



**THE PROSAIC IMAGINARY: NOVELS AND THE
EVERYDAY, 1750-2000**

ABSTRACTS

Abstracts are listed alphabetically

Azadibougar, Omid.

The Novel after Cinema: Reality and Forms of Representation

Discussing the coexistence of the realistic novel and cinema in a lecture in 1941 in Istanbul, Eric Auerbach says: "Let me say right now that the realist novel would have a brighter future in time to come if it were not for the art of cinema, which rivals it in the field of realism with its documents, homogenous and diverse, filling every moment in time." Does cinematic realism really trouble the development of the novel or render it unnecessary? This is specifically an important question in non-European literary traditions where the novel emerged simultaneously with cinema, novel reading is by no means an "everyday activity", and literary imagination resists prosaic reality.

In this paper, I discuss the coexistence of cinema and the novel in Iran to elaborate on each form's representational regime. In this cultural context, cinema is a prosaic medium whose influence and successes seem to make the novel unnecessary. As such, is it still possible for the novel to develop into a significant literary and artistic medium, or is it too late for it to develop? What aspects of the novelistic are not responded to through visual culture, how necessary are they, and what do they mean?

I will argue that while cinematic representation offers facilities that are not available in the novelistic, it imposes important restrictions which provide the grounds for the development of the novel. To elaborate on this, I will discuss an Oscar winning Iranian film, *A Separation* (2011), and argue how, despite Auerbach's claim, film is not sufficiently satisfactory when it comes to an adequate representation of complex realities.

Barnes, Sophia.

Novel-worlds: Tracing the Ripples in Doris Lessing's *The Four-Gated City*

Doris Lessing was a famously prolific, ideologically protean and stylistically ambitious author. For her, the novel was both a material object and an equally, if less literally, material action; an act of comprehension, creation, and finally communication — more often than not a profoundly political one. Martha Quest, the protagonist of Lessing's genre-bending *Bildungsroman* series *The Children of Violence*, constitutes herself and her world through the act of reading. Works of literature, philosophy, science and politics are the conduit through which Martha comes to comprehend the external world and to create an internal one, just as a young Lessing thrived on the boxes of books she regularly ordered from England to her family's farm on the Southern Rhodesian veld. In the series' final volume, *The Four-Gated City*, Martha's internal world will itself be made material, externalised

through a new kind of communication that takes this radically experimental novel into the realm of science fiction.

In the Coldridge family mansion in post-war London, and later in an imagined future, reality is both understood and reformed through texts: not only the conventional novels through which Mark Coldridge tells the story of the 'four-gated city' of Martha's imaginings, but also the figurative texts constituted by the newspaper-covered walls of his study, and the diaries-of-madness kept by the mansion's women. The everyday of the realist novel-world is collapsed gradually through Lessing's rendering of the fantastical from the prosaic, as the rooms of the mansion become rooms of the mind.

My paper considers the way in which the generic and structural openness of Lessing's novel bears out her dual understanding of the novel as a material object in a marketplace of readership, and as a necessary intervention in what for her is a tangibly collective consciousness.

Beeston, Alix.

Bad in Form: Photography and the Composite Novel in Modernism

In 'The Book of the Grotesque,' the opening story in Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), an old writer in a propped-up bed is overcome by "a dream that [is] not a dream" in which a "long procession of figures" appears "before his eyes." Attending to this dream as a parable for a *photographically* affected apprehension and compositing of the social world, that is, as a peculiarly expansive family photographic album, I propose a measure of aesthetic convergence between the modernist composite novel in the early twentieth century and one of the key vernacular uses of photographic technology from the mid-nineteenth century on. In turn, this position paper calls for the reading of odd or uncategorisable prose texts in modernism – along with their narrated persons – in terms of what Karen Jacobs has called the troubling of "the truth of the body as a sight" which resulted, paradoxically, from the proliferation of the photographic image. In particular, Anderson's composite novel and the "drawn out of shape" bodies it parades are taken as the dysmorphic (etymologically the 'bad in form') figures for photography's disclosure of the 'thingness' of human beings and the 'humanness' of things. This paper therefore argues that the modernist novel operates, much like the photograph, as 'portable property' that bears its cultural or sentimental load as burden or difficulty, registered in *Winesburg, Ohio's* distorted and fragmentary writing bodies and writing acts.

Birns, Nicholas.

Letty Fox: Australianism and the Synchronic Prose of Late Modernity

Letty Fox was Christina Stead's first novel composed after the end of the Second World War, and its action extends into 1946. Its synthesis of the premodern picaresque with the nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman* adding modern sexuality so shocking that, as Nicole Moore has discussed it was censored in Australia, the novel seems like an amalgam of prose styles. Its anthological prose posits a kind of synchronic late modernity, which can position all these styles in askance, and frenetic version of Eliot's "ideal order", all the while rendering a split portrait of a New York whose sophistication is admired—particularly if coupled with anti-establishment politics—yet is built around misogyny. In a late modernity premised on being socialist in economics, synchronic in temporality, and patriarchal in gender politics the double-consciousness required, in ' mind, for a woman writer is figured by "Australianist" allusions, Solander (Captain Cook's botanist) as Letty's father, the exclamation "Such is Life!" and the reference, in the 46th of 46 chapters, set in 1946, to Paraguay and its alleged surfeit of women, which the misogynistic Percival Hogg will seek out in a patriarchal replay of William Lane's utopian project. For Stead, gender invisibility is the primary problem, Australian invisibility the secondary but she indicates that her marginalization as a writer proceeds from both major and minor vehicles.

Cash, Conall.

Cruges in Sintra: Some Considerations on Affect and the Everyday in the Realist Novel, Following Jameson

Fredric Jameson, in his recent *Antinomies of Realism* (2013), argues that affect—a category which is more readily associated with contemporary or postmodern theory—is central to an understanding of classic realist fiction of the nineteenth century. Jameson suggests that the realist novel unleashes affects, which could be described as states of intensity and immediacy associated with "the body's present" and irreducible to the meanings associated with the "named emotions," while recontaining the intensity of these affects within an older order of narrative meaning. For Jameson, realism exists in this tension between the determinate order of an older mode of storytelling and the radically free play of affects embraced in literary modernism. The notion of the everyday or the prosaic, so important to understandings of realism ranging from Auerbach to Barthes, is interestingly refocused with this attention to affect, where the aesthetic representation of the everyday is seen to involve an attention to the singularity of affects – the distraction of Tolstoy's Prince Andrei, or the listlessness of Emma Bovary – which float beyond those "named emotions" that gave an apparent order to the lives of the fictional characters of an earlier literature.

In this paper, I will consider a paradigmatically “affective” episode from one realist classic Jameson does not discuss, Eça de Queiros’s *The Maias*, in which we find the everyday figured in its sheer stubbornness or intractability, by way of a pronounced attention to the complex play of affects. In the process I aim to probe Jameson’s theory and to relate it back to questions of the nation and of social class, which Eça’s great work on the declining Portuguese aristocracy so dramatically explores.

