



University of Brighton, City Campus, 21-23 July

Conference Programme

THURSDAY 21ST JULY

15:30 - 16:30 – Registration, **Edward Street Foyer (ES)**, City Campus

16:30 – 17:30 - Welcome from the Vice Chancellor, Conference Organisers and Sharon Duggal
Reading, **Edward Street 105**

17:30 – 18:45 – **SPECULATIVE FICTION PANEL (ES 105)** with readings and round-table discussion with Judith Bryan, Katy Massey and Gemma Weekes. Chair: Leone Ross.

Glimpse: Black British Speculative Fiction

Three women contributors in Glimpse and its editor Leone Ross discuss what happens creatively and socially when black women writers write speculatively. What, if anything, do we bring to the page that is unique from that common reality; and what does speculative fiction offer us as a community? Why do we need to be active in this genre? Brief preview readings.

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18:45- 19:15 Wine Reception

19:15 – 20:15 - POETRY PANEL (**ES 105**) with Sundra Lawrence (Malika’s Kitchen), Rheima Robinson (Leeds Young Authors), Dorothea Smartt (Inscribe). Chair: Isabelle Baafi (Reviews Editor at Poetry London)

The development of Black British Poetry since 2020 has largely occurred by groups founded by women. This roundtable discusses their creation and impact on the UK poetry landscape with readings from the poets.

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FRIDAY 22ND JULY

9.00-9.45 Late registration, Edward Street Foyer, City Campus

9.45-10.00 (ES 105) – Patricia Cumper and Pauline Walker, THE AMPLIFY PROJECT podcast - <https://theamplifyproject.co.uk/>. And afterwards available for recordings in in **ES 104**.

Chair: Suzanne Scafe

10.00-11.15 PARALLEL SESSION 1: BLACK WRITING AND TRAUMA (ES 103)

Chair: Dr Jess Moriarty (Brighton)

Christina Slopek (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf), ‘Black Woman, Interrupted: Challenging Racialised Mentalism in Jacqueline Roy’s *The Fat Lady Sings*’.

“If I was white you’d let me play my music, but if anybody black makes a noise, everyone gets scared there’s going to be a riot” (Roy 9). This is what Gloria, one of the protagonists of Jacqueline Roy’s *The Fat Lady Sings* (2000) bitterly remarks. *The Fat Lady Sings* narrates the stories of two black women who are admitted to a psychiatric ward in 20th-century Britain. Taking into consideration the women’s fates and giving voice to their points of view, *The Fat Lady Sings* creates space for (literally and conceptually) marginalised subject positions of, in one case queer, institutionalised black female mental patients and at the same reflects critically upon racialised pathologisation of non-normative behaviour. Roy’s novel was first published in the year 2000. Critically neglected, it only gained greater attention last year as part of the ‘Black Britain: Writing Back’ series Bernardine Evaristo has overseen at Hamish Hamilton. In her introduction to Roy’s novel, Evaristo suggests that there might “have been some discomfort with reading a novel so overtly and uncompromisingly about black women with mental health issues” (x). Similar to works like Susanna Kaysen’s famous *Girl, Interrupted* (1993), *The Fat Lady Sings* breaks the silence that frequently surrounds psychiatric treatment and hospitalization. Going beyond narratives like Kaysen’s, Roy’s novel further exposes intersecting heterosexist, mentalist and racist structures and forms of abuse in the British psychiatric system. The narrative challenges psychiatric “complicity with mentalism”, i.e., with normative structures discriminating against people with mental distress (Punzi and Röder 195), and complicity with racism ingrained into these structures, which shows for instance in “the ‘big, black and dangerous’ stereotype” (Fernando 105). On the formal

level, multiperspectivity and intermedial techniques reimagine British self-narratives and images by pointing to blind spots of British institutions, pluralising the novel in content and form.

Rebecca Romdhani (University of Liege), 'Child Protection v Child Autonomy in Kerry Young's "Home Is Where the Heart Is"' ([ONLINE PRESENTATION](#))

The 1959 UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child set out to protect the child from harm, abuse, and exploitation, whereas the later 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child added to these protections the autonomy of the child, which included social inclusion, self-determination, and empowerment. As Christine Barrow and Janet Brown explain in *Children's Rights Caribbean Realities* (2001), in Jamaica this produced confusion and resistance because children's rights and parental rights, in terms of authority, were often viewed as conflicting, and legislation from outside the region was seen as foreign and culturally inappropriate. The tensions between child protection and child autonomy both in Jamaica and in the UK are played out in Kerry Young's story "Home Is Where the Heart Is" (2018). In this text, I maintain, Young compels the reader to take on the role of social worker to her child protagonist. The story is narrated by an unnamed twelve-year-old black Jamaican girl who was adopted by white British parents in 1967 and brought to live in a village in Leicestershire. While narrating her first year in England, in which she experiences overt and subtle racism, she also informs the reader of her life in Jamaica, where she was prostituted by her father and became pregnant. Throughout the text, the reader is presented with the child's opinions of her own actions and of what is best for her. The reader is set the task of negotiating between what they believe to be intervention as protection and instances when her right to autonomy should prevail. The story sets the reader up to fail in the narrative set in England because the plot defies expectations, showing the importance of a child's autonomy, which is reflected in her right to authorise and control the interpretation of her own narrative.

Mona Becker (Halle University, Germany), "'Raised Under Glass": Trauma, Gaze, and the City in Aminatta Forna's *Happiness* (2018)'

The glass dwellers were terrified of the cloche being lifted. They treated the suffering of others as something exceptional, something that required treatment, when what was exceptional was all this. (Forna 232) Since Cathy Caruth's assertion that «trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures» (11), (literary) trauma theory has come under increasing scrutiny for universalising Western-based notions of trauma, marginalising non-Western experiences, and ignoring the specifically Western epistemological environment that saw the rise of trauma theory to a dominant tool of making sense of the world in the late 20th century. In Aminatta Forna's 2018 novel *Happiness*, the need to decolonize trauma theory in order for it to live up to its early «promise of cross-cultural ethical engagement» (Craps 2) is at the very core of the narrative in which Attila Asare, a Ghanaian psychiatrist and trauma expert visits London to take part in a conference on PTSD. Reversing his expert gaze, usually reserved for the places of conflict he visits professionally, upon the city and those who live in it as if «raised under glass» (Forna 232), Atilla comes to challenge his profession's take on trauma with the help of Jean Turane, a wildlife specialist working with urban foxes. In this talk, I will investigate how Aminatta Forna questions the universalising origins and practices of trauma theory and instead proposes a «decolonized trauma theory» by returning the professional gaze on a Western setting and questioning the epistemological power dynamics that surround trauma theory and its medical and cultural practice. Secondly, I will examine how the novel creatively decolonizes

«dominant trauma aesthetics» (Andermahr 501) through its narrative devices, the engagement with the city and its diverse human and non-human inhabitants, and in its hopeful imagination of a diasporic community «embracing the eco-cosmopolitanism of urban living» (Mukherjee 416).

10.00-11.15 PARALLEL SESSION 2: THE POWER OF ONE – BLACK BRITISH WOMEN’S AND NON-BINARY WRITING FOR SOLO PERFORMANCE (ES 105)

Chair: Deirdre Osborne

Prof. Lynette Goddard (Royal Holloway), Vanessa Damilola Macaulay (Royal Central School of Speech and Drama), Deirdre Osborne (Goldsmiths) and Amy Terry (Royal Holloway)

In an interview with Lanre Bakare (2021) the actor Gabrielle Brooks reflected, “I’ve stood on the stage and I thought to myself: ‘Wow, there is no one looking back at me that reflects me.’ Not only does it make me feel lonely, but it also makes me feel like there’s no progression.” Black British writer/performers have created a legacy of powerful monodramatic work and solo performing styles that intervene into exclusion zones and recalibrate cultural spaces. The empathy of recognition, of shared experience, of what James Baldwin (1976) described as a current flowing ‘back and forth between the audience and actors: flesh and blood corroborating flesh and blood – as we say, testifying’ is an exhilarating feature of work created by Mojisola Adebayo, Travis Alabanza, SuAndi, Michaela Coel, Cush Jumbo, Urielle Klein-Mekongo, and Selina Thompson. In this panel, we propose four papers and a dialogue exploring solo writing and performance that centres the work of Black women, trans/non-binary, and gender non-conforming practitioners. We consider how they use monodrama and bio/pic forms to explore and interrogate Black lives and experiences in Britain. Through papers on the work of Mojisola Adebayo, Cush Jumbo, Travis Alabanza, SuAndi, and Selina Thompson, we consider the past and present of personal and testimonial monodramas that explore politicised themes of gender, race, class and intersectionality, including responses to histories of enslavement and its afterlives in anti-Black racism, and issues about queer/trans gender non-conforming identities and safety on the streets. Further aesthetic connections will be examined between contemporary solo performance and the forms and techniques of auto/biographical, oral history performance, live art, performance poetry, club and cabaret performance, stand-up and theatre for healing.

11.15-11.45 Tea and Coffee Break (ES Foyer)

11.45-12.45 SESSION 3: EXPERIMENTAL NARRATIVES I (ES 103)

Chair: Kate Aughterson (Brighton)

Katrijn Van den Bossche (Vrije Universiteit Brussel – Research Foundation Flanders) (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), ‘Self-Reflexivity and Generic Change in 21st-Century Black British Women’s Literature’

This paper discusses my research-in-progress on the project “Self-Reflexivity and Generic Change in 21st-Century Black British Women’s Literature”, funded by the Research Foundation-Flanders (FWO) and directed by Prof. Janine Hauthal (VUB). Drawing on theories concerning genre, metafiction and postcolonialism, the project demonstrates how instances of self-reflexivity in contemporary British women writers of African and African-Caribbean descent call for the refinement of existing

(white/male-centred) theories of metafiction, which all too often have dissociated self-reflexivity from realism and political engagement. Instead, the metafictional aspects of Black British women's writing point to "an explicitly political postmodernism" (Upstone 2015). Conceptualising metafiction as a catalyst for generic change, the project centres on metafiction's aesthetic functions and explores how postmillennial self-reflexive fiction by British women of African and African-Caribbean descent has 1) broadened Black British literature's subject matter (i.e. topical invention), 2) revitalized existing genres through variation, hybridization and mixing (i.e. genre development) and 3) led to the creation of new subgenres (i.e. genre multiplication). This paper illuminates some of these claims by means of a case study of *White is for Witching* (2009) that shows how Helen Oyeyemi advances the genre of the gothic novel through experimental multiperspectivity and other metafictional aspects. This case study also illustrates how the project's tracing of an alternative self-reflexive tradition may contribute to a better understanding of the political, cultural, and aesthetic dynamics of genre evolution today in and through the Black British field.

Kayra Maes (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) & Elisabeth Bekers (Vrije Universiteit Brussel).
'Transcending Temporal and Generic Confines in Patience Agbabi's Children's Novel, *The Infinite* (2020)'

In 2020 the BBC adaptation of Malorie Blackman's *Noughts and Crosses* young adult series drew new audiences and readers to the Black British author's depiction of an alternate reality in which racial power balances are reversed. Although Blackman has been hailed for having "pioneered an incredibly effective portrayal of the workings of racism in ways that were particularly absent in the Young Adult genre" (Mukhtar 2021), the author has repeatedly remonstrated that, as a Black writer, this is also "the only topic some people feel you're qualified to write about" (qtd. Mukhtar 2021). Such reductionism also marks Black British literary criticism, which has tended to concentrate on issues of race and multiculturalism. This paper moves beyond the customary sociological readings by considering how performance poet Patience Agbabi extends the confines of traditional genres in her debut as a children's writer. A fascinating cross between whodunnit and ecological science fiction, *The Infinite* (2020) tells the story of a young black girl with autism who makes use of her ability to travel through time to respond to an SOS text from the future. In my discussion I will highlight how, instead of prioritising the girl's racial identity, Agbabi focuses on her protagonist's autism and the crucial role it plays in both her ability to solve the mystery and her journey of moral discovery. Taking a special interest in aspects of form, I examine the creative challenges that Agbabi's time travel narrative presents to the (young adult's) Bildungsroman, the mystery novel, science fiction and eco-fiction and the influence of the author's background as a performance poet on her use of language.

12.45-13.45 LUNCH BREAK (ES Foyer)

13.45 – 15.15 PARALLEL SESSION 4: IDENTITY, POLITICS, (UN)BELONGING (ES 105)

Chair: Sarah Lawson-Welsh (York St John)

Eva Ulrike Pirker (Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf), 'Acts of self-translation in Andrea Levy's early fiction'

Much of Andrea Levy's early writing could be described as centring on "postmigrant" experiences. Works like *Every Light in the House Burnin'* and *Never Far From Nowhere*, as well as some of Levy's short fiction, zoom in on the experience of children of the Windrush generation. As "second generationers" her figures often find themselves in ambivalent and insecure positions with regard to questions of belonging, and yet frequently assume – or are believed or even urged to assume – the role of translators of culture, mentalities and mindsets. Just what to translate, however, remains a fraught and vexing question in a society structured in a system of selective valorisation and apparently fixed cultural hierarchies that operate along the lines of class, race and other parameters of identification and ascription. Drawing on Edouard Glissant's conceptualisation of opacity and Sylvia Wynter's notions of autopoiesis and autonomy, my paper explores Levy's literary engagement with acts of self-translation – or missing acts thereof –, with a particular focus on her earlier works, which today can also serve as part of a generational cultural archive.

Modhumita Roy (Tufts University), 'A City Visible but Unseen: Gender and the Poetics of Space in Black and Asian Women's Writing (Andrea Levy and *Brick Lane*)' ([ONLINE PRESENTATION](#))

Raymond Williams, in his classic *Country and the City* argued that the "characteristic movement" of the "new kind of novel" (the Dickensian) is "a hurrying seemingly random passing of men and women, each heard in some fixed phrase, seen in some fixed expression: a way of seeing men and women that belong to the street." This "new kind of novel," inaugurated in the nineteenth century in Charles Dickens' novels, also produced a new way of thinking about the city, particularly London. With some modification Williams' observation appears to hold true of such recent novels as Gautam Malkani's *Londonstani* (2006) or Guy Guneratne's *In Our Mad and Furious Cities* (2018). In these novels, young men inhabit the streets and outdoor spaces of London through a restless mobility. The restlessness itself becomes a feature of a performance of masculinity. But what might we find if we shifted our attention to novels written by Black and Asian women? Where, in these novels, is there a sense of restlessness or even mobility? By carefully reading such novels as Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003), Andrea Levy's *Every Light in the House Burnin'* (1994), among others, this paper seeks to rethink the city (London) from the point of view of women whose access to the exciting, cosmopolitan, "large and wild" (Peter Ackroyd) metropolis is limited and restricted. Confined within the walls of crumbling Council Estate flats, for the likes of Nazreen, the main character in Ali's novel, London is a place where "all signs...only tell you what *not* to do." In an extension of Williams' still useful if incomplete analysis, I wish to look carefully at the non-apparent restrictions—social, individual, economic, and ideological—that inhibit movement to ask: how does the racially gendered experience of space which recasts the city create a different kind of novel form?

Selle Denier (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), "'Words of Women, Crying to Be Heard': Audre Lorde's Legacy in the Activist Poetry of Jackie Kay and Dorothea Smartt'

Despite the fact that many black British lesbian poets name Audre Lorde as an inspiration for their own writing, no research has been done relating her to Black British Poetry. In this paper, I will partly fill this void by analysing how Lorde's activist ideas echo in the poetry of Jackie Kay and Dorothea Smartt, by discussing how the rewriting of cultural history, the use of language and ideas of identity and belonging are used in selected poems by Kay and Smartt. Situated at the intersection of the historically neglected critical fields Black British Poetry and Queer Poetry, this study aims to contribute to these fields and open them up by connecting black British poets to other diasporic writers.

