* – *Jade Thomas***

In African American playwright Jackie Sibblies Drury’s *We Are Proud to Present…* (2012), a troupe of Black and white actors restage the historical Herero genocide. What starts as a well-intended attempt to accurately represent these colonial misconducts, quickly escalates into an unintended comedic take on the historical events the actors wish to restage. Part of this effect is due to Drury’s use of metatheatrical devices. On the level of narration and figuration, the play within the play structure and self-conscious roleplaying trigger a gradual conflation of the actors’ own contemporary racialized experiences with the historical roles they reenact. At the same time, direct audience address implicates spectators in the actors’ awkward portrayals of these historical colonial atrocities. By providing a metatheatrical reading of Drury’s play text, this paper will consider the possibilities and limitations of theater to restage and renegotiate colonial mythmaking in a 21st-century U.S. context. The paper posits that Drury’s metatheatrical take on the historical Herero genocide diagnoses a crisis of theatrical representation with regard to contemporary interracial relationships. To a certain extent, the play within the play structure and self-conscious roleplaying allow the actors to gauge their own historical positionality within colonialism’s global aftermath. Concurrently, the same metatheatrical devices do not allow the actors to collectively come to terms with colonial mythologies, but seem to reinforce contemporary experiential boundaries between the Black and white players. What then, this paper asks, are the functions of metatheatrical strategies in restaging colonial history for 21st-century U.S. audiences?

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**Samuho’s *Bhasaili Re (Yet Flows She)*: Radical Collective Practice and a Myth Re-told**

**– *Munia Debeleena Tripathi***

Samuho, literally meaning ‘the collective’, is a women and queer-centric theatre group based in Kolkata, India. In this paper I will explore how the work of Samuho departs from the usual structures of political theatre in the city in their dramaturgical choices. *Bhasaili Re (Yet Flows She)*, Samuho’s latest devised play, contrasts the journey of the sub-altern goddess Manasa who becomes complicit in the Brahminical-patriarchal order as she tries to secure her place with the elite gods in heaven, and the plight of Usha/Behula, an apsara (nymph) turned human who in Samuho’s retelling, chooses to escape both mortal and celestial systems of oppression, and lives out her days as a river. (In the traditional versions of the myth, Behula’s character arc is strangely incomplete.) In this paper, I will observe how Samuho’s choice of Behula’s fate reflects the orientation of their practice, which is not just attempting to navigate existing hierarchical orders to individual ends, but striving to curate new, non-hierarchical and care-full creative practices. This is rare in contemporary theatre communities of Kolkata, where even within the strong tradition of left-leaning political theatre, class/caste/gender hierarchies as well as hierarchies in the different creative roles in practicing communities have not been addressed sufficiently. I will draw from Nodding’s care ethics framework to explore how Samuho’s work can be a step towards addressing this significant shortcoming. Works Cited, Noddings, Nel. Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy. University of California Press, 2002.

*Munia Debleena Tripathi is an independent theatre-maker and a PhD candidate at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies, University of Toronto. Her research interests include contemporary Indian theatre, political theatre, applied theatre, audience research and practice-as-research. She has completed MA, Applied and Participatory Theatre at Royal Holloway, University of London (2014-15) and MA, Comparative Literature from Jadavpur University (2012-14). Munia started writing and directing plays from a very young age. The first play written by her, Hariye Jete Nei Mana, was premiered at the International Nandikar Theatre Festival, 2009. Plays directed by her include Dil Ki Duniya, Ichchhamoti and Naatok. Her first collection of plays in Bangla, Janla Khola Achhe, was published in 2018. Munia designed the MA, Applied Theatre syllabi for the Department of Drama, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata and taught there as a part-time lecturer (2017-2019). She has worked as a theatre-trainer in several schools and led theatre workshops for both children and adults, focussing on playwriting, direction and devising. She is the recipient of the Jackman Junior Fellowship (2019-2024), CSAC Writing Fellowship (Summer, 2022), Sahapedia-UNESCO Fellowship (2017) and the National Young Artists’ Scholarship in the field of theatre, India (2011-13). Munia currently lives between Toronto and Kolkata. She is passionate about performances and stories and loves making beautiful things together.*

**Past Myths, Present Realities: A Study of *Medaye* by Femi Osofisan – *Ngozi Udengwu***

Femi Osofisan is famous for adapting works by other writers both within and outside Africa. His plays that are based on classical Greek plays include *Women of Owu*, based on Euripides’ The Trojan Women; *Tegonni: An African Antigone*, an adaptation of Sophocles’ Antigone. The present paper looks at yet another play by Osofisan, *Medaye* that is based on a classical Greek work Medea by Euripides. Adaptations across cultures aid intercultural exchanges that foster cultural connectedness. They also afford a transcendental shift across time to demonstrate the relevance of past to the present realities. It is on this premise that this paper highlights the complex gender issues in the play that calls for a critical evaluation of the seemingly accultural and unwomanly conduct of the heroine Medaye in the play. The paper takes particular cognisance of the playwright’s declaration that the play is a ‘rereading’ and not an adaptation per se, of Euripides’ Medea. The paper thus argues that the heroine, Medaye represents the myth about womanhood. Catapulted into the present time, the docile voiceless woman gives vent to her anger, and it ends tragically. Medaye is more than a woman scorned. She represents an attack on the age long emotional abuse of women. *Medaye* is not yet published. Discussion is based on the various reading performances of it that have taken place in Nigeria as well as other countries.

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**Myth and Theatre Making: A Dramaturgical Re-view of the Place of Myth in Select Nigerian Plays – *Mohammed Umar-Buratai***

The affinity between myth, legend and history on the one hand and theatre making on the other not only dates back a long time into antiquity but also has remained strong up to the contemporary period. Notwithstanding the influences of globalisation, there is an increasing recourse to myth, legend and history today more than ever before. Fuelled by the quest for of identity, ethnicity and representation myth, legend and history continue to be deployed in response to nation building and nationhood in the multi-ethnic postcolonial modern nation state. However, the disposition to myth is that it has become like the dream we believe in - more real than the reality we ignore. Yet, many a ‘myth’, is saturated with emotions and sentiments, such that it becomes difficult to rationalise as well as counter cohesive. Besides, there is a circumscribing characteristic of myth that has a negative potential for development. Against this backdrop, this paper attempts a dramaturgical re-view of different plays on Amina, the legendary Queen of Zazzau who reigned around the 16th century. These include Wale Ogunyemi’s *Queen Amina* (1999); Ben Okri’s *Amina-Abstracted* (2015); Ahmed Yerima’s *Queen Amina* (2015), and Ben Tomoloju’s *Aminatu, Queen of Zazzau* (2005) among several other efforts especially in the film medium. The objective is to identify and delineate the biases of perception/interpretation of the extraordinary personality of Amina by these playwrights and to establish the continued relevance of myth to theatre making and the creative arts despite the changing contexts of time.

*A Professor of Theatre History and Cultural Studies in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, Umar-Buratai. He started his career as Graduate Assistant at University of Maiduguri, joined Nigerian National Council for Arts and Culture as Principal Research Officer in 1990. Transferred services to his Alma Mata at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1997. His wrote his PhD thesis on role of durbar, a court art in India and Nigeria under the British Empire, c. 1876-1977. He was Fellow of CODESRIA-African Humanities Programme at the University of Legon, Ghana1999, Fellow The South-South Exchange Programme of Social History (SEPHIS) International Institute of Social History, 1999, Amsterdam, The Netherlands and Leventis-Nigeria programme at CAS/SOAS, University of London 2001. Umar-Buratai was also Visiting Senior Lecturer at the Department of Music and Theatre studies, University of Cape Coast, Ghana. In addition to the above, he served as the Hub Director of the African Media Development Initiative (AMDI), a British Broadcasting Corporation World Service Trust (BBCWST) with a focus on Ghana, Cameroun, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. Overall AMDI was continental research involving seventeen countries of the sub-Saharan Africa. Umar-Buratai had been Deputy Dean (2012-2014) and, Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria (2014-2018). Email:* [*miumarburatai@abu.edu.ng*](mailto:miumarburatai@abu.edu.ng)

**Mythos Berlin: Legacies of Modernist Theatre in an Age of Gentrification – *Clio Unger***

This paper interrogates how contemporary theatrical practices in Berlin seek to mobilise and confront myths of German modernist theatre in the face of gentrification and the rapid demographic, social, and economic changes it brings. Comparing theatrical institutions in Kreuzberg and Neukölln – two neighbourhoods in different stages of gentrification – I show how modernist legacies are visible in current institutional and artistic practices. Drawing on Barbara Lang’s fundamental study *Mythos Kreuzberg*, I trace how theatres mobilises Kreuzberg’s reputation as a crucible of sub- and counterculture and the birthplace of a ‘free scene’ (independent of state funding) to justify their own programming choices. Calling upon the legacy of Brecht and the 1970s sub-cultural theatre collective ‘Theatre Zentrifuge’, for example, Shermin Langhoff has dubbed her style of post-migrant theatre the true heirs to Brechtian political theatre in Berlin. Meanwhile, at Heimathafen Neukölln, the modernist idea of the ‘Volkstheater’ (folk theatre) is being re-imagined and tested. While cautious of the nationalist connotations of the term, the artistic team of the Heimathafen embrace its associations with pop culture, making theatre ‘for and with’ the city and its particular neighbourhood. In this paper I ask what this orientation towards modernist traditions can tell us about cultural politics in Berlin today and how the tension between preservation and innovation plays out in this recasting of modernist theatre.

*Clio Unger is a PhD candidate at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London, where she works on lecture performances and the knowledge economy. She holds an MA in theatre and performance studies from The Graduate Center (CUNY) and an MA in dramaturgy from the University of Munich. Her essay ‘Share Your Work: Lola Arias’s Lecture Performance Series and the Artistic Cognitariat of the Global Pandemic’ won the 2020 TaPRA Postgraduate Essay Prize and was published in Contemporary Theatre Review. Email:* [*cliosusann@gmail.com*](mailto:cliosusann@gmail.com)

**The National Theatre of Ghana: Uncovering the “Myths” of Chinese-Exported Modernism**

**– *Jin Wang***

In 2016, the Ghanaian artist Ibrahim Mahama draped Accra’s iconic architecture, the National Theatre of Ghana, with recycled jute sacks. Considering covering as highlighting, Mahama pokes an inquiry to look beyond the materiality into histories and ideologies of the very building. In a similar spirit, this paper aims to uncover the “myths” that surround the National Theatre. Oftentimes served as the primary example of Chinese-exported architecture in West Africa, the building is, on one hand, discussed in the context of Third-Worldism if constructing a historical genealogy and an alternative of modernist development if orienting towards the future. On the other hand, some scholars have taken into account the neocolonial tendency in transnational architectural practices as such, exploring the building as diplomatic gestures but only imposing symbolic meanings on architectural forms without understanding the logic and design of such performative space. Engaging with the concept of spatial relations and performativity, this paper first analyses the National Theatre from an architectural perspective, arguing for its failure to achieve the overbearing visions and ideologies it supposed to embody. Then, the paper considers interactions happen(ed) in the contained space and that to what extent it is functional in the local and daily context, as the now-standing building replaced the workshop and theatre of the dramatist Efua Theodora Sutherland, an influential figure who contributed to Ghanian nationalist and decolonial performances.

*Jin Wang is a doctoral student in Art History at The Graduate Center, CUNY. She focuses on modern and contemporary art in the global context and from the perspective of cross-cultural and transcultural exchanges. With general interests in modernisms and decolonial/postcolonial practices, she currently works on art, architecture, and performance within the Third-Worldist network with a concentration on Afro-Asian connections.*

**Drama in Substance Abuse Education for Medical Students in the Middle East**

**– *Alan Weber***

This contribution analyses the use of drama to teach complex biopsychosocial concepts in medicine such as substance abuse and addictive disorders. Using end-of-semester exit evaluations and interviews, the research reports on the learning outcomes from a module on drama and medicine within a full-semester course entitled “Introduction to the Medical and Health Humanities” taught for 16 years at Weill Cornell Medicine – Qatar, a branch campus of Cornell University in the Middle East. Students first read Eugene O’Neill’s semi-autobiographical "Long Day’s Journey into Night", detailing his mother’s morphine addiction and alcohol abuse by other members of the family, which illustrates the psychodynamics of the Family Systems Model of addiction. In addition, students read standard textbook material on the diagnosis and treatment of addiction. The themes and behaviours presented in O’Neill’s play are then connected to the modern opioid epidemic through the stories of addicted individuals found in documentaries on the opioid crisis. Students then create their own role-play dramas, with debriefings, on such topics as ‘drug-seeking behaviour,’ ‘addiction stigma,’ etc. The module teaches not only the widespread use of drama in medical education, but also the multifaceted nature of chronic disease and how it impacts individuals and family systems economically, emotionally, socially, and psychologically (the patient experience of illness). Students were surprized at the ubiquity of drama and narrative within medical experiences, and strongly agreed that theatre-based techniques should be explored further within medical education.

*Dr. Alan S. Weber, PhD, has taught the Medical and Health Humanities–including literature and medicine, and the history, philosophy and sociology of medicine–at Weill Cornell Medicine–Qatar for the past sixteen years. He has directed a number of narrative medicine and medical humanities projects in Qatar at the national and institutional level including a nationally-distributed public brochure on Health Website Reliability, a Arabic/English book of patient education cancer survivor stories for the Qatar Cancer Society, a QNRF-funded research project on Literature and Medicine, six volumes of medical student essay writing, and the first cross-disciplinary Art-Medicine undergraduate course in the Arabian Gulf (with Stephen Scott, M.D.). He conducted an interventional educational trial on the use of graphic novels in medical ethics teaching in 2015. He has organized and Co-Directed twelve ACCME-accredited workshops on the medical humanities at WCM-Q. He was the lead organizer of the 1st and 2nd International Conferences on the Medical Humanities in the Middle East in 2018 and 2022. He shared with his co-authors the 2017 Outstanding Book Award from the U.S. National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).*

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**Or the Caribbean Homer – *Maurya Wickstrom***

This paper is part of a larger book project called The Whale and the Waters, dealing with Homer’s The Odyssey, Derek Walcott’s epic poem *Omeros*, his play *The Odyssey*, and Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*. I set these into archipelagic relation as oceanic texts connecting slavery, inter-species relation, and alternative (watery) epistemologies. This paper will focus on the way that Walcott puts Homeric myth and its Aegean archipelagic context into relation with the Caribbean archipelago and African diaspora. Walcott casts Homer’s mythic characters in multi-layered and multi-referential forms, transmuting into other histories. *Omeros* begins with Achilles as a St. Lucian fisherman in love with the beautiful servant of a colonial couple, Helen. Homer himself is a circulating character, sometimes known as Omeros (Homer in Greek), sometimes as the unhoused Seven Seas, or, in *The Odyssey*, the penniless sailor/singer Billy Blue. Like Telemachas, Achilles sets out to find his father guided by a swift. But in *Omeros* he is set on a surreal course to Africa and his riverine homeland to meet his mythic, ancestral father. In the play, *The Odyssey*, a Black Odysseus circulates in a temporal chaos of fantastical and dreamed spectacle in which the sea is the generator of the imaginary. The redistribution and reactivation of the Homeric mythos through archipelagic, watery relationality is not so much what we might call an adaptation of myth in a different context as deriving from myth a complex and rich evocation of oceanic epistemology.

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**Made Myth or Monster: Representations of African Women in Classic Dramatic Text**

**– *Kimmika L.H. Williams-Witherspoon***

From Euripides’ *Medea* to Emile Zola’s *Therese Raquin* to Guillaume Apollinaire’s *Les Mamelles* *de teresias*, representations of Africana women in classic pieces of European drama has contributed to the mythology and convention of the expectation of blackness for Black women that continues to haunt so many of us today. This paper examines and critiques one of Euripides’ most celebrated works and offers a historical perspective of the title character in that text that would set the tone and become a hallmark for writer’s, such as Zola and Apollinaire from the modernist period, as they continued to craft the convention of the Africana woman--from myth to monster, on the European stage. Key words: Myths, Euripides, Modernism, Expressionism, Black Women, Africana Women, Race, Stereotypes.

Kimmika Williams-Witherspoon, PhD (Cultural Anthropology), M.A. (Anthropology), MFA (Theater), Graduate Certificate) Women's Studies, B.A. (Journalism); is an Associate Professor of Urban Theater and Community Engagement in the Theater Department at Temple University and currently serving as President of Faculty Senate. She is the recipient of the 2021, Provost’s Arts grant, 2020 Stauffer Faculty Service Award, Principle PI for the 2018-19 $50,000. Lumina foundations Fund for Racial Justice and Equity. 2013 The Miriam Maat Ka Re Award for scholarship; the 2013 Associate Provosts for the Arts Grant ($1000 ); the KCACTF Distinguished Playwriting Award; the 2008 $50,000. Research and Creative Seed Grant Co-recipient, 2003 Provost’s Arts Commission Grant ($5,000); the 2001 Independence Foundation Theater Communications Group Grant, the 2000 winner of the PEW Charitable Trust $50,000 fellowship in scriptwriting, and the 1999, winner of the DaimlerChrysler "Spirit of the Word" National Poetry Competition (Seattle). Williams-Witherspoon has also been the recipient of a host of other awards and honors, including: the DaimlerChrysler Regional Poetry Contest (Philadelphia), the 1996, Lila Wallace Creative Arts Fellowship with the American Antiquarian Society and a two-time returning playwright with the Minneapolis Playwrights' Center and Pew Charitable Trusts Playwrights Exchange.

*The author of Through Smiles and Tears: The History of African American Theater (From Kemet to the Americas) (Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011); The Secret Messages in African American Theater: Hidden Meaning Embedded in Public Discourse” (Edwin Mellen Publishing, 2006) Williams was, at one time, Arts Producer for public radio, WXPN-88.5, reporter and columnist with the Philadelphia Tribune and television editor for the Chicago-based "Maceba Affairs Media Review Magazine. As a journalist, Williams' articles and essays have appeared in Praxis; the "Hammer" Journal, "Dialogue", the Philadelphia REAL NEWS, POETS & WRITERS Magazine, THE OTHER SIDE, the New York GUARDIAN NEWSWEEKLY, the DAILY MUSE, BLACK AMERICA MAGAZINE, PHILLY BEAT, HIGH PERFORMANCE MAGAZINE and the PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS. In 1986, she received the Outstanding Journalism Award from the Philadelphia Veterans Administration. Her stage credits include, SHOT!, (for which she is also the playwright); “Damn Yankees”; “No Mo’ Blues”; “Shakin the Mess Outta Misery”, "From Brillo Pads To Feminine Pads: Raw Abrasives", "A Product of Pop Culture and Pissed", "Nappy Truth", "Common Folk", "A CHAINED FOOT STUMBLING ON A NEW WORLD", "GUMBO", "WE THE PEOPLE","IZZY","THE BLACK DIAMOND" and "WHERE WERE YOU IN '65". As a playwright, Williams-Witherspoon has had 34 productions of her work, including Wrestlin’ ‘Rona (2022), From Safe to Brave (2020; 2019), “Count Down to Boom” (2014 and 2013); La Baker: Le Femme (2011); “SHOT!” (looking at violence in North Philadelphia which received the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival; Distinguished Achievement Award for Playwriting, Co-Conception and Performance in 2010); “ Survival Strategies: A Tale of Faith (First World Theatre) for which she won the PEW); "From Brillo Pads To Feminine Pads: Raw Abrasives" (Women's Festival/Painted Bride), "Dog Days: The Legend of O.V. Catto" (Venture Theater),"By What Price: Unity" and "Nappy Truths" (Penumbra Theater, Saint Paul, Minn.). Williams is a recipient of numerous Residency, Teaching and Community Service Awards, including citations from City Council, The Goode Admin., the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the key to the city of Scranton, Pennsylvania by Mayor James P. Connors in 1992. A contributing poet to 44 anthologies, Williams-Witherspoon has published 11 books of poetry, 9 book chapters, 10 journal articles and 2 books on African American Theater. Email:* [*kwilli01@temple.edu*](mailto:kwilli01@temple.edu) *Websites: link.* [*http://www.2deep2.com*](http://www.2deep2.com)

**Preserving Memory, Using Myths and the Process of Theatre Work on the Example of the Performative Activities of Teatr Naumiony from Ornontowice Located in Upper Silesia in Poland and Floyd Favel from the Poundmaker Reserve in Canada – *Iwona Wozniak***

How to enliven the local community through theatrical activity, tell about its identity, history and language. Description of the work of the amateur Teatr Naumiony from Ornontowice and the work of Floyd Favel with the indigenous inhabitants of Canada, which, using theatrical techniques, allows the preservation of local traditions, the Silesian languageand the Cree language. Through theatrical performances, artistic activities and workshops organized for local communities and attempts to reconstruct history in the scenarios of these activities, the remnants of memory, tradition and, above all, the local language are preserved.

*Theatrologist, director, art manager, researcher of local cultures; graduate of the University of Opole, the University of Economics in Katowice, the Academy of Theater Practices at the Center for Theater Practices in Gardzienice. I studied knowledge of theater at the Theater Academy in Warsaw. Participant of the doctoral studies "Humanities without borders" at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Silesia in Katowice. Director of the Zagłębie Theater in Sosnowiec. Director of the Naumiony Theater in Ornontowice. Email:* [*iwowoz5@wp.pl*](mailto:iwowoz5@wp.pl)

**Deaf View/Image Art and Deaf Experience: Resistive and Affirmative Strategies in the Work of Betty Miller and Susan Dupor – *Gina Yang***

Deaf View/Image Art, often denoted by the abbreviation “De’VIA,” is the visual-art expression of the Deaf experience, typically categorized under two main types, resistive and affirmative art. Elements of both of these putatively distinct tendencies can be seen in two works, “Bell School” by Betty Miller, and “Interesting Hamster” by Susan Dupor, both featuring a class photo depicting deaf children in mainstream school settings. Initially notable for their vivid, eye-catching colours, upon closer inspection, it becomes apparent these colour schemes each evoke a jarring sense of the painful experience of forced assimilation. Pre-existing scholarship on De’VIA has often adopted a unilateral view according to which De’VIA images are mainly characterized by resistant visual strategies, a somewhat restricted outlook at odds with the range of imagery present in the works themselves, which clearly incorporate both resistive and affirmative elements. This study returns attention to these two fundamental concepts defining De’VIA art, affirmative and resistive. Miller’s “Bell School” and Dupor’s “Interesting Hamster” are re-examined from this dual perspective, considering both the representational content and formal qualities of the two works. Following this critical analysis, this paper argues that both Miller and Dupor employed the typically bright, optimistic palettes ostensibly characteristic of affirmative art in order to cast an ironic light on more resistive messaging, namely the forced assimilation of deaf children into mainstream education, engaging De’VIA’s central thematic preoccupation of Deaf experience through a blending of these conflicting elements.

*Born in Busan, South Korea, Gina Yang is an independent scholar of Deaf View/Image Art. She is currently at work on a study of different political strategies in the work of Betty Miller and Susan Dupor.*

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**Working Groups Abstracts**

**From Super to Human, Demythification of the Superlative in Advertising the Paralympics – *Elena Backhausen***

Advertising portrayals of disability performances try to draw attention to athletes with disabilities in order to support them and expand their reach, but in the process seem to create images and myths that fit the general advertising primacy of excitement, novelty, and attraction that often fails representation and heroizes para-athletes. What kind of myths are created by the stories told in advertising, and how do they clash with the practices that people with disabilities engage in sports?

In 2012, the British television broadcaster Channel 4 gained a lot of attention with its famous ad "Meet the superhumans” to promote the London Paralympics. In 2016, the channel released a follow-up video titled "We are the superhumans," that shows a shift in the perspective on disability. Another four years later the channel abandoned the previously established idea of the superhuman, designing a video that shattered the concept of "super" in superhuman. The last video proves how the perspective on disability is constantly changing. I will explore how advertising can also help demystify established narratives, particularly the notion of independence and individual achievement, two ideals that emerge as two unquestioned values in the discourse of disability. I will outline three concepts, those of making, doing, and being, which I draw from sociological approaches (Goffman, Bourdieu, Foucault, Waldschmidt) to further illuminate the different perspectives on disability sketched in the advertising videos and to understand the instability of narrations, our chance to change them and create new ones that open up a better understanding of disability and crip.

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**When “Telling” Is Not How We Story: On Autistic Voodling – *Julie Dind***

This paper offers an autistic reflection on what it means to film “autistically,” and turns to voodling (a portmanteau word composed of “video” and “doodling,” which refers to an intuitive filmic practice) as an a(u/r)tistic practice that stories in and on autistic terms. While mainstream cinema tends to centre neurotypicality — cinematic language often amounting to neurotypical cinematic language — some experimental filmmakers have sought a more capacious cinematic language (although language might not be the appropriate term). My exploration of autistic filmmaking centres on the filmic practice of autistic “voodler” Rolf Gerstlauer. In this presentation, I attend to the resonances between voodling and autistic ways of being, sensing, seeing and perceiving. In my discussion, I also engage French educator, filmmaker, and writer Fernand Deligny’s work on autism and the image. If the call for papers engages the question of storytelling, my paper ponders: can there be forms of storying that do not function on the (neurotypical) mode of telling? I propose that voodling, as it manifests in the work of Gerstlauer — as a form of autistic filmmaking — opens up a space for autistic ways of seeing, sensing, and being to be shown and shared, without having to be told.

*Julie Dind is an autistic butoh performer, academic and multimedia artist. Her work artistically explores Autistic modes of performance. She is currently a PhD candidate in Theatre Arts and Performance Studies at Brown University. Since 2012, she collaborates with multimedia artist Rolf Gerstlauer on an a(u/r)tistic project titled “Drawing NN inside butoh." Email:* [*julie\_dind@brown.edu*](mailto:julie_dind@brown.edu)

**Theatre as a Place of Refuge: The Mythology of the “Forest. Performance-Mycelium” Russian Theatre Project (2021-Nowadays) – *Aleksandra Duneva***

Starting from the understanding of myth as a secondary semiological system (R. Barth), we will talk about the independent Russian theatrical project called "The Forest", which began to operate shortly before the war and continues to this day. The last ten years of V. Putin's rule in Russia, starting with the protests of 2011-2012 can be seen as an active struggle for the discourse that unfolded between civil society and the state regime. The "verticalization" of life and the mythologization of these processes by the state at all levels (rebuilding institutions, "stealing the language" by propaganda, etc.) were opposed by grassroots initiatives to build their myth – the "horizontal" utopia of peaceful coexistence. Without deconstructing the official myth, socially engaged art nevertheless contributed to the construction of the alternative. "Les" grew out of the projects of a neurodiverse theatre group, called at different times "Meeting"-"Apartment" and "Conversations" (2014-present). The works of this group were focused on building common semiotic (communication, mythological) spaces for people with different health opportunities. The experience of legalizing otherness through identification with various cultural myths formed the basis of the "Forest", which initially acted as an open theatrical laboratory for the study of the heritage of the philosopher and linguist Vladimir Bibikhin. We will talk about the ways of constructing the narratives of the "Forest" as an inclusive theatrical project in the pre-war period and how the project operates during the war from two positions: as a theatre researcher (Aleksandra Dunaeva) and as a playwright-practitioner (Elina Petrova).

*Aleksandra Dunaeva is an independent scholar living in Finland. She graduated from the Russian State Institute of Performing Arts, St. Petersburg, and defended her PhD in theatre history there in 2013. In the last years before emigration and the war she was involved in socially engaged theatre projects in Russia as a researcher, curator, and journalist. She published several articles and methodological brochures on social theatre in Russia. Email:* [*DUNAEVA.ALEXANDRA@GMAIL.COM*](mailto:DUNAEVA.ALEXANDRA@GMAIL.COM)

**Performing Maarte: Interpreting Myths of Multicultural (Un)Belonging**

**– *Jose Miguel Esteban***

Maarte is a Tagalog word used to identify someone, usually gendered through femininity, as being “extra”—as acting in excess of expected behaviours. This paper explores an embodiment of maarte through my dance piece, In the Name of the Mother…? Encountering this performance of failure, embodied through my excess gestures of queer sexuality and mad irrationality within Catholic rituals of prayer, I explore how crip theories of refusal and creativity return me to a reading of my “being maarte” as an artistic practice of refusal—of creating elsewheres and elsewhens amid an expectation of Filipino (un)belonging within Canadian settler myths of multicultural citizenship.

*Jose Miguel (Miggy) Esteban is a dance/movement artist and educator based in Tkaronto/Toronto. Miggy is currently a PhD student at the Department of Social Justice Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, where his research is oriented through disability studies and dance/performance studies to reimagine educational praxis. Influenced by disability arts and culture, Black radical traditions, Indigenous storytelling, and queer performance, his dissertation project engages in embodied practices of improvised research-creation to re-interpret curriculum as a choreographic site for inspiring pedagogies of/through dance. His work has been published in Canadian Theatre Review, Disability Studies Quarterly, Journal for Literary and Cultural Disability Studies, Liminalities, and in various edited volumes. Email:* [*miggy.esteban@mail.utoronto.ca*](mailto:miggy.esteban@mail.utoronto.ca)

**Cultural Policy for The Periphery? Or How Are the Fringe Represented?**

**– *Vibeke Glørstad***

In this presentation, I will explore regional cultural policy documents from the western part of Norway. Nationally – from the Arts Council Oslo Norway, there are now explicit aims for an including cultural sector, celebrating diversity. I will ask how these aims are expressed- or not -in the county and at municipal-level policy documents. How are the aims also including people with disabilities and people with cognitive disabilities? The cultural policy strategies at the municipal level are now segregating cultural activity for people with cognitive disabilities. This is seen in for instance local theatre groups such as Unik and Egenart. There are few examples of inclusive art projects, where artists with and without disabilities cooperate. So though at the national policy level, there are signs of celebrating diversity, this is not expressed at the local level. One may ask if there is certain ableism in the cultural policy in the outskirts and in the rural areas. Or are there unknown -undocumented examples pushing into the centre? What is the character of the cultural capital «given» (?) to people with cognitive disabilities in the outskirts and in rural areas? Do we see examples of how some occupy the third space (Bhabha) performing in a political way on the margins – post/de/colonizing their circumstances? For instance, in the so-called low-brow character of entertainment in some revues with people with cognitive disabilities? I aim to discuss barriers and signs of inclusion, also with a comparison to Ghana.

*Vibeke Glørstad is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Health at VID Specialized University, Stavanger, Norway. She has a background as a social educator and sociologist from the University of Oslo. She has published about Zimbabwean political community theatre. Further political and cultural citizenship for people with learning disabilities. Her latest publication, ' From struggles of belonging to struggles of becoming – acts of citizenship in the drama I answered a dream, with Marthe Wexelsen Goksøyr'. In: (eds.). Lived citizenship for persons in vulnerable life situations – theories and practices. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. Member of IFTR Performance and Disability Working Group since 2016, formerly in the African and Caribbean Theatre and Performance working group. Email:* [*vibeke.glorstad@vid.no*](mailto:vibeke.glorstad@vid.no)

**Photography of/as Crip Mythmaking: Disability Performance and Everyday Life**

**– *Megan Johnson***

As narratives based on tradition and shared cultural values, myths are stories that interpret and explain the world around us. They do so in ways that stretch across past, present, and future; helping us reflect on our histories, take stock of our contemporary moment, and imagine the world to come. And yet, as noted in this year’s CFP for the Performance and Disability working group, how such myths are told—the process and the medium of their communication—is as impactful as the stories they convey. In my contribution to this year’s working group, I seek to consider the medium of photography as a significant mode of disability performance and crip mythmaking. While performance values ephemerality and thus seems to be counter to photography’s capacity to freeze a subject in a moment in time, performance studies scholarship has troubled this dialectical opposition between the two artistic forms. Rather, performance theorists acknowledge the performative and affective capacity of photographs—emphasizing their contexts of reception and the politicized and intersubjective relation they elicit between image and viewer. In this presentation, I explore how photography is used as a form of disability performance and also as a mode of crip mythmaking. Though photography has a tenuous relationship with disability (particularly given its role in strengthening the medical gaze and voyeurism of embodied difference), there are myriad examples of disabled artists reclaiming the medium as a mode of self-expression or to advance disability politics. Surveying a range of such examples, as well as their corresponding image descriptions and alt-text captions, I illustrate how photography becomes a conduit for crip mythmaking in everyday life. This includes works by Chris Donovan, Arseli Dokumaci, Jonathan Sterne, Marie LeBlanc, and images from my personal camera roll. Throughout, I consider how these performances generate, contest, and reimage myths of disability and crip culture.

*Dr. Megan A. Johnson (she/her) is a performance scholar, singer, arts administrator, and dramaturg. Currently a Research Associate at Re•Vision: The Centre for Art and Social Justice at the University of Guelph, Megan’s research centres on disability art and culture, critical access studies, infrastructural politics, public and cultural policy, and environmental studies. She holds a PhD in Theatre & Performance Studies from York University (Toronto, Canada). Megan’s writing has been published in Performance Matters, Theatre Research in Canada, Performance Research, Canadian Theatre Review, Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies, and PUBLIC. Email:* [*majhnsn@gmail.com*](mailto:majhnsn@gmail.com)

**Finding the ‘Third Voice’: Creative Captions, Text Matters, and Translatory Techniques – *Grace Joseph***

Between Graeae’s ‘clutter’ and Carrie Sandahl’s ‘web’, an aesthetic approach to access tends to materialise language within theatrical space. Where Sandahl reimagines the theatre space to accommodate strands of interconnecting, sometimes interfering multimodal language, and Jenny Sealey ‘clutters’ linguistic vectors in her directorial process, both suggest a solidity to these communicative channels. Theatre captions, in manifesting text and implying the materiality of print, seem to be a particularly graspable access tool, both in terms of their explicitly linguistic function and the relative facility with which they can be applied to live theatre productions. By comparison with audio description which alters the aural performance text, and the expense of sign language interpreters, captioning is often considered a conceptually and financially accessible addition by variously resourced artists. In London’s VAULT Festival 2023 programme, there were thirteen captioned shows, four that were audio described, and four BSL interpreted. This represents the scale of opportunity for inclusivity afforded by new technologies and a wider recognition of needs, but the disparity of access tools on offer highlights an underexplored – and, at times, uneasy – an interplay between text and performance. The fixity – and fixing – of print plays into a politics of cure by normalising differing speech patterns and, as a single-handed ‘solution’, sits uncomfortably alongside the alternative ways of knowing offered by Disability Studies. I argue that captions, and especially creative captions, have an unexpectedly complicated relationship with performance, both in terms of production – with implications on acting, agency, and voice – and in their sensory reception.

*Grace Joseph is a theatre director, access worker, and PhD researcher at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her PhD project, shaped by ongoing collaborations with Disabled-led theatre companies, interrogates the aesthetics of access in both rehearsal and performance. At Goldsmiths, she co-convenes the Performance Research Forum, the Department of Theatre & Performance’s long-running public research event series. As a theatre director, she has trained at the Young Vic, worked at Shakespeare’s Globe and Hampstead Theatre, and developed new writing with Camden People’s Theatre and Battersea Arts Centre. She also teaches at Central School of Speech and Drama and Drama Studio London and is on the editorial board of the postgraduate journal Platform. She holds a BA in English from the University of Cambridge and a Level 3 in British Sign Language. Email:* [*grace\_joseph@live.com*](mailto:grace_joseph@live.com)

**Staging Freak Performers in a New Disability Theatre: John Belluso's *Traveling Skin***

**– Alison Mahoney**

In John Belluso’s play Traveling Skin, contemporary disability collides with the extraordinary bodies of famous nineteenth-century freak performers to illustrate a longue durée of friction between disabled bodies and the capitalist institutions upon which they must depend. In particular, Belluso’s representation of Chang and Eng Bunker – popularly known during their lifetime as the “original Siamese twins” – illuminates these concerns about in/inter/dependent dynamics. Through the staged embodiment of Chang and Eng Bunker and several other celebrity “freaks,” Traveling Skin asks its characters and audiences to grapple with the multiple meanings, both literal and metaphorical, that these extraordinary bodies continue to generate long after the decline of the freak show circuit. *Traveling Skin* was published posthumously in 2009, three years after the disabled playwright’s sudden death, and has no history of production. Although the play’s contemporary characters are entirely fictional, Belluso draws from an established archive of freak performers, all while insisting via his character descriptions on actors with highly specific physical characteristics. This makes for a challenging (if not impossible) play to cast, raising significant questions about disability representation onstage across time. Chinese-American conjoined twins, for example, rarely show up in actor training programs – or indeed, anywhere at all. What is at stake in (re)presenting the extraordinary body of the nineteenth-century freak performer on the contemporary stage? Which of the Bunker twins’ intersecting identities can we leave behind as we try to cast these roles? Practically and ethically, (how) is such a thing possible? In this paper, I lean into the discomfort of Traveling Skin’s complicated production logistics to argue that an engagement with the messy legacies and myths surrounding nineteenth-century freak performance is crucial as we craft new stories and modes of embodiment in what Carrie Sandahl refers to as the “new disability theatre” (“Why Disability Identity Matters,” 2008).

*Alison Mahoney (she/they) is a PhD student at the University of Pittsburgh. Her theatre practice and academic research centre on disability and neurodiversity in performance, and Alison is committed to accessible pedagogy and theatre-making. She was a 2020 Mitchell Scholar, through which she completed her MA in Contemporary Performance Practice at Ulster University in Derry, Northern Ireland. Her thesis examined sensory theatre practices for neurodiverse audiences during the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic. Alison was the founding artistic director of Bluelaces Theatre Company, which creates sensory theatre for neurodiverse audiences. She has also worked as the Accessibility Manager at Lincoln Centre for the Performing Arts and as a teaching artist with CO/LAB Theatre Group, working with actors with developmental disabilities. She was also a steering committee member of the Museum, Arts, and Culture Access Consortium (MAC). Alison has presented research at conferences including the International Federation for Theatre Research, American Society for Theatre Research, Association for Theatre in Higher Education, and the Kennedy Center’s Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability. Her short article, “Oily Cart’s Space to Be: Exploring the Carer’s Role in Sensory Theatre for Neurodiverse Audiences during COVID-19” was published in Theatre Survey’s Summer 2021 “Notes from the Field.” Email:* [*amm540@pitt.edu*](mailto:amm540@pitt.edu)

**How Do We Tell the Stories We Tell and How Will We Tell Stories in The Future? Learning Disabled Theatre and Possible Myths of Futurity – *Tony McCaffery***

In Māori myths Maui, the trickster, was born well before time, frail in body. His mother decided to throw him into the ocean, but she also wrapped him in a tress of hair from her topknot or tiktiki. Learning disabled theatre, often thrown awkwardly into the world, flourishes but needs support. The stars of Matariki, known elsewhere as the Pleiades, mark the Māori New Year in July. Matariki is an abbreviation for ‘Ngā Mata o te Ariki Tāwhirimātea’ – the eyes of Tāwhirimātea. Tāwhirimātea, the god of the wind, was so angry when his siblings separated their parents, Ranginui the sky father and Papatuanuku, the earth mother, that he tore out his eyes and threw them into the heavens. The time of renewal, of death and rebirth, and the beauty and power of the stars, are all predicated on disability. How do learning disabled artists influence how we tell stories in theatre? Their contribution reconfigures the idea of the ‘we’ of community by offering a critique of the entitled self and expanding what is meant by inclusion. As practised by Back-to-Back, Theater HORA and Different Light this theatre has a particular relationship with temporality, altering what we understand as kairos or the good timing of performance. It exposes the hidden labour of processes of theatrical meaning and affect that conventional theatre seeks to hide. Learning disabled artists can significantly contribute to the stories and myths of a future collaborative theatre that combines rigour and virtuosity with care and support.

*Tony McCaffrey is a lecturer in Creative Industries at the National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Art, Ara Institute, Christchurch, New Zealand. He has been an actor, director, and writer for many years and is the artistic director of Different Light Theatre, an ensemble of learning-disabled artists founded in 2004 that has performed in New Zealand, Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. McCaffrey is co-convenor of the Performance and Disability Working Group of the International Federation for Theatre Research. He has contributed chapters to a number of books on disability performance, performance philosophy, and research methodology and articles to Theatre Research International, The Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism, and Global Performance Studies. He is the author of Incapacity and Theatricality: Politics and Aesthetics in Theatre Involving Actors with Intellectual Disabilities (2019) and Giving and Taking Voice in Learning Disabled Theatre (April 2023), both published by Routledge. Email:* [*tony.mccaffrey@ara.ac.nz*](mailto:tony.mccaffrey@ara.ac.nz)

**Differentiated Bodies in Performance Art, Between Storytelling and the Artaudian Plague – *Felipe Monteiro***

This paper discusses how performances by performance artists with differentiated bodies, Kamil Guenatri, Nicola Fornoni and the author himself, are cathartic, thus offering a way for the spectators to change their gaze upon disability and reality to see, reflect and interpret them from alternative perspectives. Performance artists’ differentiated bodies keep the score: in the moment of the performance, they become storytellers revealing intimate moments of suffering, pain, heartache, and rupture. In so doing, they convert the private into the political, aiming to unlock and communicate peculiar truths about their clinical condition and related social concerns towards the culture of intolerance and indifference, which might not otherwise get articulated in their ongoing quotidian. Exposing their vulnerable bodies, they unleash and communicate more factual narratives about human frailty and love. The author explains further how, from his viewpoint, these performance operations have similar effects to the Artaudian Plague. The presence of performance artists with differentiated bodies, while occupying the performance space, inhabits the cognitive and affective spheres of the spectators, hopefully orienting their thoughts for a more just and inclusive future. Looking at how Artaud revisits the philosophical concept of catharsis in a transgressive manner in his “The Theatre and the Plague”, the author revamps it for the contemporary practices of performance and body art. Eventually, he attempts to implement the understanding of disability by bringing to light certain overlooked medical truths. The staging of the differentiated body opens new directions for performance: autobiographical narratives, processes, inclusivity, and spectator-performer relationships become part of therapeutic rituals aiming at transformation and togetherness. Examples and visual documentation of the performances illustrate the author’s insight and argumentation, which he positions to broader developments in the field.

*Felipe Henrique Monteiro Oliveira is the founder, director, and researcher of the Centro Internacional de Pesquisas Artísticas e Acadêmicas sobre Antonin Artaud. He is a postdoctoral fellow at the Postgraduate Program in Performing Arts at the Universidade de São Paulo, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Silva Lopes. He holds a PhD in Performing Arts from the Universidade Federal da Bahia.*

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**A Performative Model of Dis/Ability – *Benjamin Wihstutz***

In contemporary theories of Disability Studies, disability is regarded as social or cultural construction, involving myths, prejudice, and dis/abling practices as well as it is addressed as a real lived experience and identity. There exist different “models of disability” to describe the relationship between these dimensions of constructing and identifying with dis/ability (Goodley 2011, 2014). Among them are the social model which focuses on (in)accessibility and social barriers, the cultural model which emphasises the reproduction of images and narratives of dis/ability in (popular) culture, the minority model which compares disabled identity and culture with other minorities in society, and the relational model that focuses on the relations between different social actors and their environments as dis/abling situations (Tøssobro 2000, Schillmeier 2008, Kafer 2013). Surprisingly, and despite the strong tradition of theories on performativity in gender/ queer studies as well as vice versa an increasing interest in crip theory in theatre and performance studies, there is (to my knowledge) no “performative model of disability”. The paper tries to develop a performative model of dis/ability and asks how performance and disability studies can benefit from this perspective. A performative model of dis/ability would not be entirely new but could combine several existing perspectives, notions, and theories of dis/ability. I will sketch three interwoven dimensions of a performative construction of and identification with disability: 1) a performative construction of dis/ability through and by speech acts (diagnoses, prognoses, legal definitions, coming outs) 2) a public display and performance of dis/ability that has a theatrical, situational and temporal dimension of “proving dis/ability” (Samuels), involving aspects of in/visibility, staring (Garland-Thomson), masquerade (Siebers), passing, perform or else (McKenzie), and crip spacetime (Price) 3) a performativity of disability by imitation and (dis)identification (Muñoz) involving playful and satirical cropping and queering (Sandahl, McRuer) and (re-)appropriations of images, narratives and clichés of dis/ability and inspirational/ableist performance culture.

*Benjamin Wihstutz is a junior professor of Theatre Studies at Mainz University, Germany, where he is leading a research project on disability performance within the CRC 1482 Humandifferenzierung. Benjamin holds a PhD from Freie Universität Berlin and has published widely on contemporary political theatre, disability performance and the history of spectatorship. He is the author of two monographs in German: Der andere Raum (diaphanes 2012), Theater der Einbildung (Theater der Zeit 2007). Other co-edited books: Performance and the Politics of Space (Routledge 2013), Disabled Theater (diaphanes 2015), Transformative Aesthetics (Routledge 2018), Geschmack und Öffentlichkeit (diaphanes 2019) Neue Methoden der Theaterwissenschaft (Transcript 2020), #CoronaTheater (Theater der Zeit 2022), and Out of Time? Temporality in Disability Performance (Routledge 2023). Email:* [*wihstutz@uni-mainz.de*](mailto:wihstutz@uni-mainz.de)

**Choreographing, Contesting and Creating Female Representations in Post-Franco Spain; Sol Pico’s Contemporary Leadership – *Eva Aymami Rene***

Spanish dancer-choreographer and entrepreneur Sol Picó (1967) admits in an interview ‘My obsession is the absolute control of the body’ (Friera, 2003). Indeed, from the beginning of her dance career in 1988, Picó has navigated through different constructions of the Spanish woman. In control of her highly trained body, the small and brawny choreographer continues creating performances which disrupt and contest female paradigms in the Spanish democratic scene. Her performances have been internationally acclaimed, but also have often unsettled audiences nationally and around the world. This essay critically analyses Picó’s creative strategies which made her one of Spain’s most award-winning choreographers of recent times. It discusses her entrepreneurship across the recently created governmental structures to support dance (Noguero, 2008; Vendrell, 2012). It analyses her manoeuvres, from working in choreographic collectives to creating a referential dance company which served as a platform from which to engage other artist performers of her time; and this created more possibilities for women to discuss political identities on stage. This work is examined, in this study, under poststructuralist and feminist accounts of power and identity. As Picó performs women’s realities in post-Franco Spain, her practice, we argue, also writes about non-hegemonic gender subjectivities, and proposes new ways for female identities. Other methodological approaches of this essay draw on historiographic feminist studies, re-visiting archives, ethnographic methods of participant observation and oral history interviews.

*Eva Aymami Rene is a scholar, dancer and choreographer. A Senior Lecturer of Dance at Anglia Ruskin University, Eva’s research focuses on the performance of political identities and the construction of gender identity in contemporary Europe. She fulfilled her PhD thesis ‘Choreographing the Silence, Women Dancing Democracy in Post-Franco Spain’ at the University of Surrey, Guildford. A Fulbright Scholarship recipient, Eva researched dance as a construction of social protest at UCLA's Department of World Arts and Culture. Eva has danced and choreographed in different theatre productions in Barcelona with La Fura dels Baus and Less 4 Souffles; in Los Angeles with Maria Gillespie and Victoria Marks, while she also developed community projects with the American Veterans Association, Pina Bausch in Germany, and Rosas Dance Company in Brussels. Email:* [*eva.aymami-rene@aru.ac.uk*](mailto:eva.aymami-rene@aru.ac.uk)

**Performing Self-Determination: Self-Managed Abortion and the Non-Reproductive Ontology of Performance – *Rosemary Candelario***

This paper reassesses Peggy Phelan’s influential theory of performance as something that becomes itself through disappearance. Her complex argument attempts to clarify what performance can do vis-à-vis broader societal discourses and structures, particularly gender and capital. She argues that because performance is unable to be reproduced or repeated, it is uniquely able among the arts to resist the reproductive logic of capitalism. This paper picks up on Phelan’s theoretical insistence upon “representation without reproduction” and returns it to where she started: the performing female body. The paper centres on the 2008 senior thesis project by then-Yale undergraduate art major Aliza Shvarts to highlight the contemporary stakes and possibilities of the non-reproductive ontology of performance. Over several months, Shvarts repeatedly artificially inseminated herself and took unnamed abortifacient drugs to stimulate her menses. Her thesis project comprised this time-based performance, a textual narrative about the process, and an installation. Shvarts’ performance of insemination and miscarriage, I argue, drew attention to the constructed and multivalent nature of her performance, in the process laying bare the ideologies and policies which construct and constrain not only the abortion discourse in the United States but also women’s sexualities. To complicate the notion of performance, Ruby Rae Speigel's play Dry Land (2014), which stages a medically induced abortion in a girls’ locker room, is also discussed, alongside a series of comics that tell the stories of real people’s experiences with Self-Managed Abortion.

*Rosemary Candelario writes about and makes dances engaged with butoh, ecology, and site-specific performance. She is the recipient of the 2018 Oscar G. Brockett Book Prize for Dance Research for her book Flowers Cracking Concrete: Eiko & Koma's Asian/American Choreographies, and the winner of the 2022 Mid-Career Award from the Dance Studies Association. Rosemary is the co-editor with Bruce Baird of The Routledge Companion to Butoh Performance (2018), the co-editor with Matthew Henley of Dance Research Methodologies: Ethics, Orientations, Practices (forthcoming 2023), and the author of numerous journal articles and book chapters. Recent choreographic premieres include Aqueous (2019, Kyoto Butoh Festival, Japan) and 100 Ways to Kiss the Trees (2018, Denton, Texas). Rosemary is Associate Professor of Dance at Texas Woman’s University. She holds a PhD in Culture and Performance from UCLA.* [*www.rosemarycandelario.net*](http://www.rosemarycandelario.net) *Email:* [*rosemary.candelario@gmail.com*](mailto:rosemary.candelario@gmail.com)

**The Legend of The Tiemperos. The Syncretism of The Human Body and Natural Elements in Performance – *Raxá De Castilla Rosales***

The "tiemperos", "graniceros" or tlauquiazquis are people with the gift of manipulating the weather. They maintain the balance so that life in the countryside is favourable and they ask for rain, in some areas during the month of May in México. They are people who through dreams perform cures, and premonitions and receive warnings. For them, dreams are a learning space and the weather is the link between the world of the living and that of supernatural beings. The tiemperos are part of participatory ethnofiction, one that seeks to understand and preserve the world of the invisible. From a staging, the aim is to reach ethnofiction, narrating one or several stories that have dreams as their axis, thus rescuing the importance of transmitting this knowledge to future generations, since currently, this practice is losing strength within the community. The protagonists of this story are the tiemperos, although at times the music directly linked to the project that I direct, will also be the protagonist. This staging is based on the dream narratives collected in the field, using those symbolic and recurring elements that are part of the collective dream imagination. Dreams gain strength in the narration of this legend, thus legitimizing and materializing. Lightning, volcanoes, rain, dreams, and offerings. All these are elements that unite the physical with the dreamlike.

*Born in Puebla, México and based in Barcelona, Raxá is a Doctor in Culture and Society with a speciality in Performing Arts from the University of Barcelona. She also has a Master in Theatre Studies from the UAB and the Institut del Teatre, studied Dramatic Art at BUAP, and graduated with honours. She also has completed the Diploma in Dramatic Corporal Mime, at the International School of Dramatic Corporal Mime, MOVEO in Barcelona. Her research work began with a first text on "The use of emotion in the actor's art", later she carried out her final master’s thesis on "The application of Stanislavski's tempo-rhythm." She has been a beneficiary of FONCA in 2014 and 2019. She has won the third prize in the Story Contest awarded by EILA editors and the Matritense Association of University Women of Madrid. She is the organizer of the colloquium on Humour the Power of Laugh. As a stage artist, Raxá has participated in various shows as an actress and has obtained awards and distinctions for her acting work. Is co-founder of the Sleepwalking Company, which specializes in physical comedy and humour shows. Currently, she coordinates the Theatre company at the University of Barcelona and is preparing the publication of her first book specialising in rhythm in comedy, with a prologue by Yves Sheriff. Email:* [*raxadecastillarosales@gmail.com*](mailto:raxadecastillarosales@gmail.com)

**Cannibal Choreographies: Colonial Dance Drama and Anthropological Legend**

**– Lindsey Drury**

In this paper, I reconsider a history of cannibal fantasies that shaped colonial dance imagination. Indigenous dance drama forms in North America - from Hamat'sa to Matachines - have been in settler reception variously associated with a cannibal figuration in ways that vastly misunderstand Indigenous narratives of magic, eating, and otherization. In turn, I look at ways Indigenous dance dramas draw on the figuration of ‘cannibal others’ to critically address colonial conditions and settler imaginaries while poking serious fun at outsider communities. While myth has long been associated with a kind of bedrock of human world-building, herein, I look at conflict as a builder of myth. I show how cannibal figuration is exemplary of myth as a living method of re-telling and reclaiming divergent, competing, and colonially oppressed communities. Since the Spanish Requerimiento of 1513, colonial expansion had long been defended by church and state with claims of Indigenous “blood ceremony”. Despite the evidence that European colonizing forces habitually falsified reports of cannibalism to legitimate the conquering and subjugation of Indigenous settlements to Spanish colonial rule, cannibal legends long shaped settler imaginaries of Indigenous ritual life (Vento 1998, 69; Restall 2021, 105; Seed 2001, 122).

Thus, this presentation takes on conflicting colonial performatives of cannibal choreography. Drawing from and thinking through an expanding body of work on colonial dance history and Indigenous cosmopolitanisms, this paper further touches upon some of the dance anthropological-historical work that insinuates ties, for example, between Matachines dance drams and West African masked performance.

*Lindsey Drury is a performance studies scholar and historian who currently works on critical/digital research approaches to dance in colonial imagination and the history of performance practices in ethnological archives. Her work thus widely addresses popular, religious, and scholarly ideas about the performing body from the religious conflicts of the early modern period through colonisation and the rise of modernism. Drury's approach to performance history and digital scholarship is further informed by a decade of artistic work in New York City, where she worked as a member and organizer of the performance art community as well as in dance and choreography for experimental music and opera. Email:* [*lindsey@drury.live*](mailto:lindsey@drury.live)

**Scenographies of the Empire on the Russian Ballet Stage, 1880-1917**

**– Hanna Järvinen**

This is a draft paper for a new project on how ballet masters and scenographers imagined the Russian empire in the last decades of the Romanov dynasty. How did dancing and ballet figure in imagining who Russians were, in opera as well as ballet? The 1880s and 1890s saw a rapid shift in how the story of the Russian empire was being told and staged in the metropolitan centres of state power. Ideals of national romantic ‘historical accuracy’ in scenography forged close ties between the performing arts, the kustar crafts revival movement, and Russian populism (narodnichestvo), evident in the work of figures like Viktor Vasnetsov. The consequent re-choreographing of staged bodies later resulted in the emergence of what became known as ‘the new ballet’. Yet, scholarship has effectively separated ballet from opera as an art form, in part because of Wagnerian ideals in opera where ballet was denigrated as a useless divertissement and break in the aesthetic of the total work of art, and remarkably few of the nationalist operas of this period depict Russians dancing. What, then, can be deducted about the relationship of costume and ballet, dancing, and choreography in the absence of actual costumes that have not been preserved from this period and against the narrative that focuses on bodies singing rather than bodies dancing the imagined past?

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**Working Dancers and Dancers Working: Constructing Female Identities During the Depression – *Stacey Prickett***

The history of a left-wing dance movement of the 1930s in the US offers the opportunity to interrogate the construction of identities of a mythical proletariat. Inspired by idealised reports of social changes in the Soviet Union and Marxist concepts of the social function of art, young modern dancers explored choreography that presented women as workers and activists. This paper reassesses narratives and characterisations in events on picket lines, in workers’ halls, on mainstream stages and in recreational classes led by one of the most prolific proponents of a workers’ dance style, Edith Segal. Productions by the Detroit Federal Theatre Project and various union-sponsored dance events in New York facilitated a representation of women as workers, ones who were engaged with issues of social justice and equality across races. The creative work was increasingly perceived as dangerous by right-wing politicians, attesting to the potential power of such activism. How did these empowered dancers negotiate shifts between the workplace and performance spaces? Archival material including choreographic notes, photographs, interviews and publications offer material for analysis of the mythical constructions, delving into the corporeal collages comprised of modern dance technique (especially from Martha Graham), agitprop aesthetics, avant-garde theatre and social realism.

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**Moving Bodies and The Creation of an ‘Alternate Space’: The Nati Dance of The Kullu Dussehra Festival – *Amrithasruthi Radhakrishnan***

The festival of Dussehra is celebrated through various religious and mythological points of belief across many parts of India. In the Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh, the festival marks the occasion of local deities brought from the nearby village to – an alternate arena – to pay homage to the ruling King and royal gods for providing them with land rights. The festival was started in the 17th century by King Jagat Singh. Over the years, this festival has taken a sharp socio-political turn with strong imprints of cultural nationalism that have managed to forge the many ritual and devotional ties; expressed at the time of the festival. The Kullu Nati, a folk dance that belongs to the region, is a successive feature at this festival. As recent as 2015, the Nati performance at the festival was featured as the largest Nati Dance in the Guinness World Record with a total of 9892 dancer-participants. The Nati dance is the ‘attraction’ of the Dussehra festival in recent times. The proposed paper will elucidate the significance of the display of the Kullu Nati dance, specifically through the arrangement of the Kullu Dussehra Festival. It will highlight the negotiations that the state takeover to implement forms of cultural nationalism through dancing bodies in festival events. The paper will argue and highlight the significance of dance and moving bodies in geographical inquiry and the interrogation of the politics of identity, place, and belonging.

*Amritha Sruthi Radhakrishnan is a theatre and performance studies PhD candidate at Jawaharlal Nehru University's School of Arts and Aesthetics. Her current research aims to uncover alternative histories of the practice's reception and consumption by examining the phenomenon of festival events, particularly dance. Amritha earned her M.Phil. in Theatre and Performance at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU, in 2018, and her Master of Arts in Performance Studies from the School of Culture and Creative Expression, AUD, in 2016. She also works on her dancing. Over the past 23 years, Amritha has studied, taught, and performed Bharatanatyam, and she still does. One of Natya Vriksha's principal dancers, she travels extensively for performances, lectures, and other events. Amritha’s research interests, over the years, have focused on diverse aspects of performance. Her practice in dance for over 20 years foregrounds her foundational training in Performance Studies. This significant intersection scaffolds her aligned interest in dance studies, performance processes, institutional histories, the curatorial practice of performance, pedagogy, and arts education. Email:* [*amrita.sruthi@gmail.com*](mailto:amrita.sruthi@gmail.com)

**Histories of the Present: Contemporary Performance and Deconstructing Racialized Origins of Medical Innovation – *Laura Smith***

This paper questions the myth of medical neutrality and considers how performance can materialize the colonial origins behind the production of medical knowledge. Turning to two recent performances, Black Youth Project's performance protests (2017) and Mojisola Adebayo's play Family Tree (2021), I analyse how performance can reveal medicine's history of using the bodies of black women as the raw material to develop medical innovations that prolong white life. Black Youth Project's performance protests at the statue of “the father of gynaecology” J. Marion Sims visually disrupted the monument’s attempted erasure of Sims’s experiments on enslaved women. In Family Tree, Adebayo addresses the medical research uses of the “immortal” cells from Henrietta Lacks, a young, impoverished, Black woman who sought treatment for cervical cancer at the segregated Johns Hopkins University Hospital in 1951. I argue that the “nowness” of these performances can challenge the concept of the past through performing a “history of the present.” A history of the present rejects viewing historical materials as neatly aligning with present-day conceptualizations of the world and works to reveal how beliefs are constructed and normalized. Through performance, Black Youth Project and Mojisola Adebayo's Family Tree draw attention to how the drive to read medical advancements as “advancements” often requires the erasure of coloniality’s racializing function within the production of knowledge.

