

# 17th International Conference on the Short Story in English



How it Works: The Uniqueness of the Short Story



17 - 21 June, 2025 | INEC, Killarney | Co. Kerry

# **17th International Conference on the Short Story in English**

***National Events and Conference Centre (INEC), Killarney, Co. Kerry  
Killarney, Co. Kerry, Ireland***

**June 17-21, 2025**

***Tuesday, June 17***

## **6:30-8:00 PM WELCOME DRINK RECEPTION**

Please join the Director, Maurice A. Lee, the Killarney team, Ann Luttrell and Jamie O’Connell, Program Director, Dr. Jay Ruud, and all the Board Members in the Green Room at the Gleneagle Hotel (just off the Main Lobby) on Tuesday, June 17 from 18:30-20:00, for a welcome drink sponsored by Eileen and Patrick O’Donoghue, the hotel owners. Killarney, County Kerry, is a wonderful place to be at this time of year, and in keeping with its reputation for warm hospitality, the Mayor of Kerry, Breandán Fitzgerald, will be in attendance to officially welcome you all. Our conference is a “family” affair, and it will be wonderful to see all family members from around the globe as we begin four days of a fascinating tribute to the marvelous genre known as the short story. We look forward to seeing you, and most importantly, thanking you for coming.

## **WORKSHOPS: 10:00 AM-1:00 PM**

**Rebekah Clarkson (MOD SUITE 3):** Finding the Gaps: Giving and Receiving Feedback on Short Stories

**Katharine Crawford Robey (MOD SUITE 4):** How to Write a Picture Book for Children: A Workshop

**Marjorie Kanter (MOD SUITE 5):** Creativity Workshop: Notice/Attention, Accurate Recording and Playfulness

**Robin Hemley (MOD SUITE 2):** Writing the Autobiographical short story

## **WORKSHOPS: 2:00 PM-5:00 PM**

**Robert Olen Butler (MOD SUITE 1):** The Essence and the Practice: a Theory and a Coached Story

**Michael Mirolla (MOD SUITE 3):** How to Maximize Your Chances of Publishing a Short Story Collection

**Billie Travalini (MOD SUITE 4):** Writing Like a Reader: How to Give Readers What They Want

**Paul McVeigh (MOD SUITE 5):** The Art of the Powerful Short Story Narrative

**Cate Kennedy (MOD SUITE 2):** DIALOGUE: What's Said, What's Not Said

## *Wednesday, June 18*

### **Session I: 9:00-10:30 AM**

I.A (MOD SUITE 1): *Moderator*: Billie Travalini.

*Writers*:

Paula Morris  
Catherine McNamara  
Darlene Madott

I.B (MOD SUITE 2): *Moderator*: William R. Lee.

*Writers*:

Evelyn Conlon  
Madeleine D'Arcy  
Tindaya de la Torre

I.C: (MOD SUITE 5): *Moderator* Rebekah Clarkson.

*Writers*:

Emma Hislop  
Ted Morrissey  
Tyrone Jaeger

I.D: Panel (MOD SUITE 3): "Literature as a Political Witness: Traumatic Memory and Aesthetic Resistance in Taiwanese Short Stories"

*Chair and Moderator*: Lin-chin Tsai (National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan)

*Participants*:

Huang Tzu Ting (National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan): "Exploring the Emotions and Memories of the War Zone Administration Period in Matsu Literature through Liu Hung-wen's Auntie Bao"

Yang Chieh (Chihlee University of Technology, Taiwan): "Redrawing the Boundaries of 'Revolution' and 'Freedom': The Leftist Echoes of Yin Haiguang"

Yueh Yi Shin (China Medical University, Taiwan) [Paper delivered by Beng Huat Lim (National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan)]: "Invisible Narratives and Aesthetic Autonomy: Lai Hsiang-Yin's 'Miss Cassie' in *Still Life in White*"

I.E: Paper Session (MOD SUITE 4): The Short Story and Other Arts

*Moderator*: Jay Ruud (University of Central Arkansas)

*Participants*:

Flora Schildknecht (University of Louisville, U.S.) "Beyond Ekphrasis: The Short Story in 21st Century Art"

Marie-Louise O'Donnell (TU Dublin, Ireland): "The Short Story as Incipient Drama"

### **Coffee Break 10:30-11:00 AM**

## **Session II: 11:00 AM-12:30 PM**

II.A (MOD SUITE 1): *Moderator*: Billie Travalini

*Writers*:

Rebekah Clarkson  
Shady Cosgrove  
Stacey Margaret Jones

II.B (MOD SUITE 5): *Moderator*: Darlene Madott.

*Writers*:

Michael Mirolla  
Suzanne Kamata  
Rachel McPherson

II.C (MOD SUITE 4): *Moderator*: Norma Lee Johnson.

*Writers*:

Katie Singer  
Gay Lynch  
John McCluskey, Jr.

II.D (MOD SUITE 3): *Moderator*: Gigi Chen.

*Writers*:

Yueyue Wenren  
Yi Hsiao  
Hsu Liwei

II.E (MOD SUITE 2): Paper Session: American Men

*Moderator*: Marie Louise O'Donnell (TU Dublin, Ireland)

*Participants*:

Rute Beirante (University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies, Portugal): "Herman Melville's Islands and the Uniqueness of the Short Story"  
Christopher MacGowan (College of William and Mary, U.S.): "Thomas Wolfe's 'The Lost Boy' and Its Three Versions"  
Yu Xun (East China Normal University, China): "Masculine Anxiety in Sherwood Anderson's Short Stories"

## **Lunch: 12:30-1:30 PM**

*The Gleneagle will have bar food, including soup and sandwiches to purchase. Bar food is also available at the Brehoh hotel next door.*

## **Plenary Session I (Mangerton Suite): 1:30-3:30 PM**

*Alice Munro: Life, History, Boundaries, Legacy*

*Chair*: Clark Blaise

*Moderator*: Maurice A. Lee

*Panel:*

Maurice A. Lee  
Clark Blaise  
Darlene Madott  
Michael Mirolla  
Billie Travalini  
Taylor Graham  
Evelyn Conlon  
Short essay by J.R. (Tim) Struthers (read by Maurice A. Lee)

**Coffee Break 3:30-4:00 PM**

**Session III: 4:00-5:30 PM**

III.A (MOD SUITE 5): *Moderator:* Ron Robey.

*Writers:*

Katharine Crawford Robey  
Marjorie Kanter  
Dominique Hecq

III.B (MOD SUITE 3): *Moderator:* Peter Gentles.

*Writers:*

Rute Beirante  
Irene Aguzzi  
Kinneson Lalor

III.C (MOD SUITE 4): *Moderator:* Hengshan Jin.

*Writers:*

Kuan Sun  
Dennis Yeo  
Sun Wei Chen

III.D (MOD SUITE 2): Panel: “Short Story and Life Writing: Voices from the Margins Across Chinese-Speaking Regions”

*Chair and Moderator:* Lin-chin Tsai, (National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan):

“Where Have All the Flowers Gone”: On Yan Geling’s Short Story “Celestial Bath” and Its Film Adaptation

Xinru Ke (Hong Kong Baptist University, China): “Xi Xi’s Immigrant Perspective: Constructing the Image of Hong Kong in Short Stories”

Yunfei Li (Hunan Institute of Science and Technology, China): “Lyricism as the Style of A Short Story: On Wang Zengqi’s short stories in the early 1980s”

Beng Huat Lim (National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan): “Margins and Rebellion: Struggles of Religion, Female Body, and Cultural Identity in Sok Hong Ho’s short story ‘Aminah’”

### **Dinner on Your Own: 5:30-?**

*For dinner, the Gleneagle Hotel has two restaurants, and the Brehon has one restaurant; it is suggested that you make reservations. Plus there are noted eateries throughout all of Killarney. Have a nice evening,*

**Additional event:** There is an informal event organized for Wednesday evening as follows:

### **Literary Quiz at J.M. Reidy's Pub, 4 Main St., Killarney Town Centre. Wed 6.30-8.30pm.**

*Because space is limited, it is important to sign up at the conference. A sign-up sheet will be at the front desk of the hotel. Ask any clerk for the Literary Quiz Sign-Up List.*

This is a private event organized by three of the Irish writers. It should be the perfect fun break during the Short Story Conference. Conference attendees are invited to test your knowledge of classic and contemporary fiction, famous short stories, and quirky literary trivia. Prizes are up for grabs, so bring your sharpest wit and love for books. Nibbles are being sponsored by The Gleneagle Hotel and Bean & Batch café. Drinks are available for purchase at the bar. Limited places so it's important to sign up at the conference. (The pub normally has regular Irish music sessions from 9 PM on Wednesdays so you may be tempted to stay on.)

***Note: Transportation is not provided***

## *Thursday, June 19*

### **Session IV: 9:00-10:30 AM**

IV.A (MOD SUITE 1): *Moderator*: Yi Hsiao

*Writers*:

Yi-Hang Ma  
Nina Dai Tang  
Allen Gee

IV.B (MOD SUITE 2): *Moderator*: Mj Joung.

*Writers*:

Lily Kong  
Siwei Lim  
Yang Chieh

IV.C (MOD SUITE 5): Paper Session: Comparative Lit

*Moderator*: Flora Schildknecht (University of Louisville, U.S.)

*Participants*:

Rúnar Vignisson (University of Iceland): “Flash Backwards, Flash-Forwards, and Flash Nowhere at All”  
Zhang Joan Qiong (Fudan University, China): “The Boy Should Always Meet the Girl’: Circuit Through Three Stories”  
Sylvia Petter [paper read by Catherine McNamara] (UNSW Sydney, Australia): “The Smell of Dislocation: Olfactory Imagery in Selected Works of Janette Turner Hospital”

IV.D (MOD SUITE 3): Paper Session: Self and Other

*Moderator*: Juani Guerra (University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Canary Islands)

*Participants*:

Hengshan Jin (East China Normal University, China): “National Allegory vs. the Voice of the Individual in Modern Chinese Short Stories”  
Yue Wu (East China University of Science and Technology, China): “Between Solitude and Connection: A Comparative Study of Yiyun Li and William Trevor”

IV.E (MOD SUITE 4): Paper Session: Short Stories and the Socio/Political /Historical World

*Moderator*: Lily Kong (Singapore)

*Participants*:

Weichun Liao (East China Normal University, China): “Historicity of Li Yiyun’s *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*: China in 1990s”  
Lu Sun (Shanghai International Studies University, China): “Western Influence on Chinese Short Stories”  
Michael Springate (Independent Scholar, Canada): “How We Know: Michael Mirolla’s *The Giulio Metaphysics Ill*”



## Coffee Break 10:30-11:00 AM

## Session V: 11:00 AM-12:30 PM

V.A (MOD SUITE 2): *Moderator*: Kimberly Gentles.

*Writers*:

Paul McVeigh  
Éilís Ni Dhuibhne  
Judith Nika Pfeifer

V.B (MOD SUITE 3): *Moderator*: William R. Lee.

*Writers*:

Yu-Po Tsao  
Tetsuya Terao  
Hi Wun-jun

V.C (MOD SUITE 1): Paper Session: Pedagogy I

*Moderator*: Donna Davis:

*Participants*:

Suzanne Kamata (Naruto University of Education, Japan) “Using AI to Hone Critical Skills in an EFL Creative Writing Class”  
Bernice Xu (Independent Scholar, Singapore) “Reclaiming Voice: The Need for Creative Writing in the Singapore Secondary School Classroom”  
Darryl Whetter, (Université Sainte-Anne, Pointe-de-l’Église, Nova Scotia, Canada): “Interdisciplinarity, Including the Climate Crisis, in the Creative Writing Classroom: Excerpts from Routledge’s New *Teaching Creative Writing in Canada*”

V.D (MOD SUITE 5): Paper Session: Gender

*Moderator*: Teresa F. A. Alves (University of Lisbon, School of Arts and Humanities, CEAUL/ULICES, Portugal)

*Participants*:

Teresa Cid (University of Lisbon, School of Arts and Humanities, CEAUL/ULICES, Portugal): “‘The Sad Woman in the Doorway’: A Story by Julian Silva”  
Eleni Gelasi (University of Cyprus, Cyprus): “‘Institutional Care in Contemporary Women Short Story Writers ’ ”  
Wanning Sun (Nanyang Technological University, National Institute of Education, Singapore): “Metaphors and Mouthfuls: Writing Food, Females, and Fragmented Memory in *Longing for Nanking*”

**Lunch: 12:30-1:30 PM**

*The Gleneagle will have bar food ,including soup and sandwiches to purchase. Bar food is also available at the Brehoh hotel next door.*

**Plenary Session II (Mangerton Suite): 1:30-3:30 PM**

*Making Elbow Room: Expanding the Range of Black Characters and Black Life in African American Literature. A Discussion of the Short Stories of James Alan McPherson.*

*Chair:* Dr. Allen Gee

*Panel:*

Allen Gee

ZZ Packer

Diane Hinton Perry

John McCluskey, Jr.

Rachel McPherson (daughter of the author).

**Coffee Break 3:30-4:00 PM**

**Session VI: 4:00-5:30 PM**

VI.A (MOD SUITE 4): *Moderator:* Yingchao Xiao.

*Writers:*

Zhou Jianing

Wang Ruoxu

Gao Yuan

VI.B (MOD SUITE 1): *Panel: “An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction I”*

*Moderator:* Colleen Mayo (Hendrix College, U.S.)

*Participants (all from Hendrix College, U.S.):*

David Kamanga

Alaina May

Belle McKelvey

Sarah Starnes

Michaela Stevens

Aidan Wilson

VI.C (MOD SUITE 4): *Moderator:* Joyce Lee

Lauren Foley

Shan Ling

VI.D (MOD SUITE 2): Paper Session: Canadian Writers

*Moderator:* Gigi Chen (Columbia University)

*Participants:*

Martin Loeschnigg (University of Graz, Austria): “Storifying Newfoundland: Narratological and Generic Reflections on Michael Crummey’s Short Stories”

Louise Ells (Nipissing University, Canada): “Munro and her Work in the Time of ‘Cancel Culture’”

J.R. (Tim) Struthers (University of Guelph, retired, Ontario, Canada): “When the Story You Think You’re Reading Ain’t: The Mysterious Case of Alice Munro’s ‘Jesse and Meribeth’” [Paper read by Allan Weiss]

### **Dinner on Your Own: 5:30-?**

*For dinner, the Gleneagle Hotel has two restaurants, and the Brehon has one restaurant; it is suggested that you make reservations. Plus there are noted eateries throughout all of Killarney. Have a nice evening,*

### **Community Reading I: 5:00-7:00PM**

*Killarney Library, Rock Road, Kilcoolaght,*

*(For Killarney residents and invited guests)*

Robert Olen Butler

ZZ Packer

*Friday, June 20*

**Session VII: 9:00-10:30 AM**

VII.A (MOD SUITE 2): *Moderator*: Stacey Margaret Jones.

