

**Programme for  
Mermaids, Maritime Folklore, and Modernity  
26-27 October 2017, Copenhagen, Denmark**

*Note:* All trips leaving from Ibsens Hotel will depart precisely at the designated time: We will not wait for latecomers. All conference presentations on 26-27 October take place at Kulturhuset Indre By (Charlotte Ammundsens Plads 3), located just one block over from Ibsens Hotel.

**Tuesday, 24 October**

09:30: Meet in lobby of Ibsens Hotel for welcome and orientation.

10:00-16:00: Merfolk-themed tour led of Østerbro and Copenhagen Harbour by local historian Paul Hartvisgon (<http://cityseeing.dk/>). Departure from Ibsens Hotel, 10:00.

17:15: Visit to Tivoli Gardens Departure from Ibsens Hotel, 17:15. Includes dinner at Brdr. Price (18:00).

**Wednesday, 25 October**

10:00-16:00: Merfolk-themed tour led of Copenhagen City Centre by local historian Paul Hartvigson (<http://cityseeing.dk/>). Departure from Ibsens Hotel, 10:00.

17:15: Dinner at Restaurant Havfruen (Nyhavn 39). Departure from Ibsens Hotel at 17:15, actual dinner at 18:00.

**Thursday, 26 October**

08:15-08:45: Registration (Café)

08:45-10:30

Session 1: **Welcome + Keynotes** (Room 1)

08:45: **Welcome** by **Adam Grydehøj** (Island Dynamics, Denmark)

09:00: Keynote Speech: 'Into the Mer' by **Philip Hayward** (University of Technology Sydney & Southern Cross University, Australia)

09:45 Keynote Speech by **Onookome Okome** (University of Alberta, Canada) **The Figure of the Mammiwata in Nollywood.**

10:30-11:00: Coffee Break

11:00-13:00

Session 2a: **Asia and Oceania** (Room 1)

*Chair:* **Victoria de Rijke** (Middlesex University London, UK)

11:00: **Anais Duong-Pedica** (University of York, UK) **South Sea Mermaids: Mythologies of Mermaids and Tahitian Women.**

11:30: **Supriya Banerjee** (Viswa Bharati University, India) **The Apsara: Deconstruction of the Spectacular.**

12:00: **Lucy Fraser** (University of Queensland, Australia) **Crossing over Borders: Mermaids in Japan.**

12:30: **Martine Mussies** (Independent Researcher, The Netherlands) **Between Ningyo and Māmeido: A Japanese Mermaid's Transformation with Vocaloid Voice.**

Session 2b: **Polish and Estonian Mermaids** (Room 2)

*Chair:* **Peter Goggin** (Arizona State University, USA)

11:00: **Jacek Wasilewski** (University of Warsaw, Poland) & **Agata Kostrzewa** (University of Warsaw, Poland) **Warsaw Mermaid Tattoos as a New Symbol of Identity.**

11:30: **Kristie Collins** (Reitaku University, Japan) *The Lure: A Siren Song with a Lesbian Vampire Twist.*

12:00: **Risto Järv** (Estonian Literary Museum, Estonian Folklore Archives, Estonia) **Diver Niglas and the Mermaids: An Ancient Tale of the Estonian People.**

12:30: **Tracy C. Davis** (Northwestern University, USA) **How Do You Know a Mermaid When You See One? How Do You See a Mermaid When You Know One?**

13:00-14:00: Lunch Break

14:00-16:00

Session 3a: **Selkies** (Room 1)

*Chair:* **Eni Bankole-Race** (Independent Researcher, UK)

14:00: **Victoria Leslie** (University of Chichester, UK) **Sealskins and Shawls: Marriage and Modernity in Two Fin de Siècle Texts.**

14:30: **Fiachra Ó Corragáin** (Independent Researcher, Ireland) **Magical Swans of the Irish Seas: A Modern Musical Imagining.**

15:00: **Gregory R. Darwin** (Harvard University, USA) *Deirtear go bhfuil gaol ag muintir Chonghaile leis na rónta: Mermaid Genealogies and Congenital Taboos in Irish Folklore.*

15:30: **Paige Zentner** (Heritage University, USA) **Changing Skins: Connections between Selkie Mythology and Modern-day Merfolk.**

Session 3b: **Mermaids in Literature** (Room 2)

*Chair:* **Kristie Collins** (Reitaku University, Japan)

14:00: **Claire Corbett** (Western Sydney University, Australia) **Protecting Oceans in the Age of Climate Change: The Mermaid as Terrorist.**

14:30: **Victoria de Rijke** (Middlesex University London, UK) **No Fear of Depths: Unsettling Seas, Pirates, Children and Risk in Visual Arts and Literature.**

15:00: **Özlem Görey** (Boğaziçi University, Turkey) *'Turned over a New Leaf on Dry Land': Nuala ni Dhomhnaill's 50 Minute Mermaid.*

15:30: **Ana Chikovani** (Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia) **Syncretic Identity in Stratis Myrivilis's Novel *Mermaid Madonna*.**

17:30: Dinner at Send flere krydderier (Nørre Allé 7,

<http://www.sendflerekrydderier.dk/>). Departure from Ibsens Hotel at 17:30, actual dinner at 18:00.

**Friday, 27 October**

08:30-10:30

Session 4a: **Merfolk Epistemologies** (Room 1)

*Chair:* **Cathy Greenhagh** (Independent Researcher, UK)

08:30: **Sara Malou Strandvad** (Roskilde University, Denmark) & **Tracey C. Davis** (Northwestern University, USA) **Epistemological Mermaids: Knowledge Production in Experiential Encounters.**

- 09:00: **Peter Goggin** (Arizona State University, USA) **Are Mermaids Real?: Rhetorical Boundaries and the Science of Merfolk.**
- 09:30: **Cecilia Inkol** (York University, Canada) **The Deleuzian Mermaid Archetype: The Machinic Mermaid.**
- 10:00: **Katarzyna Nadana-Sokolowska** (The Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland) & **Monika Rudaś-Grodzka** (The Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland) **Archaeology of the Mermaid's Tail.**

Session 4b: **Mermaids in Fiction** (Room 2)

*Chair:* **Victoria Leslie** (University of Chichester, UK)

- 08:30: **Lydia Brugué Botia** (Universitat de Vic - Universitat Central de Catalunya, Spain) & **Auba Llompart Pons** (Universitat de Vic - Universitat Central de Catalunya, Spain) **Darkness and Desire: Three Mermaid Stories by Louisa May Alcott.**
- 09:00: **Manal Shalaby** (Ain Shams University, Egypt) **Re-storying' Faith to the Postmodern Psyche in M. Night Shyamalan's *Lady in the Water* (2006) and Neil Jordan's *Ondine* (2009).**
- 09:30: **Herlinda Ramirez-Barradas** (Purdue Northwest, USA) **A Mermaid on Foreign Coasts: The *Petenera* in the Gulf of Mexico.**
- 10:00: **Alex Kizuk** (University of Lethbridge, Canada) **'Distilled from Limbuks Foul as Hell': Sirenic Knowledge from Homer to Roberto Bolano.**

10:30-11:00: Break

11:00-13:00

Session 5a: **Merfolk in Visual Art** (Room 1)

*Chair:* **Fiachra Ó Corragáin** (Independent Researcher, Ireland)

- 11:00: **Megan Dunn** (Independent Researcher, New Zealand) **The Muse of War: Mermaids, Hybridity and Feminism in the Art of Alexis Hunter.**
- 11:30: **Han Tran** (University of Miami, USA) **When Nereids became Mermaids: Arnold Böcklin's Paradigm Shift.**
- 12:00: **Clarice Butkus** (University of Technology Sydney, Australia), **Christian Fleury** (University of Caen, France), & **Benoît Raoulx** (University of Caen, France) **Desiring the Shore: Adolphe Lalyre and the Carteret Sirens.**
- 12:30: **Cathy Greenhagh** (Independent Researcher, UK) **Encounters with the Mermaid as Elemental and Cinematography as Quintessence.**

Session 5b: **Merfolk of Difference** (Room 2)

*Chair:* **Ana Chikovani** (Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia)

- 11:00: **Eni Bankole-Race** (Independent Researcher, UK) **Emere-Omi: Mermaids, Myths and the Marine Bride in Yoruba Culture.**
- 11:30: **Sally Galman** (University of Massachusetts at Amherst, USA) **Enchanted Selves and Sea Creatures: Transgender Children's Use of Persistent Mermaid Imagery in Portraiture.**
- 12:00: **Olle Jilkén** (University of Stockholm, Sweden) **Images of the Merman.**
- 12:30: **Jivanyan Alvard** (Yerevan State University, Armenia) **Armenian Mermaids: The Sea and its Tropes.**

13:00-14:30: Lunch Break

14:30-16:00:

Session 6: **Keynotes + Closing Remarks** (Room 1)

14:30: Keynote Speech: **Jennifer Kokai** (Weber State University, USA) **American Mermaids and the Aesthetics of Descension.**

15:15: Keynote Speech: **Claire Baudet** (University of La Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3, France) Embody a Mythic Creature: The Example of Real Life Mermaids.