The horses had rested by then, so Cruges paid the bill and they left. Shortly afterwards, they were driving across the empty, apparently unending heath. On either side, as far as the eye could see, the land was dark and sad, and high above them, in all that solitude, the endless blue sky seemed equally sad. The horses’ hooves kept up a steady trot, beating monotonously on the road. There was no other sound; occasionally a bird would cut through the air, flying fast, fleeing that bleak wasteland. Inside the break, one of the servants was sleeping; Cruges, heavy with eggs and sausage, was staring vaguely and glumly at the horses’ lustrous rumps.

— *The Maias*, trans. Margaret Jull Costa, p. 192

Chuang, Ying Xuan.

Novelising a genre—Japanese Animation: Gender-bending

Writing a novel of a film is less common than making a film of a novel. Some people may claim that a film of a novel provides visual tags which can be the same as or differ from those in their imagination. Others say that a film is an easily palatable summary of the book and those who really want a better understanding should and would go back to the book. Why then are films of books made?

Conversely, why are the spin-off novels from successful films **not** usually made?

This paper will explore the conundrum of why novelisation (film to book) is ‘bad’ and adaptation (book to film) ‘good’. It will address the reason for a need of a regression of an essentially visual form to the written form and why the project focusses on novelising Anime as a genre.

The Creative Writing is about companies which enforce a cross-dressing rule on their employees, so that they can maintain an image of having ‘gender equality’ in the workplace, and the lives of some of the employees. Company saku.RA is an all-male company while Company yo.zora is an all-female company. It is written in what I coin ‘anime writing style’ which is a visual writing style where action and characters propel the scenes and attempts to preserve Japanese puns, gags, culture and other characteristics or stereotypes of anime. It can possibly be categorised across a range such as “script, play, novel, fantasy, fiction, satire, parody, or comedy”. You make the call.

Cogle, Jarrad.

Fredric Jameson, Affect and the Realist Novel

Fredric Jameson's recent *Antinomies of Realism* (2013) finds the theorist particularly focused on classical realism and its relationship to affect. For Jameson, affect alters the function of descriptive passages, the status of the protagonist, and notions of temporality within the realist novel as it develops throughout the nineteenth-century. While the work could perhaps be characterized as another of the critic's shrewd interventions within a highly visible area of academia, Jameson's work has been interested in the field for some time: for example, an essay published in 1985, "The Realist Floor-Plan", already sees the emergence of Flaubert's realism in terms of affect, temporality and middle-class subjectivity. At the same time, while he acknowledges Gilles Deleuze in *Antinomies of Realism*, Jameson's concept of affect is often constructed within his own parameters and there is little interaction with other influential notions of affect. The purpose of this paper will be to investigate ways in which Jameson discusses affect throughout his career, particularly *Antinomies of Realism's* wide range of permutations, and how this work might reconcile with a wider field of affect theory in literary studies.

Cook, Daniel.

Articles of War: The Fate of Everyday Objects in Captain Marryat's Naval Adventure Novels

This paper will engage the "prosaic imaginary" of early nineteenth-century British fiction from what might appear to be a perverse angle: the analysis of a series of Captain Frederick Marryat's high-seas adventure novels, books like *The King's Own* (1830) and *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836) which enjoyed an enormous vogue among Regency readers. Such texts, in which "the troughs between the crests of high action are shortened or entirely omitted" until narrative "approximate[s] pornography" (Brantlinger 52-53), are on the face of it unlikely vehicles for the everyday, at least as it was figured in the "silver fork" or Newgate subgenres of the period — or, more lastingly, in the meticulously realized social worlds of Jane Austen. And yet as Virginia Woolf notes, Marryat's maritime representations exist in a complex historical and formal relationship with domestic realism: "[H]e has the power to set us in the midst of ships and men and sea and sky all vivid, credible, authentic...as we are made aware when...the other side of the scene appears; the solid land, England, the England of Jane Austen, with its parsonages, its country houses, its young women staying at home, its young men gone to sea" (Woolf 43). I explore the symbiosis between these contrasting "side[s] of the scene" by focusing on the Napoleonic warship as a peculiar object world, one in which the quotidian things — and men — of the parlor and marketplace become transformed into components of "the Service." (Conrad astutely, if cryptically, suggested that Marryat's figures "do not belong to life; they belong exclusively to the Service"

(54)). This transformative logic becomes most complex in *The King's Own*, where Marryat's narrator claims to be scrawling the very words we read from inside "the after-cabin of a vessel...holding on by the table, legs entwined in the lashings underneath"; and, in a later extended conceit, likens his yarn to a ship with "stern-post, transoms, and fashion-pieces" (147, 335). Here and elsewhere, the narrative conjures itself as a recognizable, yet transmogrified collection of things — things gloriously reborn, I will argue, into a state of pure, literalized functionality. My argument will build on the framework established by scholars like Deborah Cohen and John Plotz, while tracing its ramifications through a neglected, but potentially illuminating tributary of novelistic history.

Brantlinger, Patrick. "Bringing Up the Empire: Captain Marryat's Midshipmen." *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988. 47-72.

Conrad, Joseph. "Tales of the Sea." *Notes on Life and Letters. The Complete Works*, vol. 3. New York: Doubleday, 1924. 53-57.

Marryat, Frederick. *The King's Own*. Ithaca: McBooks Press, 1999.

Woolf, Virginia. "The Captain's Deathbed." *The Captain's Deathbed and Other Essays*. New York: Harcourt, 1978. 37-47.

Crouch, Sara.

Preserving the surface boundary; the veil as epidermis in eighteenth century 'everyday' texts

The reoccurrence of the veil in eighteenth century novels has secured its discussion in literary criticism. However, this discussion is generally prompted by readings of novels that are coded as explicitly 'gothic' or 'sensational'. Accordingly, the veil is most often considered along metaphoric terms and assessed for its symbolic possibilities. This paper suggests a reconsideration of the veil, with a focus on its material reality, rather than its metaphoric potential. By focusing on the veil's presence it becomes possible to monitor the ways in which the veil was deployed by eighteenth century women as part of an everyday artillery necessary to the art of self-presentation. Moreover, veiling practices became so much a part of the daily practice of the *toilette* it is possible to read the veil as a surface boundary that may be likened to the skin itself. To make the case for the everyday veil, this paper will resist considering gothic novels and instead read 'everyday' literature. Beginning with the letters of Montagu and Burney as well as Eliza Haywood's periodical *The Female Spectator*, and finally through a reading of the domestic novel *Belinda* by Maria Edgeworth. With these texts in mind, the veil as artefact becomes more pronounced. It becomes apparent that it was not exclusively 'gothic', in fact, the practices of veiling and unveiling underpinned daily experience for eighteenth century women.

Davidson, Guy.

