



Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Royal Irish Academy

The Future

UK – Ireland

Knowledge Frontiers Symposium

Tuesday 31 January 2023 – Wednesday 1 February 2023

The British Academy

The Royal Irish Academy

Dear Participants,

We would like to welcome you to this symposium on the theme of 'The Future'. The symposium will enable the exchange of ideas across disciplinary as well as national boundaries, with the aim of facilitating cooperation and partnerships between researchers from Ireland and the United Kingdom.

This booklet contains useful background information for the symposium: travel and accommodation information; expenses policy; participation requirements; an agenda; further information on the symposium sessions; networking opportunities; participant biographies and participant abstracts. It also includes information about funding and other opportunities that will be available following the symposium, along with details of how to apply for them.

We are very much looking forward to the symposium and to a wide-ranging and fruitful discussion.

The British Academy

The Royal Irish Academy

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Programme

Monday 30 January

18:00 Informal welcome dinner

Tuesday 31 January

10.00 – 10.10 Welcome (Royal Irish Academy/British Academy)
10:10 – 11.00 Introductions
11:00 – 11:30 Tea/Coffee break
11:30 – 12:45 Exploratory Roundtable Discussion: Futures of the Past
12:45 – 13:45 Lunch
13:45 – 14:45 Works-in-progress (breakout groups)
14:45 – 15:15 Tea/Coffee break
15:15 – 16:30 Exploratory Roundtable Discussion: Environmental Futures
16:30 – 17:00 Ideas for Collaboration
18:00 Drinks Reception
18:30 Dinner

Wednesday 1 February

09:30 – 10:30 Works-in-progress (breakout groups)
10.30 – 10.45 Seed funding and other forms of collaboration (opportunity for RIA/BA to present on opportunities)
10:45 – 11:15 Tea/Coffee break
11:15 – 12:30 Exploratory Roundtable Discussion: Co-designing and co-producing knowledge in the future
12:30 – 13:30 Lunch
13:30 – 15:00 Seed funding applications
15:00 Closing remarks
15:10 Departure

Structure of the symposium

The symposium will consist of three sessions over two days interspersed with a range of networking opportunities.

Session Themes

Session 1: Futures of the Past

Session 2: Environmental Futures

Session 3: Co-designing and co-producing knowledge in the future

Networking Opportunities

- Introductions
- Tea & Coffee breaks
- Dinners
- Seed funding proposals session

What to Prepare

There are no set presentations or papers during the symposium. The sessions are designed to elicit flowing discussion and exchange to spark and share ideas.

If you could though review your and the other participants' abstracts, which are contained in this booklet, thinking of areas of mutual interest and potential collaboration that will be helpful.

You may wish also to give some thought to your one-minute introduction (see below).

If you think that you might be interested in applying for the seed funding available, we recommend that if you are a UK-based participant that you speak in advance of the symposium with your research office so that they are aware of the possibility that you might receive some funding. If you are successful in receiving funding, then it will be necessary for you and your UK institution to approve the funding via the British Academy's FlexiGrant system.

To give further background the following sets out what this symposium is and is not so as we hope to help you get the most amount of this opportunity.

Although the three core sessions are important, they are not by any means the most important part of this event. The time off the sessions including over dinner, tea and coffee or a time that does not appear on the agenda are as and perhaps even more important. We wish to stress that so as to illustrate that the contributions to the core sessions are not the sole thing we expect you to come away from this event from. Our hope is to provide a variety of structured and unstructured time with which to aid you in doing work in ways you may well not often get the chance to do, and particularly how we might support and encourage directly and indirectly future discussion and collaboration amongst yourselves well after the end of this symposium. Our hope is not to come to a research conclusion in these sessions or at this symposium. What we hope might happen is that you begin discussions that set out a variety of different perspectives and understandings for yourselves and how that might link up with others participating here as well. That linking up may come organically though the session but is very likely to also happen by the work you will do off the session and as the symposium goes on. See this as a conversation, not a debate. As a beginning, not a conclusion.

This is a broad disciplinary group. This may well be something that is unusual in your own institutional setting. This is an opportunity to have a different set of discussions and a different set of interactions that perhaps you may not usually be able to do so. You are likely therefore to hear things at the symposium, which are completely new to you and perhaps not things that you readily see as engaging with your research. We would encourage you to absorb and to listen as much as you can and with some time that may well change in ways that could help your own research by having had the opportunity to be enriched by a different set of perspectives and understandings.

That is certainly one aim we are hoping that will come out of this. Another is the potential for cooperation and collaboration between you. Some of this may come through from the seed funding at the close of the event but of course there are many other ways that you could work together which would require no involvement from any academy. You are very welcome to pursue all of this.

The idea is to see the symposium as a space where potential collaboration may be fostered and to learn new and different perspectives. Our hope is that if you keep that in mind then you will have a good chance of finishing your time here in London together with some new outlooks, new possibilities and perhaps most importantly some new friends.

Introductions

In order to provide an opportunity for each participant to introduce themselves, each participant will have one minute to say a few words about themselves, such as their research priorities, personal interests, and professional background (you are welcome to throw in a joke or two!).

Participants will be divided into three groups for this exercise. Each member of the group will have one minute to introduce themselves to the rest of the participants. After this, there are five minutes when people are free to approach those who have just spoken to discuss further. This is repeated until each participant and group has had a chance to introduce themselves.

Symposium Sessions

The symposium is split into three core roundtable sessions across Tuesday and Wednesday. Each session will have a chair and begin with three participants speaking for around five minutes to kick off the discussion. The discussion will then be opened for a free-flowing exchange among participants. We hope and expect that everyone will have an opportunity to participate fully in each session.

Seed Funding

At the end of this booklet, you will find the seed funding application form. The final session of the symposium is set aside to complete this, but we have included it to encourage you to consider possible collaborative proposals in advance of both the workshop generally and the session specifically.

These grants are designed to facilitate collaborations. These can take many different forms – in the past we have had proposals to co-host workshops, work on a co-authored article, attend a specific conference together and present at it, develop a further grant application, and many more. They are not designed for participants to pursue their own research individually. Collaborations can be of two or more people, and each participant may apply for multiple seed funding applications in different groups or partnerships, though each application must be justified individually and be able to stand alone from any other that is being made. The only

restriction in this context is that at least one person in the collaboration must be UK-based and one must be based in Ireland.

All applications must be received by 3pm on Wednesday 1 February 2023. They must be submitted electronically.

Symposium information

Attendance

Attendance at all parts of the symposium is mandatory for all participants, including the reception and dinner on Tuesday evening, unless previously agreed with the British Academy. Participants who do not attend all parts of the symposium will not be eligible to apply for the opportunities available following the symposium such as the seed funding, as set out in the call for applications.

Exclusion of Liability

BA / RIA are not liable for any physical injury or damage to property that may occur during your travels to and from the symposium or during your stay in the UK. It is recommended that participants secure appropriate travel insurance, but please note this cost cannot be covered by the BA / RIA.

Expenses

The organisers will cover train fares, accommodation, meals, and soft drinks for the duration of the symposium (Monday evening to Wednesday afternoon).

An informal buffet dinner will be organized for those participants who have arrived and are able to attend at the Royal Society at 6pm on 30 January. Breakfast is included for participants staying at the Strand Hotel and lunch is included for all participants on both 31 January and 1 February, along with a reception dinner on 31 January.

Any additional items will not be included and must be paid for separately by participants. Room charges for all participants will be billed directly to the British Academy. However, individuals will be responsible for any incidental charges (laundry, minibar, phone calls etc.) upon check-out.

Public transport to train stations must be used unless alternative arrangements have been made with British Academy staff's prior written agreement. **All expense claims must be supported by a receipt.**

Any additional expenses will not be covered by the BA/RIA.

Hotel

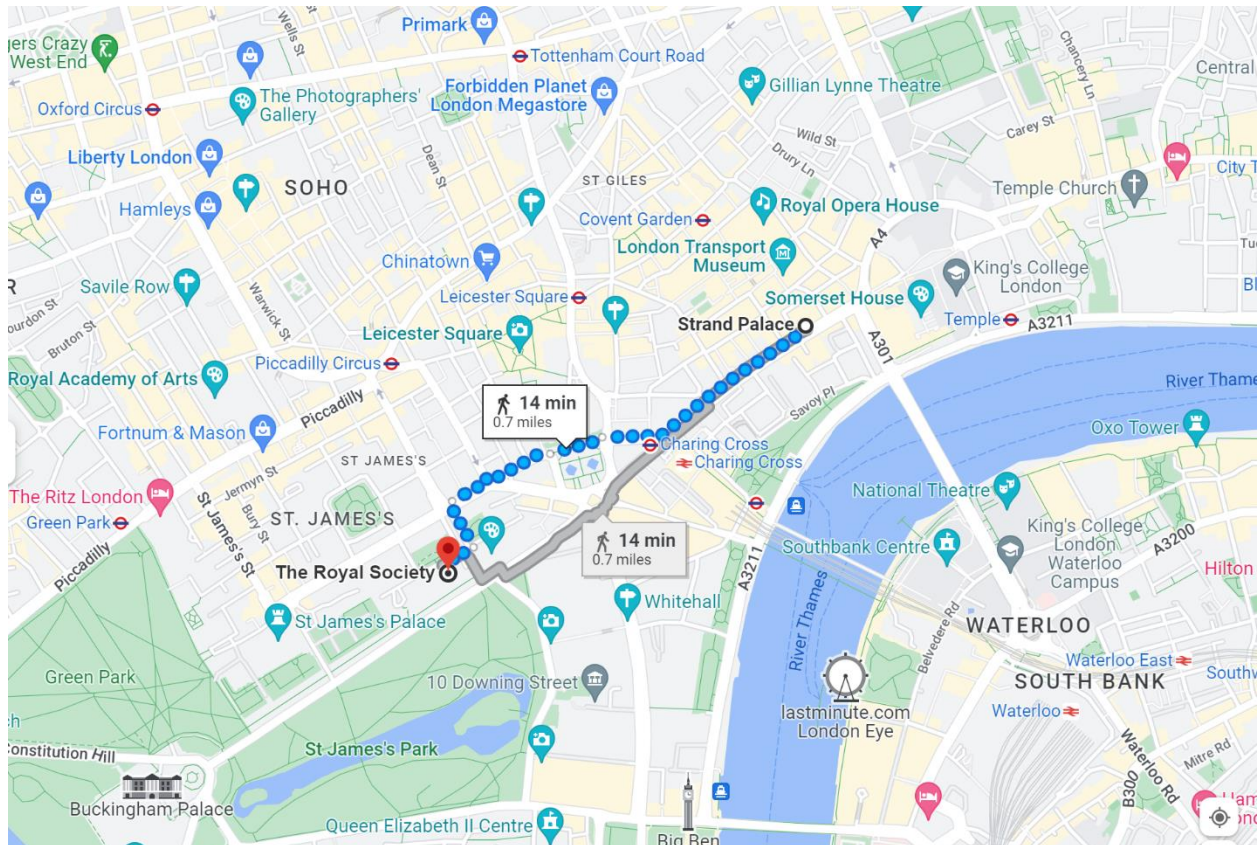
The Strand Palace Hotel

Address: 372 Strand, Westminster Borough, London, WC2R 0JJ, United Kingdom

Symposium Venue

The Royal Society

6-9 Carlton House Terrace, St. James's, London SW1Y 5AG



Symposium description

The symposium is designed specifically to encourage collaboration and networking between early career researchers based in Ireland and the UK. To incentivise collaboration, the British Academy will be making available some seed funding at the end of the symposium to support cooperation between scholars.

The symposium will furthermore provide an opportunity for participants to learn more about the different programmes and activities through which the BA and RIA provide support to early career researchers.

Sessions

At a time of unprecedented social, cultural, environmental and technological change, the perspectives of humanities and social science researchers in understanding the role of cultural forces (histories, identities, ethics, narratives, values) in imagining and living the future are needed as never before. The urgent need for these perspectives is increasingly being recognised as many of the greatest challenges facing humanity will not be technological, but rather social and cultural.