*Writers*:

Nancy Freund  
Jay Ruud  
Darryl Whetter

VII.B (MOD SUITE 5): *Moderator*: Shady Cosgrove.

*Writers*:

Lin Ying  
Cate Kennedy  
Rúnar Vignisson

VII.C (MOD SUITE 3): Paper Session: Short Stories and Publishing

*Moderator*: Louse Ells (Nipissing University, Canada)

*Participants*:

Sarah Whitehead (Independent Scholar, UK): “Pulp Modernism: James Joyce and the Smart Set Magazine”  
Allan Weiss (York University, Canada): “Periodic Changes: The Rise and Fall of Canadian Popular Magazines”  
Ted Morrissey (Lindenwood University, U.S.): “A Lesson before Writing: A Podcast Devoted to the Short Story Form”

VII.D. Panel (MOD SUITE 4): “Short Stories and a Third Moving Language”

*Moderator*: Kenneth Berri (UC Berkeley, USA)

*Participants*:

Maïca Sanconie, *Chair* (Sorbonne University, Paris, France)  
Dominique Hecq (La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia)  
Chantal Danjou ( Sorbonne University, Paris, France)

**Coffee Break 10:30-11:00 AM**

**Session VIII: 11:00 AM-12:30 PM**

VIII.A (MOD SUITE 4): *Moderator*: Darryl Whetter

Billie Travalini  
Nuala O’Connor  
Robin Hemley

VIII.B (MOD SUITE 5): Panel: “An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction II”

*Moderator:* Tyrone Jaeger (Hendrix College, USA)

*Participants (all from Hendrix College, U.S.):*

Calyx Christie  
Penelope Derden  
Daniel Dyer  
Audrey Eggensperger  
Piper Fisherman  
Lily Harper

VIII.C (MOD SUITE 2): Paper Session: The Short Story as Experimental Genre

*Moderator:* Teresa Cid (University of Lisbon, School of Arts and Humanities, CEAUL/ULICES, Portugal)

*Participants:*

Teresa F. A. Alves (University of Lisbon, School of Arts and Humanities, CEAUL/ULICES, Portugal): “Teolinda Gersão: A Storyteller for All Seasons”  
Sepehr Hafizi (Cambridge University, UK): “Fragmented City, Fragmented Self: Exploring Osamu Dazai’s ‘Eight Views of Tokyo’”  
Maria Loeschnigg (University of Graz, Austria): “The Part and the Whole: The Aesthetics of Fragmentation in Canadian Short Fiction”

### **Lunch: 12:30-1:30 PM**

*The Gleneagle will have bar food ,including soup and sandwiches to purchase. Bar food is also available at the Brehoh hotel next door.*

### **Plenary Session III (Mangerton Suite): 1:30-3:30 PM**

*Small Acts of Defiance: Tradition and Reinvention in Indigenous Short Stories*

*Panel:*

Paula Morris  
Emma Hislop

### **Coffee Break 3:30-4:00 PM**

### **Session IX: 4:00-5:30 PM**

IX.A (MOD SUITE 2): *Moderator:* Allen Weiss

*Writers:*

Diane Hinton Perry  
Flora Schildknecht  
Jamie O’Connell

IX.B (MOD SUITE 1): *Moderator*: Wanning Sun.

*Writers*:

Colleen Mayo

ZZ Packer

Anitha Devi Pillai

IX.C (MOD SUITE 4): Paper Session: How Short Is Short?

*Moderator*: Louise Ells (Nipissing University, Canada)

*Participants*:

Jessica Byrne (Independent Scholar, Australia): “Exploring Minimalism and the Short Story”

Shady Cosgrove (University of Wollongong, Australia): “Flight—A Case Study: Microforms, Collections and Containment. Possibilities for a ‘Novel’ Form”

Alison Woodhouse (Bath Spa University, UK): “Writing the Novella in Flash –A Close Reading of Techniques”

IX.D (MOD SUITE 5): Paper Session: Irish Women Writers

*Moderator*: Taylor Marie Graham (Independent Scholar, Cambridge, Ontario)

*Participants*:

Keiko Kiriyama (Doshisha University, Japan): “Mrs. Oscar Wilde’s Fairy Tales”

Antoine Halff (Independent Scholar, USA): “The Short Story as Protest Art in the Works of Claire Keegan”

Natalie Steffen (Independent Scholar, Belgium): “‘A Kind of Telescopic Vision’: Ageing and the Life Course in Mary Morrissy’s *Prosperity Drive* (2016)”

### **Dinner on Your Own: 5:30-?**

*For dinner, the Gleneagle Hotel has two restaurants, and the Brehon has one restaurant; it is suggested that you make reservations. Plus there are noted eateries throughout all of Killarney. Have a nice evening,*

### **Community Reading II: 6:00-7:30 PM**

*The Gleneagle Hotel, Muckross Rd, Poulnamuck, Killarney*

Kevin Barry

William Wall

Nuala O'Connor

## *Saturday, June 21*

### **Session X: 9:00-10:30 AM**

X.A (MOD SUITE 2): Panel: *Readings from James Alan McPherson*

*Moderator:* Diane Hinton Perry.

*Readers:*

Rachel McPherson

John McCluskey

Cecile Goding

X.B (MOD SUITE 4): *Moderator:* Marjorie Kanter

*Writers:*

Taylor Marie Graham

Maïca Sanconie

Wanning Sun

X.C (MOD SUITE 1): *Moderator:* Katie Singer.

*Writers:*

Clark Blaise

Robert Olen Butler

Allan Weiss

X.D (MOD SUITE 5): Paper Session: Short Stories and the Natural World

*Moderator:* Rajendra Ponde (M.H.Shinde College, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, India)

*Participants:*

Delzi Laranjeira, (Minas Gerais State University, Brazil): “Short Fiction on Climate Change: Perspectives from the Global North and Global South in ‘For the Snake of Power’ and ‘The Serpent’s Handmaiden’”

Rajendra Ponde (M.H.Shinde College, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, India):

“Environmental Consciousness in the Short Stories of Kenneth Anderson”

Juani Guerra (University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Canary Islands) “The short story as biocultural niche construction for ecological imagination, affective inquiry, and cultural health: The case of the fish-man as narrative device”

### **Coffee Break 10:30-11:00 AM**

### **Session XI: 11:00 AM-12:30 PM**

XI.A (MOD SUITE 4): *Moderator:* David Duer.

*Writers:*

Anna Solding

Nakao Eki Pacidal

Louise Ells

XI.B (MOD SUITE 3): *Moderator*: Gay Lynch.

*Writers*:

Yingchao Xiao  
Rhea Hou  
Carmelinda Scian

XI.C (MOD SUITE 5): *Moderator*: Madeleine D’Arcy

*Writers*:

Eileen O’Donoghue  
William Wall  
Chantal Danjou

XI.D (MOD SUITE 1): Paper Session: Pedagogy II

*Moderator*: Alison Woodhouse (Bath Spa University, UK)

*Participants*:

Katie Singer (Independent Scholar, U.S.): “Hearing Stories, Telling Stories: How Oral History Complements the Teaching and Writing of the Short Story”  
Anitha Devi Pillai (National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore): “Creative Writing in Singapore’s Tertiary Institutions: Crafting the Short Story in a Multilingual, Multicultural Landscape”  
Dennis Yeo (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore) “Teaching the Short Story: Telltale: Eleven Stories and Hook and Eye”

### **Lunch: 12:30-1:30 PM**

*The Gleneagle will have bar food ,including soup and sandwiches to purchase. Bar food is also available at the Brehoh hotel next door.*

### **Plenary Session IV (Mangerton Suite): 1:30-3:30 PM**

*Showcasing Publications and How to Make it Work.*

*Writers discuss the pros and cons, ways and means of putting your publications before the public. They will showcase specific works, including their own as examples*

*Chair*: Robin Hemley

*Co-Chair*: Madeleine D’Arcy

*Panel*:

Robin Hemley  
Madeleine D’Arcy  
Katie Singer  
Evelyn Conlon  
Emma Hislop  
Rebekah Clarkson  
Paul McVeigh  
Robert Olen Butler

### **Conference Banquet: 7:00-10:00**

*Gleneagle Hotel—Room To Be Determined.*



# Abstracts of Panels and Individual Papers

## *Panels*

**Berri, Kenneth** (UC Berkeley, USA)

“Short Stories and a Third Moving Language” (Panel VII.D)

This panel offers the collaborative effort of four scholars and creators all deeply interested in translation and writing. We recently created a digital project called “The Song of the Sirens,” referencing Italo Calvino in “The Literature Machine.” According to Calvino, the sirens inform us that: *“they are singing and that they want to be listened to [...] Their song constitutes the “extreme point of arrival of writing, the ultimate core of poetic speech.”* Their voices mix and create a chorus as they interconnect hearing and understanding. In concert, they also symbolize a third discursive space between listening and expression where (new) writing is constructed and where translation is created.

This format enables us to present our polyvalent, slightly eccentric concept of the short story as writers. Shorter in length, this genre also touches and rubs shoulders with the diary. We will examine how translation reveals a third language in the very material of these texts.

We will discuss how this polyphonic and multi-dimensional chorus affects creation in the field of short writing forms—short stories and the writer’s diary—as a way of exploring translation as a third language of creative writing, a moving language. Perhaps we sometimes must go abroad so that our own work, in our mother tongue, returns to us—we as authors and readers—like a boomerang. The feminine title, “Le chant des sirènes / The Song of the Sirens,” also symbolizes women writers’ voices as a generic feminine, precluding exclusions.

Translating implies “going through” the literary experience of creation, feeling it first as an informed reader who not only reads an “accomplished” text but also appropriates the textual process and reorients its course. Such a reader does feel the discursive undercurrent of writing, like a textual river that still stirs the writing, churning up surprises like a splash of cold water and further questions of interpretation, deconstructing seemingly over-polished notions of completion or closure.

Passing through the disconcerting experience of translating or being translated, feeling our own text escaping and returning to us enriched by the polyphonic experience of foreign sounds and “unfamiliar” nuances constitutes a vital event. Experimenting with a newly extended writing process within the parameters of the short story perhaps conveys this event in a more impactful way than within the boundaries of other genres. And mermaids in their

very particularity question, deconstruct, expand the boundaries allocated to the short story, whether written and/or translated. As seductive creatures, mermaids can fluidly interrogate, deconstruct, and expand the discursive boundaries of the short story in all their languages, which will lead us to examine the relationship between speech and the body, with reference to subjectivity, speech theory and translatology.

**Christie, Calyx** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction II” (See **Jaeger**)

**Danjou, Chantal** ( Sorbonne University, Paris, France)

“Short Stories and a Third Moving Language” (Panel) (See **Berri**)

**Derden, Penelope** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction II” (See **Jaeger**)

**Dyer, Daniel** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction II” (See **Jaeger**)

**Eggensperger, Audrey** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction II” (See **Jaeger**)

**Fisherman, Piper** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction II” (See **Jaeger**)

**Harper, Lily** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction II” (See **Jaeger**)

**Hecq, Dominique** (La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia)

“Short Stories and a Third Moving Language” (See **Berri**)

**Huang, Tzu Ting** (National Sun Yet Sen University, Taiwan)

“Exploring the Emotions and Memories of the War Zone Administration Period in Matsu Literature through Liu Hung-wen's *Auntie Bao*” (Panel I.D) (see **Yueh**)

The Matsu Archipelago, situated on the frontlines of the Taiwan Strait, is a site of profound tension and contradiction in literary narratives due to its unique geographical location and historical context. What is now known as "Matsu" is an imagined community constructed after the Chinese Civil War in 1949. Located just nine kilometers from mainland China, the islands were embroiled in a prolonged confrontation across the strait. From 1956 to 1992, a 36-year period of War Zone Administration under military governance shaped Matsu's distinctive wartime culture, geopolitical significance, and the way of life and identity of its people. Liu Hung-wen's *Auntie Bao* draws on the experiences of Matsu during this era of wartime administration. During this period, local administration was controlled by the military, and

residents lived under stringent restrictions, creating a unique military culture and societal structure. The novel portrays the lives of three Matsu women—Bao Yi (Auntie Bao), Yu Yi (the narrator’s mother-in-law), and Lian Yi—tracing their journeys from youth to old age. Through these characters, the narrative explores themes of military-civilian separation, social stratification, displacement caused by war, and identity conflict. It delves into nuanced historical contours and details, preserving a vital literary memory of Matsu’s history.

**Jaeger, Tyrone** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction II” (Panel VIII.B)

In a two-part panel series, undergraduate writers from Hendrix College will present creative work inspired by the rich tradition of “walking stories” in fiction, most notably Leopold Bloom’s famous walk across Dublin in the “Lestrygonians” episode of *Ulysses*. Each panel will begin with a reading during which student writers will share original pieces of flash fiction, followed by a moderated discussion that considers walking narratives as modes for meditation, discovery, and social commentary in fiction. Using their own works as reference, panelists will discuss how writers can deepen flash fiction’s narrative power via conventions common to walking stories.