James Baldwin and the Paradoxes of the Celebrity Novel

James Baldwin's status during the 1960s as a literary celebrity arose out of the acclaim accorded to his early writings, which marked him as a promising "Negro writer," and his media presence as an eloquent critic of American racism. But there was another element in Baldwin's notoriety—his homosexuality. Baldwin frequently characterized the artistic career as a process of compulsive confession. For him, this confession entailed the acknowledgment early on in his career of his sexuality at a time when such admissions were courageous. Nevertheless, Baldwin's confession was to an important degree obscured, in that it came in the form of a novel, *Giovanni's Room* (1956), which told the story of a doomed love affair between two white men.

In some ways, Baldwin's relegation of homosexuality to novelistic (rather than autobiographical) representation is in keeping with the twentieth-century liberal culture to which he subscribed. For Baldwin, sexuality was a private affair and the place for its exploration was the novel, regarded by liberal culture as the privileged venue for the exploration of the complexities of the private life. But Baldwin's celebrity status complicates this conception of the novel and the division of public and private on which it depends. In this paper, I explore the confusions of outwardness and hiddenness in Baldwin's career with reference to *Giovanni's Room* and its bestselling follow-up *Another Country* (1962). These texts, and their initial receptions, I suggest, indicate the intimacy between two key figures of postwar media culture—the literary celebrity and the male homosexual.

Dickson, Sam.

Realism and Everyday Mapping in Joseph McElroy's *Lookout Cartridge*

Joseph McElroy's critically acclaimed yet seldom read techno-thriller, *Lookout Cartridge* (1974), is a neglected foray into the experimental forms of the postmodern novel. Although McElroy is routinely associated with a strain of 'difficult' maximalist novelists, alongside the likes of Thomas Pynchon and William Gaddis, his literary exploration of the late-capitalist global system stands apart for its marked opposition to the popular mode of paranoid epistemology found in many postmodern texts.

With *Lookout Cartridge*, McElroy broaches familiar seventies tropes of the conspiratorial techno-thriller, a genre that Fredric Jameson has described as a dominant expression of the 'cognitive mapping' of late capitalism. However, employing a unique form of 'conceptual realism', marked by its dizzying movement between long sentences, machinic stream-of-consciousness and dense metaphor, McElroy shows up the impossibility of totality from the vantage of a networked consciousness, the world-space approached from a scriptive recording of everyday happening.

Evans, Jedidiah.

Thomas Wolfe and the Domestication of Culture

This paper will address the earliest novel of Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel* (1929) as it appeared in a moment of cultural and economic disruption in the United States. Published only six days before the first collapse which precipitated the Great Depression, and arriving at a time in American history which Susan Hegeman has argued saw the broad dissemination of the idea of “culture,” the reception history of *Look Homeward, Angel* reveals a critical juncture in the way novels were read and distributed in twentieth century America. Looking at the publication of his first novel within the broader context of modernism’s technological impact on publishing—particularly the rise of American book clubs following the foundation of the Book-of-the-Month Club in 1926—fiction’s role in moving discussions of culture into the homes (and hands) of the American population will be discussed, reinforcing Warren Susman’s argument that in the 1930s America the “idea of culture was domesticated.” Following Mark McGurl’s suggestion that a book can be seen as an “experiential commodity whose value to its readers is a transvaluation of the authorial labor that went into its making,” this paper will place Wolfe’s work within this emerging culture market, arguing, with McGurl, that the value of these novels “most often has little to do with the economic value of the pulp upon which it is pressed.” Wolfe’s reception will also be investigated, not simply his perceived critical significance at the time, but his popular reception. Literary critics can be guilty of subordinating popular responses to novels in favour of reviews that appear in journals and newspapers—particularly when articulating an author’s critical importance—but the letters of fans can express something of the actual significance which readers in this period attached to fiction, literally describing how fiction was read. Their unsolicited responses to *Look Homeward, Angel* describe the profound and even transcendent experience the novel provided for a young generation of readers. Following the death of Wolfe in 1938, his romance of the American continent was included in the greatest mass publishing enterprise of all history—the 123 million copies and 1,322 titles of the Armed Services editions—which represented a new, moral imperative in the supply of books during a period of unprecedented censorship. Looking at the afterlife of his novel as a weapon in the “war of ideas,” this paper will end with a discussion of the disparity between popular responses to *Look Homeward, Angel* and the appropriation of his work as political propaganda.

Evans, Nicola.

Missing Books

Even before the physical book is pronounced dead, we have begun to miss it. Eulogies are already underway. Yet well before the digital era, books in manuscript form often went missing. Apocryphal stories abound concerning the fragility of the unbound. Often the loss is associated with the crossing of borders, both real and metaphoric. Hemingway's wife Hadley famously left the manuscripts of his short stories on a French train to Switzerland. Walter Benjamin's masterpiece was lost at the French-Spanish border and Kafka's unpublished works were lost to the public for decades after being transported to Israel and entangled in a lurid court case. If the material trappings of a novel appear to bind its contents into a proprietary whole, the unpublished manuscript has a feral quality that unravels ownership. Among authors from Cervantes to Nabokov, the discovery of a manuscript fragment is a popular theme, attesting to the real anxieties that the unbound novel provokes. Significantly in elegies for the book it is the ageing copy that is celebrated, as though we read in its endurance lessons for our own survival. This paper explores connections between these two powerful tropes of books that are mourned and novels that go missing, focusing on the work of Borges and Hemingway in which both tropes come together, and aiming to shed light on our relationship as readers and writers to the novel's material form.

Falk, Michael.

The World of Edgeworth's *The Absentee*: A Network Analysis Approach

In recent years, literary critics such as Franco Moretti, Nancy Armstrong, Leonard Tennenhouse and Matthew Jockers have explored how network analysis (also known as graph theory) can be used to make sense of narrative form. In this paper, I demonstrated how Moretti's mathematical approach can be aligned with Armstrong interpretive one, using Edgeworth's Irish Tale, *The Absentee*, as an example.

Armstrong and Tennenhouse argue that novelists of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries developed a new kind of novel, in which the world was depicted as a network of households, and the hero functioned as "connective tissue" between them. Using Moretti's method of extracting "character networks" from fictional works, I provide new evidence for Armstrong and Tennenhouse's claim, and explain further the ways in which the hero can function as "connective tissue" in the network of households.

The Absentee, one of Edgeworth's best-loved novels, stars Lord Colambre, one of her least-compelling heroes. But in his journey from London to the family estates in rural Ireland, Colambre (1) connects the network of households into a moral scheme through the process of judgment, (2) connects the network of households into an objective perspective, from which their relationships to one another can be

seen, and (3) connects the network with outsiders, who would otherwise fall outside the world of the novel. These functions can be studied algebraically and depicted graphically using network analysis, revealing how this approach can assist in close reading, and how it might enable scholars to track transformations of literary forms through history.

Fitzgerald, David.