The 'future' is also shaping the approach and methodology of humanities and social science disciplines with the emergence of big data, large-scale humanities infrastructures, immersive technologies and digital heritage. Shifting disciplinary boundaries, the proliferation of diverse communities of knowledge, practice and thought suggest the need for inquiry into the nature of knowledge and evidence, and their formative requirements and professional moorings today and in the future. This requires an interdisciplinary and international outlook, as well as of effective co-design and co-production of knowledge between the expert and the lay or the theoretical and the applied.

The symposium invites participants to think of 'the future' across different times and contexts to explore and address the need for creative interventions in social and environmental crises, how communities of the past have managed (or otherwise) rapid social upheaval and technological change, and whether we can humanise the digital future.

Session 1

Futures of the past

Futures of the past, such as experiences of rapid social and cultural change, evolving notions of heritage, and how imaginations of the future can be rooted in our pasts

Session 2

Environmental Futures

Environmental futures, such as humanities and social science approaches to climate change, migration, natural disasters and global inequalities

Session 3

Co-designing and co-producing knowledge in the future

Co-designing and co-producing knowledge in the future, such as examining how valid knowledge, knowledge associations and evidence are developed, communicated and disseminated, and the factors which can serve as barriers in different political, historical, linguistic or cultural settings.

The British Academy

The British Academy is the UK's national body for the humanities and social sciences – the study of peoples, cultures and societies, past, present, and future. The British Academy's purpose is to inspire and support high achievement in the humanities and social sciences throughout the UK and internationally, and to promote their public value. We have three principal roles:

- A Fellowship of distinguished scholars from all areas of the humanities and social sciences, elected by their peers, that facilitates the exchange of knowledge and ideas and promotes the work of our subjects.
- A Funding Body that supports the best ideas, individuals and intellectual resources in the humanities and social sciences, nationally and internationally.
- A Forum for debate and engagement that stimulates public interest and deepens understandings, that enhances global leadership and policy making, and that acts as a voice for the humanities and social sciences.

The Royal Irish Academy

The Royal Irish Academy (RIA) is an independent, all-island learned society established under Charter in 1785. It has approximately 500 Members, chosen for their distinguished contributions to scholarship and research in the sciences, humanities, social sciences and public service. It is governed by its President and Council who, in accordance with the founding Charter, are elected by the Members at a general meeting held in the spring of each year. The three main strands of the RIA's role are to:

1. Recognise and foster excellence in research to advance the public good.
2. Be an independent voice on higher education and public policy.
3. Represent the world of Irish scholarship internationally.

Participant biographies

Dr Daniel Abdalla



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Daniel Ibrahim Abdalla is William Noble Research Fellow in English at the University of Liverpool. He is currently finishing a monograph that considers the importance of scientific theories of heredity and inheritance in to the works of four prominent American writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Henry James, Edith Wharton, Elizabeth Robins, and W. E. B. Du Bois. His new project is interested in how theatre-makers from the 19th century to today have put the environment on stage, and he particularly interested in the last two centuries of playwrights who have writing plays about the extreme polar regions.

Dr Carla Almanza-Gálvez



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Carla Almanza-Gálvez holds a PhD in Hispanic Studies from the University of Sheffield and an MA in Creative Writing from the University of Galway. She is also a graduate of Boston University and the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, as well as a former postdoctoral fellow at the University of Salamanca. Dr Almanza-Gálvez currently teaches Spanish and Latin American culture at the University of Limerick, where she is an affiliated member of the Ralahine Centre for Utopian Studies and the Centre for Early Modern Studies. She is the author of *Form and Reform in Eighteenth-Century Spain: Utopian Narratives and Socio-Political Debate* (Cambridge, UK: MHRA Legenda, 2019), a monograph based on her award-winning doctoral thesis (2017 Annual Publication Prize of the Association of Hispanists of

Great Britain and Ireland). In addition to her work on the Hispanophone eighteenth century, Dr Almanza-Gálvez has a significant research and publication record on modern and contemporary manifestations of the utopian in Spanish, Latin American, and broader intercultural and interdisciplinary contexts. This includes articles, essays and research papers on contemporary theatre, contemporary novels (urban fiction), graphic novels (environmental fiction), and utopian writing and practice.

Dr Matthew Barnfield



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Matthew Barnfield is an ESRC Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Government at the University of Essex. He researches political psychology, political behaviour, and public opinion. In particular, his current research addresses the political psychology of the future: how do citizens form beliefs about the future, how do these beliefs affect their attitudes and behaviour, and why does that matter? Matthew won the Political Studies Association's McDougall Trust Prize for his related PhD research at Queen Mary University of London on the 'bandwagon effect' and other issues involving opinion polls, electoral expectations and voting behaviour. He has also studied psychological questions beyond the realm of politics, including vaccine and public health attitudes. Alongside his substantive empirical work, Matthew writes about research practice and issues in the philosophy of science.

Dr Rahmin Bender-Salazar



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Rahmin Bender-Salazar is an Entrepreneur, Social Psychologist, and Academic focused on the application of design research and creativity on innovation, business, and policy that is socially and ecologically sensitive in a global context. He is a lecturer (assistant professor) at the Kemmy Business School at the University of Limerick focused on sustainable futures, entrepreneurship, and socio-ecological systems. He is also the founder of Creativo Design, a design thinking consultancy, which works at the crossroads of management consulting, policymaking, social psychology, and design to engage in the co-creation of products and services on all levels for social impact. He has worked as a lecturer in Universities in Ireland, France, Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In addition he has facilitated educational and research oriented workshops in systems and design thinking with participants from over 20 countries.

Dr Sarah Bezan



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Sarah Bezan is Lecturer in Literature and the Environment in the School of English & Digital Humanities at University College Cork and a member of the Radical Humanities Lab. Her work primarily examines the entangled social and ecological dimensions of species loss and revival in contemporary settler colonial literature and digital media/arts. Sarah is co-editor with Robert McKay of the recently published volume *Animal Remains* (Routledge 2022) and with James Tink of *Seeing Animals After Derrida* (Rowman & Littlefield 2018) along with special issues on “Sex and Nature” (*Environmental Humanities* 2022), “Coastal (Post)humanities” (*Anthropocenes* 2022), and “Taxidermic Forms and Fictions” (*Configurations* 2019). Her first book, *Dead Darwin: Necro-Ecologies in Neo-Victorian Culture*, is under advance contract with Manchester University Press.

Dr Hannah Boast



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Hannah Boast is Assistant Professor and Ad Astra Fellow at University College Dublin. Their first monograph is *Hydrofictions: Water, Power and Politics in Israeli and Palestinian Literature* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020), which was shortlisted for the ASLE-UKI Book Prize 2021. They are writing a new monograph called *Water Crisis and World Literature*. Hannah's interests are in the crossover between literature and geography, particularly resource politics and animal studies. Their work has been published in journals including *Environmental Humanities*, *Textual Practice* and *Green Letters*, and has been funded by the Leverhulme Trust, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, and the White Rose University Consortium.

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Iker Erdocia is Assistant Professor and Director of the PhD Programme at the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies (SALIS), Dublin City University. He is President of the Irish Association for Applied Linguistics and Committee member of the Language Policy group, British Association for Applied Linguistics. He is a member of the Linguistic Justice Society and working group member of the COST Action CA19102 'Language in the Human-Machine Era', among others.

Iker is an applied researcher and his work sits at the interface of language, policy and politics. He is interested in exploring deliberative approaches to problem-solving and

decision-making (e.g. Irish Citizens' Assembly, Global Citizens' Assembly) in the context of digital disruption and crisis of liberalism. Currently he is working on an Irish Research Council-funded research project on language and cultural differences in civic and political participation.

Dr Rosie Everett



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Lecturer in Forensic Science with a background in peatland cultural heritage. Current research focus examines interface of environmental forensics and palaeoecology to understand impact of past climate change for modelling future human-environmental interactions. She is also interested in the role of engagement and community interactions in peatland restoration. She is a member of the UNEP Global Peatlands Initiative and hosted the first Peatland Heritage and Culture roundtable in the UNEP Peatlands Pavilion at COP26, Glasgow and attained first inclusion of cultural heritage in the UNEP Global Peatlands Assessment launched at COP27.

Dr Elizabeth A. Faulkner



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I joined Keele University as a Lecturer in Law in February 2021, having previously held a Lectureship in Contemporary Slavery at the Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull and in

the Law Schools of De Montfort University and Staffordshire University. My interests, broadly conceived, are in international child law, human rights, crime, legal history, specialising in human trafficking, slavery, children's rights, exploitation and sexual violence. This year will see the publication of both my monograph 'The Trafficking of Children: International Law, Modern Slavery and the Anti-Trafficking Machine' under contract with Palgrave Macmillan and edited collection 'Modern Slavery in Global Context: Human Rights, Law and Society' with Bristol University Press.

Dr Jade Elizabeth French



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Jade Elizabeth French works on ageing, care and intergenerationality. She is currently a research fellow at Loughborough University developing the project 'Imagining the Care Home in Post War British Literature'. Previously, she was a research associate as part of the ESRC-funded project 'Reimagining the Future in Older Age'. She has written on modernism and ageing in articles for *Feminist Modernist Studies*, *Women: A Cultural Review* and *Modernism/modernity Print Plus*.

Dr Stuart Henderson



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I am lecturer in the Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics at Ulster University. I

previously completed my PhD at Queen's University Belfast with a thesis entitled "Historical Reflections on Religion, Finance and Economic Development". My research interests continue these themes (among others) and include economic history, banking, religion and agriculture. I am currently involved in several funded research projects relating to the religious history of Ireland; Northern Irish business statistics; and a cross-border comparison of generational renewal in agriculture. Within Ulster University Business School, I am the lead for embedding sustainability in research and knowledge exchange. I am also a council member of the Economic History Society and the Irish Accounting and Finance Association.

Dr Sarah Jasim



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Sarah is a research fellow in social care at the LSE Care Policy and Evaluation Centre. She is part of CPEC's partnership in the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration North Thames, as a member of the ARC-NT's Research Partnership Team. She is a mixed-methods researcher with experience in complex evaluations in mental health, social care and health services. She is also a Policy Fellow embedded within the Strategy Team of the City Intelligence Unit, Greater London Authority – where she co-developing a knowledge brokerage service for London Government and the academic community in London.

Dr Florian G. Kern



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Florian G. Kern is a Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) at the Department of Government, University of Essex. He also acts as the Director of Impact at the department. He received his PhD from the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Konstanz, and holds a M.A. from SAIS, Johns Hopkins University. His main research interest lies in comparative politics, especially the political economy of development, governance and conflict, with a regional focus on Africa and indigenous North America. His on-going work focuses on customary institutions, domestic sources of foreign policy formation in Africa, land rights, as well as research and data transparency in qualitative methods. He also co-founded the new Age and Power in Africa (AaPiA) research group. He employs a variety of approaches, combining applied experimental and qualitative methods, surveys, case studies, and fieldwork.

Dr Thomas Leahy



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Dr Thomas Leahy is a Senior Lecturer in British and Irish Politics and Contemporary History in the Politics and International Relations Department in Cardiff University. His research focuses on the Northern Ireland conflict, dealing with conflict legacy in the Republic of Ireland, conflict legacy, connections between Northern Irish/Irish and Westminster politics, and Irish Republican politics and violence since 1969. His first book *The Intelligence War Against the IRA* with Cambridge University Press (2020) won the Political Studies Association of Ireland's Brian Farrell Book Prize in 2021 and was shortlisted for the Royal Historical Society's Whitfield Prize. Thomas also is on the Multiple Sclerosis Society Cymru Council and has MS himself.