15:45: **Closing Remarks** by **Philip Hayward** (University of Technology Sydney & Southern Cross University, Australia)

17:30: Dinner at Ma'ed Ethiopian Restaurant (Griffenfeldsgade 7). Departure from Ibsens Hotel at 17:30, actual dinner at 18:00.

## Abstracts

**Jivanyan Alvard** (Yerevan State University, Armenia) **Armenian Mermaids: The Sea and its Tropes.** In spite of the fact that modern Armenia is a country entirely surrounded by land, it has a rich and unique maritime lore, an interesting repertoire of maritime beliefs, legends, tales and superstitions. Armenian folk narratives comprising sea spirits should be remarkably old, going back to times when Armenia was not a land-locked territory. Strangely, with the shrinking of geography (today the country constitutes only one-tenth of historical Armenia) the supernatural marine personnel seem to have remained intact. It seems possible to study the ‘marine beasts’ on the verbal level only. Since for most scholars they do not have language independent referents they are seen as specific results of fantasy tropes, metamorphoses in particular. The latter serve as a way of creating a special class of metamorphic personages, found within fairy tale setting and beyond. Thus in terms of rhetoric mermaids and mermen are frozen or petrified metamorphoses.

*Biography:* Alvard Jivanyan is Head of the Centre for Fairy Tale Studies, Toumanian Museum; teaches English and Stylistics at Yerevan State University; and is editor of *Hasker: Yearbook of Children’s Literature and Folklore*. [alvardjivanyan@gmail.com](mailto:alvardjivanyan@gmail.com)

**Supriya Banerjee** (Viswa Bharati University, India) **The Apsara: Deconstruction of the Spectacular.** Our conventional postcolonial understanding of modernity is something that is authoritative, with secure foundations and a stable world view. However in its negotiations with mythology and folk tales, a discourse that has chimerical, chameleon like quality destabilizing many simultaneous identities, acquired and displayed through a play on fleeting and tantalizing half disclosures has come into existence. The paper proposes to discuss one such discourses based on the Apsaras or water nymphs who trace their origin to the churning of the oceans theory in India. The Apsara, a beautiful object has always been counter valued as the logical end product of female lives structured by exploitation. She was produced and publicized entirely through modern means, and clearly demarcated from the concept of the goddesses. The Apsara is an unvoiced object, used for an end, however unjustified it maybe. The Apsara is freed from the structure of the society, lives in a counter structure that cancels out the restrictions and disabilities, the rules of submission and deference, the injunctions of silence, modesty and invisibility. The spectacle of a young sensuous beautiful woman dressed in sheer clothing arising from the oceans and embracing a god, man or a saint in public creates a counter structure, spectacular and theatrical. She is allowed moments of personhood which eventually and strongly ensures that this is a rite of passage into death, oblivion and ignominy. Rape and sexual slavery, violence have been perpetuated through this structures, and the Apsara eventually stands for all that should not be an understanding of women towards their entitlements of life.

*Biography:* A senior Resource Person at the School of Languages and culture at Rabindra Bharati University, I am also a (PhD) researcher at the Department of Comparative Literature at Viswa Bharati University Shantiniketan. I have published articles and journals both as an editor and a contributor in ISSN and ISBN books and journals. I have also done works in translations and written for travel journals. My hobbies include public speaking and travelling. [supriyabnrj4@gmail.com](mailto:supriyabnrj4@gmail.com)

**Eni Bankole-Race** (Independent Researcher, UK) **Emere-Omi: Mermaids, Myths and the Marine Bride in Yoruba Culture.** This paper is an exploration of the mermaid and marine spirit phenomenon in Yoruba culture. An emere is a ‘spirit child’, a sojourner on this plane, visiting for their own (usually mischievous) purposes. Water spirits or

Mermaids, Emere-omi are considered the most insidious. Their earthly lives are considered a mere vacation from their real lives on the spirit plane, and it is considered that it is there that the emere's first allegiance lies. A beautiful child with large eyes, a profusion of hair, too fair skin or too dark and smooth, a delicate child or one who never falls ill, one who is graceful, who speaks gently, or with a beautiful singing voice, who is overly dextrous/academic, a child who is too good to be true or is always in trouble... Using traditional beliefs and mythology as well as contemporary ethnographic account, I attempt to trace the radical transposition from the acceptance of mermaids and veneration of Yemoja the All-Mother, and Oluokun, owner of the seas, to the demonisation of all marine spirits as malevolent beings inimical to human well-being by the modern Evangelical and Pentecostal churches in Nigeria.

*Biography:* Eni Bankole-Race is an award-winning textile maker and independent ethnographer. A member of both ASA and EASA, she is also a freelance lecturer in the field of African Culture and Textiles and from Sept. 2017 will be affiliated with the Royal College of Art. She has also contributed a chapter to *The Routledge Handbook of Anthropology and Beauty* ed. Stephanie Bunn to be published in 2017. [ennibank@aol.com](mailto:ennibank@aol.com)

**Claire Baudet** (University of La Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3, France) **Embody a Mythic Creature: The Example of Real Life Mermaids.** From Mesopotamian mythology to Disney's *Little Mermaid*, the mermaid myth has considerably evolved over centuries. It now tends to be anchored into reality: for a decade, mermaid performers have embodied these fantastic creatures during underwater performances. How to make these shows a magical moment for the spectator? Using my own experience as a professional mermaid at the Aquarium of Paris and my research about the mermaid community, I would like to explain the different processes allowing the audience to adhere to this mythological representation and to believe, even for a moment, in a certain kind of magic.

*Biography:* Claire is a PhD student at the University of Paris III - La Sorbonne Nouvelle. Her thesis focuses on Myths, symbols and archetypes in Disney productions; the mermaid example. She has also written two master's theses: The myth of the mermaid and its modern representation and from myth to subculture, the virtual mermaid communities. Claire is also the first French mermaid performer. She works as a full-time professional mermaid and she has a show all year long at the Aquarium of Paris. [www.lasirenebleue.com](http://www.lasirenebleue.com), [bdt.claire@gmail.com](mailto:bdt.claire@gmail.com)

**Lydia Brugué Botia** (Universitat de Vic - Universitat Central de Catalunya, Spain) & **Auba Llompart Pons** (Universitat de Vic - Universitat Central de Catalunya, Spain) **Darkness and Desire: Three Mermaid Stories by Louisa May Alcott.** American author Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888), best known worldwide for her novel *Little Women* and its sequels, was also the author of numerous fairy tales and gothic tales, which have not received as much critical and readerly attention as her realist novels. Browsing through Alcott's fairy tales and children's stories, we have found that some of these tales revolve around the mermaid figure and present highly interesting depictions of these mythological sea creatures as both objects of desire and representations of 'the other'. We have selected three short stories in which the mermaid is particularly prominent: 'Ariel, A Legend of the Lighthouse', 'Mermaids' and 'Fancy's Friend', all of them published between 1865 and 1886. In these stories, we see how romance and the gothic intertwine to present us with idealized visions of mermaids and their underwater worlds, at the same time that these ideals are questioned and the reader is offered glimpses into the darkness of the sea.

*Biographies:* Lydia Brugué took her degree in Translation and Interpreting in 2000 and completed her PhD in Translation in 2013. She teaches at Universitat de Vic-Universitat Central de Catalunya since 2003 and is now coordinator of the M.A. in Specialized Translation. Her research is focused on translation, film studies, and fairy tales. [lydia.brugue@uvic.cat](mailto:lydia.brugue@uvic.cat). Auba Llompart is currently an Associate Professor of English at Universitat de Vic-Universitat Central de Catalunya. She completed her PhD in English Literature in 2014 at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, and her research interests include Children's and YA Literature, Fairy Tales, Gothic Studies and Gender Studies. [auba.llompart@uvic.cat](mailto:auba.llompart@uvic.cat)

**Clarice Butkus** (University of Technology Sydney, Australia), **Christian Fleury** (University of Caen, France), & **Benoit Raoulx** (University of Caen, France) **Desiring the Shore: Adolphe Lalyre and the Carteret Sirens.** Adolphe Lalyre was a high-profile French painter in the late 19th and early 20th Century who has now largely fallen into obscurity. Seemingly unmoved by the series of movements in Modern Art that came to prominence during his lifetime – including Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism and Cubism – he persisted with a style of painting derived from Art Nouveau and Symbolism, initially favouring religious themes before moving on to a series of works representing (human-form) sirens during an extended residency at Carteret, on the coast of Normandy, in the 1870s and 1880s. These works combined elements of local place association – Carteret having a location known as la grotte des Sirènes a Marée (literally the cave of the sea sirens) and a more general association with monster mythology in the form of the legend of Saint Germain Le Scot – with distinct local coast-scapes that formed the backdrop to his representations of sirens. The French term sirène refers to both human-form female water spirits of various kinds and fish-tailed ones of the type usually referred to in English as mermaids. The paper analyses the nature of Lalyre's sirènes and the pleasures and temptations they offered the viewer at an historical moment when Modernism and Modernity more generally was in its ascendancy.