*Laura Smith is a 3rd year PhD student at the University of California, Los Angeles researching the relationship between dance, gender, race, disability, and medicine in 19th-century France. She is a recipient of the 2021 Selma Jeanne Cohen Award from the Dance Studies Association. Email:* [*laura.smith.01@gmail.com*](mailto:laura.smith.01@gmail.com)

**African Storytelling and Professional Practice: A Roundtable Discussion and Critical Inquiry – *Oluwafunmilayo Adewole***

African storytelling exists as part of African theatre and multicultural theatre in Britain today and is used in various artistic and educational contexts. Practitioners formulate their own methods and approaches (praxis) drawing on storytelling practices from different perspectives to work in various creative professions. There however is little critical context for such praxis. Using narrative and critical inquiry, this paper discusses the outcomes of a roundtable discussion on this topic. The panel consisted of four practitioners, including myself. Our discussion centred on how we engage with African storytelling techniques in our work. The roundtable comprised of a film script consultant and multi-modal researcher, a theatre practitioner and scholar, a theatre-in-education practitioner and actor, and me (a dance practitioner-academic, and performer). I analyse the roundtable discussion and explore the significance of the identified themes to the field of African cultural production where much of the research is on music, literature and Nollywood.

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**Performing Indigeneity in a ‘New’ Land – *Connie Bell***

In 1938, Jamaican feminist, activist and writer Una Marson wrote the play *Pocomania*. The piece explored the stigmatization of African retentions in Jamaican religious and spiritual traditions. Early in 2023, as part of the ongoing ‘Decolonizing the Archive’ project, Applied Theatre Practitioner and Memory Worker Connie Bell produced a restaging of this play - its first-ever performance in the UK. A full 85 years after its original performance, the work received a rapturous response, reconnecting new generations of African-Caribbean people both with their theatrical heritage, and knowledge of their spiritual and religious lineage as diasporan Africans via the Americas. Presented by Connie Bell and influenced by Barbadian writer Kamau Braithwaite’s concepts of ‘Nation Language’ and ‘Tidalectics’ (Brathwaite, 1984) this paper explores what the re-performance of *Pocomania* in London meant in three distinct ways: as the activation of archived dramatic work, as an exploration of a collective cultural memory, and as a tool in the reparative reconstruction of a true African-Caribbean identity in the UK.

*Connie Bell is a Jamaican-born memory worker, cultural producer and public historian based in London. She is a PhD researcher at the Royal Central School of Speech & Drama / University of London, looking at Embodied Memory/ Rituals of Community and Identity in three specific African Caribbean plays in the Black Plays Archive (based at the National Theatre archives in Britain). Bell's work focuses on activism theatre and embodied archives as a historically contingent counter-response to notions of cultural amnesia, contested heritage and erasure. Email:* [*connie@decolonisingthearchive.com*](mailto:connie@decolonisingthearchive.com)

**An American Myth on a Ghanaian Stage: Bush II, US Africa Relations, and the Theatre of Tee-Ball Diplomacy – *David Donkor***

In February 2008, US President George Bush stood on the Homeplate of a tiny ball field of the Ghana international school for a youth Tee-ball game between the Little Dragons and the Little Saints. After a rendition of the American classic “Take Me Out to the Ball Game,” Bush exclaimed, “Welcome to Tee-ball in Ghana. … Play Ball! At the close of the game, he handed out presidential baseballs, posed for photographs and signed autographs, before heading off to a formal state dinner with Ghanaian dignitaries. The youth Tee-Ball game, part of events marking Bush’s state visit to Ghana, is a fascinating example of the long, complex relationship between the theatricality of sport and the stagecraft of public diplomacy. Whereas in America baseball (from which Tee-Ball is slightly modified) is a national pastime tied to grand cultural myths, the sport is almost unknown in Ghana where soccer and boxing provide the main construction sites for a national mythos. What, then, was the significance of the Ghanaian youth in staging this game for the visiting American president? In this paper, I situate the T-Ball game in the larger context of Bush’s visit to Ghana, a post-Cold War “reset” of US Africa-relations from the “containment” of communism to the “enlargement” of trade/aid. Viewing sports as both statecraft and stagecraft, I argue that Tee-ball in Ghana was a softly powered signification of warmed-up relations that repackaged American mythos to serve US foreign policy in Africa.

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**Zemi Ancestor Mask: The Diabolical Diablo Cojuelo (Limping Devil) in the Carnaval Dominicano – *Amy-Rose Forbes-Erickson***

Of all the masquerades in the Caribbean, the "Carnaval Dominicano" is the earliest masquerade in the Americas since the 1500s, introduced through colonial interruption and genocide. It is the most commemorative of all masquerades in the Caribbean with pageant re-enactments that tell a national story, a history of conquests and invasions of Hispaniola, to the “queering” of masquerades. By queering, I refer to the dismantling of hierarchical structures, binaries and obsessive categories in colonial race, gender, sexuality, and nationality reflected in Dominican, and broadly Caribbean, identities in masquerades. This paper traces the emergence of the masquerade character "Diablo Cojuelo" (Limping Devil) in the "Carnaval Dominicano," a composite figure of Taino, African, and Spanish elements that not only perform histories, but embodies ancestors, deities, and ghosts. I deploy a Caribbean folk epistemology of “masquerade” as an ancestral communion with the gods, derived from West African masquerades and Indigenous Caribbean practices with full-body masks/costumes for “spirit” performances. Using performance historiography, I examine performative codes in the diabolical "Diablo Cojuelo," and its colonial history with African deities, Taino Zemi masks, Spanish-influenced costumes, and the reinterpretations of observations from the controversial Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474 or 1484 – 1566). I argue that the ghosts, ancestors, and deities in "Diablo Cojuelo" are palimpsests as spiritual echoes, reverberations, and re-enactments of historical moments and myths from the Spanish invasion where ancestral performers have always sought redress from a haunted and unresolved past.

Dr Amy-Rose Forbes-Erickson earned a PhD in Theatre: Performance as Public Practice from the Department of Theatre and Dance of the University of Texas at Austin in December 2013. Her doctoral portfolio in African and African American Studies focuses on a specialization in the African Diaspora. Among her notable publications are *Caribbean Masquerades as Palimpsests: A Chronological Survey from the 16th Century to the Early 21st Century* (2023), *Dismantling Structural Racism in Colonial Monuments.*” in Nakan: A Journal of Cultural Studies, 2022. Her other publications include *“Balls at Kingston to the ‘Brown Girls’,”1: A Palimpsest for Bleached Brown Skins* in Jamaican Dancehall.” Anthurium A Caribbean Studies Journal, vol. 17, no. 1, 2021, and *Theatre Practice-as-Research in Staging Black Feminist (Re)Memorials in Pan-African Plays: ‘Vejigantes’* by Francisco Arriví and *‘The Purple Flower’* by Marita Bonner in Theatre/Practice: The Online Journal of the Practice/Production Symposium of the Mid America Theatre Conference. She is currently the Founder and Artistic Director of the Pan-African Theatre Ensemble (PATE) <https://www.the-pate.com/>

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**The Veil in the Midst of Turbans: Myth, Memory and the Performance of Masculine Feminity in *Queen Amina Theatre* – *Victor Osae Ihidero***

One of the most adapted and most performed female legends on the Nigerian theatre stage is the fabulation of the ‘Queen Amina’ myth. With over a dozen adaptations on stage and screen, a corpus of performances has emerged on the legend of Queen Amina; all either intending to correct, contextualize, or respond to one precursor dramatic text; or, a complete interrogation of the source myth itself. In this study, we examine the fabulation of Queen Amina’s legend against the backdrop of Hausa oral tradition, aesthetic distance and the prototypic zeitgeist of performing masculine femininity. We argue that the portrayal of the persona of Queen Amina in the Nigerian theatre scene is insular and lacking in profundity given the penchant of many dramatists to highlight her sexual exploits rather than her humane commitment to the Hausa state. We use Theatre Workshop and Performance Ethnography as a conceptual premise to appraise the production of Queen Amina legend at the Ahmadu Bello University Studio Theatre. We conclude that much of what is known about the Queen Amina legend in written dramatic literature falls within the precinct of *fakelore* than actuality in Hausa oral tradition.

**Keywords:** Myth, Memory, Performance, Masculine Feminity and Queen Amina Theatre

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**Spirital: The Coloured Dancer and the Café Owner's Son – *Jackï Job***

The title of this paper points to an inter-disciplinary, original performance created by Jackï Job in 2001. Based on self-created mythology, the crafting of this performance work aims to dissolve skewed racialised narratives that continue to shape social and cultural structures in the world today. In its analysis, the paper argues for a shift in extracting meaning from rational perspectives into more magical, visceral realms of perception. It points to how the Greek mythological centaur and minotaur figures are re-appropriated to unearth experiences, feelings and sensations that have been buried by colonial design. Drawing from Harry Garuba’s sense of animist realism, it elucidates a re-enchantment of the world by engaging with alternative knowledge systems which exist in the sub-material realms of a collective subconscious. It further argues for embodied perspectives of animate and inanimate elements, in order to stretch the elasticity of ancestral linkages and bonds. In so doing, the immediacy of performance dismisses the shackles of the past in determining an understanding of self and reimagines the future. Furthermore, it illuminates dramaturgical choices relating to material objects and locations, as well as its relation to intuition in the making of performance. A more complex and nuanced understanding of identity is understood through activities which commune with the space, as well as the material objects positioned inside it. Ultimately, this paper provides a feminist account of a performance informed by a self-created mythology, as a strategic ontology for the autonomous re-configuring of humancentric identities.

*Jackï Job is a dancer and choreographer, theatre-maker and director, producer, and academic researcher at the University of Cape Town. Her predominantly independent performance career has been eclectic, with performances ranging from experimental solo theatre work to choreographing commercials, directing classical operas and theatre works, as well as hosting television shows. She has created more than 80 productions since the start of her independent career in 1994 and engaged in collaborations with an array of eclectic artists, performing in academic institutions, cultural festivals and theatres in Africa, Asia and Europe. As a performer, she draws from the indigenous as a way to develop the avant-garde in relation to personhood and transformation in South Africa. Her awards include the David and Elaine Potter Fellowship, the Bunkacho Cultural Fellowship and the NRF Thuthuka Grant. Academic translations of her performance processes have been published in journals related to feminist decolonial discourse, soma-aesthetics, philosophy, theatre and Butoh. One of her most recent is a conversation with decolonial scholar, Rolando Vázquez, published in On Curating this year. She currently serves as a Senior Lecturer in the Centre for Theatre, Dance & Performance Studies at the University of Cape Town. Email:* [*jacki.job@uct.ac.za*](mailto:jacki.job@uct.ac.za)

**Migratory Mythologies and Africa Futurism in Jacaranda Time – *Mwenya Kabwe***

As a theatre maker, I have a long-standing interest in African women’s migration and mobility and have more recently developed an interest in exploring aspects of the futuristic in my work. This has led to an interest in bringing migration and African futurism into closer proximity to explore their common territory and how the relationship between them that might be productively put to work in a dramaturgical practice mobilized in the direction of possibility, potential and a more hopeful future. This work aims to contribute to the genre of black migrant cultural production called migritude, developed largely in African diasporic literary circles and tracing its evolution from the Négritude movement. For the 2023 IFTR Conference titled The Stories We Tell: Mythmaking and Performance, I intend to present a performance lecture under the subtheme, Myths of the Future on the Stages of Today addressing the (new) migrant mythologies in my 2017 performance work Jacaranda Time. The presentation will seek to explore what alternative African migrant mythologies might exist in the dramaturgy of Jacaranda Time towards a consideration of how a dramaturgy of African Futures might be put to work in my own theatre-making practice. Jacaranda Time was presented during Season 2 at the Centre for the Less Good Idea in Johannesburg and combined, spoken text, choreography, interactive digital coding and experimental sound composition. I intend to analyse the dramaturgy of Jacaranda Time by applying the pliable dramaturgical framework developed through my PhD study which leverages some of the aesthetic features of migritude artistic work.

*Mwenya Kabwe is a Zambian-born maker of theatre and performance, facilitator of creative processes, a performer, writer, arts educator, and scholar. Kabwe’s creative practice is focused on contemporary African theatre and performance, migration, immersive and site-specific performance work, live art, collaborative and interdisciplinary art making and re-imagining African futures. She has a master’s degree in Theatre and Performance from The University of Cape Town where she was a lecturer in the Drama Department before she lectured in the Theatre and Performance Division of the Wits School of Arts in Johannesburg. She is currently a PhD candidate at the Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies at the University of Cape Town, where she is also a senior lecturer. Kabwe has also taught and directed at the Market Theatre Laboratory in Johannesburg. She is a Co-Curator of the Unrehearsed Futures conversation series -* [*https://dramaschoolmumbai.in/conversations/unrehearsed-futures/*](https://dramaschoolmumbai.in/conversations/unrehearsed-futures/) *Email:* [*mwenya.kabwe@uct.ac.za*](mailto:mwenya.kabwe@uct.ac.za)

**Technological Spirits: Reinventions of African Performance Practices in the Diaspora – *Sabine Kim***

In Ashanti Harris’s Dancing a Peripheral Quadrille, a contemporary performance that premiered in Edinburgh, UK, in 2022, the concept of communicating with spirits is presented in a way that evokes Caribbean carnival but also reinvents it for the diasporic context. The outdoor stage is dominated by gleaming steel pan drums attached to steel scaffolding, yet they are never played by the performers on the stage. Instead, something akin to steel band melody rumbles through the three-metre speakers towering over the set. Reflecting on the practice of Ashanti Harris and other contemporary Black Scottish artists, this paper analyses the ways that myth is both a rich source of connection to the African continent but also something that has to be renewed and reinvented in response to the diasporic condition and also in light of performance contexts mediated by the legacy of colonialism.

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**The Mythical Afterlife of Stories: Re-imagining Tragedy in Three South African Plays – *Elisabeth Knittelfelder***

We connect with each other’s lives through stories, tracing historical lines to get closer yet never forgetting where we are coming from. The myths that are created in the process entangle past, present, and future and allow us to gauge the unimaginable. This paper surveys three recent South African performances that re-imagine tragedy, myth, and life story. *Oedipus at Colonus #aftersophocles* is an adaptation of Sophocles’ ancient Greek play by Mark Fleishman and Mandla Mbothwe which is relocated to the Global South and contemplates the state of afterness in a post-apartheid postcolonial South Africa. *Maxeke* is an object theatre production directed by Itumeleng wa-Lehulere in cooperation with CHR and Handspring Puppet Company. The play re-imagines the life and work of the ‘Mother of the Liberation Struggle’, Charlotte Maxeke, in an intimate interplay between life-size puppets and actors. Janni Younge’s *Hamlet* is an interpretation of Shakespeare’s tragedy which likewise engages in the interaction between physical performance and puppetry and is re-contextualised in a South African landscape. All three performances were staged in Cape Town in February 2023. Their temporal and spatial proximity, their use of various media, in particular puppetry, the questioning and appropriation of European myths, and the recovery and re-creation of (her)stories form an intriguing synergy that delves into present mythmaking and possible future worldmaking. This paper investigates the ways in which these three re-imaginings of tragedy, myth, and life story speak to the (post)colonial present and attempt to envision our collective future in new ways.

*Elisabeth Knittelfelder holds a PhD in English and American Studies from the University of Graz, Austria, and is an awardee of the Marietta Blau Scholarship. Her PhD was completed in 2021 and her doctoral thesis carries the title "Topographies of Cruelty: Radical Performances in South African and British Theatre". She spent extensive research periods at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in South Africa and at Potsdam University in Germany. She was an OeAW (Austrian Academy of Sciences) postdoctoral fellow at the English department at the University of Vienna in Austria and is now a postdoctoral university assistant at the African Studies Department at the University of Vienna. Her work exists at the convergence of literary studies, cultural studies, and performance studies, and the nexus between global feminism, decoloniality, and Black studies. Her current research explores the intersections of necro capitalism, crisis, and violence towards aspects of (global) migration, environmental racism, and climate justice. Email:* [*Elisabeth.knittelfelder@gmail.com*](mailto:Elisabeth.knittelfelder@gmail.com)

**Yanvalou for Haiti: An Affective Ethnography of Ayikodans' *Anmwey Ayiti Manman***

**– *Mario J LaMothe***

The presentation analyses critical embodiments of Haitians that emerged immediately following the country’s devastating January 12, 2010, earthquake in which 250,000 Haitians perished. Namely, Jeanguy Saintus’ Cry Haiti Mother (2010) is a focal point that critiques national and international journalistic reports and public discourse, which positioned Haitianess as Voodoo. Investigating Saintus’ motivation to silence the choreography despite its critical success, the presentation considers these complementary points: his company Ayikodans’ Labour to:

1. direct attention to longstanding White supremacist machinations to silence Haiti, its people, their life, and worlds and reify Haitians as the sole agents of their perceived failures, and
2. to counteract media depictions of the country’s centuries of structural problems, political turmoil, economic precarity, and collective unrest.

Ethnographies of the dance are interpreted through Haitian Vodou’s Yanvalou pedagogies alongside the ensemble’s oral history narratives to situate the choreography within a Haitian/Black social history that mobilizes relationally constituted narratives of precarity and rebirth in Haiti, Caribbean, and other Black spaces.

*Mario LaMothe is an Assistant Professor in the Departments of Black Studies and Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he is also a faculty affiliate in Gender and Women's Studies, and Museum and Exhibition Studies. He received a doctorate in Performance Studies from Northwestern University. Mario's research focuses on embodied pedagogies of Caribbean arts and expressive cultures, and the intersections of queer life worlds and social justice in Haiti. A performance artist, his work has appeared in e-mesferica, Conversations Across the Field of Dance Studies, Women and Performance, the Journal of Haitian Studies, The Routledge Companion to African American Theatre and Performance, and Duke University Press’ co-edited volume 'Time Signatures: Race and Performance after Repetition.' Email:* [*lamothem@uic.edu*](mailto:lamothem@uic.edu)

**The Veil in the Midst of Turbans: Myth, Memory and the Performance of Masculine Feminity in *Queen Amina Theatre* – *Rasheeda Liman***

One of the most adapted and most performed female legends on the Nigerian theatre stage is the fabulation of ‘Queen Amina’ myth. With over a dozen adaptations on stage and screen, corpus of performances has emerged on the legend of Queen Amina; all either intending to correct, contextualize, or respond to one precursor dramatic text; or a complete interrogation of the source myth itself. In this study, we examine the fabulation of Queen Amina’s legend against the backdrop of Hausa oral tradition, aesthetic distance, and the prototypic zeitgeist of performing masculine femininity. We argue that the portrayal of the persona of Queen Amina in the Nigerian theatre scene is insular and lacking in profundity given the penchant of many dramatists to highlight her sexual exploits rather than her humane commitment to the Hausa state. We use Theatre Workshop and Performance Ethnography as a conceptual premise to appraise the production of Queen Amina’s legend at the Ahmadu Bello University Studio Theatre. We conclude that much of what is known about the Queen Amina legend in written dramatic literature falls within the precinct of *fakelore* than actuality in Hausa oral tradition.

Keywords:Myth, Memory, Performance, Masculine Feminity and Queen Amina Theatre

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**(Im)Possible Futures: On Performance, Myth and Black Queer Belonging**

**– *Mbongeni Mtshali***

In this presentation, I explore how practitioners of contemporary performance in Africa and its diaspora draw on figures and stories from African and Afrodiasporic religious and cultural mythologies to author queer visions of black modernity and futurity. I will consider the ways that reclaiming and reimagining ‘traditional’ African myths and spiritual practices can work to queer ends by allowing queer subjects to resist neocolonial frameworks of black respectability and cultural intelligibility and insist upon their place in a transnational black political, cultural and historical imagination that otherwise always already constitutes them as abject others.

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**Mythmaking and Social Change in Nigeria: Mediations from Nollywood Films**

**– *Mark Onwe***

Myths represent, symbolise, and embody the experiences and values of humans and their cultures. Also, they are express representations of their imaginings and projections. Mythmaking processes therefore encompasses all aggregate efforts at emphasising, adapting and constructing myths to, among other things, instruct members of a society in the attitudes and behaviour necessary to function successfully in a culture. Essentially, this study examines the influences, involvement, and intervention of Nollywood films in engendering social change in Nigeria and on the backdrop of filmmaking being a myth-making process. The paper adopts descriptive and narrative approaches to thread the historical perspective to myths in Nigeria’s films and their resultant impacts in driving social change. It is revealed that myth/mythmaking is inherent in African culture and will continue to serve functional roles even as technology and media democratisation shift their performance spaces.

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**Crossing Liminal Bounds: Tracing and Performing the Folklore Stories of Gang Gang Sarah – *Jamie Philbert***

The presence of folklore in Trinidad and Tobago may be classified as Caribbean mythology. It may also be interpreted as direct strategy or methodology of inquiry, a codified knowledge system and a reliable archival medium. One such folklore is that of Gang Gang Sarah, who was documented through oral tradition to be a "witch" who flew from Africa to Tobago in search of her family. She eventually climbed a silk cotton tree in an attempt to return home and fell to her death due to being poisoned with salt. Through ethnographic interviews with Trinidad and Tobago locales who have audited varying iterations of this folklore, critical analysis of the name "gang gang" which may constitute relation to the Bantu-Kongo spiritual diviner, known as "nganga", Bantu-Kongo cosmology, the lineal and geomantic intelligence of trees, and the documentation of choreographic movement research practices, I seek to investigate the embodiment and expansion of Gang Gang Sarah's existence. Caribbean spirituals that lend as musical interventions in the research also indicate the accessibility of multiple African diasporic ontologies. Enabling these methodologies through the scope of speculative ethnography the research challenges the availability of Gang Gang Sarah's influence on African-Caribbean futurism. In such, one main research question that arises is 'what if Gang Gang Sarah did in fact fly home and did not die'.

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**Brown Gyal In De Ring: Traditional Games as A Catalyst for Developing Community Theatre Practice in Tobago – *Rayshawn Pierre-Kerr***

Folk-song games are vivid manifestations of the third theatre phenomenon that has arisen out of the Caribbean. Unfortunately, traditional games in Trinidad and Tobago have been given little focus as an area of developmental praxis among folk and heritage traditions, although they continue to “offer ideas for negotiating the pervasiveness of violence, cultural sanctions, magical practice, and community approval” (Elder, 1976). These ideas have survived within the yard spaces of Tobago. While yards are defined as areas that enable exploration and freedom of expression through play, their ability to simultaneously act as an insulator of social frustrations has long been overlooked. Within the structure of almost every traditional game, are myths that enforce different aspects of socio-communal life and reiterate the gruesomely embedded beliefs, entrenched by colonial ideologies. Simultaneously, it is necessary to accept that the myths and stories found in games have shaped performance practices as they bear the specific, cultural nuances that have later come to be defined as heritage. The paper argues that children first learn the fundamentals of social and stage performance by fully engaging in folk-song games. It examines the ways the performance of myth and lore have prevented historical erasure and have furthered the embodied social practices that have been vital to the development of Tobago’s community theatre. Finally, the paper aims to explain how the stories and myths enforced in traditional play, aid in determining the socio-cultural conditions under which children learn to understand themselves and interpret Tobago, as a re-imagined, post-colonial society.

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**Between the Old and the New that Was: The Intertextuality of Abdallah’s *Song of The Pharaoh*…, As a Historical Corrective – *Rashida Resario***

Since the introduction of the concept of intertextuality by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s, it has occupied an important position in critical work on cultural practices and power relations. Intertextuality generally refers to the multiple ways in which any text echoes other texts through manifest or covert citations, allusions, assimilations, and other forms of references. It operates on the idea that texts are essentially ‘absorption’ and ‘transformation’ of other texts. Its usefulness as a concept lies in how it highlights the relationality and connection among texts, while serving critical functions as well. In this paper, I examine the intertextuality of a 21st-century Ghanaian play, "Song of the Pharaoh: Abibigoro on the Life and Times of Pharaoh Akhnaten", by Mohammed Ibn-Abdallah. The paper explores how Abdallah echoes an ancient Greek text, "Oedipus Rex", and biblical narrative as a form of historical corrective, serving a critical function to draw attention to the influences of Ancient Egypt on western civilisations. I argue that, unlike other texts that derive from classical texts, Song of the Pharaoh…, in keeping with the historicity of "Abibigoro", questions the originality of its source material, even as it tells a (cautionary?) tale about transformational leadership.

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**The Heartman of Barbados: Myth, Folklore, Storytelling or Truth – *Carla Springer***

As a young child, I was told to be inside the house before dark. Never understanding the reason behind this request from my grandmother, or her insistence that my friends leave every evening before sundown, we continued to play behind the thick trees until late into the night, until Jimmy went missing!

The story of The Heartman has been told from generation to generation, from griot to griot; the account was never the same from any of the raconteurs. Several elders have told their own versions of “the truth”, holding fast to the “get home before dark”. One common thread throughout however, was that he came to steal the hearts of young boys so he could perform his rituals to the spirits. Possibly coming across the oceans on the slave ships, these stories may have been told by our ancestors to their children. No one could tell the origins and no one could give an exact description of this person, and when they did, no two were alike. The myth seemingly became reality in September 1951 when a young fisherman was accused and charged with murdering a 9-month-old child, dissecting his body, removing the heart, liver and brain, and carrying out rituals in a cave. But was there really a “Heartman” terrorizing Barbadian homes in the dead of night, or was the folklore passed on by storytellers over the many years to keep children off the streets at nightfall.

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**A Picture and a Thousand Words: Iya Ile Ookan’s Selected Facebook Posts as Virtual Storytelling – *Tosin Tume***

With the advancement of technology, the art of storytelling has transcended its traditional confines and found its way to the social media. Resultantly, we now have celebrity virtual storytellers on social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. Though the mediums may have been extended, the nature, elements, and functions of storytelling remain the same. Judging by the quality of her posts and the number of her followers, Iya Ile Ookan is identified as one of the celebrated virtual storytellers on Facebook Yoruba. Drawing insight from Aristotle’s framework for storytelling, this paper conceptualizes virtual storytelling and appraises the status of Iya Ile Ookan as a virtual storyteller. It investigates the negotiation of storytelling as an art between multiple spaces. Through contextual analysis, the study explores the socio-cultural relevance of selected stories and pictures posted by Iya Ile Ookan on Facebook. To process the posts under study, inferential analysis is used to interpret the reception and response of Iya Ile Ookan’s audience. An engagement with the posts reveals that Facebook functions as a viable platform for Iya Ile Ookan’s art of virtual storytelling and social commentary. Her consistent deployment of Yoruba myths and proverbs as storytelling devices for didactic and satiric purposes, establishes her Facebook page as a site of cultural renaissance for Yoruba Facebook users.

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**Performing Post-Colonial Ghanaian Fancy-Dress Masquerade towards the Restoration of Social Equilibrium through *Sankɔfa* – *Aaron Yeboah Annan***

This paper examines how Ghanaian masquerade, in the service of *Sankɔfa*, can set a contemporary stage for restoring social equilibrium. Roughly translated, *Sankɔfa* is an Akan concept referring to the idea of revisiting pre-colonial beliefs, customs, religious rituals, and traditional practices in order to reconcile post-colonial Ghanaian culture with its colonial past. Performing *Sankɔfa* is also a way of acting to repair communal relationships amongst tribes. In this study, we investigate how fancy-dress masquerading in Ghana can be seen to restore—or even to create—a sense of community following the rupture of colonization, and how this theatricalized evocation of Ghanaian people’s past can serve to sustain social equilibrium in the 21st century. In the end, we argue that this old/new performance practice can be effectively exploited to restore social equilibrium by working towards constructing a sense of cultural cohesion and community involvement. Key words: *Sankɔfa*, *Sakraboundi*, Ghanaian Masquerade, Carnival, Pre-colonial, Post-colonial

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**The Stories from the Rehearsal Room: Deconstructing Yudai Kamisato’s Immigration Ghost Stories – *Beri Juraic***

In Okinawa, ghosts and monsters are said to be part of everyday life and many ghost stories are told and re-told daily. In his latest work, Yudai Kamisato, an award-winning Japanese playwright and director born in Peru, uses these stories to re-imagine theatre from ‘a place of seeing’ to ‘a place of seeing through listening’. This new project entitled Immigrant Ghost Stories (2022) is based on ghost stories from Thailand, Laos, Bolivia and Okinawa and takes us on a journey of discovery of the history of migration and wars in the Asia-Pacific. Emerging from the pandemic, Kamisato uniquely rehearsed this play. The director was the only one allowed to travel to rehearse one-to-one with performers. The performers would not meet until a week before the premiere. The production staff was also not allowed in the rehearsal room but could watch over Zoom in real-time or a recording. In autumn 2022, I was invited to these online/offline rehearsals which gave me a rare insight into the theatre practice of this acclaimed Japanese theatre-maker. Combining my own notes from the rehearsals and Kamisato’s own writings, I will explore the ways these ghost stories are deconstructed and reconstructed in the rehearsal room. Using Nanase Shirota’s conceptualisation of listening (2021), the so-called, ‘nagara’ or ‘while’ listening, and Hiroki Azuma’s Philosophy of Tourist (2017), I will also examine how this new method destabilises the ideal model of the rehearsal process.

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**Panata Sa Bundok: Performing Devotion and Religion in Mount Banahaw**

**– Davidson Oliveros**

Mount Banahaw, located in the province of Quezon on the island of Luzon, is an active volcano complex in the Philippines. Aside from being a destination for hikers because of its elevation, locals and pilgrims believe that Mount Banahaw possess supernatural powers. Believers flock to Mount Banahaw hoping that their sickness would be cured or that their prayers would be heard and granted by the Christian God. One of the groups that frequently visit Mount Banahaw is the Kapatiran ng Lolo Patriarcha San Jose (Brotherhood of Saint Joseph the Patriarch). Every Holy Week in the Christian calendar, the Kapatiran brings its members and other interested individuals to exercise their religious devotion by going to the various “holy sites” in Mount Banahaw. Members of the Kapatiran visit and pray in caves, rock formations, boulders, and springs, which are believed to have spiritual and healing powers. This paper is a descriptive illustration of the performative acts that the Kapatiran does as they traverse the sacred sites in Mount Banahaw. Using cultural performance in understanding these acts, this paper highlights the relationship between the Kapatiran members and the sites in Mount Banahaw as the former perform their panata or sacred vow for healing and personal favours. This paper posits that the acts performed by the Kapatiran and the other pilgrims that troop Mount Banahaw contribute to its repertoire of mythical narratives.

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**Truth-making or Myth-making? The Portrayal of Huineng in the Play and the Production of Gao Xingjian’s Snow in August – *Tsu-Chung Su***

Gao Xingjian’s Snow in August is based on the life of Huineng (633-713), the Sixth Patriarch of Zen Buddhism and founder of the Sudden Enlightenment School. Snow in August is the first time in Chinese drama that Zen has been successfully integrated into a play. Drawn from Huineng’s Platform Sutra and various Koan cases, the play is about Huineng’s life and teachings, including his famous gatha poem: The bodhi is not a tree, / Nor the mind a mirror bright; / Buddha nature is always pure, / Where can any dust alight? In the play, Huineng is first referred to as “the barbarian from the south” and the episodes of Huineng’s life are highlighted in Snow in August. The 2002 production of Snow in August in Taipei, directed by Gao Xingjian himself, was an extravaganza. It featured fifty actors and actresses, a chorus of fifty, four percussionists, and a symphony orchestra made up of ninety musicians for a total of two hundred-odd performers. What is the portrayal of Huineng in the play and the production of Gao Xingjian’s Snow in August? Is Huineng, an illiterate Chinese Zen Buddhist master, an enlightened monk? a non-conformist? Or a freewheeling thinker? Is he a mouthpiece of the Chinese quintessential intellectual tradition? Is Huineng’s life the vehicle to embody Gao’s worldview, theatre vision, and philosophy of life? Is Huineng a tool for truth-making or myth-making? Or truth-making and myth-making are very much the same thing because they all refer back to the act of story-telling and theatre-making? What does Gao mean when he says that the play requires “a powerful theatrical form”? Does he mean that the play needs to be performed by “omnipotent actors” and enacted by an all-encompassing theatre which Gao called “omnipotent theatre”? In a word, this paper proposes to deal with the issues of characterization, dramaturgy, and theatricality in Snow in August written and directed by Gao Xingjian.

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**Celebration and Remembrance in Kalibo’s Ati-Atihan: Myth-making as Recuperation of Cultural Memory – *Sir Anril Pineda Tiatco***

The Ati-Atihan, in the town of Kalibo on Panay Island, is described in popular literature as the Philippine Madri Gras, only mixed with the veneration of the Santo Niño (the Child Jesus). The festival is composed of a series of impassioned dances called sad-sad (loosely to jump to the beat of the drum). The weeklong festive dancing culminates on a weekend via a cultural dance competition among the people of Panay Island. The groups competing for the grand prize apply soot on their faces and extremities to appear like the ati, the so-called first inhabitants of the Philippine Islands. The devotion is believed to date back to the 17th century and have been introduced by the Spanish colonizers. Nonetheless, the dance competition was only introduced in 1972. The history of the weeklong festival is obscure. To the people of Kalibo, both the dance competition and the devotion are not only honouring the Santo Niño but also respectfully acknowledging their ancestors, the ati. To historians, the source of the modern festival is attributed to the epic Maragtas, which literally means, the History of the Great People. Written by a local poet Pedro Alcantara Monteclaro, Maragtas is based on written and oral sources available to him, which makes the epic debatable as to whether or not it is purely fictional. In the presentation, it is argued that myth-making through performing tradition is an act of decolonization. It is an act of strategic essentialism rerouting cultural memory outside the narrative of the colonizers or the mainstream historical discourse. In the end, the ati-atihan is asserted as a counter-narrative to the archived descriptions written by the Hispanic chroniclers and annotators about the colonized people as savages.

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**Fight for Freedom: Zuguang Wu’s Poetic Myth Adaptations During the Semi-colonial Period in China – *Qi Wang***

In the 1940s, the famous Chinese playwright Zhuguang Wu had successively written three unique-style plays of mythology: The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl, The Story of Zhong Kui Ghost-Catching, and The Goddess Chang’s Fly to the Moon, which led to tremendous attention and popularity during the semi-colonial period in China. Wu’s modern myth plays are not only an inheritance of the tradition of ancient myth plays but also an expansion in the expression form of modern drama. Wu's myth adaptations displayed his thoughts on semi-colonial society through ancient myth subject matters presented in the spatial modes of fairyland and the human world, as well as the domain of the evil spirit and the human world. Meanwhile, these various spaces represented various social situations in various semi-colonial areas at the time. Human beings, ghosts, and gods also got new identities as unconventional characters in his plays. Though the unique Chinese poetic element was filled with three plays to relieve the hidden political meanings, Wu was threatened by the Shanghai government to stop writing these plays, which revealed a ghost-ridden society through a high blend of myth and reality. This paper is an attempt to analyse Wu’s special aesthetic pursuits from the perspective of colonization theory in his myth plays.

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**Ibsen for Sexual Activism: Interrogating the Myth Of “Left-Over Women” In Urban China – *Liyang Xia***

My paper looks at an activist Ibsen production in Shanghai, where the message speaks louder than the form. The Greatest Event in a Doll’s Life, devised by four Shanghai-based women, interrogates the “left-over women” myth in urban China that is pressuring women in their twenties to get married and have children “before it is too late”. This case study examines Chinese women’s status one hundred years after Ibsen’s Nora became the icon for women’s emancipation. The production is a sharp criticism of the state control over women’s sexuality that started with the one-child policy in the 1980s and culminated in a nationwide crisis of low birth rate. Sexuality has not been an explicit component of the Chinese women’s liberation movement until recently. Women’s body has always been under severe state control even during the May Fourth period, reflected in, for example, female students’ dress code. This paper explores further the woman question in China in the twenty-first century where women are once again being exploited by the nation to be “good wives and wise mothers”. The research in this paper is based on both the performance itself and interviews with the creators, whose life experiences shed light upon the meaning of Ibsen’s drama in today’s China.

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**Re-Creating Myths and Stereotypes of Africans on TikTok – *Rowland Amaefula***

Social media provides African youths an alternative platform for engaging and reconstructing taboo subjects, including harmful myths and stereotypes. Netizens exploit the pervasive nature of the medium to re-make perceptions and resist misconceptions of their lived experiences. With the increasing availability of the internet and web 2.0 channels to Africans, young women have also taken it up to express their talents. In recent times, a new generation of young women has leveraged digital spaces to circulate performances that spark multicontinental conversations, pushing back negative and unfounded narratives of Africans propounded by non-Africans. The study examines this trend, exploring the dramatic aspects of TikTok videos produced by these young women. Specifically, two such women, Charity Ekezie of Nigerian descent, and a Ugandan model, Angella Summer Namubiru produce hilarious TikTok skits owning up non-Africans’ primordial view of Africa as a continent lacking internet access, running water, and other basic infrastructure. Through content analyses of selected TikTok gigs produced by these two women, I argue that their contents deploy humour to reject typecast narratives pigeonholing Africans to barbarity. Although they playfully embody these negative conceptions of the continent, the undercurrents of their acts counteract these self-identifications. I read them as acts of resistance that dismantle deleterious notions of Africa, foreground the naivety of accusers, and make them the butt of their jokes.

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**Network Research in Theatre History: Theatre Migrants in the 19th Century Habsburg Empire – *Jorit Jens Hopp***

The concept of a "scientific turn" has perhaps been overused in recent years, yet since the early 2000s, a noticeable turn towards networks can be discerned in the scientific community. Be it in the use of social media networks for own career or in the hope of being able to understand such diverse phenomena as the spread of diseases, the collapse of economies or the radicalisation of young people more profoundly by reinterpreting the underlying systems as networks. The field of theatre research is also increasingly using "networks" as a metaphor. However, the use of quantitative methods of network research, established in other academic disciplines, still seems under-researched in our field. This is particularly irksome because not only we could potentially gain new insights through these methods, but other disciplines could also benefit from a critical questioning of their methods. As part of the ERC project T-MIGRANTS led by Prof. Szymanski-Düll, I have been working on the use of such methods and their implications for theatre historiography. Based on impulses from social geography, historical migration and network research, I’ve been analysing the migration paths of theatre professionals in the Habsburg Empire of the 19th century, to what extent cooperations between theatres and artists form a stable, relational structure over the decades and how these systems interact. Working across disciplines and with such a focus on theatre professionals, which were often poorly captured by historical bureaucracy, I repeatedly encounter bottlenecks in my research that point to the limitations of network research methods and data models established in other disciplines. In my conference paper, I would like to precisely address these. In addition to questions about working with incomplete and heterogeneous data sets, the development of data models across source types and the need for new interpretive procedures, I would also like to express some reflections on the ethical implications and epistemic violence of digital network research methods.

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**Methodological Reflection for Analysing Institutional Dramaturgies – *Alexandra Portmann***

The opening up of institutions, participation and diversity are keywords that have shaped cultural funding in German-speaking Europe at least since the international #Me Too and Black Lives Matter protests. Working conventions, existing structures and unquestioned rules within institutions are the focus of criticism and should be questioned and changed through support programs, for example with the help of a coaching person. If, following Boenisch (2021), institutional dramaturgy is understood as an analytical category that examines the interrelationship between values, aesthetic practices, and institutional processes, then this paper aims to explore the value of participation and opening up the institution based on selected production houses in Switzerland (e.g. Gessnerallee Zürich and Kaserne Basel). The focus of the presentation will be on internal processes such as working methods and production conventions (e.g. Kunst 2015, Harvie 2013) as well as on the institution's communication strategies and self-positioning in the sense of Trenscényi’s macro dramaturgy (Trenscényi 2015). Following Bojan Kunst's understanding of the institution as a potentiality that performatively produces itself through its own practices (Kunst 2018), the paper assumes that the values of openness and participation have been performatively brought forth through the construction and maintenance of organized networks (Rossiter/Lovink 2018). In addition to my theoretical discussion of the concept of institutional dramaturgy along with selected case studies, the paper also offers a methodological reflection on how institutional dramaturgy can be analysed using tools from the Digital Humanities such as topic modelling and network visualization (Varela 2021).

*Alexandra Portmann is an Assistant Professor of Theatre Studies with a focus on contemporary theatre at the University of Bern (Switzerland). She worked as Lecturer at the University of Cologne (Germany) and completed several research stays in the UK (e.g. Queen Mary UL, University of Kent) and Germany (e.g. LMU Munich). She is currently leading the Swiss National Science Foundation-funded project 'Festivals and Institutional Changes. Perspectives on international Theatre Production’ (2019-2023). Her research interests include contemporary theatre and performance art in Europe, institutional change, and criticism, (theatre) historiography, cultural politics and economics, theatre-making in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, and Shakespeare. Email:* [*alexandra.portmann@gmx.net*](mailto:alexandra.portmann@gmx.net)

**A Digital Archive for Theatre Censorship in the 20th Century – José Pedro Sousa**

Theatre Censorship has produced throughout the times an almost never-ending amount of data, difficult to find and gather not only because of the volume of information but also because many of these documental sources are scattered in different collections of various archives. If, from the 16th to the 19th centuries, some of this information is already available in online databases in Portugal and the United Kingdom, the same does not seem to apply to the 20th-century theatre censorship in these two nation-states. Although most recent studies draw mainly on 20th-century theatre censorship the output has been fundamentally published in the book format (see Nicholson 2003-15, Cabrera 2013). The volume, characteristics and complexity of 20th-century theatre censorship are prone to an approach that takes into consideration the multiple benefits of the digital medium for two main reasons: 1) the exponential growth of documental sources that makes the data virtually unmanageable, and 2) the technical advances in recording and preserving audio and visual components of the performance. In this presentation, I will contemplate the specificities of 20th-century theatre censorship across cultures (UK and Portugal) to provide a blueprint for a database that can better accommodate and organize the variety of material sources as well as the different ways each country archived their censorship files on theatre and performance.

*José Pedro Sousa holds a PhD in Theatre Studies (University of Lisbon). At the moment he is an MSc student in Digital Humanities at University College London. He is also a researcher and vice-coordinator of the research group “History of Theatre in Performance” in the Centre for Theatre Studies at the School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon, and a member of the Research Group Digital Humanities in Theatre Research of the International Federation for Theatre Research. Email:* [*sousazepedro@hotmail.com*](mailto:sousazepedro@hotmail.com)

**My Body Is Your Shrine: Death, Myth, And Embodied Wanderings with Ancestors**

**– *Sai Bhatawadekar***

Myths and rituals of death in various cultures fulfil myriad functions and needs - of knowing and being. Whether we seek solace in sitting by the gravestone of a loved one, or see birds carrying their flying spirits; whether shadows haunt the crevices of our consciousness, or we carry their memories embedded in our very bodies, in winding spine and rippling wrists - these are performative explanations of the unknown as well as ways to cope with loss and grief. Wandering through cemeteries, I had written three poems on these myths surrounding the passing of loved ones and our embodied memory of it. In 2021, I got to choreograph these poems into one dance set to a cello composition. Storytelling through graveyards, songbirds, and stomping feet, I also projected the dancers’ shadows on the back screen, blurring boundaries between the living and the dead, us and our ancestors, embodied worlds and spirited realms. Initially drawing upon Indian movement vocabulary, my choreography went beyond cultural and stylistic definitions. Performed on the Kennedy Theatre Mainstage at the University of Hawai‘i, this performance - titled RRegh - was honoured at the national level by the American College Dance Association for its Gala Concert in 2022. One adjudicator stated, "I felt ties to my own ancestral connection with Polynesia and with my Native American indigenous culture roots...I felt all that connection, it could have been from the stomping, the clapping, and this kind of continuous cycling and orbing and shifting of people…beautiful work...I was moved by it." Ultimately, this work proved to be a healing piece for me: my mother died a year later, and I felt as though in that performance a year earlier, I had written out her death, its trauma, and her memory in and as my body. My body is her shrine! I envision this presentation as a combination of installation, presentation, and workshop, although it can be either/or depending upon the conference needs: a video of the dance, followed by my presentation on the concept addressing the conference theme - myth, myth-making, and performance - along with a movement workshop, exploring death, myth, and memory. It will include teaching the participants my own choreography and also exploring the participants’ own creative impulses out of their cultures, myths, and experiences. This will facilitate cross-cultural exchange in embodied practices and alternative epistemologies.

*Sai Bhatawadekar, Associate Professor at University of Hawai‘i, is a choreographer, theatre director, poet, philosopher, and teacher. Her expertise and publications include Hindi film history and analysis, Indian popular culture, dance, and music, film adaptations of literature, Marathi theatre, German-Indian theatre and film connections, Hindi-Urdu and German language pedagogy, East-West cross-cultural studies, and German philosophical interpretations of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. She was the co-director, choreographer, lyricist, music supervisor/co-composer, singer, dramaturge, and language coach of A Midsummer Night's Bollywood Dream - A Kennedy Mainstage production in 2019, for which she received the John F. Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts Meritorious Achievement Award and the Hawaii State Theatre Council’s Po’okela Awards. Her original dance piece RRegh (from the 2021/22 Mainstage dance concert Sphere) was selected at the national level by the American College Dance Association (ACDA) and shown during its nationwide Virtual Gala Concert on May 1, 2022. For her creative pedagogy, she has also received the university-wide Board of Regents' Medal for Excellence in Teaching and the "Master Teacher" title by the Centre for Teaching Excellence. Email:* [*saib@hawaii.edu*](mailto:saib@hawaii.edu)

**Decolonizing Consciousness**

**Selected Sub-theme: Embodying Decoloniality in Myth and Performance – *Matteo Bonfitto***

Using as material the historical processes of colonization that occurred between Brazil and Portugal, this proposal has as its central axis the exploration of modes of decolonization that, through performative practices of embodiment, articulates multi-layered narratives, which involve political, sociological, anthropological, philosophical, psychoanalytical and spiritual aspects, in order to seek to create conditions for a process of decolonization of consciousness to be activated.

*Matteo Bonfitto is an actor-performer, theatre director, writer and researcher. Academic qualifications: University Degree in Drama gained at the DAMS (Drama, Art & Music Studies) of the University of Bologna. Later he was awarded his PhD from the Royal Holloway University of London. Postdoctoral Research Fellow: CUNY, New York City; Freie Universität Berlin, Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle and INSR Florence. He is the author of several articles and books published in different languages ​​about the processes of the actor-performer and his artistic trajectory includes shows and performances presented in Brazil, Chile, France, Italy, Germany, the United States, Portugal, Colombia, Scotland, China, Australia, Ecuador and Cuba. He is the artistic director of Performa Teatro (*[*www.performateatro.org*](http://www.performateatro.org)*). Email:* [*matteobonfitto@gmail.com*](mailto:matteobonfitto@gmail.com)

**Practitioner-as-Researcher – *Alexander Boyd***

Intercultural Roots (IR) is proposing a different way of rethinking what is research in the arts and humanities for health, ecology and wellbeing that could be described as ‘practitioner-as-researcher’. The UK based yet internationally-facing non-profit that, while independent, was born from the IFTR Embodied Research Working Group, now has over 180 practitioners enrolled on its international 'practitioner-as-researcher' programme called Growing Intercultural Roots in Communities that enables practitioners to best respond to local needs, from personal to domestic to social, by working directly with the people facing these challenges. Each of IR's work strands, including applied theatre, ecological arts residencies and intra-practice co-labs is also an area of research that should be addressed by involving the most immediate participants or beneficiaries. For example, not going into those communities and telling them what to do, but rather working with them to identify and address their needs. The product of such a research approach is that we may then develop a series of strategies that are transferable to other communities or conceive of new approaches to working with them. Research like this must be done with a community of people including young people in gangs or who experience knife crime, people with disabilities, survivors of gender-based violence or abuse, and also with artists. It also often has to be done phenomenologically and temporally, in site-specific rural or urban environments or in particular places such as in a dance studio or local village community hall.

*Alex Boyd (PhD, FRSA) has a passion for enabling collaborations based on equity, integrity and mutual benefit. He is the conceiver and a cofounder of the Embodied Research Working Group at the IFTR from which he co-founded and is the Executive Director of Intercultural Roots. He is a practitioner-scholar who graduated from the University of California at Davis PhD programme with a focus on the fields of Performance Studies and Critical Education. Dr Boyd's dissertation entitled ‘The Sustainability of Traditional Knowledge Systems’ draws on what is more than 3 decades of professional work in performing, developing practice and teacher training in Chinese Daoist embodied culture to benefit communities in the UK, Europe and North America. He is a Research Associate with the University of California at Davis (Theatre & Dance) and a Core Member of Cross-Pollination. His research includes an exploration of how performers, through in-person and digital communications and media, can cultivate and connect through presence. This is work that has already benefited many internationally acclaimed dancers, musicians, athletes and even CEOs. Alex was born in Irvine, Scotland and is currently based in Ilkley, Yorkshire (UK). Email:* [*amcboyd@ucdavis.edu*](mailto:amcboyd@ucdavis.edu)

**Bodycultures: The Ethics of Embodied Research in a Cross-Cultural Context**

**– *Elizabeth De Roza***

As a practitioner-researcher, my work situates the body of practice within a cross-cultural context and the intuitive processes in the studio. I cannot ignore the very personal nature of the investigation, which raises ethical issues of who owns the body and whose body is in the space. How do we locate the body in the studio and within a space? What are the encounters between the practice and my collaborators? How are these encounters perceived? As practitioner-researcher, we constantly reflect on the interchangeable role we play as the active researcher and practitioner/performance maker without discrediting the creative and/or the intuitive process in the studio space and this presentation; I hope to unpack how bodies are viewed /received cross-culturally.

*Elizabeth de Roza (www.elizabethderoza.com) is an artist-scholar, performance maker, theatre director, and actor-movement trainer. She is currently the Head of Performing Arts Research and Postgraduate Studies Co-ordinator at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA). Elizabeth’s research focuses on cross-cultural embodied experiences, thinking, and practice through making at the intersections of both decolonial and feminist theories. Elizabeth has been making theatre/performances and teaching in higher education for over two decades. She was also a Visiting Fellow at the Royal Academy for Dramatic Arts (RADA-UK), where she worked with staff members on knowledge exchanges/dialogues on Asian Theatre practices. She is the editor of the HKAPA academic journal PA:PER and an Assistant Editor for the Journal of Embodied Research. Email:* [*derozaelizabeth@gmail.com*](mailto:derozaelizabeth@gmail.com)

**Mami Wata in Pointshoes. Subaltern 'We-Voicing' As Intersectional Academic Practice in Performance Research – *Mariama Diagne***

Current re-readings of canonical works in the performing arts stress the need for intersectional perspectives towards modernity. Discursiveness also requires re-perspectives: If many voices are present in one research body, how can they be heard? My current writing concerns the subaltern work of (afro)diasporic (and) queer dance artists in Germany. Meanwhile, I tackle The Master’s Tools (Lorde 1984), by engaging systems of spoken word and rhythmic moves, that are new to me. My background differs from this practice. I studied ballet in point shoes – the coloured ones at the Dance Theatre of Harlem. My academically trained German gaze examined Pina Bausch's early works and re-contextualized them within European and US American narratives. This research was drawn by forces of gravity, by femininity, storytelling, and dance. Shadow women like Eurydice, and mermaids like Undine kept my attention. Simultaneously, a non-Western perspective seemed to be present, but neither trained nor heard: My Senegalese upbringing in Germany connects me intergenerational with the roots of the Lebu, a fishing folk in western Senegal for whom African mermaids like Mami Wata have great significance. If pointe shoes leave marks on my pages, isn’t Mami Wata co-writing with A Black Gaze (Campt, 2021)? In *Vistas of Modernity: Decolonial Aesthesis and the End of the Contemporary* (2020), sociologist Rolando Vázquez suggests the 'we-voice' for a non-dialectical sight. Picking up from there my lecture proposes a subaltern 'we-voicing' as an academic practice, that respectfully perceives and depicts non-normative human bodies and their ability to create (new) stories.

*Mariama Diagne (Dr. Phil.), is a Senegalese-German dance scholar and trained dancer (Dance Theatre of Harlem, New York City). Since 2022, she works at the Collaborative Research Center 1512, "Intervening Arts" at Freie Universität Berlin. Her project "Decolonizing Interventions in Choreographies of the Diaspora" negotiates art, theory, and cultural history with Afro-diasporan perspectives. She studied Theatre and Media, as well as Musicology and Dance Studies in Bayreuth and Berlin. Her thesis "Schweres Schweben. Qualitäten der gravitas in Pina Bauschs Tanzoper Orpheus und Eurydike" (Heavy floating. Qualities of gravitas in Pina Bausch's dance opera Orpheus and Eurydice) (transcript 2019) was awarded the Tiburtius Prize of the Berlin Universities and the dance research award of North Rhine Westphalia. In research and teaching she worked at the Institute for Theatre Studies (FU Berlin, 2012-2020) and the Institute for Cultural Management and Gender Studies (mdw. University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, 2020-2021). Outside of academia, she has accompanied institutional projects (Pina Bausch Foundation, Berlin State Ballet). Currently, she works with arts professionals on queer, anticolonial perspectives as a dramaturge and outside eye. Since September 2019, she is chairwoman of the German Speaking Society of Dance Research (gtf) (Germany, Austria, Switzerland). Email:* [*mariama.diagne@fu-berlin.de*](mailto:mariama.diagne@fu-berlin.de)

**Crystal Hysteria – *Ilona Krawczyk***

Two Polish women.

Practitioners-researchers.

An actor and singer trained in post-Grotowskian theatre.

A musician and composer, a classically trained violinist.

Two performing arts demanding a high level of virtuosity and discipline.

An actor and a musician trained to fulfil the director’s and composer’s vision.

Growing up as girls in catholic patriarchal Poland.

Submitted to the unattainable ideal of holy Mary, virgin and mother

The myth - the dogma of

Mary, ‘pure’ and intact, taken with her body to heaven.

The body that does not rot.

A virgin despite conceiving and giving birth to a child.

Disembodied

Deprived of physiology.

Role model for always saying yes

Never saying no.

An instrument to a vision.

Traditionally, in musical art and instrumental training, the body doesn’t exist. It shouldn’t exist on stage, as it should not turn away attention from the composer’s creation. In post-Grotowskian theatre, the body and its affective actions are at the centre of the performance. However, it still vanishes as it becomes an instrument fulfilling a director’s vision. In this performative presentation, we juxtapose and revise music art’s and post-Grotowskian theatre’s approach to the embodiment in the context of our cultural heritage and conditioning. We show the project’s early work, examining power dynamics and the embodiment of oppression in performance-making. We aim to expand the concept of collaboration by blurring the boundaries of disciplines between contemporary classical music and post-Grotowskian theatre, questioning the notion of single authorship through a feminist lens of non-hierarchical, relational, conversational and process-based co-creation

*Ilona Krawczyk is a Lecturer-Acting at the Norwich University of the Arts, performer, singer, and researcher. In her practice-as-research PhD, thanks to the North of England Consortium for Arts and Humanities studentship, she developed a Process-oriented Approach to voicework and performer training focused on the care and preservation of a performer’s well-being. Her recent work explores possible overlaps between physical, musical theatre, experimental music, and sound art, investigating new ethics and aesthetics of voicework and acting in the theatre informed by post-Grotowskian practice. Ilona is a founder of DreamVoice practice and a co-founder of Insoundout collective. She trained at the Song of the Goat Theatre and CAPITOL Musical Theatre. In her freelance career, she performed for Grotowski Institute, Stage Song Festival (PPA), Anna Zubrzycki Studio, NeTTheatre, SheWolf Company, Mechanical Animal Corporation, Royal Exchange Theatre, Drift Ensemble, among others. Email:* [*i.krawczyk@nua.ac.uk*](mailto:i.krawczyk@nua.ac.uk)

**Ways of Walking: ChatGPT’s Advice on Embodying Emotions – *Anton Krueger***

I’ve become intrigued by the launch of ChatGPT and what it might mean for the end of the essay as a demonstration of knowledge; as well as what it might mean for a growing emphasis on embodied ways of knowing in a number of disciplines. If bodies are going to be used to convey “scholarly” meaning, then a lot of the mythology built up in the last half millennia around textuality as a repository of truth is going to be challenged. I asked ChatGPT for assistance in providing an original embodied group exercise for us to try, and it came up with several proposals relating to sensations, emotions, mirroring and communicating self-reflection. The machine code makes it clear that it has no emotions, insights, perceptions or beliefs and yet it encourages these as part of the human experience. ChatGPT proposed an “Emotion Walk” as a “common warm-up exercise”, and I was intrigued to find that AI could already identify emotions via gait (Bhattacharya, 2020). How can we engage with AI chatbots to assist in performance studies and embodied performance training? There are those, like Jesse Stommel for whom the “existential crisis” which has been brought on by ChatGPT is “a wonderful opportunity for higher education” (2021), and could wake academia up to the value of our “quality of relationships with others, with nature, with the environment,” as well as the “quality of community” which AI processing can encourage, but not replicate. In brief, I’m intrigued by mythologies of embodied emotions, and how these might engage with massive AI chat engines which are learning to predict our needs and desires ever more accurately.

*Anton Krueger is an Associate Professor in the Department of Drama at Rhodes University, where he teaches creative writing and performance research. He’s written books in many genres, including memoirs, criticism, short stories, poetry, plays and a novel. More recently he’s begun experimenting with improvised language performance to music by a diverse range of musicians (and one DJ). Anton’s solo show The Voice in Your Head was performed as part of the Main Stage at the Virtual National Arts Festival of 2020. He also performed in a duo prove at the 2021 National Arts Festival, with multi-musician Francois le Roux. He was the guest editor of a Special Issue of the Performance and Mindfulness Journal on Improvisation:*

*https://www.performanceandmindfulness.org.uk/issue/89/info/. He likes trying new things and, truth be told, is a bit of an amateurist:* [*https://amateurist.weebly.com/about.html*](https://amateurist.weebly.com/about.html)

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**The Female Chinese Photographer’s Body: Use Your Crazy Rich Asian Camera and Shoot for Free, Baby Amateur – *Li Li***

I like the double meaning of "body" in my artistic medium and my métier, photography. Body, of course, means my own female-read Asian body, which is associated with aggressively assumed clichés like data theft and violation of privacy. Moreover, I live in Germany, which is very different from the first stations of my diaspora in Oslo, Bergen and Salzburg. If your German is not flawless in these Teutonic-Prussian lands, you practically don't exist. The employment agency advised me to work in an "Asian restaurant". Well, that wouldn't have broken a bone in my body, but may I fear that I'm a little overqualified as a waitress serving inauthentic Asian food? Well, I am not resistant to advice, then my thousands of euros expensive camera equipment just becomes a hobby along with the vocational food from buffet greed loaded plates in the residual waste to push. My camera then becomes a dead machine body instead of being empowered by man-machine interaction to unleash revolutionary, if emphatically not "red" impulses and twitches. In my workshop we explore the unleashed power of the shutter under the fingertip of our index fingers, putting essayistic digital film into the world, and thereby changing it.

*I am a professional photographer with a background in Chinese literature and culture who explores embodied methodologies in human-machine interaction with my dearest camera. Email:* [*827265306@qq.com*](mailto:827265306@qq.com)

**Mirrors, Shadows, This Body, and Tea: An Installation and Performance in Process**

**– *Nina Angela Mercer***

This presentation will explore an installation in progress that amplifies the space and time of the confessional as a mode of embodied research, challenging mythologies of power in intersecting communities. Inspired by bell hooks’ emphasis on autobiography as “confessional in an enabling political way,” challenging myths of fixity converging on Black women’s bodies and lives, I will share visual artwork, poetry, and plans for an installation and performance activated through the ritual poetics of the circle, crossroad, and water sourced from the deeply potent and intimate truths of my own embodied experience. Originally incited by Toni Cade Bambara’s question at the beginning of her novel *The Salt Eaters*, “Are you sure, sweetheart, that you want to be well,” the installation and performance will offer an opportunity for us to shed in the mirror and shadow that our many selves become. In so doing, I will untether shared time and space from notions of fixity such that we can work through our woundedness, valorising contradiction as a necessary mode of multiplicity and fluidity alongside radical change, making space to say and show truths challenging the weaponization of shame as morality in ways that systemically block progress. In this way, I hope to destabilize the “imperialist white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy’s” hold on our bodies, even as it masquerades through systems meant to decolonize ways of knowing and being here. By extension, I hope to open up a dialogue steeped in funk and sharpened by fire.