Dr Hannah Little



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Dr Hannah Little is a lecturer in communication and media at the University of Liverpool where her work focuses on science communication, science fiction and public engagement with data rights. Previously, Hannah worked at the Science Communication Unit at UWE Bristol where she was a Senior Lecturer in Science Communication for 4 years, and also a Data Fellow at the South West Creative Technology Network. She did her PhD in the field of evolutionary linguistics at the Artificial Intelligence Lab at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium, and went on to a postdoc at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in the Netherlands. She has published work in linguistics, research methods and science communication. She's on the board of directors for Open Rights Group, a digital rights advocacy organisation in the UK. In her spare time does stand-up comedy, and is writing a popular science book about linguistics and aliens.

Dr Richard Longman



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I am an academic at The Open University (UK) in the Department of People and Organisations. My expertise is grounded in ideas about alternative organising—specifically, *organising in alternative ways* (e.g., less hierarchical, more democratic), and our learning

from *organising alternative things* (e.g. hope, truth, ignorance). I bring to this work an eclectic set of experiences, having (re-)turned to academia after an earlier career in professional music. The global conditions we face today make me more convinced than ever that, in terms of seeking alternatives, we cannot simply 'talk the talk' – we must also 'walk the walk'. So, my research takes alterity as a starting point to consider how we might cultivate new organizational practices and subjectivities. And, it employs qualitative and socio-digital research methods to interrogate alternative organisational settings and explore individual/collective experiences. Through this research agenda, I seek to confront destructive and divisive practices and nourish alternatives that are more responsible and sustainable. I share this work by writing for academic journals and books as well as reaching wider non-academic audiences through blogs and podcasts. I also extend the impact of my work into meaningful relationships with individuals and organisations, staying connected with the future consumers of the knowledge I produce. I enjoy collaborations with scholars who share a desire to eradicate the marginalisation and othering of certain groups, and who seek to overcome feelings of powerless in the face of the global effects of inequalities manifested through disease, poverty, and hunger. I was elected to the Critical Management Studies Division Executive Committee (Academy of Management) for a 5-year term (2020-2025) and currently serve as Division Co-Chair Elect.

Dr Carol Maddock



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An experienced and versatile researcher, particularly in older adult's health and wellbeing, dementia literacy, public involvement and co-production with extensive experience working on an ageing research portfolio.

Previously a community health development worker within the voluntary sector alongside health and local authority colleagues. This fuelled a passion for working with community members, statutory and non-statutory providers and policy makers to positively influence quality of life, environments and health.

Currently exploring the potential of community participation in delivering and measuring solar energy system solutions in rural villages in India and using arts based approaches within the methodological approach (Strategic University Network to Revolutionize International Solar Energy' -[SUNRISE](#)). Also, CoI on Understanding Older and younger people's Perspectives and Imaginaries of Climate change (OPTIC): emplaced creativity to improve environments for healthy ageing. This project uses creative methods (comics,

mobile interviews, participatory video, cut-ups/collage) with intergenerational groups to understand older and younger people's climate change perceptions, imaginaries and behaviours.

Retain a role within the [Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research \(CADR\) Cymru](#) in the public involvement group

Recently involved with The Active Building Centre Research Programme specifically examining the impact of 'active' or low carbon home on older people's motives and the decision-making processes around moving to or agreeing to retrofitting of properties.

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Dr. Danny Marks is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Politics and Policy in the School of Law and Government of Dublin City University. Prior to this position, he was an Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at the Department of Asian and International Studies of City University of Hong Kong. He also was previously a Postdoctoral Research Fellow with the Urban Climate Resilience in Southeast Asia project at the Munk School of Global Affairs of the University of Toronto. Dr. Marks has spent a number of years conducting research and working in Southeast Asia, particularly in the field of environmental governance. He has worked for a number of organizations in the region, including the World Bank's East Asia and Pacific Governance Hub, the Rockefeller Foundation, ActionAid and the NGO Forum on Cambodia. Dr. Marks completed his PhD dissertation, *An Urban Political Ecology of the 2011 Bangkok Floods*, at the University of Sydney. He received his MA in International Affairs from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. His research interests are political ecology, environmental justice, climate governance, disaster risk reduction, with a focus on Southeast Asia.

Dr Ailbhe McDaid



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<https://www.ucc.ie/en/cacsss/research/cacsss/postdoctoralresearchfellows/draillbhemcdaid/>

Dr Ailbhe McDaid is Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of English and Digital Humanities, working on the [Ports, Past and Present](#) project. Her research interests circle around marginal narratives, via migration literature, women's writing, conflict stories and the literature of underrepresented populations.

Prior to her role on *Ports, Past and Present*, Ailbhe was an IRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow at in the School of English at UCC from 2018-2021, and was awarded the Busted Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at the Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool in 2017. She has previously held posts at University of Liverpool, Maynooth University and Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick and has worked on multiple participatory research projects, including [Homeward Bound: A Liverpool-West Africa Maritime Heritage](#), [War Widows' Stories](#) and [Creative Capacity in Ireland: Working Towards Wellbeing](#). Ailbhe is currently Treasurer of the [International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures \(IASIL\)](#) and serves on the Boards of [Diversifying Irish Poetry \(DIP\)](#); [Measuring Equality in the Arts Sector \(MEAS\)](#) and Irish University Review ([IUR](#)).

Ailbhe's scholarly work has been published in multiple peer-reviewed journals including *Humanities*, *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, *Irish Studies Review* and *New Hibernia Review*. She has chapters published and forthcoming in numerous edited collections, including *Handbook of Literature and Migration* (Palgrave); *Cambridge History of Irish Poetry* (Cambridge UP); *Race in Irish Literature and Culture* (Cambridge UP); *Women and the Irish Revolution* (Irish Academic Press) and *Post-Ireland?* (Wake Forest University Press). Her first book, [The Poetics of Migration in Contemporary Irish Poetry](#), was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2017, and her monograph-in-progress, *Domestic Disruptions: Women, Literature and Conflict 1912-1923*, explores female narratives of Irish conflict in the early 20th century.

Dr Brenda McNally



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Brenda McNally, Ph.D., is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre for Climate and Society, Dublin City University. She is an interdisciplinary social scientist specialising in climate politics and communication. Her research explores the production, circulation, and reception of media and visual discourse about climate action and energy transitions. Her dissertation examined how the Irish press performed as a platform for democratic debate about the low-carbon transition. She was awarded a Fulbright Ireland Scholarship in 2020 to develop her interest in climate imaginaries at the School for Future Innovation in Society, Arizona State University., USA. Her current research examines the climate change countermovement in Ireland, focussing on the connection between climate obstructionism and public opinion, as well as exploring the cultural production of post-carbon futures. Previously, she was the principal investigator of an Environmental Protection Agency of Ireland-funded research project examining the links between citizens' media use and perceptions of climate action.

Dr Devika Mehra



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Dr Devika Mehra is an associate lecturer in the School of English Literature, Language, and Linguistics at Newcastle University and a research fellow at the School of Advanced Study, University of London. Her current research project explores the impact of archives and prize catalogues at children's libraries and museums on diversity in children's culture, Black British children's literature archives and the role of young people's voices in increasing representation in children's prize culture. Her areas of interest include twentieth-century middle-grade children's fiction (British, American and South Asian), Indian and global children's cinema, children's publishing in India, children's literature archives, participatory research and digital methodologies, and digital texts for children. She has presented

internationally and published in these areas. She is the current recipient of the Inclusion, Participation, and Engagement fellowship grant (School of Advanced Study, University of London) for a research project investigating the role of children's archive centres and libraries in promoting diversity.

Dr Kasia Mika-Bresolin



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Dr Kasia Mika-Bresolin is a Senior Lecturer in Comparative Literature (QMUL). Prior to that, she was a Lecturer in Literary and Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam and held a postdoc fellowship at KITLV (The Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies) in Comparative Caribbean Studies. She works at the intersection of environmental and medical humanities, postcolonial and Caribbean studies, and critical pedagogy. She's the author of *Disasters, Vulnerability, and Narratives: Writing Haiti's Futures* (2019). In her analysis, she turns to concepts of hinged chronologies, slow healing, and remnant dwelling, offering a vision of open-ended Caribbean futures, full of resolve. Building on this work, she produced a short documentary, *Intranquillités* (2019; with Ed Owles, Postcode Films), on art and creativity in Haiti which won the [AHRC Research in Film Award](#) (2019). Her other work appeared in: *Third Text*, *Modern & Contemporary France*; *The Journal of Haitian Studies*; *Area*; *Moving Worlds*.

Dr Mantra Mukim



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Early Career Research Fellow at University of Warwick, I am interested in global modernism, poetics, critical theory, and avant-garde cinema. With Derek Attridge, I co-edited the collection, *Literature and Event: 21st Century Reformulations* (Routledge, 2021). My research articles have appeared in *Textual Practice*, *Interventions*, and *Irish Studies Review*. I am currently working on a project that traces the relationship between planning and poetry.

Dr Tom O'Dea



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Tom O'Dea is an artist who works with mixed-media sculpture and social practice to explore ways how different forms of knowledge impact upon our ways of acting and being the world. His work interrogates the political implications of knowledge production, practices of computation and organisation in contemporary society. He has exhibited nationally and

internationally and has curated work that examines technological materialities and the relationship between technology and society.

Tom completed a visual art practice-based PhD in TCD in 2019. This led to the exhibition *Unrepresentable: A Séance for Pierre Méchain*. Prior to this Tom attained a Master's in Digital Media in the Huston School of Film & Digital Media for his visual arts practice-based work *Chatter* that explored the political implications of communications technology on the public sphere. He has a background in engineering and holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering from UCD.

Tom is a member of the Orthogonal Methods Group (OMG), an art-research group at Trinity College Dublin and a studio lecturer in Sculpture and Expanded Practices in the National College of Art and Design in Dublin. He is one of the organisers of Dublin Art and Technology Association (DATA).

Dr Zainab Oyetunde-Usman



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Zainab is a Research Social Scientist at Rothamsted Research. She completed her PhD at the Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich and her research interestingly focused on the Impact and adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices among farm households in developing countries using various adoption probabilities, impact, and behavioural techniques. Her research aims are tailored to providing evidence-based policy intervention that increases resilience and minimises the farming population's vulnerability to climate change in the UK. She is interested in how choices and preferences for climate-resilient techniques in the UK are heterogeneously defined. Her interest extends to assessing consumer behavioural perceptions of innovative food products for sustainable environmental futures. Zainab believes that understanding the core basis of perceptions and preferences among agricultural and environmental stakeholders breeds policies that are inclusive and sustainable in the long run. Zainab looks forward to exploring several behavioural approaches and advancing social science methods through digital measures relevant to timely policymaking and meeting global sustainable agri-environmental needs.

Dr Lucy Razzall



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Dr Lucy Razzall completed her undergraduate and postgraduate studies at Jesus College, Cambridge, and was subsequently appointed to a Research Fellowship at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. She then lectured in the English departments at Queen Mary University of London and University College London before returning to Cambridge, where she is a Bye-Fellow at Christ's College.

Lucy's research explores the interplay between literature and material culture, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Her first book, *Boxes and Books in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), examines the imaginative significance of one of the most familiar of all objects, the box. Engaging with recent work on material culture, Reformation history, and book history, Lucy weaves together close readings of texts and objects, from plays, sermons, and poems, to chests, bookbindings, relics, and coffins. In tracing the box as matter and metaphor, her book reveals some of the enduring ways in which we still think about people, texts, and things.

Lucy has also published essays and journal articles on material culture and material texts in the early modern period, on subjects including relics, emblems, and print culture. Her overall research interests include: material texts; history of the book; material culture; textiles history; theology and religion; discard studies; and environmental humanities.

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Mary Robinson is a Research Associate in Language Variation in Change at Newcastle University, working with Professor Karen P. Corrigan on the project "*Múin Béarla do na Leanbháin*" *'Teach the Children English': Migration as a Prism for Viewing Ethnolinguistic Vitality in Northern Ireland*. Mary earned her doctorate in Linguistics from New York University in 2022. Her PhD thesis, entitled *Negative concord as a window into social perception of morphological and syntactic variables*, examined the social meanings that are attached to the use of double negatives, such as *I didn't see nothing*. Her broad research interests include examining how we judge others (or don't!) based on their grammar use in conversation, as well as how children learn both the linguistic and social aspects of language use.