*Biographies:* Clarice Butkus is a PhD student at the University of Technology Sydney. Christian Fleury is an adjunct researcher at the University of Caen. [fleury.cote@wanadoo.fr](mailto:fleury.cote@wanadoo.fr). Benoit Raoulx is an associate professor at the University of Caen. [benoit.raoulx@unicaen.fr](mailto:benoit.raoulx@unicaen.fr)

**Ana Chikovani** (Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia) **Syncretic Identity in Stratis Myrivilis's Novel *Mermaid Madonna*.** The paper examines the ways in which Modern Greek writer, Stratis Myrivilis (1890–1969) has drawn themes, motifs and details of ancient pagan and orthodox Christian religion into the fabric of literary work. The novel *Mermaid Madonna* is built around distinguished deity, unique synthesis of the Christian Madonna, folk-tales' Mermaid and Gorgon - the ancient Greek deity. She is Madonna from waist and above and from the waist down – a fish. In the novel layers of mythology, religion and magic are presented. The fresco of Mermaid Madonna depicted in a church wall is personified through the central character of the novel – Smaragde. Research methods consist of interpreting and comparing literary sources. I also investigate author's ideological purpose or, the effect on the reader of including descriptions and building the plot around syncretic deity in the fictional work. The research makes contribution to understandings of religion and religious rituals in 'context' and 'culture'. Perception of magic and of syncretic Deity are discussed. The paper endeavors to suggest the variety of uses and function of religious syncretism in literature. *Biography:* Ana Chikovani graduated from Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University in Georgian and Modern Greek Philology, where she also took her doctorate in Modern

Greek Studies. Her PhD was a study of rituals in Stratis Myrivilis' literary works. Since 2008 Ana is Associate Professor of Modern Greek at the Institute of Classical, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies of Tbilisi State University. She also is founder and member of the governing committee of Georgian Association of Modern Greek Studies. Her main research interests lie in the study of Folklore, Rituals and Ancient Receptions in literature. [ani.chikovani@gmail.com](mailto:ani.chikovani@gmail.com)

**Kristie Collins** (Reitaku University, Japan) ***The Lure: A Siren Song with a Lesbian Vampire Twist***. This presentation explores Agnieszka Smoczyńska's darkly whimsical horror musical, 'The Lure' (2015). Featuring two mermaid sisters, drawn to the shore in Warsaw, Poland, by a rock band rehearsing on the bank of the river, the film follows their experience as one sister, Golden, preys on local men, while the other, Silver, falls in love with one of the musicians. Drawing on themes of human migration, the mermaid duo end up sidetracked from their original journey to America and become, instead, swept into Warsaw's seedy underworld as cabaret performers. While they initially are positioned as hunters—using their siren song to call the musicians to help them ashore—their individual agency and safety as women (and as mermaids) is increasingly called into question the longer they remain on land. Quirkily, yet effectively blending slasher/horror, musical, and romance film genres, the movie is an absorbing retelling of the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale—with a lesbian, cannibal, feminist mermaid twist.

*Biography:* Kristie Collins is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Foreign Studies at Reitaku University and a frequent visiting faculty member at Aalto University in Finland. Kristie has taught Gender Studies, Cultural Studies, Canadian Literature, and Intercultural Communication in Canada, Poland, England, Turkey, Finland, and Japan. She regularly publishes and presents her work in Japan and abroad, and her first monograph, "The Marginalized Majority: Media Representation and Lived Experiences of Single Women" (Bern: Peter Lang) was published in 2013. [kristiecollins@yahoo.com](mailto:kristiecollins@yahoo.com)

**Claire Corbett** (Western Sydney University, Australia) ***Protecting Oceans in the Age of Climate Change: The Mermaid as Terrorist***. A presentation on research for my third novel, *ULTRAMARINE*, and a short reading from it. This work explores changing relationships to seas around Australia as they come under pressures of overfishing and acidification. It also explores statelessness and longing for a home: its central character, Auroa, is born at sea of mixed ethnic heritage (Islander, Asian, European) but no nationality. Auroa is rescued from a sandbank like the one on which navigator Matthew Flinders was stranded when his ship shattered on the Great Barrier Reef in 1803. Taken to an abandoned island for interrogation, Auroa realises she is a crucial link between ordinary humans and the Mer, humans altered to live in the sea and who are mounting an angry defence of the ocean from exploitation. This novel explores the idea of a science fictional mermaid, not fantasy creatures but intentional creations of science.

Research includes the history of cartography, Pacific voyages in the Age of Discovery and oceanic life and cultures, including mermaids in Pacific Island cultures. It is a transnational work responding to issues facing the oceans, especially in the global South, as these waters heat up and reefs bleach.

*Biography:* Claire Corbett is a writer, writing teacher, casual academic (University of Technology, Sydney) and PhD student at Western Sydney University. Her first novel, *WHEN WE HAVE WINGS*, was published in 2011 by Allen & Unwin and shortlisted for the 2012 Barbara Jefferis Award and the 2012 Ned Kelly Award for Best First Fiction and published overseas. Recent fiction and essays have been published in a range of journals, including *Antipodes*, a global journal of Australian/NZ Literature and Science Fiction

Film & Television. Her second novel, WATCH OVER ME, is published by Allen & Unwin in May 2017. [clairecorbett@live.com.au](mailto:clairecorbett@live.com.au)

**Gregory R. Darwin** (Harvard University, USA) *Deirtear go bhfuil gaol ag muintir Chonghaile leis na róna: Mermaid Genealogies and Congenital Taboos in Irish Folklore.* Irish folklore abounds in encounters between humans and inhabitants of the sea. One extremely common legend, known as The Seal Woman, describes a forced marriage between a mermaid or seal-woman and the human who steals her garment; often the legend includes the detail that the couple had children. Many versions of the legend claim that the man was a member of a named family, or identify members of that family as the descendants of this union; often they have a distinctive physical feature, gift, or inherited taboo. Only a handful of families, all of which are associated with specific regions, are named in connection with this tradition.

In this paper, as part of a larger project on the Seal Woman, I will examine this familial connection with the mermaid along both synchronic and diachronic lines. I will examine the history of these families, and attempt to identify any continuities between medieval dynastic origin legends and contemporary storytelling. I will also discuss the attitudes towards the named families shown by storytellers, and attitudes towards these stories by members of these families to shed some light on what sort of social difference is encoded by this connection to the mermaid. "

*Biography:* Gregory R. Darwin is a 4th year Ph.D candidate in the department of Celtic Languages and Literatures, with a secondary field in Comparative Literature. He is a graduate of the University of Toronto, St. Michael's College, with a dual major in Classics and Celtic Studies. His research focuses on supernatural migratory legends, magical belief, and popular religion, along with modern Irish-language literature, especially issues of translation and postcoloniality. [gdarwin@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:gdarwin@fas.harvard.edu)

**Tracy C. Davis** (Northwestern University, USA) **How Do You Know a Mermaid When You See One? How Do You See a Mermaid When You Know One?** Merfolk appeared as allegorical scenic embellishments in baroque spectacles but in the Romantic period became prominent across the genres of dance, opera, drama, and revue. Drawing on fairy tales and iconography, these performances nevertheless tackled challenges unique to the stage: merfolk needed to be embodied, to perambulate, and to be set amidst three-dimensional environments. In German-speaking regions, the merfolk repertoire was especially rich. This paper utilizes hundreds of original designs that stage variants on mermaids and mermen, naiads, Nixen, sirens, Nöcken, Wassergeister, Meersleben, and Fischmenschen as corporealized and kinetic characters. Additionally, in parallel to the introduction of aquariums to households and as features of civic cultural life, it examines the development of scenic motifs such as grottos, tackling the challenge of setting merfolk into aquatic environments for the first time in stage history, not merely depicting sea life but sometimes on stages inundated by water. Performance is constituted by knowledge repertoires understood by collaborating artists; where representations overlap with audiences' knowledge repertoires there is legibility. Charting the development of this repertoire over nearly 200 years, the paper asks twin questions: how could audiences recognize merfolk in theatrical representations, and what is the impact into the twenty-first century, prefiguring the recent efflorescence of mermaid imagery?