**Kamanga, David** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction I” (See **Mayo**)

**Ke, Xinru** (Hong Kong Baptist University, China)

“Xi Xi’s Immigrant Perspective: Constructing the Image of Hong Kong in Short Stories” (Panel III.D) (See **Tsai**)

Xi Xi is a significant literary figure in Hong Kong, producing a substantial body of work that intricately portrays the city. Typically, academic discourse tends to analyze Xi Xi’s construction of local consciousness in Hong Kong since the 1970s through texts such as the novel *My City: A Hong Kong Story* 我城. However, this perspective of “locality” often overlooks the writer’s immigrant identity, thereby solidifying a monolithic image of Hong Kong in Xi Xi’s oeuvre. In reality, Xi Xi was born in Shanghai, mainland China, in 1937 and immigrated to Hong Kong with her parents in 1950 due to socio-political upheaval. Her experiences of reflecting on her homeland and establishing roots in a foreign land at different stages of life are meticulously detailed in her autobiographical novels *The Migratory Birds* 候鳥 (1981) and *The Nest Weaving* 織巢 (2018). These works incorporate mainland China’s temporal and spatial dimensions, allowing Hong Kong’s image to become more diverse and multifaceted through its “dialogue” with the former. Because *The Migratory Birds* and *The Nest Weaving* span nearly three decades, previous researchers have struggled to fully grasp the image of Hong Kong from the immigrant perspective. Now, we can revisit this aspect. Since the 1980s, Xi Xi has been mainly focused on “how to write” rather than “what to write,” her immigrant themes have long been dispersed

across numerous short stories, often overlooked by scholars. For instance, *Spring Hope* 春望 (1982) depicts Mrs. Chen in Hong Kong feverishly longing for her relatives in mainland China; *White-Haired Ah Ngo Dreaming of Water Snakes* 白髮阿娥夢見水蛇 (1987) illustrates Ah Ngo's childhood and teenage years spanning the late Qing and Republican eras and how these memories are rekindled in Hong Kong; *The Silver Years of Rosa Ah Ngo* 玫瑰阿娥的白髮時代 (1988) narrates the story of Ah Ngo writing memoirs to earn "manuscript fees" to support her relatives in mainland China. These narrative elements can be traced in *The Migratory Birds* and *The Nest Weaving*. Therefore, this paper will first delineate the image of Hong Kong from the immigrant perspective in these two autobiographical works and then conduct a comparative reading with several of Xi Xi's short stories. Through this comparative reading, this paper aims to elucidate the following questions: Do Xi Xi's short stories merely reiterate the image of Hong Kong presented in her full-length novels? If not, in what ways do these stories further construct the depiction of "Hong Kong"? For a writer who emphasizes "how to write," what is the relationship between the enriched images and the formal characteristics of the short stories? This paper posits that Xi Xi's short stories exhibit a high degree of experimentalism, supplementing the image of Hong Kong through diverse narrative techniques and perspectives.

**Li, Yunfei** (Hunan Institute of Science and Technology, China)

"Lyricism as the Style of A Short Story: On Wang Zengqi's short stories in the early 1980s" (Panel III.D) (See **Tsai**)

Wang Zengqi has a unique view of short stories. In his perspective, a short story is more like a way of thinking, a form of emotion and the appearance of wisdom than just a story. Therefore, the structure of a short story should be flexible and inclusive by absorbing characteristics of poetry, drama and prose. In the early 1980s, he created a series of short stories based on his childhood memories in the 1920s and 1930s, such as *Yi Bing* (異稟), *Shou Jie* (受戒) and *Da Nao Ji Shi* (大淖記事), which reflected such concepts. In that period, most writers focused on describing their injuries during the Cultural Revolution and introspecting the reasons for the Cultural Revolution. By criticizing the politics, they expressed their desire for the country's modernization. By comparison, Wang Zengqi was marginalized. The short story *Shou Jie* (受戒), considered renowned nowadays, was very controversial initially. Although it was about the love story of a young monk, it mostly portrayed the mundane life and scenic beauty in rural areas before 1949. Some critics considered it had no theme or idea. However, Wang disagreed with this statement. He firmly believed that the 'idea' should not be transcendental. On the contrary, what counts most is the beauty and poetic flavour that the writer sensed in their daily life. Wang was willing to write about the 'healthy' human nature, which was beneficial for healing the national trauma and improving the morality of youth. Although unlike most fiction of the time that focused on politics, Wang's short stories precisely reflected the cheerful mood of the new era. He considered himself as 'a lyrical humanist' (抒情的人道主义者). Lyricism is an effective way to interpret his works. To a large extent, he used lyricism as the style of his short stories. The lyricism was formed due to many aspects, including literary tradition and the ideology of the time. This paper tries to explore the richness and complexity of Wang's short stories and further comprehend the ideology and culture in China in the early 1980s.

**Lim, Beng Huat** (Research Center for Humanities and Social Sciences, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan)

“Margins and Rebellion: Struggles of Religion, Female Body, and Cultural Identity in Sok Hong Ho’s short story ‘Aminah’” (Panel III.D) (See **Tsai**)

Sok Hong Ho is a prominent Malaysian Chinese writer whose works explore themes of identity, gender, religion, and cultural conflict, with particular emphasis on the struggles of the Malaysian Chinese community and women within a multicultural context. Her realistic writing style brings marginalized groups to the forefront, offering profound psychological portraits of individuals navigating societal norms and personal desires. Ho’s fictions include *Maze Blanket* (2012) and *Lake Like a Mirror* (2014), the latter of which was translated into English and published internationally. Her first novel *To Shed* (2023) examines the 1969 Malaysian "May 13 Incident" and its societal aftermath. *Lake Like a Mirror* has received significant acclaim in the Western literary world for its portrayal of the multifaceted experiences of contemporary Malaysian women. Ho's writing style is grounded in realism, focusing on marginalized communities and depicting their struggles and dilemmas within society. This paper analyzes Ho’s short story "Aminah" through the lenses of Malaysian religion, female identity, cultural recognition, and the female body. It explores how the protagonist, Aminah—a mixed-race Chinese Muslim—grapples with identity fragmentation amid conflicting Muslim and Chinese cultural backgrounds. Aminah's act of nudity, in particular, symbolizes her rebellion against cultural and religious norms, reflecting her search for freedom and self-recognition. This essay combines poststructuralist, gender, and postcolonial frameworks to analyze how Aminah uses her body to challenge the control exerted by Malaysian religious and cultural norms on Muslim women. Furthermore, it investigates how Ho critiques the gender and cultural expectations embedded in Malaysian society through her narrative.

**May, Alaina** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction I” (See **Mayo**)

**Mayo, Colleen** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction I” (Panel VI.B)

In a two-part panel series, undergraduate writers from Hendrix College will present creative work inspired by the rich tradition of “walking stories” in fiction, most notably Leopold Bloom’s famous walk across Dublin in the “Lestrygonians” episode of *Ulysses*. Each panel will begin with a reading during which student writers will share original pieces of flash fiction, followed by a moderated discussion that considers walking narratives as modes for meditation, discovery, and social commentary in fiction. Using their own works as reference, panelists will discuss how writers can deepen flash fiction’s narrative power via conventions common to walking stories.

**McKelvey, Belle** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction I” (See **Mayo**)

**Sanconie, Maïca** (Sorbonne University, Paris, France)

“Short Stories and a Third Moving Language” (Panel) (See **Berri**)

**Starnes, Sarah** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction I” (See **Mayo**)

**Stevens, Michaela** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction I” (See **Mayo**)

**Tsai, Lin-chin** (National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan):

“Short Story and Life Writing: Voices from the Margins Across Chinese-Speaking Regions”  
(Panel III.E)

This panel delves into the diversity and complexity of the short story as a genre, exploring how different authors incorporate various life experiences shaped by geopolitical, ethnic, religious, cultural, and aesthetic margins into their texts. Focusing on cultural identity, interethnic relationships, immigrant’s perspective, alternative expressions of emotions and memories, as well as narrative experimentations, the panel examines how these themes are manifested in short stories and other media across various Chinese-speaking areas, including mainland China, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and global Chinese-speaking communities.

In brief, the papers included in this panel attempt to interrogate various forms of marginalization—whether geopolitical, ethnic, religious, cultural, or aesthetic—while addressing the conference theme, “the Uniqueness of the Short Story.” By carefully examining these cultural texts across multiple Chinese-speaking areas, this panel seeks to deepen our understanding of the genre’s versatility and its capability to engage with complex, multifaceted experiences and aspects of life.

“Where Have All the Flowers Gone”: On Yan Geling’s Short Story “Celestial Bath” and Its Film Adaptation

Chinese-American writer Yan Geling (嚴歌苓), currently residing in the United States, is one of the most prominent authors with numerous literary works adapted into films and television shows in Chinese-speaking areas. Her renowned short story “Celestial Bath” (天浴) is set during the period of the Cultural Revolution in China, centering on Wenxiu, a young educated girl sent to the border between Sichuan and Tibet as part of the “Down to the Countryside Movement” during the late 1960s. First published in Taiwan in 1996, the story won the “Student Literary Award for Best Short Story.” In 1998, a transnational production team led by Chinese-American director Joan Chen (陳沖), adapted it into a film of the same name, *Tainyu*, though it was released in English as *Xiu Xiu: The Sent-Down Girl* (Yan worked as one of the screenwriters). The film received critical acclaim at the 35<sup>th</sup> Golden Horse Film Festival in Taiwan in 1998, winning several awards including Best Feature Film, Best Director, and so forth. The original short story, along with other

works by Yan, was translated into English by Lawrence Walker and published in 1999. However, due to the film's portrayal of the Cultural Revolution and its explicit nudity, it was banned in China and remained largely undistributed and uncirculated for many years. Both the original text and its film adaptation present a compelling case study for further exploring the concept of Sinophone cinema, especially when examined through the lenses of media studies and the politics of representation from the perspective of Sinophone studies. This paper will undertake an intertextual and cross-media comparison between Yan Geling's short story and its film adaptation, with a particular focus on the depiction of interethnic relationships between Han Chinese and ethnic

**Wilson, Aidan** (Hendrix University, USA)

“An Eye for Place: Walking Stories and the Craft of Movement in Flash Fiction I” (See **Mayo**)

**Yang, Chieh** (Chihlee University of Technology, Taiwan)

“Redrawing the Boundaries of ‘Revolution’ and ‘Freedom’: The Leftist Echoes of Yin Haiguang” (Panel I.D) (see **Yueh**)

This paper centers on the dialectic of “revolution” and “freedom” to reexamine the profound influence of Yin Haiguang on postwar Taiwanese “non-liberal” intellectuals, particularly overseas leftist groups. While existing studies predominantly focus on Yin Haiguang's role as an intellectual guide for liberal communities, this paper explores how his thought was embedded within the political practices and literary writings of leftist movements, using the “Berkeley Diaoyu Island Writers” as a case study. Through close readings of Guo Songfen and Zhang Xiguo's writings in Diaoyu Island-related publications, the study reveals that while “revolution” and “freedom” often appear ideologically opposed, Yin Haiguang's intellectual paradigm created a dialogic space for these concepts to engage. This exchange not only ignited distinctive discourses but also exposed internal contradictions within the leftist and centrist camps. Notably, as the Diaoyu Island movement faded into history, these writers began “fictionalizing” Yin Haiguang's figure in their literary works, using narrative techniques to reflect on revolution and freedom. This process, in turn, weaves a representational genealogy of Yin Haiguang in Taiwanese literature. By examining the dialectic between “revolution” and “freedom,” this paper reconsiders the historical legacy and literary landscape of the (post-)Diaoyu Island era. It not only sheds new light on Yin Haiguang's intellectual heritage but also highlights the unrealized potential of “non-liberal communities” in Taiwan's intellectual and literary history. Moreover, it resonates with contemporary reevaluations of the Diaoyu Island movement, offering fresh perspectives on Taiwan's Cold War-era political and cultural discourses and literary practices.

This paper centers on the dialectic of “revolution” and “freedom” to reexamine the profound influence of Yin Haiguang on postwar Taiwanese “non-liberal” intellectuals, particularly overseas leftist groups. While existing studies predominantly focus on Yin Haiguang's role as an intellectual guide for liberal communities, this paper explores how his thought was embedded within the political practices and literary writings of leftist movements, using the “Berkeley Diaoyu Island Writers” as a case study. Through close readings of Guo Songfen and Zhang Xiguo's writings in Diaoyu Island-related publications, the study reveals that while “revolution” and “freedom” often appear ideologically opposed, Yin Haiguang's intellectual paradigm created

a dialogic space for these concepts to engage. This exchange not only ignited distinctive discourses but also exposed internal contradictions within the leftist and centrist camps. Notably, as the Diaoyu Island movement faded into history, these writers began “fictionalizing” Yin Haiguang’s figure in their literary works, using narrative techniques to reflect on revolution and freedom. This process, in turn, weaves a representational genealogy of Yin Haiguang in Taiwanese literature. By examining the dialectic between “revolution” and “freedom,” this paper reconsiders the historical legacy and literary landscape of the (post-)Diaoyu Island era. It not only sheds new light on Yin Haiguang’s intellectual heritage but also highlights the unrealized potential of “non-liberal communities” in Taiwan’s intellectual and literary history. Moreover, it resonates with contemporary reevaluations of the Diaoyu Island movement, offering fresh perspectives on Taiwan’s Cold War-era political and cultural discourses and literary practices.

**Yueh, Yi Shin (organizer)**(Center of General Education at China Medical University, Taiwan)

“Literature as a Political Witness: Traumatic Memory and Aesthetic Resistance in Taiwanese Short Stories” (Panel I.D)

The panel explores how short stories serve as records of historical and political events, bringing overlooked narratives to light by collectively interrogating and reimagining Taiwan’s fraught past. Through exploring historical traumas such as the War Zone Administration, White Terror, and Cold War-era movements, the panel examines how literature intervenes in historical memories by amplifying marginalized voices.

One presentation focuses on Liu Hung-wen’s *Auntie Bao*, set in the militarized Matsu Archipelago during the War Zone Administration period. It highlights how Liu’s narrative, by depicting the lives of Matsu women and their unique wartime experiences, offers a vital literary preservation of Matsu’s wartime culture. Another presentation examines the legacy of intellectual Yin Haiguang within Cold War-era Taiwanese leftist movements by analyzing how writers like Guo Songfen and Zhang Xiguo fictionalized his ideas to mediate the dialectic of revolution and freedom. Literary strategies, as this presentation will explore, are employed to grapple with ideological struggles and the construction of intellectual identity in leftist literature. The final presentation analyzes Lai Hsiang-Yin’s *Still Life in White*, which uses aesthetic representation to examine traumatic memories from the White Terror. It highlights the quiet resistance of marginalized characters, linking their ordinary struggles to broader socio-political histories.

This panel will explore how short stories are situated as both a repository and a critique of Taiwan’s political history. Short stories serve as literary strategies to resist dominant narratives by reconfiguring historical memory, challenging cultural hierarchies, and giving voice to silenced or marginalized perspectives.