Kavita Bhanot (Leicester University), 'Reading the Britishness of Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*'

Kamila Shamsie's 2017 novel *Home Fire*, which focusses on the deprivation of nationality by the British government, can be seen as a premonition of the attacks in the years since, on black and brown people's citizenship, including the Windrush scandal, Shamima Begum and the Nationality and Borders Bill. At the same time, I argue that *Home Fire* belongs to body of literature by black and Asian British writers, that is deeply invested in Britishness – overt allegiance and entanglement that we rarely see in literature by white writers. The novel has been read as 'revealing' the Muslim or 'Islamist' or 'fundamentalist' subject, or as actively resisting this gaze and expectation; both are 'multicultural' readings, reflecting the assumptions of the reader and the text itself. These readings, as well as the novel itself can be seen to extend the work of the State - its concern with nationhood, with how non-white citizens are 'managed' – which is at the heart of multicultural policy – whether through assimilation or acknowledgement of 'difference'. It is Britain's failure to live up to the ideal version of itself, to live up to 'British Values' that is at the heart of *Home Fire*. The novel is not simply about the technicality of citizenship; it is deeply invested in Britishness; is about the ideal of an inclusive Britain, whilst showing that this is not always realised. Most of the obstacles in the novel are connected to the ways in which the characters, all of whom are shown to have an attachment to Britain, considering themselves British, are not always accepted by Britain. While the novel appears to show different perspectives through its five narrators/main characters, it is Eamonn who encapsulates the perspective of the novel; a secular liberal London-centric Britishness, a white multiculturalism, indicated through 'civilised' signifiers such as literature and love.

13.45- 15.15 PARALLEL SESSION 5: THE POLITICS OF PUBLISHING AND LITERARY PRIZES (ES 103)

Chair: Kadija George (IES)

Prof. Maryse Jayasuriya (Texas Tech University) and Prof. Kanika Batra (University of Texas, El Paso), 'The Empire Publishes Back: Landmark Literary Anthologies' ([ONLINE PRESENTATION](#))

This paper engages with 'new' writing venues to examine anthologies as a genre supporting BAME authors during the decades of the 1980s and the 1990s when there were fewer venues for publications available than today. Landmark anthologies of the time include *A Dangerous Knowing: Four Black Women Poets* by Barbara Burford, Jackie Kay, Grace Nichols and Gabriela Pearse (Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1980), *Charting the Journey: Writings by Black and Third World Women by Shabnam Grewal* (Inland Womensource, 1988), and *Daughters of Africa: An International Anthology of Words and Writings by Women of African Descent from the Ancient Egyptian to the Present* (Cape, 1992). These multi genre publications by black and feminist editors brought mainstream recognition to many authors over the next few decades. The significance of these works in altering the British literary and cultural landscape can be historicized in connection with Hazel Carby, Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy's assessment of British education, feminist solidarity networks, and cultural resistance in the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies' report *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in Britain in the 1970s*. The materiality of the circulation and reception of these collections, especially their validation of diverse voices for reading pleasure, classroom instruction, and academic research, makes them invaluable sources for contemporary British literary history.

Chloe Ashbridge (University of Newcastle), 'New Northern Voices: The Portico Prize and Asian British Women's Writing'

This paper examines the contribution of the Portico Prize (1985-) towards a devolved approach to Asian British women's writing. The Prize is a major literary award for the book that 'best evokes the spirit of the North of England' (Portico Prize, 2021), and a key driver of the growing momentum to move Britain's literary industry beyond London. In 2018, a collective of Northern literary presses published an open letter asking the sector to change to better reflect its readers, noting how 'white, middle-class and London-centric [the] industry is' (Northern Fiction Alliance, 2018). At the same time, in post-Brexit Britain, the North of England has been framed within media and political discourse as a post-industrial monolith of 'white working-class' identity (Favell and Barbulescu, 2018), in turn, marginalising complex, intersectional experiences of race and class in the region (Sethi, 2020; Runnymede Trust, 2018). This paper addresses these parallel movements, revealing an understudied linkage between regional imbalances in the creative sector and exclusory representations of Northern England. First, I situate the Portico Prize within existing debates regarding the devolution of British literary culture. Drawing on two case studies of Asian British women's writing that were longlisted for the Prize in 2021, I consider Anita Sethi's *I Belong Here* (2020) and Sairish Hussain's *The Family Tree* (2020) as new, under-theorised accounts of race, class, and Northern identity. Specifically, I explore how these novels assert the presence of Asian British women's voices in non-metropolitan spaces across the region. I conclude by proposing that the Portico Prize represents a model for a devolved approach to Asian British women's writing with two distinct implications: first, it problematises monolithic understandings of race and class in Northern England; second, it provides a contribution to diversifying the literary industry through its attention to writers from a range of underrepresented backgrounds and localities.

Eurekah Shabazz (Writer), 'Dismantling Barriers for Black Disabled Women Writers'

The purpose of the paper is to understand and explore 'what gets in the way' for African-Caribbean disabled (enabled) woman writers, who wish to make their mark in Britain's publishing world, and why such writers continue to be significantly marginalized, invisible and voiceless, as well as neglected, and still remain an under-represented group within the UK. The particular group, Disabled African-Caribbean Women, between the ages of 21 – 70, who have with long-term illnesses or ailments (seen or hidden disabilities) that limits their day-to-day activities. There presently seems to be relatively little or no data in this area so will include what is available in relation to statistics. The use of peer reviews, using my own lived experiences as a disabled (enabled) writer, 'Why I Write.' Shabazz, (2003). Shabazz, E. (2016), p.62, Relapse, *The Metaphysics of Universal Truth: Colour – To See or Not to See*, Cyprus, Relapse Collective.com. Shabazz, E. (2005) p.92, *Brown Eyes – A selection of creative expressions by black and mixed-race women*, London, Troubador Publishing Ltd. I plan to use content analysis to critically review the experiences from a cross-section of other disabled (enabled) published writers, exploring inequalities, discrimination, and prejudices, as well as the similarities, differences and shared experiences. At the same time, the symbiotic relationships between disabled writers and publishers will be explored. I hypothesize, that if there were to be a decolonization-shift within the infrastructure of the publishing world, reframing the landscape of equality, visibility and representation, conversely, it would invariably bring together the contributory factors and successes, or a lack thereof, of disabled (enabled) unpublished and published authors. Presently, the lack of

available research, thus far, clearly indicates the invisibility and voicelessness of African-Caribbean disabled writers, who are indeed, a marginalized oppressed group.

15.15 – 16.30: ROUNDTABLE - WRITING NEW LANDSCAPES AND WALKING THE GLOBAL IMAGINARY (ES 105) – with ALINAH AZADEH, writer-in-residence, Seven Sisters & Sussex Heritage Coast in conversation with local writers Dulani Kulasinghe, Akila Richards, Pauline Rutter, Anooshka Rawden, Cultural Heritage Lead, South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) and Amy Zamarripa Solis (Writing Our Legacy).

Supported by The Centre for Arts and Wellbeing, University of Brighton, <https://www.brighton.ac.uk/caw/index.aspx>

Writers & partners from the ‘We See You Now’ (WSYN) project share & discuss their combined strategies for creating greater cultural equity in the representation of narratives within the iconic coastal area of the Seven Sisters & Sussex Heritage Coast¹, UK. This roundtable presents the journey & model of the evolving project, offers readings of new work, & opens a discussion on the space for opportunities & existing resistance to initiating decolonial literature production within and in equitable partnership with a National Park. We also celebrate the role of creative solidarity and collective, regenerative working in fostering new networks and collaborative possibilities.

[We See You Now](#) (WSYN) is a landscape & literature project dedicated to evoking the trans-global imaginary of the Seven Sisters & Sussex Heritage Coast, through new stories & poetry, across audio & print. Initiated & led by writer-in-residence Alinah Azadeh, it hosts (mainly urban-based) writers to come into direct, collective experience of the landscape, using the rich metaphors within this iconic coastline to explore their migration legacies, belonging, loss, climate change, biodiversity & renewal – & to imagine more equitable landscape futures. WSYN is funded by South Downs National Park Authority & Arts Council England. WSYN also encompasses writer-based workshops (including with novelist Leone Ross), [The Colour of Chalk podcast](#), as well as a public, self-access writing guide, audio commissions & live events (launching this autumn). The voices and cultural heritage of Black, Asian, mixed-race & / or queer writers of colour are missing from the recorded cultural histories of this area, one of the UK’s most visited & iconic beauty spots – & now a hardening border. Whether through rural racism, anti-refugee narratives, cultural amnesia, access issues or an unspoken sense of possession rooted in class & landowner privilege, literature which evokes the presence, heritage & transcultural perspectives of those having migrated to or living on the edges of this area of the South Downs National Park remains largely invisible and stuck in tropes of a romantic pastoral idyll – & a narrow cultural view of rural Englishness. Opening a decolonised lens on this landscape will enable audiences & readers to navigate the landscape anew, exploring & rewriting for themselves what it means to belong, along this borderland and its surrounding communities, in a post-Brexit Britain, & in the face of accelerating climate change.

16.30- 16.45 COFFEE and TEA BREAK (ES Foyer)

¹ Seaford to Beachy Head, Seven Sisters Country Park encompassing the Cuckmere Valley

16.45-18.00: SESSION 6: ARCHIVES, HISTORIES, MEMORIES (ES 105)

Chair: Suzanne Scafe (Brighton)

Rachel Gregory Fox (University of Kent), 'Writing in the Wake of Slow Violence: Storied Histories and Polyphonic Verse in Jay Bernard's *Surge*'

'Windrush to New Cross is a very important historical strait' —Jay Bernard

Jay Bernard's *Surge* (2019) is a series of poems which primarily focus on the New Cross Massacre in London in 1981. The collection threads together a rich, palimpsestic narrative of Black British history, and the affects of the long shadows cast by Britain's imperial history—of in-built inequities, endemic hostilities, and deadly atrocities. Within the storied events of the New Cross Massacre and its aftermath, Bernard also draws back to the arrival of the Empire Windrush in 1948, and casts ahead, to the fractious present day, to the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 and the Windrush Scandal. *Surge* emerges from Bernard's work as writer-in-residence at the George Padmore Institute, in North London, a library and research centre dedicated to Black British history. In the 'Author's Note' to the collection, they comment that '[t]he archive became ... a mirror of the present, a much-needed instruction manual to navigate what felt like the repetition of history' (2019: xi). This paper will argue that Bernard's collection intra-acts with the space of the archive—a product of poetic labour whose polyphonic verse elucidates the slow violence that bears down on black and migrant communities in Britain. Rob Nixon describes slow violence as something 'that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive' (2011: 2). Working with a repository of knowledge—collating records, photographs, and interviews—Bernard charts a careful route through a long historical strait: from Windrush, to New Cross, to Grenfell, tracing the frayed and broken threads left in the wake of institutionalised slow violence. Their poetic intervention evokes the polyphonic voices of those Black and Asian Britons who have been witnesses to, and receptors of, the continuing formation of what is now formally labelled the 'Hostile Environment'.

Bethan Fairhurst (University of Leeds), 'Imagined Archives: Re-writing Black Archival Presence in 1st Century Literature'

This research project follows archival trails of Black women's presence (or lack thereof) in collections, in order to explore the function of Black literature in filling gaps in historical accounts. I reject the idea of an archive as simply a material repository, as for marginalised groups it has represented a harmful codification of imperialist knowledge, enacts a symbolic violence, even. However, working within archives can facilitate a creative engagement with the past and its injustices. The work of writers like Shola von Reinhold and Jay Bernard challenge the perception of the archive as a fenced-off area, available only to a privileged few. I use the central example from *LOTE*, of the character Mathilda negotiating her presence as a Black woman within the archive space. I also explore how these writers encounter the archive as not only a physical space but also an imagined location that enables self-reflection and exploration of personal identity. These writers connect the past to the present by constructing imagined pasts as a means to foreground unarchived voices and experiences. Noticing where the archive excludes people and events is central in this process of reimagining of histories. This is captured powerfully in *LOTE*, as Reinhold writes the enigmatic Hermia Druitt into existence, offering an imagined alternative to the limited portrayal of Black individuals in the archives. This paper will ultimately consider the implications of archiving and exhibiting Black bodies, giving particular attention to the depictions of Black joy and celebration. I undertake archival research to supplement

the aforementioned writers' work, evaluating the role of the archivist in the repository space. Using these texts and archives, I explore the cultural imperialism of 'the museum' and what it represents as an enactment of the violent historical erasure faced by Black individuals at the hands of those in power.

Rehana Ahmed (Queen Mary), 'Rewriting the Script: Anthologies of British Muslim Women's Writing and the Literary Marketplace'

This paper will consider two recently published anthologies of essays by British Muslim women, the majority of them Asian or Black, whose authors and subjects traverse categories of race, class, sexuality and generation: Mariam Khan's *It's Not About the Burqa* (Picador, 2019) and Sabeena Akhtar's *Cut from the Same Cloth* (Unbound, 2021). The paper will first situate the anthologies within debates about the racial and cultural exclusions of the UK publishing industry and the pressing need to bring about structural change that goes beyond the "celebrification" of the latest multicultural novel and the various diversity initiatives that have offered limited and limiting spaces to Asian and Black writers. It will explore the types of value that are typically ascribed to anthologies of writing, especially essays, by minority ethnic British writers; in particular, their valorisation as authentically representative of their culture and simultaneous devaluation as less "literary" and less deserving of serious critical attention than their novelistic counterparts with "universally" resonant themes. Combining readings of selected essays from the anthologies with scrutiny of their paratexts and reviews, the paper will ask how these books anticipate and contest the dominant terms of their reception and valorisation. In particular, the paper will explore how the development and form as well as the content of these collections of essays by British Muslim women trouble the boundary between the two opposed meanings of culture that Sarah Brouillette (2014) outlines – as the non-reflexive values and practices of a community or group (frequently associated with religiosity), on the one hand, and the self-reflexive expression of individual creativity (identified with a secular liberalism), on the other. In this way, I suggest, these essay collections, along with their more famous secular predecessor Nimesh Shukla's *The Good Immigrant* (2016), might point to a form of literary community that rethinks the role of writing in a culturally and racially diverse Britain, even while they remain partly constrained by the gatekeeping of our creative marketplace.

ALL MOVE TO THE SALLIS BENNEY THEATRE

18:30-19:30 KEYNOTE 1: BERNARDINE EVARISTO, The Sallis Benney Theatre, Grand Parade Campus.

Introduction and Chair: Stephen Maddison (Dean, School of Humanities and Social Science) and Vedrana Velickovic (Brighton)

20:00 CONFERENCE DINNER (IN TOWN, VENUE: The Chili Pickle, 17 Jubilee St, Brighton BN1 1GE, <https://thechillipickle.com/>, PAYABLE BY DELEGATES)

SATURDAY 23RD JULY

10.00-11.30 PARALLEL SESSION 7: CELEBRATING BERNARDINE EVARISTO (ES 103)

Chair: Vedrana Velickovic (Brighton)

Amber Lascelles (University of Bristol), 'Not of Their Blood': Inclusive Black Feminist Solidarity in Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*

Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019) traces the interconnections between twelve Black British 'womxn'. The 'fusion fiction' novel echoes Black British feminism's shift away from fluid, multi-ethnic 'political' Blackness, towards a collective identity based on African lineage. This talk focuses on Evaristo's treatment of race and its consequences for inclusive Black feminist solidarity. Focusing on two key scenes, I first consider the queer relationship between African-American separatist radical feminist Nzinga and Indo-Afro-Caribbean Londoner Dominique, suggesting that they exemplify a form of radical Black feminism too narrowly focused on African diaspora kinship that creates toxic relations which destroy solidarity. I then discuss the epilogue, in which Penelope, a middle-class Londoner who considered herself white until an Ancestry DNA test reveals her '13% African' gene pool, is reunited with her birth mother Hattie. I argue that in *Girl, Woman, Other's* epilogue, bodily metaphors and blood imagery—or 'racial discourses of blood' (Salvant, 2015)—reveal Evaristo's preoccupation with bloodlines and biological kinship, contradicting the inclusive Black feminist solidarity elsewhere in the novel which critiques racial essentialism

Sarah Beck (University of Innsbruck), Black British Women in *Girl, Woman, Other*: Understanding Inequality and Power Relations Through Intersectionality (**ONLINE PRESENTATION**)

Having emerged from Black feminist theory, intersectionality, which investigates intersections of different forms of oppression to grasp the complexity of social inequality, has become a vital analytical tool in the past decades. Yet, women's studies in general and literary analysis in particular have shown a lack of methodologically grounded intersectional framework in scientific contributions – a problem other fields of research have already begun to battle. As Black women's writing such as Bernardine Evaristo's novel *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019) can serve as a mirror of society portraying existing social inequalities, it requires an equally well-grounded intersectional methodological framework as subject matters from, e.g., the social sciences. Therefore, this paper applies the intersectional multilevel framework introduced by Gabriele Winker and Nina Degele (2011) on the novel's fictional characters. Based on the social practices of the characters, their identity constructions as well as involved norms, ideologies, representations, social structures and institutions – all in close dialogue with the social dimensions of race, class, gender and body – are investigated in three consecutive steps. Categories/discourses which appear on the levels of identity, representation and structure of each character are filtered out (step 4), and afterwards compared between the characters, to detect interrelations (step 5). These interrelations are then identified to be the common discourses which span through the novel. Each discourse is subsequently contextualized using supplementing structural data (step 6), and brought in relation with Evaristo's online media commentary on the respective topic (step 7). Eventually, all parts are assembled in step 8: Each discourse's particular realization of the interwovenness of racisms, classisms, sexism and bodyisms and their effect on the levels of identity,

representation and structure is discussed. Also, it is investigated how the four dimensions influence the characters' identity constructions and how the three levels (identity, representation and structure) mutually affect – reinforce, weaken, etc. – each other.