*Biographical Note:* Tracy C. Davis is Barber Professor of Performing Arts at Northwestern University (Chicago). She specializes in performance theory, 19th-century British theatre history, and gender in performance. She is General Editor of the forthcoming six-volume study *A Cultural History of Theatre*; editor of the monograph

series Cambridge Studies in Theatre and Performance Theory (Cambridge UP); and co-editor of the monograph series Transnational Theatre Histories (Palgrave). She has recently been named a Humboldt Research Fellow at the University of Cologne. [tcdavis@northwestern.edu](mailto:tcdavis@northwestern.edu)

**Victoria de Rijke** (Middlesex University London, UK) **No Fear of Depths: Unsettling Seas, Pirates, Children and Risk in Visual Arts and Literature.** Richard Hughes' extraordinary novel 'A High Wind in Jamaica' was first published as 'The Innocent Voyage' in 1929. The novel depicts risk at sea with unprecedented honesty: of drowning, of abuse of power, of innocence and betrayal. This presentation proposes exploring cover images and illustrations from different versions of the book, beginning with the stunning woodcuts and engravings of Lynd Kendall Ward with the first edition, to dramatic film stills from MacKendrick's film of 1965 starring Antony Quinn and James Coburn, and more recent versions into the C21st, to compare and analyse interdisciplinary depictions of the sea, pirates and the imagination across literature and the visual arts. Ward and his contemporaries, such as Dorothy Pulis Lathrop and Rockwell Kent's images of the sea, mermaids and death by drowning, have undoubtedly influenced the development of the graphic novel today (such as Siegel's 'Sailor Twain', 2012, Bastian's 'Cursed Pirate Girl', 2013, or Alcaraz's 'Little Mermaid', 2014). This genre forms a contemporary means to explore the same maritime motifs of unsettling sexuality and risk. My interdisciplinary presentation will refer back to a highly challenging novel of the early C20th to inform C21st understandings of literary and graphic depictions of risky seascapes, pirates and mermaids.

*Biography:* Dr. Victoria de Rijke is Associate Professor in Arts & Education and Co-Chief Editor of Children's Literature in Education journal. She has published on Noses, Ducks, Visual Arts and Children's Literature. She lives on a boat and is a member of a large mixed Sea Shanty choir. [v.derijke@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:v.derijke@mdx.ac.uk)

**Megan Dunn** (Independent Researcher, New Zealand) **The Muse of War: Mermaids, Hybridity and Feminism in the Art of Alexis Hunter.** In 1972, the New Zealand artist Alexis Hunter emigrated to London. There, she joined the Artists Union's Women's Workshop. The photo-narrative sequences she produced throughout the decade would prove crucial in the development of feminist art. This has been recognised by recent shows like WACK!: Art and the Feminist Revolution (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2007) and Alexis Hunter: Radical Feminism in the 1970s (Norwich Gallery, England, 2007). However, in the early 1980s, Hunter would turn her back on photography and conceptualism to become a neo-expressionist painter, specialising in archetypal mythological subjects.

Throughout her career, Hunter supported her art practice by working in the film industry, particularly in animation. The link between advertising and Hunter's early photo-narratives has been regularly acknowledged, but not the link between her film work and her mythological paintings. Hunter worked on the 1989 Disney film, *The Little Mermaid*. 'I drew the foam', she quipped. A little later, she painted her large canvas, *The Muse of War* (1990–91). It portrays an oil-drenched mermaid with a wolf's head as a harbinger of environmental disaster. The mermaid is a potent symbol in Hunter's work, but it also suggests her own situation as a feminist artist stuck between a rock and a hard place. Hunter died of motor neurone disease in 2014, aged 65.

*Biography:* Megan Dunn is an art writer based in Wellington, New Zealand. She has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Auckland University and a Masters in Creative Writing from the University of East Anglia. Her writing focuses on contemporary New Zealand artists,

especially women artists. She has recently contributed catalogue essays to *Jealous Saboteurs*, the new book on London-based artist Francis Upritchard, and to *Creamy Psychology*, a survey of Yvonne Todd's photography, co-published by Victoria University Press and City Gallery Wellington.

In 2017 Galley Beggar Press will publish her first non-fiction book *Tinderbox*, an irreverent take on Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. She currently works as a researcher/archivist at City Gallery Wellington. [megandunn90@gmail.com](mailto:megandunn90@gmail.com)

**Anaïs Duong-Pedica** (University of York, UK) **South Sea Mermaids: Mythologies of Mermaids and Tahitian Women.** Visual manifestations of Polynesia depict the region as 'paradise' and have been ripe with myths, particularly concerning Polynesian women. In this paper I explore Western visual representations of mermaids and Polynesian women. Mermaids have survived history more than any other mythical creature and are still featured in popular culture today. The term 'South sea mermaids' is a play on words that merges the concept of the South sea maiden with the mythic fish-women. The South sea maiden represents one of the terms used to characterise sexualised representations of Polynesian women. In this talk, I ask the following question: what is the relationship between Western visual representations of Polynesian women and mermaiders? The paper exposes the historical relationship between myths, mermaids, goddesses and Polynesian women since European navigators' first encounters with Pacific islands. I analyse predominantly contemporary photographs of mermaiders and Tahitian South sea maidens but also classical and contemporary paintings and illustrations, their mise-en-scène, and the representation of bodies from a literal and symbolic point of view. I discover common patterns and resemblances between these images, specifically in the eroticisation and exoticisation of places and bodies and discuss the implications of such visual similarities, especially for Polynesian women.

*Biography:* Anaïs is a second year PhD student in sociology at the University of York. Although, her PhD focuses on suicide, she has a master's degree in Women's Studies from the Centre for Women's Studies at York. She comes from Kanaky New Caledonia, a location that inspired the themes of her masters' dissertation on the postcolonial and western imagination, Pacific women and mermaids. [anaïs.duong.pedica@gmail.com](mailto:anaïs.duong.pedica@gmail.com)

**Lucy Fraser** (University of Queensland, Australia) **Crossing over Borders: Mermaids in Japan.** Pre-modern Japan had a rich tradition of mermaid stories that tended towards the monstrous and the strangely powerful. In one famous tale, *Happyaku bikuni* (recorded as early as 1449), a girl attains longevity and endless youth after accidentally eating mermaid meat. Modernisation and nation-building efforts from the late nineteenth century saw translations and adaptations of Western literature and arts, introducing sentimental approaches such as Hans Christian Andersen's 'The Little Mermaid' into the mix. Some more recent Japanese popular culture products incorporate both pre-modern Japanese as well as imported mermaid traditions; for example, Takahashi Rumiko's boys' manga (comic), *Mermaid Saga* (1984-1994), Shimizu Reiko's girls' manga *Moon Child* (1988-1992), and Studio Ghibli's animation for children, *Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea* (2008). Here I identify and explore the themes that bring these divergent mermaid figures together in these works: death and the afterlife, as well as pleasure and anxiety surrounding metamorphosis.

*Biography:* Dr Lucy Fraser is a Lecturer in Japanese at The University of Queensland, Australia. Her monograph on cross-cultural retellings of Hans Christian Andersen's mermaid story, titled *The Pleasures of Metamorphosis: Japanese and English Fairy Tale Transformations of 'The Little Mermaid'*, is forthcoming in 2017 from the Series in Fairy-

Tale Studies published by Wayne State University Press. She has also translated writing by well-known authors such as Hoshino Tomoyuki and Kawakami Hiromi, and literary and popular culture criticism by scholars such as Kan Satoko, Fujimoto Yukari, and Honda Masuko. [l.fraser2@uq.edu.au](mailto:l.fraser2@uq.edu.au)

**Sally Galman** (University of Massachusetts at Amherst, USA) **Enchanted Selves and Sea Creatures: Transgender Children’s Use of Persistent Mermaid Imagery in Portraiture.** In recent years, much popular culture and opinion has focused on the transgender population. However, this interest has been disproportionately focused on adults and teens, on biomedical fascination and fleeting interest in individual meaning-making (Ehrensaft, 2014). This paper presents data from an ongoing arts-based ethnographic study seeking to explore the cultural meaning-making practices and resiliencies of transgender and gender-nonconforming children (ages 3-9) in the United States and Canada. In this study, children were asked to illustrate short books about themselves and their identities, from a resiliency perspective. Female-identified participants repeatedly drew themselves as mermaids in their self-portraits, and chose mermaid-related fantasy elements throughout their books, as well as in other identity displays (such as bedroom décor, etc.). Even very young participants insisted that the mermaid represented the joy of being able to be their true selves, as well as the pain of perceived dysphoria, and often referred to folk tales and imagery as exemplars. This paper concludes by analyzing the meanings ascribed to mermaids by child participants, as well as the sociocultural roots of the mermaid imagery that has come to represent the community of transgender children and families worldwide (Hurley, 2014, Galman, 2016).