“Invisible Narratives and Aesthetic Autonomy: Lai Hsiang-Yin’s “Miss Cassie” in *Still Life in White*”

Lai Hsiang-Yin’s *Still Life in White* (2022), a story collection describing the aftermath of Taiwan’s “White Terror,” challenges dominant cultural hierarchies and aesthetic conventions while offering an intimate portrayal of invisibility and agency. While foregrounding the lived



experiences of its titular characters, Lai's book focuses on neither survivors nor perpetrators' lives but instead highlights the intergenerational echoes of trauma and the often-overlooked narratives of those on the periphery. Motivated by the English title "Still Life in White," this paper finds it resonant with Ranciere's concept of "distribution of the sensible" since the phrase "still life" focuses on the aesthetic reconfiguration of what is visible, sayable, and thinkable while "white," directly tying directly to Taiwan's "White Terror" and its legacy, suggests both a political and aesthetic idea. The paper is divided into three parts. The first part examines Lai's emphasis on the everyday as a site of aesthetic and political significance, highlighting how ordinary moments and overlooked lives are reconfigured to challenge dominant narratives and hierarchies. Then, the second part explores how, despite the ordinariness of these moments, Lai's modernist aesthetic strategies elevate them, making them not only echo with the larger socio-political history of Taiwan but also resonate with Rancière's notion of redistributing the sensible, where the everyday becomes a site of aesthetic and political reconfiguration. Finally, the last part zooms in the story "Miss Cassie" to examine the quiet struggles and hidden strength of its protagonist amid societal repression.

## *Individual Papers*

**Alves, Teresa F. A.** (University of Lisbon, School of Arts and Humanities, CEAUL/ULICES, Portugal)

### “Teolinda Gersão: A Storyteller for All Seasons”

A brief inquiry in the short fiction by Teolinda Gersão shows how deftly this contemporary Portuguese writer makes use of sudden fiction, magic realism, parody and historiographic metafiction, and how deftly she deals with the trends and styles of the short story as an experimental genre par excellence. It is the purpose of this paper to examine the unexpected and yet plausible transformation of a ‘humble bank clerk’ into a wild fox in a brief and concentrated 5-page story “The Red Fox Fur-Coat” (2007); and to explore magic realism from the perspective of a naïve young girl dealing with the absurdities of the grown-up world in “The Angels” (2009); and, finally, to analyze parody and historiographic metafiction in “Alice in Thunderland” (2021), a 12-page story built on the pseudo-autobiographic manuscript of the character created by Lewis Carroll. The paper will conclude with the appraisal of Teolinda Gersão’s steady focus on a woman’s point of view, featured either as a young bank clerk, or a girl at school age, or a middle-aged Alice, and how the use of such a strategy cannot but show this writer’s concern and literary engagement in the fundamental issues of womanhood in a world of changing moods and unveiled secrets, so characteristic of our times.

**Beirante, Rute** (University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies, Portugal)

### “Herman Melville’s Islands and the Uniqueness of the Short Story”

According to John R. Gillis in *Islands of the Mind* the island has a central place in our imagination, and became a master metaphor capable of representing so many different things. It can symbolize fragmentation and vulnerability but also wholeness and safety. In his fictional islands, Herman Melville explored duality in its different aspects. First of all, he combined the duality of the natural world with that of human nature. In his narratives, which encompass all the beings that inhabit the islands, the sea is always present. Nevertheless, the sea in Melville transcends the material order and includes a global perspective of the world. The author’s travels and his dialogues with the classics contributed to that vision. In “The Encantadas,” more than in any other short narrative by Melville, the voices of the Bible, of British, Portuguese, and American writers, of science and the visual arts intersect. The experimental approach he used to write this original short story endowed it with a plethora of geographic, political, social, and cultural meaning. Through an elaborate and symbolic frame it conveyed and exposed some of the wrongs of Antebellum America. This unique approach allowed Herman Melville to reflect on the problems of his time and Humanity’s challenges.

**Byrne, Jessica** (Independent Scholar, Australia)

“Exploring Minimalism and the Short Story”

I lean on the white wall in my art room attired in my black timeless one-piece jumpsuit and classic red lipstick and contemplate minimalism. The room is bare other than the white wooden window framing the sea, my timber easel and primary acrylic paints: red, blue and yellow. ‘Minimalism seems easy enough’ I think, until my mind’s eye glances to a large pile of clothes, books and collectables amassed over the years in the hall. My computer heaves, stuffed with half started stories and jammed full, spills over onto The Cloud. Returning my concentration to the vast nothingness of the sea view before me, I wonder what it would be like with less in my writing? Less ideas? Less themes, less density, less characters, less clutter? My steady gaze focuses on the azure ocean horizon, interrupted only by the repetitive solitary note of a lone seagull squawking. It seems to say ‘Less, less, less.’ With one clean sweep of my paintbrush, I make a blue stripe across the otherwise blank canvas. My minimalist painting of the ocean view is complete. I wonder how this same effect achieved through minimalist artwork could be conveyed or inserted into a short story, given as writers we cannot leave the page blank for effect in the same way artists can leave the canvas blank for effect. Here starts my journey. This paper seeks to share an exploration stemming from curiosity about what minimalist writing is, how it can impact on reader and writer experience and ways it may be used strategically or randomly, in whole or in part in short stories. Minimalism may come naturally to some out of necessity and for others, or at other times, seem difficult due a desire to preserve and save rather than waste anything including ideas. I am interested in looking at ways other writers overcome this challenge of too much information and the results of achieving this aim well. Logical deduction would suggest it is the short story writer who must truly excel at this objective given the inbuilt limitations of low word count within this genre. Minimalism as a philosophy and strategy extends into many fields including writing, visual art, fashion, music, film, social media, religion, data management, advertising as well as environmental, finance and wellbeing. These forms of minimalism could be used concurrently in various ways as techniques for artistic impact in minimalist short story. I hope to share some interesting and practical points I learn through my gentle exploration that are applicable to the appreciation of the short story and add to the enjoyment and strategies for short story writing. Using a synaesthetic explorative approach I will look at minimalistic strategies used in writing to adventure into the benefits of less. See what emerges and join with me while I share what I learn from the literature and from reflective considerations of how sparsity, moments of simplicity and quietness can be used to see short story from a leaner, clearer and cleaner perspective.

**Cid, Teresa** (University of Lisbon, School of Arts and Humanities, CEAUL/ULICES, Portugal)

“‘The Sad Woman in the Doorway’: A Story by Julian Silva”

Julian Silva, a fourth-generation Portuguese American writer whose Azorean ancestors first settled in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1860s, is the author of the story “The Woman in the Doorway”, the closing piece of his collection *Move Over, Scopes and Other Writings* (2011), which shows his keen interest in silences and unusual presences. This story which may be

considered a non-fiction short story offers a narrative that hints at the autobiographical but aims to address a much wider problematic that has not lost its acumen in the present. I thus propose to draw from this story to discuss issues of erasure, control and maybe cancellation of women's voices and selves both in older immigrant contexts and in our own times.

**Cosgrove, Shady** (University of Wollongong, Australia)

“Flight—a case study: microforms, collections and containment. Possibilities for a ‘novel’ form”

Marketing aside, how useful is the notion of genre? The short story cycle is sometimes termed ‘a novel told in stories’, relying on assumptions about what, exactly, constitutes the ‘novel’ and the ‘short story’. Instead of progressing story via chapters, the short story cycle offers self-contained units that inform and highlight each other, inspiring readers to make connections between stories, characters, time periods and focalisations. In this context, what would it mean to consider the microfiction collection? What happens if the self-contained story units are between 200-500 words, or even fewer? Is there such a thing as too much self-containment? Or, might we see the emergence of ‘novels’ told in microfictive forms? This might seem contrary, but the question raises issues of genre, narrative, form and readerly expectations. In this paper, I will argue there is potential for the extended-microfictive form, paying particular attention to Lydia Davis’s microfictive collections, and using the experience of structuring *Flight* (Cosgrove, 2024) as a case study in how voice, theme, time period, and focalisation might be used to achieve an ‘extended’ longform effect through repetition and multiplicity in short-short pieces.

**Ells, Louise** (Nipissing University, Canada)

“Munro and her Work in the Time of ‘Cancel Culture’”

"We don't know what Munro thought or felt, and we never will. We only know what she did, which was monstrous, and what she wrote, which was beautiful." - Constance Grady, Vox. Within hours of Andrea Robin Skinner's revelation that she had been sexually abused by her stepfather, Munro's second husband, Fremlin, and Munro, fully aware of this, had chosen to stay with him, the internet was inundated with calls to “cancel” her. In *Monsters: A Fan's Dilemma*, Dederer suggests that female artists are considered monsters if they choose to put their artist practice before motherhood. For a female artist to remain married to a partner who abused her daughter was judged by many to be a new depth of wickedness. As shock gave way to anger, distress, and disappointment in Munro's actions, there was a rush to re-analyse her stories through the lens of biographical criticism despite the paucity of known facts. Moving forward, Munro's entire oeuvre will be re-evaluated; it is possible the writer will be deliberately separated from her writing. McGill once reassured me that “There is always more to say about Munro.” After the events of the past year, this has now become eerily prescient.

**Gelasi, Eleni** (University of Cyprus, Greece)

“Institutional Care in Contemporary Women Short Story Writers ”

This paper will examine how contemporary British women short story writers discuss the complexities of institutional care regarding mental health, aging, pregnancy and disease. The analysis considers how a broad spectrum of writers including Ali Smith, Janice Galloway, Sarah Hall, Jackie Kay, Tessa Hadley and Lucy Durneen engage with topics such as cutbacks on welfare, the outsourcing of care to the private sector, abortion laws, the relationship between caregiver and care receiver and caregiving during the pandemic. This presentation will explore common threads in a diverse body of stories and will locate the most prevalent concerns of women contemporary writers related to the nature and the quality of care provided within and by institutions today. The immediacy of the short story and thus its ability to depict reflections on current events, like the pandemic, will be at the centre of this study and will illuminate the reasons that the genre of the short story serves the thematic concerns. To discuss the ways that short story writers reflect on the experience of healing within institutions, I will adopt a feminist ethics of care perspective. This presentation will rely on theory from Virginia Held to sketch basic notions of the ethics of care through the reading of selected short stories. Furthermore, I will draw on the sociologist Nancy Fraser to examine how short fiction reflects on the role of the welfare state and its shrinking within a neoliberal context, on personal responsibility and on the impact on individuals and families. Joan Tronto will provide the theoretic framework to understand the vision for a caring democracy underlying the short fiction studied. To investigate the writers' preoccupation with the regulatory role of institutions and the consequences on both caregivers and inmates, my paper will unavoidably be informed by Foucault and by criticism on his relation with neoliberalism (Zamora and Behrent).

**Guerra, Juani** (University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Canary Islands)

“The short story as biocultural niche construction for ecological imagination, affective inquiry, and cultural health: The case of the fish-man as cognitive-cultural narrative device”

This presentation explores the potential of the short story to embody and reimagine fluid subjectivities through the figure of the fish-man—a hybrid being living between land and sea, culture and nature, myth and body, short story and novel. Starting from the 17th-century Spanish legend of the "Hombre Pez" of Liérganes, this project engages with both oral and literary versions of aquatic human-animal figures across cultures to reflect on the ways in which short fiction captures transformations of the self through environment, sensation, and narrative form. The corollary of this talk is itself a new artful hybrid living between short story, novel, painting, and scientific research paper as in Javier Sierra's autofiction *El plan maestro*. My central argument is that short stories, due to their brevity, fragmentariness, and affective immediacy, are uniquely suited to convey liminal states of being. The amphibious body becomes a narrative device to express permeability, illness, healing, and belonging in a world where boundaries between body, culture, ecology, and health are increasingly unstable, producing bodily disorders like obesity or Earth disarrays like climate change. This talk is a prelude to an experimental series of creative workshops to be conducted with coastal communities in the Macaronesian

region and north-western Africa, that will discuss how participants used mythical marine figures to generate micro-narratives (written, oral, visual) about their own health, memories, and relationships with the sea. These emergent short stories could suggest that fiction, especially when informed by sensory and biocultural experience, can open spaces for alternative ways of knowing and telling the body, a target in our Laboratory of Cognition & Cultural Health at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, in the Canary Islands. The talk is highly interdisciplinary, bridging literary analysis, embodied and enacted storytelling, cognition and cultural theory, and biopoetics, offering a transdisciplinary lens through which the short story becomes not just a literary artifact but a biocultural tool for ecological imagination, affective inquiry, and cultural health.

**Hafizi, Sepehr** (Cambridge University, UK)

“Fragmented City, Fragmented Self: Exploring Osamu Dazai’s ‘Eight Views of Tokyo’”

In 2024, an English translation of Osamu Dazai’s works, titled *Self-Portraits*, was published, featuring 18 short stories. Among them, “Eight Views of Tokyo” stands out as a compelling example of the short story form’s ability to distill complex themes of identity, alienation, and culture into an evocative narrative. Set largely in pre-war Tokyo and drawing heavily on Dazai’s personal experiences, the story employs a fragmented episodic structure and introspective narration that reflects the confessional *Shishōsetsu* (I-novel) tradition, while innovating within the short story form. At the heart of this analysis is the interplay between the fragmented self and the fragmented city. Dazai intertwines the narrator’s personal turmoil with various urban locations in Tokyo, portraying the city not just as a physical setting but as a symbolic reflection of the narrator’s fractured identity. This paper examines the story through three thematic lenses—psychological, cultural, and existential. Through the psychological lens, Dazai’s portrayal of mental illness, addiction, and self-doubt is startlingly candid, drawing on his own struggles to immerse readers in the narrator’s inner world. Culturally, the story captures a pivotal moment in Tokyo’s history, juxtaposing the city’s traditional roots with its rapid modernisation and highlighting the moral ambiguities of pre-war Japan. Existentially, Dazai explores themes of alienation and self-destruction, depicting the narrator’s search for meaning in a fragmented and increasingly disillusioned world. The paper also emphasises Dazai’s narrative techniques, including his use of an unreliable narrator, first-person confessional narration, and interior monologue. These methods blur the boundaries between fiction and autobiography, challenging the reader’s understanding of memory, truth, and self-perception. For instance, the narrator’s reflection—“Had I been deluded by art? Had I deluded art? Conclusion: Art is ‘I.’”—encapsulates the merging of personal and artistic identity, as in the *Shishōsetsu* tradition. Dazai’s short fiction is further situated within the broader context of Japanese literature. The episodic structure of “Eight Views of Tokyo” draws comparisons to Yasunari Kawabata’s *Palm-of-the-Hand Stories*, which achieve intensity through brevity and focus. Similarly, parallels can be drawn with Naoya Shiga’s “At Kinosaki”, where sparse, introspective prose evokes a profound sense of alienation. Ultimately, “Eight Views of Tokyo” transcends its historical context, offering a timeless meditation on survival, disillusionment, and the existential struggle for authenticity. Dazai’s work exemplifies the unique power of the short story to capture the fragmented realities of modern life and identity. This paper aligns with the conference theme,

“How it Works: The Uniqueness of the Short Story” by demonstrating how Dazai harnesses the form’s brevity and intensity to craft a profoundly moving exploration of the human experience.