*Nina Angela Mercer is currently pursuing a PhD in Theatre and Performance at the Graduate Centre, CUNY which she hopes to complete by May 2023. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing – Fiction, from the American University in Washington D.C. (2000) and a BA in English from Howard University (1995). She has worked as a Community Engagement Fellow with The Woodshed Centre for Art, Thought, and Culture at The Racial Justice Institute, Georgetown University, Washington D.C. from 2022 to date. Her publications include “Inside the Fishtrap: A Conversation with Choreographer Paloma McGregor,” in Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts (Spring 2020, Vol. 24): 96-108, “Ritual Poetics: Hearing Space and Time,” The Oxford Handbook of African American Women Writing, ed. Simone Drake, (Oxford University Press, April 2023) and “At The Corner of Chaos & Divine,” Are You Entertained?: Black Popular Culture in the 21st Century, eds. Simone Drake and Dwan Simmons (Duke University Press, February 2020). She has served as a plenary presenter for the American Society of Theatre Research (ASTR) on the topic “In the Fugitivity of Becoming: The Ring Shout as a Tactical Choreographic and Improvised Technology of Intimacy and Activism”– “Theatre and Performance After Repetition.” San Diego, CA. November 5-8, 2021. Email:* [*nina.mercer@gmail.com*](mailto:nina.mercer@gmail.com)

**Blue Ted, Pink Ted and Bear - Myth- Making Through Rewilding Myself In Costume**

**– *Amanda Newall Johansson***

My practice-led research through costume, and tracks an elided history of costume practice within visual and performance art. There is little documented attention given by art and performance writers and/or critics, artists, and others to costume as an important form of any given artwork containing a significant amount of costume practice. My use of costume is diverse and responsive to contexts and situations and is not restricted to one form or context. This enables me to freely move from classroom to public situation, site, stage and more. I am able to test out what costumes can do in these different sites, situations, and practices. In this research, I have tested out costume for theatre in Beyond Vice Uppsala Stadsteater Sweden, costume at a cellular level within wet biology at SymbiotticA University of Western Australia and education with other artists also working in costume such as The Yes Men NYC. Social conditions and myth making have informed all of the above experiments with costume. I have analysed works by other artists that contain a significant amount of costume. Types of costume use I have identified include costume as persona, narrative device, gallery artefact, fashion, intervention, social activator, and potential for change-making. My practical costume-led research examples to date have revealed costume can be significantly steered with the assistance of narrative which can operate in multiple ways within diverse conditions. Costume can change the conditions for the audience within the theatre. It can provide a tool to understand the social body at a cellular level. My practice-led research proposes to fill in the gaps in costume knowledge whilst providing a framework for understanding costume and building new knowledge. I will present Blue Ted, Pink Ted and Bear. I would like to exhibit /perform my work as part of the conference. <https://joya-air.org/artist/2021/8/16/joya-air-amanda-newall-nz>

*I am a London/Sweden based post-disciplinary artist born in Aotearoa/New Zealand. I have worked through art and education in international contexts, previously holding full-time higher education posts at art schools in Aotearoa, England and Sweden. Email:* [*amanda.newall@gmail.com*](mailto:amanda.newall@gmail.com)

**Archi-Textures of Access: Training Transmission Through Stories**

**– *Adriana Parente La Selva***

This proposal draws on a research project which looks at documenting theatre training techniques through archival reconfigurations in virtual reality. The progress made in the fields of technology, information theory, computer modelling, and immersive multi-sensory displays brings the notion of the body-as-archive into a new perspective, challenging what 'document' means. By thinking of “the body-as-archive” through technique documentation processes, this presentation draws further on current concerns in the field of Cultural Heritage, where the disclosure of information through documents became fluid and volatile, supported by processes of intra-action. Aligned with the conference's concerns, this proposal is sustained by critical epistemological questions regarding the stakes of embodied research and practice within these shifting notions, which inevitably, transform stories into other stories. The translation of training techniques - in this case, embodied by Odin Teatret practitioners - into data, challenges a rereading of history as a reconfiguration of documents, oral tales, and reconstructions through affective transmissions, where poetic virtual spaces evoke particular intra-actions with knowledge itself. What sort of grammars and translation processes can we envisage to attune documentation and history to genealogical processes of engaging with embodied, intangible legacies? In this presentation, I will situate my position as researcher-practitioner-translator between archives and repertoires. To do so, I propose the format of a performance-lecture, which will unfold practices of translation that reveal further interdisciplinary training methods, built on cross-overs between politics of inventory and poetic equivalences that sustain the desires inherent to such re-enactments.

*Adriana La Selva is a theatre-maker, a performer, and a researcher. She is currently a fellow FWO researcher with the project Practicing Odin Teatret’s Archives at S:PAM (Studies in Performance and Media- Ghent University) - in association with IPEM (Institute for Psychoacoustics and Electronic Music), Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium, Utrecht University, Manchester Metropolitan University and Aalborg University. She is a member of the international theatre group The Bridge of Winds, led by Odin Teatret actress Iben Nagel Rasmussen. Adriana co-founded Cross Pollination, an international network of performers and researchers, which focuses on dialogues in-between practices and tactics for embodied knowledge building. Email:* [*adri.laselva@gmail.com*](mailto:adri.laselva@gmail.com)

**Steps as Myths on The Blockchain - Promenadological Explorations Between Body-Based Knowledge Production (Embodied Research), Theatrology (Sic!), Media Studies and Speculative Futurology – *Raimund Rosarius***

As an industrious walker of fast, though never fleeting, steps, empowered by the methodology of Embodied Research, I have turned many of my leisure activities into a profession. With my hybrid expertise as a pomadologist as well as a media science blockchain expert, I am so free to predict a corporeal-historical revolution of walking within the next few years. In the future - so my steep thesis - walking, as one of so many immaterial activities, will not only contribute to the refreshment of the mind and to the (already immense) improvement of the general health status, but to the improvement of subsistence. Scientists’ precarious circumstances listen up – walkers of all countries are about to unite. The blockchain community is in the process of organizing revolts against centralized data octopi and (unwittingly consented) data theft, not through protests, however, but through technological prosthetics to the point of proth-ethics. As a crypto kid - both in my identity as a scientist, as an artist, as a curator (with a strong moral fixation on curare/taking good care), as a founder, as well as a benefactor - an identity in which I ultimately see the other identities culminating, I am a vehement opponent of unpaid labour. This also concerns walking, with walking as the connoisseur: inward expression of walking with leisure. As a connoisseur and coinnoisseur (I know crypto-humour takes more than a little getting used to), I can re-appropriate my forcibly buried identities as a Sinti and a Jew. The many skins of a familial identity unfold in a critical self-reflexivity, the epigenetic consequences of having to hide, which even after persecution (if it ever stopped) was deeply inscribed in the flesh of the offspring, painfully expose themselves, but in this pain of flesh-exploration lies creativity at the core of the layered growth, with a concentrated-ness of germ that blasts systems when it erupts. In this respect, the world of decentralized finance offers the possibilities of regaining the wealth destroyed since the Nazi caesura, this time in the legal eternity of a charitable foundation worthy of its name - in an alliance of paragraphs and smart contracts. Own nothing, provide for everything. It's almost a cheesy thought, reclaiming value through the central currency of my ancestors: Knowledge - often cryptic in its divestment, materialized at times in symbols. Decentralization was literally the lifeblood of the peoples in my capillaries.

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**Dancing Tree: Dramaturgical Explorations of Eco somatic Performances – *Melina Scialom***

My current interest lies in exploring Eco somatic performances and the possible dramaturgies of being with the more-than human – mineral, vegetable, and camera. My interest in moving with trees has a long history of experimentation. From moving in nature I began to shift into a state of moving with nature. This shift came with the meanderings through the practice-thinking of Ciane Fernandes, Erin Manning and Diego Pizarro that I have been exercising in experimental nature embodiments. Being with the more-than human allows a transcendence of the subject (myself) where I remove the “difference” factor of my body and the other bodies (elements) I move with. This calls for, as Manning suggests, an “ecological co-relation to other forms of life”. In my exploration, the dramaturgical has been more clearly revealed in the moving with the camera. I partner with the camera to choreograph myself and all my surrounding in a number of procedures that emerge in the doing and becoming of a “moving researcher” as Fernandes suggests. My presentation seeks to share some of these thoughts, procedures and performances that have been emerging from this Eco somatic performance of moving with the more-than.

*Melina Scialom, PhD from the University of Roehampton (UK) and a Post-Doctorate from the University of Campinas (BR), Melina is currently a lecturer in Performing Arts Research at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. As a Choreologist, performer and dance dramaturge Melina has been interested and widely publishing in the applications of the Choreological Studies (Laban praxis) to dramaturgy, performer training and choreographic practice, inside and outside the studio. Email:* [*melinascialom@gmail.com*](mailto:melinascialom@gmail.com)

**Embodied Acting in Mythical Identity – *Abhay Srivastava***

Experiencing the state of awareness and consciousness in context to time and space with a felt sense is how I choose to identify being an Embodiment Practitioner and a Performer. This journey is about exploring mind body approaches in the domain of mental health, yoga performing arts and their intersection. How a sense of self to a perceived identity could be viewed through an embodied lens. We embody archetypes within our personalities. We are not just one archetype — we contain multitudes. I relate being a seeker. Embodiment is the pursuit of unearthing my dreams, feelings and perception followed by an impulse of expression. There is a continuing work in progress which is being developed as a solo performance - leading from an inquiry into embodied research lab project. I am keen on finding a way to pursue, a process where human sensory dimensions can be put to application in greater depth as an actor for revelations of unconscious in relation to archetype. Myth along with embodied practice has come recently into my world, which I was inhabiting even before knowing something like this existed. Embodied poetics experience with Amy Russel, Embodied Imagination practices by Robert Bosnak, unravelling stories of ancient myths with deep knowledge of cross-cultural rituals by Michael Meade, all this and more is my reference of engagement. The embodied journey continues to be a process to synthesize these disciplines, tapping into ancestral sources of wisdom and connecting them to the stories that shape me, and my perceived sense of identity.

*Abhay is an actor and embodied researcher. He has also been engaging with applied arts and performance in the domain of human wellbeing through various mind-body practices. He is currently pursuing a master’s in yoga. He is working towards integrating interdisciplinary processes from the east and west through embodied practice. Presently seeker is the archetype he identifies with. He is on a journey of artistic research for social change through creative, educational, and developmental projects. Email:* [*aby.abhays@gmail.com*](mailto:aby.abhays@gmail.com)

**Psychagogia and Some Tragic Aspects of The Materiality – *Vinicius Torres Machado***

With an unhealing wound and going through poignant pain, Philoctetes, the character whose name is also given to Sophocles' play, is abandoned on an island by his shipmates heading for Troy. It was not only the pain and the degrading fragility of a hero’s ineptitude to control his suffering, that caused Philoctetes' abandonment on that island. Yet it was the ceaseless presence of this terrifying spectacle composed by his cries, the smell and the image of the wound. Philoctetes did not bear a scar, as a mark of a victory over the decay of the flesh, but a wound that did not heal: the unceasing presence of matter seen from the inside out of the form. Philoctetes is a terrifying spectacle of the journey to Troy, revealing the vitality of matter from which the human being is only one possible arrangement. Philoctetes’ wound and his suffering on the ship acts as a trigger for this paper to consider if (1) the tragic elements of the scene (opsis) in its (2) emotional impact on the audience (psychagogia) may give rise to (3) the sensitivity towards the vitality of the matter. The main goal of the presentation will be to approach the possibilities that the materiality of the stage has to express life’s tragic dimension. Or, to put it in a question, how does the spectator establish its relationship with material tragic signs of the stage? The theoretical approach consists in the Greek concept of psychagogia and its cognates and how they may ease the analysis of the emotional impact of the scene. Aristotle briefly refers to this concept when talking about the scene effect and is usually translated as the scene’s capacity to arise emotions on the audience. Nevertheless, the concept of psychagogia can be understood as “conjuring the soul” and it used to be related to necromancy activities. But during the 4th century B.C. it also started to be used in relation to the emotional impact by rhetoric and poetic arts. Those two understandings of psychagogia combined with the image of a wound might help us to consider the scene as a wound in the landscape and foster a more vivid experience of materiality of life.

*Vinicius Torres Machado is a theatre maker and professor at the State University of São Paulo Brazil. He has dedicated his career to establish relationships between the body and objects and the possibilities to compose with them in the time structure of a scenic event. He created and coordinates the Research Group Materiality of the Stage (where?) focused on trancing relationships between performers and objects. He is the author of the books A máscara no teatro moderno (Ed. Unesp), A cena em devir: um instante para que algo aconteça (to be published in 2023 by Ed. Hucitec) and Atores Trágicos da Grécia Antiga (to be published in 2023 by Ed. Annablume) which approaches connections between performance and philosophy. He is currently doing a post doctorate as an invited researcher at Ghent University, Belgium. Vinicius Torres Machado is a theater maker and professor at the State University of São Paulo Brazil. He has dedicated his career to establish relationships between the body and objects and the possibilities to compose with them in the time structure of a scenic event. He created and coordinated the Research Group Materiality of the Stage (where?) focused on trancing relationships between performers and objects. He is currently doing a post doctorate as an invited researcher at Ghent University, Belgium. Email:* [*viniciustorresmachado@gmail.com*](mailto:viniciustorresmachado@gmail.com)

**The Sprouting of Myths of Collectivity and Pleasure – *Gabriel Vivas- Martinez***

Inspired by Sara Ahmed’s reflections on queer pleasure (Ahmed, 2014), I would like to propose a storyteller paper on myths’ transformation. This idea started around 2019, in the ‘International Applied Theatre Project’ directed by Valentina Rosati and Jason Tan in London. As a Latin American migrant, I was surprised to discover that, in several of my country’s myths, there was a high sense of loneliness, confrontation and punishment of pleasure and playfulness. Likewise, my colleagues from twelve different countries noticed that the myths that they were working on were characterised by constraints, tyrannic structures, and oppression. Acknowledging the potential tensions between what we are allowed, and what we want to do with our Foundational myths, taking Carrie Noland’s proposals on cultural inscriptions (Noland, 2009), I will present some ideas for engaging with the symbolical elements and characters of the myth, embodying and moving them, tending towards pleasure and collaboration. Conceiving myth as an opportunity for dreaming together, I would like this contribution to create a space for sharing and transforming some of our Foundational Myths, enjoying its ephemeral nature and agreeing on the possibility of a graphic representation of the experience. This initial proposal would be inspired by fellow researchers, activists, and artists in the working group, and its elements can be adapted and transformed in the co-creation process. My interest and motivation are to explore the sprouting of new myths that, acknowledging our walked pathways and backgrounds, can invite us to dream of and act towards celebratory futures.

*I am an actor, applied theatre facilitator and researcher. My practice focuses on exploring Theatre-Voice-Body Expression methods with young people directly, including young people with disabilities, young migrants and refugees, and LGBTIQ+ young people. I work as a freelancer educator in educational programmes of the European Commission, sharing inclusive Performing Arts techniques for youth workers and activists across Europe. I hold an MA in Applied Theatre from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama – University of London, where I currently work as a visiting lecturer, and I am conducting my doctoral research about masculinity and socially engaged theatre-making at the Centre for Education - King's College London. I also work as a freelancer researcher and advisor with several institutions, including the Institute for Community Studies of the Young Foundation. I am the Assistant Editor of RiDE - (Research in Drama Education) – The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance. Email:* [*gabriel.vivas\_martinez@kcl.ac.uk*](mailto:gabriel.vivas_martinez@kcl.ac.uk)

**Deconstructing and Decolonizing Myth in Contemporary Discourse/Performance: TE Lawrence In Lahore – *Fawzia Afzal-Khan***

In its decolonial approach to British spy TE Lawrence (1888-1935), my three-act play (being co-written with Pakistan’s leading playwright Shahid Nadeem), entitled Lawrence in Lahore: The Lost Years, de- mythologizes David Lean’s portrayal of Lawrence in his 1962 film, Lawrence of Arabia. After Lawrence gets himself posted as Airman Shaw in the wake of World War 1 to Karachi, thence to Miranshah before ending up in Lahore’s fabled Nedou hotel, history, in the play, proceeds to unfold as farce. Weaving a tale of (ongoing) historical and romantic intrigue against the backdrop of the Partition of India as the British prepared to leave the subcontinent after 200 years of colonial rule, the play becomes a femi/queer tragi-comedy, a subcontinental Casablanca replete with song and dance. The character of Akbar Jehan, whom Lawrence is reputed to have married briefly, and who later became First Lady of Kashmir, serves to further queer the space/time of history, re-enacting, with a difference, Isabelle Eberhardt, the woman in drag who spied for the French in Algeria. As queer theorist Jose Esteban Munoz put it in his penultimate book Cruising Utopia, “Memory is most certainly constructed, and more important, always political.” In my discussion of the play and the collaborative process of writing it, I instantiate Esteban’s claim that what and how we choose to remember and present through ritualized retellings, has “world-making potentialities.” By rethinking the past, and retelling old stories in new ways, we can contribute to a (re)imagining of progressive futures in the present.

*Fawzia Afzal-Khan is a Professor of English at Montclair State University, and a University Distinguished Scholar, who served as Director of the Gender, Sexuality and Women’s rom 2009-2015. She has also taught as Visiting Professor at NYU Abu Dhabi, Harvard University, and several universities in her native Pakistan. She has published several books of scholarly criticism, including the single-authored monographs Cultural Imperialism: Genre and Ideology in the Indo-English Novel (Penn State Press 1993), and A Critical Stage: The Role of Secular Alternative Theatre in Pakistan (Seagull Press, 2005). She is co-editor of The PreOccupation of Postcolonial Studies (Duke University Press, 2000), and Editor of the best-selling anthology, Shattering the Stereotypes: Muslim Women Speak Out (Interlink Books 2005). Her memoir: Lahore with Love: Growing Up with Girlfriends Pakistani Style was published by Syracuse University Press in 2010. Afzal-Khan is a trained vocalist in North Indian Classical music, a published playwright, and a poet. She serves as Contributing Editor on TDR (The Drama Review) and is the Founding Chair of the South Asian FeministCaucus of NWSA (The National Women’s Studies Association of North America). She is a recent Fulbright-Hays Fellowship awardee, and was in Lahore, Pakistan, as a Visiting Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at the Kinnaird College for Women in Spring 2016.*

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**Deconstructing Cuban State Mythology Through Feminist Theatre – *Candice Amich***

El Ciervo Encantado (The Enchanted Deer) is an experimental feminist theatre collective, which was founded in Havana, Cuba in 1996. Since then, director Nelda Castilla has applied techniques of group theatre to counter the foundational myths of the Cuban communist state and test the cultural memory of her participants and audience members. The Cuban state in the post-Soviet era (1991-present), despite periods of extreme scarcity, has not abandoned its triumphalist rhetoric, insisting on its achievements of social justice, even as it prioritizes the demands of a tourist economy over social welfare. El Ciervo Encantado has employed techniques of polyphonic mythmaking to disrupt and deconstruct the state’s official narrative. In pieces such as Zona de Silencio (Zone of Silence, 2020), in which a vulnerable female body contorts herself to move through a field of barbed wire, the dissonance between the state’s discourse and the national reality is palpable. At each step, the naked performer (Mariela Brito) is faced with a placard that announces one of the nation’s many silenced topics, from indigence to femicide. At the end of the show audience members who have been sitting along the periphery of the “zone” are invited to add their own placards (with the name of a friend jailed for disruptive speech, for example) therefore adding to the collective’s field of national mourning.

*Candice Amich is an Associate Professor of English at Vanderbilt University. She is the author of Precarious Forms: Performing Utopia in the Neoliberal Americas (Northwestern UP, 2020), and co-editor (with Elin Diamond and Denise Varney) of Performance, Feminism and Affect in Neoliberal Times (Palgrave, 2017). Email:* [*candice.amich@vanderbilt.edu*](mailto:candice.amich@vanderbilt.edu)

**Feminist Re-Working of Revolutionary Myths as Prefigurative Foretellings of a Better Future in Central and Eastern Europe in Performances by Katarzyna Szyngiera and Agnieszka Jakimiak – *Ewa Bal***

According to advocates of contemporary prefigurative humanities (D. Chakrabarty 2000, S.C. Motta 2011, M. Maeckelbergh 2015, Domańska 2017), it is becoming necessary today to build alternative visions of the future (realistic utopias) that awaken critical hope in people in the face of real threats such as terrorism, problems posed by migration processes, increasing levels of poverty, the crisis of democracy, as well as climate change or environmental problems. These micro-utopias, however, may not necessarily solve all global problems at once. Rather, as contemporary myths, they can be realised on a time- and space-limited local scale for the benefit of a specific community to support the well-being of its members. In my presentation, therefore, I would like to start from the challenges of prefigurative humanities in order to analyse two proposals for a specifically local, Polish and at the same time Eastern European feminist utopias as a response to the global crisis of democracy. I base my proposal on the example of two performances. The first, entitled "1989" and directed by Katarzyna Szyngiera, is a kind of feminist response to the myth of the Solidarity trade union standing behind the fall of communism in Poland in 1989, in which the leading role, instead of Lech Wałęsa, is played by his wife Danuta Wałęsowa. The second one, entitled "Peasantry" by Agnieszka Jakimiak, is an example of a feminist reworking of the recently popular critique of the patriarchal legacy of serfdom in Central and Eastern Europe. And it juxtaposes the oppression of forced and unpaid peasant labour with the feminist consciousness of 'witches' seen as wisdomhood. Both performances, to my mind, allow us to see that the cultural patterns and myths of democratic revolutions in this part of the world have in fact overshadowed the role of women, and that potential futures are only possible after a feminist reworking of the established myths of social revolutions.

*Ewa Bal, PhD, professor, Head of the Laboratory for Research on Knowledge/Creative Practices of Local Cultures at Jagiellonian University. Formerly professor of the “Orientale” University in Napoli. Her early research focused on Italian theatre and drama (2 monographs) Currently she focuses on decolonial performative practices in Central and Eastern Europe, dramaturgies and performances of ethnic minorities from Polish and Ukrainian, Spanish and Italian cultural backgrounds. She co-edited several collective monographs on theory of performance, including most recently with Mateusz Chaberski: Situated Knowing. Epistemic Perspectives on Performance (Routledge 2021). Editor in chief of the Jagiellonian University publishing series Advances in Performance Studies, where 8 volumes have been published. Visiting professor of Italian, Spanish and American universities, member of IFTR and EASTAP. Email:* [*ewabal1@wp.pl*](mailto:ewabal1@wp.pl)

**Spitting Fire (Working title) – *Ana Bernstein***

This paper examines Bola de Fogo (Fire Ball), a performance by male Brazilian artist Fábio Osório, a certified Baiana. Dressed in flowing white skirts, lace bodices, head scarves, and covered in jewellery — a costume fashioned after the Yoruba religion —, Baianas are Black women from Bahia who sell African delicacies on the streets of Salvador, Bahia. The traditional knowledge and skills associated with preparing and selling typical food in Bahia, especially acarajé, has been recognized as an intangible cultural heritage. Contemporary baianas are the historical heirs of women slaves who sold street food and then used the money to buy their own freedom and freedom for their children. The performance revolves around the affective cooking and communal eating of acarajé, a white bean cake deep-fried in palm oil stuffed with a spicy paste (vatapá) and shrimp. Weaving together autobiographical narrative, dance, music, food, and the myth of the African Orishas Xangô and Iansã, Osório creates a powerful sensual work that speaks of gender, sexuality, religion, race, ancestry, food, belonging and cultural identity in Brazil. I approach this work through the lens of feminism, performance, and affect theory to explore the force of this encounter built upon the materiality of the body and the senses. I focus on how affect — circulating in-between performer and audience — allows the performance to cut across established categories of heteropatriarchal colonial thinking, enabling an experience and knowledge that engages both the body and the mind.

*Ana Bernstein is a Professor of Aesthetics and Theatre Theory at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO) - Brazil. She has a PhD in Performance Studies (New York University) and a master’s in Social History of Culture (PUC-Rio de Janeiro). She is the author of Of the Body/Of the Text - Desire and Affect in Performance (doctoral dissertation), The Flesh and the Remains: Looking at the Work of Berna Reale (In: Performance, Feminism and Affect in Neoliberal Times, Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), Francesca Woodman - Fotografia e Performatividade (In: Corpos Diversos, Ed. Uerj, 2015), Here and Now...Again and Again - Reperformance as Difference and Repetion (Variations n. 19, Peter Lang, 2011) and A Crítica Cúmplice - Décio de Almeida Prado e a formação do teatro brasileiro moderno (São Paulo: IMS, 2005), nominated for the Jabuti Prize. Research interests include performance theory, body art, gender studies, visual arts, art history and criticism. She is also a photographer, translator, and curator of exhibitions and theatre festivals. Email:* [*ana.bernstein@unirio.br*](mailto:ana.bernstein@unirio.br)

**Breaking Myths in Looking; Introducing Dialogic Gaze – *Dana Blackstone***

In this research, I will offer ways to break the mythic power structures that potentially exist in ‘looking’; via compassion-based, dialogic practices for multi-representation (‘inclusivity and diversity') in actor training and beyond. I interpret ‘mythic’ power structures as those of oppression: racism, sexism, ableism, homo and transphobias, and classism. I conceptualise ‘looking’ as a metaphorical practice (awareness) that, in part, arises from literal eye contact invited in compassion-based, dialogic practices. I qualify these power structures as ‘potential’ because, however consciously or not; these are socially constructed, chosen ways of seeing/being, and can be unchosen with re-training awareness in this way.

The awareness and subsequent incorporation of others’ experiences that arises from dialogic, compassion-based trainings enable a broader, trained perspective that looks out for and acts on behalf of others; a theory and practice I call ‘dialogic gaze’. In this I draw from Mikhail Bakhtin’s ‘dialogic’: in short, that meaning and understanding occur within intersubjective dialogue (1981) and bell hooks’ ‘oppositional gaze’, a Black female spectators’ critical viewership resulting from alienation from the white female object and white male subject (hooks, 1989, Mulvey 1975). I will define, delineate, and to some extent, demonstrate these dialogic, compassion-based exercises, and set them within a framework of training that aims for multi-representation. I will detail my development of these practices and exemplify the impact of dialogic gaze in the training room. I will place dialogic gaze in a lineage of feminist gaze theories (Mulvey, 1975, hooks 1989) and discuss its potential beyond actor training.

*Dana Blackstone is a researcher, performer, and Module Year Coordinator for BA American Theatre Arts at Rose Bruford College. An alumnus of the Central School of Speech and Drama’s MA Actor Training and Coaching, Dana recently completed her PhD at Canterbury Christ Church University, where she was a recipient of a Full University Scholarship. In this research, Dana explored compassion-based practices, community, and multi-representativity in a feminist ensemble actor training. Dana has presented and published her research in a number of academic communities and is the author of ‘The Gauntlet; Enacting Social Transformation through the Facilitation of Community in a Feminist Actor Training' (2020) and ‘Joy is the Way’ (2020). Her research interests include intersectional feminist practice/pedagogy, community, compassion-based practices, actor training and self/social development, and the celebration of overlooked, historically marginalised contributors to the actor training canon.*

*Dana is also informed by an extensive background in acting, casting, and production and has worked with a variety of practitioners, including Arthur Mendoza and the Moscow Art Theatre School.*

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**'Slow Violence': Myth and Revolution in Cherrie Moraga's *HEROES AND SAINTS***

**– *Elin Diamond***

Revolutionary myths lie at the heart of every ethnic or national story. A founding story of creation might be understood as a revolution against an unthinkable void, the cracking opens an imaginary space allowing life energy to emerge, and with it a world becoming. Inevitably a revolutionary story is a human story, one often married to religion's mythic elements (nature’s cycles remade as death/resurrection, etc), but it is also laser-focused on disruption, the belief that oppression can only be ended by violent resistance and only with such resistance, a new world emerges. (The Jacobins, Benjamin reminds us, not only guillotined France’s absolute monarchists, they restarted the clocks and rewrote the calendar).

For those attuned to planetary crisis, the anthropocene seems to dwarf historical markers--the time scale of colonial, capitalist, white supremacist oppression and the revolutions such oppression breeds. With the anthropocene, we accept that environmental change never conforms to human time but to the timescale of Earth's history. Notions of “slow dramaturgy” (Eckersall and Paterson) and “deep dramaturgy” (Stevens) usefully conceptualize a theatre scaled to anthropocentric experience. For this paper, I foreground Rob Nixon’s “slow violence” (2011) because it helps frame the dramaturgy of Cherrie Moraga’s HEROES and SAINTS (1992), a play that grows out of the “uncompromising” spirit of 1970s feminism (Moraga coedited the feminist classic, THIS BRIDGE CALLED MY BACK, 1981), while confronting the toxic effects of industrial agriculture—particularly pesticide poisoning--on the bodies of a Latinx community in California’s Central Valley.

*Elin Diamond is a Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, USA. Author of Unmaking Mimesis: Essays on Feminism and Theatre, Editor and Co-editor of Performance and Cultural Politics; Cambridge Companion To Caryl Churchill; Performance, Feminism And Affect In Neoliberal Times. Email:* [*elin.diamond@rutgers.edu*](mailto:elin.diamond@rutgers.edu)

**Conflict, Gender, and Democracy: Uncovering Women's Testimonies – *Lisa Fitzpatrick***

Aisling Swaine writes that “Women's experiences of gendered violence during periods of conflict and in the aftermath, are not limited to rape by enemy forces. Endemic gendered and sexualized violence prevalent before, during and after conflict are equally important in exploring women's experiences as citizens in conflict and post-conflict societies” (Swaine, 2015). Her research points to the complex and long-term impact of war and conflict on the lives of women and children and those who are seen as vulnerable. These narratives are often obscured by the media focus on public violence, acts of war and terrorism, and peace negotiations involving the key military and political players. Shame, and uncertainty about being believed, or a sense that violence is normal, can silence those whose suffering is private, or perceived to be a civilian matter. Yet living in a war zone inevitably has an impact on interpersonal relationships, domestic life, and the moral choices forced upon a population. The Shedding of Skin was a collaboration with Kabosh Theatre Company in Belfast, to capture some of these narratives, which are so often silenced in Northern Irish society. The play is based on untold stories of conflict, away from the front lines, often in private spaces; international testimonies and reports of conflict and its impact on women and children, and the classical Greek tragedies which are profoundly concerned with the big, challenging questions of human life.

*Lisa Fitzpatrick is Senior Lecturer in Drama at Ulster University in Derry, where she teaches critical theory and Irish theatre, and supervises research in staging violence and post-conflict theatre. She is the author of Rape on the Contemporary Stage (2018), and her recent edited books include The Theatre of Deirdre Kinahan (with Maria Kurdi; Lang, 2022) and Plays by Women in Ireland 1926-1933: Feminist Theatres of Freedom and Resistance (with Shonagh Hill; Methuen, 2022). Her current work on gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict societies includes a collaboration with Kabosh Theatre Company, Belfast. She is co-convenor of the Feminist Working Group at IFTR and associate editor of Theatre Research International. Email:* [*l.fitzpatrick@ulster.ac.uk*](mailto:l.fitzpatrick@ulster.ac.uk)

**Myths and Mythmaking in Women’s Work – Production and Performance in mid-century English-language Theatre in Québec – *Erin Hurley***

This paper examines the infrastructural work of two core figures in the founding of professional, English minority-language theatre in the French-language region of Québec (Canada): Martha Allan and Norma Springford. Though little known by contemporary scholars and theatre professionals, between them, they were the keys to the anglophone theatre scene in Quebec from the 1930s to the 1970s. If most roads to the stage ran through them, that is also because most roads to the professional stage in English in Quebec were also their creations. I propose to analyse their alignment with / deviation from the mythologies of a Montreal Anglophone elite and the broader Anglophone community. Martha Allan’s Montreal Repertory Theatre (1930-1961) was in effect an entire theatre sector to itself; it boasted a playhouse, a studio space, theatre school, scene shop, lending library, and more. An ethos of service pervaded her many and consequential theatrical and para-theatrical activities, confirming and consolidating a myth of the Anglophone elite that is persistent to this day. Like Allan, Norma Springford was a producer and director of her own theatre called the Mountain Playhouse (1950-1961) and went on to build the first university program in theatre in English in Quebec, at Sir George Williams (now Concordia) University in Montreal. However, between her steady management practices, the dramatic repertoire of her Playhouse, and her network of professional associations, Springford came to represent a more “American” myth of skilled effort reaping commercial success. Discovering Allan’s and Springford’s impact on this small but powerful theatre scene, I argue, requires attention to their productions of both the theatre and of a sense of tradition.

*Erin Hurley is a Professor and Chair of the Department of English at McGill University in Montreal. A specialist in modern Quebec theatre, her current research project is a history of English-language theatre in the French-majority space of Québec, from 1930-2010. Research contributions include the monographs National Performance and Theatre & Feeling, and recent articles in Theatre and Human Flourishing (ed. Harvey Young), Revue d’historiographie du théâtre, Theatre Annual, and L'Extension. recherche&creation, among others. Email:* [*erin.hurley@mcgill.ca*](mailto:erin.hurley@mcgill.ca)

**Gira Ingoma - For a Culture that is Women-Friendly – Katese Odile Gakire**

“Culture, as it exists today, was made by men in the absence of women. Women found themselves chained to numerous traditions and customs that belittle them and jeopardize their full empowerment.” In 2004, Gakire Katese Odile (Kiki), a theatre artist, braved a traditional prohibition in Rwanda forbidding women from drumming and created the group she has now dedicated her life to; Ingoma Nshya (which translates as “New Drum” and “New Power”). It is crucial that culture protects women’s rights and for Kiki, Rwanda’s culture needs to accompany, reflect, and reinforce the transformation of the Rwandan society towards gender equality as articulated in Rwanda’s national gender policy. Her critics have been powerful and vocal – with entrenched views on the place of women in the country’s culture but Kiki is using this policy as both a shield from her critics, and a unique and precious asset that pulverizes taboos, lifts prohibitions, and opens the door to a new era of possibilities, precedents, and premieres. In this presentation, Kiki will provide an overview of her newest program “Gira Ingoma – One Drum Per Girl” which is modelling a new image for women in Rwanda, and a new tradition of gender equality: infused with respect, unity, and joy. equipping hundreds of girls in schools with a drum. She will illustrate opportunities for Peace Education to advance gender equity right down to the rumbling of drums, the strings of inanga, the steps of traditional male dances, the lyrics of traditional songs, and the words of secular proverbs.

*Odile Gakire Katese (Kiki) is a Rwandan actor, playwright, director, and cultural entrepreneur. Currently, she is the director of the Woman Cultural Centre (WCC). In 2004, she creates Ingoma Nshya, Women Initiatives, the first-ever women’s drumming company in Rwanda. They had toured in DRC, Senegal, the Netherlands, the USA, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Sweden, the UK, Ethiopia and Mexico. She is now working on the program “I Have A Drum” which aims to secure a place for women in the drumming arena. Kiki attended the Sundance Theatre Lab in Utah (USA) in 2008 and 2009. She is the first recipient of the League of Professional Theatre Women’s Rosamond Gilder/Martha Coigney International Award (2011). She is a fellow of Salzburg Global Seminar 2011 (Session 479). In 2012, she received the Common Ground Award “for healing Rwanda’s past and giving hope for its future” and the Fair Saturday Award in 2019 “for being a reference in inclusion and empowerment, ensuring access to the arts for all”. She is also working on the program “Gira Ingoma – One Drum Per Girl" that gives Rwandan girls the power to dream, act, and reinvent themselves on their own terms and contribute to the making of a culture that is women-friendly. Email:* [*womanculturalcentre@gmail.com*](mailto:womanculturalcentre@gmail.com)

**Neelam Mansingh’s Theatre: A Feminist Reimagining of Women in Indian Mythology and Urban Myths – *Indu Jain***

Simone de Beauvoir pointed that the worldview wherein postlapsarian women were fundamentally flawed, a view grounded in the narrative of Adam and Eve, is not isolated to Western ideological traditions alone. Women across cultures have historically as well as mythologically been represented as doomed to immorality and thereby their sexuality as emblematic of preconceived, static conviction of what it *ought* to represent as well as embody. In this paper, I propose to appraise the work of Contemporary Indian theatre director, Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry, who in her productions (like Nagamandala, Bitter Fruit, Naked Voices, and The Dark Borders) has helmed several imaginative modes of recasting myths and narratives about women, challenging the heteronormative patriarchal ways of seeing and dismantling the hold of this *ought-ness* within the Indian societal fabric of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’. Drawing from Cixous’s ‘The Laugh of Medusa’, the paper will delineate the radical potential of a feminist reading of a call for *ecriture feminine* being transposed and realized in Mansingh’s theatre work, wherein, the cynosure is not only on the re-telling of myths but also an embodiment of aesthetics of transformation and fluidity through experimentation with her native traditional folk form and presence of Naqqals (traditional artists of female impersonators), who reveal gender fluidity by producing non-conforming bodies, when pitted against the trained urban actors. The paper, through her productions, will explore Mansigh’s feminist reimaginations of women in Indian mythology together with delving into the complex nexus of how she further highlights Urban myths which continue to compartmentalise/measure women and their sexuality on a scale of “morality”, “purity”, “menstrual guilt”, “motherhood” and “deification”.

*A literature professor and researcher with a teaching experience of more than 15+ years at India’s key central university; Delhi University since 2005. Areas of interest include post-colonial theory/works of literature, feminist theory, and performance studies. Deeply interested to probe the lacunae that exist in the feminist theatre historiography in the performance space. Editorial Board member for the peer-reviewed journal, Theatre Research International (TRI) published by Cambridge University Press. Was a Research Fellowship at the Eric Auerbach Institute of Advanced Studies, Cologne (Germany),2022. Email:* [*indujain81@gmail.com*](mailto:indujain81@gmail.com)

**Against Gravity: Marta Minujín’s Feminist Anti-Monuments and The Politics of Inclination – *Jill Lane***

Argentine conceptual and performance artist Marta Minujín has long made “demythification” of national narratives and icons central to her practice. Best known as an early innovator of happenings, media art, and “dematerial” gestures in the 1960s during her time in Paris, New York, and Buenos Aires, she has since worked at the intersection of monumental sculpture and ephemera in a series of projects that recreate life-size national icons out of ephemeral—usually consumable—materials. In The Obelisk Lying Down (Obelisco Acostado, 1978), she recreated a life-size version of Buenos Aires’s iconic Obelisk and turned it on its side, inviting spectators to explore its interior, rather than contemplate its heights from the exterior. Literally toppling this national monument—in the full midst of Argentine dictatorship—this piece shifts from the vertical to the horizontal, from the hard phallic surface to a penetrable interior, in a direct confrontation with that patriarchal, authoritarian rule. Doing so, Minujín engages avant la lettre what feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero (2013) in her “critique of rectitude” names “inclination,” whereby literal and figurative “inclination” challenges the central subject (usually coded masculine) whose position is straight and vertical, and thereby shifts its axis of gravity. Taking Minujín’s larger project The Fall of Universal Myths (La Caída de Los Mitos Universales) as a point of departure, including her most recent 2021 Big Ben Lying Down with Political Book (UK), this paper explores Minujuín’s experiments with feminist inclination, situating it in the context of cognate Latin American feminist performance art and theatre.

*Jill Lane is an Associate Professor of Spanish & Portuguese and Latin American and Caribbean Studies at New York University, where she teaches courses on Latin American theatre, performance art, and activism. She has written about race and performance, including in her book Blackface Cuba 1840–1895 (UPenn Press, 2005), as well as contemporary performance art, with recent articles on Coco Fusco and Carlos Martiel. Email:* [*jill.lane@nyu.edu*](mailto:jill.lane@nyu.edu)

**Radical Kindness as a Research Methodology: A Space for the Quotidian and the Everyday – *Katharine Low***

Research in contexts of in/security and vulnerability is often extractive, which poses ethical and methodological problems. This paper proposes an exploration of radical kindness as a form of applied theatre research methodologies and the implications it has to support and extend emancipatory action research. I address the potential of radical kindness within applied theatre research practice, particularly in terms of arts and health. Through a discussion of our co-collaborative research practice with the HEXlappies Collective, a womxn-led craft and performance collective in South Africa, I take time to examine how a methodology of radical kindness is imbued within both the space and the practice, and the decision to notice, pay attention and to name these moments and actions is a deliberate one. I consider the potential of taking a radically kind approach to the practice and offer examples of quiet advocacy in which the quotidian and the mundanity of everyday life can be appreciated as both ordinary and extraordinary. The applied theatre site, therefore, can function as a place of exploration where radically kind spaces are held for the co-researchers to use. From this basis, the storytelling and the stories become a basis through which deepens and extends understandings of lived experiences and research accounts of individual’s contexts of in/security and vulnerability, so that the knowledge and the narrative is held by those who tell the stories.

*Dr Katharine Low is a practitioner-researcher and is Senior Lecturer in Performance and Medical Humanities at King’s College London. She has over 20 years of experience in applied theatre practice and health, working in the fields of sexual health, gender equity and urban violence, in the UK and internationally. Her research is embedded in collaborations with arts and cultural organisations, medical practitioners, and NGOs to co-facilitate participatory theatre and arts-based projects based around social concerns. Her publications include*[*Applied Theatre and Sexual Health Communication: Apertures of Possibility*](https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9781349959747)*(2020, Palgrave Macmillan) and*[*Applied Theatre: Performing Health and Wellbeing*](https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/applied-theatre-performing-health-and-wellbeing-9781472584595/https:/www.bloomsbury.com/uk/applied-theatre-performing-health-and-wellbeing-9781472584595/)*with Veronica Baxter (2017, Bloomsbury Methuen). Katharine is currently developing performance practices with women living well with HIV, hosting a podcast called*[*Positively Women: Past and Present*](https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/histories-caroline-guinness-and-kate-thomson/id1558730896?i=1000587472514)*and researching the impact of motherhood on academic life. Katharine tweets about arts & health practice at*[*@katlow17*](https://twitter.com/katlow17)*. Email:* [*katharine.low@kcl.ac.uk*](mailto:katharine.low@kcl.ac.uk)

**Glamour, Virtuosity and The Myth of Nation – *Aoife Monks***

Amateur Irish dance competitions combine the display of excessive technical skill with the trappings of a hyper-'glamorous' appearance. Fake tan, make-up, and hyperbolically 'national' dance dresses, combined with giant wigs, present performance skill in a form that is often experienced as uncanny and discomfiting by outsiders. Meanwhile, the stage spectacles of Riverdance and Michael Flatley lean heavily on gendered codes of glamour, while emphasising the consumption of virtuosic display. Glamour mixed with consummate skill and technique are imagined to add up to produce an experience of nationhood. This paper will ask what the relationship between glamour, stage skill and the myth of nation might be and will consider what feminists should do with the framework of glamour when considering popular performance.

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**The Paths of the Hyperwomen's Narrative, in the Dramatization of the Yamuricumã Myth: Translations and Contradictions in the Feminist Scene, in Cosmopolitical and Non-Dichotomous Openings – *Lucia Romano***

This article analyses the experience, by a theatrical collective from São Paulo, of creating a scenic adaptation of the myth of the Yamuricumã, a traditional narrative that spread among different ethnic groups in the context of the Alto Xingu, in Brazil. In it, the myth of Hyperwomen is revived, women who, reacting to abandonment by their husbands, take on mutating bodies and, rebellious, set off on a journey towards the construction of a new village. In the exclusive world of women whom they create, another communal logic operates (FEDERICI, 2022), in which no one grows old, and everyone sleeps upside down, like bats. The matristic heterotopia of this "female virtual world" (FRANCHETO, 1996, p. 54) survives, until its violent destruction, under attack by white men. The text seeks to problematize the use of traditional narratives of native peoples by theatrical groups associated with the tradition of Euro-Western theatre, in view of the complex translation process involved there, in which the striking contrasts between ways of being and thinking weigh, as well as the historical practices of epistemic-ide and looting, widely exercised by the European invader in colonial, South American, Caribbean, and African territories (OYÊWÙMÍ, 2021). Observing the cosmopolitical (ROMANO, 2022) and aesthetic tensions inherent to the scenic treatment of these narratives, we question whether the decolonial feminist perspective can help in the adoption of a tuned listening to the so-called "alterity", which allows the constitution of scenic structures that are not only mediated by fiction (ROMANO, 2021) and that reflect a less dichotomous world project (MCCALLUM, 2019), in which we can be, as the myth of the Yamuricumã suggests, all Hyperwomen.

*Lúcia Romano holds a BA in Theatre Theory from the School of Communications and Arts of the University of São Paulo, a master’s degree in Communication and Semiotics by Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo and a PhD by ECA-USP. She has experience in the fields of Performing Arts, with an emphasis on acting, performance art, corporeality, gender performativity, feminist theatre, and creative processes. A Professor at São Paulo State University “Júlio de Mesquita Filho”, at the Arts Institute, she is Co-coordinator of the Research Group “Women of the Scene” of ABRACE – Brazilian Association of Research and Graduate Studies in Performing Arts, and Coordinator of the Research Group “Poetics of Acting” of CNPq (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development). She is Editor of the academic journal Rebento, and the author of the books “Theatre of the Body Manifest: Physical Theatre” (2005) and “Whose body is this: The performativity of the female gender in contemporary theatre” (2017), in addition to several book chapters and articles. She is a founding actress of the theatre groups Barca de Dionisos and Teatro da Vertigem and works as an actress and producer at Cia Livre de Teatro (SP - Brazil). Email:* [*lucia.romano@unesp.br*](mailto:lucia.romano@unesp.br)

**Women and Revolutionary Romanticism in “The Tin Sword”: Re-Making the Nationalist Myth on Bengali Stage – *Mallarika Sinha Roy***

*Tiner Tolowar* or *The Tin Sword* (1971) became a legend in twentieth century Bengali theatre history for many reasons – the content of the play, the production design, acting and its overall impact on making theatre an integral part of the decolonization process. It is about a theatre group, set in 1876 Calcutta, facing a severe crunch in cash flow and in need of a new play that will make them commercially viable again. Playwright and director Utpal Dutt weaves in dark humour to reflect the historical crisis between colonial modernity and nationalism, typical of the period in Bengal. Women characters, who are actresses within the play as well, emerge as the principal bulwark in exposing the tension between the colonial bourgeois intelligentsia and commercial collaborators with British colonialism. Passion for theatre, sexual desire, romance and a nascent nationalist imagination become deeply gendered as the play progresses through critical plot points in the life of the theatre group. This paper is an attempt to look into ways in which “The Tin Sword” re-creates a nationalist myth from the feminist lens of the fraught relationship between gender and nation. The revolutionary romanticism in re-telling the history of Indian nationalism through peasant insurgencies remains the centre of this fraught relationship, and this particular play-text, its performance in the 1970s and its sustained popularity in the contemporary Bengali stage give an opportunity to re-visit and the unmaking and re-making of a nationalist myth where actress lives became intertwined with theatre history, political and social history of late nineteenth century Bengal.

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**Mythic Bodies: The Subversive Aesthetics of Vulnerability in East European Feminist Performances – *Aniko Szucs***

In the recent transnational crisis of neoliberal austerity and rising neo-authoritarianism, there has been increased scholarly attention placed on forms of cultural resistance and social protest that—through performative gestures—foreground bodily vulnerability, mobilizing it as a site of connection and potentiality. Vulnerability, in this context, is a socio-political predicament that is perceived as a condition of resistance. This talk, however, considers vulnerability as an affective-aesthetic quality that distinctively characterizes contemporary East European feminist performances. The resisting female-identifying subjects embodied by the performance artist evoke transnational mythical tropes and characters; women victimized by patriarchal oppression reclaim their bodies, desires, and inner freedom.

Building on the genealogy of feminist body art and theory of the region, performance artists Maria Kulikovska (Ukraine), Mikolt Tózsa (Hungary), and Mihaela Drăgan (Romania) yet again turn the female body and feminine corporeality into a vehicle of feminist resistance. The vulnerable body at the centre of these performances is not merely a product of the precarious social and material conditions, but a matrix of affective forces, symbolic gestures, and performative routines, one that liberates the artists from the ontological precarity of their existence.

*Dr. Aniko Szucs is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Theatre at Skidmore College. Her research interests include Central and East European political theatre, feminist protest movements and performances, and the genealogy and critique of state surveillance. Before arriving at Skidmore, Dr. Szucs was a Postdoctoral Fellow in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at Yale University and a Mellon Fellow at Haverford College. Dr. Szucs holds a Ph.D. in Performance Studies from New York University and an M.F.A. in Theater Studies and Dramaturgy from the University of Theater and Film Arts in Budapest. Her book project, Gestures of Radical Care: The Affect and Aesthetics of Political Resistance in Hungary, examines contemporary performances and movements of resistance in Hungary. In addition, she has published several articles in peer-reviewed journals and anthologies on Central and East European political art. She has worked as a resident and a production dramaturg in theaters across the US and Hungary. Email:* [*aniko.szucs@nyu.edu*](mailto:aniko.szucs@nyu.edu)

**Deconstructing Myths of Womanhood in Mainstream Culture: Performing Rage and Affect of Disgust in Sketch Comedy Behensplaining – *Nisha Tiwari***

In 2020, Behensplaining, a popular online feminist sketch comedy series, sponsored by Netflix, that reviews movies and web shows, responded to the popular demand to review a highly misogynist blockbuster movie Kabir Singh (2019). It posted a comic sketch where it refused to even mention the name of the movie, using the metaphor of food garbage throughout to refer to this movie. Despite the movie also streaming on Netflix, the female comics of the show resisted reviewing it in their sketch further rejecting the myths of womanhood propagated by it. How does one perceive this moment of resistance so deeply mired in neoliberal exchange and channels of production and circulation? My paper analyses the performances of feminist rage and the affect of disgust in this feminist sketch comedy to debunk myths of womanhood to call out sexism of mainstream Hindi movies. I argue that the feminist moments occur when female comics, Kusha Kapila and Srishti Dixit, push the boundaries of the affect of disgust by not ‘recoiling’ but instead using rage to put forth scenarios and questions that upset the masculine gaze using camp and parody (Ahmed 2004). The paper examines the significance of this rage and its affect performed online with the threat of “wishing the body away”(Case 1996). I complicate this moment to discuss the larger impact of such feminist practices where the female comics collaborate to aggressively decry patriarchy while negotiating their resistance with the boundaries drawn by the screen that is largely arranged and constituted by a masculine gaze in the neoliberal channels of circulation.

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**Anti-Domestic Violence on Beijing’s Central Axis: ‘Bloody Brides’, Urban Feminist Flaneur ship and Collaborative Spect-actorship – *Yingjun Wei***

This essay investigates ‘Bloody Brides’, a street performance staged in Beijing as part of V-Day, a transnational anti-violence feminist campaign. On Valentine’s Day in 2012, three feminist activists–Li Maizi, Wei Tingting, and Xiao Meili–staged ‘Bloody Brides’ on Qianmen Street, located at the central axis of Beijing City. Situated to the south of Tiananmen Square, the historical and political centre of China, Qianmen Street is a pedestrian street designed particularly for tourists. Activists dressed as brides in bloodstained wedding gowns with bruises around their eyes. They walked down the street with banners such as ‘Love is Not an Excuse for Violence’ (ai, bushi baoli de jiekou). Engaging with Buck-Morss’s ‘feminist flaneur-ship’ (1986), Elin Diamond’s Gestic Feminist Spectatorship (1988) and Wu’s Urban Chinese Feminist Flaneur-ship (2021), this essay investigates the materiality and collaborative spectatorship of the performance. Specifically, I analyse the embodied traumas of battered women, the site-specificity of the performance and the material relations between feminist performers/flaneurs, vocal female spect-actors, silent policing spectators and the urban space in Beijing. Developing from Buck-Morss’s feminist criticism against Benjamin’s modern, commodified, and masculine ‘flaneur’ in urban Paris (1986: 118), the ‘urban feminist flaneur-ship’ proposed by Wu (2021: 841) from a perspective of material feminism is highly relevant to my analysis. I argue that Bloody Brides’ feminist walk imagined a citizenship which is not solely practised at the axis of consumers and ‘legal/public’ subjects; capitalism and political surveillance, but one that is autonomous, participatory, and feminist. This feminist citizenship expanded the boundaries of ‘what is political’ and ‘what is legal’ by bringing into public the scene of domestic violence which was deemed apolitical and not yet codified into law.

*Yingjun Wei is a PGR-funded PhD candidate in the Department of Drama, Trinity College Dublin. Her research mainly focuses on Chinese feminist theatre, feminist street performances since the early 2000s and transnational feminist movements. She investigates the role of theatre and performance as a medium for social change, and the effectiveness of public performance as the medium through which Chinese feminist activists proliferate their political messages. Recent publication: “Performing Gendered Disaster Nationalism and Its Feminist Resistance in China during the Covid-19 Pandemic”, European Journal of Theatre and Performance, 4 (2022): 350-385. Email:* [*weiyi@tcd.ie*](mailto:weiyi@tcd.ie)

**Presenting Burlesque’s Extreme Mythic Wardrobe: A Trans\* and Transanarchic Feminist Understanding of Burlesque’s Self-Regulated and Deregulated Story-Telling and World Building – *Jacki Willson***

This paper disaggregates the impact of clothing from queer and trans discourse in order to understand the political issues that have emerged from costume-based storytelling. Burlesque’s performative wardrobe functions as a transformative threshold point where costume is used to surface a range of racialized and ableist cis-heterosexist myths of femininity to test out what they feel like, look like and mean collectively. I will be applying Trans\* (Stryker et al 2008; Haywood and Weinstein 2015; Thompson 2022; Amin 2023) and Trans Anarchic Feminist (Branson 2023) approaches to women and feminine centred UK wide burlesque costume practices in order to understand burlesque as a model of self-regulated and deregulated story-telling and world building that places femininity and transformative glamour at the heart of its struggle. Stryker et al’s (2008) trans\* challenge to feminist scholarship, which was to open up, leak out and cross over the categorical membership of ‘woman’ was recently followed by Branson’s Trans Anarchic Feminist call (2023) for the destruction of gendered hierarchies that must come from within communities of practice. In this paper, I would like to present burlesque as a grassroots model of practice where costume’s role is both myth-enfleshing and myth-busting and where stories are not just embodied for the wearer but also (in some cases) used to overtly make and subvert specific messages to an audience.

*I am an Associate Professor of Performance and Gender in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries and the University of Leeds. I have published two monographs - The Happy Stripper (2008) and 'Being Gorgeous' (2015) and two co-edited collections - Revisiting the Gaze (2020) and Dangerous Bodies (2023). I am the PI on a three-year AHRC funded project entitled 'Fabulous Femininities: extravagant costume and transformative thresholds'. Email:* [*j.m.willson@leeds.ac.uk*](mailto:j.m.willson@leeds.ac.uk)

**Performance Studies: The Origin Myth – *Nikki Yeboah***

The goal of this essay is to acknowledge that the stories Performance Studies tells itself about its origin as a field are simply that, stories. Moreover, they are myths that position white men as the founding fathers. This paper decentres Victor Turner, Richard Schechner, and Dwight Conquergood as the founders of the field and offers up Ghanaian playwright and scholar, Efua Sutherland as an alternative genealogical origin. Sutherland’s revolutionary contributions to theatre are well-noted within African Studies; however, her trailblazing methods remain geographically bound to the continent. Those limitations are not the same for white male Western scholars of the same generation. Turner and Schechner’s geographically-specific research findings in Asia and Africa were made universal and went on to found a field. Drawing on archival material that sheds light on her process, her theoretical speculations, and her philosophical practice, I posit her work as foundation, and encourage contemporary Performance Studies theorists to pay more attention to how her work contributes to the canon.

*Nikki Yeboah, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Playwriting in the School of Drama at the University of Washington. As an artist-scholar, her research brings together oral history methods and performance to create alternative records of Black life. Her research interests include oral history performance and the ethics and politics of conducting qualitative research in marginalized communities. She has been published in; Theatre Journal, Text and Performance Quarterly, Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies, and the Western Journal of Communication. Her most recent, article; "All the Nation's a Stage: The Ghana National Theatre as Sankofa Praxis", won the Outstanding Article Award from the Association for Theatre in Higher Education. Her performances have been staged at the Soraya (Los Angeles), New College of Florida (Sarasota) the Hammer Theatre (San José), the Marsh (San Francisco), Links Hall (Chicago), and the Chicago Cultural Center. Nikki is currently a board member of Storycenter, a nonprofit organization that uses storytelling for social justice. Email:* [*nyeboa@uw.edu*](mailto:nyeboa@uw.edu)

**Deadpan, A Pre-History – *Sarah Balkin***

This paper aims to workshop the methodological framing of my monograph in progress on the emergence of deadpan performance styles between 1830 and 1930. As a term, “dead pan” first appeared during the early twentieth century (the first printed instance I have found is in 1915). But this book takes Deadpan’s etymological origins as a terminus, instead tracing its emergence alongside and as a parody of more “serious,” realistic, underplayed performance styles. It asks: what words would theatre makers, audiences, and reviewers have used to describe a flat or underplayed performance intended to provoke laughter? What might these descriptions suggest about how deadpan signified before cinema changed how it was performed and experienced? And what are the historiographic implications of writing a history of deadpan avant la lettre? Tracy Davis and Peter Marx argue that a historiographic approach to performance benefits from what they call “critical media history,” which understands theatre and performance as interconnected with each other, with conventions of spectatorship, with “modes of presentation, economies, and different forms of institutionalisation,” and with practices that mediate among them (3-4). Because critical media history focuses on process and “allows for and seeks polyphonic trans-culturalism, multiplicate intra-cultural perspectives, and heterogeneous possibilities” (5), Davis and Marx argue that it helps resist teleological master narratives. My notion of a “pre-history” does not privilege or build up to what comes after it; rather, it posits the moment of Deadpan’s naming as a change rather than a beginning. In other words, pre-history is history.

*Dr Sarah Balkin is a Senior Lecturer in English and Theatre Studies at the University of Melbourne and the Director of Graduate Research for SCC. Her current research focus is on the historical emergence of deadpan performance styles (1830-1930) and contemporary comedy's relationship to humorlessness. Her monograph, Spectral Characters: Genre and Materiality on the Modern Stage, was published by the University of Michigan Press in 2019. Her work appears in journals such as Modern Drama, TDR/The Drama Review, Performance Research, and Textual Practice. For three years she was the Assistant Editor of Theatre Research International. Her article in this journal, “The Killjoy Comedian: Hannah Gadsby’s Nanette,” won the Australasian Association for Theatre, Drama and Performance Studies’ Marlis Thiersch Prize for research excellence. Email:* [*sarah.balkin@unimelb.edu.au*](mailto:sarah.balkin@unimelb.edu.au)

**Song-Vending in Colonial Bengal: The Myths Around the Portuguese-Turned-Bengali Hensman Anthony – *Priyanka Basu***

The cultural worlds of early colonial Bengal saw introductions and reproductions of several musical and theatrical genres ushered in by the rapid urbanisation of Calcutta. The song-theatre of Kobigaan (literally, song of poets; verse duelling) accommodated performers who largely came from the labouring classes and castes, e.g., haberdashers, confectioners, cobblers, and even ‘wayward’ women (Hartman, 2019). Early printed song collections, pamphlets and periodicals from colonial Bengal testify the musical exchanges between these poetasters (kobiyaals) in urban, peri-urban, and rural arenas. However, myths surrounding the performers offer a multivocal perception of the colonial cultural world underlining the thin demarcations with history. This paper investigates the myths around one such performer—Hensman Anthony, popularly known as Anthony Firingi—who has been variously memorialised through colonial print, postcolonial play-texts, and Bengali cinema. A Portuguese salt trader converted to a Bengali, Anthony’s popularity as a song-vendor rested on his worldview of syncretism, communal harmony, and humanistic appeal. The cultural memory of Anthony, appended by literary, oral, and cinematic texts, however, focuses on his identity as a ‘Firingi’ (foreign or white European), and as a rescuer of a Hindu widow (his love interest). In reading the evidence and myths around Anthony Firingi, this paper underscores the poly-colonial cultural world of Bengal (Bhaduri, 2020), especially through the histories of Portuguese settlement in eastern India. Beginning with an ethnographic exploration of the material memorial remnants of Anthony in and outside Calcutta, it follows the mythic-historical trail into the colonial worlds of performances. In doing so, it follows what historian Carlo Ginzburg proposes in working with clues, myths, and historical methods- ‘A close reading of a relatively small number of texts, related to a possibly circumscribed belief, can be more rewarding than a massive accumulation of repetitive evidence.’ (1986) Rather than interrogating ‘whether there was an Anthony Firingi, the verse-duller’, this paper asks- ‘what do the many myths of Anthony say about porous performance histories.’