Miriam Hinz (Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf), 'Provincialising Europe: Re-Membering the Transatlantic Slave Trade in Bernardine Evaristo's *Blonde Roots*'

For more than 300 years, the Transatlantic Slave Trade was one of the most profitable businesses and it marks the largest and one of the most violent forced migrations in his-tory. Yet, time and again, it has been silenced and glossed over in the dominant narrative of British history. To counter this, postcolonial scholars and authors alike have negotiated and pluralised the narrative of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Paul Gilroy, in his seminal study *The Black Atlantic* (1993), asserts the Black Atlantic as a space of transnational cultural construction. He examines how modernity has been shaped by the slave trade and how the Black Atlantic "provides a means to reexamine the problems of nationality, location, identity, and historical memory" (Gilroy 16). Apart from Gilroy's study, several literary works have inscribed voices lost in the Trade into the chronicles of British history (cf. e.g. Phillips 1991; D'Aguiar 1997; Levy 2010; Gyasi 2016). Among literary representations of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Bernardine Evaristo's *Blonde Roots* (2009) is seminal. Evaristo imagines "a photographic negative of historical reality" (Merritt 2008) in which 'whytes' are enslaved by 'Ambossans'. The narrative follows white British Doris Scagglethorpe as she tries to escape her enslavement. *Blonde Roots* provincialises Europe (cf. Chakrabarty 2000) and positions the United Kingdom of Great Ambossa as the imperial centre. I argue that *Blonde Roots* re-members the experiences of the Transatlantic Slave Trade to produce the unfamiliar and to evoke alternative contact zones. A formal analysis of the novel explores how *Blonde Roots* writes back to norms and conventions of the genre of historical fiction: the novel translates and trans-forms the slave narrative and subverts power relations and racial hierarchies by means of the map included at the beginning of the novel, the disrupted timelines, and the use of multi-perspectivity.

Elizabeth Abena Osei (University of Ghana), 'Rewriting Chaucer and Metamnemonics in Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*' ([ONLINE PRESENTATION](#))

Metaization and self-reflexivity as observed by Hauthal (2013) serve the productive purpose of generic change through the destabilization of existing genres and the establishment of new genres. In this vein, the aim of this paper is to present how these two purposes of metaization are realized through the reading of Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*. This will be achieved through (1) the reading of *Girl, Woman, Other* as a close re-write of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. And (2), establishing *Girl, Woman, Other* as a metamnemonic piece of fiction where elements of African heritage come to the fore. In the end, this paper will prove how Evaristo's thematic concerns, language and technique do not only prove to destabilize a classic canon but also destabilize present-day expectations in fiction using self-reflexivity.

10.00-11.30: PARALLEL SESSION 8: FORM AND FEELING (ES 105)

Chair: Sarah Lawson-Welsh (York St John)

Bethan Evans (Nottingham Trent University), 'Leonora Brito Writes Wales: The Influence of Brito's Short Stories on Twenty-First-Century Black Welsh Women Writers'

The black presence in Wales is underrepresented (Llwyd, 2005; Chater, 2011). Black Welsh women are overlooked within this already marginal(ised) field. For *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Feminism* (2022), I wrote a chapter on black Welsh feminist writer, Leonora Brito. I build upon the conclusions of this chapter for my proposed paper for 'Common Threads'. Brito was born in Tiger Bay in the 1950s. The Bay has been, since the nineteenth century, a site of racial and cultural mixing in Britain distinct from the London-centric model of post-Windrush multiculturalism. I explore Brito's collection of short stories, *Dat's Love* (1995), as illustrative of the place of black women in the activities of industry in Cardiff, challenging the masculinist memory of Welsh industrialism. Brito does not disregard the themes of Welsh women's short fiction; she writes of industrialism, agriculture, and work through the framework of these themes, particularly maternity and memory, engaging with the postcolonial 'mother country' through a specifically Welsh tradition of women's short story writing. I close the chapter by suggesting that Brito's collection establishes her as a literary foremother for black Welsh women's writing. For 'Common Threads', I consider the influence of the formal approaches employed by Brito upon twenty-first-century black Welsh women writers. Events such as *Where I'm Coming From*, a monthly spoken-word function for BAME writers, are providing communal platforms for emerging literary talent. Established authors are published in anthologies which intend to mark the black presence in/of Wales (Kay, Procter, Robinson, 2012; Issa, Shahwar, 2020). The collection of essays, *Just So You Know* (2020), illuminates the underrepresentation of black Welsh women in the narrative of black Britain. I explore such texts in terms of the formal approaches established by Brito: disjunction, inconclusiveness, and obliquity. Ultimately, I consider Brito as a literary foremother for these writers and their texts.

Ana García-Soriano (University of Leeds), 'Gender, Genre and Race: Contemporary Short Stories by Black British Women'

This paper seeks to examine contemporary short stories by black British women to conclude that this prolific body of work merits being read to highlight its significant contribution to black British writing. During the second decade of the twenty-first century, critical engagements with contemporary short stories in Britain have foregrounded women's short story writing, as we see in Emma Young and James Bailey's *British Women Short Story Writers: The New Women to Now* (2015); and Emma Young's *Contemporary Feminism and Women's Short Stories* (2018). However, the examination of the short story in relation to the politics of race reveals that the black British short story has been critically overlooked. As I shall demonstrate, there is an existing critical lacuna in the scholarly exploration of gender and genre as well as in the anthologies which compile women's short story writing, as these omit consideration of short stories written by black British women. Firstly, this paper will discuss the entanglements and disentanglements which characterise the study of the black British short story. In other words, I argue that the examination of black British short stories requires the recognition of the transnational relations which situate the black British short story between British, postcolonial, and Caribbean literary traditions. Secondly, it locates black British short stories in a complex critical space

examined through the exploration of key terms: gender, genre and race. The triangulation established gives me a conceptual basis on which to explore gender, and black British critical theory in relation to the short story. Ultimately, this paper argues that, in Jacob Ross' words, "there is no shortage of Black and minority ethnic writers engaged with the short story" (10), but rather a critical gap which surrounds contemporary black British short stories by women.

Sina Schuhmaier (University of Mannheim), 'Unexpected Turns and Fragile Gender Positions in Leone Ross' Short Stories'

The short stories published in Leone Ross' 2017 collection *Come Let Us Sing Anyway* move between the locales of Jamaica and the UK, yet it is not themes of exile and diaspora or transcultural identities that are prominent in Ross' writing. Instead, an overarching concern lies with the (Black) female body, with the relative freedoms of restrictive gender roles, and with patriarchal and heteronormative societies. I aim to focus on the two stories "Roll It" and "Velvet Man" to illustrate how Ross' stories foreground the complexities and uncertainties of Black women's position in contemporary British and Jamaican society, refusing to allocate predetermined gender roles while staging female characters who are caught in the double binds of hierarchically gendered societies. Both stories do so by creating specific expectations in their readers only to then run contrary to the expected outcomes, an effect enhanced by their internally focalised narrative perspectives. The stories lend themselves to a comparative reading because each draws on an imagery of ghosts, developing in particular the metaphor of possession, and because both negotiate relationships built on power asymmetry and dependence but sketch very different dynamics of these relationships. In "Roll It," the 'duppies' of Jamaican folklore represent a past of colonial atrocities that the story shows to be interlinked with historical patriarchal subjugation. The unnamed protagonist's transformation into a spirit avenging her abuse symbolically conveys the ongoing existence of these structures. Here, the only agency available to the character comes at the cost of self-destruction. The male ghost in "Velvet Man" is of a different nature, materialised to ameliorate the protagonist's mediocre and solitary existence. That this redeeming (and white) figure in turn fulfils gendered stereotypes indicates the difficulties of imaginatively breaking free from patriarchal structures, even more so in the context of racial identities, the limits as well as possibility of which are probed by the whole collection.

Corrine Collins (University of Southern California), "'I Began to Choose Myself, and Eventually Other People": Retheorizing Romantic, Social, and Familial Love in Maame Blue's *Bad Love*' (ONLINE PRESENTATION)

Chick-lit has not been taken seriously as "real" literature, in part, because of its focus on women's dating, personal, and professional lives. Recent scholarship on Black chick-lit has attended to the ways contemporary writers explore the racialization of space, as characters are shown navigating antiblackness in their daily lives. In this paper, I argue that Maame Blue's *Bad Love* (2020), published in Jacaranda Press's *Twentyin2020* initiative, continues this centering of diasporic Blackness through protagonist Ekuah's investment in Black community building in London, Venice, Accra, and Paris. Ekuah's various loves—her poetry, upcoming musician Dee, and English teacher Jay—are representative of her investment in, and desire for, Black communal space. Using the work of Black feminist theorists Audre Lorde, bell hooks, and Amber Jamilla Musser, I argue that *Bad Love* articulates a vision of love that is not merely an individual's romantic desire for another, but ever implicated in a generative, erotic space of safety that allows for various acts of loving, pleasure, and communal care.

Lorde's erotic exceeds both the romantic and the sexual, and frames my investigation of *Bad Love*, as Black community presents Ekuah with a radical space of possibility that challenges and revises fantasies of romance that have frequently excluded Black women. As such, I argue that *Bad Love* attends to the racialization of desire and romance, and destabilizes hierarchies that position romantic love as the pinnacle of human attachment. Ekuah's turn inwards to herself and outward to her community are romances through which she finds fulfillment, and her ultimate reconciliation with Dee is not a happy ending but another messy beginning full of possibility. Even though the title implies otherwise, the novel resists simplistic binaries of bad love and good love, to reframe and retheorize romantic, social, and familial love.

11.15-11.45 Tea/Coffee Break (ES Foyer)

11.45 – 12.45 PANEL 2: DECOLONISING HISTORICAL KIDSLIT (ES 105)

Nazneen Ahmed Pathak in conversation with Sufiya Ahmed, Catherine Johnson and Sita Brahmachari

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This author panel will feature Sufiya Ahmed, Catherine Johnson and Sita Brahmachari, and will be chaired by debut author/academic Dr Nazneen Ahmed Pathak. All four are Black and Asian women writers who are working in the still largely white and middle-class genre of children's historical fiction and non-fiction. From *The Secret Garden* to *A Little Princess*, children's literature has, from its inception, been closely imbricated in the project of colonisation. Contemporary historical children's fiction has, by and large, playfully reproduced certain classic children's fiction tropes, such as Dickensian orphanages, while erasing the "difficult" histories of colonisation, enslavement and migration; thus presenting instead a whitewashed version of history to young readers. Intervening in this whitewashed literary space, these five authors have sought to reinsert Black and Asian stories into historical kidslit, either through writing biographies of real historical figures or events for children, such as Noor un Nissa Inayat Khan (*Spy Princess*, Sufiya Ahmed), Matthew Henson (*Race to the Frozen North*, Catherine Johnson); or by weaving together historical events and fiction, as in the case of Catherine Johnson's *Freedom*, *The Curious Tale of the Lady Caraboo*, and *Sawbones*, Sita Brahmachari's *When Secrets Set Sail* and Ahmed Pathak's forthcoming *City of Stolen Magic*. Chaired by historian and debut children's author Dr Nazneen Ahmed Pathak, this panel will examine questions including: how to conduct research for children's historical fiction when archives marginalise Black and Asian contributions to the historical record; how to tell stories that represent colonisation and enslavement for children without adding to inherited trauma of Black and Asian children; and why the decolonisation of the history and literary syllabus at primary and secondary level has never been more essential for young people today.

11.45-12.45 PARALLEL SESSION 9: UNCOVERING AND DEVELOPING MARGINALISED VOICES (ES 309)

Chair: Kadija George (IES)

Panya Banjoko (Nottingham Trent University), 'Nottingham Black Archive Recovering the Voices of Black Women in Nottingham'

While teaching in schools, Jean Binta Breeze believed that children were turned on to poetry by performance in the 1970s and 1980s and that, as a result, 'several generations of people will now buy a book of poems, because of performance poets, who have not been published'. 1 This is a positive assessment but hard to evidence because performance poets were rarely recorded, and if they were the recordings exist in forms that are now obsolete. That performances influenced young people is not in doubt. Through mining Nottingham Black Archive (NBA) the women who harnessed performance poetry to inspire young people in Nottingham, in the belief that poetry was a tool through which cultural awareness might be developed and confidence instilled in young Black people have been surfaced. Their cultural work had a material impact on student creativity but performances in the 1970s and 1980s cannot be recovered. 2 They could not be preserved in the way that digital technology—smartphones, YouTube, and the Internet more broadly—ensures performances may be curated archivally now. The legacy of Nottingham women who performed poems and told stories at the Association of Caribbean Family and Friends (ACFF) Centre are now being surfaced through oral histories. Their stories once hidden as cultural producers and their impact on the city politically is now being amplified by NBA.

Farhana Shaikh (De Monfort University), 'Finding a voice – A reflection on developing South Asian women writers'

'There is really no such thing as the "voiceless". There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard,' observed Arundhati Roy. Understanding this has been the crux of Farhana Shaikh's life's work. In her role as editor of *The Asian Writer*, Shaikh has documented the experiences of more than 150 British/South Asian writers and showcased original writing from new and emerging talent. Now in its fifteenth year, the online network has set up a number of initiatives to unearth hidden voices. Since 2010 it expanded into Dahlia Books, with the sole aim to publish regional and diverse writing from voices that remain largely being overlooked by the mainstream. This presentation will highlight the various initiatives that have been set up – from The Asian Writer Short Story Prize to Becoming a Writer – a 12-week-long creative recovery course, and how these projects have helped to develop early-career South Asian women writers. Through a number of case studies we will look at the career trajectories of both unpublished and published writers and begin to understand the power of creating safe spaces and resilient writing communities. The talk will look at the many creative ways – from partnership working to publishing – in which this small, largely self-funded organisation has survived and thrived for more than fifteen years. The presentation will share lessons learned as well as recommendations in which such writers can be found and nurtured, and the various methods that can be employed to ensure that their voices are heard in an industry that still fails to recognise their talents.

Carol Leeming (MBE), 'Regional Black British Women Who Have Considered Giving Up Writing When Your Talent Is Enuf!'

'Ntozake Shangwe lit a Moonfire, in my heart, in the hearts of millions of Black Women so our that our mouths opened, for stars and moons to fall out...' (Carol Leeming 2021)./ I am inspired by Ntozake Shangwe, I write innovative choreopoems, embodying orality, of devolved diverse queer voices, I get them produced, to then blog about the process of making of them to share with others. This has been one way to try and raise my voice, as a regional Black Woman Writer. The East Midlands where I live, like other regions, lacks, an established ground swell of literary networks, the vital social milieu, of Black British writers, poets, mentors, live literature events, publishers, theatres, companies & venues, agents and media infrastructure. This network of sector support, has proved critical, in successfully supporting Black Women writers and poets, in their careers in the metropolitan centres. I would like to discuss, how devolved regional Black Women's voices are not often heard, and therefore not known, above the writing of Black Women in metropolitan centres such as, London, Birmingham or Manchester. The further problem I pose is, how can Black Women writers outside of these metropolitan centres, find the opportunities they need, to access audiences, readers, publishers, venues, etc. to produce their work. How do we address critically, their lack of visibility, and the effective archiving of Black Women writers work produced outside of the main metropolitan centres?