Dr Gareth Robinson



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Gareth is a researcher at Queen's University Belfast with a background in education in divided societies. He originally trained as a post-primary teacher before completing a PhD that focused on a model of school collaboration in Northern Ireland called Shared Education. Having worked as an active member of the Sharing Education Programme team for some time, with research focusing on school improvement and education networks (both locally and internationally), he now leads a work strand for Queen's Communities and Place (QCAP)—a university initiative that is directly partnered with local community organisations to address place-based inequalities. His current research interests are motivated by supporting the needs of local working-class communities to ensure that they can adapt and thrive in future economic realities. This involves project work exploring the transformative potential of education for urban communities: education and urban futures, development of community-based intellectual assets, and school-community partnerships.

Dr Shilpi Srivastava



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Shilpi is a Research Fellow based with the Resource Politics and Environmental Change Cluster at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UK. She is also an affiliate member of the Health and Nutrition Cluster at the Institute. A political sociologist with interdisciplinary training in political science, law and governance, and development studies, Shilpi has worked extensively on the cultural politics of water and climate change. She draws on qualitative and participatory methods to explore the everyday encounters of marginalised communities with the changing climate as they intersect with wider issues in political economy and institutional politics. She is currently involved with projects related to uncertainty, climate change and transformation in India and Bangladesh and off-grid sanitation in the global South. She is leading a project on disaster preparedness and decision-making under radical climatic uncertainty. Shilpi is the series co-editor of the Palgrave Pivot series on Global Challenges in Water Governance.

Dr Antonia Thomas



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Dr Antonia Thomas is the Programme Leader for the MA Contemporary Art and Archaeology, and Lecturer in Archaeology, based at Orkney College, part of the University of the Highlands and Islands. She is also currently a Co-Investigator on the RSE-funded

International Network for Contemporary Archaeology in Scotland (INCAScot) and a Trustee of the Orkney Natural History Society (Stromness Museum). Antonia's interdisciplinary teaching and research focus on the relationship between Art and Archaeology, using these as reference points from which to explore wider creative engagements - across and beyond a range of different disciplines. She has particular interests in the materiality of stone, mark-making, photography, and marine plastic, all of which provide starting points for the investigation of surface, depth, and time.

She is keen to develop further inter- and transdisciplinary collaborations through this symposium, particularly those which respond to the complexity of the contemporary world and the unprecedented environmental and social crises we face both now, and into the future.

Dr Lexi Webster



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Lexi is the Deputy Director of Digital Humanities at the University of Southampton. Her research has primarily relied on a combination of corpus linguistics, socio-cognitive discourse studies, and cultural political economy to examine antagonistic discourses in online spaces. Thus far, this research has focused mostly on discourses of gender and sexuality on Twitter, but she has also published and given invited talks on such topics as ideological segregation and the regulation of morality in online communication. More recently, Lexi has collaborated with colleagues from psychology and linguistics to examine the role of cognition and emotions in remembering, experiencing, and imagining futures in relation to the UK Covid-19 lockdowns. She is also working on a project that explores the language and legacy of subcultures of the last fifty years, examining the relationship between cultural journalism and political-economic currents, including how they relate to both memories and myths of the near past. As such, Lexi's work has consistently tangled with boundaries and boundarilessness – between online and offline worlds; between myth and memory; between past, present, and imagined future.

Participant abstracts

Dr Daniel Abdalla

Melting icecaps, rising sea levels, extreme temperatures -- in the present day, we are accustomed to thinking about the Arctic and Antarctica as key to many discussions about the future of life on Earth. But this region's role as a privileged bellwether is not limited to our contemporary moment of climate crisis: it stretches backward to the turn of the last century and long before that. My current research considers the long engagement with the polar regions by modern dramatists who have (perhaps surprisingly) regularly turned to these landscapes in their works in order to question the possible futures of humanity. My contribution to the symposium will use this knowledge to consider the particular uses of theatre and performance for thinking about the future.

Recent dramatic engagements with the North and South Poles--for example, Chantel Bildeou's *Arctic Cycle Plays* (2014) written in the light of work with "Climate Change Theatre Action" and *Greenland at the National Theatre* (2011)--have explicitly engaged with climate change and the future. But dramatic engagement with "polar futures" even informs the avalanches of snow immersing characters in the works of nineteenth-century Henrik Ibsen; Harper Pitt's hallucinatory visit to Antarctica in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* (1993); and the recent work of Mojisola Adebayo who has written (alongside the Antarctic Collective) *Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey* (2006), a re-telling of the fleeing slave Ellen Craft's escape that imagines her journey taking her as far as the South Pole. Alongside these works, I am also interested in more troubling aspects of theatrical engagement with the Arctic: anthropological "shows" featuring Polar Inuit peoples, especially the well-known exhibit from the turn of last century that showcased individuals brought by Arctic Explorer Robert Peary as "specimens" for the American Museum of Natural History.

Drawing on these and other works, as well as insights from the fields of Environmental Humanities and Theatre and Science, my contribution will consider the role of Arctic/Antarctic Futures Activism more generally. Some of the questions that I am interested in exploring include: How effectively do contemporary organizations such as the Antarctic Artists and Writers Collective engage with drama? Do plays about these difficult-to-reach locales succeed in stoking activism for saving the future of humanity, or, instead, do they support new, Earth-destroying forms of tourism? How can we use drama to secure a future for groups that have long called the Arctic home?

Recently, Martin Puchner has commented that literary scholars can effectively respond to the present climate crisis by not only focusing on literature's representation, but also its material conditions. This view is particularly well suited to drama, where ideas about the environment are not simply a topical reference deployed on stage, but aesthetic engagements which shape elements such as set design, costuming, and venue. Given the prominence of the Polar regions, understanding how and why they continue to inspire a diverse group theatre-makers and audiences is urgent for understanding how the humanities can secure a better future.

Dr Carla Almanza-Gálvez

The role of ecovillages as sustainable communities of the future appears as a unique example in a constantly evolving world where climate change and the post-pandemic future are forcing us to reassess the impact of urban life on the environment. These intentional eco-communities seek to implement community-led responses that can address the vision of a low-carbon future.

Although I have studied the interrelation of community life and environmental crisis in Irish ecovillages, my research primarily engages with contemporary forms of utopian thought and practice observable in initiatives occurring in the indigenous communities of Latin America. A significant aspect in this respect is the magnitude of indigenous influences on the philosophy of the ecovillage movement globally, especially in Ireland. Latin American proposals such as Buen Vivir [Good Living] promote a cultural model of life in which social equality and justice are pursued by means of a harmonious relationship between humanity and nature. The concept of Buen Vivir – which is believed to have its origin in a literary novel by Peruvian writer and anthropologist José María Arguedas – emerges as a response to previous attempts to transform Latin American reality from a foreign and invasive Western perspective.

Within a framework ranging from imperial utopian visions to utopian projects marked by colonial oppression and domination (projects readable as ambivalent acts of resistance and survival), the American continent has served problematically as a utopian scenario or laboratory representing the possibility to European minds of a renewed form of ‘civilisation’, grounded more authentically in the ideal self-imaginings of the colonising culture. Latin America was regarded as the perfect space to rewrite and expand the history of a ‘civilised’ humanity. Given that the creation of imagined societies has traditionally been male-dominated, special attention should be paid to the roles assigned to women in the depiction of imaginary spaces, and more broadly to the question of gendered differences in the utopian imaginings under consideration.

Latin America continues to be a strategic region where utopian movements and experiments are carried out in planning for the future. However, the utopian imagination has ceased to assign to the region the role of receiver of projections or supplement to a Eurocentric set of preoccupations. The social philosophy of Buen Vivir has redefined the role of Latin America from being a passive object of experimentation to that of an active agent producing its own vision of development and socio-economic models, which could also have significant value for political and environmental crises in Europe. In the contemporary circumstances of global interdependence and planetary crisis, Latin American utopian thought and practice has contributions of value to make to the world at large. Insights and case studies can be drawn from present-day ethical and political debates in Latin America about Buen Vivir and its potential for improving the development of the Andean countries, but also of the ‘developing’ and ‘developed’ worlds.

Dr Matthew Barnfield

Speaking at the 2020 Democratic Convention, then presidential hopeful Joe Biden described the upcoming election as one that would ‘determine America’s future for a very long time’. America, he said, must be ‘united in our dreams of a better future for us and for our children’. When running for office, this is ultimately what all politicians try to convincingly offer to the electorate: a better future. Citizens must grasp the potential future paths that politics could take and choose which road to go down. The obvious question this raises is one that political psychology has yet to answer: how do people think about the political future? To understand democracy, we need to understand these beliefs. I am beginning a project that will offer the first systematic treatment of how people think about the political future, what shapes and moulds these thoughts, and how they affect the political choices citizens make.

This question matters because the future guides what we do right now, in the present, in our personal as well as our political lives. It is also a salient question across the social sciences, beyond political psychology. For example, normative theorists care about how citizens understand what is possible in politics, and international relations has recently taken a so-called ‘temporal turn’ towards critical engagement with notions of past, present, and future. My focus on cognitive processes, decision-making, and the possibility of predicting the future also speaks to contemporary debates in psychology, economics, and analytic philosophy.

This broader research agenda will build on my doctoral research, which studied how voters are affected by polls and election forecasts – tools that help them predict the future. It focused primarily on the ‘bandwagon effect’ – the idea that people will vote for candidates or parties because they look likely to win an upcoming election. Concretely, this effect matters because the regulation of opinion polls, campaign strategy and election forecasting all hinge on the question of whether and how this kind of information about the future affects voters. My thesis won the Political Studies Association’s 2022 McDougall Trust Prize for elections, electoral systems and representation. I have also published work in *Political Studies Review* and *Perspectives on Politics* substantially advancing the understanding of concepts and methods employed in research in this area.

In my early postdoctoral work, I have continued to study how citizens think about future election results, particularly focusing on how polls and forecasts shape these expectations. For example, I am preparing number of solo- and co-authored papers demonstrating that people interpret improvements in a party’s polling as signals of ‘momentum’ that considerably raise their expectations about a party’s chances of winning, that exposure to election forecasts can cause voters to dramatically overstate the chances of leading parties, that expectations of which governing coalitions will be formed are shaped in large part by which coalitions voters want to see formed – even when they know the result of the election – and that over-optimistic expectations cause voters to reject disappointing election outcomes.

Dr Rahmin Bender-Salazar

Futurism, future thinking, and every exercise and strategy in looking forward in our collective society must contend with the impacts and intersecting challenges of social justice, climate change, and technology as they impact our socio-ecological systems in the decades to come. But what does that mean, and what are the myriad of outcomes? Who is involved? A question is a seemingly simple construct in which we explore, challenge, and learn about our collective reality. Questions spark curiosity, fear, bravery, and will for change. Questions are the mode of discovery for my initial contribution to explore and imagine futures with relevant groups, individuals, concepts, and practice.

The future and exploring possibilities with multidisciplinary researchers, practitioners, students, teachers, and stakeholders is the focus of my initial contribution. This exploration is centered on two major intertwined issues that are impacting social and ecological systems, specifically exploring inequality and injustice dimensions within our approaches to economic growth and climate change mitigation. Our approaches to these two intertwined issues, the decisions we make as organizations, and our individual actions will shape our collective future. I wish to explore how to bridge research, theory, practice, and lived experience to create a scaffolding in which to build systems-oriented solutions to these wicked problems. These intersecting topics involve a myriad of actors and topics, and my initial contribution seeks to specifically connect research and practice to explore sustainable and equitable futures that address the wicked problems that impact our social and ecological systems. I wish to explore the role of justice and equality when addressing the multi-pronged socio-ecological systems that are impacting and are impacted by climate change and economic growth.