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**A Time of Contradiction: Mediating the Myth of the 1980s – *Claire Cochrane***

Starting from the position that one of the primary responsibilities of the historian is the mediation of contradictions, I am embarking on an examination of a discrete period of time: the decade of the 1980s which has been indelibly associated with the realm of the global north with the rise of a free-market-led monetarist ideology. As such the ‘greed is good’ decade has taken on mythic dimensions as the source of many of the economic and societal ills now clumped together under the general heading of neoliberalism. In terms of UK theatre history the more the decade recedes away from the lived experience of new generations of scholars, the more the narrative of conservative bias, obstruction and material deprivation begins to iron out the contradictions inherent in a complex theatre and performance landscape. In particular, the foregrounding of the deleterious effects of imposed financial priorities has led to the marginalisation and actual exclusion of popular theatre initiatives which paradoxically benefited from the new challenges. Myths evolve out of dominant discourses which do not necessarily reflect, rather might have been created to counter, the strength of prevailing mentalities. Through successive exercises of the democratic process, grassroots sensibilities, and predilections of the 1980s would appear to have assented to the power structures which controlled the decade and by extension, the public spaces of theatre. My paper will begin to ask what happens to the arrangement of the historical record if these fundamental contradictions are acknowledged and scrutinised?

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**Leopold Jessner and Heinz Lipmann's Adaptation of Christian Dietrich Grabbe's *Napoleon or The Hundred Days* – *Wolf-Dieter Erns***

Weimar theatre 1918-1933 saw rapid changes in design, directing, and playwriting encompassing expressionism and New Objectivity (“Neue Sachlichkeit”), so that the cultural debates about legitimation of "the classics" emerged. Mythical power – in the sense of an ungrounded narrative (Derrida) – was assigned to these texts and characters that were considered to inherit a truth giving clear indications of how, especially verse-drama, should be spoken and acted. Many bemoaned the loss of energy, that this theatre tradition from the late 19th century supposedly underwent in these new times. In fierce anti-Semitic cultural debates, the concept of cultural Bolshevism (Mühr) was coined, threatening a tradition that had been claimed as völkisch-German. The debates in newspapers and radio between 1926 and 1929, largely determined by Erwin Piscator, Bertolt Brecht and Herbert Ihering, are well documented in theatre historiography, and one of the most prominent targets of this mythical policies was the Jewish director and theatre manager Leopold Jessner, the most prominent of early ‘Regietheater’. The paper will focus on an unpublished document titled Klassiker Kuerzungen. Drei Produktionen von Leopold Jessner, that was written by Leopold Jessner's dramaturge Dr. Heinz Lipmann (1897-1932). It is an annotated director's book, which left the dramaturgy of the Staatstheater on the occasion of the revival of the Napoleon production - intended for the Prussian Minister of Culture, Carl Heinrich Becker. This paper will discuss the location and argumentation of the documented classic adaptation, following two corresponding sets of questions: How do the scenography, music and visual actualization of Jessner's celebrated production promote a critique of realism without having to change the text? What power-political dimension does Lipmann’s treatise on the adaption of classics have, when we read it as a memorandum, a political aid to argue strategically against possible (and threatening) censorship, and perhaps also as an indication of self-censorship?

*Wolf-Dieter Ernst is Professor of Theatre. He has published widely on post-dramatic theatre, performance, media art, and the history of actor's training. He is review editor of the journal Forum Modernes Theater, and his books include "Spielräume professionellen Schauspielens" (ed. with Anja Klöck, Tübingen 2022), "Der affektive Schauspieler. Die Energetik des postdramatischen Theaters" (Theater der Zeit 2012), and "Performance der Schnittstelle. Theater unter Medienbedingungen". (Passagen Publishers 2003). Wolf-Dieter Ernst has also contributed substantially to the development of the IFTR Intermediality and Historiography research group and he is the convenor (with Anja Klöck) of the Society for Theatre Research working group on Actor’s training.*

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**Cat Island Sailboats and Other Revolutionary Thoughts – *Anita Gonzalez***

My presentation considers how storytelling performance in the Caribbean is an epistemology or way of knowing, often considered mythological, even though collective storytelling across African diaspora communities was an essential survival strategy. My case study focuses on the Bahamas as a site where archival research and field investigations coalesce to contribute to an understanding of how Afro-Caribbean populations used performative strategies to resist and respond to enslavement. The presentation incorporates an analysis of local folklore and farm storytelling, a narrative description of an 1832 insurrection on Cat Island, and a dance studies analysis of Junkanoo and Haitian Ibo dancing.

Specific local cultural communities depended upon gestural and visual communication tools to document historical events and contribute to a collective knowledge base. The enslaved used symbols, language, instruments, and other performative techniques to strategize across communities. For example, quilting became a visual way of communicating how to reach the “north star” of Canada for African American communities in the American South. Understanding how performance modes and mechanisms communicate indigenous epistemologies will broaden theatre history methodologies. I propose that a dense set of methodologies including oral histories, plantation architecture studies, shipping records (commerce and products) and music/dance studies can help to illuminate strategies of resistance among colonized African people.

*Anita Gonzalez (PhD) is a professor of Performing Arts and African American Studies at Georgetown University and co-Founder/Leader of their Racial Justice Institute. She was previously an Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and a Professor of Theatre at the University of Michigan where she promoted interdisciplinary and intercultural performance initiatives. Her edited and authored books are Performance, Dance and Political Economy (Bloomsbury), Black Performance Theory (Duke), Afro-Mexico: Dancing Between Myth and Reality (U-Texas Press), and Jarocho’s Soul (Rowan Littlefield). Her essays about multicultural and international performance appear in several edited collections including Black Acting Methods (Luckett), The Community Performance Reader (Kuppers), Festive Devils (Riggio, Segura, and Vignola) and the Oxford Handbook of Dance and Theatre (George-Graves, 2015). She has published articles in the Radical History Review, Modern Drama, Performance Research International, and Dance Research Journal. She has completed three Senior Scholar Fulbright grants and has been a resident artist/scholar at Rockefeller’s Bellagio Centre in Italy, and the Warfield Centre for African and African American Studies at the University of Texas. She was a Humanities Centre Fellow at the University of Michigan during the 2017/18 academic year and is a recent recipient of the Shirley Verrett Award for outstanding teaching of performance. Email:* [*Anita.Gonzalez@Georgetown.edu*](mailto:Anita.Gonzalez@Georgetown.edu)

**Beyond Theatrical Truth: Epistemologies of Theatre and History in Contemporary Reality-Based Theatre – *Tancredi Gusman***

In the histories of Western theatre, the changing relationship between the concepts of “art”, “reality” and “truth” has determined the forms of theatrical practices in different epochs and contexts. As a symbol, moral institute or mirror, the stage has often sought to interpret “reality” and uncover its “truth”. Drawing on the fundamental Aristotelian distinction between poetry and history, theatre, however, has rarely aimed at reconstructing facts as they happened – what was – but rather at telling a general truth – what might be. Since the late 1990s, an increasing number of theatre artists have approached the relationship between “theatre”, “reality” and “truth” with unprecedented radicality. Not only have they sought to represent particular historical events within a theatrical framework, as was the case in earlier forms of documentary theatre, but in doing so they have also challenged the clear distinction between “reality” and “fiction”. Groups and individual artists such as Rimini Protokoll, Milo Rau, Lola Arias and Rabih Mroué have blurred the boundaries between “theatre” and “reality” by introducing witnesses instead of professional actors, by re-enacting historical events on stage or by presenting “real” life stories. Through selected case studies, this paper will analyse how the threshold between theatrical and historical truth has been reformulated by these contemporary practices. The historiographical-epistemological question at the heart of the paper is whether the boundaries between the domains of theatrical and historical narration have actually collapsed or whether it is still possible to identify differences, albeit local, partial, or negotiable.

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**Notes on a Genealogy of Theatre as a Social Practice: Whiteface and Blackface Performance in the History/Historiography of Social Theatre – *Jenny Hughes***

This paper explores methodological and epistemological challenges arising from the construction of a new, critical genealogy of theatre as a social practice. The methodological challenge – relating to exploring examples of theatre rarely formally catalogued in archives, and where evidence exists across diverse and multiple sources - intersects with epistemological questions on the ‘stories we tell’ about theatre and performance studies as a discipline (to cite the conference call). The concept of theatre and performance as capable of ‘social work’ has been thoroughly debated (Jackson 2011), with historical studies of social theatre tending to identify the field’s historical roots in the liberal and radical agendas of European modernist experiments. Drawing on examples of what were effectively social theatre experiments in early to mid-nineteenth century Britain, this paper offers an alternative disciplinary ‘story’. Engaging with the intersections of race, class and gender in these performances, I respond to Chatterjee et. al.’s call for ‘undisciplining’ Victorian Studies via a collective working against what they identify as a ‘marked resistance to centring racial logic’ in studies of the period (Chatterjee et. al. 2020). Focusing on instances of whiteface and blackface performance, I interrogate theatre’s role in constructing a performative nexus of socio-political reform associated with emergent forms of civil society and liberal democracy and sustained by racialised modes of visibility, excision, classification and discipline. This same nexus underpinned colonial expansion and shaped the fledgling lives of anthropology, ethnography, sociology, as well as (later), theatre studies.

*Jenny Hughes is a Professor in Drama at the University of Manchester (UK). Recent publications include a co-authored book, Theatre in Towns (Routledge, 2022), an output of a collaborative Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project, ‘Civic Theatres: A Place for Towns’ (2021-2022). She is currently working on a monograph-in-progress, provisionally titled Theatre as Social Art: A History of Performance and Civic Practice, 1815 – 1914. Her research interests include the histories of civic theatre, theatre and socioeconomic justice initiatives, activist theatre and performance, and theatre in sites of war and emergency. Email:* [*jenny.hughes@manchester.ac.uk*](mailto:jenny.hughes@manchester.ac.uk)

**Performing Nations As “Imaginaries”: Mythologizing Italy on the Danish National Stage**

**– *Ulla Kallenbach***

This paper explores the transition from the lived experience of foreign cultures to the performative representations of these on the Danish national stage as part of the research project, Artistic Exchanges: The Royal Danish Theatre and Europe (Independent Research Fund Denmark). My focus is on Danish-Italian cultural exchange and mythologization. Several Italian immigrant artists, including composer Giuseppe Sarti and ballet master Vincenzo Galeotti, were key figures during the foundational years of the Royal Danish Theatre (est. 1748), merging Italian practices with Nordic subjects. Founding father of Danish-language drama, Ludvig Holberg, based his comedies on Italian commedia dell’arte, and Goldoni’s plays later served as inspirations for influential playwright, Charlotta Dorothea Biehl, in the 1760s. During the so-called Danish Golden Age of the early nineteenth century, Italy became a main travel destination for Danish artists, including choreographer August Bournonville, composer Henrik Rung, and playwrights such as Henrik Hertz. Italy subsequently became a popular fictional setting for works by Danish artists, including Bournonville’s Napoli, which to this day remains a signature piece of the Danish National Ballet. Specifically, I will explore the performance of Italy as an “imaginary”, that served not only as a representation of “foreignness” and “Italianness”, but also as a mythologization of “Danishness”. A key question is how we might view personal and artistic archival documents as historiographical practices that are part of an ongoing negotiation of nation-building and national identity formation. This in turn raises the question of how the theatre scholar today tackles transnational theatre historiography.

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**Reconstructing Reconstruction - Max Herrmann’s Lectures on Theatre History**

**– *Jan Lazardzig***

My contribution is based on a body of eleven (in part newly identified) students’ lecture notes, taken during university lectures by Max Herrmann, a founding figure of Theaterwissenschaft or Theatre Studies in Germany. Due to the deportation of Herrmann in 1942 to the concentration camp Theresienstadt and the subsequent destruction of his estate, these notes are the only evidence of Herrmann’s teaching practice. The notes were taken by students of German Philology and Theatre Studies between 1910 and 1932. They echo the establishment of the new academic discipline Theaterwissenschaft and promote a meticulous “reconstruction” as a methodological approach to theatre history. In my paper, I want to discuss some methodological issues and questions that arise in the processing of these manuscripts for publication.

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**Performing Hamlet/Hamlet as Performance – Shakespeare and Irish Myth-Making**

**– *Patrick Lonergan***

“I hear that an actress played Hamlet for the four hundred- and eighth-time last night in Dublin. Vining held that the prince was a woman. Has no-one made him out to be an Irishman?” – James Joyce, Ulysses (1922). This paper explores a 2018 Dublin Gate Theatre production of Hamlet that was directed by Yael Farber, with the title role being played by Ruth Negga, an Irish-Ethiopian actor perhaps best known internationally for her Oscar-nominated performance in the 2016 film Loving. My intention is to explore this production's dialogic relationship with Irish theatre histories, arguing that it deliberately sought to situate itself in relation to Shakespearean performance histories in Ireland, notably the Gate’s first production of Hamlet, which appeared in 1932 and featured a young Orson Welles as Fortinbras. In casting a woman in the lead role, the 2018 production also self-consciously linked with a 1741 Smock Alley staging of the play which featured Fanny Furnival in what is thought to be the first recorded example of a woman playing that character. The Farber production sought to draw on other elements of the Irish theatre history too, including the Gate’s associations with the work of Samuel Beckett. I will suggest that, by making these connections with the past, the Farber/Negga Hamlet was exploring the position of Shakespeare’s play in Irish culture, viewing it not simply as a play but as a myth that has recurrently been re-invented and re-circulated. This speaks to the conference theme of how theatre and performance become sites of (re)construction and transmission of myth and history.

*Patrick Lonergan is Professor of Drama and Theatre Studies at University of Galway and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. He has edited or written eleven books on Irish drama and theatre, including Theatre and Globalization (winner of the 2008 Theatre Book Prize), The Theatre and Films of Martin McDonagh (Methuen Drama, 2012), Theatre and Social Media (2015) and Irish Drama and Theatre Since 1950 (Bloomsbury, 2019). His next book, Theatre Revivals for the Anthropocene, will be published in 2023.*

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**Abstract Title: Not the Nation but The World: Bengali Theatre Historiography as World Theatre Historiography – *Souradeep Roy***

Current historiographical debates on “Indian” theatre tries to resolve the binary dichotomy of the sacred and the secular in performance traditions (Dutt 2021), as well as the tensions between serious and popular theatre in the postcolonial nationalist project of “Indian” theatre (Darius Nicholson 2021). My paper challenges the category of the nation to posit a new category of the world (as is used in recent debates on world literature). By analysing the archival remains of the first modern full-length play from the Indian subcontinent, Nabanna (New Harvest) (1944), written and co-directed by Bijan Bhattacharya, and produced by the Indian Peoples Theatre Association, set around the Bengal famine of 1943-44, my paper will explain how the crisis of world capitalism resulted in the famine, and a simultaneous socialist internationalist art solidarity project during the Second World War, presented a possible, and eventually failed vision of a nationalist theatre against the imperialist world order when the nation was three years away from being conceived. How did it become a popular theatre for the “people”, performing successfully in front of city audiences and rural peasants? Alongside the usual archive of autobiographical reminiscences, I will posit Ritwik Ghatak’s film, Komal Gandhar (A Soft Note on a Sharp Scale) (1962) to reconstruct the production and formulate reasons for the group disintegration. I will also analyse Ghatak’s deliberate mythologising of specific tropes such as the suffering mother as an allegory of the nation, which are most likely drawn from remembrances of the initial performances of Nabanna, but did not exist in Bhattacharya’s original play.

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**Magical Rebellion in the ‘Dutch Caribbean’? On Trickster Figures and Blackface Minstrelsy Performances in 18th Century Colonial Theatre of Surinam – Lisa Skwirblies**

In this paper, I discuss the historiographical challenge of doing performance research in the archive of Atlantic slavery - a research quest that is not only confronted with the extreme violence deposited in the archive but also with the convergence of terror and pleasure in the performance economy of slavery.

This methodological challenge builds the ground for a larger research project that aims at mobilizing Dutch theatre history by approaching it through its complex performance history in 18th-century Surinam. The former Dutch colony Surinam held two main European theatres in the city of Paramaribo, of which one was called the Holland or Christian Theatre (established in 1775) and the other one the Jewish Theatre (established in 1776). Rather than treating colonial-era Caribbean theatre as a mere copy of the metropolitan Dutch model, this project investigates the extent to which this theatre was impacted by local performance cultures. Especially the burlesque genres of the Dutch colonial theatre show a deep entanglement with Afro-Surinam mythical figures and themes. Harlequinades, minstrelsies, and circus performances in the colonial theatres of Paramaribo all held scenes of magical onstage rebellion by trickster figures that deeply resembled the mythical figure of the Black Atlantic. It is in this sense, that the performance repertoires of the colonial Caribbeans not only testify to the complexity and diversity of colonial theatre cultures but also to the potential that these hybrid genres held in terms of anti-colonial sentiment produced and embodied by the trickster figures and their subaltern knowledge.

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**We Are History! Theatre Amateurs Creating and Celebrating Their Own History in 19th-Century Germany – *Meike Wagner***

The paper explores how theatre amateurs expressed and affirmed their own historicity through performative practices off and on stage. In 19th-century Germany, a growing historical consciousness led to the establishment of numerous archives, collections, and libraries. In my contribution, I will investigate the Berlin-based amateur theatre society Urania (1792-1944) which hugely invested in factual and symbolic historiographic events and activities to inscribe their theatricals into a larger historical narrative. Responding to the generally felt‚ Zeitenwende‘ after the French Revolution and the disruptive Napoleonic wars that resulted in the occupation of Berlin, Urania‘s theatre amateurs developed a strong sense of creating their own history as a way to affirm and stabilize their identity as performing subjects. On special occasions, like 25th, 50th or 75th anniversaries, they celebrated the history of their society and created historical sources and documents (membership lists, historical narratives, memorial speeches etc.) that were meant to both turn to the past and a potential future historicity. ‘Keeping the records’ was essential to them, they even buried a document narrating their history under the foundation stone of their new theatre building in a symbolic act in 1834. In this symbolically historicizing frame also belong celebrations of political events that were felt to ‘make history’, e.g. the return of the Royal family to the city after the end of the French occupation. Performing and celebrating these events on and off stage marked them as ‘historically important’ and made them part of the history of the theatre association.

*Meike Wagner is Chair of Theatre Studies at LMU Munich. She has worked at Stockholm University and Mainz University. She received her PhD degree in 2002 from Mainz University. She is the author of Sutured Puppet Bodies. On the Theatre Body and the Medial Gaze. Bielefeld 2003, and Theatre and the Public Sphere in ‚Vormaerz’. Berlin, Munich and Vienna as Playgrounds of Bourgeois Media Practices, Berlin 2013. Her main research interests are theatre and media, performance and contemporary theatre, animation film, puppetry, theatre history, 19th century-theatre, theatre, and democracy. She publishes in various theatre journals and edits various volumes on theatre and media. She is co-editor of Double. Magazin für Figuren-, Objekt- und Puppentheater. Since 2018, she is Secretary General of the International Federation for Theatre Research. She is PI of the ERC project „Performing Citizenship. Social and Political Agency in Non-Professional Theatre Practice in Germany, France, Britain, Sweden and Switzerland (1780-1850)“. Email:* [*meike.wagner@lmu.de*](mailto:meike.wagner@lmu.de)

**The Stories Walter Bentley Told: Bringing the Irving Myth to Australia**

**– Sue-Anne Wallace**

In claiming Walter Bentley brought Irving to Australia in the late nineteenth century, metaphorically speaking, I argue his apprenticeship with Irving was pivotal to his career, although he loathed such comparisons. Now a scarcely known Scottish actor, who lived in Australia in the 1890s, settling in Sydney in 1909, Bentley mythologised his life on and off the stage. What he never conceded was how influential his time as juvenile lead for Henry Irving was to his performance, repertoire, and even personal affectations. Bentley’s legacy extended beyond his lifetime, carried by the actors he trained in his Brisbane and Sydney schools of elocution and dramatic art, focusing on Shakespearean drama. I excavate this dimension of Shakespeare in Australia, noting Poonam Trivedi’s suggestion “fragments, painstakingly assembled, … often provide the insight to define the whole”. I seize Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins’s suggestion of positing Shakespeare as a “hegemonic force” of empire, impacting the “theatrical culture of a society.” I argue that Shakespearean scholar and player, Henry Irving—vicariously—contributed to establishing that “theatrical culture” in Australia. Such “force” influenced antipodean actors like Walter Bentley, a Shakespearean tragedian. I respond to John Golder and Richard Madelaine, who examine Irving’s influence on Australian productions of Shakespeare, from Alfred Dampier, George Rignold and William Holloway to Allan Wilkie’s Antipodean Shakespeare, and “the ultra-realist tradition of the Irving-Tree-Oscar Asche school”. In this paper, I introduce Walter Bentley to this hierarchy and argue that he extended Irving’s mythic presence on the Australian stage.

*Dr Sue-Anne Wallace AM is an art historian whose doctoral research explored the liturgical theatres of the rock-cut churches in Cappadocia, Turkey. She taught art history at the Australian National University, before transitioning into art development and collecting institutions with the Australia Council, National Gallery of Australia, Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Queensland University of Technology Cultural Precinct, including Gardens Theatre. She is a former president of Museums Australia. Sue-Anne is a higher degree research student at the University of Queensland, researching late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century theatre in Australia and New Zealand, focusing on the tragedian Walter Bentley, whose memorabilia is housed in cultural institutions in Sydney. Sue-Anne is an Adjunct Fellow of the Sir Zelman Cowan Centre, Victoria University, Melbourne. She sits on management committees for Theatre Heritage Australia and the Performing Arts Heritage Network (Vice-Chair) and is a member of the International Federation of Theatre Research and the Australasian Drama Studies Association. Email:* [*sueanne.wallace@uq.edu.au*](mailto:sueanne.wallace@uq.edu.au)

**Oral Lore: Inculcating Cultural Awareness for Children Through Dramatic Activities**

**– *Bunmi Adedina***

Africans have a unique way of transmitting culture through oral lore. These serve as a medium for properly integrating young generations into their culture and preparing them for further interrogations and personal development in social relationships. Oral traditions are a popular and important aspect of Yoruba culture. In the past stories told by adults to children gave a pictorial value to the history and traditions of various societies. This approach to cultural transmission has greatly dwindled in recent times due to modernity, civilization, technology, religious inclinations and so on serving as a threat to the continued existence of orality even among the Yoruba. The research which is interdisciplinary, will employ drama and dramatic activities to explore Yoruba cultural narratives in the classroom. It is therefore an avenue to explore Yoruba oral traditions in folklore, folk songs, proverbs, idiomatic expressions, and panegyrics to revive oral cultural transmission and create cultural awareness for children. These oral accounts will be recounted in the Yoruba language and translated into English for the benefit of non-Yoruba speakers. Pupils in Primary Schools which is the formative age where children are open and more receptive to ideas and ideologies, are targets of this study. Most importantly, these oral accounts will play vital roles in enlightening them about their roots, practices, and experiences with a view to touching their core existence and shaping their future for cultural identity.

*Nkemdirim Olubunmi Adedina has a Doctor of Philosophy, (Drama in Education) M.A, B.A and Diploma in Theatre Arts from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She has been a Lecturer for over two decades climbing through the ranks to be a Chief lecturer at Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Oto/Ijanikin where she was head of the Department of Theatre Arts for three tenures. The defunct College has transmuted to Lagos State University of Education with effect from February 2nd, 2022, and she is presently a Senior Lecturer in the Acting capacity as Head of the Department of Theatre Arts. As a scholar, Bunmi Adedina has a lot of publications to her credit. These publications include theses, books (plays and a collection of short stories for children), chapters in books and journal articles. Her specialisation is Educational Drama, particularly with children and youths. Her research spans a variety of studies involving working with children while adopting drama and dramatic activities, particularly in primary and secondary schools. She has attended and participated in many Seminars, Conferences and Workshops at national and international levels. Her focus is on how to navigate learning through drama and its attendant tools for practical teaching and learning for children's personality development. Bunmi is also a versatile actor and has lots of stints directing and coordinating stage performances for children and young adults. She is a member of professional bodies like NANTAP, SONTA, AFTA, WICE, WAACLALS and President of NATE. Above all, she is a collaborator who believes strongly in harnessing people’s potential to achieve common goals. Email:* [*bfadedina@gmail.com*](mailto:bfadedina@gmail.com)

**Metaphoric Translations for Virtual Body Interactions Myths from Performance Studies**

**– *Florencia Aguilera***

To think on viable translations from a performative perspective for a virtual body interaction seeks that the subject of learning broadens their attention and become an actant within their own process, thus, contributing to their own Ontocratic Territory. Exercise self-criticism in the human relational modus operandi of virtual space-time and the increasing technology dialectics. The importance of the social virtual body lies in its active and political configuration of new practices for active and collaborative sharing. What performative elements, from the body myth narratives, are urgent to rescue and translate for a holistic well-being virtual interaction? With the above, the proposal is to use the verb "to translate" as the action that mobilizes the literacy figure of the metaphor as a potential myth. The translation of a virtual myth is still under construction and needs regulation. The terminological redundancy of translating a metaphor places the research in a beneficial liminal space that appeals to investigate the dialogue between memory (past), the collective imaginary (future), and what we want to preserve and build for our (present) virtual experiences. The proposal is that a more-than-human liminal space, with a specific interest in the body gets attention. Thereby, this liminal quality of the analysis as a nebulous definition between reality and fiction, makes the investigation of a “digital presence myth” an attractive event, the symbolic power of the transition between two different states (Dubatti, 2017) seeks to give voice to the production of better virtual myths for everyone.

*Florencia Aguilera is a theatre scholar and practitioner with research in Bodies and Education: Analysis of Possible Metaphors between the Face-to-Face and the Online Experience from the Game and the Performance. Game, Performance, and Interaction Design: The Bodily Limit of Design at the Centre for Design and Communication Studies, Universidad Palermo and Universidad del Desarrollo, 2020-21. Her other areas of research include the Guide for narrative design, Innovation Projects and Strengthening of UDD Teaching, in 2016. She worked in visual design at the UC Theatre from 2016 to 2019 and held an artist’s residency at the Hemispheric Institute in Chile in 2016. She is a proud recipient of the Arteles Grant (2017), the Experimenta Sur Scholarship (2015) and the Professional Master Scholarship Art and Virtual Image Technology, Paris VII, France (2007-09). She currently works in visual communication at the Network of Theatre Room and teaches Narrative Teaching and Experience Design at the Universidad del Desarrollo. Email:* [*faguilera@udd.cl*](mailto:faguilera@udd.cl)

**Pondering with Pines – *Annette Arlander***

Unlike the common way of using myths (stories, legends, or narratives) as source material for performances, in ‘orthodox’ performance art-enhancing myths are often created around the work or the artist afterwards. In much contemporary art, work stories are crucial for understanding the meaning of work and could be compared with the process accounts of PAR projects. In the artistic research project Pondering with Pines, myths have not played a significant role; the aesthetic idea being what you see is what you get. “The main concern is how to develop ways of recognizing and engaging with the subjectivity of life forms such as trees, which we tend to consider as wholly ‘other’. How to develop acts of thinking, reflecting, pondering, or speaking with trees, next to them or in some form of collaboration with them.” The link to myths is nevertheless evident in the plan: “How to consider historical, cultural, material, and local aspects when encountering specific trees. How to develop imaginative and poetic ways of encountering pine trees and engaging with them.” Could exploring myths related to pines enrich the project? In this presentation, I will look at some examples, such as the story of the mountain nymph Pitys in early Greek poetry, Finnish folk practices related to pine trees, symbolic meanings related to pines in several cultures like longevity and immortality, and contemporary recommendations to use pine in ceremonies of resilience and self-healing. This proposal relates to the question of how PAR engages myth, myths, and mythology as well as to the question of how PAR methodology could be used to address or intervene in the myths of nature and humanity and rather help us to think in terms of their inseparability.

*Annette Arlander, DA, is an artist, researcher, and pedagogue, one of the pioneers of Finnish performance art and a trailblazer of artistic research. Former professor at the University of the Arts Helsinki and Stockholm University of the Arts. At present, she is visiting researcher at the Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki. Her research interests include artistic research, performance-as-research and the environment. Her artwork moves between the traditions of performance art, video art and environmental art. See* [*https://annettearlander.com*](https://annettearlander.com) *Email:* [*annette.arlander@uniarts.fi*](mailto:annette.arlander@uniarts.fi)

**Crosspoints: An Integrative Acting System – *Stephen Atkins***

In this live, participatory workshop on the Crosspoints Acting System, we will practice the basic tenets of a new way to approach character, story, and identity. The Crosspoints builds on personal archetypes and 'proto-stories' to expand the actor's inner life through improvised, symbolic interactions. It leans on Jung's concept of the archetype as a pattern of behaviour that is both personal and part of a collective identity. It also incorporates the Lacanian notion of the 'Real' which is a state of nature that has been taken away from us through our use of language. Using guided physical exploration and the participants' embodied imagination, archetypal situations are explored as the basis for character, story, and worldview. The system de-centres the text of a play as the prime source for an actor's analysis. It is a generative framework rather than a deductive one, referring to imaginative resources rather than personal experience. Above all, the system is adaptable and as effective for scripted performance as it is for devised theatre.

*Dr Stephen Atkins, PhD (2021) is a performer, director and teacher from Western Canada. He also lives and works in the UK and Australia. For the past 15 years, he has assembled the Crosspoints Acting System as a guiding process for actors to generate inner life for a character and devise new stories for the stage and screen. His training background consists of several Stanislavsky and Grotowski-influenced methods, Suzuki Actor Training, the Meisner Technique, The Viewpoints, and the Michael Chekhov Technique; all of which have influenced the Crosspoints and their integrative nature. Atkins' scholarship is in acting pedagogy and post-dramatic theatre. He is honoured to live, work, and play on the traditional lands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples of Canada and the Kabi Kabi, and Jinibara peoples of Australia. Email:* [*stephen.h.atkins@gmail.com*](mailto:stephen.h.atkins@gmail.com)

**Beyond Myth: Perceiving Dragon – *Bruce Barton***

"Dragon" is an interdisciplinary project combining devised theatre, contemporary choreography, and a complex acoustic soundscape. Structured poetically, rather than as a linear narrative, it unfolds through the performance of a series of embodied memories. Each memory offers an intense physical encounter with the natural world, inviting observers to become reacquainted with the act of perception itself. "Dragon" is at once an effort to understand the place of humanity within the earth’s ecosystem—and an attempt to imagine beyond that place. Reflecting on a core creator’s personal experience of living with a progressive physical disability, we are exploring the ways that mature artists adapt their practices and awareness in response to their ageing bodies. This focus is combined with a desire to explore the possibility of imagining what lies beyond human perception and experience, as a way of envisioning a different relationship with the planet. Connecting these two sources of inspiration is the figure of the dragon. Bridging science and art, straddling history, mythology, ideology and cosmology, dragons have preoccupied the collective imagination across a wide spectrum of geographies and cultures. Sitting outside of both stable anatomy and human time, the lifespan of a dragon offers a vast canvas. Occupying a space that is both within and beyond human experience, dragons offer a window on another way of understanding the relationship between our own bodies, the physical world, and the complex generative sphere of mythology.

*Bruce Barton (https://brucewbarton.com) is a performance maker, scholar and Director of the School of Creative and Performing Arts at the University of Calgary. He is the author or editor/contributor of seven books, including Performance as Research: Methods, Knowledge, Impact (Routledge 2018), Mediating Practice(s): Performance as Research and/in/through Mediation (U of Winchester P, 2013), and At the Intersection Between Art and Research (NSU 2010). Bruce is the co-convenor of the Artistic Research Working Group of Performance Studies international (PSi) and the Artist Relations Officer on the PSi Board. Bruce works extensively as a professional director, playwright, dramaturg, and designer, and is the Co-Artistic Director of Vertical City (https://verticalcityperformance.com). Email:* [*bruce.barton@ucalgary.ca*](mailto:bruce.barton@ucalgary.ca)

**Performing Stories of the Posthuman: Worldmaking with Mythical Creatures, Robots, Aliens, and the Other(s) – *Serap Erincin***

My multimedia performances and installations intersect narratives of racial and ethnic identity with social and environmental concerns. They often tell stories of mythical creatures e.g. animals who have been long extinct, endangered species, -- and in futuristic work -- those who have become extinct, while also adapting the stories of marginalized, minoritized, disenfranchised people such as women artists who committed suicide or refugees, e.g. an orca named Virginia who starves itself when her calf Ofelia dies or a displaced polar bear named Kurdi who swims after losing its cub Aylan. These hybrid, ficto-critical, interspecies stories show that our "political" struggles aren't independent of our environmental concerns. My artistic research at the intersection of social and environmental justice positions mythmaking, storytelling, and fiction as methods of worldmaking for marginalized identities while considering what it means to be human and posthuman through the real, fictional, and mythical stories of the human and the nonhuman. I also use such literary tools of subversion as methods to decolonize both artistic practice and mainstream Eurocentric narratives – which have traditionally treated animals, minoritized groups, women, and other nonhuman humanoid characters such as robots as posthuman, never completely equal to humans, due to social, physical, biopolitical markers. This paper and the accompanying narrative and media texts document and analyse how speculative fiction and mythmaking in performance-making can serve as strategies to decolonize by helping viewers and readers imagine a future where people of colour and other minoritized groups belong, equally, without battling everyday systemic and societal oppression.

*Serap Erincin, an artist scholar from Istanbul, is an Assistant Professor of Performance Studies and affiliated faculty in Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies, Screen Arts, and African and African American Studies at LSU. She is also the vice president of PSi, Performance Studies International. She is the recipient of many awards and fellowships such as the Dwight Conquergood and David Keller awards and has presented her scholarship, live performances, and multimedia installations internationally. She is the editor of Solum and Other Plays from Turkey and publishes widely on experimental performance and social justice performance. Her plays such as Atrocity Boulevard, Suppression of Absence, and Ofelias, her performances, and interactive multimedia installations such as those that were part of her solo exhibition Human Rights/Human Rites or Plastigene intersect narratives of social justice and environmental concerns. She is currently working on a reimagining of Alice in Wonderland, a play on narratives and dreams of transnational migrants. Email:* [*se556@nyu.edu*](mailto:se556@nyu.edu)

**City Myth-Making and Re-making – *Alexandra Halligey***

My proposal for the Performance-as-Research Working Group for IFTR Ghana is to offer a session that draws on a set of key creative practice tools I have been developing since 2015 to explore everyday experiences and ways of being and moving through urban public spaces. We will work with physical expression, writing and drawing to access, tell and reimagine the myths of cities well-known to us through our sensory memories. These methods take as their inspiration Josephine Machon’s concept of (syn)aesthetics (2009), using the senses and their mediation through performance-based representational practices with an emphasis on synaesthesia. I initially developed the methods as part of a participatory public art project in inner city Johannesburg, exploring everyday place-making in participation with local residents. Since then I have used the methods in working with students, fellow researchers, and residents of the cities of Mongla and Noapara in Bangladesh. Most recently I have started to explore these methods with an interdisciplinary working group from South Africa, the UK and Canada, considering and furthering my understanding of “vulnerability as method”. I would like to explore with the PaR Working Group how these methods might be turned to consider the myths of our cities, where the charge and symbolic power rests in these city myths and how we might reimagine the myths to support what is robust and precarious in our cities towards greater socio-spatial justice.

*Alex Halligey has a PhD in Drama and Urban Studies through the University of Cape Town’s African Centre for Cities and the Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies (CTDPS). Her research is concerned with theatre and performance as research tools and conceptual lenses for exploring the relationship between people and the built environment. She is currently a research fellow with the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study at the University of Johannesburg. Her monograph Participatory Theatre and the Urban Everyday: Place and Play in Johannesburg was published by Routledge in 2020 and 2021 saw the publication of a scholarly volume she co-edited with Sara Matchett on women-lead theatre organisation, The Mothertongue Project: Collaborative Conversations: Celebrating Twenty-One Years of The Mothertongue Project. She has an ongoing practice as a theatre maker with recent productions including a solo memoir piece called Unfathomable (2018-2022), directed by and co-created with Athena Mazarakis and an ensemble work called Diving (2020), directed by Clara Vaughan. In keeping with her investment in understanding the relationship between bodies and space, she is also a practising Alexander Technique teacher. Email:* [*alexhalligey@gmail.com*](mailto:alexhalligey@gmail.com)

**The Myth in A Regenerative Body – *Elikem Kunutsor***

The body as a subject matter is difficult to define and contextualise; however, it is present, diverse and the only way human beings and animals connect to the existing environment and with the cosmos. The relevance of the human body day in and day out has been limited to the tangible and the potential of its performativity through co-creation with ‘other (s)’ needs more attention. The current socio-political challenge of humanities existence and relevance requires accessing the body not only through the tangible but also from a regenerative approach where there are constant and transformative renewals through a whole system approach and co-creating with nature. To ascertain this, the body needs to move beyond the tangible and accessed from the mythical framework in order to find its relevance in the past, present and future. This PAR exploration and presentation apply the Anlo-Ewe ethnic group from the Volta Region of Ghana’s concept of Ave Yiyi (pilgrimage to the forest) to investigate the process of attaining a ‘regenerative body’. The regenerative body seeks to interrogate the individual/performer’s body beyond body structure (tangible) and its limitations, to a more (w)holistic (mythic) approach to the body through co-creation with nature. The concept is to bring the body to a natural state of being; to place the body in a state of flux, playfulness, adaptability, receptive and engaging with stimuli from within and the environment. It aims to create a resilient and adaptive body.

*Elikem Kunutsor is a theatre scholar and practitioner. He holds a BA and MA in Dramatic Arts from the University of Witwatersrand. He has taught Drama in many schools in Ghana, notable among them the University of Ghana (2011-2015) and Tema International School (2015-2018). He has also lectured at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa (2008-2010). He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Cape Town (2019-to date).*

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**Lament: Lamentation Ritual at Contested Sites- Sara Matchett**

Building on previous work, Lament is not a singular action but a series of events whose aim is to bring intention, activism, and remembering, to contested sites such as the Amazon Africa headquarters development on indigenous land in the Western Cape. Associate Professor Sara Matchett and Professor Micha Espinosa intend to work with movement and vocal performance to generate new insights which will be disseminated as a workshop at IFTR (Performance as Research Working Group). The intention is to mix cultural mythologies and pedagogies using Transborder aesthetics, radical performance pedagogy, and radical lament. In April/May 2023, Espinosa will be in residence in Cape Town for six weeks, where Matchett and she will facilitate the creation of the rituals and a film installation. The film will be shared with workshop participants at IFTR before taking them through an experiential workshop process. Matchett will be there in person and Espinosa will be present on Zoom or Teams. The research centres on border theory, as borders are everywhere. Borders shift time and attract violence and new ways of being especially cultural, gendered, and racial borders. Borders swallow each other as they reclaim and let go, remember, and relive, expose marginality and distribution of sadness in a constant and static conversation that can only be understood through lament. Communal lament will allow participants to invoke and claim the past to remember in the present. The voice and the release of the voice will be the entry point for community catharsis.

*Dr Sara Matchett is an award-winning Theatre Director, Associate Professor, and the Director of the Centre for Theatre, Dance & Performance Studies (CTDPS) at the University of Cape Town (UCT). She is also a Lead Trainer of Fitzmaurice Voicework® the Regional Co-ordinator of the Fitzmaurice Institute for Africa, and an Advanced Breathwork Practitioner with Breathwork Africa (www.breathworkafrica.co.za). Her teaching profile centres around practical and academic courses that include, voice, acting, performance-making, applied theatre, and performance analysis. She is especially interested in transdisciplinary modes of creating. Her research explores the body as a site for generating images for the purpose of performance-making and specifically focuses on investigating the relationship between breath and emotion, and breath and image, in an attempt to make a performance that is inspired by a biography of the body. Her particular interests are in embodied practices that focus on presencing, co-sensing, collaborating, and co-generating as a way of transforming egosystems into ecosystems. As co-founder and Artistic Director of The Mothertongue Project women’s arts collective, Sara has experience in the field of theatre and performance as a performance-maker, performer, director, and facilitator. Email:* [*sara.matchett@uct.ac.za*](mailto:sara.matchett@uct.ac.za)

**Abstract Title: Survival of Myths or The Myths of Survival? Communities' Tales from A Delhi Landfill- Priyanka Pathak**

The Bhalaswa landfill site on the outskirts of New Delhi is inhabited by the waste picker community pejoratively labelled as an unorganised workforce. It is where the undocumented disappearance of workers is often explained as mythical narratives of ‘successful escape’. Instead of the more probable reason which is death due to inhuman working conditions or getting buried in a landslide of debris. However, unlike the myths in mainstream culture that celebrate communities, the stories at this site are of unacknowledged death against the façade of escaping misery, hardship, and alienation. Niros Sathpaty, an artist who worked as a night supervisor at the site for five years (2013-18), has been a witness to the disappearance of co-workers and the myths surrounding the events. Sathpathy is a trained visual artist who has engaged in community projects with waste pickers for over a decade. He is also a practising performance artist whose ongoing project is to compile such mythical narratives to create a performance text. He claims and I argue that despite the complexities and contradictions underlying these myths, they serve as an escape from their wretched lives and lived experiences. Using the methods of performance as research (PaR), to critically engage with the repository of these myths and performance texts serving as the background, this paper complicates the analysis of the strategic narratives of ‘hope’ of living interwoven with ‘myths’ of survival. The acts of performing these stories create a sense of community for those whose lives remain unacknowledged. I critically analyse the elements of myth-making that emanate from abject poverty fight for survival.

*Priyanka Pathak works on performance practices and art works in contemporary  
context of urban waste, ecology of cityscapes and its margins. In her ongoing  
doctoral research at the New Delhi-based Jawaharlal Nehru University, she is  
looking at performance of/and around the material remains of the city of Delhi as it  
has evolved in the last two decades. She has been awarded ‘EXC 2020 Temporal  
Communities’ Fellowship, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), at  
the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies, Freie Universität  
Berlin. She is an awardee of the Charles Wallace India Trust Research Grant  
(2020) to pursue research at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama,  
London. In her cross-cultural and international comparative research projects, she  
is focusing on performance-as-research at the intersection of urban ecology and art.  
Priyanka has a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in Life Sciences from Delhi  
University and a Diploma from the New Delhi-based National School of Drama  
with specialization in theatre technique and design. In her M.Phil. research, she  
focused on locating specific public sites through the lens of performance. Priyanka  
has been practising theatre in India as a designer, performance-maker &amp; performer  
for seventeen years. Email:* [*priyanka13pathak@gmail.com*](mailto:priyanka13pathak@gmail.com)

**Documented Workshop on Staging/Acting of Rigorous Ambiguity- Orestes Pérez Estanquero**

The main objective of the documented workshop is to scenic/act on stage -and reflect on these scenifications/actings-. Individual performances will be produced during the first two days, then, in the last days, a collective performance. In this workshop, two concepts that come from African culture will be staged: 1) Ashé and 2) Ubuntú. Each individual staging/acting of these two concepts, or of one of them, can be traded at the beginning as theatre, dance, circus, opera, magic, or cabaret referential fictions, or mixing any or all of these affirmed disciplines, but tending in all cases towards to the self-referential theme: autobiographical- performative by extension. The collective staging/acting will have a common formal context of reference: Jerusalema - the song and its danced versions, in videos. What are the ways, the creative methods, to achieve: the staging/acting that pays tribute, or preferably pays tribute, to the performing arts, to the art of the performing artist? Each participant in the workshop will carry out their own research (their own self-research). Afterwards, he/she will share it with the rest of the participants. Which dramaturgy and dialogues are an essential part of the creation of stage myths: neither fictional nor real or both at the same time?

*Orestes Pérez Estanquero (b. 1962, Habana, Cuba) is an artist and a PhD candidate. He earned a degree in Dramatic Art (1985) and a master’s degree in Arts (2002) at the Universidad de las Artes de Cuba (ISA). His research focuses on the areas of theory and practice of acting. He has published in different theatre journals. He has presented his research in the Annual Conferences of the IFTR (Barcelona, 2013 and Warwick, 2014)-PAR (Belgrade, 2018, Shanghai, 2019) and at different scientific conferences (Malta, 2016; Brno, 2017; Madrid, 2018-22). See Pérez Estanquero (Linkedin) Email:* [*orestesteatro@yahoo.com*](mailto:orestesteatro@yahoo.com)

**Theatre and Virtuality: A PaR Exploration of the Uncanny as Dissensus- Riddha Riddha**

In my MPhil thesis titled Digital Theatre and Social Media during the Covid-19 Pandemic in India: New Modalities and a Shared Political Lexicon, I have attempted to demonstrate how cyberspace and theatre can collaborate to challenge the dominant, mythic narrative of India as Hindu Rashtra/ nation. That theatricality makes itself felt as alterity (Feral:2002) and the digital visceralizes virtuality (Deleuze:1991), making digital theatre rife with affective and performative potential to demonstrate multiplicities and differences. This created the basis for a PaR collaboration with three other artists in the form of a digital performative essay wherein we explored how the body becomes a kinaesthetic coordinate in the digital image and in theatre, particularly through the horrific and the erotic. In the next stage of the PaR project, we are working towards exploring the uncanny as an effective tool for political dissensus through digital performance. I argue that in its logic of an incomplete doubling, the uncanny already resonates with theatre. Can it acquire a Brechtian character with its ability to disrupt one’s cognitive world, by introducing a strangeness to familiar experiences? My proposal for the PaR Working Group is oriented towards this question within the Documented Workshop format, wherein I will show a variety of clips to the participants and invite them to create montage arrangements of them. The focus will be on resisting familiar narratives and instead creating dissensual points of conjunction, to highlight both the inherent virtuality of formal decisions as well as the strength/precarity of the stories we tell.

*I am an MPhil scholar of Theatre and Performance Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. I hold a master’s degree from the School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU and a bachelor’s degree in history from St. Stephens College, DU. I have previously acted in and directed theatre productions that have been screened at the Fringe Festival, the Old-World Theatre Festival, and the Atelier Theatre Festival, among others. My dissertation titled Digital Theatre and Social Media during the COVID-19 Pandemic in India: New Modalities and a Shared Political Lexicon look at performances that occurred in cyberspaces in the context of the Anti-CAA Movement in India. After participating in Would I Lie To You: A Course on the Use of Documents in Theatre organized by the Serendipity Arts Foundation, I collaborated with three artists to devise a digital performative essay titled Is Your Here, Now?: A PaR Enquiry into Sensuous Nonsense, which explored the debate on liveness through the kinaesthetic possibilities of the performing body in a digital image. Email:* [*riddha97@gmail.com*](mailto:riddha97@gmail.com)

**WILDING- The Body at Risk in Militant Feminist Revolt (Performance Lecture)- Ildiko Rippel**

“Rights of assembly struck me as different from rights of association or rights of free expression. They fundamentally involve the body in a collective, embodied set of acts.” (Butler 2015). The Performance as Research project Wilding is concerned with the precarious female body as a site of protest in feminist revolt, precarity describing the “conditions that threaten life in ways that appear to be outside of one’s control” (Butler 2009: i). Wilding is a collaboration with non-binary, queer performance maker Emma Bourke, a descendant of the militant suffragette Emily Wilding Davison, who died at the Epsom Derby in 1913 after running in front of the horses in an attempt to pin a suffragettes’ flag to the King’s horse. Wilding uses a Performance as Research methodology to challenge myths surrounding femininity and precarity and explores the meaning of feminism to non-binary people today. The project is furthermore invested in the female body risk during radical feminist revolt, and the relation of protest to queerness, “if the term is taken in its most theoretical sense to mean the bending and modification of normative structures of power and sociality” (Glazier 2015). The Wilding performance lecture merges archival footage of the Epsom Derby with autobiographical confession and is accompanied by a sound score of protest recordings merged with feminist Euro-Punk. Wilding explores the embodiment of protest in performance, is a response to and a protest against the UK’s policing bill, and explores the performers’ personal, political and phenomenological experiences of their protest bodies.

*Dr Ildikó Rippel is a performance practitioner and researcher based in the UK. Ildikó is a senior lecturer at the University of Worcester and co-artistic director of Anglo-German Zoo Indigo theatre company. Ildikó’s previous research examined familial performance and the presence of real-life family members in contemporary maternal performance in reference to Zoo Indigo’s Under the Covers (2009) and Blueprint (2012). She has co-authored articles with Zoo Indigo collaborator Rosie Garton, examining maternal performance in Performance Research (2017), and in Critical Stages (2020/2021), discussing Zoo Indigo’s multilingual performance projects and dramaturgies of migration. Ildikó’s current research is concerned with the embodiment of protest in contemporary performance. Email:* [*ildiko@zooindigo.co.uk*](mailto:ildiko@zooindigo.co.uk)

**Children and Their Adults Mythologising Ecology: The Nudibranch- Gӧze Saner**

Nudibranchs are flamboyant sea slugs found all over the world. Their unique forms and amazing colours are due to their tendency to copy their environments; spotting these tiny creatures (most are just a few centimetres long) tells us about the health of the marine ecosystem. In her short story "Nudibranch," Irenosen Okojie writes of the goddess Kiru who arrives at an island, shapeshifts, and eats the hearts of eunuchs during their orgiastic ceremony. Okojie mythologises the cannibalistic behaviour of some nudibranchs into a feminist anticolonial revenge poem (2019). Nudibranchs speak to our times: their beautiful diversity iconifies racial justice, equality and difference; their hermaphroditic biology and playful mating behaviours celebrate queer, trans, non-binary, and otherwise fluid or resistant gender and sexual identities; their sightlessness and shell-lessness along with their ability to ingest, store and recycle their enemies’ poison exemplify the multiplicity of bodies and forms of resilience; their minuscule size compared with their pervasive presence and significance as part of the ecosystem present a powerful reminder that the human being is not alone and not at the centre of this planet. In August 2022, I worked collaboratively with my eight-year-old daughter over a week-long residency to create a performance installation about nudibranchs for children her age and their adults. In preparation for a second week in 2023, I will reflect on the previous year and ask: can a mother and a daughter collaborate equally, artistically? Can searching, uncovering, telling and embodying the myth of a strange animal together help us get to know and work through each other’s familiarity and strangeness?

*Göze Saner is an actor, researcher, theatre practitioner, clown and lecturer in Theatre and Performance at Goldsmiths, University of London. She holds a BA in Philosophy from Bryn Mawr College, PA, and a PhD in Theatre and Performance from Royal Holloway, University of London. Her forthcoming book Archetypes of Performance, Performing Archetypes (Perspectives on Performer Training series, Routledge) investigates how solo performance can be reconfigured as a socially engaged, participatory, D-I-Y practice. Her current performance as research engages the ubiquitous and flamboyant nudibranch as an archetypal figure. She is a co-convenor of the IFTR Performance as Research working group. Email:* [*g.saner@gold.ac.uk*](mailto:g.saner@gold.ac.uk)

**Merging Performance: Re-Programming the Myth of Ariadne- Mark Tatlow**

Informed by Walter Mignolo’s concept of “delinking,” my current research project experiments with ways of detaching the rehearsal and performance of eighteenth-century vocal music from its colonial past, by looking for techniques of empowering it to speak into today's existential complexities. In the summer of 2022 I made a field trip to the island of Naxos in the Aegean Sea. I was curious to learn what it could tell me about the story of Ariadne, which I was studying in a version set to music by the eighteenth-century composer Joseph Haydn. I had the urge to spend time on the rocky outcrop where the mythical Cretan princess was abandoned by Theseus, shortly after she had helped him slay her half-brother, the Minotaur, in his Knossian labyrinth. I wondered whether, through being attentive to what is happening on Naxos today, I could redream the ancient myth of Ariadne, allowing it to open up a more hopeful, if not necessarily simpler future for her and others in a similar plight. I suggest that this demonstrates how myth-making and story-telling might create new narratives for the future, and play their part in spreading peace, by promoting collaboration and solidarity, rather than prolonging violence and war, through selfishness and separation. In my participatory presentation, I will invite colleagues to join me in a process of re-programming the myth by creating a piece of performance art to run alongside and complement Haydn's musical storytelling. This would merge traditional classical performance with a contemporary performance program.

*My background is as a classically trained musician. I have worked in opera and education most of my life. Originally from the UK, I have lived in Sweden for over 25 years and have been a professor of musical studies at Stockholm University of the Arts/SKH, and artistic director at Drottningholm, an eighteenth-century theatre. I co-founded Performing Premodernity, a research project at Stockholm University in 2013, and am now undertaking artistic research towards a PhD at the University of Gothenburg. My dissertation, "Assaggio. Experimenting with the performance of early vocal music" looks at how this repertoire might speak to a world facing a possibly catastrophic future. I have been a member of IFTR since 2015 and have attended annual conferences in Hyderabad, São Paulo, Stockholm, Galway-on-line and Reykjavik. Joining the PaR working group in 2017, a new world opened up for me, and listening to Eleonora Fabião talk about her research and performance inspired me to completely rethink my current research project: I realised that issues of climate change, colonialism, and race could indeed impinge on my way of doing music. I am co-convenor of the PaR working group. Email:* [*mark.tatlow@hsm.gu.se*](mailto:mark.tatlow@hsm.gu.se)

**Ten Thousand Steps- Myer Taub**

Mythologies made from walking as praxis; is often a question and statement made in walking: "You walk in Johannesburg? I am asked.... Astounded. You don't have a car!"How does walking as a praxis in a city like Johannesburg articulate the affect and measuring of performance. This is a workshop. Part paper, part performance... When I began to take walking praxis seriously it was when it engendered other kinds of performance practices including mythologies/mythologizing on the reincarnation and removal of whiteness-as an example of how walking provokes epiphany as paradox; I have an already messy archive of walking-based performance projects: some unresolved and some already constituted. But what can be extracted from this archive to further the technologies of performance studies as radical acts Is The effect of the radical technology from the body, as in walking. I want to stimulate these thoughts as a display or installation of the artefact from the messy archive of walking (that includes other documents of writing, posters from walking plays, fragments, stones, and the like....) And alongside this display of artefacts, is a workshop as a conversation on walking as a performance practice, integrating the workshop with themes of collaboration, non-collaboration, reading of intermediality and stimulation, interactive, organic, and site-specific. The title of the integration of workshop, performance, paper, and conversation with walking praxis is TEN THOUSAND STEPS playfully suggesting the mythology of better walking as a starting point to this conversation.

Myer Taub is a senior lecturer teaching at the Theatre and Performance Department, Wits School of Arts, University of Witwatersrand. Email: [myersuniverse@gmail.com](mailto:myersuniverse@gmail.com)

**Performance, Religion and Spirituality Working Group -**

**Interrogating the Myth of The Dead through Puppet Performance- Cariad Astles**

Scholars of ritual puppetry (Darkowska-Nidzgorski 1976; Houdart 2004; Jurkowski 1988; Pimpaneau 1977; Geertz & Lomatuway'ma, 1987) note that humans in all cultures throughout the world have made effigies of themselves which accompany them through death to other worlds, or which remain in the world of the living in order to represent their dead 'selves'. As liminal objects, neither alive nor dead, puppets could be seen as the 'fantasy' proposed by Kirkegaard as a response to the 'despair of infinity'. They can also be seen within Caplan's theory of crisis as material to accompany and bear testimony to trauma, such as that caused by death or perception of death. The puppet is recognised as an intermediary, which gives it a particular place within health contexts. If the myth of death, however, is not an end but a journey, puppets can be used as part of a biographical trajectory tracing not only the life of the living but also assuring their place after death. In contemporary puppet performances, puppets emphasise either the 'live' parts of themselves or highlight their 'non-alive' presence. This presentation will explore how puppetry challenges binary myths of death, tracing its performance from ritual uses within funeral rites to contemporary performance within the work of practitioners such as Paska, Paiva and Schonbein.

*Cariad Astles is a puppetry tutor at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, London and is also a Lecturer in Drama at the University of Exeter, UK, specialising in applied theatre (with a focus on theatre and health) and transcultural performance. She is the President of the UNIMA Research Commission. She is also a core collaborator with the Catalan group Irenia Jocs de Pau, which runs training workshops in different art forms towards a culture of peace and intercultural identity. She also works as a puppetry performer and director. As a puppet theatre director, she has recently worked for Med Theatre and the Northcott Theatre in the UK. She frequently runs training workshops in the UK and overseas, most recently in China, Chile, and Spain. Email:* [*c.astles@exeter.ac.uk*](mailto:c.astles@exeter.ac.uk)

**Invitation of the Trickster: Prayers, Proverbs and Poems on Living and Imagining- Priscilla Azaglo**

I am often, paused and moved by Octavia E. Butler’s question, ‘What do we need to do now, to create the future that we want?’ Using the tool of storytelling, community archiving, and sound collage as a portal to transcend through time and space. In honour of Toni Morrisons' invitation to imagine grace, I intentionally call on the wisdom within the community. The language that is often ignored or silenced is guidance to ways of living and being. Reaching into the lessons of yesterday while honouring proverbs, poems, and prayers that challenge and lift us up. In hopes to question, explore and answer the practices of liberation and living. In questioning, there is a transparency of unknowing, and in exploring, there is a trusting of the unknown. The performance art embodies the sacredness of the human and spiritual world. Inviting the audience to participate in a ritual that honours the lessons and [re]membering of African indigenous languages, stories, proverbs, and ancestors. The invitation is to welcome the acts of the trickster, one that disturbs the rhythm of doing and leans into the being. Grounded in the tradition of the American South, Ga Dangbe and Eʋe people in Ghana. As an interactive performance, the presentation is aimed to disturb the role of a performer and the audience, inviting the audience to 'perform' and participate. The meditation essay exhibited as a performance art will present a collage of the sounds of Toni Morrison, Sarah Dorgbadzi, Efua Sutherland, Ghanaian Proverbs, Bible passages, poetry, and songs/chants centred around liberation, wandering, and living.