Chigurh's shopping list; objects and minutiae in Cormac McCarthy's *No Country For Old Men*

Much of *No Country For Old Men* reads like a murderous shopping list. McCarthy's convoy of comma-less sentences takes on a deadpan, processional, tone as every minute detail of his character's actions are obsessively described. Shopping lists themselves play a prominent role in the novel, and all manner of objects, from tent-poles to nickelplated government .45 automatics, are endowed with a kind of magical significance, becoming the talismans for preserving control over human destiny in an utterly deterministic world. If McCarthy's malevolent antagonist, Anton Chigurh, pays homage to the power of objects with his fated coin-toss, he also recognises the irrational futility of this kind of magical thinking. By examining early drafts of the original screenplay version of *No Country For Old Men*, alongside the novel itself, I will illustrate how McCarthy's fetishization of everyday objects, and obsessive descriptions of minutiae, are the product the novel's original conception as a screenplay – itself a 'prosaic' form. By tracing the connections between the novel and its embryonic screenplay version, I will argue that the very form of the screenplay serves as a blueprint for the novel's preoccupation with the smallest details of human existence.

Green, Cressida.

A Jewel Between Sisters – *Middlemarch* and non-everyday objects

George Eliot's *Middlemarch* presents us with a portrait of provincial, prosaic life, but this story of the everyday is prefaced by a scene that focuses on non-everyday objects. Early in the novel, the Brooke sisters divide their mother's jewellery between them, and this jewellery is marked out as a special object against the backdrop of provincial life; indeed, so far from being part of everyday life, six months has had to pass before the subject of the jewellery could even be raised between the sisters. The negotiations over these markedly non-everyday objects help establish the nature of the heroine who is going to star in this narrative of everyday life. But there is a complexity of affect attached to the manoeuvring around the jewellery that suggests that this narrative allegiance to one character is not necessarily so easy as it may first appear.

Hardie, Melissa.

Cinematic Circulation and the Novel: *Old Acquaintance*, *Rich and Famous*, *La Flor de mi Secreto*

Across three women's films the status of the literary novel in the midst of changing media environments is melodramatically plotted through the figure of 'old acquaintance.' Vincent Sherman's 1943 *Old Acquaintance* pits the meagre output of celebrated writer Katherine 'Kit' Marlowe (Bette Davis) against the stream of popular novels competitively written by her friend Millie Drake (Miriam Hopkins). This contest of literary style and production is revised in George Cukor's 1981 *Rich and Famous*, and again in Pedro Almodovar's 1995 *La Flor de mi Secreto*, where friction between literary styles and markets is subdued through the genre's focus on affective rather than taste-making practices.

Almodovar's late or postmodern revision of the story explicitly offers friendship as a point of rapprochement between the 'pink' and the 'black' and feminine rivalry is quarantined, no longer a viable metaphor of the fate of book-objects in a zero sum marketplace. This paper, however, focuses on *Rich and Famous*, which explores the question of affinity between women, lowbrow and highbrow, and the fate of the novel circa 1980. *Rich and Famous* embraces what Leo Bersani calls 'an important category of thought: that of *aliqueness*.' The particular experience of 'aliqueness' between friends and the possibility that literary value is volatile -- that high and lowbrow are alike -- are imagined in its nuanced representation of 'publication anxiety' (whose symptoms are both writer's block and excessive publication), and by its use of cinematic space to stage the possibility of amicable if incongruous contemporaneity.

Hile, Fiona.

Generic Engineering in Michel Houellebecq's *Atomised*

In *Portable Property*, John Plotz remarks on the 'oft-noted Victorian predilection for quotation' as 'one preeminent example of how literary texts can travel across historical, authorial, national and, not least, generic boundaries.' In this paper I examine the purpose of generic quotation in Michel Houellebecq's second novel *Atomised*, which, as Morrey and Sweeney have noted, is 'riven with ambiguities'. These at once produce and are made manifest by 'a mix of genres, shifts in tone, complex narrative voices and a persistent 'flattening' affect that make it difficult to situate authorial intention.'

Sweeney argues that this 'shambolic, makeshift realism, interspersed with *moraliste* essayistic asides, rather than working as 'a kind of skilfully wrought intertextuality pointing up the interrelatedness of contemporary life' instead produces 'an inventory of the compacted texture of everyday life that has been evacuated of distinction and fatally colonized by the rationalizing nexus of exchange.' Although

this strategy risks reducing the novel to a series of incoherent repetitions, commentators such as Dion and Haghebeart have argued that it produces instead 'a whole of a new and strange complexity'. Houellebecq orchestrates a number of stylistic strategies to achieve this, including juxtaposition, repetition and 'flatness'. His most significant innovation, however, lies in his use of the epilogue, which, in the staging of a generic non sequitur, introduces an asexual species that is reputedly responsible for the production of the book. The novel's final sentence – 'This book is dedicated to mankind' – compels the reader to reconceptualise the textual, structural and generic idiosyncrasies that have preceded it and to produce the novel itself as portable quotation.

Lu, Mimi.

Pursuits of Happiness in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*

This paper argues that Thomas Hardy's novels consistently engage with cultural and philosophical discourses about the prosaic emotional state of "happiness." It focuses on *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy's most concerted attempt to articulate and dramatise subjective experiences of happiness, as well as the ethical and affective repercussions of the individual's pursuit of this elusive, often inexpressible, feeling. The novel's tragedy is catalysed by the protagonists' incompatible philosophies of happiness, each character having been indelibly shaped by the patchwork of values and aspirations appropriated from his or her eclectic readings. *Jude* thus offers an intensely self-reflexive juxtaposition of the diverse paradigms of happiness, as advanced by classical and contemporary thinkers, which were informing the cultural imaginary and the everyday realities of the *fin-de-siècle*. The paper proceeds to analyse Hardy's implicit hierarchisation of the forms of happiness in *Jude*, contrasting the affective stimulation occasioned by material affluence and tangible objects against the more ambivalent, intangible kinds of fulfilment achieved through the cultivation of an individual's intellect and creative imagination. Ultimately, this paper aims to counterbalance the recent critical focus on Hardy's poetics of melancholy and loss by examining a positive dimension of emotional and philosophical "everyday" life in late Victorian society.

Lyons, Siobhan.

Novels Without Readers

What is a novel without a reader? Maurice Blanchot would argue that a book without a reader is a book that has not yet been written (1982: 193). This line of thought is often used in regards to literature, the idea that an author cannot function, and that a novel cannot be actualised or relevant, without a reader. Many theories surrounding the often complex relationship between writers and readers see the reader as functioning as a co-author of a novel, or seeing the author as the

first reader (Ricoeur, 1991: 109). These theories dismiss the idea that writing a novel can be an endeavour undertaken without the slightest regard for whether it is read or not, and are unable to see the novel as existing independently of the reader's role in receiving it. This paper will explore the notion of the novel in a readerless context in order to undermine the popular and commonplace assumption that novels must automatically be linked to the act of everyday reading. Although many would argue that a novel automatically demands to be read, I argue for a case in which the novel can exist in and of itself without the constant intrusion of readership.