12.45-13.45 LUNCH BREAK (ES Foyer)

13.45-15.00 ROUNDTABLE: CULTURAL ACTIVISM/Writers AS ACTIVISTS (ES 105)

Round table conversation with Kemi Alemoru (gal-dem), Nkenna Akunna (Skin Deep) and Pawlet Brookes (Serendipity/Black Ink). Introduction and Chairs: Suzanne Scafe (Brighton) and Jess Bond (Sussex) Supported by



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15.00-15.45 SESSION 10: 'WHO THE NARRATIVE CONTROLS/ WHO CONTROLS THE NARRATIVE?' (ES 105)

Rahila Gupta and Deirdre Osborne

'We both crave and shun labels. We crave them because we want to control our own narratives. We shun them because they can be reductive, particularly when imposed by others' wrote Rahila Gupta in 2021. In her remarkable body of writing she has never shied away from addressing topics that unsettle comfort zones, challenge prejudices, or examine the determiners of marginalisation. An anti-

racist and feminist campaigner and longstanding member of the pioneering collective Southall Black Sisters, Gupta's career has been dedicated to social justice. A striking dimension is her monodrama, *Don't Wake Me: The Ballad of Nihal Armstrong* one of a number of contemporary monodramas penned by women in Britain (who happen to be of African or Asian descent) that centralise uncharacteristic presences in British theatre. The 'ballad' (with its timeless folkloric associations of a story to be passed on) is a love poem to her son Nihal who died at seventeen years of age in 2001. As we will discuss, in this work, Gupta employs both stylistic and thematic inventiveness to render grief, by overstepping generic boundaries between love poetry, confessional, auto/bio/graphical and eulogy forms and its transposition from page to stage. Our paper will explore the aesthetic controls that enabled the articulation of the unspeakable, the sayable – a space for reflecting upon it in the respite of poetry and the now shared remembrance of Nihal's life. *Don't Wake Me* helps to stir up sedimented thinking about the limits of and around motherhood and the vulnerabilities of people who are minoritised and frequently voiceless in un-disabled-dominant society. We will unpick the 'common threads' of this majestic *témoignage* of a son and his mother—emotionally raw, uncompromising, confronting, and propelled by the unbridled infinite energy of motherlove in all its exhausted, ecstatic and ambivalent forms.

15.45-16.15 COFFEE AND TEA BREAK (ES Foyer)

16.15-17.15 PARALLEL SESSION 11: EXPERIMENTAL NARRATIVES II (ES 105)

Chair: Sarah Lawson-Welsh (York St John)

Tara Brusselaers (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven & Vrije Universiteit Brussel), 'Diversifying and Opening Up Modes of National Belonging in the Poetry of Jackie Kay'

In her latest two volumes, *Fiere* (2011) and *Bantam* (2017), Black British poet Jackie Kay poetically explores her own sense of national identity and belonging through her friends and biological and adoptive families. Expanding on the few existing discussions of Kay's poetry, which focus on issues of gender and race in her earlier volumes, this paper combines sociological insights regarding national identity (Schulman 2002; Douglas 2009; Leith & Soule 2011) with McLeod's observations regarding filiative and affiliative modes of belonging in adoption literature (2006) to discuss Kay's multiple and diverse approaches to national identity and belonging: on the one hand, an ethnic-genetic approach that considers national identity as a closed category and relies heavily on filiative notions of belonging; on the other hand, civic and cultural constructions of national identity as an open category, which enable alternative, affiliative modes of belonging. My close reading of both volumes, illustrated in this paper by means of selected poems, shows Kay opening up the closed, ethnic-genetic approach to national identity through affiliation and arguing instead for a non-exclusionary ethnic approach. In *Fiere*, Kay does so by applying a combined cultural-ancestral approach where her filiative bond with her birthfather serves as a way of claiming her right to explore her Nigerian national identity, to which she relates affiliatively; in *Bantam*, Kay reverses this approach and claims a filiative bond with Scotland and its history through her adopted family, using her 'affiliative' lineage to cement her sense of Scottish national identity and belonging. If most of Kay's work challenges the authority of any one point of view over others, in *Fiere* and *Bantam* this multiplicity also translates into Kay's use of poetic language and form. As my case studies will make clear, rather than disrupt the volumes' overall coherence, this aesthetic variety and experimentation underscore Kay's timely oxygenation of identity politics in 21st century Scotland with a more diversified approach to national identity and belonging.

Helen Cousins (Newman University, Birmingham), 'Morphing Forms: Metamorphosis in Black British Women's Experimental Fiction'

Challenges to the borders between the human, the (non-human) animal, and other ways of being are found in the short fiction of contemporary writers such as Elizabeth-Jane Burnett, Irenosen Okojie and Helen Oyeyemi. These writers tell stories of human / non-human metamorphosis asking how they are rethinking boundaries where anthropocentrism is no longer the assumed norm, and stability is replaced by changeability. I will draw on Donna Haraway's ideas of 'the figure' where 'the biological and literary or artistic come together with all of the force of lived reality [...] the figures are at the same time creatures of imagined possibility and creatures of fierce and ordinary reality' (Haraway, 2008, p. 4). Coupled with the imaginative, what might be quite ordinary and commonplace (in these stories, for example, a bat or a puppet) become 'tangled' and 'knotted' figures that can operate powerfully on the human consciousness and body. By studying these figures and how they are constructed in their respective texts, we can explore how they are 'co-shaping' agents in human understandings of their changing place in the world. Change is also reflected in the often-experimental way that these authors write, challenging too the generic boundaries of form. As D.B.D. Asker notes (2001, p. 2), literary language expresses our human understanding of the changeability of being in the world in a way that is flexible, intuitive and a rapid way to explore the liminal and fluid spaces where human and non-human subjectivities blur and merge.

Parham Aledavood (Université de Montréal), 'Generational Memories and Identity Formation in the Fiction of Bernardine Evaristo' ([ONLINE PRESENTATION](#))

In her poetical fiction, Bernardine Evaristo has always been conscious of generational memory, narrating how memory travels across generations. These generational memories play a major role in the process of identity formation in her fiction. In some of her novels this aspect is so prominent, both formally and thematically, that they can be grouped with some other works of Black British fiction that Astrid Erll (2017) has dubbed "fictions of generational memory". In her semi-autobiographical novel-in-verse *Lara* (rev. ed. 2009), Evaristo presents the story of a mixed-race girl, living in London in the 1960s and 1970s and travels back 150 years and 7 generations to see how her character has been formed through the genealogical line. As in *Lara*, memory plays a vital role in *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019). In her most recent novel Evaristo takes the reader on a multi-generational journey by portraying 12 women of colour and their intertwined lives. In both novels (fictionalised) cultural memory migrates through generations of immigrant families, but also moves among the people belonging to the same generation, and thus manifests "the double logic of generatio" (Erll 2014) through both intra- and intergenerational memories. In this paper I concentrate especially on the literary strategies employed to present these transgenerational memories, which not only contribute to forming and informing the identity of the characters, but also are indicative of the characters' complex relationship to the larger context of British society. I will demonstrate how in *Lara* the reader is immersed in the memories of Lara's ancestors through poetry-infused prose that imitates the form of memory by drawing on narrative techniques and aesthetic tools that Birgit Neumann (2008) calls "mimesis of memory". In *Girl, Woman, Other*, the characters' lives are narrated through their memories rather than their present lived experiences, while the typographical rendering of the focalizing characters' thoughts enhances the vividness and immediacy of their reflections.

16.15-17.15 PARALLEL SESSION 12: MEMOIR/LIVED EXPERIENCES (ES 309)

Chair: Suzanne Scafe (Brighton)

Prof. Tracey Walters (Stony Brook University), 'Valerie Mason-John: autobiography' (Online presentation)

In Valerie Mason John's semi-autobiographical novel *Burrowed Body*, the protagonist proclaims, "I have to change from being English to African to coloured to black." Pauline's frustration reflects the challenges experienced by first-generation-born black British children struggling with identity. In this paper, I investigate how John acknowledges the limitations of defining identity according to racial and/or ethnic categories. I argue, John presents the notion of transculturation as a more appropriate definition for individuals who embody multiple cultural identities.

Laura Fish, (Northumbria University, Newcastle), 'Turning Anger into Art'

Today I am 'the face' of equality on posters around my university. Yet if I write honestly, I must confront some uncomfortable truths. Relationships with our ancestors and culture are rarely straightforward. Working on my memoir I've encountered contradictions, biases and misunderstandings. Despite my skin colour, for my first 20 years I knew nothing about black history, or that black people even have a history. I had barely spoken to another black person. I certainly hadn't been inside a black person's house. I was white in every way - apart from my skin colour; enjoying the privileges that went with a middle-class rural childhood. Transracial adoption had quite simply bleached the colour out of me. As a small girl, I held such negative views of other black people I was scared of meeting them on the street. Yet as I grew older and searched for my true identity – and my real parents - I discovered further contradictions. I learned that my birth father's home, a museum preserved for white tourists, once belonged to Jamaica's largest plantation owners. And with my education and my dreadlocks I didn't confirm to his idea of an acceptable black woman. When we write, it's important we risk our vulnerability. My background is mixed up, with ancestors from the Maroons, the Indigenous Taíno or Arawak, native South American Indians, India, and West African. Navigating such different origins, highs, lows, sinks and ravines, I came to understand how big the gaps in my understandings were. This paper will focus on the racism I have experienced and am guilty of. How, as a black author and academic, I am often silenced and I am wilfully silent, and when I do speak it is not with one voice, but with the many acquired over one lifetime, and more.

Abiódún 'Abbey' Abdul (writer), *Genre Benders: Polemic Memoirs about Race*

'Genre Benders: Polemic Memoirs about Race' examines how the literature and publishing world react when straightlaced auto-ethnography writing meets creative non-fiction prose. This unique genre mesh features in my memoir series 'Stained Glass Eyes (SGE)' mixing culture-hopping narratives between Nigeria, Scotland, Japan, etc with factual insights into sociology, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, etc to give essential context to my life journey. This niche genre has already been successfully done by celebrated authors such as journalist Reni Eddo-Lodge with 'Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race', journalist/lawyer Afua Hirsch with 'Brit(ish): Race, Identity and Belonging', and rapper/social commentator Akala with 'Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire'. So why are literary circles not as quick to embrace similar writing styles from debut authors in this area? Why are writing conference organisers asking polemic memoirists to read only narrative extracts vs embedded definitions from their books? Why are seasoned editors excited about the subject

matter, but glossing over the polemic sections in their manuscript assessment comments? Why are bigger publishers' tentative interest mismatched with their indie or hybrid counterparts' fervent enthusiasm? Indeed, more enthusiasm can be seen from initial readers of varied backgrounds: parents of primary school kids celebrating the explicit definitions of racism without ambiguity; 16-year-olds loving the visual depictions of social spheres to enhance understanding; Black youth project organisers extending workshops invites to inspire young people to write their own creative discourse. An eager audience is there for the story/factual content of polemic memoirs about race like SGE, so let's relax the literary gatekeepers' cautious approach regarding the 'who's and 'how's of its genre bending delivery.

17.15 – 18.15 KEYNOTE 2: Dr LOUISA UCHUM EGBUNIKE (Durham), (ES 105)

Iconoclast with a small i?: Women's Networks and Powerbases in the works of Buchi Emecheta

Early scholarship on Buchi Emecheta, particularly the works of male critics, framed Buchi Emecheta's writing as iconoclastic, with an overwhelmingly pejorative depiction of her male characters. At the same time Emecheta, who regarded the term 'feminist' as rooted in non-African experiences, famously declared, if I am a feminist, then I am a feminist with a small 'f'. This lecture seeks to briefly revisit these early conversations, proposing an alternative lens through which to engage Emecheta's writing. Returning to the indigenous forms of protest amongst Igbo women, specifically "sitting on a man", this lecture explores how women's collective power was used to shame men who abused or grievously wronged women in their community. It considers the existence of powerful women's associations in Igboland and the social standing they occupied. The strength of these institutions eventually diminished during the colonial era, but serve as a starting point to consider women's power bases within Emecheta's writing, as well as the strength she drew on from her relationship with other women writers. It reads Emecheta's works, focusing on her novels set in Britain, in the context of the transnational, multicultural networks of women which form in London, but it also explores Emecheta's depiction of men vis-à-vis 'sitting on a man', in which daughters of the lineage in communities in Igboland bring shame to male abusers. This lecture moves beyond the early framing of Emecheta as an 'iconoclast' to locate and rehabilitate her writing in both its Igbo and British cultural contexts.

18.15-19.15 ARIEL LAUNCH: SPECIAL ISSUE, ANDREA LEVY IN MEMORIAM (ES foyer)

Sarah Lawson-Welsh (York St John University), Vedrana Velickovic (Brighton University), Michael Perfect (Liverpool John Moore) and Deirdre Osborne (Goldsmiths) with the late Andrea Levy's husband, Bill Mayblin (tbc)

20.00- DINNER in town (Côte Brasserie, 115-116, Church St, Brighton BN1 1UD
<https://www.cote.co.uk/restaurant/brighton/#>)



Delegates will be able to purchase books from Brighton's black-owned bookstore <https://afroribooks.co.uk/> (on Friday 22nd July) and throughout the conference at [28 Kensington Street, Brighton BN1 4AJ](#)

ASSOCIATED EVENTS

Seven Sisters - Walk and Write Sunday July 24th :- We See You Now walk and write, as part of SDNPA's Renature Festival at Seven Sisters Country Park. Free, public but spaces limited. For Booking and Info please visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/be-inspired-walk-with-alinah-azadeh-seven-sisters-writer-in-residence-tickets-375137756127>

South Asian Heritage Month South Asian Women's Poetry Workshop - Manjot Dhaliwal presents South Asian Women's Poetry Workshop - **Saturday, 30 July 2022 | Sunday, 31 July 2022** at Jubilee Library, Brighton, East Sussex. For Booking and Info please visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/south-asian-womens-poetry-workshop-tickets-368831844977>

EXTENDED CALL FOR PAPERS

Taking the Mic: Black British Spoken Word Poetry Since 1965

Aesthetics, Activisms, Auralities

Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London, UK.
Friday 18th November 2022

Extended Deadline for Abstracts: 15th August 2022

Keynote Speakers: Carolyn Cooper, Professor Emerita, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica and Jay Bernard, Writer and Artist, Berlin and London

Conference Convenors: Dr Deirdre Osborne FRSA, Goldsmiths, University of London; Dr Emily Kate Timms, University of Vienna; Josette Bushell-Mingo OBE, Principal, Central School of Speech and Drama.

Conference Assistant: Shannon Navarro, Central School of Speech and Drama.

Black British* poets have long pushed the aesthetic and sonic boundaries of performance in spoken word poetry, creating a compelling public voice for poetry. The legacy of this work both on and off the page follows diasporic routes in and out of Britain from Una Marson to James Berry, from the Caribbean Artists Movement to Linton Kwesi Johnson, Jean 'Binta' Breeze, John Agard, and Roger Robinson through to the twenty-first century poets Patience Agbabi, Jay Bernard, Anthony Joseph, Raymond Antrabus, Warsan Shire, and Caleb Femi to name a few. While fashioning electrifying performance personae, Black British spoken word poets have equally claimed, redefined, or rejected the term 'performance'. In his classic essay, Kwame Dawes (2005) argued that 'the position of the black poet in Britain has become inextricably linked to notions of "performance poetry"' and that this association inhibits recognition of the fact that many poets were writing for print publication. In response Corinne Fowler (2016) reflects, 'The lack of parity between so-called "page" and "stage" poets points to a long-running, unresolved argument in Britain about what poetry is, and who it is for, an argument that reaches back to the British poetry revival of the 1960s.'

To what degree does Black British spoken word poetry offer an ongoing 'avant-garde'? From the Black People's Day of Action to #BLM, to decolonising the curriculum, spoken word poetry plays significant roles in Black activism; bears witness to contested and forgotten histories; and imagines new futures, communities, and belongings to numerous cultural lineages. To rhyme, rap, or speak of poetry performance, its lyrical forms, beats, and bars is also to invoke the voices of Black British poets and collectives across Britain's geographical breadth. From Grace Nichols's meditations on the English countryside, to the Mancunian Blackscribe Black feminist poetry collective; Khadijah Ibrahiim's poetic histories of Chapeltown and Harehills, and Benjamin Zephaniah's accounts of Brummagem; to Eric Ngalle Charles's negotiations with his adopted 'home' in Wales to Jackie Kay as Scotland's Makar; or Caleb Femi's testimony to North Peckham— these locales, regions, and their nations reveal the multiple genealogies of Black British spoken word poetry's performance communities.