How will we create a space to learn and explore the necessary concepts for this exploration? At the University of Limerick, Kemmy Business School, we have embarked on an exploratory journey into systems change and shaping our collective future with a suite of research and academic programs. Specifically, the Digital Futures Lab graduate course working with local partners, the Digital Future and Innovation Postgraduate Certificate that can be used in place of a thesis, and the Erasmus+ EU Lab on place-based mission-led futures labs. Each program is studio-based learning, learner-led, and focused on building systems change orientation, design thinking capabilities, and team projects tasked with addressing an identified wicked problem. This suite of programs at the University of Limerick are complementary and provide a versatile multi-purpose space with three distinct outcomes that would link well with my initial contribution to the theme of "the future." First, the programs provide an opportunity for research in the techniques, learning, and challenges of conducting a program oriented towards multidisciplinary praxis and addressing wicked problems. Second, the thematic scope and programs are opportunities for further research studies and partnerships to deepen knowledge across academic disciplines, countries, and professional domains. Third, having education and research programs established is an opportunity for learning with students, industry, and academia and creating a new space where all three can explore the challenges of the future.

Dr Sarah Bezan

My research mainly focuses on the narratives and visual cultures of de-extinction science: the work of resurrecting extinct species through synthetic biology, gene editing, and reproductive technologies. By its very nature, this work is future-oriented. While there have been some previous attempts to resurrect extinct species, the prospect of bringing back species like the woolly mammoth is something that awaits us in the coming years.

In exploring the speculative futures of extinct animals, I argue that authors and artists are creating the space necessary to negotiate the complex moral and ethical terrain of species revival that lies ahead. This analysis is grounded in two main areas: 1) a critique of the sexual and gendered dimensions of reproducing extinct species; and 2) a critique of cryoconservation, or the conservation preservation techniques that are freezing endangered/extinct species now for an unknown future.

1) **The Sexual and Gendered Dimensions of Reproducing Extinct Species:** In this research strand, I focus on how de-extinction scientists (who are overwhelmingly male, white and Western) sidestep the moral and ethical complexities of using artificial wombs and surrogates in order to reproduce extinct species. How, for instance, does one parent a woolly mammoth? Can revived extinct species create kinships and families? This research strand draws on ecofeminist theory to open up important questions in the de-extinction debate.

2) **Cryoconservation and Freezing Endangered/Extinct Species Now for an Unknown Future:** In this research strand, I investigate the political dimensions of cryoconservation: the process of freezing biological tissues of endangered/extinct species for future use. Part of this project is tracing the literary and cultural history of time capsules, which have both time-dated and indefinite deposit dates that aim to capture a certain moment in time for the benefit of those living in an uncertain and unknowable future. I argue that in the face of a rising number of ecological crises (from climate change to plummeting rates of biodiversity loss), the time capsule has become an intensified and power-driven programme of "capture" that seeks to lock in, and attempt to stave off, the ever-accelerating effects of human activity. The Frozen Ark based in the UK is one of a number of cryoconservation facilities that play with temporalities of extinction, in turn inviting a critique of the politics of these frozen futures.

Through these research strands, my work combines approaches from critical time studies (Michelle Bastian), extinction studies (David Farrier, Thom van Dooren, Ursula Heise), Anthropocene studies (Richard Grusin) and ecofeminism (Carol Adams) to think about how we are shaping the futures of endangered and extinct animals in the age of the Anthropocene.

Dr Hannah Boast

One of the most urgent issues of our environmental future will be water: whether we have too much, or not enough. Climate change is often registered through changes to water, in the increased frequency of extreme weather events like floods or droughts. Today's intensifying environmental crisis threatens safe access to clean water through water pollution, whether in the process of resource extraction or through the effluent of animal industries, which ultimately makes its way into our water supply. Water is often proposed as a means of mitigating climate crisis, in the form of hydropower or tidal energy. Yet dams in particular pose many challenges as a source of 'clean' energy and come with serious social harms in the form of dam-induced displacement. Water's role in a just transition will be a crucial question for the future.

The UK and Ireland are commonly thought of as wet countries, yet the long, hot summer of 2022 showed that neither are immune to the risks of drought. Both face the risks of animal agriculture on the supply of fresh water: the River Boyne in Ireland is threatened by abattoir wastewater, while the Wye in Wales has been heavily contaminated by effluent from free-range egg farms. As temperatures rose in 2022, citizens in both countries sought relief in swimming, only to find beaches contaminated by untreated wastewater. Both countries have seen recent contestations over privatisation. In Ireland, the Right2Water protests of 2014-15 successfully resisted proposed privatisation. In the UK, dissatisfaction with water pollution incidents amid spiralling water company profits has led to unprecedented pushback against the 1989 privatisation of the UK's water supply. Both countries face the threat of too much water, with their capital cities London and Dublin and many coastal areas at risk from rising sea levels. Examining the water pasts and presents of the UK and Ireland together offers invaluable insights into our water futures.

Contemporary world literature has much to tell us about our relationships with water, and its manifold cultural, economic, political, religious and social meanings. I have explored these issues in my monograph *Hydrofictions: Water, Power and Politics in Israeli and Palestinian Literature* (Edinburgh University Press, 2020) and in my current monograph project, *Water Crisis and World Literature*. Key concerns in my work are environmental justice and the impacts of our use of water on other water-dependent life. This includes my extensive experience of teaching twenty-first century literature, literary theory, and environmental writing, most importantly in my module *Resources, Environment and Climate*. In my work on the future of water, I show that literature does not merely reflect water crisis, but plays a vital role in imagining a way out of it. It can help us to see scarcity not as 'natural', but as the product of political decisions to prioritise certain communities over others. What is more, literature offers imaginative resources that can inspire us to purposefully reshape our world so we can live with water more sustainably and more justly in a shared future.

Dr Iker Erdocia

My contribution is based on the conviction that the future of democracy at a time of digital disruption and crisis of liberalism lies in promoting participatory citizenship. It draws on my academic interest and research experience in analysing the interplay between language and participation (e.g. Erdocia 2020, 2022), an interdisciplinary topic that has been insufficiently researched but has the potential to transform our understanding of public engagement. I aim to share my linguistic expertise with researchers in other fields and, ultimately, provide an important layer to the conversation on the future of principles such as equality and inclusivity. This project can result in scholarly publications and research-based reports with policy recommendations.

Participatory approaches to problem-solving and decision-making are on the rise. Such processes are traditionally adopted at the local and national levels (e.g. Irish Citizens' Assembly). In many of these forums, deliberation is conducted in one common language. Influenced by these long-established monolingual practices in Western states, some political philosophers (e.g. Kymlicka 2001) argue that democratic deliberation can only take place in the vernacular language. However, the experience of the European Union and other multilingual contexts proves that deliberation in multiple languages is not only possible but also desirable.

Participatory initiatives are being adopted by supranational organisations (e.g. European Citizens' Panels) and even globally (e.g. Global Citizens' Assembly). Active citizenship may well shape our understanding of democratic life in the future. This is partly because digital technologies facilitate multilingual communication and contribute to creating public space for multinational citizen deliberation.

The relevance of using a language lens to examine participation can be illustrated with the example of the 2021 Global Citizens' Assembly on the Climate and Ecological Crisis. This world's first global citizens' assembly adopted a multilingual approach to deliberation at the local level. However, English was the language used for all deliberations in the Core Assembly and fluency in English was one of the eligibility criteria for assembly members. The Report of the Global Assembly (2022: 174) notes that “the use of English as the ‘exchange language’ throughout the Core Assembly likely reinforced pre-existing inequalities, as English language speakers had more direct access to information materials and dialogue”.

Participation in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts may, therefore, give rise to language-related challenges not found in contexts with one single national language. This is particularly the case for non-institutionalised forms of political participation or when resources for human translation are limited.

Drawing on this case and other forms of online political participation, I aim to engage with other Ireland and UK-based researchers in the social sciences to understand and overcome potential linguistic and cultural barriers to citizens' participation in democratic life. For instance, factors such as citizens' socioeconomic background, educational attainment, literacy level, and having English or the language used in deliberation as an additional language may pose a challenge to the principle of participatory equality for deliberative democracy. I firmly believe I can contribute fruitfully to co-creating knowledge on the future of political engagement and, more generally, democratic life.

Dr Rosie Everett

The future of ecosystem restoration requires the integration of cultural arts and heritage with scientific data and presents as a critically undervalued resource for public engagement. As part of the United Nations 'Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030' (United Nations General Assembly, 2019), peatland environments have been formally recognised as a key tool for net carbon sink but has failed to engage with the rich cultural arts and heritage that associated with peatland environments, as means to engage with peatland restoration at a community level.

My research focusses on peatland cultural heritage and the value of integrating cultural arts and heritage for community engagement in peatland restoration programmes to ensure sustainable management for the future. At COP26 (2021), I co-hosted the first peatland cultural arts and heritage event (with Historic Environment Scotland) which highlighted the small number of individual projects that engaged with art and culture as a tool for community-level practice to improve global peatland restoration programmes. The 'Culture at COP' event was a major milestone for researchers, NGOs and government bodies to engage with the cultural arts and heritage in the conversations around peatland restoration. As part of the outputs of the Peatland Pavilion at COP26, I am a contributing author of the UNEP Policy paper, the 'Global Peatlands Assessment' (2022) and will be in attendance of COP27 to discuss my contribution of the first discussion of value of cultural arts and heritage engagement in UN peatland policy.

As it stands, the future success of community cultural arts and heritage peatland projects is currently reliant on word-of-mouth process and is reflected in lack of engagement in global networks, such as the UNEP Global Peatlands Initiative, where the primary focus is around dissemination of restoration science. As an ECR I have recognised the limitations of this research without a formalised cultural arts and heritage network and the value of engagement with multi-disciplinary arts, humanities and social science researchers around the themes of public engagement and education and I am currently actively seeking to broaden my future collaborative networks. The Knowledge Frontiers Symposium presents the opportunity for me to develop international engagement and collaboration with arts and humanities ECRs for broadening my personal research interests in peatland cultural arts and heritage. In exchange, I will contribute discussion on the future of cultural arts and heritage in the face of the climate crisis and how we, as ECRs, can harness our research culture to support community-level action for sustainable climate futures. This contribution would use case study examples of the application of cultural peatland narratives in the restoration process and how that can be used to support national and international policy.

The Knowledge Frontiers Symposium is also of great value to the development of a future peatland cultural arts and heritage network as both the UK and Ireland are engaged with peatlands restoration. Both have a rich research environment for interdisciplinary knowledge exchange in the arts and humanities sector but has yet to harness this in the discussion around sustainable climate futures.

Dr Elizabeth A. Faulkner

During times of unprecedented social change, political instability, economic crises, or perceived heightened periods of movement the perspectives and insights of humanities and social sciences researchers are of pivotal importance. Not only in relation to knowledge exchange and pedagogical practice, but in informing the development of responses to some of the great social and cultural issues of our time. I am curious about how law and policy that is implemented under the guise of protecting children can continue in willful ignorance of the detrimental impact it can have upon those it purports to protect. How best to tackle global inequalities, to tackle migration or to protect children? Through silencing and excluding children from those discussions we are potentially harming our future.

The main source of my intellectual curiosity relates to the influence and impact of the colonial era of international law and order upon contemporary legal responses to children's rights, specifically focusing upon the mobility, trafficking, and exploitation of children during the 20th and 21st centuries. The issues of race, class, patriarchy, nationalism, and white supremacy clash forming a kaleidoscope to analyse how we understand, approach, and regulate the rights of children globally both today and during the previous century. These undercurrents form a toxic cocktail, one that engulfs current perceptions upon how to approach or 'fight against' the mobility and movement of people across national borders. The issue of migration is one that has shaped our past, present and will continue to shape our future. How do we address contemporary mobility in a fair and equitable way that does not persecute vulnerable populations or try to restrict those who are perceived as vulnerable such as women and children from crossing national borders.

My pedagogical practice at both undergraduate and postgraduate level is shaped by my research and drives my course development. The law adopted to regulate and govern the lives of children creates contradictions, the law does not respond equally to all children and how to distinguish between different categories of children is one of the central themes of the undergraduate Child Law module I convene. The aim is to encourage the cohort to view the law as a mechanism that both protects and restricts access to rights, justice, and assistance.