*Biography:* Dr. Sally Campbell Galman is an Associate Professor of Child and Family Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. As an anthropologist of childhood and education, her research focuses on the study of childhood and gender. Her recent work with young children who are transgender or gender-nonconforming has been awarded a grant from the Spencer Foundation. She is Editor-in-Chief of *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* along with colleague Dr. Laura Alicia Valdiviezo. A visual artist, Dr. Galman is author of the award-winning Shane series of qualitative methods texts, available from Alta Mira and Left Coast Press, and third volume on the ethnography of childhood, forthcoming from Routledge. You can learn more about the Gender Moxie Project on her research blog, [www.SallyCampbellGalman.com](http://www.SallyCampbellGalman.com), [sally@educ.umass.edu](mailto:sally@educ.umass.edu)

**Peter Goggin** (Arizona State University, USA) **Are Mermaids Real?: Rhetorical Boundaries and the Science of Merfolk.** ‘No evidence of aquatic humanoids has ever been found. Why, then, do they occupy the collective unconscious of nearly all seafaring peoples? That’s a question best left to historians, philosophers, and anthropologists.’ – USA Department of Commerce NOAA website

A popular perception, often fostered by broadcast and literary media stereotypes, holds that science (and scientists) dwell in an epistemological space of desired, if not actual, objectivity. However, science and imagination are dynamically, materially, and rhetorically intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Contemporary “moonshot” scientific research has embraced a “what if” confluence of scientific method, speculation, and pure fiction to boost early stage start-up projects that may lead to important technological and social breakthroughs. Futures Studies scientists draw on mythology, art, and fiction to develop creative scenarios of the “yet to be”. SETI Institute astrophysicists continue to draw on the Drake Equation and the search for alien life to stimulate intellectual curiosity about the universe. While belief in merfolk generally declined with the rise of scientific

thought and inquiry (the so-called “aquatic ape hypothesis” notwithstanding), science has re-opened the door of possibility, not as a validation of the actual existence of such mythological beings, but as creative means to inspire new ways of thinking about science and scientific discovery. The NOAA’s posted statement on “aquatic humanoids” is rhetorically intriguing not only as such an official response acknowledges that there is even an argument worth responding to, but that it presumes to validate study of merfolk in other disciplinary fields and still leaves the question open for potential inquiry. This paper will discuss speculative rhetoric in scientific discourse and make a case for the significance of merfolk in the realm of science and imagination.

*Biography:* Peter Goggin is Associate Professor in Rhetoric (English) and a Senior Scholar in the Global Institute of Sustainability at ASU He is the editor of *Environmental Rhetoric and Ecologies of Place, Rhetorics, Literacies, and Narratives of Sustainability*, and author of *Professing Literacy in Composition Studies*. Articles on literacy, environmental rhetoric, and small islands include publication in *Composition Studies*, *Community Literacy Journal*, *Computers and Writing*, and *Rhetoric Society of America*. His co-edited collection, *Serendipity in Rhetoric, Writing, and Literacy Research* is forthcoming with Utah State UP. He is founder and codirector of the annual Western States Rhetoric and Literacy conference, which features themes on sustainability, culture, transnationality, and place. [pgo@asu.edu](mailto:pgo@asu.edu)

**Özlem Görey** (Boğaziçi University, Turkey) **‘Turned over a New Leaf on Dry Land’: Nuala ni Dhomhnaill’s 50 Minute Mermaid.** Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill is a contemporary Irish poet whose collection of poems titled *The Fifty Minute Mermaid* constitutes an important part of her literary canon. The volume has been published bilingually with the original Irish poems and English translations on the same page. As her extended metaphor Ni Dhomhnaill chooses the mermaid in a fifty minute session of therapy to explore the sense of belonging which remains forever elusive for her. As the volume progresses, the reader comes to realize that the mermaid can only live on land by achieving self denying forgetfulness with respect to the sea. Life can go only if the original place which used to be a source of well being and joy is abandoned. This paper aims to explore *The Fifty Minute Mermaid* through French feminist theory, particularly the ideas of Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous. It argues that the female identity needs to abandon the maternal principle in order to adapt herself to patriarchy, just like the mermaid who abandons the sea and struggles to turn over a new leaf on dry land.

*Biography:* Özlem Görey is an assistant professor at the Department of Western Languages and Literatures in Istanbul Turkey. Current research interests are narrative theory, poetry, contemporary women's poetry. [gorey@boun.edu.tr](mailto:gorey@boun.edu.tr)

**Cathy Greenhlagh** (Independent Researcher, UK) **Encounters with the Mermaid as Elemental and Cinematography as Quintessence.** This paper explores filmic encounters with mermaid lore and the materiality of light and water. It draws on the Ancient Greek notion of the elements and characteristics of water spirits. Aether or “quintessence” was the “fifth element” used by alchemists, akin to the substance the gods breathed, the life-force, or presence. Four short films made by the researcher: *Fishing for Compliments* (1988), *Undercurrent* (2001), *Aftermath* (2006) and *Wonder* (2018, forthcoming) will be used to show cinematographic illumination techniques. The films represent a brief narrative over thirty years of different approaches to space, time, the body and (female) point of view; influenced in particular by Luce Irigaray and Trinh T. Minh-ha. They move from a representational form with a humorous mermaid cookery presenter in a studio built fantasy ocean environment; an embodied point of view and underwater

photography with the researcher as a water spirit; Icelandic river, steam and ice images superimposed with a dancer in the studio in an immersive combination; and finally an abstracted view of the body and surface water images as light and texture of sea, lakes and rivers in Australia, Dominica, Wyoming and Britain.

*Biography:* Cathy Greenhalgh is a film-maker, lecturer, media anthropologist and writer with over thirty years teaching, education consultancy, management, research expertise, latterly as Principal Lecturer in Film and Television at University of the Arts London. She spent fifteen years as a professional cinematographer in the film and commercials industries, and conducted ethnographic research with feature film cinematographers (1995-2017 ongoing). She directs and shoots films with elements of choreography, animation and documentary for cinema, gallery and museum spaces. Research interests and publications centre on filmmaking practices and communities of practice, cinematographic phenomena and aesthetics. [cathygreenhalghcinema@gmail.com](mailto:cathygreenhalghcinema@gmail.com)

**Philip Hayward** (University of Technology Sydney & Southern Cross University, Australia) **Into the Mer.**

*Biography:* Philip Hayward is author of *Making a Splash: Mermaids (and Mermen) in 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> Century Audiovisual Media* (JLP/University of Indiana Press, 2017) and is editor of *Shima* – a journal of research into island and maritime cultures. He holds adjunct professor positions at the University of Technology Sydney and at Southern Cross University (Australia) and has recently begun working on a project with the University of Central Asia in Kyrgyzstan. He has published widely in the fields of island, media and tourism studies. Outside of academia, he is involved in rainforest restoration in far north New South Wales (Australia). [prhshima@gmail.com](mailto:prhshima@gmail.com)

**Cecilia Inkol** (York University, Canada) **The Deleuzian Mermaid Archetype: The Machinic Mermaid.** Carl Jung understands the mermaid to embody an archetype that makes reference to the unconscious. The metaphor that corresponds to the unconscious, in Jungian thought, is the ocean. The mermaid is the being that can traverse this oceanic realm. She is not stuck within in, as a neurotic is: her body, a hybrid of fish and human, has adapted to its watery conditions. She is part human, part overhuman, in Nietzschean terms: she has overcome the challenges and obstacles posed by the unconscious. In this sense, the process of navigating, and therefore overcoming the personal unconscious will be elucidated as a process of becoming-mermaid. The archetype of the mermaid encounters a new facet of itself via the philosophy and concepts of Deleuze and Guattari. Their vision of the unconscious is a machinic realm- the unconscious formulates a machine comprising a matrix of clandestine networks, processes and flows. The process of navigating the machinic unconscious for Deleuze is a process of merging with the machinic unconscious. Deleuze's vision of navigating the machinic unconscious will thusly be elucidated not only a process of becoming-machine, but also as becoming-mermaid: it is a process of becoming the machinic-mermaid.

*Biography:* Cecilia Inkol is a Phd student in Toronto, Canada at York University. She is an arts-based researcher and artist. [cecilia.inkol@ryerson.ca](mailto:cecilia.inkol@ryerson.ca)

**Olle Jilkén** (University of Stockholm, Sweden) **Images of the Merman.** This paper addresses the representation of the male equivalent of the mermaid – the merman – in illustrations. The paper relies on a theoretical framework of gender studies, queer theory, masculinity studies and previous studies of the mermaid including psychoanalysis and folkloric studies. I identified some different representations of the merman and focus on four of them: the pin-up, the romantic couple, the pretty fish boy and the elderly merman.

Each type is examined by their portrayal of gender, sexuality, masculinity position, the gendered gazes in the picture and the intertextual relation to mermaid mythology, folklore and research. The paper concludes that illustrations of the merman mainly perform a marginalized masculinity due to its marginalized position in popular culture. The illustrations are made to please a male homosexual gaze except in the case of the elderly merman-type. Due to its marginalized position the merman does not oppose hegemonic conceptions of the binary gender system or the beauty ideals for the western man where whiteness, muscles, youth, ableness among other qualities is prioritized. The elderly merman gets positioned as the most authentic counterpart for the mermaid by the heterosexual framework and the folkloristic and mythological view.