McVey, John.

Hardware and Fiction : Genre Intersections

This paper will reflect on the intersection of two genres, each from a different world: hardware stores, a subset of retailing; and the novel, and genres within the novel form.

Over several years, I've sought, identified and read fiction in which hardware and hardware stores are taken up in (1) significant and (2) reflective, metaphorical, imaginative or otherwise interesting ways. Certain patterns surface within the fiction (and beyond it to poetry, film and other realms).

My paper will provide a kind of "distant reading" account of those patterns and intersections. These include: (1) The valence of the hardware store in common understanding, and its meaning in a particular novel (or story), as a benign (or not) place, and a marker for a character's ambition, virtue, humanity, etc. (2) The mutable nature of this retail genre itself (stores evolve, or fail). (3) Gender and maturity issues. (4) The relationship of language with things; in a business selling thousands of items, words, labels and definitions matter.

My corpus exceeds 100 titles and includes "literary" and genre works, e.g., romance (including evangelical romance), mysteries, science fiction, erotica, humor, and conduct-of-life fiction. I will omit from my discussion novels published after 2000.

An unevenly annotated and partial list of fiction in which hardware and/or hardware stores are significantly employed:

<http://jmcvey.net/hdwe/fiction/index.htm>

Part of a larger project described at

<http://jmcvey.net/hdwe/literature.htm>

Malgesini, Frank.

Life as We Know it: Finding Ourselves in Wildfell Hall

The ethnographic orientation of much nineteenth century realism has been regularly acknowledged in recent years. What has been less discussed is the utility of ethnographic approaches for interpreting realistic fiction. Understanding Anne Bronte's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* almost requires ethnography. Because Bronte does not intrude in the narrative and neither of her two limited narrators is a skillful interpreter of events, the reader is forced to closely observe the speech events that form the basis of the novel and reach his own conclusions about their significance. Fortunately, though faulty interpreters of their surroundings, both narrators are accurate observers, providing ample data for the reader to analyze. This paper discusses how such approaches as ethnography of communication, interaction ritual, and interactional sociolinguistics reveal what is happening in interactions and help to draw the reader more fully into the world of the novel. Wildfell Hall benefits from this type of analysis because the author's attention to the details of ordinary life has enabled her to duplicate the complexity of life as it is and to create a world that remains compelling to students reading the book centuries and continents away from it.

Marland, Patrick.

Dickens and Things

The status of things in Dickens has been a thread of Dickens criticism at least since Dorothy Van Ghent first wrote about 'the transposition of attributes' that rendered the animate in his novels things and things animate. This paper explores the perceptual and aesthetic relationship between Dickens' descriptive prose and everyday objects. It invokes 'thing theory' and the much older Formalist concept of *ostranenie* to meditate on how Dickens estranges these everyday objects, transmuting them into an ungovernable surplus of things. It also compares this estrangement with the fictional praxis of his contemporaries, notably with what the critic Harry Levin has referred to as the 'Thing-ism' of nineteenth-century mimesis.

Milthorpe, Naomi.

"Fatigues and things": Boredom and objects in Henry Green's *Party Going*

Henry Green declared that the novel "should be concerned with the everyday mishaps of ordinary life." (Breit 29) It is unsurprising, then, that the prosaic dominates his 1939 novel *Party Going*, known for its combination of an experimental prose style with banal subject matter. The gerund form of its title suggests action, but as Sara Crangle argues, "unresolved waiting" (Crangle 21) directs the plot: a group of people, stranded at a train station which has been shut down by fog, wait with their luggage, order drinks, and lose and find various

members of their party. Eventually the trains start up again, at which point the novel ends.

In its absence of dramatic action and attention to the quotidian, Green's novel is exemplary of twentieth century anxieties about time, leisure and the nature of subjective experience. These concerns manifest in the novel's fretful leveling of objects and experiences using the repeated, vague signifier, "things." Green's characters, and his narrator, apply the denotative *things* equally to specific objects (a pigeon, a toy pistol) and to general situations, encounters, and emotive states, resulting in a conflation of the material and the affective. At the same time, the most common figurative language occurs in the troping of humans *en masse* as inanimate objects (bamboo, lozenges, tailors' dummies).

The multiple subjects and objects effaced by the vague term "things" suggests that the novel is very much preoccupied with what Douglas Mao has identified as the "utter contingency of everything (and every thing)" in the modernist period (Mao 3). This paper will read *Party Going's* multiplied and contingent "things" as they relate to the broader contexts of boredom, everydayness, and literary modernism.

Mishra, Vijay.

The Sonic Imaginary in Salman Rushdie

Gibreel, the tuneless soloist, had been cavorting in moonlight as he sang his impromptu gazal (*The Satanic Verses*)

In the Emory University Salman Rushdie Archive ten great films are mentioned on a single typed sheet (written quite possibly at the time Rushdie had finished a first draft of *The Satanic Verses*, that is in February-March 1988). The films noted on Rushdie's list were made in a short period between 1954 and 1965, a period marked by a modernist, cosmopolitan, art-house aesthetics that pushed the European avant-garde (with its surrealist foundations) to the limit. One of the striking features of the films on this list, which includes Fellini's *8½* (1963) and Godard's *Alphaville* (1965), is the space given to cities. But their representation is not simply visual; there is a symphonic architecture about them as music both mediates and provides extra-diegetic acoustics for the mechanical sounds of the city (cars, trains) and the organic sounds of the human world. Visual literalism works with sonic literalism as cities reconfigure cinema aesthetics.

Reference to Rushdie's interest in modernity's most powerful and pervasive art form, and in cities too,¹ takes me to the crux of this paper, which is the persistence of cinematic effects – the moving image but more importantly in the reading offered here the sound track – in Rushdie's novels. The paper draws attention to the role of cinema's sonic style (source music, diegetic music, underscore, extra-diegetic music, *musique concrète*, and so on) in Rushdie. The argument here is that sonality characterizes the Rushdie aesthetic, a fact which – and given Rushdie's declared interest in cinema – necessitates an exploration beyond Rushdie's fictionality, beyond a reading of his works via homologous correspondences

between novelistic representation and cinematic representation, to his interest in what may be called 'auteur music.'

Montague, Kate.

Prosaic Drama and the Postwar American Novel

This paper traces the generic admixture of the prosaic and dramatic within the postwar American novel. For György Lukács, these two genres reveal a tension between what he calls "general historicism" (the essence or idea of individual things) and "material historicism" (lived existence or the totality of everyday reality). Whilst the novel is traditionally thought of as a generic iteration of "material historicism," this paper argues that a dramatic and particularly tragic formalism has reasserted itself from within the postwar American novel. This paper investigates the manner in which tragedy articulates the inborn "Real," essence or idea, of everyday North American culture, manifesting from within several celebrated novels—William Gaddis' *The Recognitions* (1955), Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* (1985), and Philip Roth's *American Pastoral* (1997). In all of these novels, dramatic forms of tragedy assert themselves anachronistically. By tracing the resurgence of early and pre-modern forms therein, this paper will answer two questions: what are the aesthetic implications of this return to a tragic formalism in novelistic prose? And, why does the history and geography of postwar America give rise to this energetic exchange between prosaic and dramatic forms.