Thus, it is timely for poets, academics, and critics alike to 'take the mic' and embark on a sustained examination of Black British spoken word poetry and the relationships that might be traced between its aesthetics, activisms, and auralities. This one-day conference combines critical and creative perspectives and invites 20-minute papers, presentations, panels and/or performances exploring any aspect of Black British spoken word poetry in performance since 1965. Such presentations may include, but are not delimited to, explorations of Black British performance aesthetics, audience interactions, performance reception, education, and engagement with creative industries.

The conference will form the basis for a special issue with a scholarly journal. This conference is a free event with options for remote attendance.

* Black British indicates a scope, for ease of reference, to the work by poets of African or Caribbean descent who live(d) and/or published/performed a significant body of work in Britain, in a context of literary history.

Please email abstracts of no more than 250 words and a short biographical note (80 words)* to: takingthemmic2022@univie.ac.at, follow us on twitter @PoetryOff_Page. You can also find out more information at www.TakingTheMic.net.

Speaker's Biographies

Bernardine Evaristo is the author of ten books and numerous writings that span the genres of fiction, verse fiction, short fiction, non-fiction, poetry, essays, literary criticism, journalism, and radio and theatre drama. Her writing and projects are based around her interest in the African diaspora. Her first non-fiction book, *Manifesto: On Never Giving Up*, was published by Penguin UK in October 2021 & by Grove Atlantic USA, January 2022. Her second non-fiction book, *Feminism* (Look Again series, Tate Publishing, Nov. 2021) is a survey of the representation of women of colour in British art, responding to a major rehang of Tate Britain, the National Collection of British Art, due in 2023. Bernardine's novel *Girl, Woman, Other* won the Booker Prize 2019, the first black woman and black British person to win it in its fifty year history. The novel also won many other [prizes](#) including the British Book Award's Fiction Book of the Year & Author of the Year, and the Indie Book Award for Fiction. It was a #1 *Sunday Times* bestseller for five weeks, the first woman of colour to achieve this position in the paperback fiction chart, spending 44 weeks in the Top 10. There are now over 60 translations of Bernardine's books in over 40 languages. Her verse novel *The Emperor's Babe* was adapted into a BBC Radio 4 play in 2013 and her novella *Hello Mum* adapted as a BBC Radio 4 play in 2012. She has received many awards, nominations and honours, including being voted one of 100 Great Black Britons in 2020 and making the Black Powerlist 100 in 2021 and 2022. In 2021, she was the 151st honoree on *The Bookseller's* Powerlist 150, making her their defacto Person of the Year. She is Professor of Creative Writing at Brunel University London and her lifetime fellowships include: Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, 2004; Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, 2006; Honorary Fellow of the English Association, 2017; Fellow of Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance, 2018, taking on the role of President in 2021, succeeding Sir Richard Eyre; Honorary Fellow of St Anne's College, Oxford University, 2020; and International Honorary Fellow of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2021. She is a Forbes '50 over 50' honoree for 2022 for the Europe, Middle East, & Africa region. Bernardine joined the governing Council of the Royal Society of Literature (RSL) in 2016, was Vice Chair from 2017-2020, became a lifetime Vice President in 2020, and she was selected as its 19th President in November 2021 (tenure: 2022-2026), succeeding Dame Marina Warner. She is the second woman and first writer of colour to hold the position since the RSL was founded in 1820. She received an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 2009 and an OBE in 2020.

Sharon Duggal writes novels and short stories. Her second novel, *Should We Fall Behind* (2020, Bluemoose Books) was shortlisted for the Royal Society of Literature's 2021 Encore Award, selected for *Between the Covers*, BBC television's flagship book show and chosen as a *Prima Magazine* Book of the Year. Her debut, *The Handsworth Times* was *The Morning Star's* Fiction Book of the Year 2016 and selected as the Brighton City Reads in 2017. Her short fiction appears in various anthologies including *The Book of Birmingham* and *Love Bites: Fiction Inspired by Pete Shelley and Buzzcocks*.

Sharon grew up in Birmingham as part of a large Indian family. As well as being a writer, she is also one half of Radio Reverb's long-running *The Ruben and Sharon Show*, the UK's only regular radio show with a mum and son producer/presenter team.

Dr Louisa Uchum Egbunike is Associate Professor in African Literature, Department of English Studies at Durham University. My recent scholarship centres on the legacies of the Nigeria-Biafra war. I am currently spearheading a multifaceted project, which has included an international conference, a touring art exhibition and a documentary film series. I am collaborating with the Nigeria Arts Society UK (NASUK) in curating the [Legacies of Biafra](#) exhibition. In January 2020, the documentary film [In the Shadow of Biafra](#) which I produced and co-wrote with Nathan Richards, was launched after preview screenings in London (National Theatre), Accra (Pa Gya! Festival), and Nairobi (ASAA conference). *In the Shadow of Biafra* explores how writers have engaged and continue to engage with the war, and features contributions from Chukwuemeka Ike, Nnedi Okorafor and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. I am

currently working on a monograph which explores the role of the literary and visual arts in the cultural memory of the Nigeria-Biafra war.

In 2016, the BBC and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) selected me as one of their '[New Generation Thinkers](#)'. This has seen me feature on radio programmes and create content for BBC Radio 3, BBC World Service, BBC Radio 4 and BBC Arts Online. I recently contributed to the BBC Four documentary film on African Literature, [Africa Turns the Page](#), produced by, David Olusoga. I have served on the council of the African Studies Association UK (ASAUK) since 2016, and was appointed honorary treasurer in 2020. I serve on the council for the African Literature Association (ALA) and on the editorial board for *The Journal of African Cultural Studies* (JACS). I have also served on the steering committee for the African Studies Association's (ASA) women's caucus, and have thrice been appointed to the judging committee for the Aidoo-Snyder Prize for women's writing (serving as chair of the committee in 2018). I am one of the co-founders and co-conveners of the annual international [Igbo Conference](#) in association with SOAS, which was inaugurated in 2012.

Leone Ross is a novelist, short story writer, editor/copy-editor, reviewer, and teacher of fiction writing. She was born in [Coventry](#), England, and when she was six years old migrated with her mother to Jamaica, where she was raised and educated. After graduating from the [University of the West Indies](#) in 1990, Ross returned to England to do her master's degree in International Journalism at [City University](#), in [London](#), where she now lives. Her first novel, *All The Blood Is Red*, was published by Angela Royal Publishing in 1996. It was nominated for the [Orange Prize](#) in 1997. Her second novel, *Orange Laughter*, was published in the UK by [Anchor Press](#), in the United States by [Farrar, Straus & Giroux](#) and [Picador](#) and in France by [Actes Sud](#). In 2009 [Wasafiri](#) magazine placed Ross's second novel, *Orange Laughter*, on its list of 25 Most Influential Books from the previous quarter-century. Ross's first short-story collection, *Come Let Us Sing Anyway*, published in 2017 ([Peepal Tree Press](#)) was widely acclaimed. [Maggie Gee](#) in [The Times Literary Supplement](#) characterised Ross as "a pointilliste, a master of detail", and in a review for *The Guardian*, [Bernardine Evaristo](#) described the collection as "remarkable" and "outrageously funny", saying: "Ross writes here with searing empathy and compassion. ...The effect is mesmerising, shocking, unforgettable", while the book was described on [BBC Radio 4's A Good Read](#) as "incredibly rare, extraordinary". *Come Let Us Sing Anyway* was nominated for the [V.S. Pritchett](#) Prize, [Salt Publishing's](#) Scott Prize, the [Jhalak Prize](#) and was shortlisted for the 2018 [Edge Hill Prize](#). It was named runner-up Best Collection in the public-voted Saboteur Awards. Her latest novel, *This One Sky Day*, is published by Faber & Faber in the UK and as *Popisho* in the USA with Farrar, Straus & Giroux. It will be out in paperback in 2022 (with Picador USA and Faber). *This One Sky Day* is presently shortlisted for the Goldsmiths Prize and Ross is described by *The New Statesman* as "one of the six most cutting edge novelists" writing today.

Judith Bryan is a writer and playwright. Her first novel *Bernard and the Cloth Monkey* won the 1997 Saga Prize and was published by Flamingo/HarperCollins. It is being republished by Hamish Hamilton in 2021 as part of Black Britain: Writing Back series curated by Bernadine Evaristo. Judith's short fiction and non-fiction have been published in various anthologies including *IC3: The Penguin Book of New Black Writing in Britain* (edited by Courttia Newland and Kadija Sesay, Penguin), *Gas and Air: Tales of Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond* (edited by Jill Dawson and Margo Daly, Bloomsbury) and *Closure: Contemporary Black British Stories* (edited by Jacob Ross, Peepal Tree Press). Judith is a Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Roehampton and a Hawthornden Fellow. She has taught creative writing at City Lit, Arvon, Spread the Word and to community groups. She is working on her second novel.

Katy Massey was a journalist for fifteen years before returning to university and beginning to write creatively. Her PhD findings formed the inspiration for *Tangled Roots*, a long-term project aiming to

equip everyone with the skills to author their own lives. She is a skilled workshop leader, editor and writer. Her life writing and fiction has been shortlisted for several prizes including Leeds Literature Prize 2013, Crocus Books/Commonword First Chapter competition 2010 as well as being long-listed for Route publications A Few Good Books submissions competition 2010. She has also edited two collections of memoirs. In 2017 she was a judge for the first-ever Spread the Word Life Writing Prize. Her memoir *Are we home yet?* was published by Jacaranda in September 2020. It was well received by readers and critics, and shortlisted for the Jhalak Prize 2021. She is also the editor of [Who are we now?](#) (2019) a collection of first-person responses to the Brexit referendum.

Gemma Weekes. Touted in The Independent as ‘a name to watch’, Gemma Weekes is a poet, singer/songwriter, beatmaker, multi-disciplinary performer and critically-acclaimed author of [Love Me](#) (Chatto & Windus). Her poetry and fiction have appeared in several anthologies and literary journals including IC3: The Penguin Book of New Black Writing in Britain (Penguin) and Kin (Serpent’s Tail), [Mechanic’s Institute Review](#) 14, [Wasafiri](#) (Issue 94: Summer 2018), and most recently in [Filigree](#) (Peep Tree Press, 2018) and [In Yer Ear](#) (2018) and was recently shortlisted for the Bridport Flash Fiction Prize, and longlisted for the Myslexia Flash Fiction Prize. Celebrated for her vivid, edgy writing style, she has been commissioned to write plays for Theatre Royal Stratford East and New Jersey Performing Arts Centre; poetic works for radio – most notably a collaboration with Nitin Sawhney for BBC Radio 3, and has written screenplays still in development for N22 Films, Fresh Strawberry and in collaboration with Menelik Shabazz. Passionate about the subversive, unifying and audience-actuating potential of interdisciplinary work, she is also an established performance/spoken word artist and musicmaker who has performed nationally and internationally at festivals and theatres, having scored poetry film ‘[Kumukanda](#)’ for Dancing Words in collaboration with poet, Kayombo Chingonyi and also Race Tracks for Foreign Bodies Orchestra and contributed to Club FRSHRZ presents [The BLXCK PLAYLIST](#). Her live literature/art piece entitled [Who Murked Basquiat](#) received support from the Artists’ International Development Fund (British Council and Arts Council, UK) for research, development and scratch performances in collaboration with artist [Nyugen Smith](#) in 2017. Currently she is working on the second draft of the attached manuscript entitled ‘SAMO LIVES’ and raising her witty and wise pre-teen son, Isaiah.

Sundra Lawrence is a UK based poet and writer of Tamil heritage. Her work visits themes of migration, religion, and home. She is an experienced creative writing tutor and has performed her work across the UK and internationally. Sundra’s work has been broadcast on BBC television and radio, and is published in numerous anthologies including the Los Angeles Review. Sundra joined Malika’s Poetry Kitchen in 2001.

Rheima Robinson is a poet, educator and cultural curator based in London. Born and raised in Leeds, Rheima started writing with Leeds Young Authors, a community-based poetry and performance group. Since then, Rheima has continued to write, perform and facilitate creative writing workshops throughout Yorkshire and worldwide. She is the Founding Director of The Sunday Practise (TSP), a creative hub and poetry event with its roots in Leeds, UK. It was with TSP that Rheima found her feet in producing and curating artistic events. She has an MA in Audiences, Engagement & Participation from the University of Leeds. As a poet and speaker, Rheima has appeared nationally and internationally, including The Chicago Theatre, The Nuyorican Cafe (NYC), The Historic Hampton House (Miami), and the UK House of Lords. Her poetry can often be heard across different media outlets, including BBC Radio Leeds, BBC1xtra and work living on BBC iplayer. Rheima features in the award-winning documentary 'We Are Poets' and more recently on BBC Four's Rhyme and Reason hosted by Lemn Sissay OBE. She was one of the BBC's Words First 2020 finalists. Her newly commissioned film with New Creatives, supported by BBC Arts, is pending release. Celebrated by ITV

News for International Women's day 2021, Rheima was also Ilkley Literature Festivals 2021 Apprentice Poet in Residence.

Dorothea Smartt, born and raised in London, is of Barbadian heritage. Her work as a poet and live artist receives critical attention in both Britain and the U.S.A. She is acknowledged as tackling multilayered cultural myths and the real life experiences of Black women with searing honesty. She was Brixton Market's first Poet-in-Residence, and a former Attached Live Artist at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts, and a Guest writer at Florida International University and Oberlin College, U.S.A. Her evocative and spirited voice 'coils up your feelings, around granite chips of truth...unwinds solace, in the most soothing volleys' (Caribbean Times). Awarded several commissions and bursaries, she's a member of the Black Arts Alliance and an Afro-Style School 'graduate'. Her solo work, 'medusa', is considered an 'Outstanding Black Example'. Other collaborative performances include: 'from you to me to you' (An Institute of Contemporary Arts, Live Arts Commission); 'fo(u)r women'; and 'home is where the heart kicks' (A Black Arts Alliance Commission). Her first play, 'fall out', (a Theatre Venture multi-media commission) successfully toured primary schools in and around London. She is an artist in the residency/exhibition project 'TradeWinds-LandFall 2007-8 between London and Houston, due to exhibit at London's Museum in Docklands 2008-9. www.tradewinds2007.org/tradewinds.html. Described as 'accessible and dynamic', her poetry appears in several journals and ground-breaking anthologies, including *Bittersweet* (Women's Press, 1998), *The Fire People* (Payback Press, 1998), *Mythic Women/Real Women* (Faber, 2000), *IC3: The Penguin Book of New Black Writing in Britain* (2000), and *A Storm Between Fingers* (Flipped Eye, 2007). She continues to work in schools, run workshops and perform in Britain and abroad. She is poetry editor of *Sable* (a magazine for new writing by Black writers), while currently researching and developing new works and working towards her second full collection.

Isabelle Baafi is British poet and editor of Jamaican and South African descent. Her debut pamphlet, *Ripe* (ignitionpress, 2020), was a winner of the 2021 Somerset Maugham Award, and was the PBS Pamphlet Choice for Spring 2021. She won Second Prize in the 2022 London Magazine Poetry Prize, and was the winner of the 2019 Vincent Cooper Literary Prize. She was shortlisted for the 2022 Aesthetica Creative Writing Award, the 2021 Brunel International African Poetry Prize, the 2020 Bridport Prize for Poetry, and the 2019 Oxford Brookes International Poetry Competition. She was also Commended in the 2020 Verve Poetry Festival Competition, and was nominated for Best of the Net 2020. Her writing has been published in *The Poetry Review*, *The London Magazine*, *Aesthetica Magazine*, *Magma*, *harana poetry*, and elsewhere. Her work has also been anthologised by Broken Sleep Books, Verve Poetry Press, 20.35 Africa, and Brittle Paper. She is the Reviews Editor at *Poetry London* and has co- or guest-edited issues of *Magma*, *Poetry Wales* and *Tentacular*. She is also a Ledbury Poetry Critic, an Obsidian Foundation Fellow, a board member at *Magma*. She was a member of the Creative Access & Penguin Random House Mentoring Programme (2021-22), the Griot's Well Programme with *Writerz* and *Scribez* (2020), and the London Library's Emerging Writer's Programme (2019-20). She has performed at the Winchester Poetry Festival, the Ledbury Poetry Festival, the Poetry in Aldeburgh Festival, the Verve Poetry Festival, the Battersea Arts Centre's Homegrown Festival, the London Library Lit Fest, the Barbican Library, Clapham Library, and Westminster Reference Library. She received a BA in Comparative Literature and Film from the University of Kent, and is studying towards an MSt in Creative Writing at Kellogg College, Oxford. She lives in London and is currently working on her debut poetry collection.