Dr Jade Elizabeth French

What does the future of ageing and care look like? Broadly, my research is interested in examining how twentieth-century literature and visual art can inform our future thinking on ageing, care, and intergenerational relationships. I am interested in how creative methods – drawn from literary studies and social sciences – can help us understand and learn from emotional attitudes and late-life creativity in the past.

I am currently developing a new project ‘Emotion and the Care Home in Post-War British Literature’, which explores conflicting feelings of hope and fear attached to care homes, care and ageing in a critical moment of social, medical, and political change. I am interested in how authors and audiences in the past imagined what the future of care might look like: particularly considering statutory intervention promised care ‘from the cradle to the grave’. At a time when care is in crisis, I will contribute by questioning if past representations can help us to map new paths forward and exploring how the role of interdependence, community, and kinship can be centred.

As a research associate on the ESRC-funded project ‘Reimagining the Future in Older Age’, I was part of a team examining how the relationship between older age and future time is socially constructed. The project explores the potential for utopian thinking and arts-based methods to understand what participants desire – not just require – as they age. I developed a toolkit and practical guidance for policymakers on addressing these desires in the real world. Here, creative interventions were a crucial part of the project.

In all my research, I am committed to thinking with public audiences about the real-world implications of the future of care and ageing. Recently, as an invited panel host on ‘Posthuman Care’, I interviewed experts on how to humanise digital futures, facilitating a conversation on the emotions and ethics relating to robotic care, AI and home-help technologies. My research on posthumanism informed my teaching on Queen Mary’s ‘Contemporary’ MA, and I have also drawn on my background in ‘utopian methods’ teaching on Loughborough University’s third-year course ‘Better Worlds: Utopian and Dystopian Texts & Contexts’.

In light of these research interests and teaching experience, my contribution to the theme of ‘the future’ will be to share examples of creative interventions in literary, social and policy discussions, to think about how communities in the twentieth century have felt about the changes made to health and care, and to ultimately discuss who should get to invest in our futures.

Dr Stuart Henderson

In recent years, there has been a fundamental change in the underlying socio-economic nexus that underpins societal norms across Ireland and the United Kingdom. The UK's exit from the European Union represented a seismic divergence in the common values-and-rules-based structure that prevailed via EU membership, and has resulted in a deterioration in Anglo-Irish relations and enduring difficulty in finding a "settled" status. However, recent years have also brought to the fore many common challenges for both the UK and Ireland such as the Covid-pandemic, the cost of living crisis, the climate crisis and stagnant economic growth. Arguably, these common "grand challenges" present the opportunity to work collaboratively (across disciplines and national borders) to build a better future for the people living across our islands. Such a collaborative effort will also enable an improvement in Anglo-Irish relations and further the strong cultural bonds that connect our various populations. In terms of the symposium theme, I am able to contribute perspectives and expertise on all-island Irish development and society, with particular interests in economic history, rural/agricultural development, religion, and household finance. The following are the specific areas that I am interested in:

- (1) Rural development - research to understand the sustainability of farming in marginal areas, small farms and the innovative potential of rural communities. I am currently involved in projects related to generational renewal (a cross-border perspective) and sustainable farming in the hills and uplands in Northern Ireland.
- (2) Religious history - research to understand the long-run impacts of religious beliefs and affiliation in society. I am currently working on a project about pre-Famine religious structure and practice in Ireland, and for my PhD examined the significance of religion in Irish and Dutch development. Looking to the future, the current secularization of society raises important questions about the modern role of religion in cultural identity, community heritage, social cohesion and well-being.
- (3) Lessons from history - research to compare and contrast modern and historical experiences. My PhD and main publications are associated with economic history. From my teaching (in economics and finance), it is clear that the past provides important lessons for the present and future (e.g. forgotten lessons about historical financial crises before the 2008 crisis). There is also scope to learn from the post-pandemic experience of historical societies and how this contrasts with the current Covid transition.
- (4) Household finance - research to understand how finance can fulfil a social purpose while remaining sustainable. I have published several articles about historical microfinance institutions, their evolution and performance. I am particularly interested in how small-scale financial institutions can enhance local financial inclusion and fulfil local credit needs.

Dr Sarah Jasim

I have worked on a variety of research projects, spanning different disciplines, that have informed and contributed to the theme of ‘the Future’ – especially in the contexts of the ageing population, and the impacts on health and social care. I am currently one of two Policy Fellows embedded at The City Intelligence Unit, Greater London Authority (GLA) since March 2023. I have been developing a dedicated knowledge brokerage function within the GLA to build knowledge networks between the London Government (GLA, London Councils and London Boroughs) policy makers and academic researchers in London and beyond, bringing together communities of practice to address future challenges to respond to social, cultural, environmental, and technological change. Through this work I have been engaging closely with the London Research and Policy Partnership (LRaPP). This knowledge brokerage function is essential for London, and beyond (the UK and international communities) as it aims to bring researchers, policymakers, and communities together to support evidence-based policy development.

My current roles mean I am embedded within the Greater London Authority, and leading universities (London School of Economics & Political Science, University College London, Imperial College London, and King’s College London), which could support the co-creation of a knowledge base to address these challenges during the Symposium. As my CV demonstrates, I have gained strong expertise and experience in using mixed research methods and findings to inform and contribute towards the theme of ‘the Future’ as well as integrating multiple types of evidence in decision-making, working in multiple academic and non-academic environments. I have collaborated with service users to co-design study components and collect data as well as testing the acceptability of different components of evaluations. This would enable me to lead collaborative research involving multiple stakeholders, as well as lead on data collection through interviews, surveys and other qualitative or quantitative methods. My key expertise is in evaluation, I ensure it is integrated across project components and delivery for continuous learning.

I have been involved in organising several early-career researcher seminars at UCL, my research group (the National Institute of Health and Care Research Applied Research Collaboration North Thames), and Imperial College London, as well as large meetings and conferences to champion social causes, including TEDxUCLWomen (November 2017), and Shaping PostDoc Culture: Second National Postdoc Meeting (September 2019). For the latter, I delivered the welcome plenary to over 300 attendees, and over 100 remote delegates, and contributed to capturing and sharing widely lessons learned with the wider academic community – which later developed into a collaboration of UK-wide early career researchers. Being experienced with organising large-scale cross-disciplinary events would help me to organise and facilitate collaborative events and other activities following the Symposium.

As such, I believe my skills are an excellent fit with the requirements of the purpose and focus of this ECR Symposium as I possess the relevant experience and existing relationships within both academic and local partner organisations to be able to actively contribute to the Symposium sessions.

Dr Florian G. Kern

My research speaks to the theme of past futures in addition to that of co-designing and co-producing knowledge in the future: Published in leading outlets, on the one hand, my work has focused prominently on the lasting, "sticky" effect of past institutions on the present political landscape, with a particular focus on customs and customary institutions in the developing world (Africa). On the other hand, more recently, I have focused on providing new methodological pathways to improve the value of qualitative insights across disciplines, with highly cited articles published in interdisciplinary outlets, e.g., focusing on the secondary analysis of qualitative data (*Comparative Political Studies*, 2022), pre-registration of qualitative work (*International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2020), or triangulation (*Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 2018). The latter research stream of my work is where I see my strongest potential contribution to a group of scholars aiming to understand the future of scholarly endeavours given technological change, and what role qualitative insights can play if they make transparent use of the new technological tools available to the researcher. Issue of production transparency and analytical transparency, data archiving, and multi-method evidence will be part and parcel of scholarship in the future -- if only to make insights available to future generations -- and understanding how qualitative insights can be combined with "big data, large-scale humanities infrastructures, immersive technologies and digital heritage" across disciplines will guide my own future research in this realm.

Dr Thomas Leahy

My research and teaching focus on the Northern Ireland conflict/peace process, the constitutional future of the island of Ireland, and British-Irish-Northern Irish relations. The symposium will enable me to build new networks/grants that study the past and contemporary politics to help plan for the political future on the island of Ireland, UK and internationally.

I am currently investigating how the Irish Government deals with Northern Ireland conflict legacy. The research includes interviewing former UK/Ireland security personnel, former Taoiseach and politicians north/south of Ireland and in the UK, alongside victims/survivor groups. I want to create new networks with scholars who work on Northern Ireland conflict legacy and legacy in other international contexts at the symposium. Together, we can consider how future academic research and impact work may help guide Northern Ireland and other international scenarios through conflict legacy.

The symposium will also offer opportunities to build Irish-UK and international networks to enable me to put my other Irish/UK case studies in a wider international context. I am also working towards producing a book on Sinn Féin since 1969, the Irish Republican party who are the leading electoral party in Northern Ireland since May 2022, and whom poll first in polls for the next Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament) election. My other research project is with colleagues Dr Kirkup (Cardiff) and Dr Fahey (Nottingham University). We are researching the impact of MPs and TDs from parties who also take seats in Northern Ireland's Assembly (Sinn Féin, Social Democratic and Labour Party, Ulster Unionist Party, Democratic Unionist Party, Alliance Party) on UK Westminster and Irish Dublin politics and governments since devolution emerged in Northern Ireland from 1999.

This symposium will facilitate me in creating broader networks to internationalise my island of Ireland historical/political research on key themes including: Northern Ireland's and UK's political future; how political organizations formerly linked to armed groups transition to democracy; and comparing how separatist parties elsewhere in other nation-state parliaments act compared to the situation of political representatives of parties in and abouts Northern Ireland as MPs and TDs (such as the Basque and Catalan nationalists in the Spanish Parliament).

Building these new networks on these key themes will enable me to study key questions for the future by looking at mixed methods too. I primarily use qualitative research via interviews/archives for my work. But I am interested in working with data scientists such as I am doing in my project on MPs/TDs from or linked to Northern Ireland with Dr Fahey. Considering multiple ways of studying the key questions/themes outlined will help me showcase the significance of my Irish/Northern Irish case studies to our international understandings of UK-Irish relations, European-UK relations, transitioning groups from armed campaigns/terrorism to democratic political participation, and how separatist parties act in national parliaments that they ultimately want to leave. These are all key questions related to our future across these isles and beyond.

Dr Hannah Little

Many events in the past few years, including increased awareness of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, have highlighted the importance of trust in science and the need for effective science communication. My research investigates science communication as it relates to language, human cognitive biases and digital media. Recently, I have completed work looking at innovative methods for science communication, such as escape rooms, and have conducted an evaluation on the future of the Royal Institution's Christmas Lectures, looking at how they can shift their activities to be suitable for future audiences as our media landscape is changing.

In the field of science communication, I am currently especially interested in the use of storytelling. I have started work funded by the British Academy which uses methods from cultural evolution to look at how stories about science are passed on and remembered, to try and model best practice for language-use and framing in science communication. I am also working on projects that use speculative fiction as a tool for imagining and understanding science, especially in future contexts. I am currently undertaking work that trains science fiction authors on a specific academic topic, and using their stories to generate hypotheses that can be empirically tested, and I have recently received funding from the Science and Literature Hub at Liverpool to produce a new podcast series on how fiction can be used as a tool for science communication.

Another key aspect of my work, and of our future society, relates to public understanding of governance and rights around the use of our online activity and data. I have completed public perceptions work on digital data collection in relation to robotics and smart cities as part of the EU Horizon 2020 project, SciRoc, and also worked on similar themes with Drag*n (Data Research, Access, Governance Network) at UWE Bristol. I was recently a Data Fellow at the South West Creative Technology Network working on methods for audience mapping work for data rights advocacy, looking at how an audience's pre-existing values and priorities can shape communications without unethical micro-targeting. I hope to expand this work in collaboration with Open Rights Groups, who I currently work with as one of their Board of Directors. At my new position at the University of Liverpool, I am due to start designing and teaching materials as part of a new BA in Media, Data and Society, where I will teach content on governance of the internet, how algorithms shape our media and case studies on data discrimination.