Nicéphore, Anastasia.

Paroxysm, Sublimity and the Role of the Prosaic Imaginary in Don DeLillo's novels.

Don DeLillo's apocalyptic novella *Point Omega* (2010) delves into the transformative nature of "cultural property" through eschatological rhetoric and fatalistic dialectics which signify the vulnerable vacuity within postmodern subject matter. Entangled in bureaucratic systems of governmentality and pseudo sociopolitics, the protagonist of *Point Omega*, Richard Elster is exemplary of the western subject as object, who chooses escaping to an alternative—geological space. In this, the made space of the novel genre is an elucidation of political and sociocultural contentions, and as John Plotz puts it "the novel ... is the logical breeding ground for reflections on cultural portability in large part because of its own form" (*Portable Property: Victorian Culture on the Move* 2008, 72). Analogous to this, Don DeLillo considers the made space of the novel as possessing the ability to proffer a type of "paroxysm or something enormously sublime".

This paper addresses preoccupations with the complexities that arise from the prosaic imaginary, and whereby in DeLillo's *Point Omega*, temporality is mimicked through the influence of metacinematics playing out as a psychological re-awakening to pertinent issues within a society, culture and world. I will attempt to examine how these issues and meta-signifiers of cinematic spatiality blur the boundaries between the realms of reality and fiction, and in turn interpose neo-hermeneutics in scholarship and academia.

O'Connor, Tasmin.

Fictive History and the penal stations of New South Wales.

In 1996 David Malouf was interviewed by Helen Daniel about the emergence of a fictive history – a rival to ‘real history’. Historians seemed largely disinterested until almost a decade later, when Kate Grenville made a contentious claim for historical truth following the success of her novel *Secret River*. This paper will not attempt to argue the relative merits of the subsequent inter disciplinary debate – but rather it will seek to examine the notion of fictive history in its colonial context. Malouf identified a certain Australian inevitability in the creation of ‘a myth history’. And in a sense he was right. The novel, and the narrative tradition of criminal biography from which it emerged, was always crucial in shaping representations of New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land. After all, the penal colony was founded on novelistic ideas of determined space, sequential time and structured sentences. This paper will focus on the significance of middle class ventriloquism in three texts – the recorded defence of the bushranger Black John Gough published in the *Monitor* in 1827; the ‘useful narrative of terror and retribution’ Charles Dickens offered to the home secretary in the service of the nation and Peter Carey’s *Jack Maggs* – a novel that in one very important respect truly is a rival to “real history”.

Pender, Elizabeth.

Not your everyday novel: modernist novels and literary criticism in the early 1960s

How did institutional literary criticism shape a set of ideas about modernist fiction? In the 1920s and early 1930s, what later became known as modernism included a relatively broad grouping of writers, critics and artists. But as modernism emerged as a legitimate field for study within academic institutions, it was subject to considerable exercises of selection and judgment. Strategies of reading modernist fiction were developed that worked well in academic contexts, but that favoured some writers over others. At this time, a narrowed canon of modernist literature became current. This paper explores some of the strategies of reading that helped to shape canons of modernist fiction in the early 1960s. I look at criticism of

modernist fiction by Harry Levin and Hugh Kenner, reading their work in the wider critical context of the early 1960s, and I consider what made the novels they selected into interesting subjects for their literary criticism. In particular, I discuss the need for exemplary works of modernist fiction, and I consider the relationship between academic institutions, literary criticism, and productivity. In the process of institutionalisation, the concept of literary modernism was temporarily shorn of many of its links with everyday culture, including its emergence across avant-garde and mass magazines and its social and financial networks. The critical moment of modernism's admission into the institution provides background to the way academic study is currently reimagining modernism to include its wider cultural history and its complex relationship with the everyday.

Rooney, Brigid.

'That hideous lighted tomb': house and suburb in Elizabeth Harrower's *The Long Prospect* (1958)

Elizabeth Harrower's finite yet powerful oeuvre, culminating in *The Watch Tower* (1966), was produced at the height of the Menzies and Cold War eras well before the advent of second wave feminism. Her 1958 novel, *The Long Prospect*, presents a kind of inverted or poisoned *künstlerroman* in which the cultivation of a young girl by intellectual outsiders is stymied by the casual cruelty of her determinedly parochial family. Harrower's portrait of provincial, suburban Australia is more excoriating and bitter than the most anti-suburban of the fiction produced in the same period by Patrick White and George Johnston. This paper registers but seeks to resist the rubric of anti-suburbanism in order to investigate the novel's sensory recall, summoning and reanimation of childhood place. With reference to the terrain of Harrower's childhood suburb of Mayfield, Newcastle (NSW), I propose to consider how *The Long Prospect* marshals its energies via the prosaics of the industrial suburb, a place twice or thrice removed from the metropolitan centre in which it was composed. How do its constellations of space, its routes of escape and return, and its sonic reverberations electrify the malignant house at its centre?

Rooney, Monique.

Mute Eloquence: Elizabeth Jolley's *The Well* as Encrypted Melodrama

See

I will not forget you ...

I have carved you on the palm of my hand (*The Well* 161)

Drawing on Derrida's reading of the crypt as both secret place and no place (*Fors*, 1986), and on Catherine Malabou's work on the plasticity of form, this paper argues that buried in Elizabeth Jolley's *The Well* (1986) is a Pygmalion-esque

melodrama about animated stones and the turning to stone of the animated. The paper shows how the novel's juxtapositions of song and speech place it in a musical-dramatic tradition that, reaching back to antiquity, has crossed spatio-temporal borders and metamorphosed in migration through various media, genres and modalities (including theatre and novel). Like the words carved on the palm of a hand, *The Well's* melodrama is partly buried within its written form. Melodrama is, in this Australian story, an encrypted imaginary that nevertheless animates the novel's fascination with terrestrial death and sub-terrestrial life and its depiction of a human will to closure or burial that conditions a will to expose, transfer, transform and renew.

Rudge, Chris, with Adam Hulbert and Patrick Cronin.

Novel Objects: The Unsettling Life of 'Things' in the Novels of Philip K. Dick.

Philip K. Dick's science fiction novels invariably feature material 'things' that appear and transform according to rules that are not always readily explicable or disclosed. Various these objects include mechanical 'helpers' (what Frederic Jameson calls Dick's 'adjuvants'), vigilant agents for hyper-capitalistic economies or merciless power regimes, and even articles of trash that go on to become the protagonists' most valuable possessions. To apprehend the shifting value accorded to these objects in Dick's novels prompts the reader to set aside their normative, anthropocentric ideas about what constitutes the materials of their own construction – a process that can be both horrifying and amusing.