Patricia Cumper has worked in the arts for more than forty years as playwright, broadcaster, artistic director and commentator. She has set up and run arts charities and has wide experience as a trustee and board member. Patricia began writing for the theatre in the Caribbean where she had a dozen plays produced, many of which won awards or writing competitions. They include 'The Rapist'

published by Longmans in the collection 'Champions of the Gayelle', 'The Fallen Angel, and the Devil's Concubine' which has been produced throughout the Caribbean, USA and Canada, and was published in 2013. A 2006 production of 'Fallen Angel' in Toronto won two industry awards. In the UK, Patricia has been commissioned by Talawa Theatre Company, Carib Theatre Company, The Royal Court and Blue Mountain Theatre. 'The Key Game', commissioned and produced by Talawa at the Riverside in 2004, won four star reviews and was included in Time Out's Critic's Choice. She was Artistic Director and CEO of Talawa Theatre Company, the UK's largest Black-led theatre company, from 2006 to 2012 and produced among other plays George C. Wolfe's 'The Colored Museum' in the V&A Museum, and a touring production of Samuel Beckett's 'Waiting for Godot', the first all-Black production in the UK. Her work with young Black British theatre makers launched the careers of talents like Michaela Coel. She was made Member of the Order of the British Empire in 2013 for her work in Black British theatre. She subsequently founded and was co-Artistic Director of StrongBack Productions, a charitable theatre company that brings the Caribbean practice of forging one culture from many histories to British theatre. Her play about Jamaican soldiers in World War One, 'Chigger Foot Boys', was produced by StrongBack Productions in 2017 at Tara Arts Theatre and is published by Oberon Books. Reviews of her decades of contribution to Black theatre in the Caribbean and the UK are included in publications by Oxford University Press, Heinemann and Collins. A collection of three plays 'Inner Yardie' with an introduction by Prof. Kwame Dawes was published by Peepal Tree Press in 2014. She contributed to 'The Diverse Bard' edited by Dr. Delia Jarrett-Macauley and published by Routledge in 2016, and 'New Daughters of Africa' edited by Margaret Busby and published by Myriad in 2019. Patricia was a member of the team of writers on 'Westway', the BBC World Service drama serial and wrote more than seventy episodes for the soap. She wrote a five part drama series 'One Bright Child' based on the life of her mother, Gloria Cumper, the first Black woman to graduate from Cambridge with an LLB and it won the CRE radio drama award. The story was also published by BlackAmber Books. Her adaptations of stage plays and novels to radio include Rita Dove's 'Darkest Face of the Earth'; a 15-part series for Woman's Hour of Andrea Levy's 'Small Island'; a 10-part series also for Woman's Hour of Alice Walker's 'Color Purple' (it won a silver Sony Award); a 1-hour play based on Zora Neil Hurston's 'Their Eyes Were Watching God', a 10-part adaptation of Toni Morrison's 'Beloved'; and a 2-hour adaptation of Marie Ndiaye's 'Trois Femmes Puissantes' (it was nominated for the BBC Radio Contribution to Diversity award 2016). She adapted four of the six autobiographies by Maya Angelou as part of a series that won an 'Outstanding Contribution to Audio Drama' Award in 2020. Her original play based on the life of Anthony Trollope 'Mr. Trollope and the Labours of Hercules' was broadcast in May 2016. 'Pardna' a new 45-minute play about four South London women was broadcast in 2017. She abridged four novels for Book at Bedtime on BBC Radio 4, the Booker Prize winning novel 'Girl, Woman, Other' and 'Manifesto' by Bernardine Evaristo and 'The Housing Lark' by Samuel Selvon and 'We Are All Birds of Uganda' by Hafsa Zayyan.

Pauline Walker. From a very young age Pauline loved reading and getting lost in her imagination. She wrote her first story in primary school and had her fifteen minutes of fame when it was pinned on a notice board for the whole school to read. Fast forward a few decades and in 2017 Pauline won the platinum prize from [Creative Future Literary Awards](#) with her short story 'The Wait' which was published in the winner's anthology Important Nothings alongside the work of Kit de Waal and Dean Atta, and later online by [Wasafiri](#). Pauline is currently working on her novel Welcome Home. With Patricia Cumper she leads The Amplify Project, <https://theamplifyproject.co.uk/about-us/>.

Christina Slopek is a second-year doctoral student at Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf, Germany, where she also works as lecturer and research assistant in the department of Anglophone Literatures and Literary Translation. Her principal research interests are postcolonial studies, queer theory and culture and medical humanities. Currently, Christina Slopek is working on a PhD project about psychology in Anglo-African and African-diasporic fiction. Christina Slopek has published an article on queer masculinities in Ocean Vuong in *Anglia*; an article in *Gender Forum* as well as several chapters for edited volumes are forthcoming.

Dr Rebecca Romdhani is a lecturer at the University of Liege, Belgium. She works primarily on Caribbean and Caribbean diaspora literature and her research focuses on emotion, violence, children, gender, and literary genres. Her recent work includes a chapter on Caribbean speculative fiction in *Caribbean Literature in Transition, 1970-2020* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), and a co-edited volume *Narrating Violence in the Postcolonial World* (Routledge, 2022), in which she has a chapter on symbolic violence in Tiphonie Yanique's *Land of Love and Drowning*.

Dr Mona Becker is a postdoctoral researcher and teacher at the department for English and American Studies at the Martin-Luther-University in Halle, Germany, as well as a theatre practitioner. She was awarded her PhD (playwriting) in 2019 from the University of Essex. Her post-doc project focusses on postmemorial narratives of National Socialist and colonial violence.

Lynette Goddard is Professor of Black Theatre and Performance. My research and teaching is focused in the area of the politics of contemporary Black British theatre and performance, including work on new writing by Black playwrights and contemporary Black productions of canonical plays. I have published a number of articles on Black British playwriting, as well as two monographs, a short cultural history of Errol John's *Moon on a Rainbow Shawl*, and a co-edited anthology of essays, ***Modern and Contemporary Black British Drama*** (London: Palgrave, 2014). My monograph ***Staging Black Feminisms: Identity, Politics, Performance*** (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007) explored British Black womxn's plays, poetry, and performance in relation to questions about feminist theatre practice. ***Contemporary Black British Playwrights: Margins to Mainstream*** (London: Palgrave, 2015) examined the mainstream presence of Kwame Kwei Armah, Debbie Tucker Green, Bola Agbaje, and Roy Williams in the early twenty-first century, interrogating how their prominence was enabled by Arts Council funding policies to enhance diversity before thinking about how their representations provide ways of thinking about Black playwriting as a social and political practice that intervenes in contemporary debate about Black experience, race, and racism in the articulation of national and global identities. *Errol John's Moon on a Rainbow Shawl* is a short cultural history of this 1958 play about Windrush generation immigration rendered through reference to the original production and of four subsequent revivals. My research on Black theatre practice also includes exploring debates about race and casting in contemporary Black British productions of Euro-American classics; a comparative study of Black history plays in the UK, USA, and British and Francophone Africa and the Caribbean; a project on how race and racism is staged in relation to big issue themes such as race and immigration, Black men and the police, and race and the rise of right-wing politicians; I am also researching a project on Black British directors: Access and Inclusion, which broadens my research to analyse productions of African-American plays as staged in the UK. I selected and introduced the plays for ***The Methuen Drama Book of Plays By Black British Writers*** (London: Methuen, 2011), which includes plays dealing with identity politics across three generations of Black playwriting in Britain from the late 1970s until the early 2000s.

Dr Vanessa Damilola Macaulay is Scholar and Lecturer in Contemporary Performance Practice, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London. Her research is concerned with Black feminist performance practices in the UK and US. Her work investigates Black artists and their strategies for performance making that creatively disrupts fixed notions of performance and live art. Her research uses practice-based and written approaches to challenge the imbalances of intersectional identities, speaking to contemporary struggles and anxieties about performing Black bodies and issues of visibility. Her writing has been published in *Interventions* and her performances have been programmed at Talawa Firsts festival, The Yard Theatre, and Camden People's Theatre.

Dr Deirdre Osborne is an [Australian](#)-born academic who is Reader in English Literature and Drama in the Theatre and Performance Department at [Goldsmiths, University of London](#), and also co-convenes the MA degree in Black British Writing. She wrote the [Edexcel](#) Examination Board's A-level Black British Literature syllabus. She has published extensively on the work of Black British writers (including

[Kwame Kwei-Armah](#), [Roy Williams](#), [Lemn Sissay](#), SuAndi, [debbie tucker green](#), [Andrea Levy](#), [Valerie Mason-John](#) and Mojisola Adebayo). Her books include *Critically Black: Black British Dramatists and Theatre in the New Millennium* (2016), *Inheritors of the Diaspora: Contemporary Black British Poetry, Drama and Prose* (2016), *Bringing up baby: food, nurture and childrearing in late-Victorian literature* (2016) and, as editor, *The Cambridge Companion to British Black and Asian Literature*, the first comprehensive account of the influence of contemporary British Black and Asian writing in British culture, which "investigates the past sixty-five years of literature by centralising the work of British Black and Asian writers". Osborne was responsible for organising two notable international conferences at Goldsmiths: "*On Whose Terms?": Critical Negotiations in Black British Literature and the Arts*, in 2008, and *On Whose Terms? Ten Years On...* (2018). In 2021, with [Joan Anim-Addo](#) and [Kadija Sesay](#) she curated *This is The Canon: Decolonize Your Bookshelf in 50 Books* – in the words of [Nikesh Shukla](#) "a vital and timely introduction to some of the best books I've ever read" – which is described as "[s]ubverting the reading lists that have long defined Western cultural life", highlighting alternatives by people of African or Asian descent and indigenous peoples.

Amy Terry is a Theatre Maker and Practice-Based Postgraduate Researcher at the Royal Holloway, University of London. Their working-class, queer theatre company, Free School Lunch, has performed at Camden People's Theatre. Their research centres on working class, queer/trans and intersectional writing for performance.

Katrijn Van den Bossche is a doctoral researcher at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), funded by the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) as part of the fundamental research project "Self-Reflexivity and Generic Change in 21st-Century Black British Women's Literature" (2022-2026). She explores generic change in metafictional works written by British women of African or African-Caribbean descent, such as Bernardine Evaristo, Helen Oyeyemi and Zadie Smith (under the supervision of Prof. Hauthal and Prof. Bekers). She obtained an MA in German and English Literature and Linguistics from the University of Ghent in 2021, with a thesis on the intersection of ecocriticism and memory studies in *The Children of the Dead* by the Austrian Nobel prize winner Elfriede Jelinek. She was Erasmus exchange scholar at University of Sheffield (2020) and participated in the University of Gent Summer School on climate change (2021). She is currently completing an MA in Education (2021-2022).

Kayra Maes hopes to have obtained her Bachelor in Linguistics and Literary Studies at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) by July 2022. A top student in her cohort, she was one of three students selected by the Centre for Literary and Intermedial Crossings (VUB) for the 2-year "Talent for Research" programme (2021-23), which gives research-oriented students a taste of a career in academic research and encourages them to engage in different types of research activities in preparation of a PhD funding application upon completion of their one-year master's degree. The proposed paper will be developed within this programme's framework under guidance of her thesis supervisor (Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Bekers) and draws on her Bachelor thesis on children's and young adult literature by Black British women writers (to be completed by early May 2022).

Elisabeth Bekers is Professor of British and postcolonial literature at Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Her research focuses on authors of African descent, with a particular interest in image/knowledge production, canon formation, intersectionality and the imagination of Europe and Brussels in literature. Currently she is working on experimental black British women writers and, as part of an international network, on literary imaginings of Europe from peripheries in and beyond Europe. In recent articles she addresses metafiction in Black British neo-slave narratives, Buchi Emecheta's pioneering contributions to genre innovation in her debut novels from the 1970s, and Helen Oyeyemi contemporary position as spearheading generic experimentation in Black British literature today. Together with Elizabeth-Jane Burnett and Helen Cousins, she is co-editor of a special issue of *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* on formal innovation in Black British Women's literature (Autumn 2022). She is co-director of the international Platform for Postcolonial Readings for junior researchers,

and, since 2014, editor of an academic website on Black British Women Writers (<http://www.vub.ac.be/TALK/BBWW>).

Eurekah Shabazz is a published writer with works in several anthologies. Her self-published Health book, *Ancestral Healing Revelations* (2004), is well sought after. She was a Performance Poet for 15 years, performing in Barbados, Martinique, Hunters College (New York) and London. She holds an M.A in Creative and Life Writing from Goldsmiths University. Eurekah set up and ran, creative writing workshops for disabled African Caribbean people. She also set up an organization, Disability Inspired Alliance, creating New Public Road Signage while consulting with other organisations. Her new children's book, *Fuzzy-Fox and the Huggy Huggy Dance*, will be out later this year. She's Herbalist and Consultant working with women who have Fibroids and Endometriosis.

Dr. Eva Ulrike Pirker teaches Anglophone Literatures and Literary Translation at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, where she also coordinates the Centre for Translation Studies (cts.dus.hhu.de). She has published widely in the field of Anglophone and Black British Studies and is especially interested in formal questions pertaining to translations of self and other in literary and artistic works. She is the author of *Narrative Projections of a Black British History and Black History – White History* (with Barbara Korte) and has co-edited several critical books, special issues and anthologies.

Modhumita Roy is Associate Professor of English at Tufts University. Her research interests are in Anglophone literatures of Africa and the Africa Diaspora, South Asian Literature Literatures of Empire Post-colonial Theory and Feminist Theory. Her publications include *The Politics of Reproduction: Adoption, Abortion, and Surrogacy in the Age of Neoliberalism*, co-edited with Mary Thompson (2019), *Sharing the Earth: An International Environmental Justice Anthology*, co-edited with Elizabeth Ammons (2015), *Made in India: Essays in Class, Gender and Culture* (2010) and numerous articles.

Selle Denier is completing a Master in English and Dutch Literary Studies at Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Her paper draws on her Master thesis on the legacy of Audre Lorde's activism in the poetry of Jackie Kay and Dorothea Smartt (under supervision of Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Bekers and Prof. Dr. Inge Arteel). Next academic year, she will prepare her PhD funding application, whilst pursuing the interuniversity Advanced Master Literary Studies at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium.

Kanika Batra is a Professor of English at Texas Tech University. She is a specialist in postcolonial literatures, feminist and queer writing, and British diasporic literature, and author of *Feminist Visions and Queer Futures in Postcolonial Drama: Community, Kinship and Citizenship* (Routledge, 2010) and *Worlding Postcolonial Sexualities: Publics, Counterpublics, Rights* (2021, Winner of the National Women's Studies Association-Routledge Book Prize in Feminist Histories, Subversive Futures).

Maryse Jayasuriya is a Professor of English at the University of Texas at El Paso. She specializes in Twentieth-Century British and South Asian Literature. She is author of *Terror and Reconciliation: Sri Lankan Anglophone Literature, 1983-2009* (Lexington, 2012) and editor of *The Immigrant Experience: Critical Insights* (Salem Press, 2018). Her articles and reviews have appeared in *South Asian Review*, *Journeys*, *Margins*, *Indialogs*, *The Journal of Postcolonial Cultures and Societies*, and *Asiatic*.

Chloe Ashbridge is a Lecturer in Modern and Contemporary Literature at Newcastle University, where her research concerns the connections between literary culture and politics in Britain. Chloe is currently preparing her first monograph, *Rewriting the North: Contemporary British Fiction and the Politics of Devolution* (Routledge, 2023), which situates Northern England at the centre of a new devolutionary approach to contemporary British fiction. Elsewhere, her publications explore working-class writing and neoliberalism, Brexit, and the political identity of the North in Sarah Hall's fiction.

Alinah Azadeh is a writer, artist, performer and social activist of mixed Iranian and English heritage. She has been making work for and with museums, galleries and diverse communities for over 20 years, including the National Portrait Gallery, South Bank Centre, Westminster Hall, Fabrica Gallery and Freud Museum, as well as internationally.

Dulani Kulasinghe was born in Colombo, Sri Lanka, raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico and now lives in Brighton with her family. Across teaching, law, activism and theatre making, storytelling has been at the heart of Dulani's work.