Together, my interdisciplinary expertise forms a foundation of knowledge that allows me to make connections between questions at the core of our future society and the disciplines of science communication, linguistics and digital policy. I see an enormous value in investigating how identities and values interface with how populations receive, understand and perceive knowledge relevant to our future, and hope that this symposium can help me connect with people who can provide me with new perspectives.

Dr Richard Longman

Our future is mediated by the ever-changing nature of life online. The pandemic has accelerated an “online turn” and scholars of society and organisation are starting to turn their attention to its implications for knowledge (re-)production. Expanding this field of enquiry has huge significance for the health of democratic society. Key to addressing the implications of life online, and at the heart of my contribution to the theme, is (i) the development of understanding about how people consume information online, and (ii) how people make sense of associated truth claims. The rapidly-changing nature of the online world makes it ever-harder to predict a future and/or pre-empt future societal needs; thus, an interdisciplinary approach to knowledge (re-)production about knowledge (re-)production is of paramount importance.

This is an important contribution because, amidst a maelstrom of misinformation and disinformation, organisations promoting critical thinking and fact-checking will need to fight harder than ever to be heard. A product of the democratisation of knowledge, which was once a proud boast of the World Wide Web, our experience of life online is mediated itself by technologies and is subject to informational abundance (e.g. news, narratives, opinions). Informational abundance benefits from short-termism (Oxford Internet Institute, 2021) and while reporting on disinformation has increased (Briant, 2021) little, if any, progress has been made towards establishing common standards for finding, exposing, and countering misinformation and misleading claims.

A number of organisations (e.g., FaktaBarri, Full Fact, Trolls In Your Feed) advance innovative approaches to information literacy, though truth continues to be determined by whoever has the power to define reality (Wagner, 2020). Today, everything from elections, environmental crises, and the invasion of Ukraine have become battlegrounds for contested truth claims. Exacerbating this are events such as the acquisition of Twitter by Elon Musk and the rise of Truth Social under the control of Donald Trump. Indeed, post-truth has become one of the most frequently used memes of our time (Foroughi et al., 2019) and the prevalence of ‘alternative facts’ (Madrigal, 2017), ‘epistemic bubbles’, and ‘echo chambers’ (Nguyen, 2020) signal that this field of enquiry is critical to the survival of the planet.

My research expertise is grounded in qualitative work: specifically, netnography (e.g., researching online organisations). This was developed throughout my doctoral studies (“Organising for alterity”, 2016-2019) during which time my work on e-fieldnotes was recognised internationally (2018, prize winner at Ethnography Symposium, Copenhagen). And, in subsequent projects - including “Organising Truth” - which explored the relationship between the “digital natives” I teach in university and critical thinking about information from online sources.

Understanding the classroom as a space with radically transformative potential, I have worked with GenX/GenZ/Millennial cohorts to advance an analytical method (derived from work by the freelance writer, Mic Wright) to deconstruct front pages of newspapers to reveal different levels of attentional focus between fact, briefing, opinion, and sensationalism. This has opened up conversations between students about the nature of knowledge (re-) production and how this impacts them and the choices they make.

Dr Carol Maddock

The world faces enormous challenges regarding the achievement of climate change targets, sustainable development and environmental management. Future progress requires profound changes around transitions. Active participation of all those involved and impacted is a pre-requisite for success; including action from civil society, science, business and Government. Over reliance on technological fixes and market solutions where the existing 'knowledge politics' sits can ignore issues of justice. We must develop inclusive and innovative responses to co-design the future. My research trajectory including research design, methodological approaches, practical expertise and experience of interdisciplinary research make me ideally suited to contribute fully to this symposium. I have the desired commitment, research interests and skills that alongside others with complementary skills and passion could transform idea developments into transformative realities. I am committed to public participation in all aspects of the research process and have many years of experience in developing and improving mechanisms of doing so.

Currently working on two interdisciplinary research projects:

- SUNRISE an international collaboration (EPSRC/GCRF funded) leading the social science mixed methods research with colleagues from the Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) India to understand wellbeing impacts following the construction of a solar building in a rural village, additionally as PI (BA/Leverhulme)
- I am evaluating the project from the perspective of a diverse group of the villagers using a participatory video methodology
- CoI on Understanding Older people's Perspectives and Imaginaries of Climate change (OPTIC): emplaced creativity to improve environments for healthy ageing (UKRI). This explores climate change perceptions, imaginaries and behaviours using a qualitative, creative approach involving intergenerational dialogue. It investigates older and younger peoples' relationships with climate change and the key issues and opportunities of an ageing population while contributing to more sustainable futures via expertise and knowledge exchange during creative workshops. Recently with the Active Building Centre (ABC) - research programme, I designed and delivered the research alongside the senior RO. We used a mixed method longitudinal study to understand impacts of Active Builds/retrofit measures on older people and their motivations/decision-making processes around moving/agreeing to retrofit. We worked with older people (via an expert panel and advisory board) to enhance the research approach with a view to scaling up similar future activities.

Such projects recognise successful realisation of new design needs to consider not only technical and economic factors but human, historical and cultural contexts where new technologies are introduced. SUNRISE introduced me to a longstanding and evolving global transdisciplinary energy collaboration - winning the Times Higher International Collaboration of the Year award 2020 and the Knowledge Exchange (KE) awards 2021. I am additionally supporting a BA awarded Ecology and Creative Writing project 'Our Nature Was' led by a PhD student at Aberystwyth University. The mixed methods research focusses on how we understand nature and the environment around us. It asks what role our memories play and tell us about our local environment today and how sharing memories across generations may galvanise people to act on wildlife conservation.

Dr Danny Marks

My research over the past nine years concerns the political ecology of environmental problems, focusing on urban areas and on climate change. I am particularly concerned with ways of improving the future governance and policy outcomes for those most vulnerable to environmental risks. My PhD thesis describes the ways in which state actors, in concert with unequal socioeconomic processes, reinforced each other to create vulnerabilities to the 2011 floods in Thailand. I view floods as not only outcomes of biophysical processes, but also as products of political decisions, economic interests, and power relations. My research also discussed ways in which to reduce future risks to flooding in Thailand and beyond.

Since earning my PhD, I have been working on a larger project which studies the political ecology of environmental challenges from multiple perspectives, including transport, sea-level rise, air pollution, and drought. For example, I investigated the political ecology of traffic congestion and urban heat in Bangkok as well as the political ecology of Thailand's air pollution crisis. All of my research is future-looking. It seeks to find out the underlying drivers of various, present-day environmental challenges, explore issues of injustice and inequality, and then think of ways to address these challenges so that we have a better future. In particular, I am concerned about improving environmental justice and reducing future vulnerability of the most vulnerable. For example, the best way to make the air cleaner in Thailand in the future is to pass new citizen-driven legislation, the Thai Clean Air Act. Therefore, I have volunteered as an advisor to the sponsor of this bill, the Thai Clean Air Network, and together we have been advocating for the new law and other measures.

As another example, I recently co-authored a paper on adaptation pathways and have recently conducted research on coastal erosion using this framework. This framework looks at available future adaptation trajectories but also argues that adaptation itself is embedded within particular socio-environmental contexts (Fazey et al. 2016). Therefore, I am seeking to understand the current available pathways to marginalised groups given past adaptation legacies as well as pre-existing power structures. Then I seek to find out how to improve these pathways for marginalised groups so they will become more resilient to future climate risks.

Finally, given the centrality of climate change to my research and teaching – I teach a course on the international politics of climate change to undergraduate students, a larger question shapes all of it: what planet will we leave future generations? How can we reduce emissions in a fair way in which each country, city, and individual does their fair share? How can we reduce major climate risks, such as floods and droughts, so that the most vulnerable groups do not suffer inordinately from these impacts? I encourage my students to think about these questions in my courses.

Thus, my research and teaching are always concerned with the future and addresses problems of inequality and injustice.

Dr Ailbhe McDaid

As the contours of global migration inevitably sharpen in line with geopolitical and climate-induced crises, my research asks: what role does literature play in narrating these changes? My research and teaching philosophy is underpinned by the conviction that studying literature is a creative and generative endeavour crucial to socially-engaged, ethically-alert and globally-conscious citizenship, especially in the context of the degradation of humanitarian and ecological values. As I re-theorise my foundational research interests of migration literature and border studies in light of the intense pressures of the late-Anthropocene moment, my scholarship is increasingly concerned with how the cultural imaginary records and responds to such crises. While international migration continues to intensify through global conflict, climate breakdown and mass displacement, an urgent reconsideration of how to engage with these faultlines is imperative for engaged future scholarship. Amongst the emergent questions for literary migration studies are: how has creative cultural practice responded to pressing international and humanitarian issues in different geopolitical contexts to date? What might we learn about future possibilities through attention to historical (inter)actions? And how can the cultural imaginary respond to the specific challenges of nascent systems collapse?

These dialectics of displacement in literary practice underpin my current research. Relevant publications include: “not safe any / where any more: biopolitical poetics and Irish migration poetry”; ‘Forms of Resistance: witnessing institutional, racial and structural violence in recent Irish writing’; and “‘Dubh’: New Irish Poets’. This suite of publications represents the productive possibilities of attention to literary and aesthetic dimensions of dis- and re-location as a means of engaging with global shifts in migration practices. My research-led teaching brings an international dimension to these questions while interrogating how migration imprints itself in formal, stylistic and thematic patterns in contemporary literature; I have convened UG and MA modules on migration in 21st-century world literature that showcases these complexities.

While my foundational research interest is Irish literature, my current research pursues a global orientation to literary migration studies that recognises how geopolitical crises entrench nationalist identity politics. My current collaboration with the Centre for Global Migrations at University of Otago, New Zealand, on Writing migration at the edge of empire: soft power, hard borders, examines political, sociocultural and literary contexts of migrant incarceration practices in Ireland and New Zealand. The research involves consultation with Māori, Pasifika and international academics working on border and migration studies across Oceania, highlighting emerging models of critical interrogation into interactions between cultural practice, migration patterns and immigration policy. Similarly, my new research project, Pathologies of Violence: Inscriptions of Global Conflict in Irish Literature, 1922-present, examines the cultural reception and mediation of global conflict and immigration in Irish literature. These new projects and publications form the preparatory work for an ERC Consolidator Grant application in 2024. That project proposes to track patterns of migration and migrant reception in cultural and political practice in postcolonial and recently-independent nations, by triangulating cultural, biopolitical and economic contexts of migration theory to read soft and hard power in dialogue in the 21st-century cultural imaginary.

Dr Brenda McNally

Meeting our climate change commitments and moving to a low carbon future requires societies mobilise at an unprecedented pace and scale. This calls for innovative thinking across multiple scales from policy-making to public deliberation and citizen engagement. Despite this, climate policy is often viewed as a two-dimensional challenge involving taxes or technology while policy communications focus on awareness-raising and public understanding. However, these approaches do not adequately address climate change as a future-oriented challenge that will place major transformational demands on society. Therefore, my interest in 'the future' targets the need for radical social transformation in response to the climate and biodiversity crises. This work recognises that climate action goes beyond the direct experience of most people and as a result, requires breaking-out of our current patterns of thinking, acting and feeling in order to move beyond our current, unsustainable cultural expectations and values. To address these challenges, my research investigates the need for creative interventions to reimagine environmental futures along two lines. The first explores the cultural production and construction of post-carbon futures, and the second examines and evaluates the use of creative methods, such as co-creation approaches, to engage communities and stakeholders with future change.

I am currently developing a research project investigating how the creative industries are shaping the visions and narratives about climate action with a particular focus on the construction of post-carbon futures. Creative industries, such as advertising, are central to this cultural work as producers of the collective visions needed to respond to the climate crisis. In particular, as business responds to the twin pressures of climate policy and increasing consumer concern about climate change, advertising about carbon reduction activity in the home, in how we move and in our social life represent powerful signposts of the necessary climate action. This content warrants urgent investigation to contribute to research on the sources of information that are being used to shape collective visions of climate action and of desirable climate futures. This research aims to produce high impact practitioner guidelines on the visual representation and storytelling about post-carbon futures. It will also contribute to knowledge of how creative professionals are designing the collective visions of climate action which is crucial to national climate policy to create a just transition.