*Dzidzor is a Ga-Ewe folklore performing artist, who is paused and moved by Octavia E. Butler’s question, ‘What do we need to do now, to create the future that we want?’ She often echoes the words of Toni Morrison’s words and her father’s prayers as a guide to reaching back into the past to guide us toward the present. Dzidzor organizes community art events and facilitates workshops around empowerment and strengthening the voice, she intentionally calls for the community to reach into the lessons of yesterday while honouring proverbs, poems, and prayers that challenge and lift us up. Dzidzor is the founder of the Black Cotton Club and partners with Grubstreet, ICA Boston, and Boston Public Schools to teach creative empowerment workshops in Boston. Dzidzor is a candidate for a master’s in Theological Studies at Boston University and holds the role of a Community Archivist at Northeastern University. She is currently working on a two-piece project that features a listening component and public art project entitled, ‘Wilderness’ with Crystal Bi. Email:* [*PazaglO@bu.edu*](mailto:PazaglO@bu.edu)

**“I Only Knew Him As ‘SOGYA’” — Creating A Decolonial Performance Theology of Re-Becoming, Founded Upon Dagaaba and Catholic Principles of Temporality- Patrick Bayele**

The paper examines the decolonial Performance Theology of Re-Becoming, presented in SOGYA: Pt. I. My father's testimony of his uncle, whom he remembers as ‘Sogya’ (Dagaare for ‘soldier’), deployed in the 1944 Burma campaign without returning, triggered a ‘flash’ of my ‘mythic’ colonial ‘past’ (Ford, 1999), compelling me to reinvent this legacy into ‘a critical site for the advancement of experimental practice in black art’ (McCormick, 2019). What has emerged is a dialogical, participatory performance mode of ‘personal and social healing’ (Ford, 1999) which syncretises Dagaaba and Catholic principles of temporality, whereby I, performing as my present self whilst re-enacting the mythos of my great-uncle and ancestors, bind the geographical and cultural severances afflicted upon my forefathers. To heal is to re-become what we once were, and black performance facilitates this trans-temporal ‘release from the post-memory of […] dehumanising acts’ (Keizer, 2004) instrumented by ‘peculiar institution[s]’ such as slavery and colonialism (McCormick, 2019). For members of the African diaspora, this ‘release’ animates Catholic principles of ‘redemption’ and ‘salvation’, which wrongfully commandeered these ‘institutions’ and diminished traditional African religion. SOGYA: Pt. I embeds these aforementioned Catholic principles as mytho-spiritual temporal registers within the interdisciplinary praxis, and decolonises them through audience participation, foregrounding the theatre as a nexus of spiritual, temporal dialectic. As a ’liberatory narrative’ (Mitchell, 2002), SOGYA: Pt. I illuminates restorative identities for African diasporic and Western audiences to encounter and receive, thereby unfolding a legacy of re-becomings, healing and postcolonial justice.

*Patrick Sung Bayele is a British-Ghanaian theatre maker, filmmaker, writer and MFA Advanced Theatre Practice student at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, UK. He previously studied at the Identity Drama School of Acting, Queen Mary University and the Moscow Art Theatre School. His interdisciplinary practice weaves Catholic and African theology, Ghanaian theatre practices, poetry, political philosophy and devising together, to envision alternative futures of cross-cultural union. Having worked extensively alongside the National Youth Theatre as an actor, facilitator, and Youth Trustee, he recently became a Visiting Lecturer at Middlesex University and is now the Co-Artistic Director of The Avieli Arthouse; an arts charity which received a 2022 StART Enterprise Award grant from Royal Central. With the launch of its creative programme scheduled for summer 2023, The Avieli Arthouse puts God at the centre of the creative process to unlock new ways of telling urgent stories and working alongside marginalised communities. Email:* [*patrickbayele@outlook.com*](mailto:patrickbayele@outlook.com)

**Nmaadumor: Silence, Sonic Anarchy and Communal Healing- Kwame Boafo**

In this paper, I examine the performance of silence, its materiality, location, and agency in the Ga Kple religion. I use the annual ban on drumming and noisemaking, known as Nmaadumor by the Ga Mashie traditional leaders, as a case study. Several scholars have engaged with the ban by considering the friction it induces between Pentecostal/Charismatic and Ga religious leaders (van Dijk, 2001; De Witte, 2008; Goshadze, 2019). These studies are imperative for understanding the performance and sacredness of sound and its agency in Accra's religiosity. However, such studies or readings often focus on the tensions and noise that the aftermath of the ban brings without considering the most significant aspect of the ban, which is silence. Thus, there is an urgent need to consider the affective relationality of silence, particularly for Ga Kple religious practitioners and the city of Accra. This paper is delineated by these questions: How do Ga Kple religious practitioners alter the sound environment in the metropolis? How should we read the ban on drumming and noisemaking beyond religious frictions? How is silence performed and observed in a "sonically enchanted" (Goshadze, 2019, p. 191) metropolis? I do not attempt to provide definitive answers but instead, trace a broad outline by contextualising silence within an expansive epistemology. Beyond the religious friction that has frequently been discussed, this paper highlights the multiple points of affiliation and alienation that silence engenders for Ga Kple religious practitioners and the city of Accra.

*I am currently a PhD candidate in Theatre and Performance Studies at the National University of Singapore. My doctoral research investigates the genealogies and dramaturgy of processions in a West African community. For many years, sentimental perceptions and misconceptions have hindered the understanding and interpretation of the particularities of processions. My interest lies in exploring what insights processions offer as a form of knowledge production and memory-making. I explore how processions have retained, diversified, and survived the changing dynamism of modernity, with religion and cultural hegemony, capitalist development, and technological advancement rattling its core. I explore processions in Ga Mashie and other embodied ritual practices as a primary source to examine their legacies and agencies. I completed my master's degree in Intercultural Communication Studies at Shanghai Theatre Academy and a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts at the University of Education, Winneba. Parallel to my research work, I work as a movement artist. I have performed and devised multiple collaborative projects and experimental shows featured worldwide at festivals and art residencies. Email:* [*e0452937@u.nus.edu*](mailto:e0452937@u.nus.edu)

**The World of LUXe- Giuliano Campo**

I will present, for the first time in a public and academic setting, the activities of LUXe, a company based in Donegal, Ireland, founded and directed by English-born Mandy Blanco and Mark Hill, which is devoted to producing landscape theatre performances, ritualistic, illuminated, and processional spectacles, witnessed by an average of 200-250.000 spectators a year since its foundation in 2008. Luxe company’s projects aim to design and make event-specific bodies of work, celebrating local communities, landscapes, and cultures, including their mythical figures, such as, just to give a recent example, the Irish goddess Brigit, St Brigid, Imbolc, a symbol of the feminine, and the returning sunlight, to mark Ireland’s new national public holiday 1st Feb. This IFTR conference, focused on the relationship between myth and performance, gives us the opportunity to acknowledge LUXe’s work, which combines the ability to create imaginary worlds, with the enactment of exceptional professionalism and craft, environmental rigorous research with people’s participation, pedagogical approach and support to communities, with ritual processional theatre, magic beach spectacle with large scale illumination shows for urban centres, and more creative applications of performance arts in Ireland and in international settings, including Hong Kong, Scotland, Eastern Iceland, Arctic Norway and Newfoundland. Their landscape performances are world-leading examples of how artistic practice can address the environment in relation to human presence as a key conceptual framework, in order to foster awareness of possibilities for creative, humanities-informed, shared-island, organic inter/trans-cultural responses to the contemporary fragmentation of the human and the ecological crisis of today’s world. Their craft-based, creative investigation, always opened to partnership with a significant number of performers, artists, technicians, and scholars, is an example of excellence in collaborative research, enabling exchange of insights, perspectives and methodologies that respond to the Anthropocene, and to the spiritual, practical demands of individuals, across humanities and creative practice disciplines.

*Dr Giuliano Campo PhD (Rome and Paris) is an Italian Performer, Theatre Director and Actor trainer, presently Lecturer in Drama at Ulster University in Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland. He has been visiting professor in a number of international institutions, from the Moscow Art Theatre School (MXAT) to UniRio (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), UFBA (Federal University of Bahia) and several other Universities and HE centres in Brazil and Europe. Formerly he was a Research Associate for The British Grotowski Project based at the University of Kent, UK, and founder of the theatre company Ypnos Teatro and of the laboratory Towards an Active Culture in Rome. His publications include the book Acting the Essence: The Performer’s Work on the Self (Routledge, 2022), the book/film Zygmunt Molik’s Voice and Body Work-The Legacy of Jerzy Grotowski, with Zygmunt Molik (Routledge 2010, published in five languages) and several articles and book chapters in Portuguese, Italian and English on theatre and film. He is a member of IHA, Irish Humanities Alliance, Environmental Humanities Working Group, and of the research network ‘Humanities for the Anthropocene’. Email:* [*g.campo@ulster.ac.uk*](mailto:g.campo@ulster.ac.uk)

**Loving the Chameleon: Obatala in Portsmouth- Christopher Danowski**

In Lukumí ritual tradition, Obatala is the creator who moulds human beings in the womb. Obatala is also related to the mountaintop, purity, patience, and time. One of the translations of the name is ‘Orisha of the immaculate white cloth’; initiates in the tradition wear white during their first year, and children of Obatala wear white often afterwards (some more than others). I was initiated to Obatala in 2008. Lukumí is a tradition that began in Cuba as part of the transculturation of the transatlantic slave trade. It is primarily innovations of Yoruba traditions recontextualised in the Caribbean and combines some elements of indigenous practices, Catholicism, and spiritism. Alagemma is one of Obatala’s avatars, and this is the path I was initiated to; Alagemma is portrayed as a chameleon, and there is a creation story where Alagemma was in a contest with Olokun (the Orisha of the deep part of the ocean), over who could be the most colourful. I won’t say who won. This performance presentation is an artistic-academic discussion of this story and its relationship to indigenous ecologies. It will be a rough version of a live and recorded performance where the myth glitches with everyday experience, working with the idea of ori, emi, and iponri, as Yoruba-inspired concepts for understanding human consciousness and experience. I will be drawing on Strongman’s discussions of androgyny in the figure of Obatala and Olokun, Beliso de-Jesús’ notion of co-presence as the seeds for a methodology for working with the non-human to construct performance, and Cardenas’ notion of the stitch and the glitch in both art-making and gender experience outside the binary.

*Dr Kit Danowski. I have an MFA in Playwriting and Fiction and have worked since 1992 as a playwright, director, and performer of experimental theatre and performance. My work has been performed in galleries, music venues, and found spaces, and occasionally in theatres in Phoenix, Brooklyn, Berlin, Krakow, Seattle, Minneapolis, and Brighton, among other places. My book of experimental prose, dog's ear, was published by Hoot n' Waddle Press in 2018, and I have a monograph, Trances and Traces: Ancestor work as method for performance, forthcoming, from Intellect. I am currently a Senior Lecturer in Performance at the University of Portsmouth. Email:* [*kit.danowski@port.ac.uk*](mailto:kit.danowski@port.ac.uk)

**The African American Dancing Body; a Site for Religious Experience through Dance (Religion, Myth, Popular Culture, and Performance) Shani Diouf**

African American religious dance is not a topic previously explored in detail beyond dance that has historically existed within the context of Christianity and the church, a myth I wish to address. The African American religious experience is not limited to Christianity and should be inclusive of various religious practices extending beyond the church, thus requiring deeper exploration of what constitutes an African American religious experience, especially as it relates to dance. In an effort to explore this, careful exploration of the Ring Shout was necessary as a tool in discussing the evolution of African American religious dances. In my essay I use Saidiyah Hartman’s text Scenes of Subjection to aid in my investigation into why and how African American performance has historically been affected by enslavement while also drawing in part on historical recollections of experiences of the enslaved through reflections on the Ring Shout, the first African American religious dance. While arriving at my own definition of African American religious dance I pull from Anthony Pinn’s definition of African American religion. I also include interviews conducted with dance practitioners of different genres about their perceived notions and personal experiences of what makes a dance religious. I ultimately arrive at a definition of African American religious dance neither aligned with Christianity or any other specific religion but is instead representative of the communal identity of being Black in America. I ultimately assert that African American religious dance can be both inclusive of secular dance and a religious experience simultaneously.

*Shani Diouf is a Fulbright scholar having researched dance in Ghana from 2006-2007, where she researched and performed with The National Dance Company of Ghana and Saakumu Dance Troupe. She has also had the pleasure of working with Urban Souls Dance Company, Second-Generation Dance Company, Jawole Zollar (at Florida State University), Bernard Woma, Dr. Paschale Younge, Dr. Zelma Badu-Younge, Torgbui Midawo Gideon Foli Alorwovie and Sulley Imoro among others. She has an MA in Religious Studies from Rice University, an MFA in Performance and Choreography from Florida State University, and a BS in Dance from Lamar University (summa cum laude). Diouf, who is a certified Kemetic Yoga Instructor, has also taught dance at Houston Community College for the past 15 years where she founded and organized The Akwaaba Dance and Drum Festival aimed at celebrating the beauty and diversity of African music and dance as well as dances of the diaspora through dance and drum classes, performances, lecture demonstrations and panel discussions. She is currently a PhD student at Texas Woman’s University and teaches West African dance at The Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts as well. Email:* [*sdiouf@twu.edu*](mailto:sdiouf@twu.edu)

**Akwunaenyi Masquerades and The Myth of Performance: (Re)Telling the Gendered Stories of The Ndokwa People- Ruth Epochi-Olise**

Masquerading promotes verbal and visual tales of cultural identity and cosmologies while bringing people together. It is a form of education and entertainment that helps people fully comprehend culture and its social and historical heritage. The study aims to examine the history of the Akwunaenyi masquerades. The legendary elements of the Akwunaenyi masquerades will be examined, as well as the relevance of myths associated with its religious practices. This paper will probe into the social context of the Akwunaenyi masquerades as a mythical performance and a pillar of morality. The paper shall investigate the gendered nature of the masquerade performance with an ungendered mask that adorns both female and male forms as they co-exist within the natural environment. In view of the masquerade’s pedagogical relevance, the work will also investigate the artistic, sociological, and economic-environmental effects of the masquerade performance.

*Epochi-Olise Etuwe Ruth studied at the University of Ibadan, where she holds a B.A (Hons), M.A and PhD in Theatre Arts; a director, actor, costumier, and theatre Manager. She currently lectures at the Department of Theatre Arts, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Epochi-Olise is a Fellow of the Institute of the Ife Advanced Studies (IIAS), whose research and teaching interests cuts across Dramatic literature, costume and makeup, Theatre for Development, Children's Theatre, Cultural, Gender and Performance Studies. She has published academic papers in reputable local and international journals as well as reviewed and co-edited articles in national and international journals. Email:* [*epochiolise@yahoo.com*](mailto:epochiolise@yahoo.com)

**Thaumaturgical Practice on Live Streams and Social Media- Alvin Eng Hui Lim**

As the COVID-19 situation intensified in 2020, live-streamed videos of Chinese gods and spirits appeared on the Facebook pages of several private temples. Increasingly, spirit mediums possessed by a host of spirits and divinities communicated with their online audiences through live streaming and social media posts on TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube. They re-emerged to provide some semblance of normalcy, or rather, a new normal where they relied on social media to connect with their devotees during times of necessary physical isolation. The shift to social media platforms subverts the private nature of such possessions, making them somewhat public. The paper examines how divinities now engage with online devotees through social media and live-streaming, and the transgressive nature of this emergent practice. The phenomenon of gods going online combines myth, thaumaturgical practice, and contemporality, where the past has been reimagined to have present agency. Acts of small miracles, accurate prediction of lottery numbers, and advice from the gods reveal how these gods become physically and digitally available through spirit mediums. In other words, the process of mythmaking is ongoing, and the online platform provides a new site for staging divine interventions and spiritual (and mediated) immediacy.

*Alvin Eng Hui Lim is a performance, religion, and theatre researcher. He is Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Linguistics, and Theatre Studies at the National University of Singapore. He holds a PhD in Theatre Studies jointly awarded by the National University of Singapore and King’s College London. He is also Deputy Director and Technology and Online Editor (Mandarin) of the Asian Shakespeare Intercultural Archive (A|S|I|A, http://a-s-i-a-web.org/). Lim’s first monograph, titled Digital Spirits in Religion and Media: Possession and Performance (2018), studies how lived religious practices in contemporary Singapore perform in combination with digital technology. He has also published on Singapore theatre, translation, digital archiving, and religious performance in Singapore. Email:* [*ellleha@nus.edu.sg*](mailto:ellleha@nus.edu.sg)

**Abhishek It Up, Baby- David Mason**

God needs a bath. Fortunately, there are a bunch of people to make this happen regularly, if not especially frequently. Several times a year, Radharaman Mandir in Vrindavan hosts a grand abhishek—a ritual bathing of Krishna’s Radharaman image that is installed there. The event draws a crowd. Mostly from outside of Vrindavan, which is a town in which some Krishna-related event is always taking place, and mostly for the sake of outsiders, who cycle through Vrindavan as a crucial pilgrimage site. Devotee regard for Radharaman varies. A certain reverence is perhaps consistent, although the word reverence probably ought to be cast more as adoration. Otherwise, one finds a multitude of regard for this 18-inch figure of a flute-playing boy. For some, the figure operates as a symbol of something ineffable. For others, the figure is a living, might-as-well-be-breathing entity, in itself. And every possible regard in between these two poles is, well, possible. None of these various regards emerges spontaneously, and the common adoration of varying intensity does not come from nowhere, either. The abhishek and other ritual activities facilitate a certain sort of interaction between Radharaman and devotees. That interactive activity—for which the best word is play—is the mechanism that fashions a relationship between figure and devotee. If mythopoesis is a process by which a story entangles with reality, the abhishek offers a model. The abhishek bonds Krishna with devotees, and vice-versa, in a way that is really experienced. Which is to say that the abhishek makes reality.

*David Mason is the co-convenor of IFTR’s Performance, Religion, and Spirituality working group. He is the author of Theatre and Religion on Krishna’s Stage (2009) and The Performative Ground of Religion and Theatre (2019). He is the editor of Ecumenica, a peer-reviewed journal for scholarship on performance and religion. He is composing a book about play, based on work in India in 2022 as a Fulbright Fellow. Email:* [*iamunhyphen@gmail.com*](mailto:iamunhyphen@gmail.com)

**Hanuman of Wakanda: Speculative Cartography from the Deep- Pavithra Prasad**

The decolonial present has made possible, distinctly imaginative ways of refiguring our understanding of racialized histories. For theorist Saidiya Hartman (2007), “critical fabulation” becomes a method and analytic for resurrecting historical lives that went unrecorded and unarchived. Using speculative semi-fiction to populate emptied histories and possibilities of racialized relationalities other than the oppressor-oppressed model, Hartman’s work illustrates how the work of history is never finished, nor is it always material. The use of story-telling as a form of speculative historiography reveals alternate routes along which we travel to understand our relationalities against the grain of recorded history. In this performative presentation, I heed this call and revisit imaginative geography as a source of minoritarian power. This talk charts a speculative journey through mythical continents, from submarine Dravidian Lemuria, and Drexicya formed along routes of the Middle Passage, to landlocked Wakanda, told through revisionist mythology of the Hindu monkey-god, Hanuman. Acknowledging a debt to Black futurist thinking, I trace a purposefully unruly yet shared map of speculative transcontinental migration and mythography that disrupts growing religious nationalism in South Asia. In asking how South Asian identity politics may divest from its own anti-Blackness and Hindu supremacist historiography, I move towards the speculative deep, an ocean floor littered with stories of alternate histories of marginalized peoples of the subcontinent. It maps what theologian An Yountae (2016) calls the “decolonial abyss,” to excavate a shared politics of racialized dissent across the global north and south. In using performance as a method of critical knowing, I call upon South Asian conventions of staging, character work, and Nebentext (Roman Ingarden’s delineation of secondary script and stage directions) to give life to a new polyvocal myth – Hanuman of Wakanda – which merges Black speculative thinking and comic book aesthetics with revisionist Hindu mythology. This performative work reaches across terrain, time, and oceanic expanse to reimagine and write new shared racial genealogies of the Global South.

*Pavithra Prasad is a writer, performer, and scholar. Her performance works explore issues of postcolonial futurism, race, and identity. She holds a PhD in Performance Studies from Northwestern University and currently teaches at California State University, Northridge. Her ethnographic work on subculture and tourism in India has been published in Text and Performance Quarterly, QED, Ecumenica, and Critical Arts. Her mixed-method research and performances prioritize deep play as political practice. Her creative work blends speculative non-fiction, performance art, and experimental sound scaping, in charting decolonial pathways to solidarity practices across the Global South. Email:* [*pavithra.prasad@csun.edu*](mailto:pavithra.prasad@csun.edu)

**Political Performances Working Group**

**Plagues and Para-Sites: Julia Bardsley’s Decadent Scenography in The New Dark Age- Adam Alston**

Financial markets in the 21st century draw on an occult network of transactions and facilities if we understand the occult as something hidden or concealed. Transactions flow at super-fast speeds that elude human perceptibility, assets hiding within assets, which has given rise to an era that James Bridle dubs the ‘new dark age’: one that pedals the myth of being information-rich, but that is also becoming increasingly unfathomable and bewildering. Another myth of the new dark age is its apparent immateriality, which is reliant on energy-hungry data networks and secluded storehouses that use valuable metals and other resources imported from other countries. Part of what the digital occult conceals, in other words, is its materiality. The British performance maker Julia Bardsley’s 'Aftermaths: a tear in the meat of vision' (2009) is ‘about’ the new dark age, putting a literal spin on the occultation of financial markets by summoning a Mephistophelean character, a ‘prophet of profit’, who calls to their side an army of delightfully hideous plagues: each one garbed in meticulously crafted abscesses, sores, boils, and sequined monstrousness. In this paper, I will be exploring how the attention is given to stitching and weaving these plagues alongside their revelling in the end times gives them a distinctly decadent quality. I will be looking at what the performing body and what I call ‘decadent scenography’ has to offer to our understanding of the digital occult, and what space there might be for imagining a time after its end.

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**Dragging Fabulations- Evelyn Annuß**

An Anglo-European 'folk etymology', i.e. an unverifiable origin story, takes the term 'dragging' to the stage and reads it figuratively. Dragging, as this story goes, comes from theatrical practices of gender-bending and refers to young male actors in female roles shlepping the trains of their costumes along. Fama, rumour, allegorizes dragging, one could further fabulate, as a dingy practice, as a circumlocution for bringing along what is lying or hanging around. Shifting the current perspective on dragging beyond its confinement to stagings of gendered identities, my paper will underline the situatedness of (queer) mimetic practices in specific political environments and thereby try to question narrations of origin.

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**Orature as Political: Kanhailal Heisnam’s Pebet (1975) and the Storytelling Traditions of Manipur- Trina Nileena Banerjee**

Manipur, in the Northeast of India, has a diverse repertoire of indigenous stories that are orally transmitted without ever being written down or otherwise translated into textual forms. At times these are communicated through formal ritual performances (often to the accompaniment of music and chanting) and at others narrated in more informal domestic contexts. In the Meitei culture has two major genres of oral narrative practices: the public performance tradition of 'wari-liba' and the domestic tradition of fireside tales, known as the 'phunga-wari'. If the 'wari-liba' is meant more for the communitarian public sphere, the 'phunga-wari' concerns itself much more with the personal, the familial and the domestic. These stories, usually told to children, carry a moral warning or an ethical lesson at the end. Often, they teach strategies and tactics for social survival, equations of power, violence, and hierarchies, and how to survive them. In 1975, director Kanhailal Heisnam took up a traditionally popular 'phunga-wari' tale in his play Pebet, where the protagonist is a mother bird, who struggles to protect her five children from the violent and rapacious attacks of a wily cat. The ambit of the moral lesson in the traditional story was expanded to create a powerfully contemporary political narrative. This paper will draw on my research in Manipur between (2009-2018) in order to understand how traditional oral and performative sources turn intensely political for a marginalised culture at a moment of crisis.

*Trina Nileena Banerjee (b. 1981). After completing her MA in English Literature from Jadavpur University, Trina Nileena Banerjee proceeded to complete a Master of Studies (M St.) in English at the University of Oxford. For her PhD, she worked on a history of women in the group theatre movement in Bengal between 1950 and 1980. She has also been researching the interfaces between women's movements and political theatre in contemporary Manipur for several years now. Her essays and reviews on these and other subjects have appeared in national and international journals, as well as in several edited volumes. She writes both in English and Bengali. Between 2011 and 2013, she taught at the Theatre and Performance Studies Department at the School of Arts and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University. She is currently Assistant Professor in Cultural Studies at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta. Her research interests include Gender, Performance, Political Theatre, Theories of the Body, Postcolonial Theatre and South Asian History. She has also been a theatre and film actress, as well as a journalist and fiction writer. Her book Performing Silence: Women in the Group Theatre Movement in Bengal was published by Oxford University Press (India) in October 2021. Email:* [*trina.banerjee@gmail.com*](mailto:trina.banerjee@gmail.com)

**Still Resisting Left Melancholy? Chinese New Leftist Theatre’s Inheritance and Resistance in Che Guevara- Chaomei Chen**

The overwhelming agony in the theatrical remaking of socialist revolution and communist utopia as a catastrophic illusion tends to pathologize socialist revolutionary memories in the postmodern deconstruction of the communist utopia. Zhang Guangtian, Huang Jisu, and Shen Lin, among other Chinese New Leftist artists and scholars, came to the rescue of the postrevolutionary stage as the fin-de-siecle melancholic champions of revolution with their collaborative play, Che Guevara (2000-2005). The play integrates the life of the legendary communist icon Che Guevara against the backdrop of the 1960s Cuban revolution and Third World decolonization with the radical social transformation of postrevolutionary, globalized Chinese society that reduces its twentieth-century revolutions to meaningless and destructive social turmoil. Why do these Chinese theatrical artists still carry on the leftist “melancholy” amid the worldwide postrevolutionary phenomenon that has bid “farewell to revolution”? How do affective and Marxist theories of leftist “melancholy” extend and renew an understanding of recurrent revolutionary pathos in the Chinese New-leftist theatre? Whose memories and histories do the Chinese New-left artists attempt to reclaim and retrieve through this melancholy? Shifting the current scholarly focus on left melancholy, which has been largely confined to Western leftist theorists such as Walter Benjamin, Stuart Hall, and Wendy Brown, to the postrevolutionary Chinese context, I argue that Che Guevara demonstrates a New-Left melancholy on the postrevolutionary Chinese stage, a “performative paradox” between epistemological, passive despair and a radical, active aesthetic vision of hope, through an interweaving investigation of its affective, aesthetic, and ideological dimensions.

*Chaomei Chen is a PhD in Drama at Trinity College Dublin and was an early career researcher at the Trinity Long Room Hub (2021-2022). Her current research interests lie in postrevolutionary Chinese theatre with regard to affective studies, memory, trauma, and interculturalism as well as contemporary Irish Theatre. Departing from the worldwide postrevolutionary phenomena investigated by scholars such as Jacques Derrida, Arif Dirlik, Wang Hui, and Dai Jinhua across an intercultural spectrum, her PhD project argues that the postrevolutionary Chinese theatre both reveals and betrays the postrevolutionary syndrome of “depoliticized politics”. Her recent publications include “Restaging Feminist Modernity with the ‘Shackles’ of Traditional Chengshi Aesthetics in Liyuanxi Yubei Ting (The Imperial Stele Pavilion) (2015)”, Platform: Journal of Theatre and Performing Arts, vol. 16, 2022, and book and performance reviews in Theatre Research International and Theatre Journal. She has also been an editor for the Journal Ying Ming Theatre (published by the University of Göttingen) since September 2021 and a postgraduate representative for the Irish Society for Theatre Research (ISTR) since September 2021. Email:* [*chenc3@tcd.ie*](mailto:chenc3@tcd.ie)

**The Myth of ‘Africa is a Country’: Ideo-Aesthetics of Black Cultural Epistemology in “Look Black in Anger”- Olusoji Cole**

This is a descriptive analysis of an ongoing research-creation PhD project. The project constructs a written drama as material testimony that conveys strategies of political and aesthetic undertones; ones which are aimed at compelling readers to become witnesses to identity and racial narratives (Dori Laub, 1992; Cathy Caruth, 1996; Dominick LaCapra, 2014). The title of the research-creation project (an experimental written drama) ‘Look Black in Anger” was inspired by John Osborne’s mid-20th century play Look Back in Anger. “Look Black in Anger”, however, follows the story of an educated black immigrant who lives in North America and whose marriage to a white lady suddenly becomes ruptured in the heat of the covid pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement. By creating the drama as a subversive alternative, I attempt to allow material subjects (characters) to voice their agency, and in turn create important artistic space to facilitate the visualization of racial realities and the production of racial discourses. The project adopts artistic research-creation methodology that blends the context of auto-theory (Fournier 2021), notions of decolonizing language (Wa Thiong’o 1981), reframing (Smith 2012), situated knowledge (Haraway 1988), and theories of power and social discourse (Foucault etc.). The presentation will utilize templates of the experimental drama to explore subjects relating to condition of the systems of identity and power (cultural, social, political, and economic), and how these conditions inflict experience of racism on the African black immigrant—one whose identity investment in North America is continually shaped and promoted by the image of a ‘runaway’ (refugee, or ‘self-captive’ labour material) who migrated from a hostile environment (Africa) to search for the ‘good life’ in North America.

*Soji Cole is a PhD candidate in Interdisciplinary Humanities at Brock University, Ontario Canada. His research creation project entails constructing a drama to define hierarchy of colour oppression in contemporary North America, with specific focus on anti-black African immigrant racism. Email:* [*sojicole15us@yahoo.com*](mailto:sojicole15us@yahoo.com)

**Imagining Harmony, Retelling Myths: Premchand's Theatrical Adaptation of the Legend of Karbala- Anuran Dasgupta**

Against the backdrop of the British Raj, when the authorities were actively inciting and exploiting communal divide within Indian society, progressive voices of the country found innovative ways to tell the tales of unity between religious communities of the country. This paper will focus on one such literary work, a play called Karbala (1924) written by Premchand, one of the most famous and prolific Indian writers of the time. Named after the battleground on which Imam Hossein was martyred, Karbala is a dramatic adaptation of the legend of Hossein which can be called the foundational legend of Shia Islam. The paper will examine why Premchand, a writer of Hindu lineage, well versed in Hindi and Urdu literature, chose the legend of Hossein’s martyrdom, associated with the minority sect of Shia Islam in order to express the Indian aspirations and resistance against the colonial government. In order to demonstrate the author’s larger aim of creating cultural familiarity between different Indian religious communities, the paper will closely look at Premchand’s own invention of the myth of Hindu soldiers in Imam Hossein’s army within the play. Furthermore, in addition to analysing how legends can be retold and iconic figures can be repurposed in different political and social contexts, the paper will highlight how re-tellings and performances of myths can build affective networks through which sentiments like the spirit of resistance, collective victimhood, self-sacrifice, and morality can be shared and translated.

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**Reconstructing the Myth as a Strategy of the Left in India- Komita Dhanda**

The regional cultural squads of the Left in India during the anti-colonial struggle adapted folk forms and popular religious myths to the new content. The cultural activists of the left subverted narratives of popular Hindu mythological texts such as Ramayana. They have used and subverted the great epics, myths, and Sanskrit text scriptures as material to tell the stories of collective struggle instead of worshipping deities or glorifying individual heroism. Such subversions emerged out of the belief in the class struggle, which was otherwise absent from the caste and gender-ridden but classless mythological texts. Ramayana, as an epic text has been instrumental in creating the image of the Hindu right-wing in India. The macho, masculine figure of Rama as part of the Right-wing populism symbolizes provocative and aggressive nationalism. This paper aims to understand how the Indian left theatre makers have deconstructed and reinterpreted popular mythological texts and characters through reimagined narratives, dramatic vocabularies, and structures. Through this paper, I intend to explore methodological frameworks to unravel dramatic strategies adopted by the theatre makers of the Left, which incited new meanings in the specific episodes from the Ramayana by destabilizing the character of Rama as a deity. Embedded in the analysis of two specific plays, based on episodes from the Ramayana, as examples — Marich Sangbad (1973) by Chetana in Kolkata and Shambuk Vadh (2004) by Jana Natya Manch in Delhi, I intend to argue that in the present times, reimagining and retelling of the myths can present a counter-narrative and challenge the Right-wing populism.

*Komita Dhanda is also a Ph.D. scholar in Theatre and Performance Studies at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, J.N.U. in New Delhi, India. Her research pertains to political theatre as a significant genre of post-colonial theatre practices that exist at the intersection of the left and feminist performance traditions, with direct political activism. As an extension to her larger project, she is interested in studying the transnational exchanges and ideological connections among the theatre and performance groups that work within the larger framework of activist theatre. She received the Charles Wallace India Trust Research Grant in 2022 for her research on political theatre in the UK. She has been working as an organizer, actor, director, and writer with an activist theatre group Jana Natya Manch in Delhi since 2004. Email:* [*komitad2@gmail.com*](mailto:komitad2@gmail.com)

**An English Myth? Towards a New Post-War English Theatre History- Gemma Edwards**

This paper introduces my Leverhulme ECF project which explores English national mythologies in post-war theatre. Here, the word ‘myth’ is used in three ways. First, national mythologies are cultural in that I examine the stories that England stages about itself – its processes of national narration – concerning its place in Britain and in the world. Case-study productions are grouped into thematic lenses which offer differentiated stories of ‘English’ experience, including ruralism, colonial history, industrial heritage, and working-class cultures. But, in relation to England, myths extend beyond narrative and into structural concerns: ‘Britain ‘and ‘the United Kingdom’ have been used as hieroglyphs for ‘England’ since the late 18th century, obscuring, and centring England as the locus of the British state formation and the core imperial nation of the British Empire. In this sense, England’s constitution is mythic: England occupies a paradoxical position of centralised but uncodified political power that Nairn (1977) terms ‘the English enigma’. Third, I propose that this enigmatic quality to England’s political power is reflected in the discipline, where studies of post-war theatre tend to use the British national qualifier or indeed do away with national labels altogether. This paper tests the project’s anti-colonial devolved conceptual frame and works to demythologise England’s cultural and political centrality. It begins to ask how, and where, has English theatre acknowledged and critiqued England’s centrality in practices of Britishness and Empire, and how does this repertoire of work, newly cast through my research, create grounds for a radical history of post-war English theatre?

*Gemma Edwards is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Manchester, UK. Her work focuses on place, politics, and performance, particularly in non-metropolitan contexts. She has published on rurality in contemporary theatre, and her next project explores race, class, and English nationhood from 1945 to the present. Email:* [*gemma.edwards@manchester.ac.uk*](mailto:gemma.edwards@manchester.ac.uk)

**The Politics of Planetary Aesthetics and the ‘Narrative of Colonial Difference’ -Tony Fisher**

The idea of the planetary is increasingly prevalent in critical discourse, including theatre and performance studies, today; however, it is not without its ambiguities. This paper explores the politics of ‘planetary aesthetics’ beginning with a short account of three conceptions of the planet as an ‘aesthetic’ object. The first is the image of the Earth taken in 1968 by Apollo 8 astronauts called ‘Earthrise’, the second is Robert Smithson’s land artwork ‘Spiral Jetty’, and the third, a work by the contemporary Cherokee artist, Cannupa Hanska Luger, called ‘Future Ancestral Technologies’. Where the first two images produce a planetary aesthetic from the perspectives, respectively, of ‘epistemic delocality’ (Burkart) and aesthetic delocality – the third produces the planet as an aesthetic and epistemic locality. These distinctions provoke two questions: What are the politics of locality? And what are the politics of delocality? In addressing these questions, the paper identifies the political stakes of planetary aesthetics – and the possibility of articulating a political project of planetarisation, which can inform understandings of eco-political art and performance practices. It turns to Native American philosopher, Brian Burkhart’s concept of the ‘narrative of colonial difference’ and Walter Mignolo’s related concept of colonial epistemic difference to argue that planetarisation, whose ultimate aim must be the displacement of globalisation, requires reckoning with the epistemological dispositive of coloniality itself. As such, and as revealed in Luger’s work, only then can we begin to think the planet in the mode of locality, thus avoiding what Dipesh Chakrabarty terms ‘the lure of the non-place’.

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**“When the Flocks Head Home”. Shifting Myths on Unstable Grounds In "Akal" By Radouan Mriziga and Dorothée Munyaneza- Leon Gabriel**

This contribution develops a close reading of the performance “Akal” by Moroccan choreographer Radouan Mriziga and British-Rwandan dancer Dorothée Munyaneza. It analyses a central thematic, but also choreographic element of the performance: The relation to the earth, i.e. the ground that is negotiated via the myth of the ancient goddess Neith and her importance in the indigenous Imazighen culture. Following up on this, the paper sheds light on the philosophical notion of ‘landscape’. While ‘landscape’ can be understood as a term for relationality that goes beyond the reflecting subject, it also implies a problematic naturalized bounding to the ground. The paper works on the inherent politicality of landscape by comparing the respective thoughts (and poetics) of Martin Heidegger and Édouard Glissant. Whereas the first tends towards an essentialization of the soil and polemicizes (with a clearly antisemitic and racist tone) against nomads, the latter refuses to merge the landscape into a standstill and instead ‘thinks with the Ocean’. Therefore, Glissant’s notion of circular nomadism offers a central idea for relationality. Meanwhile working on a contemporary mode of reiterating a traditional myth, the performance “Akal” questions linear narrations of origin and invites the audience to reflect on their situatedness. Thus, the paper finally underscores transnational artistic research as a way of relating to specific surroundings and temporalities – instead of a mere dissolution into an abstract globalized space.

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**The Myth of the Failed Revolution- Nesreen Hussein**

In Revolutionary Life: The Every Day of the Arab Spring (2021), Asef Bayat proposes that, if we take the macrostructural and state-centric outlook, revolutions are most likely to disappoint, fail, and even betray dreams. But it may be different if we take […] the social lens, looking at what happens at the grassroots level, in every day, at the underside. No matter what transpires at the top, revolution unleashes dramatic convulsions in society—often giving rise to new thinking, inspirations, and ways of life, new relations of power and property, and new claims for redistribution and self-governance. (43) On the perceived failure of the Arab revolutions, mainly focusing on Tunisia’s 2010 and Egypt’s 2011 revolutions, Bayat points out certain irreversible, if illegible outcomes that problematise the question of revolutionary ‘failure’ and ‘success’ when considering the transformations that may emerge in societies at personal and social levels. He argues that certain internalised revolutionary ways of feeling, being, and doing things, at the level of subaltern everyday politics, put together, differentiate societies from the pre-revolutionary past and, at the same time, set the foundation for thinking of different futures (43). In this paper, which is part of my current ongoing research, I draw on Bayat’s premise when exploring the work of certain contemporary artists and collectives in Egypt, while attempting the challenging task of unpacking some of the implications of a shifting political reality in the years following the 2011 revolution. My aim is to look at how lived experiences of those tumultuous past twelve years may have led to the emergence of creative strategies of resistance, political expression, and also survival, at the level of grassroots and art practices in ways that subvert authoritative political rituals and myths, and that may lead to finding ‘new’ forms of political participation.

*Her research area and publications are centred on the intersections of performance, politics, and activism, in relation to issues of identity, agency and belonging. Further research and practice interests include post-colonial and decolonial histories and practices, and materiality and objects in performance practice. She is a Co-Editor of the Global Performance Studies Journal, Assistant Editor of the Theatre Research International Journal, and sits on the editorial boards of the Performance Research Journal and International Journal of Carnival Arts. She serves on the Executive Committee of the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA) as its Co-Conference Officer. Email:* [*n.hussein@mdx.ac.uk*](mailto:n.hussein@mdx.ac.uk)

**Look Back on the Commonwealth: New Myths of Political Citizenship in English Theatre of the 1950s- Michael Meeuwis**

The British Nationality Act (BNA) 1948 created the status of “Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies,” granting in effect full rights to live anywhere in the Commonwealth for all Commonwealth citizens. Britain’s national myths of belonging were made, briefly, universal across its colonies. Coupled with government encouragement of widespread immigration, the BNA created the conditions for a remarkable constellation of cosmopolitan immigrants to come to London, some intending working lives as arts professionals and intellectuals in the United Kingdom. This constellation changed the version of Englishness modelled on London stages, particularly outside the best-established venues. In this paper, I establish the cultural poetics of the BNA. Although the history of English theatre’s post-war expansion to include working-class and regional perspectives is well-known, the history of Commonwealth theatre-makers in 1950s England is not. Here, I read three plays by Commonwealth theatre-makers, Errol John’s *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* (1958), Barry Reckord’s *Della* (1958), and Wole Soyinka’s *The Invention* (1959), as modelling the new conception of Commonwealth citizenship proposed by the BNA—challenging as they do the ways that this purported universality of citizenship collapsed in the face of everyday prejudice against migrants. I nevertheless show how these plays evidence a belief in the universality of citizenship that would shortly be foreclosed by the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 and its restriction of immigration to those with work visas or direct familial ties to the United Kingdom.

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**Performing Myths of the ‘Special Relationship’ at the Decline of Empire- Julia Peetz**

The so-called ‘special relationship’ between the US and the UK is a persistent and influential political myth that perpetuates transnational identities based on Anglo-American closeness and shared culture, but also notions of Anglo-American exclusivity and white Anglo-Saxon hegemony. This paper will examine what it means to regard the ‘special relationship’ as a myth that is performed, both in the sense that its existence as an empirical fact has always been the subject of debate (to what extent is the US-UK relationship \*more\* special than that between either nation and any other ally?) and in light of the fact that its existence remains nevertheless unquestioned by many, yet needs to be ritualistically reiterated in public performances by political leaders that actively engage in mythmaking about democracy and transnational kinship. Focusing on the Suez Crisis, a critical moment that made the decline of British world power highly visible whilst calling the specialness of the US-UK relationship into question, the paper investigates how US President Eisenhower and his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles wrestled with the definition and redefinition of the special relationship in public performance. In addition to scholarship on political myth, the paper will draw on original research into Eisenhower’s documents, particularly successive speech drafts of Eisenhower’s landmark Middle East Message to Congress (1957), to illuminate how performances of political myths seek to define nations not just internally but also, crucially, in terms of how, and in proximity to whom, they see themselves situated on the world stage.

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**Utopia in the Imagination of Politics- Rui Pina Coelho**

One can easily argue that since Marx and Engels demise of nineteenth-century Utopian socialism, characterizing Utopianism as an “idealism deeply and structurally averse to the Political” (Jameson, 2005), utopia has migrated into fiction. With no surprise, Alain Badiou has famously declared the “passion for the real” as the twentieth century’s “major subjective trait”. The (early) twenty-first century has also succumbed helplessly to the eruption of the real. But the times we live in today seem to be claiming something else. The severity and monumentality of the issues that afflict the world today are inciting a central question for artists: in the face of an imminent catastrophe, what is the use of utopian imagination at the end of times? Utopian (or dystopian) fiction has always dealt with the envisioning of a future anchored in scenarios based on “What-if” or “If-Only” premises (Thaler, 2022). However, if we consider that the world needs to start a new narrative, performing arts can help us to expand our imagination, freeing political thinking from the constraints of the real world and wide open to “social dreaming”.In this paper, I aim to combine a speculative reflection grounded on utopian studies and in political theatre with an analysis on two recent performances: Fraternité, conte fantastique, by Caroline Guiela Nguyen; and Catarina and the Beauty of Killing Fascists, by Tiago Rodrigues (2020). I will consider them as attempts to defying the end of times and fighting for the rooting of (artistic) utopia in the imagination of politics, trusting that art and theatre will be able to help us to invent scenarios that today seem impossible or that we have not yet managed to conceive.

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**Aesthetics and Genealogy of Dalit Bahujan Mythmaking Processes in Telangana -Malavika Rao**

This paper will examine the aesthetics and genealogy of Dalit Bahujan mythmaking processes by analysing two instances of counter-performance by Dalit Bahujan activists against the appropriation of Dalit Bahujan culture by the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) government and the Hindu Nationalist organisations in Hyderabad city and other parts of Telangana, India. The first instance is the annual celebration of the Dalit Bahujan ‘Batukamma’ festival by Dalit women activists in Hyderabad city and other parts of Telangana since its formation in 2014. ‘Batukamma’ is a seasonal flower festival usually celebrated by the women of the ‘backward’ castes but now celebrated by the dominant castes as well and is part of ‘Telangana Popular Culture’. The second instance is the statue installation of Dalit Bahujan working-class Telangana Talli (mother) by activists in Hyderabad and other parts of Telangana to counter the state’s imagination of Telangana Talli as dominant caste (savarna) Hindu women. This paper will outline the iconography, aesthetics, and genealogy of both the state sponsored Telangana Talli and Dalit Bahujan activists’ installed Telangana Talli. By tracing the aesthetic genealogy of both these interventions, this paper will highlight the history of counter-performance by Dalit Bahujan culture in public spaces and everyday lives. This paper will further argue that Dalit mythmaking is an ongoing process. In this process new heroes, icons, symbols are created and the old heroes, symbols, icons are kept alive through reinvention, and recreation in everyday lives and in public spaces.

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**Dystopian Motifs in Contemporary Anglophone Drama- Trish Reid**

This paper addresses the theme of fear and anxiety in contemporary Anglophone drama through a consideration of the trope of the dystopian near future as it has re-occurred in a significant number of recent plays. I include examples from UK, US, and Australian stages. I take as my starting point the contention that the prevalence and persistence of this motif makes it worthy of investigation. The plays under discussion do not re-inscribe socio-political problems, or the status quo, by pretending to be objective records of the real world. Instead, they create alternative fictional near-future-worlds, exploratory dystopias that deliberately perform anxiety-inducing and estranging critical interrogations of current cultural and political concerns. Drawing on the work of Raymond Williams, this paper seeks to show that the critical and emotional insights offered by these play-worlds are made possible only through the process of our pondering their strangeness. Each example stages its own particular disruption of theatrical realism and in so doing engages critically both with realist theatrical traditions, and also with the wider cultural discourses about ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ that haunt the contemporary neoliberal sensorium and the emotions these discourses produce.

*I am a Professor of Theatre and Performance and Head of the School of Arts and Communication Design at the University of Reading. I have published widely on contemporary British theatre and its engagement with politics in the broadest sense. I am the author of Theatre & Scotland (Palgrave, 2013) and The Theatre of Anthony Neilson (Bloomsbury, 2017). With Liz Tomlin I am general editor of the new Cambridge series, Elements in Theatre, Performance and the Political and with Claire Cochrane, Catherine Hindson and Lynette Goddard, of the forthcoming Routledge Companion to Twentieth-Century Theatre (2024). I am currently completing a book project for Palgrave on Theatre and Performance in Contemporary Scotland. I am from Glasgow. Email:* [*trish.reid@reading.ac.uk*](mailto:trish.reid@reading.ac.uk)

**Staging IG Farben Building or Intervening the Structure of Academy, Crime and Policy- Diego Rotman**

In October 2nd 2022, a group of international students from the Institute for Theatre-, Film- and Media Studies together with several artists and scholars explored the presence and absence of history(s), and current politics of remembering and forgetting on the IG Farben building, home to the humanities departments at Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main. In this way they staged and exposed the site of their proper studies and thus the preconditions of the usual work being done in this building. They asked what it means to work in a building and to produce knowledge today in the architectural structure of a building where decisions regarding mass murders were taken. They also asked questions regarding the university's renewed interest in the politics of remembrance, about the years of silence, and about how through performative events students might take an aesthetic and political agency challenging a site and the discourse on these socio-political debates related to it. In the frame of this paper, I will approach the project as curator of this site-specific project. Among the questions to be dealt with are how “specificity” is constructed, expanded, and challenged, how site-specific practice might become a mode of institutional critique, what are its limits, how the IG Farben Haus might become ghosted or not by this event that became another chapter in the history of this building. About the IG Farben Haus: It was built in the late 1920’s (1928-1931) for IG Farben by the famous architect Hans Poelzig. IG Farben was a powerful trust of the German chemical industry. It became a declared supporter of National Socialism after 1933, profiting from it but also being actively involved in exploitation of forced labour and extermination campaigns. It operated the firm's own concentration camp Auschwitz Monowitz III, performed a series of human experiments, and supplied Zyklon B for the gas chambers in Auschwitz Birkenau. After the 2nd World War the building became the headquarter of the V. US-corps, the German branch of the CIA and the U.S. European Command and was renamed after the supreme commander in the Vietnam war Creighton W. Abrams. After the U.S. forces left the building in 1995, in 2001 Goethe University was relocated in the building.

*Diego Rotman is a Senior Lecturer, researcher, playwright, theatre and performance director, artist, and curator. His research focuses on performative practices as related to local historiography, Yiddish theatre, contemporary art and folklore and research-creation projects. Since July 2019 he is the Head of the Department of Theatre Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In March 2022, initiated at the Hebrew University the lab-performance The OWL. Email:* [*Diego.rotman@mail.huji.ac.il*](mailto:Diego.rotman@mail.huji.ac.il)

**Performing Underwater: Submarine Myth-Making- Julia Schade**

This contribution interrogates the ocean as a site of (de)colonial myth-making and seeks to ask: If we draw the notion of myth away from its land-boundness and into the submarine, how does that inaugurate new ways to think about performance? Recent discussions in performance, media, postcolonial and cultural studies have highlighted, that the ocean as a “wild blue media” (Melody Jue) challenges anthropocentric, terrestrial notion of place, borders and bodies as well es of memory, the archive and temporality (Saidiya Hartman, Christina Sharpe, Rebecca Schneider). The ocean can thus no longer be considered as a mere European romantic maritime trope but rather needs to be explored as a (non)site of myth-making and of 1) historical colonial violence as well as of contemporary migration, and 2) of infrastructural enclosure (Natascha Adamowsky, Jennifer Gabrys), digitalization and neo-colonial extra-activism (deep-sea mining). Last but not least thinking of the ocean in this manner also implies 3) a conceptual shift (John Durham Peters) which casts doubt on our anthropocentric understandings of categories such as appearance, corporeality, (in)visibility and subject (dis)possession. In my contribution I aim to ask what impact it has to think of bodies, of performance “in fluid terms” (Stefan Helmreich) and which new aesthetic modes and myths derive from it. In order to explore these questions I will draw on recent artistic works such as Wu Tsang’s VR real-time video installation "Of Whales" which perform what I call “the oceanic” and thereby explore submarine ways of decolonial myth-making by submerging us into the ocean’s depths, confronting us with the unruly experience of what more-than-human cosmologies from below the surface might look like.

*Julia Schade (Ph.D.) is a performance scholar at the Department of Media Studies, Ruhr-University Bochum. Her dissertation titled Resistant Temporalities. Thinking time in the works of William Kentridge, Rabih Mroué and Eva Meyer-Keller was awarded the WISAG prize for the 'Best Scientific Work on Social Cohesion' in 2021. She researches decolonial, queer-feminist, more-than-human temporalities at the intersection of theory and performance. Her recent publications include „Elements Matter: New Relationalities in Colonial Modernity” co-authored with Leon Gabriel, Stefan Hölscher, Ruth Schmidt. In: The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics, Nr. 64, (2022) and „Dramaturgies of Response-ability. Exploring relational ways of thinking-with in the apparatus of theatre”. In: Performance Research, Volume 27, Issue 5(6): ‚On Care‘. Email:* [*ju.schade@riseup.net*](mailto:ju.schade@riseup.net)

**Unter den Linden: Berlin’s Boulevard as Politically Significant Performance Space- Hanife Schulte**

In Chapter 2 of my PhD thesis, I consider the city of Berlin as archive and Unter den Linden, a boulevard in Berlin, as archival material. I pose the following questions: How can we explore the city as archive? How can we examine the boulevard as archival material? How do political demonstrations on Unter den Linden transform an ordinary public space into a politically significant performance space in which the Right performs and propagates monoethnic German nationalism as myth? I explore the AfD (Alternative for Germany) demonstrations in the present and the Nazi demonstrations in the past as political performances to discuss how the Right has been occupying Unter den Linden for right-wing propaganda. The AfD demonstrations in contemporary Berlin, I argue, show that the Right continues to promote monoethnic German nationalism as myth, just like the Nazi demonstrations did in 1930s Berlin. The myth has been used to identify and justify who can and cannot belong to the German nation. Historically Jews were excluded through racial laws, while the national belonging of children and the grandchildren of migrants has been disavowed through citizenship laws in contemporary Germany. Drawing on Michel de Certeau’s notion of ‘walking in the city,’ I employ walking as an embodied research method to investigate Unter den Linden as archival material (1980, 93). While walking the boulevard, my body becomes a recorder that documents the AfD demonstrations. I use the subjective recordings to offer a critical perspective on the AfD’s disavowal of multi-ethnic German nationalism.

*Hanife Schulte is a PhD candidate and teaching associate in Drama at Queen Mary University of London. She is also a visiting lecturer in Contemporary Performance Practice at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Schulte’s peer-reviewed article has appeared in New Theatre Quarterly (2020), and her book reviews were published in Contemporary Theatre Review (2021) and Theatre Survey (2022). Her research interests include political theatre, political philosophy, performance curating, social movements, demonstrations, and audiences. Schulte participated in the PPWG at the 2022 IFTR conference. Email:* [*h.schulte@qmul.ac.uk*](mailto:h.schulte@qmul.ac.uk)

**Mythologies of Globalization and Planetary Particularity: ACT UP, Derek Jarman and the Ecopolitics of the AIDS Crisis -Tom Six**

This paper will propose that the AIDS pandemic in the West after 1980 represents a crucial event for the politics of planetarity. As the performance interventions of activist groups such as ACT UP clearly indicated, this was a crisis not merely of inadequate healthcare or social abjection, but also of globalization. Specifically, this was the first moment when the crises of globalization, ineluctably following the logic of Césaire’s boomerang, ran back through its networks of domination to their origins, ravaging the bodies of the poor, the marginalised and dispossessed as they went. By contrast, representations of the AIDS epidemic in mainstream performance from Angels in America to Philadelphia clearly demonstrate the political imperative to construct a mythology that would contain its crisis within the logics and structures of the liberal, colonial institutions governing globalization, an imperative that finally overwhelmed ACT UP. Meanwhile, hunkered on a shingle promontory in a forgotten corner of England, gazing at the sea in one direction and a nuclear power station in the other, artist and film-maker Derek Jarman, newly diagnosed HIV+, began to make a garden. I will read this act as a durational performance that instantiated him as a planetary subject. He lived among the garden – and it through him – in an ongoing process of entanglement that engaged the increasing porosity of his body and his dislocation from the spatio-temporality of globalization in a process of revealing Jarman and the garden’s planetary particularity, and – by extension – the planetary condition of all victims of AIDS.

*Tom Six is Reader in Politics and Performance at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London, and editor of the international, peer-reviewed journal Studies in Theatre and Performance. His current research focuses on the politics of racialization in theatre, and the politics of planetary performance (in collaboration with Tony Fisher). He is the author of numerous essays on practices of theatre-making and their politics, and of Theatre Studios: A Political History of Ensemble Theatre-Making (Routledge, 2021), and co-editor of Michael Chekhov in the Twenty-First Century: New Pathways, and a special issue of Contemporary Theatre Review on director Katie Mitchell (2020). https://www.tom6.space/ Email:* [*tom.six@cssd.ac.uk*](mailto:tom.six@cssd.ac.uk)

**Community by Their Very Presence: From Victim to Activist, From Myth to Reality- Luis Sotelo Castro**

Community by their very Presence is a research-creation experiment in which I collaborate with a victim of multiple forms of sexual violence to reconstruct her healing process as a participant in restorative justice encounters. The recounting of her participation in the restorative justice process was co-constructed with her through an oral history interview process. Oral historians of conservative political persuasion fear using oral history as a source of historic evidence. They target the ‘unreliability of memory as its weakness’ and claim that it will lead us ‘Not into history, but into myth’. In this paper, I argue that an oral history performance for restorative justice does the opposite. It embraces the subjective dimension of the act of recounting and, if done ethically and collaboratively, leads the participant (the interviewee) from myth into the real sense of her positioning concerning the harm she experienced in the past. Although the paper focuses on the experience of a victim of sexual violence, I suggest that the claim might apply to any other form of victimization as long as the victim participates in facilitated restorative justice encounters and/or performances.

*Luis C. Sotelo Castro is Associate Professor in Performance Creation at Concordia University (Canada). As the Director of the Acts of Listening Lab, his research-creation projects focus on the transformative power of listening to painful narratives in the context of oral history performance. Email:* [*lsc234@nyu.edu*](mailto:lsc234@nyu.edu)

**Project Kosovo: Myth-Making and State-Building in the Dramaturgy of Jeton Neziraj- Aktina Stathaki**

My paper will discuss strategies of myth-making in the dramaturgy of Kosovar playwright Jeton Neziraj. Taking into consideration the peculiar place of postcolonial criticism in a Balkan context, I will discuss how such strategies serve the purpose of “occidentalizing” the West, subverting founding myths of western modernity in order to articulate the post- and neo-colonial predicament of the Eastern Balkans. In most of his plays, Neziraj engages with the idea of Kosovo as a historical construct in the framework of an eternally demonised and incomprehensible Balkan region: in The Return of Karl May, he resurrects May’s hero, Kara Ben Nemsi, and sends him in a frenzied road trip through Eastern Europe; in The Internationals the likes of Bill Clinton, Mother Teresa, Marina Abramovic and Carla Del Ponte take on superhero status as Neziraj proposes a foundational myth of the country itself. In One flew over the Kosovo theatre he parodies the very institution of the “national theatre” - an essential myth of European modernity - as the play’s underpaid cast of Kosovar actors trying to stage the first “national play” are crashed under the weight of local bureaucracy and political corruption. Considering the ways myth has functioned in the European context to “establish, symbolically, the dividing line between […] the 'real' European home and the rest” (Stuart Hall), Neziraj’s plays engage, as I hope to show, with what Hall proposes as the necessary work of deconstruction that allows us to comprehend and stay vigilant when dividing lines are drawn.

*Aktina is a graduate of the National Theatre of Greece and holds a PhD in theatre and postcolonial studies from the University of Toronto. She is the founder and artistic director of Between the Seas Festival: an international platform presenting and promoting the work of emerging contemporary Mediterranean performing artists in North America (2011-2019). In 2016 she inaugurated an annual residency for Mediterranean performing artists in the rural town of Monemvasia and in 2019 she founded 1927 Art Space in Kypseli, an independent venue for socially engaged work, the bridging of academic research and practice and the promotion of international exchange. Parallel to her own work, Aktina has served in managerial and consulting positions at The Joyce Theatre (New York), Women’s Project Theatre (New York), The International Theatre Institute (Shanghai), while most recently she was appointed a special advisor to the Greek minister of culture in charge of international relations. She regularly writes in the Greek press on issues of cultural policy. Her research and articles have been published and presented in conferences, journals and newspapers in Greece, North America and beyond. Aktina is the recipient of a Time Warner Fellowship for her producing work and a United Nations Alliance for Civilizations fellowship for her commitment to intercultural dialogue and exchange.* [*https://aktinastathaki.wordpress.com/*](https://aktinastathaki.wordpress.com/) *Email:* [*aktina.stathaki@gmail.com*](mailto:aktina.stathaki@gmail.com)

**‘Some Agonies are Beyond Telling and Some Must Be Told’: Epistolary Performance and the Politics of Resistance in the Developing Artists’ Production Queens of Syria- Amanda Stuart Fisher**

Based on an adaptation of The Trojan Women by Euripides, Queens of Syria was initially conceived as a drama therapy project for Syrian women in a refugee camp in Amman. The project evolved and in 2016 toured UK theatres, drawing on the women’s personal stories and a series of imagined letters written to their families in Syria, to explore the impact of the civil war, the women’s experience of displacement and their refusal to accept what Boltanski has termed the ‘politics of pity’, which they encountered from those in the West. The production interweaves elements of The Trojan Women with the story of the Syrian conflict, generating a potent counterpoint to disempowering, dominant narratives that tend to ‘invisiblize’ the struggle of Syrian women in the conflict (Alhayek 2015). In this paper, I draw on Miranda Fricker’s conceptualisation of ‘testimonial injustice’, to reconsider how Queens of Syria might be understood dramaturgically as a form of ‘life performance’ that resists misrecognition and calls for justice. I argue that it is the use of epistolary performance that enables these women to become agents of their own narratives and to speak out about their experiences of displacement while addressing the loss of identity forced upon them by the conflict. The paper thus employs the performance to show how forms of life writing can challenge reductive and disempowering narratives circulated in media portrayals – a mode of victimology that precisely ‘invisibilizes’ Syrian women and against which this production can be seen to offer a resounding response.