Akila Richards is a published writer, poet and spoken word artist of Liberian and German heritage. Her writing was published in Penguin, Peepal Tree Press and Waterloo Press. Some of her material gives voice to the Black German experience. She performs and reads in a variety of educational, artistic, professional and community settings. Akila became involved in theatre and playwriting greatly inspired by the consciousness raising artistic expression in the 80s. This led to a joint production by Sound Spectrum using repeatedly the frustrating question *Where Are you REALLY from?* Akila reignited her passion for theatre becoming an associate artist and performer in *Snakes and Ladders* by Plenty Productions in 2011 and a production in process performance of *From Rwanda ... With Love* by www.ryico.org. Akila's short story *Eleven Years* was published in an anthology by Penguin in 2008 and so was her poem *Red Saviour* in the RED anthology by Peepal Tree Press in 2010, followed by a national tour. Akila initiated a writers group out of desire to mutually support and critically assess new writing. This led to a co-edited anthology with text and images with Write-Meet-Read *Ink On My Lips*, published by Waterloo Press in 2013. The book was proudly launched with readings and performances at Brighton Pavilion Theatre. Writing and working in the creative sector has led to international opportunities. The first as part of the Cultural Leadership Programme Hot House in 2009 for research in Liberia, leading to new partnership working and writing including the published poem *Red Saviour*. Akila is took part in the first Fringe Saint Lucia and Brighton Festival 2014 in both locations as part of an international cohort and exchange of writers. Akila is a qualified creative coach for writers and artist and generally people who want to tap into their creative potential for business, work, visions and ambitions. Her coaching work builds on past work in Arts Council England and current freelance work supporting emerging writers and artists, diverse practitioners from a range of background in collaborations with groups, schools, communities and artistic events. She is one of Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival's In-House Artists.

Pauline Rutter is a cultural producer and PhD history researcher with a background in fine art, charity and co-operative development, education, mediation, and conflict resolution. She has lead initiatives within the Values, and Sustainability Research Group at the University of Brighton and most recently at The Culture Capital Exchange has addressed equity, social and environmental justice themes within Higher Education. Pauline's creative research methodologies have cultivated theories of change through seeding awareness, advocacy, action, and accountability within a range of organisational settings and community and regenerative contexts. Her work is further developed through academic and speculative writing and through conference presentations. Pauline holds degrees in Fine Art and in Education and a master's in International Business Management as well as an Advanced Diploma in Environmental Management. She is Afrori Books Poet in Residence.

Anooshka Rawden is the Strategic Lead for Cultural Heritage at [the South Downs National Park Authority](#), having previously worked in museums, including [South East Museum Development](#), [Science Museum Group](#), [the Society of Antiquaries of London](#), [The Novium](#), and [Reading Museum](#). She has also acted as Vice-Chair for [the Society for Museum Archaeology](#) (contributing to the production of Standards and Guidance in the Care of Archaeological Collections) and has been a mentor for [the Museum Futures programme](#), which supports the development of diverse museum professionals, challenging and disrupting the traditional route of entry into the sector that has left many people

under-represented in the workforce. She currently sits on the UK Museum Accreditation Committee. After specialising in the care of museum collections, Anooshka would describe her career now as 'Jack of all trades and Master of none', but was recently reminded that this closes with 'though oftentimes better than master of one'. A broad level of knowledge across archaeology, museums and the creative arts has opened doors to support a wide range of activities, such as a currently live project with [Archaeology South East](#), [Seaford Town Council](#), and a contemporary artist to explore heritage loss focused on an Iron Age hillfort in Seaford, bringing together archaeology and the creative arts to communicate a challenging topic affecting coastal communities.

Amy Zamarripa Solis. Amy has worked in communications, fundraising and management in arts, culture and creative sectors for over 20 years. For the past four years, she has run her own arts management and production company, supporting and developing art and cultural work that promotes social cohesion, equality and diversity. Amy was born in Austin, Texas. She has a BA from Sarah Lawrence College, NY and qualifications from University of the Arts London and Trust for Developing Communities. She is also founder of voluntary Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) literature organisation *Writing Our Legacy*.

Dr Rachel Gregory Fox is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Kent whose research project focuses on migration, the UK's Hostile Environment, and the ethics of storytelling. Her monograph, *(Re)Framing Women in Post-Millennial Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran: Remediated Witnessing in Literary, Visual, and Digital Media*, will be published with Routledge in March 2022.

Bethan Fairhurst was born and raised in South London before attending the University of Birmingham as a student of English Literature. It was here that she discovered an interest in Postcolonial literature, evidenced by her Bachelor's dissertation, 'Living, Breathing Archives: London's Black Poetry from Dub to Grime'. This led her to undertake independent archival research on critical events in London's Black history, creatively interpreting these sources alongside poetry. After graduating with a first class BA in 2020, she volunteered and worked part time for the George Padmore Institute in London, gaining experience with handling archives and creating a series of short films based on their collections for an Arts Council funded project. Bethan is currently a Masters student at the University of Leeds studying Postcolonial Literary and Cultural Studies under the supervision of Professor John McLeod. Her postgraduate research considers the role of museums and archives in 21st Century Black British literature.

Dr Rehana Ahmed is Senior Lecturer in Postcolonial and Contemporary Literature at Queen Mary University of London, Co-Editor of the Journal of Commonwealth Literature and Associate Editor of *Wasafiri*. She is the author of *Writing British Muslims: Religion, Class and Multiculturalism* (MUP, 2015) and of a range of essays published in books and journals including *Race & Class*, *the Journal of Postcolonial Writing and Textual Practice*, and the editor of a number of journal issues and books.

Dr Amber Lascelles is a scholar of African, Caribbean and Black British women's literature and the Research Associate for the Black Health and the Humanities project at the University of Bristol. She is currently preparing a monograph, *Solidarity in Contemporary Black Feminist Fiction*, which explores how contemporary Black women writers intervene in global conversations about Black feminism by transforming the theory and practice of solidarity.

Sarah Beck. I have been employed as a predoctoral fellow at the University of Innsbruck, Austria (Dep. of German Studies) since May 2020, where I work as the PhD coordinator of a doctoral college called "Borders, Border Shifts and Border Crossings in Language, Literature, Media". Also, I am a member of the same doctoral college and work on my dissertation entitled "Black Female Authors' Intersectional Discourse in 21st-Century World Literature: Production, (Re)Presentation and the Readership". Furthermore, I am a part-time lecturer, teaching Gender Studies at the Dep. of English Studies (also University of Innsbruck) and English and Academic Writing (MCI College Innsbruck).

Miriam Hinz is a PhD student and research assistant at Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf in the department of Anglophone Literatures/Literary Translation. She has specialised in the field of postcolonial literatures and her main research interests lie in postcolonial, gender, and spatial studies, and the intersections of these. Her PhD project focuses on gendered configurations of cosmopolitanisms and pays particular attention to female Black British protagonists. She teaches literary seminars for B.A.-students on the topics of postcolonial theory, gender studies, and space. An article on Bernardine Evaristo's *Mr Loverman* as a queer subversion of the European Bildungsroman will appear in the January 2022-issue of *Postcolonial Interventions*.

Elizabeth Abena Osei is a Ghanaian published post-colonial researcher and feminist. She holds an MA in Comparative English Studies, Literature and American Culture from Heinrich-Heine Universität, Düsseldorf. She is currently conducting research in MPhil at the University of Ghana on Black Speculative fiction specifically Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism. When she is not conducting research, she is singing Super Simple English Songs with her Kindergarten students online.

Bethan Evans is a PhD candidate at Nottingham Trent University, funded by the AHRC through the Midlands3Cities Doctoral Training Partnership. Her thesis, *Publishing Black British Short Stories: The Potential and Place of a Marginalised Form*, is the first study on the formal properties of black British short fiction. It explores the potential, place, and publishing circumstances of black British short stories against the strictures of metropolitan publishing. Bethan is the co-author of 'Mother Country: Leonora Brito Writes Wales' for *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Feminism* (2022). Currently, she is organising a conference, 'Building Bridges', which aims to unsettle long-held dominant ideologies and narratives which function to sustain the invisibility of colonial and empirical legacies in the contemporary world, in its educational, governmental, and cultural institutions and structures.

Ana García-Soriano holds a BA in 'English Studies' from the University of Alicante, where she carried out a research fellowship on 'Contemporary Female Short Stories in English Language: New Voices of the Post-Millennium'. After that, she received funding to undertake an MA in English Literature (Modern and Contemporary Pathway) at the University of Leeds. Her MA dissertation is an exploration of loneliness in Jackie Kay's short stories. She is currently the recipient of a grant from "La Caixa" foundation to write her doctoral thesis at the University of Leeds, under the supervision of John McLeod and Tracy Hargreaves. She is interested in the examination of intimacy in contemporary short stories by black British women writers.

Sina Schuhmaier is an academic staff member and doctoral student at the University of Mannheim's chair of English Literary and Cultural Studies. She is currently working on a doctoral thesis about Englishness and England as imagined by contemporary song lyrics, proceeding from the assumption that song lyrics have the 'cultural ecological' potential to open up and render ambiguous the static discourse of nation. Methodologically, the thesis combines the theoretical lenses of cultural and postcolonial studies with the framework of literature as cultural ecology as developed by Hubert Zapf. Further research interests comprise contemporary British television drama, Black British literature, and the 'Condition of England'-genre. She has published on BBC Two's *Peaky Blinders*, song lyrics by artists PJ Harvey, Kae Tempest, and Kano, and has co-edited a volume on contemporary literature and recent critiques of capitalism.

Corrine Collins is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Southern California, and she received her PhD from Northwestern University in 2019. Her research examines socio-sexual intimacy, racial passing, and multiraciality in African diaspora literature and popular culture. Her book-in-progress, *Injurious Love: Interracial Intimacy and the Politics of Desire*, examines social and familial

relationships in twentieth and twenty-first century African diaspora literature to theorize modes of interracial kinship and care that challenge ideologies of race-neutral love and post-racialism. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Public Books*, *Air/Light Magazine*, *Gastronomica: The Journal for Food Studies*, and the edited volume *Mixed Race Superheroes* (Rutgers UP 2021).

Dr Nazneen Ahmed Pathak is a poet, novelist and textiles artist who lives in Southampton. Her poetry is often inspired by the theme of migration, which was the topic of her work as an academic researcher and historian at University College London and the University of Oxford. She is currently Writer in Residence with the Southampton Stories project at Southampton City Museums and has held residences at John Hansard Gallery and Southampton City Libraries in the past. She runs writing workshops in schools, libraries and community settings. She was recently commissioned by Poet in the City to write a poem, inspired by the Covid-19 vaccination drive for their collaboration *A Drop of Hope* with the Francis Crick Institute. The poem, *Dhonnobad*, was then displayed on the building and was selected to be set to music by the London Sinfonietta. She has had poems published in the journal *POEM* and the anthology *Places of Poetry: Mapping the Nation in Verse* (OneWorld, 2020). For her fiction, she is represented by Louise Lamont at LBA Books.

Sufiya Ahmed worked in advertising and in the House of Commons before becoming a full-time author. In 2010 she set up the BIBI Foundation, which arranges visits to the Houses of Parliament for children from underprivileged backgrounds. Sufiya has written several children's books including *My Story: Noor-Un-Nissa Inayat Khan*, *Secrets of the Henna Girl* and *Under the Great Plum Tree* which was longlisted for the UK Literacy Association Book Awards.

Catherine Johnson has written several books for children and young adults, including [A Nest of Vipers](#) (Corgi, 2008), the story of Cato Hopkins, the youngest member of a group of expert fraudsters. Her next book, [Sawbones](#), was published in October 2013 and won the Young Quills Award for Historical Fiction. [The Curious Tale of the Lady Caraboo](#), published by Penguin Random House in 2015 was nominated for the CILIP Carnegie Medal 2016 and the YA Book Prize. Her most recent books are *Freedom*, nominated for the CILIP Carnegie Medal in 2019, and *Race To The Frozen North*. She is also included in Margaret Busby's anthology of Black Women's writing, *New Daughters of Africa*. Catherine also writes for film, television and radio. In 2005 she co-wrote the highly acclaimed feature film *Bullet Boy*, followed by a number of commissions for Century Films, Working Title and Channel 4. Her TV work includes *Rough Crossings* for Simon Schama and *Holby City*. She is currently working on an adaptation of Miranda Kaufmann's *Black Tudors* for Silverprint Pictures.

Sita Brahmachari was born in Derby in 1966 to an Indian father from Kolkata, India and an English mother from the Lake District. She has a BA in English Literature and an MA in Arts Education. Her many projects and writing commissions have been produced in theatres, universities, schools and community groups throughout Britain and America. Sita has lectured on intra-culturalism and Arts Education and her writing has been published in a number of journals and in *On the Subject of Drama* (Routledge). Sita's plays include touring productions by Tamasha Theatre Company including *Lyrical MC* and scripting and co-creating an adaptation of Sean Tan's graphic novel *The Arrival* for Tamasha Theatre Company (published by Bloomsbury). Her first book for Macmillan Children's Books *Artichoke Hearts* won the Waterstones Children's Book Prize, was nominated for the CILIP Carnegie Medal and was selected for the BookTrust Booked Up scheme in 2011. In 2014 it was selected as one of the top 50 books in cultural diversity since the 1950s by *The Guardian*. Its sequel, *Jasmine Skies* was published in 2012 and was also nominated for the CILIP Carnegie Medal. Her critically acclaimed novel, *Kite Spirit* published in May 2013 was nominated for the UKLA Book Award. Her fourth novel, *Red Leaves*, published in September 2014, was endorsed by Amnesty International UK as a book to enhance understanding of human rights. *Red Leaves* was also on the Redbridge Book Award Longlist for 2015. Sita's fondly received novel for Barrington Stoke, *Brace Mouth, False Teeth*, was also published in 2014 and was included in Julia Eccleshare's picks for readers

with dyslexia. Sita has been Patron of Reading at Fortismere School since 2012 and regularly visits schools, community groups, libraries and festivals offering talks and creative writing workshops. She lives and works in North London with her husband, three children and dog Billie.

Panya Banjoko is a poet, archivist, and PhD Researcher at Nottingham Trent University studying a practice-led PhD rooted in Nottingham Black Archive (NBA), the archive she founded in 2009. Since 2011 she has directed NBA on several pioneering projects, including bringing to the fore the narratives of Black Writers, community activists, and political poets in Nottingham since the 1950s. As poet, her poems feature in numerous anthologies and exhibitions including the Beaconsfield Gallery, the British Film Festival and International Film Festival in Rotterdam. Her second poetry collection (Re)Framing the Archive is slated for June 2022.

Farhana Shaikh. A writer and publisher born in Leicester, Farhana Shaikh is the editor of The Asian Writer and manages small independent press, Dahlia Publishing. In 2017, she won the inaugural Traveler / Penguin Next Great Travel Writer Competition and was long-listed for the 2018 Spread the Word Life Writing Prize. She can be found on Twitter talking about books and publishing @farhanashaikh. Farhana teaches marketing at De Montfort University.