*Biography:* Olle Jilkén is a MA-student in gender studies with a bachelor in arts management. His earlier essays addresses queer film festivals in Stockholm, queer gods in ancient Nordic mythology and representations of gendered game characters in online games. His theoretical interests revolves around culture studies, queer theory, classic gender studies, masculinity studies and representation theory. Mermaids are interesting to examine for gender theorists because of their sexualized appearance and their elevated position in popular culture. Because of the focus of female representations of mermaids Jilkén decided to devote his research to the relatively unexamined merman. [olle.jilken@gmail.com](mailto:olle.jilken@gmail.com)

**Risto Järv** (Estonian Literary Museum, Estonian Folklore Archives, Estonia) **Diver Niglas and the Mermaids: An Ancient Tale of the Estonian People.** In a four Estonian fairy tale variants from the 19th century, a fearless diver Niglas is described, who reaches sea bottom with ease as he is “favoured by the Sea King” and is “friendly with the mermaids”. This tale has also reached the international folk tales type index (ATU 434\*, The Diver). As is customary to mermaids in Estonian folk tradition, their relations with land dwellers do not bring happiness – in this case the young man is in love with a human princess Salme instead. Mermaids are portrayed as jealous creatures who transform Niglas into a duck. Nevertheless, the end of the story is a happy one – for the humans. The same romantic story was published in a newspaper in 1878. Although it is described there as “an ancient tale of the Estonian people that the publisher of this paper has recorded from the people’s mouth”, the plot of the tale has, in fact, developed through several steps. The original source is a Sicilian legend “Cola pesce” (XXII century), that Friedrich Schiller based his poem „Taucher“ on (1797). Estonian writer Carl Robert Jakobson then adapted the poem as a literary fairy tale, thus bringing it into the Estonian oral tradition.

*Biography:* Risto Järv (Ph.D). is the Head of the Estonian Folklore Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum and Associate Professor of Estonian folklore at the University of Tartu. His main research areas include folktales, folklore historiography, heritage and tourism. He has compiled and/or edited more than 15 academic folktale collections. [risto@folklore.ee](mailto:risto@folklore.ee)

**Alex Kizuk** (University of Lethbridge, Canada) **‘Distilled from Limbuks Foul as Hell’: Sirenic Knowledge from Homer to Roberto Bolano.** Once Odysseus takes leave of Hades (in itself a result of the suffering at Troy), he encounters the ambiguous Sirens, who attempt to seduce the hero not with Circean pleasure but true and comprehensive knowledge of what he suffered. The Sirens claim this gift for, as they sing, ‘we know everything that happens on this fertile earth.’ The epistemological nature of the Siren or mermaid trope persists in the many culture forms its has taken from the time of Homer to the 21st Century. I will discuss Christian deflations like that of Eustathius, archbishop of Thessalonica in the 12th Century, to whom the Sirens were merely ‘flute playing whores

who robbed travellers of their money,' Shakespeare's Sonnet 119, Goethe's Faust, and Roberto Bolano's wonderful masterpiece, 2666. I will suggest that Bolano's hero Archimbaldi, as a young man, and unlike the resistant Odysseus, accepts the Sirens' knowledge (in the form of a single text on the North Atlantic seacoast). This decision allows him to become a 'seaweed man.' In the climax of the novel, as I will argue, Archimbaldi himself becomes a Siren, luring the other main characters to Mexico, where they find an evil and pervasive truth behind 21st Century Western culture. *Biography:* I am a Professor of Liberal Education at the University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. I teach Canadian Literature, The Great Books of Western Culture, Creativity, and Interdisciplinary courses in Liberal Education. I am interested in research and pedagogy that establishes connections between different historical periods and scholarly disciplines. [akizuk@uleth.ca](mailto:akizuk@uleth.ca)

**Jennifer Kokai** (Weber State University, USA) **American Mermaids and the Aesthetics of Descension.** In 1939, famed American theatrical producer Billy Rose presented his Aquacade at the New York World's Fair with hundreds of swimming Aquabelles. Newt Perry, friends with his stars, borrowed Rose's aesthetic model as a basis for Weeki Wachee Florida's theme park, the "City of Live Mermaids," which opened in 1947 and remains open to this day. In 1950, Paul Rogers noted the success of that attraction and used Weeki Wachee as the inspiration for his now-defunct park, Aquarena Springs, in San Marcos, Texas, which also featured a mermaid show. Finally, SeaWorld in San Diego—which is today a chain of elaborate parks with rides, shows, and more—began in 1964 with a simple idea borrowed directly from Weeki Wachee and Aquarena Springs: place a woman in a mermaid costume in a tank with some dolphins. Mermaid shows in the United States have consistently utilized what I have termed "an aesthetics of descension." Pretty white women, calm waters, popular music, and romantic stories have typified water based mermaid performances in the United States over the last century. This aesthetics-- nostalgic, fantasy based, and racist in its origins-- has shaped American perspectives on the ocean and cultivated a notion that the water is a controllable, safe, and an infinite resource under human dominion. The trajectory of these spectacles shows both how our ideas of race, gender, interspecies communication, and ecology have evolved, and reveals those places where the spectacles' ideological commitments are unchanging. *Biography:* Dr. Jenny Kokai is an Associate Professor of Theatre at Weber State University in Ogden, UT, USA. In 2017, she published her book, *Swim Pretty: Aquatic Spectacles and the Performance of Race, Gender, and Nature* with Southern Illinois University and an essay, "Shamu the (Killer) Whale and an Ecology of Commodity" in *Showing Off, Showing Up: Studies of Hype, Heightened Performance, and Cultural Power* from University of Michigan. Articles appear in *Theatre History Studies*, *The Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, and *The Journal of American Drama and Theatre*. She received her PhD from The University of Texas at Austin. [jenniferkokai@weber.edu](mailto:jenniferkokai@weber.edu)

**Victoria Leslie** (University of Chichester, UK) **Sealskins and Shawls: Marriage and Modernity in Two Fin de Siècle Texts.** The legend of the supernatural sea bride, or the selkie wife, in which an otherworldly water woman loses her sealskin to a fisherman, compelling her to marry him and remain on dry land, exists throughout the Scottish Highlands, Western Isles, Orkney, Shetland, Iceland, Sweden, the Faroe Islands and Denmark. One of the most significant differences in some of these stories is that the sealskin is sometimes replaced with a cap, cloak, hood or shawl depending on the location. It has been suggested that this magical garment lost before marriage actually symbolizes

a woman's virginity, hence why the water woman is ensnared and unable to return to her previous liberty. Using this migratory legend as a framework, I propose to analyse George Egerton's short story 'A cross Line' (1893) and H. G. Wells' satirical novel, 'The Sea Lady' (1908) to explore emergent modern attitudes concerning femininity, marriage and motherhood, as well as exploring the fascination with fashion and clothing within the two texts.

*Biography:* Victoria Leslie is a second year English and Creative Writing student at the University of Chichester. Her thesis explores femininity and water in nineteenth-century literature, folklore and art. Her short stories have appeared in a range of publications and her short story collection, *Skein and Bone* was a finalist for both the 2016 World Fantasy Award and the British Fantasy Award. Her debut novel, *Bodies of Water* was released last year from Salt Publishing and has just been translated into French. She has been awarded fellowships for her writing at Hawthornden in Scotland and the Saari Institute in Finland. [victoriahopeleslie@hotmail.com](mailto:victoriahopeleslie@hotmail.com)

**Sara Malou Strandvad** (Roskilde University, Denmark) & **Tracey Davis** (Northwestern University, USA) **Epistemological Mermaids: Knowledge Production in Experiential Encounters.** Creative, technological, and biomechanical developments since 2000 mean that merfolk have ceased to be mythological. Indeed, they are a new category of performing artist on exhibit in aquariums around the world: emergent multiple-species performance practitioners and an aesthetic phenomenon epitomizing challenges to ecology, categories of the human, and transgressions of environmental boundaries. Our contention is that these mermaids do not simply document a zoomorphic (decorative) category but have evolved a zoonomic (physiological) identity role. This represents an epistemic shift from fantasy to knowledge techniques. Mermaids perform both as "wet" (in tanks) and "dry" (in discussion forums) interpreters, adjuncts of aquariums' education departments. The professional mermaid appears underwater in artificially created biotopes, and on land is a particularly communicative interlocutor between sea creatures and human visitors. They are, essentially, marine animals who speak languages understood by spectators (choreographic, gestural, and spoken), remain immersed for awe-inspiring periods, and take up ontological authority not just to act like but also speak for oceans which they inhabit as seemingly indigenous intermediaries. To elaborate on these issues the paper considers two cases of mermaid shows in aquariums (in the EU and the US), studied both by means of ethnographic interviews and performance analysis techniques.