**Halff, Antoine** (Independent scholar, USA)

“The Short Story as Protest Art in the Works of Claire Keegan”

The last days of my aunt Claire Larrière, the founder of the International Conference on the Short Story in English who passed away on November 30, were illuminated by her discovery of an author she read with enthusiasm, Claire Keegan. My aunt and I had worked closely together 40 years ago when she launched the Conference and her journal of literary criticism, *Visions Critiques*, to which I had contributed several articles. With only a few weeks to live, Claire asked if I would accompany her to Killarney and present a paper on Keegan. My paper focuses on two of Keegan’s books with which my aunt was especially taken, *Foster* (2010) and *Small Things Like These* (2021), both of which deal in different ways with the themes of filiation and social justice. While I aim to discuss them on their own terms, I can’t help reading them through the prism of my knowledge of my aunt’s fondness of them, nor stop seeking in them signs of what resonated so strongly with her in her final days. I find these cues in what I see as Keegan’s use of the short story as protest art, understood not just as art that is “engaged” and conveys a social and political message, but more viscerally as a textual practice that is itself liberating and quasi-performatively empowering and cathartic. My paper explores how the minimalism of the short story lends itself to this type of practice and lets the narration surface deep meaning from the noise of conventional small talk and deceptively banal interactions, heal the wounds of social relationships rife with abuse of authority and give back their voices to the self-effacing, the oppressed and the emotionally stunted.

**Jin, Hengshan** (East China Normal University, China)

“National Allegory vs the Voice of the Individual in Modern Chinese Short Stories”

In his profoundly influential article “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism,” Frederic Jameson, when talking about the relations between the literature in the West and that in the third-world, points out with such a striking force that “all third-world texts are necessarily, I want to argue, allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will national allegories, even when, or perhaps I should say, particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly western machineries of representation, such as the novel.” Though admitting that this judgment might risk “a grossly oversimplified way,” he goes on to make a very thorough analysis to prove his point, especially its insight in making the distinction, so enlightening that one is always convinced to agree with him with little reservation of one’s own. The emphasis on the national allegorical nature of the modern Chinese literature, to follow the logic of Jameson, immediately sheds much light on both the cultural and political functioning of the literary stories by modern Chinese writers, among whom, Lu Xun stands out as the representative as firmly believed and so well diagnosed by Jameson.

Still, one needs to take another look at Jameson's definition and analysis, and then finds something to add to his already seemingly seamless conclusion. The allegorical features in the stories of some Chinese modern writers, Lu Xun's short stories in particular, are so obviously necessary that they at one and the same time even appear to be political polemics, so as to awake the nation to the dangerous reality, according to Jameson's illustration based on his deep understanding of the historical context of modern China around the turn of the twentieth century. On the other hand, it is precisely due to this point that the individual voice of the authors play a critical role in trying to turn the nation around, thus achieving the purpose of national awakening. One can therefore also conclude that the so-called national allegory is substantiated and realized through the trajectory and projection of the individual voice, which is as well obvious. For one thing, Lu Xun, again, sets up a pioneering example, for another thing, other writers such as Yu Dafu also follows suit. The individual voice of these writers in fact shows multi-layered meanings. As mentioned by Jameson, the modern Chinese writers heavily adopt the western way of short story and novel writing, which itself speaks to their apparent individual choice as a gesture to depart from the traditional way of story telling in China. Lu Xun is supposed to be the first modern story writer. At the same time, the function of the individual voice could be felt clearly in their efforts to educate the individuals at large in society for raising their self-consciousness. As a result, the society will be changed, too. The eventual appealing to the nation is certainly there in their writings, but it should be clear that this will not be accomplished until every individual sees and seizes their own rights nationwide. This explains why Lu Xun gave up his training to become a western-style medicinal doctor and turned to take up literary writing as his career. Furthermore, some writers even delve deep into the area of human psychology to demonstrate something hidden, secret and mystic measured by the traditional outlook so as to outpour the characters' inner struggling feelings and convoluted emotions, which is almost rare before in the history of literature in China. The individual voice finds its expression strongly in this psychological exploration, to be more exact, the use of Freudian psychoanalysis. The representative writer is Shi Zhecun whose short stories pioneered the trend of psychoanalytical writing in the history of modern Chinese literature. In conclusion, the Jamesonian concept of national allegory needs to be modified and adjusted in order to better understand the "situational awareness" of modern Chinese literature.

**Kamata, Suzanne** (Naruto University of Education, Japan)

"Using AI to Hone Critical Skills in an EFL Creative Writing Class"

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is disrupting the publishing world and academia, creating anxiety among authors, editors, and teachers alike. While noteworthy concerns have arisen over the theft of material to train Large Language Models such as ChatGPT, and the significant ecological impact of data centers, AI is here to stay. Therefore, educators need to understand the potential capabilities and applications of AI. In Japan, where students receive little instruction in writing, partly due to large class sizes, the use of AI in generating texts may seem irresistible. Best-selling writer/artist Eiichiro Oda used ChatGPT to generate story ideas for his long-running



manga One Piece, and recent Akutagawa Prize awardee Rie Qudan notably employed AI in 5% of her novel Tokyo Sympathy Tower, and recently published a short story generated through AI prompts. Furthermore, some Japanese universities encourage the responsible use of AI. Preliminary research suggests that AI might be used to help EFL students improve their creative writing. Peer review is an effective way for students to develop critical skills and improve their own writing, however many students are reluctant to criticize others. In using text generated by AI, such as folk or fairy tales, students can suggest revision without fear of offense. Simple prompts tend to result in formulaic, underdeveloped stories short on figurative language, but full of adjectives and adverbs. Students can first learn to identify these weaknesses, and then learn to use prompts to effect changes to the existing texts, and evaluate the results. In addition, students can learn ways to elicit responses from generative AI to their own writing, and ideas on how to revise. This session will present the results of an action research project in which university students of English as a Foreign Language in Japan critiqued AI-generated texts, revised such texts via prompts, and elicited advice on original writing via AI.

**Kiriyama, Keiko** (Doshisha University, Japan)

“Mrs. Oscar Wilde's Fairy Tales”

It is well known that Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) published two fairy tale books: *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* (1888) and *A House of Pomegranates* (1891). They include many celebrated stories represented by “The Selfish Giant,” “The Nightingale and the Rose” and “The Fisherman and His Soul.” Compared to Oscar’s world-famous tales, it seems not to be so noticed that his wife, Constance Mary Wilde (1858-1898), produced two collections of fairy tales: *There was Once! Grandma’s Stories* (1888) and *A Long Time Ago: Favourite Stories Re-told* (1892), though the latter one where other writers also contributed stories. In these books she retells traditional fairy tales such as “Little Red Riding Hood,” “Puss-In-Boots” and “Jack and the Beanstalk” under the name of Mrs. Oscar Wilde. Taking into account that both Oscar’s and Constance’s first books were published in the same year and their second ones were produced in the consecutive years, we may assume that they should help each other in writing their stories. Besides her collections, Constance creates her original short stories, and in my presentation one of them titled “Far Japan” included in a coauthored book *Cozy Corner Stories* (1893), is featured. In the story, Isola, a seven-year old girl, is given exotic birthday gifts coming “all the way from that beautiful land of flowers, Japan”; “the wonderful doll [called Ai] with its almond-shaped eyes and straight black hair, dressed just like the real Japanese children” and “a Japanese fan with a garden painted on it.” Regarding the protagonist’s name, there are two intriguing points we should not overlook. First, it is named after Oscar’s sister christened Isola who died in 1867 at the age of ten. Constance must have named her character with the hope that Oscar’s sister will live forever in the story. Another point is that Isola is similar in its sound to Ai, the Japanese doll’s name, which may imply that Ai should be the alter ego of Isola. Indeed, Isola in the story falling asleep with the doll on her bed finds herself walking in Kimono attire through the Japanese garden painted on the fan. There is no doubt Constance creates the story under the influence of Japonism in which Oscar also shows a great interest. The purpose of my presentation is to shed light on Mrs. Oscar Wilde’s fairy tales that seem to have been unnoticed

and to examine her affections for Oscar's sister and also Constance's longings for "that beautiful land of flowers, Japan."

**Laranjeira, Delzi** (Minas Gerais State University, Brazil)

"Short Fiction on Climate Change: Perspectives from the Global North and Global South in 'For the Snake of Power' and 'The Serpent's Handmaiden.'"

Although speculative fiction has addressed climate change since the 19th century, the theme got prominence in the literary scene in the first decade of the new century, when writers emphasized it through various genres, leading to the emergence of what is known as climate fiction. The term refers to those narratives focused on issues related to climate change. By the beginning of the new century, "there has been an actual increase in literary engagements with climate change, and literary scholars have been busy exploring both these texts and the concept of climate change as a cultural phenomenon" (Johns-Putra 2016). Since then, numerous short stories and collections have been published focusing on climate change issues, including climate justice. There is a consensus that developing countries, often referred to as the "Global South," are the most likely to suffer the severe effects of floods, droughts, heat waves, extreme cold, and species extinction caused by anthropogenic climate change. This situation highlights the discussion about the unequal distribution of climate change impacts between industrialized and developing countries. These narratives present possible scenarios caused by climate change, either implicitly or explicitly pointing out the reasons and the groups affected by its effects. The perspective of these stories varies depending on their setting: the repercussions of climate change in the Global North differ from those portrayed in the Global South. The short stories examine the challenges of surviving in profoundly altered realities and the discrepancy in the impacts of the climate crisis according to economic and social conditions. By comparing the stories "For the Snake of Power," settled in Phoenix, Arizona, and "The Serpent's Handmaiden," which takes place in South Africa, readers can discern the differences derived from social and political structures that provide the means to fight against unjust systems. It is also possible to perceive how the characters in both stories convey different attitudes toward their relationship with the environment. Boyd (2006) remarked that the short story "can seem larger, more resonant and memorable than the shortness of the form would appear capable of delivering." By addressing climate change and the climate crisis, contemporary climate fiction short stories can stress the urgency of addressing the inequalities confronted by vulnerable populations and ecosystems. They motivate readers to reflect on these consequences and become aware of the challenges of climate change and the plea for climate justice.

**Liao, Weichun** (East China Normal University, China)

"Historicity of Li Yiyun's *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*: China in 1990s"

For the Western reader, the image of China is mostly of two types: one is an old feudal China, misogynistic and torn by incessant wars, as represented in Maxine Hong Kingston's *Woman Warrior* and Amy Tan's *Joy Luck Club*; the other is the new Red China, denounced as a

totalitarian regime repressing and distorting human nature, found in works such as Jung Chang's *Wild Swans* and Li Cunxin's *Mao's Last Dancer*. Both of the images convey a message of being the Other, the former for being backward and the latter for its segregation. Li Yiyun's works provide Western readers meaningful glimpses at an "even new China", the contemporary China, especially what happened to Chinese people after the introduction of the reform and opening-up policy.

According to New Historicism, the text is inevitably embedded within the socio-political conditions of its production and interpretation. The short stories in Li Yiyun's *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers* are marked with its socio-historical specificity. The paper attempts to review three major historical events during the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy: the reform of state-owned enterprises and the wave of layoffs in the 1990s; the reform of China's education system; the birth and development of China's stock market. All of the three events took place in 1990s, the first decade since China decided to open up and learn from the West. The characters and their lives in Li Yiyun's stories such as "Extra", "After a Life" and "Love in the Marketplace" are profoundly impacted and transformed by these three reforms, as Li renders their plight and struggle in the process towards "modernization". The stories of the "nobodies" form a contrast with the epic-style official narrative of the achievements of the opening-up and reform policy, providing a more realistic view to China in 1990s, as it was strenuously embracing modernity, with most of the its people unaware of and unprepared for what the policy would bring about to them.

**Loeschnigg, Maria** (University of Graz, Austria)

"The Part and the Whole: The Aesthetics of Fragmentation in Canadian Short Fiction"

As Vanessa Guignery and Wojciech Draę claim in their book *The Poetics of Fragmentation in Contemporary British and American Fiction*, the "last few decades have seen a renewed popularity of fragmentation in works of fiction that deny completeness, linearity and coherence in favour of incompleteness, disruption and gaps" (2019: xi). Fragmentariness, as has been pointed out repeatedly by scholars in the field, is integral to short fiction in general. Yet, in the contemporary short story, this genre-specific leaning towards the fragmented has often been intensified through radical techniques of disrupting unity and linearity. Such broken-up narratives, as I shall show, are subtle systems of meaning-making which derive their semantic potential from the relationships between the parts and the whole. Often revolving around issues of loss and crisis, fragmented stories thus mirror the content on the level of form – and they do so in a way that, even after the reconstructive act of reading that such stories demand, the fissures can still be felt. After providing a brief overview of manifestations of the aesthetics of fragmentation in contemporary Canadian short fiction, the focus will shift more specifically to authors such as Carol Shields, Caroline Adderson and Deborah Willis and their experimentation with forms of fragmentation, including the composite story, the braided story, and the multimodal story. The critical focus will be on how these writers have employed forms of fragmentation to lend further depth to their stories about mental breakdown, personal trauma, dislocation and isolation. In particular, the aim of my approach is to demonstrate how, in these stories, experiences of trauma and crisis are not merely narrated but also memorably conveyed

through a fragmented structure which foregrounds the mechanisms of alienation and disruption in poignant ways.