*Dr Amanda Stuart Fisher is a Reader in Contemporary Theatre and Performance at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Her research has been published in journals such as TDR, Performance Research and Research in Drama Education. Her monograph Performing the Testimonial: Rethinking verbatim dramaturgies was published in 2020 as well as her co-edited collection Performing Care: New Perspectives on socially engaged performance. Email:* [*amanda.stuartfisher@cssd.ac.uk*](mailto:amanda.stuartfisher@cssd.ac.uk)

**Subversion and Resistance in Mythologies of the Working-Class Subject in UK Theatre- Elizabeth Tomlin**

This paper will draw on my current AHRC leadership fellowship research examining representations of the working-class subject in contemporary British theatre. I will begin by briefly outlining one of my key observations to date, which is that representations of the working-class figure in contemporary British theatre are overwhelmingly abject or precarious, such as the unemployed, the refugee, the homeless, the marginalised, and the destitute. I will argue that this risks replicating the stigmatising tropes and mythologies of the mainstream media and reducing a broad and diverse class identity to a narrow figure of abjection. I will then focus on two productions, Mouthpiece (2018) by Kieran Hurley and Hungry (2021) by Chris Bush, in order to compare and contrast their approaches to the representation of the working-class protagonist in each. In Mouthpiece, Declan is figured as abject, and Hurley invites the (assumed middle-class) audience to reflect on their own complicity in the aesthetic commodification and exploitation of such a figure for their own cultural benefit. I categorise this approach as a subversive dramaturgical strategy, where the protagonist is empowered to overturn the tropes of abjection they are drawn with. In Hungry, Bex refuses the tropes of abjection from the start and, in particular, those that stick to a working-class person of colour. I name this a dramaturgical strategy of resistance which challenges the audience to confront their own politics of class relations, however well-intentioned. I have published two monographs on political performance in Europe (Acts and Apparitions, 2013; Political Dramaturgies and Theatre Spectatorship, 2019); the second of these in particular began to focus in on the importance of class analysis to different political dramaturgies and different audiences. I edited the third in the series of British Theatre Companies 1995-2014 (2015), in which I charted the development of cultural politics and political theatre in the UK throughout that period and was the principal investigator (PI) on the AHRC research network Incubate Propagate (208-19) which examined the challenges of access to the theatre-making profession for non-university graduates. One outcome of that project was a special issue journal, Arts Development: Class, Diversity, Exclusion (Studies in Theatre and Performance 2020) which I co-edited. I am currently holder of an AHRC Leadership Fellowship, and PI on the project, Figurations of the Working-Class Subject in UK Practice and Policy. Email: [Elizabeth.Tomlin@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Elizabeth.Tomlin@glasgow.ac.uk)

**The National Mythos of Harm and Repair in Contemporary South African Performance- Aylwyn Walsh**

Pumla Gqola outlines contemporary South Africa as a ‘Fear Factory’ (2021), wrought by patriarchal and systemic injustices that are upheld by traces of colonialism and institutionalised religion. Under these conditions, sexual violence is symptomatic, and its close correlate, fear form the embodied scripts for women and girls. Meanwhile, political discourse replicates objectification, under which gender-based violence is accepted as a common-sense part of daily life.

Koleka Putuma’s work for the stage is critically analysed with a specific focus on how the violated female body in these performance ‘texts’ disrupts this mythos. I consider how possible acts or enunciations of repair are staged, contributing to the construction of recuperative social imaginaries, or as Judith Butler describes it, “an altered state of perception, another imaginary, that would disorient us from the givens of the political present” (2020). In some ways, they can be seen to reinforce the gender-based violence that they seek to represent and critique. The national mythos of harm and repair contributes to analyses of theatre and performance in South Africa. This mythos is constructed on assumptions to do with the causal relationship between harm and the processes of repair and justice that follow. With a concentration on fear, the role of the body and the performativity of resistance, and drawing on original interviews with director Mwenya Kabwe, I offer a critical comment on how Putuma contributes to a political and ethical re-imagining of justice in the national mythos of harm and repair in contemporary South Africa.

*Dr Aylwyn Walsh is Associate Professor of Performance and Social Change at the University of Leeds in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries. Current practice includes participatory arts with mental health service users in Leeds, and arts education with young people in South Africa. Her book Prison Cultures, maps performance, resistance, and desire in women’s prisons (Intellect, 2019), and her collaborative 'Arts Activism Toolkit' (2022) is used worldwide. Email:* [*aylwynwalsh@gmail.com*](mailto:aylwynwalsh@gmail.com)

**Pink Washout: Renegotiating Queer Citizenship in Digital Queer Performance- Raz Weiner**

In recent years, ‘pink-washing’ became a central point of criticism of Israel's covering up of its crimes against Palestinians by investment in gay-friendly policies and reputation. The complicity of queer Zionist publics in Israeli settler violence against Palestinians allowed the regime to appear tolerant, inclusive, and progressive to the world. The recent change of government following Israel’s November 2022 elections poses an opportunity to examine queer publics’ renegotiation of identity assertion, affiliation, and solidarity, amidst the shift from the rhetoric of pinkwashing to overt state-sanctioned queerphobia. I ask: what happens to both settler and indigenous queer publics when the state no longer cares to appear gay-friendly? The paper will utilize frameworks of creolization and drag in analysing and theorising explicit and implicit performance of Palestinian and Israeli-Jewish queers on social media. Through a methodology of digital ethnography, the featured performance of queer artists on TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter will be sampled and compared with the work of the same people prior to the government shift. Alongside phenomenological and semiotic performance analysis, the study will reflect on audience response and reception through a discourse analysis of threads of viewers’ comments. Through this, the study strives to destabilise existing theoretical generalisations of queer politics of identity and performance of resistance, such as Puar’s homo-nationalism and Muñoz’s disidentification. In its stead, it seeks to articulate new modes of creolised intersectional queer resistance and resilience and place them in an ambivalent and multifaceted network of queer performance of citizenship.

*Raz Weiner is a maker and researcher of performance and political theory, specialising in applying methodologies from theatre and performance in social research and the performance of knowledge. He is presently a postdoctoral researcher in the Smart Social Strategy Lab at the Architecture and Urban Planning Faculty of the Technion, Haifa. He works with practice-research methodologies of immersive performance on the critical study of smart-city immersive data visualization theatres. His previous postdoctoral position at the School of Politics and IR at the Queen Mary University of London focused on archival research and its display, developing a gallery space as a participatory means for recording community knowledge in research on histories of race and racialisation. He received his PhD from the Royal Holloway University of London, where his project explored the epistemologies of drag performance both as a phenomenological metaphor and as a research methodology of the archive, landscape and architecture. Weiner's work as a drag performer, actor, director, writer, and dramaturg features globally in various theatres, festivals, and performance venues. Email:* [*razweiner@gmail.com*](mailto:razweiner@gmail.com)

**“Mythmaking and Actor Training in Southeast Asia: A Postcolonial Interrogation”- Peter Zazzali**

In his book The Myth of the Lazy Native, Syed Hussein Alatas argues that colonial powers concocted false narratives to demoralize and control the indigenous peoples of Southeast Asia throughout the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. He uses British Malaya, Indonesia, and the Philippines as case studies to show how imperialists deployed a conjoined myth of European superiority and Asian indolence to perpetrate their expansionist agendas. In what can be seen as cultural hegemony, mythmaking thus became a weapon that has persisted in the consciousness of these formerly oppressed populations despite their eventual independence. From the literature and languages taught in schools to the capitalist economies defining their respective societies, colonialist tropes and traditions continue to haunt them at the expense of their own national identities.

What does this postcolonial paradigm mean for theatre, performance, and most especially, actor training? How does the ‘mythos’ of power and precedent operate accordingly? Can actor training responsibly operate in cross-cultural contexts, especially in countries once occupied by a Western colonizer?

This paper will engage these questions by examining Western—especially British—pedagogies and cultural praxis and their impact on drama schools in Southeast Asia. My research is based in an ethnographic methodology of interviews and archives alongside classroom observations and attending productions at institutions in the Philippines (ATENEO di Manila University), Vietnam (Hanoi Academy of Theatre and Cinema), Hong Kong (Academy of Performing Arts), and Singapore (University of the Arts Singapore). Thus, I will present the role mythmaking has had on actor training in postcolonial Southeast Asia.

*Dr. Peter Zazzali is Professor of Theatre and Director of the School of Theatre and Dance at James Madison University in the US. Prior to that he was Senior Lecturer of Acting and Director of the Acting Program at the LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore. He was also an Associate Professor at the University of Kansas, where he served as Associate Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance and was the unit’s Artistic Director. In 2019, Zazzali was a Fulbright Scholar at New Zealand’s national drama school (Toi Whakaari). His research on performance training has appeared in numerous journals and edited volumes including Theatre Topics, Theatre Journal, Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism, and Theatre Research International—among numerous others. His book, Acting in the Academy: The History of Professional Actor Training in US Higher Education (Routledge 2016) has received high praise, with Theatre Topics calling it “a critical contribution to ongoing discourse on the role, structure and purpose of actor training programs within US academic institutions.” His sequel, Actor Training in Anglophone Countries: Past, Present and Future was released by Routledge in 2021 and credited as a “thorough, thoughtful exploration of institutional actor training in the English-speaking world (Theatre Survey).” Email:* [*peterbzazzali@gmail.com*](mailto:peterbzazzali@gmail.com)

**Popular Entertainments Working Group**

**Palestinian Stand-Up Comedy: Making and Breaking Myths Under Occupation- Sam Beale**

This paper explores the potential and limits of Palestinian stand-up comedy as autobiographical and collective storytelling, reflecting on a collaborative performance project in the region, May-August 2022. Six Palestinian performers and a UK academic/director worked together to devise a 90-minute ensemble comedy show which toured six cities and facilitated comedy workshops for Palestinians, including in women's centres and refugee camps.

The paper considers the potency of stand-up comedy as an individual and shared storytelling in this context and its impacts on performers, audiences, and workshop participants. The blend of UK/US stand-up approaches with traditional Palestinian storytelling techniques resulted in the evolution of a collective and particularly Palestinian comic performance style. A priority for the performers, as they established their comic voices and devised material about often difficult subjects as comedy, was a shared desire to dismantle limiting perceptions of Palestinians and prevalent myths – emerging from both within and outside the region – about their lives under occupation. This resulted in a combination of autobiographical stand-up and collective comedy performances tackling everyday social, religious, and political realities and imagining possible Palestinian futures.

Given the limits on Palestinians’ freedom of movement, touring the show enabled these comedians to share their stories with audiences who are often unfamiliar with each other’s situations and have little experience with stand-up comedy as a form of entertainment. Issues of censorship and self-censorship which arose in some cities and the mixed range of audience responses to the comedy and the comedians are also considered.

*Sam Beale is a Senior Lecturer in Theatre Arts at Middlesex University, London, specializing in stand-up comedy, solo performance, and autobiographical performance. Over the last 20 years, she has regularly collaborated in the UK and internationally as a comedy writer, director, producer, and teacher; working with comedians, theatre companies, community groups, and performance festivals to create stand-up comedy and comedy-theatre performances and produce comedy events. Sam is a co-founder and co-director of PalCom (Palestine Comedy Club), an international collaborative performance and teaching project. She researches and writes about the history and practice of comedy and women’s comic performance and is the author of The Comedy and Legacy of Music-Hall Women 1880-1920: Brazen Impudence and Boisterous Vulgarity (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). Email:* [*s.beale@mdx.ac.uk*](mailto:s.beale@mdx.ac.uk)

**What We Can’t Stomach: Ambivalence and Freakshows in the Commercial Circus 1900-1940- Stephen Cedars**

This paper examines Barnum & Bailey circus programs from between 1903 and 1937 to investigate how the commercial circus framed the alterity of the “freakshow” in contrast to its more overtly virtuosic performers (i.e. aerial artists, equestrians, daredevils, etc.). By analysing how the programs use language, images, and formatting to position the freakshow in relation to the larger “popular entertainment” of the circus, the paper identifies a simultaneous diminishment in the freakshow’s prominence alongside a broader, simultaneous deemphasis on liminality, alterity, and grotesqueness in the circus experience more generally. Programs in the early part of the time period emphasize the circus’ open embrace of a Bakhtinian duality (i.e. “praise” alongside “abuse”) both through the overt valorization of the freakshow as equal partner to the “greatest show” and internally within each of those categories; later programs, on the other hand, illustrate a rhetorical discomfort with liminal alterity even within the “greatest show.” The stakes of the project are to consider how the generations-long diminishment of the freak show as part of the circus reflects not simply an evolved cultural discourse about disability, but also a shifting cultural narrative about alterity. As the circus’ peripheral transgressive quality was sanitized into a more mainstream product reflecting the presumed values of an imagined hegemonic centre, so perhaps did the “stories we tell” about Western culture’s heterogeneity lose some of their complexity. Seen that way, the turn-of-the-century freak show can be understood not only as manifestation of cultural insensitivities, but also a lens through to understand how entertainment culture valorised ambivalent, transgressive liminality as an appropriate and desired commodity.

*Stephen Cedars is a writer, director, teacher, and scholar originally from South Louisiana. His plays have been produced or developed both in New York City and throughout the U.S. and Canada and published by Original Works and Words of Choice. As a producer and director in NYC, he has created work for stages in three boroughs, including several years of community programming. As a scholar, he has presented his work at major conferences and published his work in journals in the U.S. and U.K. Amongst his awards are the Theatre Masters Visionary Playwright Award, the Gloria Ann Barnell Peter Award, and the John Golden Playwriting Prize. He earned his MFA in Dramatic Writing from NYU, which he attended as a Rita and Burton Goldberg Fellow, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Theatre and Performance Studies with the CUNY Graduate Centre. Email:* [*scedars@gradcenter.cuny.edu*](mailto:scedars@gradcenter.cuny.edu)

**Mixing Sources from Alternative Archives: Chinese Immigration in North American Popular Entertainment- Maria De Simone**

“Mixing Sources from Alternative Archives” reflects on the intersection between theatre and immigration archives in the study of popular entertainment. The essay focuses on Chinese and Chinese American vaudeville entertainers and circus artists performing in the United States during the Chinese Exclusion Act period. The Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943) shaped the work of Chinese and Chinese American entertainers profoundly. The law prohibited Chinese laborers from entering the country and American-born individuals of Chinese descent to prove their American citizenship before they could travel abroad. Chinese entertainers were not considered “laborers,” yet they were excluded from those categories (such as tourists, diplomats, businessmen, or students) and allowed to visit the US temporarily. This complicated their touring schedules and required intense border interviews. Similarly, American-born artists of Chinese descent were required to submit their birth certificate or, if they did not have one, to interview with the Bureau of Immigration for a re-entry permit to use upon their return from a tour abroad. The screenings that both Chinese and Chinese American entertainers had to go through at US national borders and the Bureau of Immigration produced records dense with information on the artists’ private lives and craft. These immigration documents are often the only sources to access the work of Chinese and Chinese American entertainers. Moreover, they are vital records to study the transnational nature of popular entertainment in turn-of-the-twentieth-century North America, a context that is rarely seen as a crossroads of nationalities and performance cultures.

*Maria De Simone is the Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow for the “Scholarship Across Boundaries” Initiative at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Maria’s research brings together performance history, immigration law, and critical race theory. Her book manuscript, tentatively titled "Faces of Many Colours: Immigrant Racial Impersonation in American Popular Entertainment" explores racial impersonations by first and second-generation Irish, Chinese, and Jewish artists during the peak immigration years in the United States between 1870 and 1920. Maria is also the Associate Editor and Translator of "Three Loves for Three Oranges: Gozzi, Meyerhold, Prokofiev" (Indiana University Press, 2021), which won the 2022 American Society for Theatre Research Translation Prize and Honourable Mentions for Best Edited Collection from the Association for Theatre in Higher Education and the Theatre and Performance Research Association. Maria holds a Doctoral Degree in Theatre and Drama from Northwestern University and has taught theatre history and performance studies courses at Northwestern, Brown University, and Tufts University. Email:* [*mariades@mit.edu*](mailto:mariades@mit.edu)

**Blue Man Group: Theories of Story in Post-Dramatic Theatre- Susan Kattwinkel**

The book Performance and Cognition: Theatre Studies and the Cognitive Turn (edited by Bruce McConachie and F. Elizabeth Hart) was published in 2006, heralding the rise of cognitive theory in performance studies. 2006 also saw the first publication in English of Hans-Thies Lehmann’s book Postdramatic Theatre – an examination of contemporary avant-garde theatre in which traditional narrative takes a muted or sometimes almost invisible role. These two theoretical approaches have become entrenched in performance scholarship over the last two decades, but rarely come in contact with each other. Both theories claim that people are pulled toward stories, evident in cognitive theory’s focus on traditional narrative drama and Lehman’s admission that much post-dramatic theatre has been “met with little understanding” by “the majority of spectators, who . . . subscribe to a comprehensible fable (story) [and] coherent meaning.” How then, to explain the widespread popularity of contemporary variety theatre? Ranging from the music/dance performance of Stomp to the acrobatics/theatre of De La Guarda and Fuerza Bruta, to the clowning of Bill Irwin, to the magic/comedy of Penn and Teller, contemporary variety theatre generally contains no clear or sustained narrative and fits Lehman’s description of the post-dramatic performance, and yet it is extremely successful with a broad spectrum of audiences. In this paper, I will look at the work of one post-dramatic theatre group - Blue Man Group, and question what theories of narrative and cognitive science can tell us about their popularity and conveyance of meaning. If, as cognitive scientists tell us, people are inexorably pulled toward stories, why is Blue Man Group so popular? How does it communicate with its spectators, and what can the way it skirts narrative tell us about the lacunae in cognitive and post-dramatic theory?

*Susan Kattwinkel is a Professor of Theatre at the College of Charleston in South Carolina, U.S.A, where she teaches Theatre History and Dramaturgy courses, among others. She publishes in the areas of popular theatre and pedagogy. Her scholarship has appeared in the edited essay collections Sporting Performances and Performing the Progressive Era among others. Her most recent co-edited book is Performing Arts as High Impact Practice. She is currently working on a monograph on incubator baby shows in the United States. A director and dramaturg, Susan has worked both within her department and in Charleston-area theatres. Email:* [*kattwinkels@cofc.edu*](mailto:kattwinkels@cofc.edu)

**The Stories We Tell: Life and Times of ‘A Pretty Little Portable’- Larraine Nicholas**

This paper forms part of a research project in which I begin to map professional popular entertainment in the industrial valleys of South Wales in the nineteenth century. This narrative is entangled with other histories, such as civic building projects (e.g. theatres), transport infrastructure (roads and railways), and religious intolerance of entertainers. Right through the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, portable theatres were a feature of small and burgeoning towns. Moved from place to place on wagons or trucks, and re-erected in the open, they were a feature of fairs but sometimes licensed to remain static in a town centre for a run of weeks. My recent research has focused on the family of William Haggar, proprietors of portable theatres in the West of England and South Wales, and early pioneers of film. Responding to the ‘storytelling’ theme of this conference, I have considered alternative methods of exploring the essence of portable theatre life for their workers and audience. I considered adopting the autobiographical voice of a real person but rejected this idea for ethical reasons, so my proposal is to give a voice to the portable theatre itself, described by one newspaper (1887) as ‘a pretty little portable theatre’. I have previously theorized the role of imagination in historical research (2013) as a legitimate methodology when controlled by the critically evaluated source material. I draw also on my writing on (2013) the historian’s experience of her own somatosensory body as a methodological tool (2018). In thus giving the portable theatre itself a notional body and a voice, I am able to imagine it as having interior experience and exterior expression as well as memory and desire. My aim is to use this storytelling form to explore the idealized, generalized, and specific experiences of performers and audiences.

*Larraine Nicholas is an honorary research fellow of the University of Roehampton following her career teaching in the dance department there. Her publications include the monograph 'Dancing in Utopia: Dartington Hall and its Dancers' (2008) and she was co-editor with Geraldine Morris of 'Re-Thinking Dance History' (2018, 2nd edition) Email:* [*larrainenicholas45@gmail.com*](mailto:larrainenicholas45@gmail.com)

**Streets and Pop Platforms: A Study on Performative Pop Poetry and Shahre Farang-Yasamin Rezai**

Shahre Farang, translated to "foreign city," a peep show box, was brought to Iran from Europe in the 19th century. In the 18th-19th century, peep shows served as platforms for performative poetry as part of popular culture entertainment. In turning the peep show into Shahre Farang, Iranians have localized this device in many ways, from its appearance and mystic images inside to its lyrical stories and tales. This is an understudied entertainment device representing much about Iranian popular culture and Iran's socio-political status during the 19th century through street performance and poetry. Since Shahre Farangs had completely died out by the mid-20th century and since they had no place in the scholarship as the device belonged to streets and the working class of society, researchers have yet to be able to discover much about the pictures or tales inside them. In this essay, Shahre Farang's performativity and socio-political presence are explored through the remains of research, photographs, and narratives. A brief history of peepshows and their street performances will be presented, demonstrating how they were part of popular culture and how performative oral poetry was an integral part of it. I use theories of performance studies to explain how the device served as a site for interaction between the performers, the public, and the Iranian and European authorities. As part of my dissertation, "Poetics of Platforms: Pop Performative Poetry on Instagram and Twitter," I examine the poeticness, performativity, and subversiveness of today's digital poetry or poetic creations on social media. In my argument, pop poetry is dependent on its platform as well as being influenced by it. This essay, as part of my dissertation, examines peep shows as a visual/performative platform similar to social media, with pop poetry on both as a mutual phenomenon. I argue that the relationship between peep show performers and instapoets, platforms (Instagram and peepshow), and performative pop poetry is similar and changes in time, depending on the hosting platform.

*Yasamin REZAI (she/they/او) is a polyglot actor, social media scholar, and Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures (MLL) at the University of Miami. Her academic work is focused on the intersection of New Media Studies and Performance Studies and employing Digital Humanities tools and data-driven approaches. Her research is focused on instapoetry, data culture, and justice, online activism, especially #metoo in Iran. She is the co-founder of Instasociety.org, an open-access research resource exploring how social media changes popular culture. Yasmin’s works have appeared in Digital Humanities Quarterly, and Critical Studies in Media Communication, and her research was presented at conferences by Cultural Studies Association and Modern Languages Association. Email:* [*rezaei.yasamin@gmail.com*](mailto:rezaei.yasamin@gmail.com)

**Coming Back: Black Herman and a Myth of Return- Aileen Robinson**

Benjamin Rucker (1889-1934), né Black Herman, promised to return “once every seven years” a testament to his magical and spiritual powers, and a nod to the varied performance practice that shuttled between stage magic, conjure, and savvy businessman. Placing himself in the lineage of magician Prince Herman and Alonzo Moore (who had performed with international magician Alexander Herrmann), Black Herman gained notoriety and influence through his myth-making, both in his stage tricks and through his larger commercial practices. The possibility of resurrection was further supported through Rucker’s major performance “Buried Alive” in which he would resurrect a woman, and occasionally himself, after a few hours or days. Rucker mirrored and extended the escape artistry of Harry Houdini and Henry Box Brown, complicating the notions of endurance and survival within an early twentieth century American landscape. Rucker’s conjure performances also contributed to his mythos, especially as they were positioned alongside African religious traditions and developments of Hoodoo. This project takes up the methods through which stage magic and conjure create and maintain methodologies of return in the early twentieth century. Focusing on Rucker’s performances and life, I examine how return and repertoire become fused through the shifting expectations (time, day, place) of Rucker’s performance. Rucker uses the material and temporal possibilities of stage magic to address spiritual and quotidian concepts of return (and of futurity) for Black American audiences. I thus analyse the specific work of Rucker as a larger contribution to a politic of myth within Black popular culture.

*Aileen K. Robinson is a historian of performance and technology with specializations in 18th and 19th-century British theatre and Black cultural performances. Working across the history of science, technology, and theatre, Robinson explores how systems of knowledge, connected to the body and the object, overlapped to produce practices of research, dissemination, and valuation. Email:* [*aikr@stanford.edu*](mailto:aikr@stanford.edu)

**Processus de Creation Working Group**

**Study of the Creative Processes of Some French Female Playwrights- Thibault Fayner**

Writing for the performing arts has undergone major changes in France over the last ten years. More and more shows are either created entirely by stage directors (adaptations of novels, so-called "stage writing", etc.), or are the result of collaboration between an author and a director, right from the script development stage. So how do playwrights work? Or to put it another way: are playwrights' creative processes impacted by these recent developments or not? More fundamentally, how do playwrights write: from what sources of inspiration, according to what protocols, and can we distinguish several major families of creative processes? To answer these questions, we propose to study the creative work of several major female playwrights in France today. We will also consider whether or not the creative processes of female playwrights are specific to those of male authors.

*Born in 1979, Thibault Fayner joined the playwriting department of ENSATT (École nationale supérieure des arts et des techniques du théâtre) under the direction of Enzo Cormann in 2003, graduating with his first class in 2006. A senior lecturer in theater studies and co-director of the Performing Arts department at the University of Poitiers, he is in charge of the reading committee at Méta-CDN de Poitiers, created by new director Pascale Daniel-Lacombe for the 2022-2023 season. His main research interests lie in contemporary dramatic writing (poetics, creative processes, playwriting workshops).* [*thibault.fayner@univ-poitiers.fr*](mailto:thibault.fayner@univ-poitiers.fr)

**Theater Women, Means of Production and Creative Process- Sophie Proust**

The development of the aesthetics of an artist rarely passes through a socio-economic approach. Still, she would win. Similarly, the low visibility of female artists would also benefit from going through a socio-economic approach to theatre. We would quickly discover that a director has three times less means than a man to carry out his production. This results in relative visibility with the public, which has repercussions on the publication choices of publishers, the objects of study of students. etc Drawing up an inventory of the situation in France on this link between women in theatre, means of production and the creative process means paying attention to gender parity in live performance. We will thus discuss in France the ministerial reports produced by Reine Prat within the Ministry of Culture and Communication in 2006 and 2009, and the political decisions that resulted from them in the face of the appalling figures that appeared: in 2006, in France, 92% of theaters were run by men; 75% of the shows were directed by men, 76% were written by men. What is the situation today? Is a difference tangible? And, if so, from the point of view of the creative processes, what does this difference provide for the theatrical community, the scientific community and civil society?

*Sophie PROUST is an associate professor in Theatre studies, member of the CEAC, Head of the Master in Theories and Practices of Contemporary Theatre at the University of Lille. She was assistant director (Yves Beaunesne, Matthias Langhoff, Denis Marleau). Specialist in creative processes, she is a journalist for Théâtre(s), wrote the MOOC on directing actors for the Académie Charles-Dullin. She is convenor of the working group on creative processes at IFTR. Email:* [*sophie.proust@univ-lille.fr*](mailto:sophie.proust@univ-lille.fr)

**Queer Futures Working Group**

**Historical Repair: Queering the Family Album- Nazli Akhtari**

I propose a paper presentation that focuses on three archive-based examples in the Iranian and Afghan diasporas that specifically turn to the Family Album as a site to fumble historiography. Taking up diasporic accounts of the Family Album which are varied and plentiful, this presentation considers the work of three artists that misuse the album to do the queer-feminist task of historical repair. I begin with Firouzeh Khosrovani’s autobiographical film Radiograph Of A Family (2020) which uses discarded and mishandled photographs of her parents who grew apart by their conflicting political views of the 1979 Revolution. Khosravani reconstructs a counter-history of 1960-80s Iran. I weave in two additional examples that similarly tell counter-histories of Afghanistan within the same two decades: Wazhmah Osman’s Postcards from Tora Bora (2007) and Shaista Latif’s The Archivist (2020). Wazhmah returns to Afghanistan in search of tangible traces of her past family life in her homeland. Wazhmah’s family’s only suitcase filled with their family photos was stolen during their departure. In her solo performance, Latif similarly creates a live archive of found objects including family photos. The artist makes a brazen gesture against historiography and questions the right to document a history of war.

Bringing these archive-based examples into conversation with the conference sub-theme of "Decoloniality in myth-making and performance," this presentation considers how circulations of family photographs, in particular, respond to historical erasure while in their queer use of the family album these artworks perform beyond historicity. I contend that these memory-based practices offer possibilities that can reframe our colonial relationship to History, mythmaking, and their contested technologies as well as our understanding of Euro-American histories of Empire and Diaspora. I conclude that for diasporic artists and memory workers, these archival engagements rather become sources of feminist speculation, queer historiography, and anticipating queer/diasporic futurities over that of historical accuracy which is bound to the notions of an archive.

*Nazli Akhtari is an interdisciplinary artist and theorist working at the intersections of performance studies, diaspora and cultural studies, and feminist media studies. Her research and praxis broadly focus on questions of collective memory and its effect on performance, archives, new media, and cultures of diasporas. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Theatre and Performance in the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Waterloo. Nazli’s work has been published in the Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies, Global Performance Studies, Performance Matters, Mise-en-scène: The Journal of Film & Visual Narration, Imagined Theatres, and Camera Obscura: a Journal of Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies. In 2021, Nazli received a Research Fellowship from the American Society for Theatre Research for “Remixing Visceral and Temporal: Performance and Archives of Reza Abdoh.” More recently, her article “Diaspora Walks: Small Lessons in Unlearning” in Performance Matters received an honorary mention for the Richard Plant Award for best article in English on a topic in Canadian theatre and performance studies. In 2022, her doctoral dissertation garnered an honorary mention for the inaugural Neda Nobari Dissertation Award granted by the Association for Iranian Studies on behalf of the Centre for Iranian Diaspora Studies in recognition of an exceptional Ph.D. dissertation that investigates topics connected to the global Iranian diaspora. Email:* [*nazli.akhtari@uwaterloo.ca*](mailto:nazli.akhtari@uwaterloo.ca)

**Myths of Queer Belonging- AB Brown**

As Kadji Amin points to in his recent essay, “We Are All Nonbinary,” the proliferation of gender identities stems from a historical model of divergence, which simultaneously reifies binary thinking and leaves categories understood as normative untroubled by gender and sexuality. Part of this dynamic, I argue, is that belonging to a gender category is understood primarily through identity. In contemporary practice, modes of queer belonging are by and large rendered through what might be considered the myths of identity politics, legal rights, or geographic boundaries (which often reproduce racial and class stratifications). In this paper, I discuss a performance project I am currently working on in which I interview queer people about objects that make them feel a sense of connection to self, community, or history. In doing so, I am looking for alternative practices of belonging that might organize themselves through touch, gesture, and sensation. In conversation with scholars and artists who argue for experiencing identity and community through affect and comportment, this project is concerned with how we can understand queer attachments to subjectivity, community, and history through objects, textures, and materials. Situating these interests in the contemporary context articulated by Amin, this paper goes on to postulate how reframing belonging might impact the ways we understand and do gender in the future. Can mapping modes of belonging in these ways offer a model of confluence and what implications might this have on how we define and enact gender individually and together?

*AB Brown is an Assistant Professor of Contemporary Performance in the Department of Theatre and Dance at Colby College from 2019 till date. He was an Assistant Professor of Performance Art at Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies at the Western Washington University from September 2015 to June 2019. He holds a BA degree in Directing and English Literature from Muhlenberg College, an MA in Performance Studies from Northwestern University, a Certificate in Gender and Sexuality Studies and a PhD in Performance Studies from Northwestern University. Email:* [*ab.brown@colby.edu*](mailto:ab.brown@colby.edu)

**Queer’s Affect. What Do Queer Theories and Affect Theories Have to Tell Each Other and Why is their Nexus So Useful in Thinking about Shaping Queer Performance, Visibility and Activism?- Alyson Campbell**

Much has been written in the last 10-15 years about the affect of performance studies. Equally, expanded strands and waves of queer theory and queer thinking/doing continue to open up new ways to articulate what is happening in performance. Occasionally, and increasingly, the two fields have been brought together to think through what it is to make or attend, a theatre or performance that calls itself queer. As a queer practitioner (theatre director) who writes largely in a Practice as/-led/-based mode, in this paper, I delve into what it is that each field gives to the other as a way to understand what makes performance queer, how it moves us as queer spectators and how we might queerly mobilise affect – or an affective dramaturgy. The paper builds on queer scholarship (Butler, Dolan, Muñoz, et al) that argues for the political or social value of queer performance via its capacity to create a sense of kinship or bonding – affective communities – when we assemble in space together for theatre/live performance. Specifically, as a maker, I am exploring the dramaturgical strategies that coalesce through affect and queerness in our making and rehearsal processes and then into performance. I will draw on examples from work I have made over the last thirty years, looking back to working with Reza Abdoh in the early 1990s, who really catalysed these questions for me as I was starting out.

*Alyson Campbell is a freelance director and dramaturg whose work spans a broad range of companies and venues in Australia, the UK, and the US over the last 30 years: from the Los Angeles Theatre Centre, through Fringe, independent and community theatre, to making forum theatre with secondary students. Works include The Trouble with Harry, Catapult, GL RY, Cake Daddy, DFLTLX and Promiscuous/cities. Email:* [*alyson.campbell@unimelb.edu.au*](mailto:alyson.campbell@unimelb.edu.au)

**Ausente! Early Career Success from Below during the Decolonial Turn: The Theatrical Performance of Multiculturalism in the Everyday Life of Neo-Colonial British Academia - Rodrigo Cañete**

In her Presente! The Politics of Presence (Duke, 2020) Diana Taylor took to central stage the resistance of academic institutions to acknowledge their own colonial bias. She proposed to walk alongside the subaltern, but I am still waiting. As an activist scholar concerned with a materialist decolonisation of academia my hybrid mix of aboriginal mestizo, protean social background and cisgender identity has been a source of discomfort, mainly for a series of white female academics with authority over my project. Partly as a phenomenology and partly as a hauntology and carefully preserving the anonymity of those involved, I will discuss the three occasions when after receiving undeniable academic recognition, I became the target of institutional violence instead of praise. In my abstract, I will identify two traditions that clash when the invisible hybrid’s success is made public. Far from alone, I insert in a long tradition of talent from below whose performativity is a toolbox for people like me starting with the Inca chronist Waman Puma de Ayala (circa 1535), followed by the proto-feminist queer Mexican poet, Sor Juan Ines de la Cruz (1648-1695), and ending with the Chilean performance artist Pedro Mardones (1952-2015). Drawing from Jacqui Alexander’s use of trauma theory in Pedagogies of Crossing (Duke, 2005) and James Harding’s deployment of border theory in The Ghosts of the Avant-Garde (Michigan, 2013), I will focus on those intersectional collisions where phenomenologies of crossing and transgenerational trauma caused by the subaltern’s unrealistic views of what the academia in the Global North has to offer clashes with internalised racial and sexual belief systems deeply rooted in faculty and academic processes whose fears of the assimilating other from below find in Baldassare Castiglione’s Il Corteggiano (1478-1529), Baltasar Gracián’s El Discreto (1646) and Judith Butler’s Gender Troubles (1990), for example, a legacy of theories that present achievements as tribal manipulation.

*Rodrigo Cañete is an Argentine (soon British) visual cultures scholar and activist based in the United Kingdom. After obtaining his MPhil from the Courtauld Institute of Art for his work re-contextualising the work of Diego Velázquez, he is currently finishing his PhD thesis at the University of Warwick on Art, AIDS and Buddy Systems as Cultural Elites in Argentina and Chile. He has been awarded the First Prize in the 2021 Competition for the Peter C. Marzio Award for Outstanding Research in Latin American and Latino Art and the current Issue of Simpson7, the Journal founded by Pablo Neruda and edited by Carmen Bergenguer is dedicated to his work as a counter cultural activist. His Historia a Contrapelo del Arte Argentino was published in 2022 with Penguin/Random House and became the first art history book to reach the list of best sellers in Argentina, currently in its fourth edition. He runs the highly influential loveartnotpeople.org blog, a non-profit intellectual commons dedicated to queer and decolonial criticism of the exclusionary cultural elitres that in its tenth anniversary has started to be partially written in English. His Podcast ‘Everyone Thinks is Queer Except You and Me’ has been singled out by the Sunday Times as a ‘curiosity’. Email:* [*rodrigo.canete1@gmail.com*](mailto:rodrigo.canete1@gmail.com)

**Queer Exuberance and Scottish Colonialism: Live Art Praxis in the City of Glasgow- Steve Greer**

This paper considers the stakes of visibility, invisibility, and hypervisibility in the work of Scotland-based artists whose interdisciplinary performance, film and visual arts practice has sought to engage with the country’s significant – but still-often unremarked – legacies of colonialism and involvement in the transatlantic slave trade. These artists include Thulani Rachia whose projects obuyile (2021) and of sugar and Bones (2019) have responded to the violent histories held in historically established architectures, and Ashanti Harris, whose practice has returned repeatedly to the figure of the ‘jumbie’ to examine historical colonial relationships from a Caribbean diasporic perspective. Reading against the grain of a paranoid critique in which ‘hidden’ histories are made visible for a conveniently naïve, majority-white Scottish audience, I consider Harris and Rachia’s works in terms of their world-making potentiality, and in relation to what Tyler Bradway (2017) has theorised as ‘queer exuberance’, an affective mode which does not disavow negativity or trauma but nonetheless works to ‘elaborate the possibilities of new, more, different sensations than those we know’ (Grosz 2008, 79).

*Dr Steve Greer is a senior lecturer in Theatre Practices at the University of Glasgow where his research and teaching focuses on contemporary theatre and queer performance. He’s the author of two books – Contemporary British queer Performance (2012) and Queer exceptions (2018) – and currently working on the history of live art and experimental theatre in Scotland. Email:* [*Stephen.Greer@glasgow.ac.uk*](mailto:Stephen.Greer@glasgow.ac.uk)

**Queer Scent: Structures, Histories and Performance- Stephen Farrier**

This paper explores nascent research into queer scent and olfaction. Starting from olfaction’s functions in performance, the paper explores the ways in which scent and olfaction have been used as a tool of classification in a wider sense. The paper continues by exploring the way in which – to the Western nose, as perfume discourse would have it – scent is used to support binary gender, the paper looks to the ways in which queer communities in specific historical contexts have used scent to communicate. Turning, to artworks that specifically use scent to explore ideas such as global inequality, class, ethnicity and queerness, the paper engages with contemporary considerations. In the light of the discussion, the paper ends by returning to the wider point with which it started, positioning olfaction’s use in the role of normalising dominant social structures. The paper ends in this way less to restate the relationship of olfaction and normativity but rather – informed by the journey of the paper – to begin a counter-narrative where olfaction can be/has been used as resistance by queer positionalities, people, and communities.

*Stephen Farrier is a Professor of Theatre and Performance at Rose Bruford College, UK. He has written and presented on queer intergenerational work, the relation of temporalities to drag performance, queer histories, and the playwright Joe Orton, drag performers and informal training, HIV and AIDS on stage, and queer research methodologies, and queer practice as research methodologies with Alyson Campbell. He co-edited with Alyson Campbell Queer Dramaturgies, International Perspectives on Where Performance Leads Queer (Palgrave 2016) and with Mark Edward Contemporary Drag Practices & Performers: Drag in a Changing Scene Vol. 1 (2020) and Drag Histories, Herstories and Hairstories: Drag in a Changing Scene Vol. 2 (2021). He sits on the editorial board of Studies in Theatre and Performance and on the advisory board of Contemporary Theatre Review. Email:* [*Stephen.Farrier@bruford.ac.uk*](mailto:Stephen.Farrier@bruford.ac.uk)

**Dragging AI, Or Every Drag Queen Only Ever Wants to Perform with Her Own Deepfake Doppelganger- Joe Parslow**

In this paper, I explore Zizi & Me, a “solo” drag show in which Me the Drag Queen performs alongside the only person she’s willing to share a stage with - herself. Or, more specifically, a deep fake version of herself created using AI technologies. The show, created by artist Jake Elwes and Me, is part of a wider series called The Zizi Project, where Elwes brings drag performers into AI art to disrupt the often-normative systems that abound in AI technologies. Zizi & Me is perhaps the most contained yet most ambitious staging of AI drag that Elwes and Me have produced, involving an intense relationship between one performer and their deepfake doppelgänger (rather than Elwes’s other projects which explore a cacophony of drag in and through AI), but extends this relationship across a full solo show. As drag queen and AI interact in increasingly complex and increasingly sticky ways, I propose that new modes of queer digital (AI) performance emerge. For this paper, I am interested in how the stories that are told about drag (as, for example, an exemplar of the performance of gender) and perhaps more importantly the stories that are told about AI (as something which is taking over the world isn’t both obvious and insidious ways), are purposefully disrupted in this show. The constructed nature of both the drag character and the AI version of the drag character offer a complex techno-temporality where past, present and future collide on stage. Zizi & Me tells a story about drag and a story about AI, but neither stories solve the problems of either form. Instead, narratives collide, intersect and fail to be resolved as body, character and performer slip and slide across the screen and the body. Constructed upon an already-constructed persona, Zizi reveals the fallacy of originality for drag, for gender and for the very concept of human.

*Dr Joe Parslow is a queer researcher, writer, teacher and producer. They are a Lecturer in Popular and Queer Performance at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, where they also support research ethics and integrity and the development of practice research. Outside of Higher Education, they have also worked extensively as a producer of performance events in queer nightlife settings. Their research focuses on queer performance and queer studies, and they examine how queer communities come together in spaces where drag and queer performances take place. Their monograph, Their Majesties: Drag Performance and Queer Communities in London (Routledge, 2023), examines London’s drag scene between 2009-2019. Their current research projects explore drag performance and Artificial Intelligence (AI) and a larger ongoing project examining contemporary queer hope. Email:* [*joseph.parslow@cssd.ac.uk*](mailto:joseph.parslow@cssd.ac.uk)

**Gossiping for Survival. Surviving Gossip and the Survival of Gossip- Phoebe Patey-Ferguson**

The precarity of queer practice requires a reliance on informal support and solidarity, where the ‘pleasures of queer intimacies challenge the designation of queer as abject,’ who has been ‘cast out of the domain of the liveable’ Ahmed, 2004, 155 Butler, 1993, 9. Further, the vulnerability of queer performance often reproduces and multiply these intimacies through creating intense, liminal, shared moments of queer sociability that form an experience of collective effervescence and communitas, resulting in ever-closer bonds between participants. Gossip has been looked at extensively, particularly in queer and feminist art historical contexts. Gavin Butt in Between You and Me: Queer Disclosures in the New York Art World, argued for ‘adding in gossip to the category of evidence’ in order to ‘deconstruct the bases of authoritative constructs of truth.’ Identifying gossip as ‘dangerously’ holding the potential to ‘displace so-called veritable truths from their more positivistic frames of reference and to render them instead […] as projections of interpretive desire and curiosity’ 2005, 3-5. Gossip appears to always be considered dangerous—holding significant potential for destabilisation – but which gossip, when it is disclosed, to whom and about what can have extremely different effects. Among feminist scholarship, Silvia Federica has identified how gossip was traditionally considered ‘women’s talk’, outside of sanctioned institutions, caught up in personal intimacies, a way of resisting hegemonic power structures and a way of developing a shared collective life Caliban and the Witch, 2004. For some, this knowledge is incredibly dangerous as it holds the potential to destabilise their hegemonic power and act as a vital resource for those who are marginalised or disempowered – and therefore must be generally denigrated and excluded from official histories and contemporary research practices. What happens when we recognise the value of gossip and begin to use it in legitimate academic research? Should we seek to redeem gossip as a prior or grassroots truth or encourage a revelry in its illicit nature and how unverified or salacious forms of knowledge might come to ‘queer the very practice of historical accounting itself’ Butt, 2005, 2.

*Dr Phoebe Patey-Ferguson is an academic, artist and producer. Their research expertise is in the social context of contemporary performance, primarily festivals and clubs, with a focus on queer and trans practice. They are a Lecturer at Rose Bruford College Kent, UK teaching Theatre and Social Change, Contemporary and Popular Performance and programme director of MA Queer Performance. Email:* [*phoebe.patey-ferguson@bruford.ac.uk*](mailto:phoebe.patey-ferguson@bruford.ac.uk)

**Flickering, Veering and the Ouroboric Loop: Moving Weirdly Towards Queer Futures- Greg Wohead**

This Queer Futures paper proposes an analysis of weirdness in contemporary performance as it pertains to the queer self and futurity. I ask whether and how a ‘weird’ lens can offer ways of thinking about queerness as a moving target in which the moving is more important than the target. As such, I will focus on the idea of moving and ‘being moved’. If we consider the weird as pointing towards futurity, the Beyond, the Outside, what does it mean to move towards those ideas and with what qualities? Artist Charlie Ashwell writes about the idea of the flicker as a provocation for choreographic movement: “Flickering, this flashing of something else, something that shouldn’t normally be there…interrupts the smooth politics of recognition and assimilation with a flash of something else. Another possibility. An impossibility. A wait, what?” 2019, p. 44. Nicholas Royle addresses the quality of veering as “responding to what is on the move and uncertain in the very moment of reading, to what is slippery unpredictable and chancy.” 2011, p. 28. The veer is a reckless movement away from something often towards an unknown. This paper draws on texts by Ashwell and Royle as well as Sarah Ahmed, refracting them through my own artistic practice. I will reference two of my own performance works: DOISMILEVINTEEDOIS a collaboration with Portuguese company Cão Solteiro, and In Floods. The paper will be presented in conjunction with a short performed reading, offering a practice-based reflection on the analysis and a springboard for discussion.

*Greg Wohead is a queer writer, performer and live artist currently pursuing a practice-as-research PhD at Bristol University on weirdness in performance. He makes performances for theatre spaces, audio works and durational pieces, touring in the UK and internationally. Greg was a contributor to Robert Daniels’ DIY Too and Forest Fringe’s Paper Stages 2020 as well as the In Other Words 2 compiled by Metal. He has worked as a visiting artist, led modules, thought workshops and provided student mentoring at University of the Creative Arts at Farnham, the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, Reading University and Chichester University. Email:* [*gwohead@gmail.com*](mailto:gwohead@gmail.com)

**Samuel Beckett Working Group**

**Abstract Title: Post-imperial Theatre: A Reading of Hyperreal Politics in Samuel Beckett’s Stage Plays through Jorge Luis Borges’s *On Exactitude in Science-* Abdellatif Ben Halima**

This paper projects to discuss the aesthetic and theatrical manifestations of the political in Samuel Beckett’s stage plays from Waiting for Godot to What Where. It borrows from Jorge Luis Borges’s parodic postimperial and post-realistic fictionette ‘On Exactitude in Science’ to show that while Beckett’s plays do not directly/thematically engage themselves with politics they perform a hyperreal demolition of the very basis upon which all empires stand, language. Borges’s short story mocks the formation of maps and empires in one single gesture. Likewise, Beckett’s theatre can be said to simulate a parodic demythologization of ‘Power’ together with all the discourses that have historically been used to construct it. I suggest that Beckett’s stages can be read as hyperreal aesthetic battlefields where all empires are doomed to collapse: The empire of language threatened by meaninglessness and silence; the empire of mimesis deconstructed by metatheatre; the empire of nations/states dismantled by Beckett’s characters’ chosen sense of unbelonging; the empire of metaphors destroyed by denotation; the empire of the real contaminated, à la Borges, by the fiction that devours it; and the empire of the author demolished by the inability to express. I argue that the gradual shift that has occurred in Beckett’s stages from the concrete human body that physically manifests itself in the early plays to the abstract and formless body parts that populate the stages of the later plays allows for a Borgesian understanding of Beckett’s theatre as a post-imperial theatre in which reality dissolves into and is consumed by fiction.

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**“May One Inquire Where His Highness Spent the Night?” Waiting For Godot, British Vagrancy Law, and the Irish Free State- Patrick Bixby**

Section 4 of the 1824 Vagrancy Act passed by the Westminster Parliament indicates the following individuals shall be deemed “rogues and vagabonds”: “every person wandering abroad and lodging in … the open air ... not having any visible means of subsistence and not given a good account of himself or herself.” The description, in all its particulars, applies to the many vagrants found in Beckett’s drama and fiction, including his two most iconic characters, Vladimir and Estragon. Since the first performances of Waiting for Godot, critics have understood their condition, abstracted from its Irish setting, as an allegory of existential despair, modernist alienation, or some variety of transcendental homelessness. But this is to ignore both the lingering historical details in the play, as well as the social, economic, and political contexts relevant to its composition. When Beckett left the Irish Free State (IFS) for good in 1937, Section 4 was still in effect across the country. Indeed, identical legal language can still be found in the statutes of other formerly colonized countries, including Botswana, Gambia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. In the IFS, it was part of a legacy of colonial rule that, to the dismay of many, remained very much intact in post-independence Ireland, along with English-style court procedures and a centralized police force, modelled on the old Royal Irish Constabulary. Meanwhile, the IFS struggled with the compounding effects of the worldwide economic crisis and a trade war with Britain. Debate in the Dáil Éireann often to turned to questions of assisting the unemployed (and conservative fears about the creation of a welfare state) and of preventing Ireland itself from becoming a “beggar among nations,” dependent on foreign aid. But, even as the perils of homelessness grew during the fiscal trials of the 1930s, the newly-independent nation did not substantively change the legal framework applying to vagrancy. The presence of vagrants belied nationalist narratives that sought to overcome social and political differences in order to forge a cohesive sense of national identity after independence. Acknowledging these contexts is crucial to understanding the significance of such figures in Beckett’s writing, which disrupts the authority of such legal discourses not just to establish identities but to separate certain individuals from the ranks of legitimate citizens of the postcolonial nation-state.

*Patrick Bixby is a Professor of English at Arizona State University and the incoming President of the Samuel Beckett Society. He has written extensively on the Irish writer, including a monograph, Samuel Beckett, and the Postcolonial Novel (Cambridge UP, 2009). His other books, which range across the fields of mobility studies, modernist studies, and Irish studies, include License to Travel: A Cultural History of the Passport (U of California P, 2022), Nietzsche and Irish Modernism (Manchester UP, 2022), Unaccompanied Traveller: The Writings of Kathleen M. Murphy (Syracuse UP, 2022), and, with Gregory Castle, Standish O'Grady's Cuculain (Syracuse UP, 2016) and A History of Irish Modernism (Cambridge UP, 2019). Email:* [*pbixby@asu.edu*](mailto:pbixby@asu.edu)

**Reinventing Beckett by Reinventing Godot on Contemporary German Theater Stages- Alice Clabaut**

The anecdote is well known: Beckett did not hesitate to ban any performances of his plays that did not correspond to his idea. His auctorial authority still weighs on directors today, creating a "retinal persistence" (Mathieu Protin) in performances of his theatre in France or in the UK. Each production of Godot seems somewhat akin to the others: similar atmosphere, recognisable colour palette, and comparable direction of the actors. The situation is quite different in Germany. The pressure inherited from Beckett himself is slender, and stagings of Waiting for Godot, which are radically different from what a French or an English audience is used to seeing, are easy to find. Marcus Lobbes’ 2020 staging is a blatant example. For the Dortmund Theatre, he offered a very eccentric and colourful production, in which Wladimir and Estragon were dressed like musketeers in pink and red velvet costumes. Provocation against the mythical Beckettian aesthetic? or only a surprising and innovative staging choice? Such stagings challenge the modern reception of Beckett’s classics and show to what extent Beckett’s theatre resonates with contemporary political and social concerns. During the covid pandemic, Beckett’s theatre embodied in many ways the extraordinary global situation. Among the many directors who produced Godot in 2020, Jan Bosse proposed a very unconventional version. The director turned upside down the Köln Schauspiel, making the characters wander between the theatre seats while the very limited audience sat on the stage. Such ruptures with traditional stagings convey the turmoil of our modern times, as displayed as well in Robert Borgmann’s 2019 uncluttered staging in the Schauspiel Frankfurt. The curtain opens on white empty walls soon replaced by brutality and dissonance. By analysing and commenting on German contemporary stagings, I aim to highlight to what extent they broaden today’s readings of Beckett’s politicised dramatic spaces and pertains to, not undoing, but reinventing the myth of the author.

*Alice Clabaut is a contractual Ph.D. student at Sorbonne University and Charles University Prague. Her thesis tackles the "Stagings and Reception of Samuel Beckett's Theatre in France, Germany, and Czechia after the Fall of the Berlin". She has given several talks in which she emphasized to what extent aesthetics and politics go hand-in-hand to understand the reception of production, such as the very first production of a Beckett play in the GDR, about which she published an article in 2022 in the Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui review. In April 2023, she is organizing an international conference about "Beckett in Central Europe. Staging and Reception Beyond Censorship", where she invites stage directors as well as law specialists and literature researchers to discuss all together. Her approach to Beckett's theatre and to literature, in general, is eminently interdisciplinary and international. For instance, in 2021-2022, she organized monthly seminars, and an international workshop at Sorbonne University about "Body Building - Building the Body in Literature", and is now leading the editorial process of a special issue on the same topic in the peer-reviewed journal Sillages Critiques. Email:* [*alice.clabaut.billier@gmail.com*](mailto:alice.clabaut.billier@gmail.com)

**Undoing Beckett’s Generic Power Relations: Is Fiction ‘The Important Writing’ and Theatre ‘Relaxation’? *The Unnamable* and *Waiting for Godot-* Matthjis Engelberts**

Theatre is “a relaxation, to get away from the awful prose I was writing at the time”; Waiting for Godot is “that fucking play”, and prose fiction is “the important writing”: Beckett was not always gentle with his plays, apparently relegating them at times to a position behind the novels and other prose. This appears not always to have paved the way for critics, who sometimes seem to privilege writing substantial work on the prose fiction, but who, on the whole, probably devote about as much attention to the prose as to the drama. This may also be the case for Waiting for Godot, Beckett’s first published play that made him famous worldwide and that is probably still his best-known and most-read text – for the stage, and perhaps generally. The writing of this play overlapped partly with the writing of The Unnamable in French; and although the stage text has indeed received considerable attention from critics (which is of course also due to analyses of the numerous performances and adaptations of the play), at least as much critical attention appears to have been paid to The Unnamable. However, the two texts are not often considered in relation to each other, and as a consequence structural resemblance between the two works may not have been sufficiently elucidated. It is perhaps time to look into the relation between these two crucial texts, and to see if there is enough ground to start to ‘decolonize’ the theatre by tentatively undoing the – sometimes latent – premise of the supposed priority of the prose.

*Matthijs Engelberts is based at the University of Amsterdam. His current research is centred on the social and aesthetic relations between different media in 20th-century and contemporary literature and the arts, notably theatre, film, and the novel. Among his publications are articles in English and French on the value of literature (Poétique, 183), on aspects of Beckett’s work, Tardieu, Duras, Molière, surrealist theatre, theatre sports, French national theatre, and the institutional history of university language departments, edited or co-edited volumes of the annual bilingual review Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui (SBT/A), and Défis du récit scénique (Droz) on the relationship between narrative and theatre, mainly in Beckett and Duras. He has been a member of the editorial board of SBT/A since its inception. Email:* [*m.engelberts@uva.nl*](mailto:m.engelberts@uva.nl)

**A New Intercultural Reading of Waiting for Godot- Ciara Moloney**

Investigation of the role empire, imperialism and anti-imperialism play in Samuel Beckett’s work necessitates a New Intercultural approach. An Anglo-Irish writer who spent most of his life living in, and writing in the language of, France, married to a woman who spent part of her childhood in Tunisia, Beckett exists in what New Intercultural scholar Ric Knowles calls “the contested, unsettling, and often unequal spaces between cultures” (4). Unlike utopian theories which seek to “move beyond postcolonialism, racism, or ‘the pervasive binary concepts of Self versus Other, East versus West, North versus South…’”, Charlotte McIvor argues, New Interculturalism is deeply concerned with how these dynamics continue to “shape and interrupt” contemporary performance (5) – even as the potential of “simultaneous insider-outsider status between and across multiple cultural and national contexts” to dismantle “us-them hierarchies, by simultaneously embodying us, them and phases in-between” (Mitra 14-15). Beckett’s most significant work, Waiting for Godot, does exactly this. Vladimir and Estragon, in the English translation, speak in Hiberno-English, which, as Terence Patrick Dolan writes in his Dictionary of Hiberno-English, incorporates vocabulary and grammar from Irish, Early Modern English, Ulster Scots, and Shelta (xvii, xxii-xxiii). Both visually and in action, they resemble English in origin but world icon Charlie Chaplin, the Jewish-American Marx Brothers, and Laurel and Hardy, the English/American comedy duo. They refer to the currency as francs. Us-them hierarchies are dismantled by the constant disruption of “us” and “them.”

*I am a PhD candidate at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, where I am in receipt of the Mary Immaculate College Doctoral Award. My research focuses on interculturalism and diaspora in Martin McDonagh's work for stage and screen. I contributed a chapter on Anna Marie Hall to The Golden Thread: Irish Women Playwrights, 1716-2016 (Liverpool University Press, 2021), and have a forthcoming article in the Journal of Modern Literature on Alison Bechdel's graphic memoirs. I presented a paper on neurodiversity in Rocky (1976) at AHSS Postgraduate Research Conference, University of Limerick, 10 June 2022, for which I was awarded the joint prize, and presented a paper on homoerotic allusions in Echo's Bones Lost Bodies: Beckett, Gender & Sexuality Conference, Trinity College Dublin, 8 July 2022. Email:* [*ciara.moloney@mic.ul.ie*](mailto:ciara.moloney@mic.ul.ie)

**My film and television criticism has appeared in publications including Cineaste, Fangoria, Paste, and Current Affairs. Alicia Nudler**

Two Sides of Post-Colonial French Influence on Argentina: The Introduction of Beckett´S Plays and The Arrival of OAS Ideology. Violence and Torture in The Theatre of Beckett, Gambaro and Pavlovsky. In this paper, I examine Beckett’s impact on experimental theatre in Argentina during a period of dictatorships and increasing social unrest and repression, which had its own links to European post-colonial violence. Beckett´s texts, introduced in Argentina in the mid-1950s, were at first criticized by the left as being “too European” and lacking positive characters. But his plays soon gained acceptance with audiences, and influenced two important Argentinian playwrights, Eduardo Pavlovsky, and Griselda Gambaro, who created a political form of theatre known as “situated absurd”. During the same period there was an influx of right-wing OAS French military and catholic groups in Argentina, justifying torture in the name of Western civilization and family values, architects of a repressive plan leading to the clandestine criminal methods of the last 1976-83 dictatorship. After outlining this history, I address the subject of torture in plays by Beckett, Pavlovsky, and Gambaro. As Morin and others have shown, Beckett was deeply concerned with the practice of torture in the Algerian war. Not only did Pavlovsky and Gambaro mirror Beckettian subjects like disenfranchisement, powerlessness, and oppression, but also, especially in Gambaro´s theatre, disintegration and opacity of language became procedures to avoid censorship. I also consider reverberations of Beckett´s theatre today, through the work of Leandra Rodríguez, a director who staged What Where in Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, where the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo have gathered weekly since the 1970s to bear witness to their children, disappeared by the last dictatorship.