*Biographies:* Sara Malou Strandvad is Associate Professor in Performance Design, the Department of Communication and Arts, Roskilde University. A sociologist whose research concerns creative work and production studies, her research has been published in Cultural Sociology, Visual Studies, Cultural Studies, and elsewhere. Her previous research includes a study of development processes in Danish film production based on the perspective of the new sociology of art, a socio-material perspective inspired by science and technology studies, and a study of the valuation processes in a design school entrance exam. Her current research is about freediving. [malou@ruc.dk](mailto:malou@ruc.dk) Tracy C. Davis is Barber Professor of Performing Arts at Northwestern University (Chicago). She specializes in performance theory, 19th-century British theatre history, and gender in performance. She is General Editor of the forthcoming six-volume study *A Cultural History of Theatre*; editor of the monograph series *Cambridge Studies in Theatre and Performance Theory* (Cambridge UP); and co-editor of the monograph series *Transnational Theatre Histories* (Palgrave). She has recently been named a Humboldt Research Fellow at the University of Cologne. [tcDavis@northwestern.edu](mailto:tcDavis@northwestern.edu)

**Martine Mussies** (Independent Researcher, The Netherlands) **Between Ningyo and Māmeido: A Japanese Mermaid's Transformation with Vocaloid Voice.** Like many cultures, the Japanese have a mermaid synonym. The Ningyo is since olden times described as a fish with a human-like face with a monkey's mouth and small teeth like a fish's. The Ningyo is associated with horror stories. The "Western" prototype of the beautiful mermaid as seen in Disney films is also recognised in Japan but bears the name Māmeido. The 21st century gave birth to a third type of mermaid through Japanese technology, a hybrid of the traditional Japanese and the Western images. An example of this phenomenon appears in the 2010 Vocaloid song "The Little Mermaid" (English title, Japanese lyrics) by humanoid persona Luka Megurine, which uses a Disney-like mermaid in manga style as its artwork. Other notable examples are Ponyo (from the 2008 movie of the same name) and the nameless siren in the horror video game Siren (2003). By examining the various identity markers, I would like to explore how these three case studies relate to the two traditions. What are the differences and similarities of this new Japanese mermaid, compared to the traditional Ningyo and the archetype Ariel? I would further like to speculate about what this shift means for us, the Western viewer, in terms of globalisation and authenticity.

*Biography:* After obtaining her MA in musicology, Russian literature and cultural analysis, Martine Mussies started researching mermaids in music. As an independent researcher, she is now working on a PhD on the topic of how modern media invite people to create new stories based on mermaid mythology. What fascinates her most about her subject is the way by which we shape fantastic creatures tells us so much about what it means to be human. Besides her research, Martine is a professional musician. Her other interests are gaming, crafting, reading, MOOCs, autism and karate.

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**Katarzyna Nadana-Sokolowska** (The Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland) & **Monika Rudaś-Grodzka** (The Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland) **Archaeology of the Mermaid's Tail.** Mermaids are enjoying great popularity in popular culture. Representation of half-woman half-fish belongs to the oldest cultural motifs. In contemporary science, Darwin's observation that changes occur randomly and that alterations of form cannot be explained by a general design of nature, is still valid. Nature makes use of what exists, selecting favorable accidents and hence progression and retrogression are either preserved or discarded. The cross between woman and fish is not a random accident but a testimony of a different order as well as a trace of a deep memory of moving from one form of life to another. Using literary examples I argue that mermaid's tail is a sign/symbol of a transitory form in the nature itself but also of a transition between nature and culture as well as art and science. It points out that every living being is made up of borrowed elements and thus open to change. The mermaid reminds us of the instability of the body and of the varieties of becoming.

*Biographies:* Dr Katarzyna Nadana-Sokolowska - a literary historian, literary critic, and lecturer in gender studies. She received her Ph. D. in 2008. Since 2012 she has been a member of an interdisciplinary research group Literature and Gender at the Institute for Literary Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences (IBL PAN). She has published *Religion in Polish Personal Diaries: Stanisław Brzozowski, Karol Ludwik Koniński, Henryk Elzenberg* (IBL PAN, Warsaw 2012), as well as many articles in literary history and literary criticism. Her research interests lie in the areas of gender studies, philosophy

of religion, and personal writings. [katarzyna.nadana-sokolowska@ibl.waw.pl](mailto:katarzyna.nadana-sokolowska@ibl.waw.pl). Dr Monika Rudaś-Grodzka - an assistant professor in at the Institute of Literary Research at the Polish Academy of Sciences. She is interested in history of ideas, 19th- and 20th-century literature. She leads the work of interdisciplinary research group Women's Archive at the Institute of Literary Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences. She is a head of Postgraduate Gender Studies there as well. She has published e.g. books: 'Slavic Sphinx and Polish Mummy'; (IBL PAN, Warsaw 2013), To make ideas sing. \*\*Platonic motives in Adam Mickiewicz's life and work in the Vilnius-Kaunas period" (IBL PAN, Warsaw 2003) and many articles in literary history and literary criticism. [monika.rudas-grodzka@ibl.waw.pl](mailto:monika.rudas-grodzka@ibl.waw.pl)

**Fiachra Ó Corragáin** (Independent Researcher, Ireland) **Magical Swans of the Irish Seas: A Modern Musical Imagining.** The Irish legend of Oidhe Chloinne Lir (the tragic fate of the children of Lir) continues to resonate as one of Ireland's most enduring and beloved folktales. Dating to the sixteenth century, and perhaps much earlier, the narrative recounts the lives of the children of the sea god, Lir, who were transformed into swans by their jealous stepmother and cursed to spend over nine hundred years on Irish lakes and seas. The legend provided a conceptual basis for my creative practice doctoral research project, which yielded numerous outputs including a large-scale collection of musical compositions which expresses the narrative in thorough detail. In the interdisciplinary approach of my research, and in drawing from traditions of Irish folklore, music, and dance, a modern realisation emerged from these historic materials, bringing the sea tale to new life through digital recordings and videos. This presentation will explore central themes of the Oidhe Chloinne Lir legend, including the significance of water, surrounding maritime lore, and connection between physical place and fantasy. I will also discuss the creative processes and outputs of my research through video and audio materials and artwork via PowerPoint presentation.

*Biography:* My name is Dr. Fiachra Ó Corragáin. I am a researcher, composer, and multi-instrumentalist from Co. Cork, Ireland. I hold first-class honours degrees in Music and Irish language from University College Cork. In 2016, I was awarded a PhD in composition for my project Legends as Music: New Composition in the Traditional Irish Idiom. I have produced two albums: The Enchantment (2016), and Hidden Gems (2014). My research interests include traditional Irish music and dance, Irish legends and folklore, the intersection of new media with creative practice, and Irish language. [fiachraharp@gmail.com](mailto:fiachraharp@gmail.com)

**Onookome Okome** (University of Alberta, Canada) **The Figure of the Mammiwata in Nollywood.** For over a hundred years, local mythologies of the water goddess have shaped the spiritual life of communities along the tributaries of the River Niger in Nigeria, and different variation of the worship of this goddess exists in these communities. Put in context to other forms of local worship systems, the worship of mammiwata, water goddess, is a fairly recent religious invention that dates back to the beginning of the 20th century. A specific variation is the dance-worship, *igbe*, which is popular among the Urhobo, Itsekiri, Ijaw, Edo and the Oguta ethnic groups of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Indeed, the famous Nigerian novel, *Efuru*, by Flora Nwapa, is framed around Efuru whose life is controlled by the water spirit. Mostly patronized by women, the worship of the figure of the mammiwata has been read by African feminist scholars as an example of women-centered spiritual activities that exclude men and empower women in the typically male-dominated societies of the Niger Delta. The rise of the Nollywood film changed all that, focusing instead on denouncing this local form of worship as the practice

of the devil. My presentation focuses on the representations of the worship of this goddess in Nollywood, with a special reference to the Nollywood genre, the “hallelujah video film (Okome 2004).” In this presentation, I will investigate why the mammiwata myth became a rallying point of worship among many, especially women, who live in the riverine part of Nigeria. My reading of the figure of the mammiwata will ask the question: why is this water mermaid often, if not always, structured in narrative opposition to the Pentecostal idea of the Christian God?

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**Herlinda Ramirez-Barradas** (Purdue Northwest, USA) **A Mermaid on Foreign Coasts: The *Petenera* in the Gulf of Mexico.** Mexicans have a vital tradition of folk songs called peteneras, largely though not entirely derived from Spain. Music of colonial roots, peteneras are still played in the Gulf of Mexico in areas where people of diverse ages gather to sing and dance. Central to the song are the mermaids who, sometimes, have the seductive attributes corresponding to their kind. But, in the development of the songs thru time, there has been a resignification of the siren figure that reflects the worldview of its surroundings. Academics such as Gloria Juárez San Juan have pointed out the importance of studying the evolution of the genre that has been adopted and adapted, preserved, but also transformed in Mexican territory. My argument is that the presence of the mermaid in the Mexican petenera songs provides a thematic core that allows transformation and renewal. This is important because patterns ingrained in tradition not only help to reconstruct the past: they have played a key role in transporting the mythical figure to the present. Essentially, my paper attempts to uncover ways in which the song has departed from the Spanish original acquiring uniqueness in form and meaning in a Mexican coastal domain.