**Loeschnigg, Martin** (University of Graz, Austria)

“Storifying Newfoundland: Narratological and Generic Reflections on Michael Crummey’s Short Stories”

Michael Crummey is among the most prominent fiction writers in contemporary Canada, and a foremost exponent, together with Lisa Moore, Michael Winter and others, of a surge of Newfoundland writing since the 1990s. Mostly known as a novelist (there have been five more highly acclaimed novels since his best-selling *River Thieves* of 2001), Crummey, who refers to himself as a “storyteller,” has also published prose poetry, non-fiction and short stories. As he says in one of his collections of poems, *Hard Light*, stories are “one of an indefinitely large number of maps that might be produced for the same situation or from the same data” (London, ON: Brick Books, 1998. 103). In my paper, I shall discuss the stories collected in *Flesh and Blood* (1998) from a generic and cultural narratological perspective. I will show that – notwithstanding the progression or development suggested by publication dates – Crummey’s short stories are not simply preliminaries to the novels, but integral to his creating a literary landscape of Newfoundland. In his works, Crummey explores a wide range of aspects like the geology and biology of the island, the cultural history of indigenous and settlement communities, personal stories of encounters with the place, the political and industrial stories that have affected the original biome and economies, and the spiritual dimensions of the physical environment that press on everyday realities. In their different ways, the novels, short stories and prose poems thus contribute to what Susan N. Maher has termed, with reference to the Great Plains, a “deep mapping” of Newfoundland, “captur[ing] within their narrative structures a complex web of information, interpretation and storytelling” (Susan N. Maher. “Deep Mapping the Great Plains: Surveying the Literary Cartography of Place”. *Western American Literature* 36, 1 (2001), 7). In the short stories, as I shall show, the focus is on the importance of Newfoundland as an experiential space. While the novels and poems tend to be far-reaching as to the cultural historical dimensions of Newfoundland life, the short stories – which are also often more experimental in technique – provide a different approach to the storifying of Newfoundland. In accordance with generic characteristics of the short story, they offer concentrated glimpses of individual and communal experiences that add to Crummey’s deep mapping of Newfoundland in a specific and very important manner.

**MacGowan, Christopher** (College of William and Mary, USA)

“The Three Versions of Thomas Wolfe’s ‘The Lost Boy’”

Thomas Wolfe’s story “The Lost Boy,” generally recognized as one of his two or three best, is centered on the death from typhoid of his twelve year old brother Grover during the family’s extended stay in St. Louis for the 1904 World’s Fair.

“The Lost Boy” offers four separate perspectives on Grover. The first is fiction, set in 1904, imagining the boy wandering in the main square of his home town a few weeks before the St. Louis trip; the second records his mother’s memories, decades later, of Grover on the train to St. Louis; in the third Grover’s older sister remembers the day that the boy first fell sick, while in the fourth the narrator—actually Wolfe himself, now in his thirties a famous author but only three in 1904 and remembering little—makes a pilgrimage to St. Louis to find the house where his brother died.

As is well known, Wolfe needed substantial help from his editors in cutting his lyrical, impressionistic narratives down to commercial requirements, help either from Scribner’s Maxwell Perkins in the case of the two novels published in his lifetime, from Edward Aswell the editor of the three posthumous volumes published by Harpers, or from literary agent Elizabeth Newell who tackled the manuscripts sent out for short story publication, including “The Lost Boy.”

The separate editorial efforts of Newell and subsequently of Aswell produced two published versions of “The Lost Boy”—the 10,000 word version that appeared in *Redbook* in 1937, and the 13,000 word version in the 1941 posthumous Harpers collection *The Hills Beyond*. A third version appeared in 1992 as a 20,000 stand-alone novella, edited by James W. Clark, which, following the spirit of recent scholarship on Wolfe that returns to his original intentions, prints the version originally submitted to *Redbook* before Newell, in her own words to Wolfe, cut “the hell out of it,” reducing 82 typescript pages to the 40 that *Redbook* demanded, before consulting Wolfe on the revisions. Each of the three has its advocates.

It would seem that the unpromising circumstances behind the shortest, *Redbook*, version—the story cut in half before Wolfe is consulted, length dictated by a commercial publication, the pressures of Wolfe needing money and his publishers wanting to keep his name to the fore between novels—taken together would make for at the least a rather ragged and disposable version of “The Lost Boy” but in this case, with this story and this author’s particular kind of talent, the focus of short story form and what its possibilities bring to the four perspectives on the doomed boy, do much greater justice to Wolfe’s conception than the half-hearted posthumous tinkering by Aswell or the overloaded novella offered in 1992 as reflecting the author’s actual intentions .

**Morrissey, Ted** (Lindenwood University, USA)

“A Lesson before Writing: A Podcast Devoted to the Short Story Form”

In July 2023, my co-hosts and I launched a monthly podcast, A Lesson before Writing, which has the tagline “Writers, editors, publishers and teachers talking about writing, editing, publishing and teaching.” While we discuss all forms of narrative—from “hint” and flash fiction to the novella and novel—our chief interest has been the short story. We are all writers and teachers of short stories. Meanwhile, Brady Harrison’s specializations include being a critic of short fiction. Grant Tracey and I teach in MFA programs and are also involved in editing and publishing short fiction (Grant as a long-serving editor of *North American Review*, and I as the

publisher of Twelve Winters Press and its *Twelve Winters Journal*). From the start, each podcast episode has featured a recently published short story and short-story writer, drawn from literary journals, both in the U.S. and internationally. The types of stories we analyze run the gamut from traditionally written to experimental, by authors who identify as male, female, and gender neutral, as well as widely published and “new” writers. Among the featured journals have been *Nimrod*, *Gulf Coast*, *Bennington Review*, *SAND*, *Ecotone*, *EX/POST Magazine*, *Booth*, *Boulevard*, and *Story*. We talk about techniques at work in the stories, but we also approach them aesthetically, making sure to emphasize the artistry involved in their telling. Each episode runs about 80 minutes, and our podcast is available free of charge on YouTube, Spotify, and Apple Podcasts. Via our website and various social media outlets, we encourage viewers and listeners to read (and purchase) featured journals and the authors they publish. This paper will include conclusions about the current state of short story writing and publishing, in the U.S. and elsewhere, based on our encounters with such a wide variety of examples (as well as our experiences as writers, editors, publishers and teachers).

**O'Donnell, Marie Louise** (TU Dublin, Ireland)

“The Short Story as Incipient Drama”

John McGahern called the short story an “Explosion.” The well written short story contains a natural internal dramatic structure although it is not written as a dramatic form. Short story writers are dramatists at heart. They have to be as the action of their stories is compact, immediate and intense. They allow us as readers into their story at a certain point and they select our exit. We are left to decide what happened before we entered and what might happen after the story ends. It is up to our imagination to decide those fates. It is my belief that all short stories are incipient dramas. Contained dramas. Immediate dramas. The scenes, the description, the dialogue, the narration, are all part of the drama, and their very essence is the story. In an instant, we are involved. We are part of the story we understand and know the characters sometimes as though we are looking in a mirror. “The short story is the form on which the iron bar of character breaks,” Frank O Connor. When we read McGahern’s short stories it is as though we are sitting in a theatre as the curtain goes up on the lives and contexts of the characters. We journey with them through the acts of their causes, decisions and outcomes. When a short story is spoken aloud it also takes on new power and an understanding of its buried complexities are brought forth with fresh meaning. My paper will explore John McGahern short story “Wheels” as drama, the selection process, the dramatic dialogue...point and counter point, the dramatic scene changes, and his use of the narrator’s internal and external thoughts, description and dialogue.

**Petter, Sylvia** (University of New South Wales, Australia)[paper to be read by Catherine McNamara]

“The Smell of Dislocation: Olfactory Imagery in Selected Works of Janette Turner Hospital”

The words “olfactory imagery” may seem to be a contradiction in terms due to the difficulty of containing scent and the paucity of olfactory language. Scent, however, has strong links to memory and place, and through its non-visual and associative qualities may bypass language. I argue that engagement with the representation of scent in fiction can expand the current categories of formalist criticism found in narrative theory and Creative Writing pedagogy. My essay examines how Janette Turner Hospital employs olfactory imagery in her “Australian” stories and novels to represent the recurring themes of dislocation underscoring the lives of many of her characters. Despite the difficulty of representing smell in fiction, I explore possibilities for thematic considerations triggered by the percept of smell as experienced by Janette Turner Hospital’s characters, narrators, and possibly readers. Such explorations deal with the links between scent and memory, the liminality of both scent and the expatriate condition, as well as a narrative methodology which considers psychological and cognitive reactions to scent and culminates in their “mapping” and the “slippage” of personal associations. Both thesis components examine expatriate identity and approach its fictional representation through the filter of expatriate perceptions. Awareness by readers of such perceptions may serve to amplify their own appreciation of the dislocation of such identities in fiction, and in our current world of growing and even shifting diasporas.

**Pillai, Anitha Devi** (National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore)

“Creative Writing in Singapore’s Tertiary Institutions: Crafting the Short Story in a Multilingual, Multicultural Landscape”

Singapore’s creative writing programs have expanded significantly in recent years, reflecting a growing recognition of storytelling as an essential skill in higher education. Within this evolving literary landscape, the short story has emerged as a key genre—uniquely positioned to capture the complexities of Singapore’s multilingual, multicultural, and historically layered society. This presentation explores how creative writing is taught in Singapore’s tertiary institutions, focusing on the frameworks, pedagogies, and thematic concerns that shape the short story as a literary form in this context. It will highlight the increasing number of creative writing programs and their role in nurturing a new generation of writers attuned to the geographic, political, social, cultural, and linguistic intricacies of storytelling in a Southeast Asian setting. A central discussion point will be the pedagogical approaches that define short story instruction—from traditional writing workshops to interdisciplinary and multimodal methods that integrate digital storytelling, translation, and cross-genre experimentation. How does the short story, with its concision and narrative intensity, serve as an ideal medium for exploring Singapore’s linguistic diversity? How do educators navigate the tensions between form and cultural specificity, encouraging students to craft narratives that are both deeply personal and universally resonant? Additionally, the talk will consider the impact of emerging technologies—such as AI-assisted

writing tools—on short story pedagogy. While digital tools offer new possibilities for engagement, they also raise critical questions about originality, authenticity, and the evolving nature of creative authorship in an era of automated storytelling. By mapping the growing presence of creative writing in Singapore's tertiary education system, this presentation will illustrate how the short story is uniquely suited to capturing the shifting landscapes of identity, language, and belonging. Through this exploration, we gain insight into how the short story works in a contemporary, globally connected, yet locally rooted context, and why it remains a vital form in Singapore's literary imagination.

**Ponde, Rajendra** (Shivaji University, Kohapur, India)

“Environmental Consciousness in the Short Stories of Kenneth Anderson”

Ecological imbalance all over the World has created a serious concern for social activists, administrators, scientists and environmentalists. Now, we need to re-evaluate the literature of the past with an ecological perspective. The hunting stories have a very special significance in the history of literature. Kenneth Anderson (1910-1974) was an Indian writer of the Scottish descent, who wrote stories about his adventures in the jungles of South India. He has written eight books in the form of Jungle Stories which are hailed as classics of the Jungle Lore. His love for the denizens of The Indian Jungles led him to big game hunting and eventually to writing real life adventure stories. 1) “The Big Bull Bison of Gedesal” is the story of courage and heroism of the big Bison. The story is about the memorable event that occurred in November 1953. The big bull survived after a great fight with the mighty tiger. Anderson conveys the message that the man has no right to interfere in the scheme of Nature! 2) “The Black Rogue of The Moyar Valley” is a pathetic story of a full grown and exceptionally hairy elephant that ends with the tragic death of the elephant. Anderson justifies that the “Nature is supreme power!” by narrating his harrowing experience in the Jungle. 3) “The Man-Hater of Talainovu.” The story deals with the wily panther that made its abode in a steep valley some ten miles from Talainovu when she gave birth to her three cubs. But one day the bamboo cutters discovered her cubs in the thicket and killed them. The pantheress evidently remembered the slaying of her cubs and her feeling of hatred for the human race seemed as fresh as on that day! Anderson shows that the deforestation and human beings ruined her life. His environmental consciousness is evident here! 4) “The Sulekunta Panther” is a wonderful tale by Anderson. His ecological approach and love of wild creatures is revealed in this story. Anderson's first attempt to shoot that beast failed. After a month again he went to Sulekunta and had an encounter with the panther. He had his finger on the trigger of the rifle when he hesitated for a moment, he was lost! Anderson disapproves wanton killing of panthers and tigers. His stories reflect his genuine concern for the Indian wild life which is in danger of extinction by the encroachment of a “developing” population. The theme of conservation of forestry is recurrent in his short stories.



**Schildknecht, Flora** (University of Louisville, USA)

“Beyond Ekphrasis: The Short Story in 21st Century Art”

This paper investigates intersections of the short story in English with contemporary art. Close readings of short stories from authors working in collaboration with artists and curators demonstrate how stories deployed in art exhibitions can move beyond ekphrasis by creating narratives that not only describe visual elements but are in fact integral to the exhibition as a whole. These narratives expand the possible functions of the short story by shifting the typically private experience of readerly reflection into the public space of encountering art at an exhibition. While some of the stories discussed are presented solely during an exhibition, others are anthologized, published in journals, or collected in bound artists’ volumes, demonstrating the versatility of short fictive forms that can move between art and literary worlds to be received by multiple audiences. Representative short stories include Ted Chiang’s “The Great Silence” (2014, 2017), a story created for a collaborative project with the artistic duo Allora & Calzadilla, in which Chiang’s narrative (from the perspective of an endangered Amazonian parrot) serves as a subtitle script for a lyric film on the more-than-human, environmental destruction, and the search for extra-terrestrial life; Salman Rushdie’s “Ü Or, The Interpretation of Dreams” (2022), created for an exhibition at Fondazione Prada in response to the Cylinders of Gudea (2120 BCE), Mesopotamian artifacts containing a Sumerian inscription thought to be one of the oldest existing records of a dream; and Shubigi Rao’s flash fiction vignettes of resistance in the face of the obliteration of libraries and languages within her volume, *Pulp III: A Short Biography of the Banished Book* (2022), created for her exhibition of the same name curated by Ute Meta Bauer for the Singapore National Pavilion at the 59th Venice Biennale.