*I am a PhD candidate in History and Theory of the Arts in University of Buenos Aires, Argentina. My research is in the field of theatre studies and cognitive embodied psychology. My main focus of study is Beckett´s Krapp´s Last Tape, where I look at specific performances of this play, both in English and Spanish, from the point of view of embodied cognition and developmental psychology. I teach Psychology to drama students at University of Río Negro, Argentina. I have published in my field in several journals: Stops and starts: Krapp´s Last Tape and Post-Dictatorship Argentina in Samuel BeckettToday/Aujourd'hui (in press); Review of the Conference Spectral Landscapes, Revista Beckettiana, 19 (2022), (in press); Happy Days International Beckett Festival, Theatre Review, Journal of Beckett Studies, 31(2), 2022; Las formas de la vitalidad en la recepción de una obra teatral (co-author), Epistemus 8(1) (2018); A Multimodal analysis of vitality forms in the play Krapp's Last Tape, Proceedings ICMPC15/ESCOM10. Graz, Austria: Centre for Systematic Musicology, University of Graz. (2018). Lately my research has focused on the history and political implications of Beckett´s drama in Argentina. Email:* [*anudler@gmail.com*](mailto:anudler@gmail.com)

**(Not?) Performing Beckett in Francophone Africa: Further Undoing the Myth of Universalism- Celine Thobois**

Irish artist Samuel Beckett fled Ireland while the country was in a process of decolonisation; he settled in an imperialist France in 1937, and French soon became his preferred creative language. From Paris, he witnessed the stark resistance and repression with which independence movements were met in the 1950s and 1960s in French colonised territories (Morin, 2017). Despite his strategy of ‘vaguening’, Beckett’s plays written in the same period register struggles for freedom that shaped the geopolitical world in which he lived. Staging Beckett in Great Britain (2016) and Staging Beckett in Ireland and Northern Ireland (2016) – edited by Trish McTighe and David Tucker – queried the postcolonial frame through which Beckett is often understood in the European English-speaking countries. This study takes inspiration from this series, but the methodological approach replaces the arguably national lens with a linguistic and geographical framework, in order to 1) investigate the political and cultural meanings of Beckett’s twentieth-century plays in French in Francophone Africa, 2) take into account the complexity of national borders in this region, 3) further undo the myth of universalism tied to Beckett’s plays in French. As a case study, this paper analyses the performance of En’Nihaya, adapted after Beckett’s Fin de partie and directed by Ahmed Belalem, in 2015 at the Salle El Mouggar in Alger. In the aftermath of French colonisation, Africa now hosts the largest number of French speakers worldwide. Yet, it is the geographical area that is least represented in Beckett studies, and it is also perhaps the continent where Beckett’s work is the least performed. This paper argues that contemporary reception studies and theatre historiography looking at Beckett’s work in French need to take Africa as centre, rather than margin, in order to better understand the political resonances, affordances and limits of such plays in the twenty-first century.

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**Displacements According to Contexts – Daoist Philosophy in Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot"- Chengyun Zhao**

My paper aims to examine the influences of Taoist philosophy in Samuel Beckett's “Waiting for Godot” as evidenced in Beckett’s handwritten notes on Taoism in his “Beckett’s Dream Notebook”, arguing how that influence reflected pervasive feelings of negativity in and after the Second World War. The paper is structured around three topics: the social contexts of the Second World War, cultural responses to French authorities, and Taoist enlightenment for the victims of the War. Comparing the motionlessness of the drama’s plots with the Taoist “void”, the essay argues that Beckett might deploy the Taoist “void” in an opposite way to reveal the oppression and weakness suffered by those deemed “undesirables” in the 1940s-occupied France and underscore in contrast their desire for a better life. Further, the essay analyses the text of the play to reveal Beckett’s adoption of the Taoist disbelief in language that might stem from his disappointment towards the authorities of Vichy France. Lastly, the essay attempts to illustrate that the behaviour of Estragon is similar to that of the Taoist ideal figure – pure man, which could be interpreted as a pitiful comfort given by Beckett to those left wandering and dispossessed after the Second World War. Accordingly, the negative deployment of Taoism that might exist in “Waiting for Godot” could help to understand the socio-cultural backgrounds of the play as well as Beckett’s attitudes towards the Second World War.

*Chengyun Zhao is a 2nd year PhD student studying intercultural performance and Taoist philosophy at Trinity College, Dublin. He has already published 2 academic essays in China, one of which is “On the Role of Translation in the Chinese Drama ‘Going Out’ Strategy” in New Perspectives in Translation Studies [yi yuan xin tan] (2019), and the other of which is “Victims of Post-industrial Era— A Review of Sweat, the 2017 Pulitzer Prize Winning Drama” in New Perspectives on World Literature [wai guo wen xue dong tai yan jiu] (2021, a CSSCI journal). A theatre review, "Technology, Parole, and Truth – A Review of Duck Duck Goose, A Theatre of 2021 Dublin Theatre Festival", was published in Ying Ming Theatre and Drama. He gave 3 papers respectively at Global View and Local Practice of Comparative Literary Studies: Youth Forum on Comparative Literature (Shenzhen, 2019), IAMCR (online, 2022), and the New Scholar Forum of The International Federation for Theatre Research (Reykjavik, 2022)- Email:* [*czhao@tcd.ie*](mailto:czhao@tcd.ie)

**Scenography Working Group**

**Theatre Technology and Environmental Utilities in Africa from the Perspective of Femi Osofisan’s Selected Plays- Grace Uchechukwu Adinku**

African mythology has been well exploited in the storytelling theatre of Femi Osofisan. Osofisan explores mythology from multiple dimensions in his theatre, ranging from *Yungba Yungba* and the Dance Context to *Aringindin* and the Night Watchmen and the retold story, Adventures in the Forest of a Thousand Daemons. This study examines the use of scenography in interpreting the concepts and dispositions of myth in Osofisan’s performances. Using a descriptive and analytical approach, this study delves into the output of set, lighting and costume and makeup designs in the performances of Femi Osofisan’s *Yungba Yungba and the Dance Context*, and *Adventures in the Forest of a Thousand Demons*. With the use of impressionistic lighting, as well as consequential realistic interpretative stage setting, costume and makeup designs in both performances, this study relays on the theory of conceptual metaphor to demonstrate how design plays a critical part in communicating the metaphysical knowledge system of the plays. Osofisan uses mythology as a metaphor to portray oppression, inequality, and the tendentious profligacy of the ruling elite towards the collaborative complacencies of the African people. Scenography visually synchronizes his performances towards rejuvenating the various audiences. The study concludes that Osofisan’s metaphorical images provide visual signifiers that connect and make characters, place, time, and events realizable on the stage based on varied design interpretations.

*Adinku Grace Uchechukwu is both an educator and an artist, whose core philosophy centres on promoting artistic and creative arts both on stage and in film. Grace is currently teaching in the School of Performance, Visualization, and Fine Arts, at Texas A&M University. Her research interest includes Pre-colonial and 20th-21st Century Anglophone Theatre Performance, Costume, and makeup design, World dress culture, and Black and race representation in cinema. She is currently studying the interconnection between the articles of dress and ornaments used in the African rituals and the ones in the Black Panther film. Email:* [*iyami.8@tamu.edu*](mailto:iyami.8@tamu.edu)

**Abstraction and Embodiment: Interpretation Through Hybrid and Trans-Species Female Folktale Bodies- Donatella Barbieri**

Staged interpretations of Antonin Dvorak’s Rusalka, first performed in Prague in 1901, have, since the 1980s, proliferated beyond the central character’s Eastern Slavic mythological origin (Dynda, 2017) in interpretations that may also transcend naturalistic readings of the eponymous poem by Jaroslav Kapvil that informed the opera’s libretto, and its relationship with other water-based hybrid characters’ stories to engage a contemporary audience into the complexities of entanglements, love, loss and death in the context of trans-species worlds. Key is the costume-centric phenomenon of a non-human being, Rusalka, transformed, muted, and displaced by the desire to be human, a concrete embodiment of hybridity emphasised by her silent presence in Act 2. Such hybridity may lead to a reworking of concepts of narrative costume away from descriptive semiotics, towards abstract, dynamic, and plastic materialisations, reflecting how it may affect the wearer as much as the viewer within processes of transformation. Beyond approaches that vertically privilege categories, binaries, and hierarchies that implicitly or explicitly refer to previous iterations, trans-species hybridity asks for a rhizomatic approach to design that encourages multiplicities of interpretation and horizontality that transverses traditionally distinct ontologies and epistemologies. Focusing on the watery spirit’s desire to have human legs, and the loss of the operatic character’s voice, this presentation places costume within feminist discourses that privilege matter within ecological and trans-species perspectives, given that, as in Anne Balsamo’s reading of Haraway’s Cyborg Manifesto, ‘the body is not solely a matter of materiality; nor can it be reductively a matter of discourse’ (Balsamo, 1996, 34). Rusalka can present a liminal trans-species being-in-the-world in conflict with the multiple oppressive patriarchal structures that the narrative presents. Notwithstanding these, as a force of nature, she remains in charge of her own story and desires. The aim is to draw parallels between the impossibility of reconciling human desires to possess and oppress the irrepressible and Rusalka’s story told through material performances, spaces, and movement.

*Dr Donatella Barbieri is a Senior Research Fellow and Principal Lecturer in Design for Performance at LCF. An international designer of performance, Barbieri’s research and teaching have been advancing knowledge around materiality, bodies and performance cultures for over 20 years. Barbieri wrote Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture and the Body awarded Best Publication at the Prague Quadrennial 2019 and shortlisted for the best book award by the Society of Theatre Research (2018). She led the founding of Studies in Costume and Performance journal while being Joint Research Fellow LCF & V&A, where her research in costume as agential also manifested through her Encounters in the Archives film-based project. With practitioners from indigenous cultures and scholars from six continents, she is currently platforming marginalised and endangered performance practices. For over 15 years, she has been channelling research into the MA Costume Design she founded at LCF, while her participatory methodologies of material embodiment have been curated into exhibitions and research events, around the world, most recently at World Stage Design 2022 in Canada. She co-convenes the Scenography Working Group at the International Federation of Theatre Research. Email:* [*d.barbieri@fashion.arts.ac.uk*](mailto:d.barbieri@fashion.arts.ac.uk)

**Challenging Public Myths- Hilary Baxter**

The desire to see changes in contemporary UK culture, both societally and in theatre-making, was the catalyst for my PhD practice-based research project from 2017-2022. This was an interdisciplinary Drama and Healthcare studentship at St Mary’s University, Twickenham, in which new Scenography methods were developed and used to interrogate the invisibility of the mid-life (or menopausal) female in UK culture. Using and developing visual languages from a small randomised sample of interviewees, the Scenography work-in-progress layered individual life narratives, Greek mythological narratives, and feminist theatre practices, to imagine alternative and more sustainable communities. This presentation is a reflection on the outcomes of this research, whether the newly imagined present can be acted upon, to enact real changes.

*Hilary Baxter is a freelance researcher, theatre-maker and academic, currently working as an associate researcher for one of the UK’s most prestigious Drama conservatoires. She completed her Drama and Healthcare practice-based PhD studentship CHANGING IN PUBLIC, at St Marys University (Twickenham). This was a cross-disciplinary research project in Scenography (Theatre Arts practice) which was used to investigate Menopause, using interview methods, and visual/spoken verbatim theatre practices. This research was developed from professional design work as a Theatre and Costume designer and earlier academic work concentrated on ‘show’ costumes, (specifically masques, showgirls, drag queens) and different aspects of contemporary scenography practice: immersive, site-specific, and site-responsive. Previously published work includes the chapters ‘Masquerade, Pride, Drag, Love and Marriage’ chapter published in Masquerade, Essays on Tradition and Innovation Worldwide (2015) edited by Deborah Bell, and ‘Alison Chitty – The Public Sketch’ chapter published in Designers’ Shakespeare (2016) edited by John Russell Brown and Stephen di Benedetto. She has written several articles for the forthcoming Bloomsbury Encyclopaedia of Film and Television Costume Design, edited by Deborah Nadoolman Landis and in 2021 contributed a published submission for the UK Parliament’s Women and Equalities Committee's inquiry, ‘Menopause and the workplace’. Email:* [*hilaryquinnbaxter@icloud.com*](mailto:hilaryquinnbaxter@icloud.com)

**‘Confinement’: Motherhood, Myths & Activist Scenographics in Site-Specific Performance- Kate Lane**

This paper will reflect upon our working process for our recent project ‘Confinement’, a site-specific costume-led performance at Walthamstow Wetlands in London in the summer 2022, the project included community workshops, and a triptych of short films as legacy to the performance. ‘Confinement’ was a collaboration between Ceschi + Lane, Masumi Saito a Japanese choreographer/ performer and Helen Epega a Nigerian Composer, it was a testament to motherhood and birth over lockdown. It interrogated the representation and the positioning of the act of mothering and birth in society during Covid using costume as prothesis, body scenography and wearable sculptures that distorted and manipulated the human form. The project examined the historic traditions of post-natal confinement in the context of the global pandemic lockdowns, questioning how the costumed body can give materiality to memory, form connections with community and become a critical commentary in the context of current events and wider contemporary & historical cultural traditions. It drew on ‘scenogaphics’ as a form of world building (Hann 2019) looking at how scenography, not related to thingness, can have the potential to be a catalyst process within an activist poetics and political commentator? The core of this project is about connection through costume both with the geography of the landscape in its site-specific location and with collective memory and communities. This auto-ethnographical work presented a dystopian alternate world of maternal experiences and looked towards the fantastical and myth-making as way to raise political & social awareness.

*Kate Lane is an artist, performance maker, scenographer and academic. Her practice focuses on performance through a design-led methodology, focusing on costume and multi-platformed performances. She is the Course Leader for the BA Performance: Design and Practice at Central Saint Martins and co-artistic director of Ceschi + Lane. Ceschi + Lane is a collaboration Italian theatre director/ performance maker Valentina Ceschi & Kate Lane. They have been supported and performed with organisations such as the Barbican, London, The Point Eastleigh, Ovalhouse, (UK), Arts Printing House (Lithuania), ACTs Festival, (Bilbao) and Scenofest, World Stage Design (Taipei). Kate’s work with them was selected as part of the UK Exhibit for Prague Quadrennial (2015) and the ‘Make:Believe’ Exhibition at the V&A (2015). Kate’s scenography practice has been shown extensively in the UK including Barbican, The Roundhouse, Sadler’s Wells, Southbank Centre, V&A, Roundhouse and International at Dovzhenko Centre; Kiev, Ravenna Festival; Italy, Musique Cordiale; France, Cork Festival; Ireland, Arts Printing House; Lithuania. Exhibitions include: ‘Costume at the Turn of the Century’ (2015) & ‘Innovative Costume of the 21st Century: The Next Generation’ (2019) both at the A.A. Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum, Moscow and as part of ‘Staging Places’ at the V&A (2019). Email:* [*kate.lane@csm.arts.ac.uk*](mailto:kate.lane@csm.arts.ac.uk)

**When Urgent Stories Break the Myths- Sophia New**

The myth that many of us tell ourselves about climate catastrophe is that somehow happening elsewhere and therefore it is not urgent and it is a problem for tomorrow. As a pedagogue, I have continued to advocate that the feminism maxim ‘the personal is political’ is still urgent and useful. Recently Theresa Nelson a student from Ghana on the MA Performance: Politics and Social Justice woke me up from the myth of abstraction or elsewhere and showed me the direct impact that climate collapse has had on her family and community. Seeing her grandfather’s house in Jamestown eroded into the sea, the water across the land where clearly buildings once stood, I can still picture her confronting us the audience: ‘You said it would be safe’. Her hair extensions trail across blue paint as the traces mark where she can currently tread, but her footprints are quickly eradicated by the sea of blue. This is Theresa’s story to tell about how the exploitation of the Global South directly impacts the inhabitants, but it is also the power of performance that we find ways to leave an impact that breaks through generic stories to the particular and personal. For this conference, I would propose that we show short extracts from the performance (hopefully live) and I would facilitate a conversation with her and the participants of the conference about the work.

*Sophia New has recently been appointed as the Course Leader for MA Performance: Politics and Social Justice and MA Performance: Theatre Making at Wimbledon College of Arts, UAL. She also taught for the last 10 years on the MA Solo/Dance/Authorship at the University of the Arts Berlin. Together with Daniel Belasco Rogers, with whom she created the performance company plan b, they were Guest Professors for the program in Interdisciplinary art and theory practice for Studium Generale at the University of the Arts Berlin 2020-2023. Sophia has also taught courses on Live Art & Performance regularly at Folkwang University, Bard College, Leipzig University and HCU Hamburg. As plan B for the last 20 years, they have created durational performance works for festival contexts, site-specific performances and audio-visual works. Sophia completed a PhD at Exeter University about the ongoing daily recording practice they have, titled ‘Transforming personal daily GPS data through performances: movement, memory and time’’.*

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**Theatre Technology and Environmental Utilities, Africa from the Perspective of Femi Osofisan’s Selected Plays- Alphonsus Shireku Orisaremi**

African mythology has been well exploited in storytelling theatre of Femi Osofisan. Osofisan explores mythology from multiple dimensions in his theatre, ranging from *Yungba Yungba* and the Dance Context to *Aringindin* and the Night Watchmen and the retold story, Adventures in the Forest of a Thousand Daemons. This study examines the use of scenography in interpreting the concepts and dispositions of myth in Osofisan’s performances. Using descriptive and analytical approach, this study delves into the output of set, lighting and costume and makeup designs in the performances of Femi Osofisan’s *Yungba Yungba and the Dance Context*, and *Adventures in the Forest of a Thousand Demons*. With the use of impressionistic lighting, as well as consequential realistic interpretative stage setting, costume and makeup designs in both performances, this study relays on the theory of conceptual metaphor to demonstrate how design plays a critical part in communicating the metaphysical knowledge system of the plays. Osofisan uses mythology as a metaphor to portray oppression, inequality, and the tendentious profligacy of the ruling elite towards the collaborative complacencies of the African people. Scenography visually synchronizes his performances towards rejuvenating the various audiences. The study concludes that Osofisan’s metaphorical images provide visual signifiers that connect and make characters, place, time, and events realizable on the stage based on varied design interpretation.

*Orisaremi Alphonsus Shireku has over thirty years of consistent exposure in the area of Theatre Design and Technology. He has designed for well over 100 theatrical, para-theatrical, and screen productions and installations. He teaches Theatre design and technology in the Department of Theatre Arts of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. Email:* [*shireku@gmail.com*](mailto:shireku@gmail.com)

**Holding Stories- Christina Penna**

The Afterlife Creative Memory Retreat by The Other Way Works (research and development) invited audience participants to an online retreat via Zoom. Inspired by the 1998 film After Life by Kore-eda Hirokazu, the work invites participants to focus on what they value in life through an in-depth creative exploration of their own important memories facilitating hope, togetherness and a deeper connection to one’s sense of self. The scenographer was part of the team of artists who devised exercises that were then given to the online audience to help them revisit some of their memories. A playful exercise featuring a red thread was introduced and the participants were encouraged to use it for connecting with each other’s screen spaces. Through the medium of touch and the playful scenographic illusion of the thread extending to other participants’ rooms, this tool was used as a way to create a sense of togetherness among the group. I will unpack the above scenographic action through the lens of 4Es cognition: enactive, ecological, embodied, embedded ‘and some cases extended and affective’ (Ward and Stapleton, 2012), suggesting that human cognition is an on-going collaboration between brain, body and environment. If places are shaped by significant historic moments (Hannah, 2011: 56), they are also shaped by the memories we choose to attach to those moments and a certain materiality related to those moments. By understanding thinking not as an individualistic activity but one that is happening within socio-cultural and material knowledge and inextricably integrated with perception and action I will argue that in the Afterlife Creative Memory Retreat, the tactile scenographic element of the thread enhanced the sense of memory as storytelling between the screens.

*Dr Christina (Xristina) Penna is a performance designer/practitioner and researcher, currently the Programme Leader of the BA (Hons) Costume and Set Design, the University of Derby. She has worked as a designer for plays, devised and site-specific performances, and events, while her participatory installation work (xristina penna+aswespeakproject) has been presented internationally: New Mexico (USA); London, Liverpool, Leeds, Derby (UK); Athens, (Greece). In this, she works with mixed-media, handmade bizarre objects, inefficient aesthetics and material stemming from the audience to create hybrid collaborative performance installations and actions, which she calls scenographic contraptions. Her thesis ‘Towards a CogScenography: Cognitive Science, scenographic reception and processes’ (University of Leeds, 2018) investigated through practice how participatory performance processes can be informed by neuroscience theories of human consciousness and cognition in order to facilitate collaborative thinking through materials, spaces and audiences. Email:* [*x.penna@derby.ac.uk*](mailto:x.penna@derby.ac.uk)

**Translation, Adaptation and Dramaturgy Working Group -**

**Rendering Red Oleanders Readable: An Exercise in Cultural Translation and Conscious Dramaturgy- Arnab Banerji**

One of the only purveyors of theatrical modernity in early twentieth-century India, Rabindranath Tagore’s (1861 – 1941) plays speak to universal concerns while fiercely holding on to their Bengali and Indian identities. Tagore translated many of his plays into English for his growing foreign audience, especially after his Nobel Prize win in 1913. These plays were produced in both academic and commercial theatre settings in Europe and North America often drawing praise from critics for introducing audiences to a hitherto unknown cultural phenomenon – modern Indian theatre. In the hundred years since Tagore introduced his dramatic oeuvre to the West his work has shifted from representing a theatrical niche to a cultural curiosity. His poetic elevated language, once perceived as a signature lyrical style, has become a linguistic barrier to exploring this work further in the contemporary milieu. This past May the University of California, Riverside produced a version of Red Oleanders, one of Tagore’s most celebrated and complicated plays, that attempted to circumvent this cultural dissonance. The production team led by the director Reena Dutt approached the heart of Tagore’s message rather than stumbling through his rhetoric flair. This was enabled by a new translation and a unique production process located between and betwixt cultural sensibilities. In this presentation, I explore the process that led to this adaptation/production and the ways in which Tagore’s complex Bangla can be effectively translated to English without the play losing its original urgency and music.

*Arnab Banerji is an Associate Professor of Theatre History and Dramatic Literature at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles. Arnab’s essays and reviews have been published in Theatre Journal, Theatre Topics, Asian Theatre Journal, TDR, BOOM California, Ecumenica, Theatre Symposium, Sanglap, Cerebration, and SERAS. His current research is in performances by the Indian diaspora, translations of Indian vernacular plays, and contemporary Bengali theatre. Arnab is married and lives with his partner Sayantika and daughter Saira in Los Angeles. When he is not doing academic stuff, Arnab enjoys drinking specialty coffee, looking up restaurants around town, binge-watching The Office, and browsing through graphic novels. Email:* [*arnab.banerji@lmu.edu*](mailto:arnab.banerji@lmu.edu)

**Zangi: The Politics and Poetics of Blackness in Representations of Amir Khusrau’s Tale of the Camphor Princess- Karishma Bhagani**

This paper centres the lesser prominent narratives around representations of blackness in Amir Khusrau’s *The Tale of the Camphor Princess* as part of the Hasht Bihisht (Eight Paradises) in Khusrau’s Khamsah. In comparing these perceptions of blackness in poetic and visual representations from the 14th and 15th century, I will trace a genealogy of blackness in Medieval Indian art and literature, which remains notably unanalysed but is undeniably present. Specifically, an exploration of the black body of the Zangi (which is a Persian term used to refer to black people from East Africa) will reframe analyses of Medieval Indian literature to focus on the less dominant characters and the various depictions of blackness. The study extends itself to include 15th century Turkman and Mughal paintings that were inspired by Khusrau’s original writings. As Khusrau’s poetry gets reinterpreted in visual forms in both Mughal and Turkman styles, its region-specific representations are recontextualized in ways that respond to larger discourses around transregional, transcultural and transtemporal depictions of blackness. This paper is situated in demonstrating a proof of concept to establish that further study of depictions of the black body and blackness in general within Medieval India is required. Such an analysis has the potential to re-centre perspectives and focus on black characters in art and literature, as well as contribute to a larger conversation on the portrayal and performance of blackness in performance studies.

*I am originally from Mombasa, Kenya and am currently pursuing a PhD in Theatre and Performance Studies at Stanford University. I graduated from New York University (NYU) with a B.F.A in Theatre and a B.A. in History. While at NYU, I was the recipient of the Richard Hull Fellowship, the Bevya Rosten Memorial Award, the CTED Development Impact Fellowship, and the President’s Service Award, all in honour of outstanding theatre scholarship. I was also the Tisch bachelor’s representative at NYU’s All-University Commencement ceremony. In my capacities as a director, producer, and scholar of the performing arts, I am keen on contributing to the development of a sustainable creative economy within East Africa. I currently serve as a Strategic Consultant for the LAM Sisterhood in Kenya, the associate producing director of the Nairobi Musical Theatre Initiative and the Associate Artistic Director for the Tebere Arts Foundation in Uganda. I was also a fellow at the Georgetown Lab for Global Performance and Politics (2019-2022). Select credits include dramaturg and cultural consultant for Goddess: The Musical, produced Theatre for One: Nairobi Edition in conjunction with the Arts Centre at NYU Abu Dhabi and Octopus Theatricals in New York. Email:* [*kbhagani@stanford.edu*](mailto:kbhagani@stanford.edu)

**Serious Games. How Fictional Representations Intervened in the System of Serious Beliefs- Olga Danylyuk**

This article undertakes an exploration of the Ukrainian ‘Cossack myth’ as the embodiment of national values, instrumentalised by various political forces and its relevance to the current struggle between Ukraine and Russia. As stated in the article “Taras Bulba” and the tragedy of Russia and Ukraine: ‘Gogol’s novella (Taras Bulba) and his life, suggest a way of thinking about Russia and Ukraine rooted in the ironies and contradictions of art, rather than the deathly binaries of autocracy’ (Economist, 2022). Somewhat paradoxically, Gogol succeeded in creating an iconic text, celebrated in Ukrainian and Russian cultures with the notoriously aestheticized account of the sixteenth-century Cossacks’ brutal struggle for freedom. No matter how idealised, inaccurate, and even fantastic the image of Cossacks is presented in the text, it became an embodiment of “truth” about the past for generations of readers. It is important to ask how fictional representations intervened in the system of serious beliefs. The crucial point, according to Schaeffer, is that many of our serious beliefs are so distant from knowledge that in practical terms, whether they are true or false is a matter of indifference (2010:128). Furthermore, the fictional history of Gogol’s novel was appropriated by cinematography, exemplified by the Russian blockbuster Iron and Blood: The Legend of Taras Bulba (2009), which reinterpreted Gogol’s myth as a realistic historical account. Hollywood made a film of Taras Bulba in 1962, changing the ending: Taras (Yul Brynner) is triumphant and merciful, whereas in the book he is vengeful and burned alive.

*Dr. Olga Danylyuk works as a researcher, director, dramaturg, curator. Olga completed her PhD using PaR methodology at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London, under the title: ‘Virtually True’. Intermedial Strategies in the Staging of War Conflict (2015). Olga continued her research by conducting fieldwork in the war zone in Eastern Ukraine. She worked with CIMIC Ukraine and different volunteer organisations in the Zone of the Antiterrorist Operation. Her performative research resulted in a large-scale promenade performance with 16 teenagers from the war zone: Letters to an Unknown Friend from New York (2018) and performance project Contact Line (2020). Her new documentary performance A Visit to the Minotaur was presented at Voila Europe Festival (2022), London. Currently, Olga is a British Academy Research Fellow in RCSSD and Research Fellow at Birkbeck School of Arts, London, Member of the Law and Theory Lab, University of Westminster. She is also a director of I - DO Lab performance company in Kyiv, Ukraine. Email:* [*danylyuk@gmail.com*](mailto:danylyuk@gmail.com)

**The Myth of Hell: The Icelandic Avant-Garde and Jean-Paul Sartre´S No Exit- Irma Erlingsdóttir**

The Icelandic theatre company Gríma (1961–1970) staged many contemporary and avant-garde plays in new Icelandic translations. These included the translation of Jean-Paul Sartre´s existentialist play No Exit by Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, who was, at the time, a Theatre Director. Her translation will be analysed in terms of different expressions of the myth of hell. The reception of the play will be discussed, and oral history methods used to highlight performative elements relative to the staging of the play. In 1987, the play was translated again by actress Þórunn Magnea Magnúsdóttir for the Icelandic National Public Radio. The conception and the rendering of the idea of hell between the two translations and performances will be analysed, with a focus on the different venues and mediums (stage vs. radio) and on the difference between French and Nordic expressions of the myth.

*Irma Erlingsdóttir is a professor at the University of Iceland and Director of the UNESCO- affiliated Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (GRÓ- GEST); RIKK — Institute for Gender, Equality and Difference; and EDDA Center in Contemporary Critical Research at the University of Iceland. She holds a PhD from the Sorbonne University, Paris, France. Irma Erlingsdóttir has led several large-scale academic projects in the fields of gender studies, globalization, contemporary politics, and critical theory, and has wide-ranging experience in cooperating with government ministries, public and private organizations on policy-relevant gender and equality research. As a specialist in gender studies, literature, and critical contemporary philosophy, she has published articles and book chapters in these fields. Among her publications are The Handbook of the Politics of the MeToo Movement (Routledge, 2020) and Iceland’s Financial Crisis: The Politics of Blame, Protest, and Reconstruction (Routledge, 2016). Email:* [*irma@hi.is*](mailto:irma@hi.is)

**Translating Pop Culture Myths and Politics in Contemporary Swiss Drama- Kiki Gounaridou**

Switzerland has four distinct official languages, literatures, and cultures: French (or Romande), German, Italian, and Romansch. While Swiss-German theatre received international attention after WWII, Swiss-French theatre has been relatively unknown to English-speaking scholars and theatre audiences. In Isabelle Sbrissa’s La Traversée du desert (Crossing the Desert) (2009), there are four pop culture “mythical” and, at the same time, very political characters, on the desolate and empty stage, the desert of the play’s title: Barbie, Ken, and their doubles, who appear on stage, anxious and disoriented, after having received contradictory instructions by someone unnamed. For the process of translating this play into English, I’ll discuss a few examples in regard to linguistic and other cultural references. Dominique Ziegler’s Affaires privées (Private Affairs) (2009) is a political, overtly anti-capitalist play. The play takes place in the offices of a Geneva finance company/bank, with connections to the global financing system. It explores the global banking and financing world, as well as neoliberal government policies, as an insidious jungle of violence, populated by powerful characters. For the translation of Ziegler’s play into English, I encountered problems relating to political and cultural terminology that I will discuss in my paper. Overall, Swiss-French theatre, influenced by the contemporary Swiss pop culture of questioning political power structures, experiments with new aesthetic configurations, as well as with overt political subjects that pose many interesting challenges to the translator.

*Kiki Gounaridou is Professor of Theatre Studies at Smith College. Her publications include books, translations, and essays on Ancient Greek Theatre, Swiss-French Theatre, And American Theatre among others. Email:* [*kgounari@smith.edu*](mailto:kgounari@smith.edu)

**We’ve Always Been Here: Re-Writing the Myth of Polish Identity- Sarah Grochala**

This paper examines attempts by Polish theatre artists to stand in opposition to nationalist myths of Polish identity by employing utopian dramaturgy to rewrite and challenge them. From the end of the eighteenth century through to the fall of communism in 1989, Poland was almost continually occupied by a series of other nations. During this time, the Polish language and culture was repressed. In response to this, a myth of Polishness evolved, heavily rooted in Catholicism and Romanticism, which characterises Poland as the martyred Christ, who suffers but is destined to rise in triumph. Despite Poland’s resurrection as an independent nation in 1989, this myth of Polishness continues to persist and, in recent years, has been exploited by the right-wing Law and Justice party to support their rise to power and maintain their popularity (e.g. Antoni Krauze’s 2016 film Smolensk). Drawing on Jill Dolan’s work on utopian performatives, this paper will focus on the use of utopian dramaturgy by Polish theatre artists to challenge the Romantic myth of Polish identity. Specifically, it will explore how the staging of a real (though unofficial) same-sex wedding in Jakub Skrzywanek’s 2022 production SPARTAKUS (Teatr Współczesny, Szczecin) is used to challenge the myth that LGBTQIA+ identities are a Western ideology and instead present them as an integral part of Polish identity.

*Sarah Grochala is Senior Lecturer Writing for Theatre at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, where she leads the MA/MFA in Writing for Stage and Broadcast Media. Her monograph, The Contemporary Political Play (Bloomsbury 2017), was shortlisted for the 2018 TaPRA Early Career Research Prize. In 2018, she was awarded a British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award for a project examining the lack of contemporary European drama in translation on British stages in the run-up to Brexit. Her latest monograph The Theatre of Rupert Goold was published in 2020. As a playwright, her plays include S-27 (Finborough Theatre, London 2009; Griffin Theatre Sydney 2010), which won the 2007 Amnesty International/ice and fire Protect the Human Playwriting Competition and was recently streamed as part of #FinboroughForFree. She regularly writes audio dramas set in the worlds of Dr Who and The Avengers for Big Finish. As a dramaturg, she has worked for Headlong, Theatre 503, Soho Theatre, and the Brighton Festival. Email:* [*sarah.grochala@cssd.ac.uk*](mailto:sarah.grochala@cssd.ac.uk)

**(Re)Generating Mythological Knowledge(s) in Performance- Torsten Jost**

In my presentation, I will highlight and explore different ways in which spectators are invited and encouraged to (re)generate mythological knowledge(s) in performances. In doing so, I will draw on historical and contemporary examples from both European performing arts history and examples from performance cultures in Africa and Oceania. My presentation will focus on two basic questions/perspectives: (a) How are spectators in performances encouraged to (re)generate mythological knowledge(s) (dramaturgical perspective)? (b) What effects can mythological knowledge(s) have (impact perspective)? What effects can such knowledge(s) generate within and beyond the space-time of the performance (for example semiotic, affective, epistemological, etc., effects)? In other words, my talk aims to explore different forms and dimensions of actualization and efficacy of mythological knowledge(s) in performances.

*Torsten Jost is a researcher and academic coordinator at the Cluster of Excellence "Temporal Communities: Doing Literature in a Global Perspective" at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. After receiving his PhD from Freie Universität Berlin in 2017, he joined the faculty of the university’s Theatre and Performance Studies Department, where he teaches courses in the bachelor’s and master’s degree programs. In 2018, Jost was invited as a guest lecturer by the Shanghai Theatre Academy, China. His dissertation, which was nominated for the Ernst-Reuter-Prize, was published by Wilhelm Fink Verlag under the title "Gertrude Stein: Nervosität und das Theatre" (2019, Gertrude Stein: Nervousness and the Theatre). Together with Erika Fischer-Lichte, he has co-edited numerous books on theatre and performance in German and English, including "The Politics of Interweaving Performance Cultures: Beyond Postcolonialism" (2014); "Theatrical Speech Acts: Performing Language; Politics, Translations, Embodiments" (2020); "Dramaturgies of Interweaving: Engaging Audiences in an Entangled World" (2021); "Entangled Performance Histories: New Approaches to Theatre Historiography (2022); and "Performance Cultures as Epistemic Cultures" (2 Volumes, 2023). Email:* [*torsten.jost@fu-berlin.de*](mailto:torsten.jost@fu-berlin.de)

**Anouilh‘s Black Plays Antigone and Eurydice: Adaptations in Translation- Gudrun Kristindottir**

Anouilh wrote his plays Antigone and Eurydice during the Second World War while France was under the Vichy Regime. In these rewritings of Greek tragedies, published under the collective titles Black Plays and New Black Plays, the author offered an allegorical representation of the debate between the fighting members of the Resistance movement and the pragmatist attitude of those who chose to collaborate with the invaders and submit to a new reality. These plays were translated and staged at the National Theatre in Post War Iceland. In this talk, I will discuss the political implications involved in these myths about tyranny and death, with particular attention given to the ambiguities of the original plays and how these were re-enacted in the Anouilh plays and further rendered in the Icelandic translations. Oral history methods will be used to approach dramaturgical elements deployed at the National theatre. Finally, the reception of the plays will be discussed, in particular with regard to the idea of conquest and invasion.

*Guðrún Kristinsdóttir-Urfalino is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Iceland as part of a research project entitled “The French wave in Icelandic theatre 1960-2000”, funded by the Icelandic Research Fund (Rannis). She has a dramatic art training and is also a sessional teacher at the Department of Languages and Culture at the University of Iceland. Her thesis, entitled The Roman Civil War in French Tragedy (1550-1650). Poetic and political analysis, defended at the University Sorbonne-Nouvelle Paris 3 in co-supervision with the University of Iceland, was written under the direction of Professors Hélène Merlin-Kajman and Ásdís R. Magnúsdóttir. It is to be published by Classiques Garnier. Email:* [*gudrunkr@hi.is*](mailto:gudrunkr@hi.is)

**Dramaturging the Grant, Dramaturging the Field: On Politically Driven Dramaturgical Approaches to Grant Application on Migrant Theatre in The Netherlands- Kasia Lech**

Approximately 15 % of Netherlands’ residents are first-generation migrants; 25% of residents have a migrant background. Their stories stretch over all continents, the EU and non-EU countries, and contexts related to postcolonial contexts, fleeing the war, family reunification, and work-related migration. The theatre they make and its (hi)stories, however, remains largely undiscovered. Dramaturgy, as Janek Szatkowski has recently argued, is a “production of and reflection on the communication of communications to society about society,” and brings to the fore the questions of what society is, how it functions, and how its functioning is underpinned by different political and power structures (Szatkowski 2019, 6). In this paper, I will combine Szatkowski’s point with that of Martynas Petrikas, who argues that scholars co-create fields of cultural production by choosing about who and how to write, and thus distributing cultural and social capital and, connected to it, economic and political power (Petrikas 47-51,54-55). What implication may the intersection of these points have on the grant application for a research project on theatre created by first-generation migrants in the Netherlands in the twenty-first century? How can one use dramaturgical tools to write a grant application that has at its core (1) interrogation of power structures within Dutch society and specifically its theatre that is related to migrants (2) examination of histories that underpin these structures (3) empowerment of migrant theatre’s (hi)stories social and cultural capital?

*Kasia Lech is a scholar, actor, storyteller, dramaturg, puppeteer, and Associate Professor in Global Performance History at the University of Amsterdam, where she coordinates Artistic Research within Art and Performance Research Studies Master. Her research and creative practice explore theatre through practice-based and traditional scholarship and primarily focus on verse, multilingualism, translation, migration, dramaturgy, and cross-cultural encounters. Kasia published "Dramaturgy of Form: Performing Verse in Contemporary Theatre" (Routledge, 2021), which received outstanding reviews for its content, critical quality, and decolonizing scholarship on verse. Her second book "Multilingual Dramaturgies: Towards New European Theatre" is forthcoming with Palgrave. Kasia – who holds a PhD from University College Dublin – is a trained puppeteer and actor. She performed internationally and co-founded Polish Theatre Ireland – a multilingual theatre company based in Dublin. She is an Executive Director at TheTheatreTimes.com, a global theatre portal which seeks to decolonize theatre criticism. She co-convenes the Translation Adaptation Dramaturgy working group at the International Federation for Theatre Research. Email:* [*k.k.lech@uva.nl*](mailto:k.k.lech@uva.nl)

**Weakness, Fate and the Foreign in Racine's Icelandic Phèdre- Ásdís Rósa Magnúsdóttir**

French comedy, from Molière to Florian Zeller, is well known in Iceland and has been extremely popular since the beginning of Icelandic theatre history. Many translators have worked on and adapted these texts, both in poetry and prose. In contrast, French tragedy has rarely found its way onto the stages of Icelandic theatres and only one translator has endeavoured to translate the alexandrines of the French neo-classical playwrights Pierre Corneille and Jean Racine. Corneille's famous tragicomedy Le Cid, translated by Helgi Hálfdanarson, was the object of a public reading in 1998 at Reykjavík City Theatre, while Racine's Phèdre is the first and only French tragedy to have been staged in Iceland (National Theatre, 1999). Racine's play was first performed in 1677. Both before and after that time, many artists and writers have drawn inspiration from the myth of Phaedra and interpreted it in various ways. In this lecture, I will discuss the reception of the work in Iceland in the 1999 staging and the translator's solution to the foreignness of the French poetic form.

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**Negotiating Greco-African Myths and History: Mohammed Ben Abdallah’s *The Fall of Kumbi* - Stephen Oppong**

Since the second half of the 20th century, there has been a significant trend of African theatrical adaptations of ancient Greek tragedies and myths. This Greco-African intercultural theatre has attracted significant scholarly attention over the years. Works such as *Edufa* by Efua Sutherland, *The Bacchae of Euripides* by Wole Soyinka, “Song of a Goat” by J.P Clark, “The Gods are not to Blame” by Ola Rotimi, *The Women of Owu* by Femi Osofisan, among others, have been identified as belonging to this intercultural engagement. To date, however, Mohammed Ben Abdallah; a famous Ghanaian dramatist and academic has not been recognized as a contributor to this interculturalism. In this paper, through a careful examination of how Abdallah negotiated the ancient Greek Trojan War myth, the history of the fall of the Old Ghana Empire, and the myths about the rise of the present-day Akan clans of Ghana in his *The Fall of Kumbi* Abibigoro play, I argue for Abdallah’s inclusion on the list of contributors to the Greco-African theatrical interculturalism. The paper will expand our understanding of how Abdallah searched beyond African borders to use an ancient Western myth as a source for his play as mentioned above, and at the same time broaden our knowledge of the Greco-African theatrical interculturalism.

*Stephen Yaw Oppong is a PhD student in Theatre Studies at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. He completed a Master of Philosophy degree in Arts and Culture, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre Arts (Directing) at the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana. In 2015, he founded Reflections Multimedia Productions which engages in theatre productions and cultural events in Ghana. Since 2020, this company has been organizing the Theatre Stakeholders’ Online Symposium (TSOS) which brings Ghanaian and foreign theatre academics and professionals together for discussions supporting the development of Ghanaian theatre. Stephen is a theatre director, playwright, and emerging theatre scholar with three co-authored journal articles on African theatre. His current playwriting projects are attempting to recast Ananse within the traditions of Anansesem and Anansegoro in Ghana. His research interests include African (Ghanaian) theatre traditions, adaptations of ancient Greek tragedies in Africa and the postcolonial world, intercultural theatre, as well as war and trauma in theatre. Email:* [*stephenyawoppong30@gmail.com*](mailto:stephenyawoppong30@gmail.com)

**Deconstructing the Turkish Founding Myth Through Kasimir and Karoline- Berfin Orman**

The Turkish Nation was founded in 1923. In the founding, myths had to justify a social order. The Turkish Nation was built on the European idea of a folk that is a homogenous entity, so Kemalist Politics wanted to create a national identity for the newfound republic. My essay approaches the term of myth from a rather critical perspective - looking at the founding myth around the Turkish Nation. The essay is a theoretical concept paper of the performance of Kasimir and Karoline in Istanbul. At first glance, Kasimir and Karoline is a beautiful and simple love story. The artistic concept is researching the actuality of this folk play, by translating the story into Turkish society. The political situation we face in Turkey requires a complex view of society. Horváth says he aimed: The unmasking of consciousness by means of a modern folk play. He used the saying "money as the categorical imperative of his time “. Behind this is the thesis, that money governs the social and moral order. Starting from the founding myth till the situation in Turkey today - the performance shows that Capitalism is the main force, that holds oppression systems together. The original play text has a lot of racist and sexist subtexts. The performance is also deconstructing the text through a multi-language adapted translation. Horváths play with my handwriting as a Kurdish Alevi, immigrant and women director can be and aims to be a tool for deconstructing the Turkish founding myth and all its implications. The performance attempts to look at society from multiple angles - capitalism, love, nationalism, ethnicities, and women.

*Berfin Orman is a young director with a strong critical political awareness. Due to her own biography, she has as a person and as well in her arts an eye for complex realities and follows an intersectional feminist approach. She was born in 1993 and studied philosophy and languages ​​and cultures of the Islamic world at the University of Cologne. Before and during her studies, she assisted many directors in Germany (Thalia Theater) and Turkey (moda sahnesi). Since 2023 she is working as a theatre director - her next show will be "Der Sturz der Kometen und der Kosmonauten" at Thalia Theatre in February and "Pleasure - Arzu mu?" and "Kasimir ve Karolin" at moda sahnesi. Berfin works as a transnational artist and is a fellow of the International Theatre Institute (ITI Germany). In addition to her directing work, Berfin also works at the intersection of activism, curation and theatre. She is a member of the BIPOC network (an activist theatre artists group of German-speaking BIPOC artists) She and the group are fighting to make themes around "migration, racism and the decolonization of theatre" more widely accepted. Berfin Orman's concern is to live arts more transnationally and to implement decolonization beyond buzzwords. This concern is not only fed by general interest but also by the personal story of the young artist. Email:* [*berfin.b.orman@gmail.com*](mailto:berfin.b.orman@gmail.com)

**Translating Disability in Epic Verse Drama: A Comparative Analysis of two translations of Dharamvir Bharati’s *Andha Yug* (*The Blind Age*)- Anandi Rao**

Dharamvir Bharati (1926-1997) wrote Andha Yug in Hindi in 1953. He was a renowned author who wrote in several genres, a journalist and an academic. He is perhaps most famous for his novel Gunahon Ka Devta (lit. The God of Sins) and the novella Suraj Ka Satvan GhoDa (lit. The Seventh Horse of the Sun). The play itself is a reimagining of an event that takes place towards the end of the Classical Indian epic The Mahabharata when the Kaurava clan has been defeated by the Pandavas. The other tradition is that of Indian folk theatre, which has many forms, one of which is the ‘NauTankii’. This is a form of “musical theatre” which uses “sophisticated poetic metres with heavy emphasis on rhythm and rhyme” (Hansen 1983:80). While Bharati emphasises the fact that he writes in free verse he does acknowledge being influenced by folk theatre traditions especially in the use of the “kathaa gaayan” (lit. story singing) as a dramatic device (2011: x). It has been translated into English three times – by Paul Jacob in 1972, Tripurari Sharma in 2001 and Alok Bhalla in 2005 . I will look at the translations by Sharma and Bhalla, who come from very different professional backgrounds and see how they interpret and translate the “kathaa gaayan”. By doing so I hope to see what certain translation choices tell us about translating and adapting plays based on deep-seated traditional epics for differing and more contemporary audiences.

*Anandi Rao (she/her) is a Lecturer in South Asian Studies at SOAS, University of London. Her work lies at the intersection of translation studies, performance studies, gender and sexuality studies and postcolonial studies. Her work has been published in South Asian Review, Studies in South Asian Film and Media and Shakespeare Bulletin. Email:* [*ar75@soas.ac.uk*](mailto:ar75@soas.ac.uk)

**Caring for Our Myths and Histories of Slavery: Kyle Bass' Careful Dramaturgy of POSSESSING HARRIET- Stephanie Sandberg**

There are many studies that detail the theatre’s representation and misrepresentation of the histories and myths of slavery in the United States. This paper explores how one playwright, Kyle Bass, seeks to address how slavery is represented in dramatic form in his play Possessing Harriet which premiered at the Syracuse Stage in 2018. Through interviews with the playwright, articles he has written, as well as deep dramaturgical analysis, I seek to explore how slavery is represented in this play and how we might move forward with more care(fully) crafted narratives. Is theatre an effective intervention for the misrepresentation of slavery in the United States? How might the theatre serve as a more effective intervention? Using an ethics of care approach, I examine how contextualizing Kyle Bass’s work in the larger narratives of slavery works to open a new understanding through both maintaining and upholding the standard narrative and offering a fresh approach to a new ethics of dramaturgy. This ethics emphasizes a relational dramaturgy, where we care for our history through the examination of documents and the stories, we tell about them. In this case, Kyle Bass began his story in the presentation of an award advertisement for a runaway slave in 1839. From that careful study of the artefact, Bass’s narrative emerges to reveal our vulnerability in relation to historical narrative, and how situational details determine how to safeguard and promote the interests of creating an egalitarian society, one that uplifts freedom and autonomy for all.

*Dr. Stephanie Sandberg is a documentary playmaker and filmmaker, a professor of theatre and film at Washington and Lee University. Her current research is in Applied Theatre including: Theatre of Care, Theatre for Social Justice, Contemporary issues in theatre, Human Trafficking, Human Sexuality and its representations on stage, Adapting Theatre into film production. This research takes a relevant and pressing cultural topic such as modern-day slavery or housing discrimination, or racial lines in a city and turns that research into social justice theatre as a catalyst for social change. Selected publications include (writing and directing) Stories in Blue: A Pilgrimage to Heal Human Trafficking, ArtPrize 2016; Lines: The Lived Experience of Race 2016 Edition, ADAPT Theatre Company, Wealthy Street Theatre; Grains of Hope: Refugee Experiences, Calvin Theatre Company; Check Your Privilege: Race and Education in the University, Western Michigan University; The Violence that Binds Us: True Stories of Domestic Violence; Loneliness, A Documentary Email:* [*sandbergs@wlu.edu*](mailto:sandbergs@wlu.edu)

**Towards A Science-Fictional Dramaturgy II: Thought Experiments and Sf -Sanja Vodovnik**

On the 50th anniversary of Apollo’s moon landing, the New York Times journalist, Michael Benson (2019) wrote that “[m]ost major achievements, be they personal or collective, arrive after rehearsals”. In the 21st century, science-fictional performances have arguably become embedded in our daily interactions with each other and with the world around us and challenge the ways in which we perform in public and private spaces. In the proposed paper, I want to explore sf dramaturgy by engaging a tool that is often used when thinking, describing, and conceptualizing abstract phenomena: thought experiments. Following the ideas developed by Salis and Frigg (2020) and building on the work of Degani-Raz (2005), I examine the sf play After the Blast by Zoe Kazan (2019) as a thought experiment. The play deals with two characters, Anna, and Oliver, who are trying to have a baby in a post-apocalyptic world in which humans live underground. As Degani-Raz (2005) notes, theatre can be a tool that helps us understand the worlds we live in, and that being faced with fictional theatrical worlds “enables the spectators to extract insights about the actual world” (355). Furthermore, a taxonomy of varieties of imagination developed by Salis and Frigg (2020) offers a way of understanding thought experiments as central to scientific imagination by involving a “specific kind of propositional imagination, namely, make-believe” By examining After the Blast I argue that sf dramaturgy can be a useful tool for creating performances that rehearse the technologically saturated worlds we live and their potential future manifestations.

*Sanja Vodovnik is a graduate of the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies, University of Toronto. Her work focuses on science fiction in theatrical and extra-theatrical performance spaces and investigates the roles that science fiction plays in contemporary technologically saturated worlds. She is particularly interested in events that contribute to the production of SF experiences such as immersive theme parks, world fairs and online fan communities. Email:* [*sanja.vodovnik@gmail.com*](mailto:sanja.vodovnik@gmail.com)

**Of Cannibals and Creatives: Minorating the Myth of the Author in Shakespeare’s Last Play- Jef Hall-Flavin**

In Dead Centre’s Shakespeare’s Last Play (Schaubühne, 2019), The Tempest is re-imagined through the plight of the minor characters whom the audience tracks as they move on a giant projected map using GPS. Shakespeare’s voice is heard from beyond the grave, losing control of the characters who depart from the text, eventually exhuming and eating his 400-year-old corpse. This 20-minute presentation sheds light on Dead Centre’s praxis through a Deleuzian lens, in which Dead Centre can be said to ‘minorate’ the text (Murray 1997), dethroning the sovereignty of the Author. Simultaneous imaginative speculations mediatise Shakespeare’s text with voiceovers, video projections, GPS mapping, and supertitles, so that the spectator becomes a time-traveller with the power of authorship. In this non-linear dramaturgy, I argue that text is an event: it acts on its own, just as performance ‘thinks’ on its own (Cull Ó Maoilearca 2012), without seeking to present the meaning of the text as a ‘tracing’ of what came before (Deleuze & Guattari 1988). Rather, the production resists tracings in favour of creating a map for the spectator’s continuous co-authorship, whereby meaning emerges through text-events in continuous variation, re-territorialising 400 years of Shakespearean dogma. Dead Centre’s robust intermedial praxis, therefore, is a process-relational framework for the ‘becoming’ (Faber & Stephenson 2011) of classic texts.

*Jef Hall-Flavin is a theatre practitioner and researcher with a 25-year career as a director, producer, and educator. For 13 years he ran the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival, where he directed three world premiere Williams plays, in addition to directing, producing, and presenting dozens more. Prior to that, he was the associate director of the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington DC, and an education associate at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis. Jef earned a Practice as Research degree in London at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, where he is a visiting lecturer. He is also a lecturer at Norwich University of the Arts.* [*https://jefhallflavin.com*](https://jefhallflavin.com) *Email:* [*jef.hall.flavin@gmail.com*](mailto:jef.hall.flavin@gmail.com)

**The Supernatural and Magical in the Performative Practice of Interactive Art- Raivo Kelomees**

I would consider interactive works with audience participation as evocative of mythological and supernatural themes. Paradoxically, even in the most modern, digital technology, works can be created that speak to the deeper layers of our narrative memory. These works make it possible to experience the miraculous, the supernatural and the impossible. Jeffrey Shaw's Golden Calf (1994), Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau's Interactive Plant Growing (1992), A-Volve (1994-97) and HAZE Express (1999). Shaw's work exemplifies the paradoxical nature of the biblical legend. The viewer sees what is invisible and gets a spatial experience of it by walking around it, as if performing a cult ritual. Here the visibility-invisibility of the object of desire is consistent with the nature of the legend. When Moses went after the tablets, the people began to worship a false god, an imaginary god - the golden calf. Today, the "golden calf" has become a metaphor for the worship of false values, be they pseudo-gods or overconsumption. The works of Sommerer and Mignonneau act as connectors between the imaginary and the sensual. I consider these and several other works both as interpreters of well-known mythological narratives and as bringing the viewer-participant closer to the magical and animistic world.

*Raivo Kelomees, PhD (art history), is an artist, art historian and new media researcher. He studied psychology, art history and design in Tartu University and the Academy of Arts in Tallinn. He is senior researcher at the Fine Arts Faculty at the Estonian Academy of Arts and professor at the Pallas University of Applied Sciences. Kelomees is author of Surrealism (Kunst Publishers, 1993) and article collections Screen as a Membrane (Tartu Art College proceedings, 2007) and Social Games in Art Space (EAA, 2013). His doctoral thesis is Postmateriality in Art. Indeterministic Art Practices and Non-Material Art (Dissertationes Academiae Artium Estoniae 3, 2009). Together with Chris Hales he edited the collection of articles Constructing Narrative in Interactive Documentaries (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014). In collaboration with Varvara Guljajeva and Oliver Laas he edited the collection of articles The Meaning of Creativity in the Age of AI (EKA Press, 2022). Email:* [*offline@online.ee*](mailto:offline@online.ee)

**Sound Matters: A Position Statement-Lynne Kendrick**

The global pandemic closed theatres world-wide and this had two significant consequences for theatre practice. Firstly, through online, streamed, digital and downloadable content, theatre became a form that we consciously tuned into. The sound of theatre ordinarily arrives with it; we don’t have to think about how we listen to it or pay much attention to the means and terms of sonic engagement. Once the visual aesthetics of theatre were flattened by the screen, it was sound that generated its three-dimensionality, its presence - the performance event. The second consequence of Covid lockdowns was that the absence of all from theatres produced a quasi-democracy; a temporary freedom which allowed us to talk about what was valorised in the rehearsal room, to speak about which voice(s) that had held-sway for far too long and to act against abuse in the industry. This movement of activist voicing was an act of sonic agency, an important counter against an industry that trades in visuality and appearance. This position statement will put forward questions about fundamental position of sound in (post)pandemic performance, of the digital and dissent.

*Dr Lynne Kendrick is a Reader in New Theatre Practices at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London, Course Leader of the MA/MFA in Advanced Theatre Practice and a Fellow of “The Sound of Theatre” CAS research group, LMU. Publications include: 2021. ‘Voicing Identity: Theatre Sound and Precarious Subjectivities’ co-authored with Yaron Shyldkrot in Avatars, Activism and Postdigital Performance: Precarious Intermedial Identities edited by Liam Jarvis and Karen Savage (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama); Theatre Aurality Palgrave Macmillan (2017); ‘Aural visions: sonic spectatorship in the dark’ in Theatre in the Dark: Shadow, Gloom and Blackout in Contemporary Theatre Alston, A., & Welton, M., (eds.) Bloomsbury (2017); ‘Auralite´ et performance de l’inaudible’ in Le Son du Théātre Larrue, JM., & Mervant-Roux, MM., (eds.) CNRS Editions (2016); ‘Aurality, Gestus and the Performance of Noise’ in Sound und Performance Ernst, WD., Niethammer, N., Szymanski-Düll, B., Mungen, A., (eds.) Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann (2015); ‘Scene in the Dark’ in ‘Sounding out ‘the scenographic turn’: eight position statements, Curtin, A. & Roesner, D. for Theatre and Performance Design, 1:1-2 (2015); ‘Mimesis and Remembrance’ in Performance Research: On Technology Vol 17:3, (2012); ‘A Paidic aesthetic’ in Theatre, Dance and Performance Training, Vol 2:1, (2011); Theatre Noise: the Sound of Performance co-edited with David Roesner CSP (2011). Email:* [*lynne.kendrick@cssd.ac.uk*](mailto:lynne.kendrick@cssd.ac.uk)

**From the Atomic to The Astronomic: ‘Scale’ as Strategy and Scheme for Postdigital Practice- Rosemary Klich**

The postdigital considers the human part of a biological, material, and informational assemblage, requiring the expansion of human subjectivity, of perspective beyond the human, to the unfathomably ‘big’ of big data, to the nanoscopic. This paper examines the concept of scale within postdigital practice, from the cosmic to the cellular, suggesting scale as both an artistic approach and an interpretive lens. Christian Suteanu explains, “With scale we can explore our environment. Using scale, we can apply transformations to time and space. Thereby we can understand change and, in turn, produce change” (2023, p. 3). Extending Suteanu’s position, this paper will suggest scale as a paradigm through which to consider the human participant in relation to, but not at the centre of, other-than-human agencies.This paper will explore audiovisual installations that address elements of scale-beyond-the-human. Exploring subjects ranging from individual raindrops (McClymont) to the paths of manmade objects in space (Quadrature), the experience of plankton in sound (Vesna) to the use of machine learning algorithms to visualise vast data sets (Anadol), these artworks encourage a form of slow-encounter. Like scale, slowness is “always in relation to” (Kwastek and Le Cour, 2019). This paper will argue that the artworks addressed lean towards the development of a form of ‘slow-knowing’, which operates on a temporal dimension, “far from representing a momentary cognitive mode or state of mind [and] points to the unfolding of deep layers of meaning” (Wiseman 2022, p. 722).

*Rosemary Klich is Professor of Theatre and Director of Research at East 15 Acting School, University of Essex. Her research examines immersive, participatory, digital, and audio theatre practices, and the role of the producer in the creative industries. Most recently, Rosemary’s projects have investigated the impact of Covid 19 on regional theatres and freelance theatre workers (Theatres Beyond the Stage: The Recovery of Theatres as Placemakers in the East of England, Freelancers in the Dark). She is co-lead for the University of Essex Digital, Cultural, Creative Research Network and leads the University of Essex Screen and Performance Research Network. On joining East 15 from the University of Kent, Rosie set up and ran the BA Creative Producing course at East 15 from 2018-2022. In 2020, she established the Estuary Producers Network, part of the Creative Estuary project, for arts producers in the Thames Estuary. Her research has been enabled through funding from UK and European organisations including the ESRC, Arts Council England, Enabling Innovation: Research and Application, DanceEast, and Focal Point Gallery. Email:* [*r.klich@essex.ac.uk*](mailto:r.klich@essex.ac.uk)

**Psychophysical Training Exercises as Dramaturgical Events In VR- Ioulia Marouda**

For Eugenio Barba, training can take an autonomous role for the practicing performer, becoming a theatre of own. Focusing on five exercises central to the work of Odin Teatret as well as other embodied practices, I am looking at the ways in which they can be translated to clusters of experience with the use of immersive technologies. I propose a paper which navigates through the selected exercises and their experiential qualities as they turn into VR events, and their relations as one experiences them. Further on, I will break down the process of abstracting and translating physical training into an interactive experience, drawing from techniques used in related design disciplines or somatic practices. Through this translation, the immateriality of the designing of movements that the actor performs through training meets the hybrid materiality of immersive space. Parallel to this, I will investigate how following body-focused and autoethnographic design methods opens possibilities for probing the qualities of the exercises and generate new modes of interaction and learning. I will suggest how this network of experiences, through its interconnections, creates an open-ended and synergetic narrative to be felt and explored.