*Biography:* Herlinda Ramírez-Barradas is currently an Associate Professor of Spanish at Purdue Northwest, Indiana, USA. Born in Mexico, she obtained a doctoral degree from The University of California in Santa Barbara. Her publications have dealt with the Spanish romance (“Estudio comparativo del romance Delgadina: la tradición de México y la de Nuevo México,” 2014); Mexican popular culture (“Mujeres asesinas en los grabados de José Guadalupe Posada”, 2015) and the Mexican ballad (“Narcocorridos: Elements of Power in the Construction of the Drug Lord Mystique”, 2016). Her upcoming book is entitled *Corridos Pre-revolucionarios: Análisis de variantes* (Pre-revolutionary Mexican ballads: Analysis of variants). [barradh@pnw.edu](mailto:barradh@pnw.edu)

**Manal Shalaby** (Ain Shams University, Egypt) **Re-storying’ Faith to the Postmodern Psyche in M. Night Shyamalan’s *Lady in the Water* (2006) and Neil Jordan’s *Ondine* (2009).** In the two feature films *Lady in the Water* (2006) and *Ondine* (2009), M. Night Shyamalan and Neil Jordan, respectively, present us with two grounded-in-reality fairy tales whose two male protagonists come in close contact with two mythical water creatures – an encounter that positively reshapes their perspective on reality through the use of storytelling faculties. Shyamalan relates the story of an emotionally wrecked middle-aged man who rescues a ‘narf’ (a water nymph in an unoriginated ancient bedtime story) from the pool of the dreary building he is superintending, while Jordan follows the ordeal of a struggling Irish fisherman who accidentally fishes a ‘selkie’ (a Celtic seal-like water creature that has the power to assume full human form on land by shedding its seal skin). Not only do the two films negotiate the problematic relation between the fantastic and the real, but also they question the postmodern Baudrillardian concept of representations masking an absence of solid reality. The paper will mainly focus on how acts of storytelling can rework the human psyche’s understanding of reality in a

postmodern world, and the narratological and psychological means by which this relation is constructed as put forward in Shyamalan's and Jordan's films.

*Biography:* Manal Shalaby graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in English from Ain Shams University in Cairo in 2008. She worked as an English Instructor for Berlitz where she participated in the Berlitz-sponsored Future Generation Foundation program. In 2013, she received a Master's Degree in English Literature and Adaptation Studies from Ain Shams. She spent two years as a Fulbright exchange student to the United States where she did research work on literature and film studies, and taught Arabic to American students in Williams College, Massachusetts. Manal is currently an Assistant Lecturer in English Literature and Language at Ain Shams University. [manal.shalaby@alsun.asu.edu.eg](mailto:manal.shalaby@alsun.asu.edu.eg)

**Han Tran** (University of Miami, USA) **When Nereids became Mermaids: Arnold Böcklin's Paradigm Shift.** Arnold Böcklin's untraditional depiction of the Nereids as mermaids merges two strands that classical representations of the sea creatures endeavored to keep separate and that Roman iconography yielded to: the Nereid as idealized, anthropomorphic representative of the Olympian order in the treacherous realm that is the monster-breeding sea, and the erotically charged object of male attention. His intention, in his own words, was to fuse figure with setting and atmosphere, such that the Nereid was no longer simply a figure occupying the pictorial space, but embodying in her shape, expression, sensual and dangerous demeanor the drawing power of the sea, as well as the vertiginous suggestion of its abysmal depths. Böcklin concludes that the Nereid's fusion with her environment leads logically to her being conceived as a mermaid, with fish-tail. The sea is no longer, as was the case in her earliest representations on ancient Greek vase paintings, all the way to fourth-century mosaics throughout the Mediterranean world, a medium where she takes gentle rides on the back of always contrasting sea creatures, without ever seeming to merge with or be affected psychologically by their disturbing otherness, their difference from her.

*Biography:* Han Tran earned her PhD at the University of California, at Berkeley, and is currently a Senior Lecturer at the University of Miami, where she has taught for six years. She has published on the sea monsters, Skylla and Charybdis, and is preparing a book on the Nereids and a second one on Echidna. She has also lectured at The Ohio State University and Oregon University. Her special areas of interest are theoretical approaches to myth, ancient mosaics, and classical myth in contemporary art. She teaches on a wide range of topics including ancient magic, monsters, and world myth. [h.tran@miami.edu](mailto:h.tran@miami.edu)

**Silja Truus** (Artist, Estonia) **Mermaid as a messenger**

In many disciplines, including analytical psychology, water is a symbol of the unconscious psyche and dreams. Mermaid, who comes from the depths of the ocean, brings messages from the dark and unknown parts of ourselves. Intuition, gut feeling, vague murmurings of the subconscious - every artist, analyst, mystic and, to a larger or lesser degree, every human being receives messages from their unconscious mind. Mermaid is also a symbol of duality, of a creature who is attempting to live in two worlds. After all, she is part fish, part human. According to Jung, "atavistic identification with human and animal ancestors can be interpreted psychologically as an integration of the unconscious, a veritable bath of renewal where one is once again a fish, unconscious as in sleep, intoxication, and death."<sup>1</sup> It is a state that is close to the life source but is not yet human, has not achieved the shape and rigidity of the conscious world. There is some sadness in living between the two worlds as they can never fully meet – mermaid remains mute on land, humans cannot

breathe in water. The gifts and messages that the mermaid brings will remain vague; dreams dissolve in the daytime and are forgotten and the mermaid dissolves into sea foam.

*Biography:* I am an emerging sculptor currently living and working between London, UK, and Estonia. I always start my work with posing questions that are concerned with human condition and our place in the world at the most fundamental level. I endeavour to give a simple, iconic, and instinctually comprehensible form to concepts that have often been developed through extensive research and introspection. I often draw inspiration from the disciplines of existential psychology and Eastern philosophy but there is also a certain physical, raw quality to my sculptures. They speak of the deeply emotional and meaningful experience of the world that evokes a reaction in one's gut.

Most of my work has both abstract and representational elements, and often contrasting materials and textures/colours. I work in a variety of media, including stone, steel, clay, bronze, and found objects – based on the principle that the characteristics of the materials will be carried into and become an inherent part in the final piece. [siljatruss@yahoo.com](mailto:siljatruss@yahoo.com)

**Jacek Wasilewski** (University of Warsaw, Poland) & **Agata Kostrzewa** (University of Warsaw, Poland) **Warsaw Mermaid Tattoos as a New Symbol of Identity.** Long ago, two mermaid sisters came to the Baltic. One of them liked the Danish straits and can now be seen sitting on the rock in Copenhagen. The second sailed through Gdańsk up the Vistula. She liked the neighborhood of Warsaw so much, that she decided to stay there. The oldest image of the Warsaw mermaid occurs on stamps of documents of Warsaw's city council from 1400. Today, the image of the mermaid is not only in the city's coat of arms but also in many Warsaw institutions. The mermaid as one of the symbols of the city is crucial for identifying residents and creating Warsaw collective identity. The presentation aims to show the results of semiotic analysis of Warsaw citizens' tattoos of mermaid. The analysis is supposed to show how these mermaid tattoos correspond to the official image, to explore the cultural codes to which mermaid reinterpretations conform, and to consider which types of symbols are connected with mermaids to define collective Warsaw identity. The analyzed tattoos appeared on Instagram and were submitted to a 'Mermaid Forever' competition organized by the Museum of Warsaw.

*Biographies:* Jacek Wasilewski, PhD, from The Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies (University of Warsaw). His scientific interests focus on semiotics and narrative methods that function in psychology, culture or filmography. His scientific output is 7 books (two translations into Polish) and over 30 articles. [jacek.wasilewski@narrativeimpact.pl](mailto:jacek.wasilewski@narrativeimpact.pl). Agata Kostrzewa is PhD student at The Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies (University of Warsaw). Her scientific interests focus on semiotics, narrative theories and media discourse. [agata.kostrzewa@narrativeimpact.pl](mailto:agata.kostrzewa@narrativeimpact.pl)

**Paige Zentner** (Heritage University, USA) **Changing Skins: Connections between Selkie Mythology and Modernday Merfolk.** The ongoing fascination with mermaids, often stemming from childhood favorites like *The Little Mermaid*, has led to a robust worldwide merfolk community. In Seattle, there is a dedicated group who don tails and take to the water, embracing the idea of a life under the sea. This current trend, and the legends that inspire it, are influenced by the myth of the Celtic selkies as much as, if not more than, traditional mermaid mythology. Traditional mermaids, though more closely matched in appearance, are almost always water-bound. Meanwhile, selkies are able to shift between human and aquatic form by shedding a coat, just as today's mer-community shifts between human and merfolk by donning a tail. This speaks to a mingling of mythology between the mermaids of Western Europe and the selkies of the British Isles.

The shapeshifting aspect of this combination serves as a symbol for the very human need to find both a sense of self and of community, especially in today's world where one must be a master of shifting outward appearance to fit life's myriad demands.

*Biography:* Paige Zentner is a graduate student in English at Heritage University in Washington State, USA. Building on her undergraduate degrees in history and archaeology, she continues to explore the connections between mythology and society. Her emphasis is in Celtic mythology and folklore, focusing on its presence in the archaeological record and its modern-day iterations in literature and life.  
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