In life as in his fiction Dick obsessed over things, devoting much of his later years to studying the way in which his novels obsessed over and valorised certain objects: hi-fi radios, Barbie dolls, pendants, and even trash (what Dick sometimes called 'kipple' or 'gubbish'. Dick's some 9,000 pages of hand-written autocriticism were recently published as the *Exegesis*, a 900-page volume that sheds light on Dick's unique authorial process whereby objects are imparted significance and transformed into sacred, even deific things in his fictions. Using the *Exegesis* as a reference point, The Philip K. Dick Reading Group Panel proposes to examine the political and psychical implications of this reconfiguration of everyday objects in Dick's novels.

Rudkin, Hayley.

"A craving cry I could not satisfy": Hunger in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*

There is perhaps nothing quite so prosaic as our need to eat food to survive. Many Victorian novels are littered with references to food preparation, dining practices and starvation, and feature characters whose actions are motivated by hunger. The prominence of hunger in the Victorian novel is complicated by the frequent use of appetitive language to describe experiences and desires which are directly opposed to the prosaic realities of dining and earning one's bread. In Charlotte Brontë's

Villette, for example, Lucy Snowe describes her intense longing for spiritual, intellectual and sexual fulfilment in terms of hunger. Critics have often distanced this figurative use of hunger from the biological hunger of the stomach by reading the relationship between the two as metaphorical. In my reading of *Villette*, however, I propose that Brontë's language invites us to read the figurative hunger of her characters as contiguous with the prosaic realities of their biological desires.

Russo, Stephanie.

Domesticating Charlotte Corday: Helen Craik's *Adelaide de Narbonne* and Private Vengeance

The murder of Jean-Paul Marat in July 1793 by the twenty-five-year-old French woman Charlotte Corday sent shockwaves around France, and irrevocably changed the way women's public political participation was thought about within the nascent Republic. Corday became a problematic, prominent figure in writing on both sides of the Continent, as writers attempted to grapple with the idea of the militant woman. Helen Craik's little-known 1800 novel *Adelaide de Narbonne* is a novelistic reimagining of the lives of French revolutionary celebrities, including that of Charlotte Corday. By focusing on the everyday life, thoughts and feelings of a woman like Charlotte Corday, Craik invites her readers to engage sympathetically with one of the most notorious militant women of the era. However, in the process of "normalizing" Corday, Craik effectively strips Corday's actions of their political significance, instead locating her motivations in private vengeance. In rewriting the story of Charlotte Corday as an act of private vengeance, Craik attempts to use the novel form to reduce Corday's political act—and, indeed, the French Revolution—into a depoliticized domestic drama; a drama of the every-day, rather than a drama of international political significance.

Saleh Rofail, Lydia.

The Prosaic and Phantasmagoric: Fictive Urban Bodies in Peter Carey's *The Tax Inspector*

The urban misfit, a recurring character in the contemporary Australian novel, embodies the paradoxical search for a unique Australian identity in an increasingly globalised world. This paper will explore depictions of the urban misfit's imaginative body and the juxtaposition with the prosaic (sub)urban setting in Peter Carey's *The Tax Inspector* (1991). I will reveal how this discrepancy between imaginative and prosaic can be read as a metaphor for Australia's transnational aspirations that sit uneasily alongside historical legacies of trauma, xenophobia and parochialism. By engaging with theorists that explore the body, illness, trauma and subcultures, I will explore the fictive body and its symbiotic relationship with the city, with particular focus on the tattooed, 'angelic/psychopathic' body of Benny Catchprice, which is phantasmagoric and quasi-human. How is this

imaginative (body) inscribed, shaped or impacted by the prosaic (city)? How does the contemporary Australian novel offer itself so readily to complex urban misfits like Benny Catchprice and does the imaginative rendering of this quasi-person offer socio-political commentary upon the identity of Australia in a transnational world? This focus on the city as a signifier of Australian identity in the novel is a vital corrective to the body of National literatures, which feature an iconic Australian identity located in the outback. In contrast, this paper will examine the (sub)urban fringe and its inhabitants to expose a complex world, one embedded with Australian fixations, fears, anxieties and trauma.

Stanton, Christine.

Small Measures, Great World

A fiction-writer's perspective will always be obverse to that of the academic in that the author chooses to introduce elements of story into the text, while academics can only analyze an existing text. In this paper I would be referencing work done on my D/Arts thesis novel set at the turn of the C16 in the beginnings of European mercantile empires. The protagonist is a native of a tiny, isolated Indonesian tribe which believes it is a superior race living in the centre of the world. He has no sense of property other than that which is portable. He is kidnapped by Europeans, and so himself becomes a piece of property, a cultural artifact to be traded, interpreted and used for mercantile benefit. He carries with him a few objects of cultural value to his tribe, but unlike the exported British imperial culture sustained by *memento patriae*, his 'property' either loses or has a misleading value in the newer, wider world of Europe.

The narrative proceeds through a series of incidents that do not reference great works, great men, great moments in history, grand gestures: but are predicated on the protagonist's need to 'read' an alien culture through the mundane objects he acquires or uses, as he has no prior knowledge of that culture nor a shared language in which to interrogate it. The persistent question for this author is which objects will 'speak' most effectively to and for the protagonist and how are they to be integrated into the text, what weight to give inclusions, so that they have sufficient resonance to serve the narrative without becoming either intrusion or mere decoration. - e.g. In my novel; when is it appropriate for a small piece of broken ceramic to be no more than that and how and when is it to become a quasi-document for safe-conduct through enemy territory. Finally, to speculate on how much attention academics should or do give to questions of authorial choice of prosaic details and chattels when analyzing a narrative for cultural significance.

Steer, Philip.

Strategic Banality: The Work of the Prosaic in Novels of Early Settlement

This paper explores the generic instability of the early colonial Australian novel, specifically its tendency to veer from narrating the vicissitudes of settler life to detailing agricultural production and other concerns more commonly associated with political economy. Viewed through the lens of classical realism, therefore, texts such as Charles Rowcroft's *Tales of the Colonies* (1843) or Thomas McCombie's *Arabin; or, The Adventures of a Settler in New South Wales* (1845) must inevitably be seen as flawed or underdeveloped. By contrast, I suggest that the settler colony might be reconsidered as a space where genre distinctions necessarily collapse in the service of producing a distinct form of prosaic realism central to the project of colonization. In a broader sense than Franco Moretti's assertion in *Atlas of the European Novel* that the realist novel normativises the nation by recording "a slow and regular progress; daily, tiresome, often banal" (48), the strategic assertion of colonial banality across a range of registers functions to assert the Britishness of Australian settlement. That is, if the colony's suitability for the British subject is most immediately conveyed through the portrayal of characters' achievement of a settled, rural lifestyle, this is complemented at a societal level by the statistical assertion of the colonial capacity for steady, regular economic production. Paradoxically, therefore, asserting the prosaic nature of settlement can be seen as one of the most audacious and wide-ranging strategies of the colonial novel.