*Ioulia Marouda is a multidisciplinary designer whose work expands between interactive art and scenography. She is currently doctoral fellow in art science and computer science at Ghent University and part of the IPEM (Institute for Psychoacoustics and Electronic Music) . Her research interests include interaction in XR, embodiment, computer graphics and perception . She currently focuses on the transmission of embodied knowledge through immersive and interactive technologies as well as the translation of physiological data as a way to explore the possibilities of the virtual body to uncover qualities otherwise invisible. Ever since her diploma studies in Architecture at the National Technical University of Athens, she grew an unusual interest in the way digital technologies affect our perception of space. This led her to study further in the Interactive Architecture Lab at UCL. She has worked with design studios and in theatre in Germany and the UK designing physical and digital temporary spaces. Email:* [*ioulia.marouda@ugent.be*](mailto:ioulia.marouda@ugent.be)

**No-Where Tales of Pop Asia - Katherine Mezur**

The apocalyptic landscapes of pop music videos reveal worlds of disturbance and upheaval, through which lyrics narrativize performers in haunted and excess-laden scenes. They dance in rubble and explosions, fumes creating cloudy mystic post-war-city-scapes of abandoned factories or contaminated wilderness. Cute pink cafés or glistening shopping arcades belch wasted electronica. Are pop songs about journeys to no-where? Or are these a media folklore, a virtual and affective mythology? The J-pop girl groups Keyakizaka46 and Baby Metal drive their performances with the stories of their wanderings among isekai or "other" worlds in contemporary, past, and future times. K-pop Alexa and Lim Kim weaponize their lyrics and music cadences, like repeated artillery shots as they dance through fable-like sequences of explosions, battles, and desolation. These multiple-media lyrics, images, and gestures intertwine, drift off, and intercept narratives where spectacle/sound immerse the viewers' conscious mind/body. These ballads are invitations to epic events of transformation. You can join these sci-fi or medieval journeys, where CGI worlds are haunted by our"selves" and singers become spectral ancestors. In online flurries, these tales lurch and bump through rocky roads of social-media, becoming chards/splinters, mediated folklore. These pop tales offer participatory journeys through gesture, image, and sound through isekai. Their mediation demands an imagination allegiance. Like myths, these screen/virtual journeys require belief-awareness. While I do not interrogate belief or spirituality, I do offer that these works are media channels, simultaneously sensory and mythic. My investigation moves through layers of image, sound, and gesture to sort and then re-accumulate "experience."

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**Crossing Thresholds of Virtual Practice: Actor Training as a Pedagogic Method for Collaboration- Jennifer Parker-Starbuck**

This joint presentation investigates the actor’s collaborative role in future-facing technological advancements such as Virtual Production (VP, or LED Wall technology). As technologies continue to surround acting bodies, actors are developing adaptive skills. In ‘The Importance of a Green Screen Acting Course within the South African Film Acting Curriculum’, authors Jacobs, Munro, and Broodryk propose skills actors need for encountering green screen technologies. In their findings, while the actor’s imagination is essential for green screen performance, it is live feedback loops and advanced visualization systems that point towards more productive future solutions. These are the systems that are materialized in Virtual Production, where real-time feedback is achieved through LED environments created in Unreal Game Engine. This presentation outlines a practice-based project “An Actor Prepares for Virtual Production”, developed by the presenters in conjunction with Director Peter Bathurst (Unit 9 productions) to create an Acting Tool Kit for actors in VP. In Virtual Production actors interact with the environment in real-time. The LED Wall allows actors to encounter historic settings and imagined locales, and also to interact with CGI characters. In our project we analyse the skills actors need to hone as they move through real and virtual worlds in Volume LED Virtual Production. In addition to these skills, we identified a need for broader creative and collaborative methods across disciplines. We argue for the undiscovered potentials of collaborative practice when the actor’s journey intersects with that of games engine designers and industry professionals.

*Professor Jen Parker-Starbuck is former Executive Dean of the School of Performing and Digital Arts at Royal Holloway, University of London. She is the author of Cyborg Theatre (2011), co-author of Performance and Media: Taxonomies for a Changing Field (2015), and co-editor of Performing Animality: Animals in Performance Practices, (2015), and other book chapters and journal articles. She was the Editor of Theatre Journal from 2015-19, and is a Contributing Editor to PAJ, and the International Journal of Performing Arts and Digital Media. She is a Theme Leader for StoryFutures, an ARHC funded Creative Clusters Programme. Email:* [*Jen.Parker-Starbuck@rhul.ac.uk*](mailto:Jen.Parker-Starbuck@rhul.ac.uk)

**Writing Plays in Light: Carl Mayer and Cinematic Narrative- Ralf Remshardt**

About 100 years ago, following the First World War, the film industry of Weimar Germany maintained both an unusually intimate and a thoroughly conflicted relationship with the medium of theatre; many of its key performers came from (and returned to) the stage, and the aesthetic of high artifice represented by Expressionist films such as The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari (1919) was modeled on theatrical precedents. At the same time, the heated Kino-Debatte (cinema debate) critically contested the derivative position of film. In this context, three mostly Naturalistic films that were collectively categorized as Kammerspielfilme or chamber play films appeared on screens: Shattered and Backstairs (both 1920) and Sylvester (1924). The linking imagination of these three films was the writer Carl Mayer, who also contributed scenarios to Caligari and The Last Laugh, and suggested the contours for The Street and Berlin, Symphony of a Large City, among others. Mayer’s brand of metaphysically tinged psychological and social drama became for a time the dominant scheme of German film, for better or worse, and he invented the figures and the fateful constellation of narratives which were to be the lens through which post-war society largely viewed itself. Calling his practice Lichtspiel (play in light), Mayer was the only Weimar scenarist whose screenplays were perceived as autonomous artistic creations and who developed a double language of transmutation, verbal to visual, converting the staccato linguistic rhythms of literary expressionism into suggestive images. Part of a larger project on theatre and early film, the paper discusses Mayer’s narrative strategy in the three Kammerspiel films in relation to the fraught history of Weimar visual culture.

*Ralf Remshardt is Emeritus Professor of theatre at the University of Florida (USA). Remshardt received an MA from the Freie Universität Berlin and a PhD in Dramatic Art from the University of California at Santa Barbara. Remshardt is an experienced director, translator, and dramaturg who has lectured nationally and internationally. His publications have appeared in many journals and in several edited collections. He co-edited Intermedial Performance and Politics in the Public Sphere (Palgrave, 2018) and The Routledge Companion to Contemporary European Theatre and Performance (2023). His book, Staging the Savage God: The Grotesque in Performance, was published in 2004. In 2014, he co-produced a documentary film about Latinx theatres in New York, which was shown in New York, at the Library of Congress, and at several film festivals. He has directed at university and professional theatres, including plays by Euripides, Shakespeare, Brecht, Beckett, Stoppard, Dürrenmatt, Bernard-Marie Koltès, and Roland Schimmelpfennig. Email:* [*rremshardt@arts.ufl.edu*](mailto:rremshardt@arts.ufl.edu)

**Crossing Thresholds of Virtual Practice: Actor Training as a Pedagogic Method for Collaboration- Will Shuler**

This joint presentation investigates the actor’s collaborative role in future-facing technological advancements such as Virtual Production (VP, or LED Wall technology). As technologies continue to surround acting bodies, actors are developing adaptive skills. In ‘The Importance of a Green Screen Acting Course within the South African Film Acting Curriculum’, authors Jacobs, Munro, and Broodryk propose skills actors need for encountering green screen technologies. In their findings, while the actor’s imagination is essential for green screen performance, it is live feedback loops and advanced visualization systems that point towards more productive future solutions. These are the systems that are materialized in Virtual Production, where real-time feedback is achieved through LED environments created in Unreal Game Engine. This presentation outlines a practice-based project “An Actor Prepares for Virtual Production”, developed by the presenters in conjunction with Director Peter Bathurst (Unit 9 productions) to create an Acting Tool Kit for actors in VP. In Virtual Production actors interact with the environment in real-time. The LED Wall allows actors to encounter historic settings and imagined locales, and also to interact with CGI characters. In our project we analyse the skills actors need to hone as they move through real and virtual worlds in Volume LED Virtual Production. In addition to these skills, we identified a need for broader creative and collaborative methods across disciplines. We argue for the undiscovered potentials of collaborative practice when the actor’s journey intersects with that of games engine designers and industry professionals.

*Will Shuler is a Senior Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies at Royal Holloway, University of London, and Vice Dean of Education and Student for the School of Performing Arts from. Will was recently shortlisted for the Times Higher Education Innovative Teacher of the Year Award, based on his work using Augmented Reality in Higher Education. His research areas include performance pedagogies, mediated performance, ancient Greek theatre, and queer theories. Will worked as an education mentor for StoryFutures Academy, where he advised five funded HE immersive storytelling projects. His recent book chapter, “The Emancipated Educator: Chance, Will, and Intellectual Equality in Higher-Education Role-Immersion Pedagogies,” appeared in Rancière and Performance. Will recently completed a StoryFutures funded project in collaboration with Unit 9 Production company, developing an actor training toolkit for Volume LED Virtual Production. Email:* [*shuler.will@gmail.com*](mailto:shuler.will@gmail.com)

**The Mythic Everydayness of My Neighbour Totoro- Danica Stojanovic**

When Mei chased an acorn-leaving ball of fluff into a forest, she did not expect to run into an enormous sleeping wood spirit. What the audience of the Barbican theatre expected even less was the full-scale actualisation of the star of modern Japanese and global mythology – Totoro. My Neighbour Totoro, a theatrical adaptation of the internationally acclaimed Studio Ghibli film, has recently joined the growing spectrum of fantasy theatre, combining modern and traditional mythmaking in performance. This paper examines the interplay of transmediation, remediation, and intermediality in modern mythopoeia within the context of popular mythology and emerging trends of crossing generic boundaries in theatre. By enhancing the mythical and downplaying the ordinary, My Neighbour Totoro becomes a site of convergence of the conventional reality and the world of gods, bringing about the re-negotiation of our understanding of mythology. By closely examining the scenic design, representation of magic, and Totoro’s role as the patron of nature, I argue that this adaptation joins the eco-critical debate by praising the natural world as magical, particularly emphasised by the frailty of human-made structures. In its performance of space and magic, My Neighbour Totoro proposes a return to more mindful social practices. In the context of global warming, the stage not only re-evaluates the role of mythology in environmental activism and contemporary settings.

*Researcher and hopeless fan of fantasy. After completing my studies in Belgrade, I joined the New English Literature and Culture team at the University of Augsburg where I am currently pursuing a doctoral degree with focus on fantasy theatre. My research interests include adaptation studies, postmodern literature, musicals, convergence culture and transmedia storytelling. Email:* [*stojanovic.danica994@gmail.com*](mailto:stojanovic.danica994@gmail.com)

**Data Myths and AI Legends: Staging the Pulse of a Building’s Heart- Robert Walton**

This paper addresses The Heart (2023) as a case study in myth-making performance with data and artificial intelligences. The Heart stages the impalpable sensations of new “smart building” Melbourne Connect in registers the human sensorium can perceive. It does this through a lighting array in the form of a ten-meter-tall human heart, with a pulsating red neon core at its centre. Machine learning algorithms translate live data from 5000 building sensors into The Heart’s pulse. Over the envisioned 42-year “life” of the artwork, The Heart will learn to become accustomed to its sensations in each moment and will begin to anticipate what it might “feel” in the next moment based on its habituated responses to all previous stimuli. In this sense the artwork is similar to a baby learning to distinguish its senses from the noisy sensations stimulating its nervous system. The artwork has no signage and is situated at a meeting place at the entrance to its building. In the lead up to its “birth” certain “secrets of the heart” were circulated via oral transmission amongst the community who will live with The Heart for the next decades. This strategy was designed to seed community speculative fabulation in the mythologisation of The Heart and what it stands for. A longitudinal study over the next decade will follow community perceptions of The Heart, AI and data in everyday life. This paper situates the aspirations for The Heart and hypothesizes about its future at the beginning of this experimental durational performance.

*Robert Ellis Walton is Dean’s Research Fellow in The Faculty of Fine Arts and Music at The University of Melbourne where he leads the creation of performance artworks that explore the expressive potential of emerging technologies including, artificial intelligence, virtual holograms, swarm robotics, engineered bacterial bioluminescence, MR/XR, building information model data, and ambient computing. His PhD from the University of Melbourne explored the use of smartphones in performances and won the Chancellor’s Prize for Excellence. He holds degrees in Theatre and Information Technology (Software and Systems). His writing has been published Theatre Journal, Australasian Drama Studies, and as chapters in research books.* [*www.robertwalton.net*](http://www.robertwalton.net) *Email:* [*robert.walton@unimelb.edu.au*](mailto:robert.walton@unimelb.edu.au)

**Intermythomediamentality- Tim White**

Things may be in abeyance in the metaverse and whatever small ransom is required to enter this as yet nascent virtual realm, the prospect of paying via cryptocurrency seems diminishingly unlikely. Stepping up to the plate to fill the void in our future imaginings is the coming of age of artificial intelligence, presaged both by giddy anticipation and grave admonitions. No significant processing power may have been expended in settling on the name ChatGPT, yet within months it is reckoned to have authored content across a broad swathe of activities considered the preserve of specialists. Perhaps we are experiencing belated regret that we were not more vociferous when they came for the loom workers, the switchboard operators or any others displaced by automation. Perhaps we can overlook the irony that software has been developed to detect non-human authorship. Perhaps, not unreasonably, one might struggle with such singular prose written to distinguish itself from the product of computational aggregation and assimilation. In this paper I intend to audit, analyse and assess the growing adoption of artificial intelligence within the practice and teaching of new media. This will embrace tools and workflows as well as the ensuing results, considering the consequences, intended or otherwise. The narratives of new efficiencies and convenience will be considered against the risks to existing notions of creativity and employment, across a range of art forms and the terms by which they might be evaluated.

*Tim White is Principal Teaching Fellow in Theatre & Performance Studies, University of Warwick. His teaching and research interests include food and performance, immersive practices, online performance, video, and performance in public spaces. In 2012 he was presented with the Warwick Award for Teaching Excellence. His practice focuses on virtual reality and motion capture for live performance using Unreal Engine. Email:* [*t.white@warwick.ac.uk*](mailto:t.white@warwick.ac.uk)

**The Musical Myth: Colourism, Classism, and Colonialism in *Once on This Island -* Marissa Barnathan**

In 1990, lyricist Lynn Ahrens and composer Stephen Flaherty, two White US American musical theatre artists, premiered their second major Broadway musical, *Once on This Island*, which featured an all-Black cast and is based on Trinidad-born American writer Rosa Guy’s novel, *My Love, My Love, or The Peasant Girl.* Guy’s novel is a Caribbean re-telling of Hans Christian Andersen’s story, *The Little Mermaid*, with a bit of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* mixed in. The result of this story, based on a story, based on a story, is a delightful ninety minutes of calypso-inspired music, vibrant dancing, and valuable lessons about the ills of colourism, classism, and colonialism. In this paper, I argue that the use of Afro-Caribbean music and dance performed by all-Black, or majority-Black, performers is integral to the storytelling and myth-making in *Once On This Island*. Indeed, it is through this use of Afro-Caribbean music and dance traditions that a new musical myth, which centres and celebrates Afro-Caribbean culture, is created. This paper also considers how the Afrocentricity of the piece changed and developed from the original 1990 production to the 2017 revival production. Finally, I detail how *Once on This Island* is a cautionary tale for modern audiences. This Broadway musical, paradoxically made possible by colonialism and yet critical of it, warns how the outcomes of colonialism - the oppressive systems of colourism and classism – persist today.

*I am a 2nd year MFA in Directing student at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ, expecting to graduate in May 2024. Prior to starting this MFA program in 2021, I was a Part-time Lecturer at Rutgers University – Camden for two years, teaching Musical Theatre Dance, Ballet, and Jazz. I presented my paper “Musical Theatre and Civic Engagement in the US” at the IFTR 2022 World Congress in Reykjavik, Iceland as part of the Music Theatre Working Group. From 2012-2021, I worked professionally as a theatre artist in Philadelphia, PA. On my website (www.marissabarnathan.com), you can access my resumes for directing, choreography, performing, and teaching to see the greater breadth of my work experience. Most of my theatre work has been in musical theatre. I have also worked and volunteered in political and community organizing. I received my BA from Washington University in St. Louis in 2012, with a double major in Drama and Psychology and a minor in Ballet. I trained in Theatre of the Oppressed with Lisa Jo Epstein at Just Act in Philadelphia, PA. I have also completed both levels of the Theatre for Living training with David Diamond in Vancouver, Canada. Email:* [*mbarnath@asu.edu*](mailto:mbarnath@asu.edu)

**Experiencing Opera Remotely: Opera Transmissions Via Telephone Around 1900- Jasmine Goll**

At the end of the 19th century, a peculiar form of experiencing opera arose: listening to opera by telephone. Before the telephone was used for verbal communication on a large scale, its communicative potential was explored and demonstrated through real-time transmissions of concerts and opera performances. Having started in the US in 1877, such telephonic music transmissions later came up in Europe. In some countries, this broadcasting practice was commercialized and enabled subscribers to experience opera from home or other distant places. Often presented as a strange episode in historical narratives of technology, media, and communication, these telephonic transmissions are still widely unknown in musicology and theatre studies. Since opera did not simply pass through the wire, this paper focuses on the operatic experience generated by the telephone as a device and infrastructure. Following the work of Melissa van Drie on the Parisian théâtrophone (2015/16), I consider further yet unstudied locations of such transmissions, such as Berlin. Framed by theories from Sound Studies, Media Studies, and Popular Music Studies (Sterne 2003, Bijsterveld 2019, Grossmann 2008), I suggest conceptualizing the phenomenon as a hybrid media arrangement in which two media dispositives merge: the operatic and the telephonic dispositive. The paper investigates how the telephonic dispositive influenced operatic experience: People were perceiving the opera performance ‘blindly’, accessing it only through short snippets of sound while being encapsulated in their own acoustic space through headphones. Analysing mostly unpublished archival material, I show how opera broadcasting via telephone brought up liveness (Auslander 2008) and challenged traditional imaginations of opera as a social experience. By embedding the phenomenon in the discourse of listening history, I argue that the listening mode, proposed by the media arrangement, could not be reconciled with the operatic dispositive and, therefore, been responsible for the decline of the phenomenon.

*Jasmin Goll is a research associate and PhD candidate at the Institute of Musicology at the University of Bern. She studied music theatre studies at the University of Bayreuth and musicology at the Humboldt University of Berlin. She worked at the Institute for Music Theatre in Bayreuth and was teaching classes in Bayreuth and Berlin. Her master thesis dealt with telephonic music transmissions in late 19th century Berlin with a focus on the specific mode of listening that was cultivated by this media arrangement. For her dissertation project, she expands the topic geographically, temporally, and theoretically: She studies the phenomenon on a global scale through the lens of infrastructural concepts and listening history. Moreover, her research interests include the history and analysis of opera staging, voice, and intermediality. Email:* [*j.goll@mailbox.org*](mailto:j.goll@mailbox.org)

**Operatic Representations of Africa in East-Central Europe- Tereza Havelková**

On the example of Czech post-WWII opera, this paper seeks to unpack the complex relationship between Africa and East-Central Europe during the Cold War. East-Central European nations never had overseas colonies and arguably have the experience of being colonized themselves. In spite of the official critique of Western colonialism during the Cold War, however, the engagement of the countries of the Eastern Block in Africa may also be approached through the lens of colonialism. My discussion will focus on the Czech opera Lake Ukerewe by Otmar Mácha, first performed in the Prague National Theatre in 1966. The opera revolves around the search for a cure for malaria in German East Africa in the late 19th century, and features among its characters the famed German epidemiologist Robert Koch. The libretto was based on a theatre play of the same name by Vladislav Vančura from 1935, which was conceived as a critique of German colonialism and the rise of Nazism. The opera was composed in the early 1960s in response to the ongoing decolonialization of Africa. I will examine the opera’s specific historical and political contexts as well as some of the more troubling features of its representation of Africa, such as the use of black face and the exoticism of its score evocative of African drumming, with the aim to offer a de-centred perspective on the Africa-Europe relations and their artistic articulations.

*Tereza Havelková is Assistant Professor of Musicology at Charles University in Prague. Her scholarship concentrates on contemporary relationships between opera and the media, the intersection of aesthetics and politics in music theatre, and issues of sound, gender, and identity. She is the author of Opera as Hypermedium: Meaning-Making, Immediacy, and the Politics of Perception (Oxford University Press 2021), and co-editor of the special issue “Sounding Corporeality” of Theatre Research International 46.2. She is currently working on a book titled Music Theatre and Politics: Hegemonies, Resistances, Utopias (co-edited with Marcus Tan, contracted with OUP), and a research project focusing on the staging of history, memory, and national identity in opera under State Socialism and beyond. She is the convenor of the Music Theatre Working Group of the International Federation for Theatre Research. Email:* [*tereza.havelkova@ff.cuni.cz*](mailto:tereza.havelkova@ff.cuni.cz)

**The Holocaust, Musicals, and Witnessing for Youth- Erika Hughes**

Although it may sound like a dissonant combination, there are many musicals for young audiences that take as their main subject the Holocaust. These performances reflect manifold ideas of what the Holocaust was, who it affected, how it should be remembered, and why it should serve as a warning for the future. Performances about the Holocaust have been staged by a range of players as diverse as the canon itself, including professional, amateur, and community theatre troupes, Jewish Community Centres, primary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities. In this essay I examine the phenomenon of the youth Holocaust musical, taking as case studies examples from Germany (the GRIPS Theater’s Ab heute heisst Du Sara), the United States, and Australia (American and Australian restaging of Hans Krasa’s Brundibar, including the adaptation by Tony Kushner and Maurice Sendak). I explore the ways in which contemporary stagings of these plays ​​use what I term the dramaturgy of natality to witness and frame contemporary understandings of the Holocaust. I suggest ways in which Hannah Arendt’s concept of natality might offer new insights into the cultural impact of youth performances on Holocaust memory and look at how natality can be a powerful lens through which to examine song and musical storytelling in the service of collective memory.

*Dr Erika Hughes is a director, dramaturg, and performance studies scholar. She is Reader in Performance at the University of Portsmouth, UK, where she also leads the Performance area in the School of Art, Design and Performance. She has published scholarship in journals including Theatre Topics, Performance Research, Research in Drama Education, and Youth Theatre Journal. Her work as a director and deviser of performance has been seen in the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, Israel, Canada, Austria, and Pakistan. Most recently she has directed The Amazing Life of Margot Heuman, the digital performance of which is currently touring museums and universities in the UK, Germany, Canada, Austria, and the USA. She is the author of Holocaust Memory and Youth Performance, forthcoming from Bloomsbury Methuen Drama 2023. Email:* [*erika.hughes@port.ac.uk*](mailto:erika.hughes@port.ac.uk)

**Folk Song, Land and Affect in Nell Leyshon’s Folk (Hampstead Theatre London 2020-1)- Maggie Inchley**

This paper thinks about the connections of song, affect and land through looking at Nell Leyshon’s play Folk (2020-21), which depicted the gathering (or extraction) of English folk songs from Louie Hooper, a Somerset glove-maker, by collector Cecil Sharp in the early twentieth century. It explores Folk’s staging of these traditional vernacular folk songs more than hundred years later when nostalgia had become a ‘major force in global politics’ during an ‘epidemic of mythicizing’ that was ‘shaping policy in risky ways’ (Campanella and Dassù 2019). In the same period of the 2010s and 2020s, while the UK was internally debating its internal divisions as well as its European and international status, in global discourses perceptions of ‘land’ increasingly emphasized fears relating to the planet’s capacity to support human lives. In what ways did alternative, ‘apocalyptic’ discourses (Rehding 2011) also enter Folk? How does considering the dramaturgical staging of folk song, a form so often understood as linked both to physical land and to symbolic nation, assist us in understanding the mythologies we make together, and the desires that lay behind the national and international narratives upon which we ground our actions? Folk, I will argue, resisted territorialised nostalgic and nation-building tendencies, emphasising singing as somatic and psychic connection with the material world, an understanding that resonates with indigenous people’s practices of stories and song as ways of ‘animating and activating’ the material world we live within as part of a reciprocal mode of knowing and being (Magnat 2019).

*Dr Maggie Inchley is a Reader in Drama, Theatre and Performance at Queen Mary University of London with a background in teaching and directing. She is interested in political and cultural audibility, and the intersectional, social, and aesthetic aspects of vocal performance. Her publications include Voice and New Writing 1997-2007 (Palgrave 2015); and '“It’s Alive”: Towards a Monsterized Theatre with Beatbox Academy’s Frankenstein: How to Make a Monster (2018 -)’, Contemporary Theatre Review, 31 (2021), 307-322. Maggie is Principal Investigator of the collaborative practice-based research project, The Verbatim Formula with care-experienced young people, which aims to support adults working in care and education in their listening practices:* [*https://theverbatimformula.org.uk/*](https://theverbatimformula.org.uk/)*. Email:* [*m.inchley@qmul.ac.uk*](mailto:m.inchley@qmul.ac.uk)

**The Black Vocal Register- Michael Mohammed**

Throughout the last century, many works written for the theatrical and concert stage have used musical techniques that integrate elements from Western classical traditions with those from Black popular and folk idioms. Performers who sing in such hybrid forms are required to understand the authentic phonatory, articulatory, and expressive aspects of the distinct styles. However, rarely are the signifiers of vocal technique and stagecraft discussed in direct relation to the authentic representation of race by black singers. Drawing on theories of postcolonialism and poststructuralism, I apply the concept of Africanism to the ways singers use their vocality to make sense of a world structured by anti-Blackness. In the Black Register (2020), political theorist Tendayi Sithole describes “the ways of thinking, knowing, and doing that are enunciated from an existential struggle against antiblackness, and which dwell from the lived experience of being black in an anti-black world which must be ended” (p.2). Sithole uses the word register in the sense of the condition of alignment or relative position. But musicians most often use the word as the portion of the range of the human voice of a particular quality. The central point of my presentation is looking at the black vocal register qua the Black Register, or how sounds across the African diaspora share a similar nature in the character of the social context of black alignment or positioning. The aesthetics of black vocality, which includes a wide range of vocal moving freely between speech and singing, disrupt traditional notions of Western tonality and rhythm. As such, black vocality acts as a form of resistance to racism and dehumanization inherent to colonial domination.

*Michael Mohammed is an opera and theatre artist whose interests lie at the intersection of expression and identity. He received his doctorate from the Music and Music Education Program at Teachers College, Columbia University. His work focuses on the representation of persons with historically excluded identities in theatrical and operatic performance. He is the Director of the Musical Theatre Ensemble at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He is also on the voice faculty of San José State University, the College of Marin, the San Francisco Community Music Centre, and the American Conservatory Theatre. As Community Engagement Ambassador for Opera Parallèle, he develops resources for sustainable social change through opera. He is on the working teams of the Black Opera Research Network and the Research Riff. "Dr. Mojo" has co-created multiple projects for Amplified Opera, a Toronto-based company that places equity-seeking artists at the centre of public discourse. In the summer of 2021, he curated a program of parlour music by composers of the global majority from the turn of the last century for the Lyric Theatre of San José. Recent directing credits include A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder (Lamplighters Music Theatre) and The Merry Widow (Pocket Opera). Email:* [*mjm69@tc.columbia.edu*](mailto:mjm69@tc.columbia.edu)

**Meaning Making in Music Theatre Practices Today: Considering Sound as A Feminist Medium- Luciana Perc**

Media theorist Marshall McLuhan introduced the idea of media as human extensions (1964). He raised awareness of the social consequences of the use of media and media’s capacity to transform societies by imbuing them with its qualities. He stated that electronic era was characterised by electricity’s power to cancel time and space distances between people. The forms of theatre that emerged in the 60s were described by Lehmann (1999) as Post Dramatic Theatre, to which he sees media as a strongly influential factor. Regardless of the use of technologies for creating or performing, the social impact of media determines the world created and explored in these forms of theatre. I propose an understanding of music and music theatre practices that appeared contemporaneously with Post Dramatic Theatre from a similar media-informed perspective, highlighting a parallelism between sound’s lack of context (Cage 1961) claimed by leading composers of the time and the lack of message of the medium (McLuhan 1964). I go on to engage with recent feminist media scholarship that revisited McLuhan thinking to study how technologies alter life differently for different people and how violent forms of power are extended and resisted through technology (Sharma 2022). I then problematise today’s Music Theatre approaches using the criteria of Music in the expanded field (Ciciliani 2017). To conclude, I provide a framework for reconsidering sound (technologies) ontologically and share methodological approaches explored in my work Dessus-dessous (2022) with which sound is addressed as a means to extend and transform messages, bodies, and perspectives.

*Luciana Perc is a PhD candidate in Composition at the Centre of Creative Technologies, University of Portsmouth, where she teaches the module Composition for Visual Media. Her doctoral research is supported by a faculty bursary and focuses on new materialist approaches to creating meaning with sound. 2022 highlights include the performance of her work Film Performance at Tête-à-tête : The Opera festival (London), the performance of her work Dessus-dessous by Ensemble 2e2m at Music of the Americas (NY) and the award of an Innovation Grant from OperaHack (San Diego Opera) for the composition of the new opera Metropolis 3.0. Her teaching activity recently took place in the Outreach department of the Festival d’Aix (France), at Trinity Laban’s Learning and Participation department and as composition tutor and sound designer for the MA Music Theatre at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (London). She holds a MA in Composition from the University of the Arts in Bern (Switzerland). She also performs new music and has collaborated in Venues and Festivals internationally. She took training in Opera Staging at ISATC (Teatro Colon Superior Institute of the Arts) and has collaborated in opera productions as Stage Director and Assistant director. Email:* [*luciana.perc@port.ac.u*](mailto:luciana.perc@port.ac.u)

**Abstract Title: Mythical Time and Colonial Modernity in William Kentridge’s Refuse the Hour (2015)- Juliana Pistorius**

The Western clock is a tool of coloniality, implicated in imperial expansion and authoritarian systems of discipline and control. As a symbol of Enlightenment preoccupations with progress, development, and civilisation, European temporality contrasts with colonial fantasies of enchantment, timelessness, and myth. The tension between Western temporal regimes and the so-called mythical time of the pre-colony provokes searing questions regarding the role of modernity in the construction of African belatedness. This paper examines contemporary opera’s ability to complicate colonial imaginaries of Western clock time. It takes as a starting point William Kentridge’s 2015 experimental work, Refuse the Hour, which combines dance, song, video, and animated sculpture, to probe the formal limits of the Western temporal order. The opera pushes against constructions of linear time by exploring sonic and visual themes of repetition, reversal, and discontinuity. Its quasi-improvisatory score combines futuristic blips and glitches with sung reflections on the history of colonial arrival on the African continent. Together, the visual and sonic registers of Refuse the Hour produce a ludic archive of time from a variety of cultural and geographical perspectives. Drawing on postcolonial historical anthropology (Fabian 1983; Dube 2017) and theories of musical temporality (Bell 2016; Paddison 2013), I argue that opera, an art form with its own history of temporal subversion, offers productive generic possibilities for the exploration of alternative conceptions of temporality. Kentridge’s piece, I contend, enacts a celebratory speculation on the potential of the operatic form to refuse the constraints of colonial temporal regimes on the postcolonial stage.

*Juliana M. Pistorius is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Research Fellow at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. Her research centres around opera in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa, and incorporates interests in voice, race, and the politics of anti- and post-colonial representation. Email:* [*juliana.pistorius@gmail.com*](mailto:juliana.pistorius@gmail.com)

**Abstract Title: Estonian Ballads, The Interdisciplinary Performance by Peeter Jalakas - Expression of the Ancient Finno-Ugric World View- Kristiina Reidolv**

Estonian Ballads, the cantata-ballet from 1980 created by Veljo Tormis has since then inspired several Estonian unique contemporary choreographers, film makers, theatre directors and conductors to create their interpretations of this ageless work of art because of its timeless topics. Veljo Tormis is one of the internationally best-known and beloved contemporary Estonian composers of the 20th century. However, the spirit of his work should be measured as spanning millennia: in his musical scores he gave new life to the deepest layer of Estonian and Finno-Ugric culture — traditional runic singing. By Tormis’ hand the ancient folk songs were shaped into deeply moving works of art that captivate the audience with both their original sound and their message, relevant for the contemporary listener. Old Estonian folk songs - the runo-songs, are an intact part of an ancient culture where all the components are combined in structure: the melody, the words, the performance, etc. Regi-song, which is believed to be two or three thousand years old and that is paganist and pre-Christian, forms the basis of Estonian singing culture and it is strongly linked to the Finno-Ugric world view. The paganist lifestyle and beliefs continued to exist in parallel after the adoption of Christianity and this substrate is still perceivably there. Regi-song is a medium, by which oral tradition is passed on and the core principle of it is repetition for reinforcement of information. Formally, the Regi-song is a continuous activity, an unbroken flow, creating a trance-like state. It also became clear that it is a very old pre-Christian culture which is shamanistic in substance, and extremely close to nature in the ecological sense. The cantata-ballet Estonian Ballads is like a bridge from the present to the past and back. Offering a glimpse at a world that is unknown and yet so recognizable, so thoroughly Estonian down to its very roots – a world where the harsh destinies of our ancestors unfold. The presentation will deal with the reinterpretation of the cantata-ballet Estonian Ballads in the interdisciplinary performance Estonian Ballads (produced in collaboration with Von Krahl Theatre and Nargen Opera from Estonia) and the broader intercultural context since the choreography of Estonian ballads was created by the butoh artist Aki Suzuki from Japan.

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**Abstract Title: Mythologizing Aesthetics of Movement: Choreographic Disruptions in 21st Century Musical Theatre- Phoebe Rumsey**

In the historical exploration of the choreography of musical theatre revivals there lies, ostensibly, an innate mythologizing of the aesthetics of the original choreographer. To that end, the contributions, and legacies of choreographers such as Agnes de Mille, Jerome Robbins, and Bob Fosse (to name only a few) are deeply woven into the historiography and bodily archive of the genre. Whether choreographers of revivals are hemmed in by copyright restrictions or paying homage to the original choreographer there exists, arguably, a language of movement that upholds, to greater or lesser extent, an aesthetics of movement for musical theatre. Recently, the work of choreographers such as John Heginbotham with 'Oklahoma!' (2019), Spencer Liff with 'Spring Awakenings' (2015), and Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker with 'West Side Story' (2020) have exploded those styles and qualities. By disrupting the mythologies and ‘layer[s] of metalanguage’ (Barthes, 2000, p.144) that surround these and other iconic choreographers a space opens up to consider these revivals in a manner that troubles the musical itself, the contemporary moment, and centres a diversity of bodies at the heart of the discussion. This paper focuses on the movement strategies of choreographer Julie Cheng in the recent West End revival of 'Cabaret' (2021). Cheng is Creative Director of the experimental cross-disciplinary performance ensemble, House of Absolute. This discussion explores how (and to what end) Cheng’s subversions tear free from or disrupt the embodied stories put forth by original choreographer Ron Field and, importantly, choreographer (and 1972 film director) Bob Fosse.

*Dr. Phoebe Rumsey is a Senior Lecturer in Musical Theatre at the University of Portsmouth. Prior to moving to the UK in 2020, she taught in the Theatre and Speech Department at the City College of New York. She received her PhD from The Graduate Center, CUNY, and holds an MA in Performance Studies from NYU, an MA in Theatre from UNLV, and a BFA in Contemporary Dance from SFU. A scholar and practitioner, her research has been published in The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Politics, Studies in Musical Theatre, The Routledge Companion to the Contemporary Musical and Reframing The Musical: Race, Culture, and Identity (Palgrave). She is the author of Embodied Nostalgia: Social Dance, Communities and the Choreographing of Musical Theatre and Co-Editor of Dance in Musical Theatre: A History of the Body in Movement (Bloomsbury/Methuen Drama) upcoming for Autumn 2023. She is co-convenor of the IFTR Music Theatre Working Group and part of the editorial board for Studies in Musical Theatre. Email:* [*ph.rumsey@gmail.com*](mailto:ph.rumsey@gmail.com)

**Mozart’s Operas in Copenhagen in the Early Nineteenth Century- Magnus Tessing Schneider**

In the 1820s and 1830s the Copenhagen productions of Mozart’s operas represented a meeting between Danish literary Romanticism and an Italian performance tradition rooted in the late Enlightenment. These productions shaped the image of Mozart’s operas in Denmark, but also influenced their image globally, through the writings of Søren Kierkegaard who developed his famous interpretation of Don Giovanni on the basis of the Copenhagen production. In 1819, after an illustrious international career, the Italian tenor Giuseppe Siboni (1780-1839) was employed as ‘master of singing’ by the Royal Danish Theatre. Though Italian operas were sung in Danish translations in Copenhagen during this period, the coaching of the soloists fell under Siboni’s jurisdiction, and he exerted major influence on opera in Denmark during the last twenty years of his life. The paper will focus on the local premiere productions of Mozart’s Le nozze di Figaro (1821), La clemenza di Tito (1823) and Così fan tutte (1826), and on the revival of Don Giovanni (1822). These operas were mounted on Siboni’s instigation and sung mainly by his pupils, but in Danish adaptations by local playwrights that sometimes differed substantially from the originals, making the operas conform to the ideological climate in Copenhagen. The romanticizing of Mozart’s operas conflicted with the Mozartian performance tradition that Siboni introduced to Denmark, and which can be traced back to his time as primo tenore of Domenico Guardasoni’s opera company in Prague from 1800 to 1805 where he had shared the stage with several of Mozart’s original singers.

*Magnus Tessing Schneider is a Docent (Reader) in Theatre Studies from Stockholm University and currently a postdoctoral researcher at Aarhus University in Denmark within the research project ‘Artistic Exchanges: The Royal Danish Theatre and Europe’. His research interests include seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European theatre, Shakespearean dramaturgy and performance practice, the intertwined histories of singing and acting, the opera composers Monteverdi, Cavalli, Gluck, Mozart, and Verdi, and the librettists Giovan Francesco Busenello, Ranieri Calzabigi, and Lorenzo Da Ponte. He was a cofounder of the Nordic Network for Early Opera, and his practice-oriented research has inspired opera productions across the world. His most recent monograph is The Original Portrayal of Mozart’s Don Giovanni (London: Routledge, 2021). He is co-editor with Ruth Tatlow of Mozart’s La clemenza di Tito: A Reappraisal (Stockholm University Press, 2018), and the editor of Felicity Baker’s essay collection Don Giovanni’s Reasons: Thoughts on a Masterpiece (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2021). Email:* [*magnus.tessing.schneider@teater.su.se*](mailto:magnus.tessing.schneider@teater.su.se)

**Intercultural Relations and Cultural Diplomacies in Early African-American Musical Theatre- Nico Schüler**

The Civil War in the USA (1861-1865) ended slavery, but not the racial discrimination of African-Americans. It did open, however, new artistic endeavours for people of African descent: Ensembles consisting entirely of Black artists emerged rapidly during the 1870s, which allowed for cultural diplomacy and for publicly addressing intercultural relations. At the centre stage (literally and figuratively) were Sam Lucas (1840-1916) as well as the “Hyers Sisters”, Anna Madah Hyers (1855-1929) and Emma Louise Hyers (1857-1901). Starting in the mid-1870s, several musical theatre plays / dramas / operas were written for them: The first of these was the musical drama Out of Bondage (1876), portraying the life of African-Americans during slavery, during the Civil War, and after the Civil War. Following its success, *Urlina, the African Princess* (1878) was written for the Hyers Sisters, which is an opera bouffe about the African princess Urlina, who is banished to a desert island, rescued by a prince, then sentenced to death, but rescued and installed as the rightful queen. *The Underground Railroad* (1879), written for Sam Lucas has a plot similar to that of Out of Bondage, but instead of being freed by the Union Army, the slaves escape to Canada. The use of spirituals, other music, dance, and comedy are central to both musical dramas and their cultural meaning, but while *Out of Bondage* changes music and dance to ‘white’ genres in the fourth act, thus ridding the former slaves of their cultural heritage, *The Underground Railroad* retains spirituals and traditional dances through the end and thus makes a strong statement about retaining the African-American cultural heritage. This paper will summarize the historical re-discovery (based on hundreds of newspaper articles and other archival documents) of this forgotten (yet vibrant) early African-American musical theatre and an interpretation of its cultural importance.

*Dr. Nico Schüler is University Distinguished Professor of Musicology and Music Theory at Texas State University (USA) and immediate past-president of the American Musicological Society Southwest Chapter. His main research interests are interdisciplinary aspects of music, African-American music, methodology of music research, computational music research, music historiography, and music theory pedagogy. Email:* [*nico.schuler@txstate.edu*](mailto:nico.schuler@txstate.edu)

**The Operatic Imaginary of Children in South Africa After 1994- Lena van der Hoven**

While analyses of children's operatic imaginaries (A. Sutherland 2021, M. Schildkret 2017, R. Peat 2007) and their functions in societies (A. Timberlake 2015, C. Fanyolle 1997) have been widely conducted in the repertoire of the Global North, children's operatic imaginaries in the Global South have received less attention. In my paper, I will present a number of different imaginaries and functions of childhood in the new music theatre compositions in post-apartheid South Africa and argue that the aesthetic treatment of topoi reflects the socio-political significance ascribed to children in the young democracy. This is particularly significant as the apartheid state used the art form of opera both for repression and segregation, and for the representation of an Afrikaner identity in the nation-building process, while in the transition to democracy opera had to prove its identification potential for a new, united South African society constituted by diversity. Building on the work of theatre scholar Yvette Hutchison, I argue that many of the 48 new compositions I have identified must be seen as performative archives of memory (Hutchison 2013, van der Hoven 2023) and employ aesthetic strategies of mythmaking in relation to nation-building in the new democracy (van der Hoven 2023). As part of my argument, I will present three main concepts: 1) nostalgic views of childhood as a time of innocence, which can be seen as a distinctive technique of remembrance in South Africa's current political aspirations for remembrance and national renewal as e.g. in Princess Magogo kaDinuzulu (2002), 2) children as bearers of the future perspective for the community and the nation, which can indicate either hope for societal transformation, as in Buchuland (1998) or Valley Song (2005), or scepticism, as in Love & Green Onions (2001), and 3) the role of children in performative acts of speaking publicly about traumatic memories, as in Comfort Ye (2015) and Rewind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape & Testimony (2011).

*Lena van der Hoven's research interests include contemporary South African opera, music theatre and politics. She received a PhD in Musicology at Humboldt-University, Berlin. She was also a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Max Planck Institute for Human Development. From 2015 to 2022 she has been Assistant Professor for Music Studies at the University of Bayreuth, and from 2016 to 2022 a member of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities. In 2018 she received the Scientific Award of the University of Bayreuth for her research on South African opera. In 2022 she was appointed professor for music theatre at the University of Bern. She is a co-editor of the first edition of opera and music theatre in Africa (African Theatre 19). In a forthcoming publication in the South African Journal of Musicology vol. 41/42, she maps the South African opera market after 1994 and analyses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for it. Email:* [*lena.vanderhoven@unibe.ch*](mailto:lena.vanderhoven@unibe.ch)

**Performance in Public Spaces**

**Mythologies of Dissidence: Public Happening and Political Mystifications in The Work of Aktuál - Sam Čermák**

To a Western audience, Czechoslovakia carries connotations of political struggle and oppression. Western scholars such as RoseLee Goldberg have argued that ‘performance art had functioned almost exclusively in the East as a form of political opposition’ (Goldberg, 2011). Although this status is overly generalising, Eastern European scholars argue that performance from the region has accrued an almost mythical value to Western audiences, encumbered by expectations of dissidence (Piotrowski, 2009). Although many artists from the region created works that were purposefully apolitical, some artists such as the group Aktuál led by Milan Knižák were happy to participate in this mythmaking, which allowed them to connect with Western artists. Aktuál actively created their own mythology both within Czechoslovakia and internationally, which Knižák used to demonstrate their political efficacy in order to network with Fluxus members. In the relatively democratized atmosphere of de-Stalinization in the early 1960s, Aktuál were creating happenings in public spaces within Prague that they called “demonstrations”. The group was purposefully provocative in their choice of terminology, but their seemingly political demonstrations were in fact demonstrations of “things” rather than demonstrating against a state (Morganová, 2015). Their actions occupied public spaces around Prague, creating participatory performance works in parks and streets around the city. Additionally, the group members created a mythology of a political cult around themselves – they tattooed the word AKTUÁL on their forearms, published samizdat newspapers with anarchistic slogans, and centred around the charismatic personality of Knižák. Many of their actions were consequently persecuted, cancelled, or interrupted by the police. The Public Security (the police) and the State Security (secret police) started following Aktuál members, actively discouraged people in participating in their actions, or encouraged newspapers to write about the group as undesirable ‘parasites’ all of whom ‘were treated at a psychiatric hospital’. In an attempt to neutralise Aktuál’s supposed anarchistic efficacy, the State aggressively participated in their own myth-making around the group. This paper examines the relationship between purposeful myth-making as an approach to performance-making and networking and myth-making as a way of political control of public space.

*Sam Čermák (he/him) is a LAHP (AHRC) funded PhD candidate in the Drama Department at Queen Mary University of London. His research interests focus on Slovak and Czech performance art practices from the 1960s to 1989, emphasising disentangling national identities within art historical narratives. He was a member of the 2021/22 organizing committee for Quorum, a theatre and performance seminar series at QMUL and conference organizer of ‘Performance and State Violence’ at QMUL, 2022. He has an upcoming publication at the Contemporary Theatre Review, and a chapter in an edited volume about performance and populism. Email:* [*a.s.cermak@qmul.ac.uk*](mailto:a.s.cermak@qmul.ac.uk)

**At Home in Evanston, Illinois: Myths, Histories, and Public/Private Home-Making- Lesley Delmenico**

At Home in Evanston is currently a work in progress, so this abstract serves as a place-holder: I will submit a revision later this spring, analysing early outcomes of our city-wide theatre/film project. At Home is predicated on Evanston’s diversity and recent ground-breaking payment of reparations for segregation—and on the fact that Evanstonians often still do not converse across demographics. Our project questions, “What makes home?” Devised from verbatim stories by six single actors for small, invited audiences in various forms of residence, these fifteen-minute filmed performances will create a mosaic of responses to being “at home” here. Performed in six kinds of home that include a “home place” for an international student at Northwestern University, a ranch house of a multi-family Latinx family, an apartment, a homeless shelter, the house of a lifetime Black Evanstonian, and an assisted living facility, this project is designed to valorize and connect under-told individual stories. “Micro” stories always reflect larger, “macro” issues as snapshots of “the moment we’re in” socially, culturally, and politically. They demonstrate the myths we make to create meaning and identity as individuals and communities. The project will culminate in three free film showings in accessible public spaces, with all Evanstonians invited to participate in discussion. At Home in Evanston is designed to help start some conversations between Evanstonians of varied races, religions, ethnicities, genders/ orientations, classes, and political viewpoints. I use Dan McAdams’ foundational Stories We Live By (1993) to understand the personal myth-making in journeying, finding, settling in, defending, and leaving a home, as well as Lorna Mahoney’s Conceptualizing Home (2007) and other sources.

*Lesley Delmenico is an associate professor of Theatre and Performance Studies at Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa (M.A. and Ph.D. Northwestern University). Her work on theatre and politics explores intersections of performance, urban space, post-coloniality, gender, and immigration, concentrating on the ways that marginalized women improvise spaces from which to speak. An ethnographic/ verbatim playwright, deviser, and director, she creates performances concerning law, tradition, and changing identities in the metropolis, staging professional and community-based performances in London, Grinnell, and Mumbai. Lesley directed her production based on a landmark British trial, No Bad Women, in London in November 2019. She recently published “Performing Public Presence: African Migrant Women Create Uncomfortable Conversations in London” in TRI (March 2019) and it was featured by Cambridge University Press for International Women’s Day, 2020. Recent adaptation/direction includes More than Skin Deep, an inter-racial conversation with Prof. Jan Gross (Grinnell College) and Prof. Heather Lobhan-Viravong (Ursinus College). Email:* [*delmenic@grinnell.edu*](mailto:delmenic@grinnell.edu)

**Anansi Returns the Stories: Mythmaking as Decolonizing Practice in Immersive Heritage Performance- Holly Maples**

Marble Hill is an 18th-century historical site in Richmond, UK. Home to Henriette Howard, a patron of the arts and former mistress to George II, much has been studied about the house, and its owner, as a rich location for the 18th-century literati and decorative arts movement. Throughout the beautiful halls, there is little on the surface to reveal its links to a darker history. A US/UK mixed reality heritage project hopes to change that through the conception of an immersive experience combining augmented reality HoloLens with live verbatim theatre to reveal the house's financial and material links to the 18th-century slave trade. The use of Asante spirituality and the trickster figure of Anansi will descend upon Marble Hill to reveal what is hidden from the surface of 18th-century British stately homes. This paper discusses the use of mythical storytelling to subvert dominant narratives of Britain's past and reveal hidden histories through new technologies.

*Dr Holly Maples is a cultural historian, theatre maker, educator, and scholar. She is a Senior Lecturer in Theatre and Director of Impact Research at East 15 School of Acting, University of Essex. Her current research and practice involve creating interactive performances highlighting under-represented voices in the heritage industry. She has created performances and immersive experiences for heritage and museum sites in the UK, Ireland, and the US. From 2017-2020 Dr Maples acted as Drama lead on Norfolk heritage projects with the Paston Footprints, a festival celebrating the Early Modern Paston Letters. She has also created projects for the Norwich Castle Museum Viking: Discover the Legend exhibition. In Hillingdon, Middlesex, she created a site-specific heritage performance exploring the 18th-century slave trade and abolitionist movement for the Being Human festival in 2019 and on tour across the UK in 2020. She is a co-investigator on a US/UK project on digital innovation for the heritage industry National Endowment for Humanities and Arts and Humanities Research Council where she is creating two experiences merging Augmented Reality with live theatre to educate audiences on the 18th-century slave trade for English Heritage Marble Hill and Historic Deerfield in the United States. She has won Excellence in Research Impact awards at both Brunel University and the University of Essex.*

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**Performing History: Using Holograms to Confront Public Art- Lisa Merrill**

How can performances of the past help us enter into dialogue with contemporary public monuments and spaces? At Hofstra University in New York, Prof. Lisa Merrill's students explore how performed re-enactments of historical characters and the staging of their speeches at outdoor sites is in dialogue with the rhetoric of public art and provide an opportunity to perform what is missing from the “official history.” Working with Hofstra colleague Prof. Aashish Kumar, we (Merrill and Kumar) devised an ongoing project to bring Black, Latinx and labour history alive. Prof Kumar, whose research is in immersive and interactive media, founded an immersive media lab to explore virtual and augmented reality and consider ways digital embodiments and re-creations of performance can move beyond the "docu-real". This paper will discuss how we used our intersecting research interests in creating an augmented reality installation on the Hofstra campus to encourage rethinking about public monuments, performance, and history. Utilizing 3D sensors, live student performances of historical figures were captured as holograms and archived with a cloud-based streaming service as AR experiences. Using a set of propositions regarding how such installations could serve as a tool for performance education, dialogue about historical figures and social movements, and the role of monuments, public art, and public space.

***BIO****: Professor Merrill's research and publications are in the fields of performance studies, critical race and cultural studies, and women's and LGBTQ+ history. She applies her work on performance history, spectatorship, and visuality to a range of cultural artefacts, artworks, and performances. Most recently she has worked on performative engagements with Black history in artist Lubaina Himid’s exhibition at Tate Modern Museum, London, UK. Email:* [*lisa.merrill@hofstra.edu*](mailto:lisa.merrill@hofstra.edu)

**“Around Us a Sea of Fire”: the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising’s 80th Anniversary, and Jewishness, Commemoration, and Political Mythos in Poland-** **Rachel Moss**

This April 19th marks the 80th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which will occur a few months prior to the 2023 parliamentary elections in Poland. While seemingly unrelated, both highly politicized events enmesh audiences in large-scale public performances. The 80th-anniversary commemorations for one of the most-known events of recent Polish history will offer a multi-faceted public spectacle, likely to top the 75th anniversary by powers of ten. It’s sure to include the usual public speech by the Polish president in front of the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes, alongside special museum exhibitions, citywide programming, and related theatrical and extra-theatrical performances. These events promise to underscore the politicality of Jewish history in Poland through pointed public programming, while also spotlighting the contentious mythology surrounding Poland’s wartime history. For example, the temporary exhibition in commemoration of the 80th anniversary at POLIN Museum in the heart of the former ghetto — “Around Us a Sea of Fire”— was conceptualized by a Polish Holocaust scholar put on trial in 2020-21 for libel after publishing a book documenting one Polish man’s ambiguous wartime actions. The trial was initially prosecuted under 2018’s controversial so-called Holocaust Bill, which, created by the current Polish government, threatened action against anyone who defamed the good name of Poland. Meanwhile, that party’s government leadership is running for re-election this fall. This paper will document and analyse these highly public and politicized events at the complex entanglement of historical and political narratives and myth-making, alongside experiential and auto-ethnographic research.

*Rachel Merrill Moss is currently a Lecturer of Dramatic Literature and History at Boston University's School of Theatre. She earned her doctorate in Theatre and Drama from Northwestern University, with research supported by a Fulbright fellowship to Poland. Rachel's monograph in-process and ongoing research examine how shifting representations of Jewishness from the interwar to post-communist periods engage with changing modes of national identity formation, politics, and memory work. Rachel was awarded the 2022 New Scholars' Prize from IFTR for her paper, "The Theatre of Jewish Absence in Poland." She is a multi-year co-convener of the Central Eastern European and Eurasian-focused Working Session at ASTR, and in December 2022 co-convened the interdisciplinary scholarly workshop, “Between Worlds: Performing Polish-Jewish Continuities” as part of the POLIN Museum’s Global Education Outreach Program (Warsaw, Poland). Rachel is a co-editor with Debra Caplan of The Dybbuk Century: The Jewish Play that Possessed the World (University of Michigan Press, Fall 2023).*

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**Performing and Problematising Stereotypes of Contemporary Irish Nationalism Through Art and Performance on the Island of Ireland- Ciara L Murphy**

In her book Women and Embodied Mythmaking in Irish Theatre, Shonagh Hill observes that “myth attempts to suppress cultural context but it is also reinvigorated by, and reinterpreted in, the present. Thus, self-conscious awareness of myth’s incompleteness, of it as an ongoing process, offers the possibility for critical intervention” (21). This paper attempts to consider how the myth of Irish nationalism and nationhood intersect with complex cultural contexts emerging across the island of Ireland since the Good Friday Agreement (1998) by interrogating the performance of ‘Irish Nationalism’ in 2022. This paper contends that Belfast-based hip hop group KNEECAP intentionally contest and problematise common mythologies around ‘Irish Nationalism’ through an unveiling of a controversial mural as part of Féile an Phobail in the summer of 2022. This mural, which depicts a PSNI (police) van on fire, intentionally layers and presents a complex performance of political values, which by design are intended to provoke its audience and question common stereotypes surrounding working-class nationalists in the north of Ireland. Using a performance studies framework, I aim to explore how KNEECAP use costume, symbols, and public artwork to intentionally contest a damaging stereotype of Northern Irish Nationalism that has pervaded public and cultural discourse over the past twenty-five years and has become more potent against the backdrop of post-Brexit negotiations, the Northern Irish Protocol, and increased calls for Irish reunification.

*Dr Ciara L. Murphy is an Assistant Lecturer of Drama and Theatre at Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland. She has recently published her first monograph, Performing Social Change on the Island of Ireland: From Republic to Pandemic, and a co-edited collection, Austerity and Irish Women's Writing and Culture, 1980-2020, both with Routledge. Dr Murphy is currently the research lead for the Irish 'Safe to Create' project which considers Ireland-based artists and arts workers’ experience in the workplace. Email:* [*ciaralynnmurphy@gmail.com*](mailto:ciaralynnmurphy@gmail.com)

**The Evocative Storytelling of "Burning Man"- Sarah Ann Standing**

This paper investigates Burning Man—that yearly neo-pagan creation, and subsequent burning, of sculptures in the Nevada, U.S. desert as resonant forms of storytelling. Burning Man is a storytelling performance of unfettered creativity, of anarchic community, and ecologic concern. The scene is undeniably evocative: a desolate landscape, light emanating only from either participants or stars, the dust, the scale, and the climax of combustion after a sweltering week under the sun. In the same way that performance and reality form a feedback loop, Burning Man creates its own ecosphere. Burning Man is a series of storytelling performances: a performance of rurality, paganist imagery, collective bargaining with nature, and a performance of environmentalism, but is it also protest and if so, protest against what? Does protest always need an overt political and storytelling agenda—collective in this case?

*Dr Sarah Ann Standing is an Associate Professor of Theatre at New York City College of Technology, City University of New York. She established and is the editor of, the new book series Studies in Theatre, Ecology, and Performance (Routledge), and is currently writing a book under contract with Routledge on the intersections between theatre/performance and eco-activism. Dr. Standing has published in The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Politics (Routledge); Global Performance Studies; Readings in Performance and Ecology (Palgrave Macmillan); PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art; Theatre Topics; The Eugene O’Neill Review; American Theatre; Terra Nova; and Western European Stages. She is an active playwright and director, and participated in the Mellon Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research, Centre for the Humanities, The Graduate Centre of CUNY, writing a play—“A Happy Christmas in California”—which was performed at A.R.T. Theatre in New York City, 2018.*Email: [sstanding@citytech.cuny.edu](mailto:sstanding@citytech.cuny.edu)

**Myth Busting Burial Grounds by Exposing Acts of Secrecy­­-- Fraser Stevens**

While it may be counterintuitive, secrecy is most certainly a form of performance and it is often public in nature. We can view secrets as instances of ‘showing-doing’, ‘restored behaviour’, and ‘twice-behaved behaviour’ (Schechner, 2004). Yet, what is, perhaps, most important consider, when thinking of secrecy as a performance, is the technique/tactic of how a secret is made and maintained. In this presentation, I will address this categorization of secrecy by drawing comparisons between the manipulation of intelligence archives and the destruction of former Indian residential schools in Canada. It has been established that intelligence services have, at times, manipulated archives to maintain secrets (Hughes and Scott, 2008). It has also been argued that landscapes can be viewed as both archives and performances (Ness, 2016). It is then easy to understand how covert landscapes that once hosted clandestine operations and materials might be viewed as archives in their own right. By extension, we may view the alteration of a clandestine landscape as a rewriting of the intelligence archive, or, alternatively, as a performance of deception and misdirection (Stevens, 2020). Historically we know that such landscape alterations took place and that clandestine training bases were destroyed, and attempt to shield facilities and materials from prying eyes. This government-sanctioned technique of maintaining secrets bears an uncanny resemblance to the destruction of Indian Residential School grounds by the Government of Canada and mainstream churches in the 20th Century. I would suggest that these acts of destruction are performances intended to rewrite the archive and keep secrets of death and abuse from the public's prying eyes. The issue with these acts of covering up is that the rumours and myths—open secrets if we were to call them something else—persist. At the heart of this issue is a conflict between myths. Those of abuse and destruction shared by the indigenous people of Canada, who hoped to bring them to the attention of the public effectively rendering the myth void and the same myths that the institution of Canada hoped to perpetuate and have fade into memory.

*Fraser Stevens is a lecturer in Acting and Performance at Sheffield Hallam University. He most recently co-edited Performance Research: Undercover with James Harding. He is currently a part of a research group supported by the British Academy and Oxford University exploring cultures of secrecy. His work has appeared in both academic journals and edited anthologies.* Email: [f.stevens@shu.ac.uk](mailto:f.stevens@shu.ac.uk)