Carol Leeming MBE FRSA is Leicester born, of Windrush parents from Jamaica and Antigua, and grew up partly in Jamaica. She received her Queen's honour as a playwright and poet, and for her contribution to Leicester arts and culture. Carol is a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts, a Cultural Olympian of 2012, and is featured on the University Grassroutes Writers' Gallery microsite [here](#). Carol's choreopoetry is highlighted by Corinne Fowler in the *Cambridge Companion to Black & Asian Writing 1945-2010*, ed. Deidre Osborne. In 2018, Carol's poem 'Molly' was displayed across a Leicester University Campus building, as part of a centenary celebration week for the British Suffragettes Movement. Other notable work includes Carol's debut chapbook *The Declamations of Cool Eye* published by Dare Diva. A film poem, entitled *Enchanter*, featured the poem 'Drawing' from the chapbook. You can see it [here](#). Some other plays produced include *Storm*, & *The Twisted Plait* at Haymarket Theatre, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Diva*, and *Love the life you live ... Live the life you love* at Curve Theatre, also published in the book *Hidden Stories Anthology*, published by Leicester University/Phoenix. Carol's poetry features in a number of anthologies. These include 'Valley Dreamers' in *Out of Bounds*, ed. Jackie Kay (Bloodaxe), 'Some Things that Never Failed Me' in *Covid 19 & Poetry Anthology*, ed. Anthony Caeshu and Rory Waterman (Shearsman Press), 'Song for Guests' (translated into ten languages) in *Welcome to Leicester*, ed. Emma Lee (Dahlia Books), *Overland, Oversea*, ed. Kathleen Bell, Emma Lee & Siobhan Logan (Five Leaves). A recurring feature of her work is to give voice to the voiceless, untold diverse stories, or magic realism in narratives, compelling diverse characters, with distinctive voices. Carol recently debuted at A Time to Breathe Festival curated by Greta Mendez MBE, London 2021, in a performance of her new choreopoem play, entitled *The Dreadful Dance of Ms. Iniquity*. Carol also has a major collection of writing, poetry and choreopoetry entitled *The Eclipse of Dread*, in preparation for book publication, along with writing the final part of her choreopoem trilogy, 'Go Where the Songs Are.' Carol works freelance, in literature performing arts and digital media. She is a multi-award award-winning author, published poet, director, playwright, dramaturge, performer and tutor. She was dramaturge and director for *Harley, Scholar & Stateman* by Pamela Roberts. She previously worked full-time as Resident Assistant Director at Curve Theatre Leicester, on theatre productions *My Beautiful Laundrette* by Hanif Kureishi, and *West Side Story* by Laurents/Sondheim/Bernstein. Carol currently is part-time lecturer at De Montfort University, BA Performing Arts, Guest Visiting Lecturer on the MA Creative Writing at Nottingham University, and Guest Visiting Lecturer Writing for Performance at Derby University, in

addition to mentoring prisoners, to create poetry for the *NO BARS II Project Anthology* launched in 2021. Carol is also Patron of East Midlands Women Awards.

Kemi Alemoru is London-based, Manchester-born writer, editor, host, and consultant, and culture editor at *gal-dem* magazine.

Nkenna Akunna is an Igbo writer and performer from London. She is the winner of the 2021 Rosa Parks Playwriting Award and Lorraine Hansberry Playwriting Award (2nd place) from the Kennedy Center, and the 2021 Neukom Institute Literary Arts Award for Playwriting (2nd place). Akunna is co-director at *Skin Deep*, a femme-led collective that makes space for Black creatives and creatives of colour through cultural production, and she is currently completing an MFA in Playwriting at Brown University. Akunna lives and works between London and New England, USA.

Pawlet Brookes MBE is the founder, CEO and artistic director of Serendipity – Institute for Black Arts and Heritage. An experienced and highly respected senior leader and producer, Brookes has been at the forefront of the development of Black arts in the UK since she was appointed Marketing Manager at the Nia Centre (Manchester) in the 90s, then Artistic Director of Peepul Centre (Leicester) and ultimately Chief Executive of Rich Mix (London). Brookes has been the Arts Council assessor for a number of Black arts capital projects, such as Bernie Grant Arts Centre (London) and National Centre for Carnival Arts (Luton). She has over 30 years' experience as a cultural leader with expertise in partnership building, international programming and cultural diversity. She is the trailblazer behind several initiatives with arts and cultural organisations both in the UK and internationally. As founder, CEO and artistic director of Serendipity, Brookes has pioneered the establishment of an annual dance festival in Leicester since 2011, *Let's Dance International Frontiers*, and coordinates the high profile annual Black History Month Leicester. With Serendipity she has produced two heritage initiatives *Lost Legends: 30 Years of Black History Month in Leicester* (2016-2017) and *Archiving the Past: Reflecting the Future* (2018-2020). Under Brookes' leadership, Serendipity was recently awarded £760k to support the development of a new project *Unearthed: Forgotten Histories*, one of the largest grants given by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to a Black arts and heritage organisation. Brookes has produced several large-scale projects including two for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, *Ballare: To Dance* with classical composer Phillip Herbert, and *Follow the Light*, a carnival parade as part of the Olympic torch relay in the East Midlands. In her extensive career, she has worked alongside a wide range of international artists, directors and companies from Soweto Kinch to Nina Simone, Steven Berkoff, Scottish Ballet, Geraldine O'Connor, Ballet Black, Mahogany Arts, Daksha Sheth, Phillip Herbert, Mica Paris, Akala, Gil Scott Heron, Aswad, Kyle Abraham, Germaine Acogny and Philadanco. Brookes has edited over 18 publications focusing on Black arts, heritage including *Serious About Dance – Let's Talk* (2005), *Hidden Movement: Contemporary Voices of Black British Dance* (2013), *Reflections: Irrepressible Voices of Black British Cultural Resilience* (2020), *Creating Socially Engaged Art: Can Dance Change the World?* (2021) and *BlackInk: Arts, Heritage and Cultural Politics*, a magazine published annually for Black History Month.

Jess Bond is a current graduate student at the University of Sussex in the MA in Media and Cultural Studies programme. As a 2021-2022 US-UK Fulbright Recipient, Jess has a passion for understanding the nuanced differences between the US and UK regarding the intersection of race and gender in media representation. As a current freelance journalist, Jess is devoted to reporting on marginalised identities and showing the beauty within them and how they redefine outdated narratives.

Tara Brusselaers graduated magna cum laude from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium, with a degree in Linguistics and Literary Studies. She is currently a student of the interuniversity Advanced Master Literatuurwetenschappen at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium. She is a member of

VUB's Centre of Literary and Intermedial Crossings (CLIC). In June 2021, she participated in 'Jackie Kay: An International Conference' and is currently developing this into a book chapter. In March 2022, she will participate in the International Conference on Poetry Studies, where she will present on the hybrid approaches and intermediality in Jay Bernard's *Surge* (2019), which is the topic of her Advanced Master thesis (supervised by Prof. Elisabeth Bekers).

Helen Cousins a Reader in Postcolonial Literature at Newman University, Birmingham, UK. She has published on black British writers in articles appearing in *The Journal of Commonwealth Writing and Postcolonial Text*. She has a chapter in *Telling It Slant: Critical Approaches to Helen Oyeyemi* (eds. C. Buckley and S. Ilott, Sussex Academic 2017) entitled "'As white as red as black as ...': Beauty, Race and Gender in the Tales of Helen Oyeyemi, Angela Carter and Barbara Comyns"; and one in *Blackness in Britain* (eds. K. Andrews and L. Palmer, Routledge 2016) entitled "Black British Writing and an English Literary Belonging." She edited a Special Issue for *African Literature Today* (No. 34, 2016) with P. Dodogon-Katiyo on "Diaspora and Returns in Fiction" in which she has an article: "Returns 'Home': Constructing Belonging in Black British Literature – Evans, Evaristo and Oyeyemi." She also published an interview with the Zimbabwean-British writer Tendai Huchu in this volume. She participated in the first expert meeting on Black British Women's Writing in 2013 and is a founding member of the Black British Women Writers' Network. She is also an active member of The Postcolonial Studies Association having acted as membership secretary 2010-2013 and now serving on the Conference Organising Committee. She works as a desk editor for the online *Literary Encyclopaedia* and has contributed entries for the black British writer, Laura Fish, and on Oyeyemi's novel *Boy, Snow, Bird*. She has also contributed several writer's profiles to the Black British Women Writers' website. She is on the advisory board for *Postcolonial Interventions: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Postcolonial Studies*.

Parham Aledavood obtained a BA in English language and literature from the University of Tehran in 2020 and an MA in English literary studies from Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) in 2021. His master's thesis, titled "Transgenerational Memory in Bernardine Evaristo's *Lara and Girl, Woman, Other*" and supervised by Prof. Elisabeth Bekers and Prof. Janine Hauthal, won the 2021 VUB Multilingual Master Award in Literary Studies. He is currently a PhD candidate in English at the University of Montreal in Canada. His dissertation deals with the trauma of migration in contemporary diasporic Anglophone literature. Alongside his research, he continues his career as a literary translator by translating classical and contemporary plays from English and French into Persian.

Kavita Bhanot is ECR Leverhulme Fellow at Leicester University. She wrote the landmark Essay 'Decolonise not Diversify' in 2015, has edited three short-story collections, including *Too Asian, not Asian Enough* and co-founded the LitMustFall collective and festival, with whom she organises reading groups and events. She is currently writing a book about decolonising literature with Pluto Press and is co-editing, with Jeremy Tiang, an anthology on decolonising translation with Tilted Axis. Her translation of short stories by Anjali Kaja won a 2021 Pen Translates award and will be published by Comma Press in 2022. She won third prize in the SI Leeds Literary Proze in 2018. For the last ten years she has been a reader and mentor with The Literary Consultancy, with whom she is running workshops with publishers on ethical editing, drawing on her academic research. She does translation workshops in schools with Shadow Heroes.

Rahila Gupta is a freelance journalist, writer and activist. Her poems and short stories have been published in several anthologies. Her books include: a collection of essays she edited, *From Homebreakers to Jailbreakers: Southall Black Sisters* in 2003; *Provoked and Enslaved* both 2007. *Don't Wake Me: The Ballad of Nihal Armstrong*, ran in London, Edinburgh, New York, and four cities in India between 2012-14 and was nominated for a number of awards. It was published by Oberon Books in an edition including essays by Gupta in 2019.

Tracey Walters is Professor of Literature in the Department of Africana Studies at Stony Brook University where she also holds an affiliate appointment with the Department of English, and

Women's and Gender Studies. She is an interdisciplinary, transcultural scholar of Africana Studies, and writes about the experiences of African diasporic women through the lens of feminist studies and cultural studies. She is a scholar of Black British literature and *Classica Africana*, a subfield of classical studies. Her articles on Bernadine Evaristo, Andrea Levy, and Zadie Smith can be found in numerous journals and anthologies. She has published two monographs: *Not Your Mother's Mammy: The Representation of the Domestic in Transatlantic Media* (Rutgers Press, 2021) and *African American Women and the Classicists Tradition: Black Women Writers from Wheatley to Morrison* (Palgrave, 2007). She has edited two collections: *Zadie Smith: Critical Essays* (Peter Lang, 2008) and *Decoded: Critical Essays on Zadie Smith* (Peter Lang, 2022), and the reader *Today's Writers and their Works: Zadie Smith* (Cavendish Square Publishing, 2012). She was a guest editor for *Open Cultural Studies Journal*. Walters is co-host of the *Black Girls with Accents* Podcast.

Dr Laura Fish. I am a Writer and Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing. I have over 10 years' experience in broadcast television and radio. My first novel, *Flight of Black Swans* (Duckworth: London, 1995) received very favourable reviews. My second novel, *Strange Music*, (Jonathan Cape 2008; Vintage, London 2009) was Orange Prize Listed 2009; nominated for International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award 2009; and selected for Pearson Edexcel & Black British Writing A level reading guide 2017/18. My third novel, *Lying Perfectly Still*, (extract in Johannesburg Review of Books, 2017) has twice been SI Leeds Literary Prize listed (2018 and 2020). I have worked as a Creative Writing tutor at St Andrews University, University of Western Cape, University of East Anglia, where I studied for the MA and PhD in Creative Writing, and Newcastle University, where I was RCUK Academic Fellow in Creative Writing 2007-2013. I am a Fellow of the Iowa International Writers Programme. I currently lead the MA in Creative Writing, Northumbria University, Newcastle, U.K.

Abiòdún 'Abbey' Abdul is a Yorùbá-Nigerian writer who won several poetry awards throughout childhood. Fascinated by how grammar could be bent to facilitate new meaning and enhance creative expression, she has worked for several years in higher education as an English Language Lecturer & Assessor across the globe. She still enjoys composing poetry focusing as ever on social justice and topics celebrating our common humanity, which have been included in various anthologies. But most of her expressive writing is now creative non-fiction prose, and auto-ethnographical memoir in particular encompassing her schooling across three continents.

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Dr Michael Perfect is a Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Liverpool John Moores University. His research interests are in twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature and culture. His first book, *Contemporary Fictions of Multiculturalism*, was published with Palgrave in 2014, and his work has also appeared in *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, *The Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, *The Journal for Cultural Research*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, and numerous edited collections. He has written for The Guardian's Higher Education Network, and been interviewed on local and national radio. His second book focuses on Andrea Levy, and is forthcoming with Manchester UP. He was the first academic to carry out research on Levy's archive, and his ongoing work on the archive is supported by a BA/Leverhulme research grant. In addition to his work on Levy, he is currently developing a project that relates to screen adaptations of contemporary transnational novels. He is Co-editor, with Hengameh Saroukhani and Sarah Lawson Welsh, of 'In Memoriam: Andrea Levy Special Issue'. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 53: 1-2 (2022). [Link to special issue.](#)

Conference Organisers

Suzanne Scafe is Visiting Professor at the University of Brighton, School of Humanities and Social Science. She is the co-author of *Heart of the Race* (1985, 2018), *Teaching Black Literature* (1989), *The Black Body in Europe* (2007), co-editor of *African-Caribbean Women Interrogating Diaspora/Post-Diaspora* (2022) and several articles and book chapters on Caribbean and Black British writers.

Dr Kadija George is a Sierra Leonean-British literary activist, who edits, publishes, and mentors writers of African and Asian descent. She is the Publications Manager for Inscribe/Peepal Tree, publisher of SABLE LitMag and editor of several anthologies. George has published a poetry collection, 'Irki', and is the co-author of 'This is the Canon: Decolonize Your Bookshelf in 50 Books'. She is co-founder of Mboka Festival of Arts, Culture and Sport and founder of AfriPoeTree SIV. She has received awards and fellowships for her work in the creative arts and her research, has judged several writing competitions, and received her doctorate from the University of Brighton in 2021.

Dr Sarah Lawson-Welsh is Associate Professor and Reader in English and Postcolonial literatures at York St John University. She received her PhD in Caribbean Studies (Language and Literature of the Anglophone Caribbean) from Warwick University. Her latest monograph, *Food, Text and Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean*, was published by Rowman & Littlefield in July 2019. She is currently working on a new book on Caribbean Literature for the new Routledge series, *Global Literatures: Twenty-first Century Perspectives*. She is the coeditor of the bestselling *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*, first published in 1996: <http://www.routledgeliterature.com/books/The-Routledge-Reader-in-Caribbean-Literature-isbn9780415120494> and a Founding Editor of JPW, the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* (formerly *World Literature Written in English*), published by Taylor & Francis: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjpw20> For more details of Sarah's research publications (including full-text versions) see <https://yorksj.academia.edu/DrSarahLawsonWelsh>. She is Co-editor, with Henghameh Saroukhani and Michael Perfect, of 'In Memoriam: Andrea Levy Special Issue'. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 53: 1-2 (2022). [Link to special issue](#).

Amanda Holiday is an artist, poet and filmmaker. Holiday completed a degree in Fine Art at Wimbledon School of Art in 1987. She exhibited with and was active in the 2nd wave of the black British art movement before moving into film & scriptwriting - directing short experimental films for the Arts Council, BFI and Channel 4 before studying briefly at the NFTS. Between 2001-10, she lived in Cape Town where she wrote and directed several educational television series. Her chapbook 'The Art Poems' was published in April 2018 as part of New Generation African Poets (Tano) chapbox series from Akashic books (US). She completed the Creative Writing (Poetry MA) at UEA in 2019 and her poetry has appeared or will appear in *Prairie Schooner* (US), *South Bank Poetry Magazine*, *Poetry Birmingham Literary Journal*, *amberflorazine*, *Lolwe*, *ANMLY* (US), *CUSP* anthology and *Frieze*. In 2020, she was shortlisted for the Brunel International African Poetry Prize and founded the UK's first crowdfunded poetry press *Black Sunflowers*. She is a doctoral student at the University of Brighton researching 'pictured blackness' in poetry and art and is supervised by Dr Veličković.

Dr Vedrana Veličković is Principal Lecturer in Literature at the University of Brighton, School of Humanities and Social Science. Her research interests are in contemporary literature, specifically Black British, postcommunist writings and BrexLit. She is the author of *Eastern Europeans in Contemporary Literature and Culture: Imagining New Europe* (Palgrave, 2019) and several articles on Black British and post-Yugoslav women's writers. Her most recent article on Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* appears in the 'In Memoriam: Andrea Levy Special Issue' of *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 53: 1-2 (2022), Ed. by Sarah Lawson-Welsh, Henghameh Saroukhani and Michael Perfect. [Link to special issue](#). She co-organised the first Black British Women's Writing conference at Brighton in 2014 and is the co-founder, with Dr Vy Rajapillai, of the student-staff DeCol Collective in The School of Humanities and Social Science, <https://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/decolonisingatfalmer/>.