Sutton, Emily.

Domesticating the Plague: Realism, History and the Everyday in AIDS Fiction

Narratives of the AIDS crisis have a troubled relationship with the prosaic and the everyday. At once a horrifying estrangement of the everyday and, in its domestic manifestations in care and sickness, a quickly assimilated aspect of mundane experience, AIDS destabilises the history of the 1980s in by being both 'plague', a 'crisis,' a disruption and yet a common experience across gay lives. How does realist fiction – the dominant form in which gay writers have approached the representation of AIDS – manage this tension? What consequences for literary representation are there in this combination of the estranging and the everyday, the unrepresentable and the prosaic? Interactions between the personal and the historical, the real and the imaginary are especially fraught in AIDS fiction. How can novel-reading as everyday activity manage the representational demands of the kind of extreme everyday dilemmas the AIDS crisis presents? I will read three novels of the mid 1990s, Edmund White's *The Farewell Symphony*, Felice Picano's *Like People in History* and Allan Gurganus' *Plays Well With Others*, as exemplars into order to offer some preliminary insight into the role of the realist novel in negotiating the traumatic and the everyday.

Taylor, Therese.

Romantic and Pious Themes: Historical Novels about Saints

This paper will look at the characteristics of historical fiction by women authors in the mid-twentieth century, and will make a specific study of the works of a now-forgotten writer, Margaret Trouncer. She was born in Paris of mixed European background, then moved to England and studied at St Hilda's College, Oxford University in the 1920s. She then became a popular novelist, and from the 1930s to the 1960s published numerous works of historical fiction about Catholic saints. Margaret Trouncer's novels were published by Pan Macmillan and other presses which marketed paperback fiction internationally. The novels were written from the point of view of admiring identification with the central character, and also of conforming to the historical record. These two characteristics were enough to banish most aspects of sensationalism, romance, overt erotic content, and almost any other theme which raised historical fiction above the prosaic. However, Margaret Trouncer's detailed and carefully researched novels sold well and enabled her to pursue a full time literary career.

My paper will discuss the characteristics of Margaret Trouncer's novels, and will look at the general field of mid-20th century historical novels, which was female-dominated and assigned to the sphere of popular culture. I will discuss the appeal of novels which depicted the ordinary events of past lives at great length, and I will use the example of Margaret Trouncer's writing to describe an aesthetic of the prosaic past.

Williams, Marise.

When "knowing don't mean shit": The Novelistic Lens, Everyday Language and the Epistemophilic Bind in Susanna Moore's *In the Cut* (1993)

In Susanna Moore's 1993 novel, *In the Cut*, a series of women are brutally murdered, including the first person narrator; decapitated and disarticulated by a sadistic serial killer whose methodology is a perversion of the myths of heterosexual romance. This plot allows Moore a novelistic lens through which to critically engage with female desire and contemporary feminist discourses on violence against women and female victimisation. Yet on another level, critically and creatively, Moore's novel is about novelistic practices, speaking, writing and language, the conventions and limitations of genre and literary fictional form. The novel's narrator is a literature and linguistics scholar, a creative writing teacher who researches urban slang for a dictionary she is writing. The problematic, polysemic nature of language as a system of signification erupts at both the level of story, form and character in Moore's work. The reader's epistemophilic desire when bound to the narrator's has fatal consequences. In her forensic critical

analysis she misreads the sign of the murderer as the reader does. The revelation of the serial killer's identity is the death of the narrator.

This paper explores the literary sensibility of Moore's novel, its pleasure in language and self-reflexive play, the beauty and intelligence of words even when part of an aesthetics of violence against women. For as Joyce Carol Oates points out in her *New York Times* article, "Why is your writing so violent?": "writing is language and, in a very important sense, is more 'about' language than 'about' a subject".

Willis, Ika.

Obscuring Genocide: Knowledge and Identity in *Hard Yards* and *Daniel Deronda*

You were my son, and it was my turn to say what you should be. I said you
should not know you were a Jew.
(*Daniel Deronda*).

It was genocide.

Sir Ronald Wilson, report of the *Inquiry into the Removal of Aboriginal Children*;
epigraph to *Hard Yards*.

As John Plotz argues in his chapter on 'Race and Portable Culture in *Daniel Deronda*', the racial and cultural complexities of Eliot's novel operate through an intricate structure of ignorance and knowledge involving not only the novel's characters but also its authors and its readers. The novel's narrative is driven by Daniel's *being* a Jew towards the moment where he *knows* he is a Jew, and can act as such.

In this paper, I read Melissa Lucashenko's 1999 novel *Hard Yards* as an intervention into the logics of being, knowing, and racial identity that Eliot's novel constructs. The epigraph of *Hard Yards* calls attention to its setting: an Australia where genocide proceeds through the interruption of cultural transmission ("knowing") rather than/as well as through the destruction of racialized bodies ("being"). *Hard Yards* intensifies the play of ignorance and knowledge set up in *Daniel Deronda* by denying to its protagonist, Roo Glover, the knowledge that he is Murri, although this knowledge is granted to the reader. Through detailed comparison of the two texts, I will explore how this Aboriginal novel reinscribes and transforms its own inheritance of a theory of race as portable culture.

Zheng, Yi.

The Prosaic History of a Provincial Revolution

Li Jieren (1891-1962)'s historical trilogy *The Great Waves (da bo, 1937)* is a "spatial-descriptive" epic of life in the last days of the Qing Empire (1644-1911) in

the city of Chengdu. The novel's expansive and voluminous narrative sequence follows the minutiae of Late Qing and Early Republican gentry activism, plebian movements, social upheavals and daily life within and beyond the city limits. Li's original ambition is to document Chengdu's "changes in social life and institutions, as well as the evolution of social mentalities" from the late 19th century up to the time in which he lived and wrote. In its commitment to chronicle changes of a particular locale, the novel recreates on the one hand the becoming of a modern urbanity, on the other the agitations leading to the riots of the Railway Protection Movement which is later thought to have launched the Republican Revolution that ended China's imperial history. Li calls these stirrings and changes the "historical real" of a place, which is linked to worlds beyond the mountains, down the rivers and across the sea, while at the same time rooted in the development of age-old regional economic, social, and cultural networks that are also undergoing dramatic transformations. Formally, Li's epic-chronicle, which combines the French panoramic novel with traditional episodic Chinese novelistic structures, allows divergent mini-dramas, wayward plots and arrays of side characters. The spatial-descriptive details, and the minutiae in social and personal life take over as the main players in the unfolding of a non-progressive, often disjointed but nonetheless momentous process of change. The paper will explore questions such as how the 'prosaic' as the daily and personal psychological works in the historical novel with epic ambitions which aim to recount passions and events that end empires and begin new eras.