**Singer, Katie** (Independent Scholar, USA)

“Hearing Stories, Telling Stories: How Oral History Complements the Teaching and Writing of the Short Story”

Oral histories and short stories can go hand in hand. Pedagogically, teaching oral histories in the creative writing classroom reminds students that all of their stories are notable. This is counter to all too many messages from inside the academy, persisting as it does in holding up quite limited types of voices and writers to the students as the “important” ones. While this message may be implicit at times, other times it can take on quite the explicit nature. Oral history also provides a way in to understanding stories of the “marginalized.” Students are introduced to an array of racialized, gendered and classed stories that may or may not be reflective of their own personal experiences. The act of listening, and then writing, based on these listening sessions can stir up creative forces in some while affirming other young writers’ own personal experiences. As Amanda Wray, associate professor at University of North Carolina Asheville writes, “Oral history research methods and rhetorical studies are essential to the work of creative writing. Such research methods can build empathy and critical consciousness among writing students while also honing their creative writing skills and personal inspiration...” As both an oral historian and creative writer I see the oral history interviews that I listen to as nothing less than short stories – or perhaps collections of linked stories. As a scholar who uses oral histories in her academic

writing and presentations, I also see the need for a creative hand as I foreground these stories. My work requires that I call upon a myriad of literary devices, from characterization to placemaking. Yet, lest we mistake oral histories as simply a handy tool for writing our stories – the ones we make up, that is – oral histories also show us just what good storytellers “ordinary” people can be. This in turn complicates the whole definition of story, providing opportunity for deeper thinking on what it is we are writing – and why, indeed, we are even doing it.

**Springate, Michael** (Independent Scholar, Canada)

“How We Know: Michael Mirolla’s *The Giulio Metaphysics III*”

The paper argues that the short stories in Michael Mirolla’s *The Giulio Metaphysics III* (Leapfrog Press, 2013), taken together, create an epistemology rooted in a considered approach to our actual means of knowledge acquisition. I begin by defining the frustration with traditional historical narration felt by Flaubert, Joyce, and Beckett – each of whom strongly influenced Mirolla – leading to their literary innovations rooted in a radical representation of our means of knowing, then go on to show how these innovations are quoted and developed by Mirolla in this collection. A close reading of the grouped stories follows: a Prologue, three sections entitled Families, Friends, and Familiars which include two Intermezzos, and an Epilogue. The biographical information carried in each section, as well as its role in the sequence, are linked to progressively answer the question ‘how do we know’. In the emerging answer there is a clear and specific relation to trauma, be it individual and familial, as in the earliest stories, or collective and historical, as in the later. As the stories continue the braiding of the interior voice is increasingly foregrounded, as well as its ability to self-question. This leads to Mirolla’s presentation of the writer as simultaneously creative subject and literary object — a double helix which, conveniently for our sake, can be called Giulio. The paper concludes with comments on the historical positioning of ‘modernism’ and ‘post-modernism’, the names under which these literary innovations are most often grouped. The systemic preferences of this epistemology as evidenced in the collection are also noted. There is a privileging of transience to underscore the fluidity of identity; an insistence on the non-binding nature of knowledge to stay clear of ideological certainty; and the use of contradictions to create speculative alternatives.

**Steffen, Natalie** (Independent Scholar, Belgium)

“‘A Kind of Telescopic Vision’: Ageing and the Life Course in Mary Morrissy’s *Prosperity Drive* (2016)”

Mary Morrissy’s *Prosperity Drive* (2016) exemplifies the short story cycle, offering a formally rich and thematically suggestive engagement with ageing and the life course. Through interconnected yet standalone narratives set in suburban Dublin, Morrissy captures ageing as a relational and multiscalar process. This paper examines how *Prosperity Drive* positions the short story cycle as a vital form for interrogating Irish cultural constructions of the life course. The life course paradigm, originating in sociology (Elder, 1998; Billari, 2009), conceptualizes the stages and transitions of individual lives within broader societal frameworks. In literary Ageing Studies,

the life course is understood as a dynamic process shaped by overlapping beginnings, contingent transitions, and indeterminate endpoints (Lipscomb and Swinnen, 2024). Ageing, meanwhile, is recognized as a biological, chronological, psychological, and social phenomenon embedded in cultural narratives (Gullette, 2003). Kathleen Woodward emphasizes the estrangement inherent in ageing and the role of narrative in negotiating these processes (1991). Twigg and Martin underline the importance of cultural narratives in shaping perceptions of ageing (2015). These frameworks underpin this paper's analysis of *Prosperity Drive* as a work of 'age writing.' The collection is framed by Edel Elworthy, whose viewpoint bookends the text. In the opening story, Edel is an elderly woman with Alzheimer's disease, nursed on her deathbed by her daughter Norah. "Remember, remember, remember what?" concludes this story, while the final story loops back to Edel's youth and her chance meeting with Victor, her future husband. Yet Morrissy avoids a unifying protagonist, as each story centers on a different life, highlighting the charged interplay of individual and collective lives. Elke D'hoker describes the short story cycle's "dynamic tension between the one and the many," a feature central to *Prosperity Drive*. Each story stands alone yet gains resonance when read as part of the whole, recurring characters and events invite readers to construct coherence (or not) across varied life courses. As one character muses, "What she longed for, though, was a kind of telescopic vision so that she could see all the other worlds that were contained in there" (Assisted Passage). Through close reading and new formalism, this paper engages with Irish Ageing Studies scholars such as Heather Ingman, Michaela Schrage-Früh, and Margaret O'Neill to analyze how Morrissy interrogates culturally inscribed life course templates. It adopts a new formalist approach, inspired by Jacob Jewusiak's insight that literary form does not simply reflect ageing but actively shapes and interrogates its social and cultural meanings, offering opportunities to imagine alternative representations of ageing processes (2023). It draws on Ingman's argument about the short story's capacity to crystallize moments of revelation and evaluates whether, as Schrage-Früh and O'Neill argue, contemporary Irish literature (in this case, the short story cycle) might resist ageist stereotypes and demographic panic. Ultimately, *Prosperity Drive* reframes ageing and the life course, combining formal precision with thematic depth. Morrissy's work positions the short story cycle as a genre uniquely suited to capturing the multiscalar, unsettling trajectories of lives shaped by cultural and temporal contingencies of contemporary Ireland.

**Struthers, J.R. (Tim)** (University of Guelph, Retired, Ontario, Canada)

When the Story You Think You're Reading Ain't: The Mysterious Case of Alice Munro's "Jesse and Meribeth"

In Alice Munro's family history/herstory *The View from Castle Rock* (2006), there's a scene in the memoir-story "Working for a Living" where the father and the daughter arrive in the family's old car at a posh hotel where the wife and mother of the family is selling furs from their fox farm to rich American tourists. They drive around the hotel's circular driveway a couple of times, unable to figure out where to park since they have missed seeing the tiny sign that points to the parking lot. Here I imagine Alice Munro laughing. Metafictionally you might say. Maybe laughing a lot. On account of the number of occasions when on our first trip around a story of hers we miss some all-important detail or sign. Or eventually realize that the story concerns something altogether different from what we thought it was portraying. As I consider to be true in

examining the mysterious case of “Jesse and Meribeth” from Munro’s 1986 volume *The Progress of Love*, the first of the four successive story collections that I regard, artistically speaking, as her breakthrough books. Here we believe ourselves to be offered a good-humoured account of the sometimes lively but essentially everyday adventures of two adolescent high school girls, one who narrates the story and whose name is actually spelled Jessie and a classmate of hers whose name is actually spelled MaryBeth. Names being important in this piece, we observe the two girls playfully making characters out of themselves (as the author does of them) by inventing the alternate, we may say fictional, names for themselves announced in the title. To begin the story, Munro has the narrator Jessie remark one-sidedly and as a result misleadingly to herself and to us that “In high school I had a tender, loyal, boring friendship with a girl named MaryBeth Crocker” (162). But by story’s end, or rather in the all-important act of narration of the story, Jessie begins to apprehend something altogether different. Or at least the reader does. Hence the remarkably striking impact upon our realizing that the story we thought we were reading wasn’t what we were meant to connect with primarily at all. That was just the surface; we had to perceive, to enter, to engage with the depths. Suddenly at or more likely beyond the ending as we continue reflecting on what we have read – and isn’t that the way a great story works? – something drastic, something compelling happens. In this case, our sense of the story as a comedy switches to a wholly new awareness that what we have been reading is at its heart a tragedy, certainly for MaryBeth but especially for Jessie since the story, being told by her in the first person and now sadly in the past tense, is predominantly Jessie’s lamentable story. Hence The Mysterious Case of Alice Munro’s “Jesse and Meribeth” – shockingly resolved.

**Sun, Lu** (Shanghai International Studies University, China)

#### “Western Influence on Chinese Short Stories”

The rise of modern Chinese short stories profoundly reflects the absorption, localization, and functional differentiation of Western short story theories. In the early 20th century, Liang Qichao proposed the "revolution of the novel", advocating for the short story as a tool for the "new citizen" and initiating a close connection between literature and social change. In his essay “On Short Stories,” Hu Shi drew on Edgar Allan Poe's principle of economy and the unity of effect to argue that the short story should focus on the “most vivid moments” of social reality through a “cross-sectional” approach. He transformed Western narrative techniques into tools for reflecting Chinese social issues, giving short stories a realist core. Lu Xun further practiced this idea in works like “A Madman's Diary” and “The True Story of Ah Q,” blending Poe's psychological methods to reveal the national character's flaws through the spiritual struggles of lower-class characters, thus turning the short story into a vehicle for social critique and emphasizing the didactic function of literature. Meanwhile, writers like Yu Dafu and Zhou Zuoren turned toward the exploration of “art for art's sake,” incorporating Poe’s emphasis on subjective experience and artistic autonomy. In “Sinking,” Yu Dafu employed delicate psychological monologues to showcase the conflict between individual desires and moral dilemmas, while Zhou Zuoren argued that literature should transcend utilitarian purposes, instead, should commit to exploring humanity. The localization of Western theories stimulated the rise of modern Chinese short stories. On the one hand, Poe's advocacies of "unity of effect" and “psychological depth” were transformed into narrative strategies serving modern China’s goal to develop “new citizen”; on

the other hand, the stylistic features of short stories, such as brevity and rapid dissemination, were deliberately strengthened, making this genre a common ground for both social enlightenment and artistic experimentation. Thus, short stories not only undertook the mission of exposing social ailments and promoting ideological transformation, but also explored the formal boundaries of modern literature, ultimately establishing a literary theory system that is both socially and artistically significant.

**Sun, Wanning** (Nanyang Technological University, National Institute of Education, Singapore)

“Metaphors and Mouthfuls: Writing Food, Females, and Fragmented Memory in *Longing for Nanking*”

Food metaphors in literary fiction are frequently used to express emotion, often linked to themes such as nostalgia, healing, and sentimentality. These associations are particularly common in works by women and diasporic writers. However, food metaphors also possess broader narrative potential to represent experiences shaped by gender, intergenerational memory, bodily transformation, and cultural identity within changing social contexts. Despite their expressive potential, food metaphors remain underexplored in Anglophone creative writing in China. This paper addresses this gap by examining how food metaphors in short stories can articulate gendered experience, cultural inheritance, and the negotiation of identity in urban landscape of contemporary China. The study focuses on the creative praxis behind *Longing for Nanking*, a coming-of-age short story collection. The project explores how culinary imagery functions metaphorically to express themes of gendered identity, intergenerational memory, and transformation within the urban landscape of contemporary China. Through recurring food imagery from festival banquets to street snacks, the stories employ food-related embodiment to map both cultural and individual experiences of femininity. While the structure is still evolving, the collection draws on the affordances of the short story cycle to achieve symbolic continuity and thematic depth, allowing fragmented experiences to form an accumulative narrative whole. Methodologically, by integrating creative praxis with critical reflection, this paper draws on Flower and Hayes’ (1981) cognitive process theory to analyze the recursive development of metaphor and narrative voice throughout different stages in the act of writing. The paper also engages with critical discourse to contextualize the stories’ efforts to resist sentimental or oversimplified tropes in food fiction. This paper contributes to ongoing discussions on the uniqueness of the short story form and the craft of writing short stories. It positions the short story both as a mode of representing gendered experience and as a site of inquiry into narrative form. It further advocates for the short story’s uniqueness in its potential to challenge conventional uses of food metaphors and to contribute to broader conversations on gender and cultural expression in contemporary Anglophone fiction from China.

**Vignisson, Rúnar** (University of Iceland)

“Flash Backwards, Flash-Forwards, and Flash Nowhere at All”

Temporal shifts are common in short story writing, typically serving to deepen characterization and illuminate the present of the story. However, some consider them a cheap device and prefer to use subtext to convey everything needed from another time period—much like in Hemingway’s “Hills Like White Elephants.” Hemingway argued that an author must know more than what appears in the story for this method to work, with the text serving as only the tip of the iceberg. Flashbacks, nevertheless, are widely used in short fiction, providing satisfying context and valuable insight into a character’s emotional life. Flash-forwards, on the other hand, are quite rare. They propel the narrative forward in time to reveal a future event before returning to the present. This technique can create an uncanny effect, casting an ironic or ominous light on the character’s current situation. At the same time, some short stories operate entirely in the present, avoiding temporal shifts altogether. This choice can create an intense immediacy, as in a single uninterrupted monologue, or a sense of entrapment in a single moment, as seen in many minimalist and modernist works. In this lecture, I will examine these three methods of handling time in short stories and discuss their significance for narration and characterization. What impact do these stylistic choices have on structure, narrative flow, urgency, suspense, immediacy, and ironic contrast? What are the advantages and potential drawbacks of such temporal shifts in short fiction? To illustrate how authors employ these techniques and their effects, I will analyze three key examples: 1. Ernest Hemingway’s “Hills Like White Elephants” (no shift/subtext) 2. Alice Munro’s “Dimensions” (flashbacks) 3. Gregorio C. Brillantes’ “The Cries of Children on an April Afternoon in the Year 1957” (flash-forwards)

**Weiss, Allan** (York University, Canada)

“Periodic Changes: The Rise and Fall of Canadian Popular Magazines”

Until the late 1950s, the primary venue for Canadian short stories was the popular press. Weekly and monthly magazines published short stories for a mass market, and Canadian authors found a ready and fairly steady market in those periodicals for their works. Magazines like *Canadian Magazine*, *Canadian Home Journal*, *National Home Monthly*, *Chatelaine*, the *Family Herald* and *Weekly Star*, and *Maclean’s Magazine* published numerous short stories by writers who have disappeared from the history of Canadian short fiction. During the 1950s, however, the magazines began to die off or to change their formats, as they published fewer and fewer short stories, and the sort of short story they published faded away with the periodicals’ demise or switch to being dominated by news and photographs. Writers who had thrived in the days of the popular magazines, like John Patrick Gillese, Leslie Gordon Barnard, Margaret Barnard, and H. Gordon Green, now lost places to publish and therefore their audience. At one time, it was possible to make a living selling short stories to these magazines, but by the later part of the decade that was no longer feasible. Histories of American and British popular magazines have detailed the rise and fall of the popular press in the United States and the United Kingdom, but the Canadian popular magazine has received not nearly as much attention. Above all, we have seen few studies that have examined not just the fact of the evolution and death of popular

periodicals but also why they developed the way they did. Yet it would not be difficult to apply the insights of such scholars as Frank Luther Mott, Richard D. Altick, Jane Tompkins, William Charvat, A. S. Collins, J. W. Saunders, James Playsted Wood, Michael Denning, Alan J. Lee, and others to the Canadian scene. The growing importance of advertising in the financing of these magazines, and the rise of syndicates, had profound effects on the nature of what the magazines published and then their very ability to survive. Seeing Canadian popular magazines in their international context helps us understand their role in the production, distribution, and consumption of the popular Canadian short story until external circumstances rendered them no longer viable. As a result of their passing, the nature of the Canadian short story as we understand it changed radically, as new largely university-based literary periodicals replaced them as the primary publishers of short fiction.

**Whetter, Darryl** (Université Sainte-Anne, Pointe-de-l'Église, Nova Scotia, Canada):

“Interdisciplinarity, Including the Climate Crisis, in the Creative Writing Classroom: Excerpts from Routledge’s New Teaching Creative Writing in Canada”

Drawing on chapters from *Teaching Creative Writing* in this will address writing and teaching creative writing through interdisciplinary modes. The course, which has run for three years now, is in part motivated by growing public skepticism about the sciences that challenges those seeking to change public behaviour, and which universities themselves at times unwittingly exacerbate. With the first Canadian university CW courses offered as early as 1939 and Canada being a geographical if not linguistic and/or cultural midpoint between the influential CW pedagogical centres of the USA and the UK, bilingual, multicultural, postcolonial Canada is a unique landscape for charting both universal issues but also national particulars in CW pedagogy.

**Whitehead, Sarah** (Independent Scholar, UK)

“Pulp Modernism: James Joyce and the *Smart Set* Magazine”

James Joyce had a nine-year struggle to have his short story collection, *Dubliners*, published by Grant Richards in London in 1914, only to fail to receive any royalties as the sales were so disappointing. Three stories from the collection, ‘The Sisters’, ‘Eveline’ and ‘After the Race’ had appeared a decade earlier in the Irish magazine *The Irish Homestead*, but it was not until 1915 that his short fiction had a mass readership when ‘A Little Cloud’ and ‘The Boarding House’ were published in the May edition of the New York monthly, the *Smart Set*. And it was in this magazine, with its circulation of around 40,000, its cheap paper pages and light, modern tone, that Joyce’s fiction first met the American public. In this paper I consider Joyce’s two stories away from their now more usual material context of a bound collection and explore how they are influenced by their 1915 magazine frame, sitting alongside ‘entertaining’ fiction, epigrams, poetry, editorial reviews and mass market advertising. I argue that the satirical tone, reinforced by the sense of cultural superiority of this ‘magazine of cleverness’, dilutes both ‘the odour of ashpits and old weeds and offal’, and moral element that Joyce claims he wrote into the stories. I

also argue that the commodified frame of the magazine privileges the risqué, unconventional nature of the narratives over their underlying theme of economic and spiritual paralysis, the latter sitting uncomfortably against the advertisements for storage for furs, holidays to Bermuda and pills for ‘a girlish face and figure’. Indeed, by reading Joyce’s fiction in the *Smart Set*, we encounter a form of pulp modernism storytelling, aligned to the magazine’s cultural and commercial positioning, where the writer’s ‘scrupulous meanness’ is packaged to privilege certain readings over others in what was, for most of Joyce’s early readers, their first encounter with his writing.

**Woodhouse, Alison** (Bath Spa University, UK)

“Writing the Novella in Flash—A Close Reading of Techniques”

This paper proposes to explore a range of techniques used in the novella in flash, a hybrid form that sits between traditional flash fiction (up to 1000 words) and novellas (up to 50,000 words). This paper argues that they are not just long (linked) short stories but a unique and exciting form in their own right. Flash novellas are about connectedness whilst cutting away the connective tissue. You find the links in the spaces, jumping from rock to rock, lily pad to lily pad, skimming your stone across the pond, creating ripples that reverberate throughout the story. In the flash novella the reader is forced to pay close attention, not just to the fictional reality but to the omissions, the space between the stories. Fragmented but closely aligned, so that the whole becomes stronger than its individual parts. There is an arc, characters change, a story unfolds, often from multiple (polyphonic) viewpoints. -The novella in flash specifically uses jump cuts and experiments with multiple points of view and/or disrupted chronology and flash fiction techniques such as lists, hermit crab, breathless paragraphs. - The novella in flash falls anywhere between the traditional word counts for short stories (1000-7500) and novellas (20,000-50,000)- Traditionally each chapter will be titled and under 1000 words - Individual stories will be linked by characters and objects that move across the novella. - Use your titles both to structure your Nif and strengthen the overall theme/metaphor. “One way to describe the interplay of flash fiction and novellas in flash is to think of each flash as a star. Stars stand alone. They appear in the sky as singular sparks of light, each one possessed of its own flickering beauty. In nearly every era and culture, humans have named the stars and then taken those beloved luminous points and connected them in the sky into shapes and stories. Novellas-in-flash are like those constellations: writers linking their flashes together into a larger image – into narratives deep with possibilities.” (My Very End of the Universe, Rose MedsStal Press, 2014)

**Wu, Yue** (East China Normal University, China)

“Between Solitude and Connection: A Comparative Study of Yiyun Li and William Trevor”

This paper explores the literary connections between Chinese American writer Yiyun Li and Irish short story writer William Trevor, emphasizing how Trevor’s influence resonates in Li’s works. Despite their distinct cultural backgrounds, both authors share a theme and narrative style marked by subtlety, implicitness, and a pervasive sense of bleakness. Focusing on Li’s “Extra”



and Trevor's "Traditions", this study conducts a comparative analysis of their characters—marginalized individuals whose lives are shaped by unspoken intimacy and hidden desires. Despite differences in geographical and cultural contexts, both stories unfold in boarding school settings—one in 1990s Beijing and the other in religious Ireland—and center around the unlikely, fragile relationship between an old maid and a young boy. Besides the striking similarity of the relationship dynamics in these stories, another focus of this paper is the writers' use of circumstantial details. In both "Extra" and "Traditions", seemingly accidental elements are transformed into arenas where the unspoken is brought to light, illuminating the inner struggles of the characters and their hidden desires. In addition, Li and Trevor both adopt a restrained narrative style, which conceals as much as it reveals, capturing the unspoken thoughts and private struggles of their characters. This aesthetic of subtlety and implicitness underscores the profound isolation, solitude, and guarded privacy that define the human experience in their stories. Through this comparative analysis, the paper sheds light on the thematic and stylistic intersections between these two writers.

**Xu, Bernice** (Independent Scholar, Singapore)

"Reclaiming Voice: The Need for Creative Writing in the Singapore Secondary School Classroom"

In many Singaporean classrooms, the teaching of writing has become narrowly associated with the accuracy of language, task fulfilment and structure. Teachers and students view the teaching and learning of writing as mechanical rather than one that develops their potential as creators. As such, students often produce essays or stories that are formulaic, regurgitating memorised content instead of writing about authentic experiences and their beliefs. While it may enable one to score a decent mark in the examination, it has wider and even more insidious implications because the process of writing is seen as a performance of correctness and accuracy instead of self-discovery. The internalisation of this process during one's teenage years may lead to imposter syndrome and other mental health issues in their adult years because of the lack of practice and exercise in owning their experiences and voice. This paper would argue for the need to reintroduce Creative Writing into our classrooms as a core practice as the creative writing process allows for imagination, self-expression and developing the personal voice which are necessary for one to develop a healthy self-esteem and leadership qualities in navigating an uncertain world. It draws upon research about the psychological benefits of creative writing and is supported by studies on teenagers' and Gen Z's mental health. It positions creative writing as an essential tool for cultivating mental-clarity, confidence-building and emotional-regulation, enabling students to see themselves as active creators instead of passive consumers in a world flooded with endless stimulation. Ultimately, this paper aims to invite English language educators to reassess the role of writing as a way to build leadership qualities and deeper ownership over language in students, reflecting on the value of storytelling as both a pedagogical method and a humane practice that builds resilient, reflective learners in a world that increasingly demands both skill and soul.

**Xun, Yu** (East China Normal University, China)

“Masculine Anxiety in Sherwood Anderson’s Short Stories”

Sherwood Anderson’s short stories unfold as intricate meditations on masculinity and gender, rendered with a keen Freudian sensibility and an acute awareness of those relegated to the margins. While his work is celebrated for its incisive engagement with gender dynamics, it has also faced criticism for being “saturated with sex” and “insufferably monotonous.” As a writer who lived through a critical period of transformation in American history, Anderson’s portrayal of masculinity and gender relations can be viewed as his participation in the discourse on gender consciousness within this unique historical context. Focusing on *Winesburg, Ohio* and *The Triumph of the Egg and Other Stories*, this paper analyzes Anderson’s writing of masculine anxiety in an era marked by socio-economic changes, artistic disillusionment, and familial expectations. In *Winesburg, Ohio*, figures like Dr. Reefy in “Paper Pills” stand as relics of a vanishing world, their eroded craftsmanship mirroring the dissolution of traditional male roles. Likewise, in “The Triumph of the Egg,” the protagonist’s father is consumed by an obsessive pursuit of the American Dream, his futile striving embodied in the egg—a potent emblem of both fertility and failure, promise and futility, ultimately hinting at symbolic castration. Yet Anderson’s inquiry extends beyond individual men in crisis; his narratives unravel the tensions of gender relations, revealing masculinity as a construct shaped by—and often in conflict with—its entanglements with the feminine. In “Mother,” the suffocating bond between Elizabeth Willard and her son George evokes a Freudian drama of dependence and revolt, wherein maternal influence both nurtures and constrains, deepening George’s struggle for self-assertion. Similarly, Anderson’s portrayal of women oscillates between disciplinarian and redeemer, figures who both embody oppressive social conventions and offer the possibility of release from them. What emerges from Anderson’s fiction is not a rigid dichotomy between tradition and modernity but a meditation on the instability of male identity itself. His fragile, sensitive men—most poignantly embodied in Wing Biddlebaum of “Hands”—subvert the myth of masculine fortitude, while “The Man Who Became a Woman” dares to imagine gender as fluid and unfixed. In such depictions, Anderson not only exposes the structural roots of masculinity anxiety—encompassing economic, familial, and cultural forces—but also suggests the possibility of a more diverse, flexible understanding of gender identity. By weaving these threads together, Anderson’s work resists the notion of masculinity as a fixed essence, instead presenting it as a site of negotiation, tension, and transformation. His stories do not simply chronicle the decline of an old order; they gesture toward a new, more complex vision of male identity—one that remains profoundly resonant in contemporary discussions of gender consciousness.

**Yeo, Dennis** (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore)

“Teaching the Short Story: *Telltale: Eleven Stories* and *Hook and Eye*”

The brevity of the short story is especially apt for young readers with shorter attention spans while building their capacity, maturity and reading strategies for longer and more complex works. This paper explores pedagogical approaches for teaching the short story and the unique challenges and rewards that it brings to the Literature classroom. The reliance of the short story

on economy, nuance, omission and suggestion demands close critical attention to detail and an openness to ambiguity and interpretation from students. Studying an anthology of short stories also exposes students to the diversity of genre, themes, voices and styles that the study of Literature affords. In addition, the form allows for an exploration of emotions and perspectives through focused dialogue, intertextuality between stories, and transmediation to other literary forms like microfiction, podcasts, graphic novels or short films. *Telltale: Eleven Stories* (Gwee, 2010) and *Hook and Eye* (Holden, 2018) were recommended O-level literature texts in secondary schools in Singapore. Written by Singapore writers, these narratives aim to address socio-cultural concerns and imbue empathy in readers for the marginalized. In so doing, the authors (and publishers) had to boldly negotiate the line between social commentary and government censorship as the narratives raised controversial issues like ethnicity, the treatment of migrant workers, or the death penalty. The presentation will further discuss the production of accompanying study companions for these two texts to engage students in the classroom.

**Zhang, Joan Qiong** (Fudan University, Shanghai, China)

“‘The boy should always meet the girl’: Circuit through three stories”

“The Heart of a Broken Story” (1941), the American writer J.D. Salinger’s (1919-2010) self-claimed disciple work, ends by the sentence “[I]n a boy-meets-girl story the boy should always meet the girl.” Intriguingly the meta-fictional conclusive sentence tends to summarize a romantic (or ironically quasi-romantic) story by a paradigm. Across the Atlantic Ocean, the Irish modernist writer James Joyce (1882-1941) composed “The Dead,” the last story of his *Dubliners* (1913) to wind up the story cycle by the arch theme on a spiritual paralysis in the ancient Irish capital city. Still another ocean away, the Chinese writer Eileen Chang (Zhang Ailing, 1920-1995) created a short story “Love” (1944) within one page to recapture a woman’s emotional life as broken. “The boy should always meet the girl” paradigm circuits through the three short stories, in spite of the huge differences among them in culture, space, gender, and time, though the last of which might be covered by the same token of modernism. This paper here approaches the three short fictions by revealing the embedded paradigm, via the lens of which it analyzes renditions of love, criticisms on patriarchal ideas, commercialization implicit or explicit in erotic relation, and other concerns beneath the fictions. The circuit, or the comparative reading of the three, therefore attempts to see into some common features behind the differences, transcending time and space. The significance of the paradigm helps readers see Chang’s defiant attempt at the contemporary patriarchal authority, Joyce’s witting effort to be disillusioned from the spiritual paralysis status quo, and Salinger’s endeavor to denounce a commercialized phony society.