My research is also interested in the creative methods for engaging communities and stakeholders with future changes related to climate impacts and decarbonisation and how co-creation methods can be used to reimagine alternate post-carbon futures. This work involves the use of Citizen's Think-Ins, geodesign and minecraft to engage a range of communities with climate action. Most recently, I have worked with colleagues to explore the use of Minecraft to engage young people in future planning as part of a local development consultation. This work led to new insights on how young people reimagine urban spaces in light of the need to tackle climate change and highlighted their alternative imaginaries of climate futures.

Dr Devika Mehra

With an increasing engagement with the future of education, pedagogy, and lived experience of children and young people in different disciplines in the Humanities, it is the right time to investigate the directions future research in children's culture can take that have a more comprehensive public impact. My research focuses on interdisciplinary and transnational/global collaborations that support knowledge exchange between stakeholders and partners from different sectors. For example, my independent research project exploring the impact of archive centres, children's libraries, and museums on diversity in children's literature involves collaborative, participatory research with partners at Seven Stories, National Centre for the Children's Book (UK), and International Youth Library (Germany). Using the historical with the contemporary texts and archive materials, this research facilitates a discussion on how to look to an inclusive and diverse future of children's literature. Embedding inclusion, participation and engagement in research in the Humanities enable people to bridge the gap between academic scholarship and broader public outreach. With access to a wide range of technologies, new and interdisciplinary participatory research methodologies can facilitate inclusion and engagement across disciplines and enhance forward-thinking research in the humanities nationally and internationally. This is the crux of my research work in children's literature, film studies, and archival research. One of my research projects combines two interconnected strands: the importance of Black British children's literature archives and the role of young people's voices in increasing representation in children's prize culture. My areas of interest include twentieth-century middle-grade children's fiction (British, American and South Asian), Indian and global children's cinema, children's publishing in India, children's literature archives, and digital texts for children. It is informed by interdisciplinary fields, children's literature, film studies, archival research, childhood studies, book publishing, digital media and cultural studies.

During the knowledge exchange symposium, I would like to focus on integrating data analysis, digital humanities, and participatory research methodologies in children's literature scholarship. I plan to explore new modes of co-designing and co-producing knowledge in the future, such as examining how valid knowledge, knowledge associations and evidence are developed, participatory techniques, namely systemic research, collective analysis, peer research, using digital approaches are communicated and disseminated to a diverse range of audience. I particularly want to focus on using advanced digital technologies such as artificial intelligence and data analytical skills for archival research to visualise the interconnectedness of transnational collections, typology in prize catalogues, and metadata. The symposium will provide a space and an opportunity to collaborate with scholars from different disciplines and backgrounds to develop knowledge exchange and collaborative co-research partnerships. Through this peer dialogue on participation, inclusion, and engagement in research on the Humanities in today's world, I will be able to contribute to the session themes and make connections for possible future activities.

The primary outputs include a collaborative peer-reviewed article and the co-creation of a toolkit on adopting digital and participatory methodologies in the humanities and the social sciences to create a strong impact.

Dr Kasia Mika-Bresolin

The crisis has no end, and the future is bleak. Or at least, at times, it might seem like it, with the term ‘crisis’, or ‘permacrisis’, qualifying all spheres of life, scales of experience, and imaginative thought. Drawing on my interdisciplinary and collaborative work on untimely crises ((Un)timely Crises: Chronotopes and Critique, Palgrave 2021), disasters, recovery and futures (Disasters, Vulnerability, and Narratives: Writing Haiti’s Futures (Routledge 2019)), I will contribute a joint, postcolonial environmental humanities, anthropological and critical theory, perspective to the symposium’s discussion of environmental futures. Specifically, I will emphasize the importance of plurality, asynchronicity, and varying notions of ‘end’ (e.g., end of times; crisis tipping points; uses of apocalyptic tropes) for our rethinking of crisis, and futures.

My work draws from postcolonial disaster studies, environmental and medical humanities, and Caribbean and critical theory and joins humanities approaches, rooted in literary and cultural analysis (incl. literature, visual art), with creative participatory methodologies (e.g., film; IntranQu’illités, 2019) and anthropological commitment to the lived experience of communities about and with whom we write. Throughout, I centre on notions of futures, chronicity, disasters and crisis, injustice, and vulnerability as experienced, represented, and theorized. Disasters, in the Caribbean and elsewhere, have been conveniently and erroneously deemed natural. Similarly, ideas of the future and recovery have oft been limited to going back to the pre-disaster state, even if it is precisely multi-scalar vulnerability (Mika 2019) and the atmosphere of crisis (Beckett 2022) that create disasters in the first place. In response, my research and teaching (in the humanities, Caribbean studies, cultural analysis, critical theory) attend to the histories of disasters and long-term crises, challenging also homogenising notions of one, desired future or a vision of what a ‘good’ future might look like, whether in environmental or experiential terms. Instead, my theorization of hinged chronologies, slow healing, and remnant dwelling emphasises the oft contradictory explanatory frames, the divergent scales, and varied sense of how times of crises feel (e.g., in the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake) and what visions of futures they inspire. In short, the future is plural.

At the heart of this approach is my commitment to repair and renewal, an undoing, rather than a recovery of past, unjust structures. This dual emphasis on plurality and asynchronicity, underpinning my work, as well as cross-media and interdisciplinary methodology will nuance the symposium’s theorization of ‘the future’, in and through crises, directly enhancing the wider consideration of the nature of knowledge and evidence across disciplines.

Dr Mantra Mukim

I am currently working on a project titled, 'Future Sentences: Gladman, Jabès, Kolatkar and the Poetics of Planning', wherein I am drawing connections between contemporary poetry and a language of futurity and planning. As part of this project, I am bringing together a diverse range of poets such as the Black American poet Renee Gladman, the Indian modernist Arun Kolatkar, and the Egyptian-French surrealist Edmond Jabès, to think about the challenges of conceptualising a future in a language that is semantically and figuratively still rooted in the contemporary discourses. To discuss this complex relationship between language and futurity, I turn to the theories and debates around planning, especially by urban planners and activists such as Howard Ebenezer and Patrick Geddes, wherein planning is conceptualised as both a linguistic and design tool through which one writes about a future or intervenes in a dominant writing of the future. Planning, thus, becomes a radical form of writing that constantly addresses itself to a future but also confronts futures that have already been proposed or conceived within contemporary discourses.

In reading poets such as Gladman, Jabès, and Kolatkar, I argue that a new kind of poem can be found in their work, one that is founded on planning, blueprinting, fore-thinking, strategising, instead of actualisation. Their poetry employs a language of planning very differently from each other and addresses very different futures, but what remains common to their work is the significance and the centrality of planning to experiences of future. While Gladman uses her training as an architect to explore facets such as 'openness', 'shelter' and 'refuge' as future spaces, Jabès writes about the 'book' and a 'language' that will arrive in the future and how his own language is preparing the ground for this future book to arrive. Kolatkar's poetry engages with a very different poetics of planning, where his speakers are not so much planners themselves as they are occupying and contesting colonial plans for a post-colonial city. Kolatkar's speakers occupy and glitch the future that was planned by colonial developers.

Thus, this project is an attempt to set-up a dialogue between poetry, philosophy of planning, and futurity, and in process identify a mode of poetic writing that is fundamentally different, I would argue, from dominant modes of writing and conceptualising future in science-fiction or speculative writing that already situates itself in a future. The poetics of planning, instead, tackles the impossibility of situating oneself in anything but the present and yet the impossibility of not being haunted by a future.

Dr Tom O'Dea

How will we make decisions about our cities in the future?

The past decades have seen an explosion of the use of computing technologies in all areas of our lives. From our bodies, through our social networks, to the emergent formation of the global economy, our ways of knowing are increasingly dominated by the use of machine-readable data – abstracted representations that circulate untethered from the subjects to which they refer. The administration of our cities too has increasingly become subject to the regime of computation and automation – epitomised in the notion of the “smart city”. However, despite unprecedented levels of monitoring, modelling and evaluation, digital approaches have yielded limited success in addressing the challenges of environmental collapse, privatisation of common goods, housing and labour inequality, threats to social and community resilience and infrastructural inequality.

The Department of Embedded Knowledge (DoEK) is an arts-practice research project which proposes that existing knowledge structures used by cities are biased towards data, which is produced by, and reproduces, historical and current inequality across gender, socio-economic, racial and political differences, and which fail to account for the complex, tentative, subjective, embodied, contingent, communal and granular forms of knowledge through which people act and express themselves.

Through my project the Department of Embedded Knowledge I am investigating methods to include hitherto ignored forms of knowledge in the administration of contemporary societies. To do so, The Department of Embedded Knowledge proposes to create a cutting-edge research department with responsibility for Embedded Knowledge within city municipal administrations. Embedded Knowledge is the accumulation of knowledge that is embedded in our social realities. It is democratic in its production, it is generated by diverse groups and through diverse methods, it is open and inclusive of wide ranging epistemologies, it is productive and speculative rather than reactive, it creates new social formations and realities, it exposes rather than hides differences and tensions, it is provisional, tentative and contingent. The DoEK recognises each individual is a specialist in the context of the knowledge embedded in themselves, and in turn embedded in their lived reality, and recognises the specialisms of artists and art practice as tools for the creation, communication and development of Embedded Knowledge. The DoEK develops on my practice as a researcher and on my teaching practice in the National College of Art and Design which is grounded in the belief that individuals are experts in the own context. The DoEK is informed by critical pedagogical practices that simultaneously seek to rebalance the knowledge relationship of student/teacher and expert/subject.

Dr Zainab Oyetunde-Usman

The future theme highlights the need to humanise the digital future which is quite related to my research interests. I am currently leading the development of a project to enhance large-scale social science methods by analysing data from multiple smartphone surveys to provide critical methodological insights in collecting social data at high frequencies and over large spatial space.

The background to this is that there is widening awareness of global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and widening inequality, which requires urgent redress. A substantial challenge in addressing these issues is the fundamental difficulties presented in collecting social systems data at a high spatial-temporal resolution like in the natural sciences. The human social system is dynamic, however poorly interacted with other sustainability systems due to weak data methodological approaches. Approached to fill this gap has been tested in projects (<https://msds.tools/>), for example, a 'microtasks for micropayments' trial model whereby the survey application was loaded directly onto the respondents' phones, and they were trained in its use. However, the potentials of smartphone social survey methods are currently poorly developed, due to a poor understanding of its retention rates and how socioeconomic factors. Promoting big data approach in the human-social systems has the potential to solve societal and environmental anomalies, this helps to collect social data at regular time intervals and over large scales, analyse these 'big data' quickly and efficiently, and foster timely policy intervention.

Second, my research contribution fits into the environmental futures, such as the humanities and social sciences approaches to climate change. I currently lead the development of a project promoting precision breeding and precision-bred food product which is at the centre of meeting the United Kingdom Net Zero target. My research also has the potential to address consumer lay beliefs that traditional methods are more "natural" and therefore desirable. I propose to use behavioural approaches to understand underlying beliefs and behavioural constructs that may be barriers or motivations to accepting precision-bred food products and how this differs across socioeconomic groups.

The background to this is that although precision breeding has the potential to solve many global problems, its acceptance and commercialisation rely on surmounting barriers with consumers, potentially related to lingering perceptions of genetic modification technologies. As it is, there are currently no behavioural studies to understand the gap in the ethical, and the anthropological reason behind the perception of precision breeding, including consumers' valuation of precision breeding attributes in the UK context. Quite novel to my approach is modelling scientific development on precision breeding at Rothamsted Research (precision-bred wheat) to present attributes of precision breeding in a mock precision-bred derived product, this will be used to test consumers' behavioural demand for precision-bred food products. This is fundamental to understanding demand attributes for precision breeding. Also, providing insights into impact pathways that can shift consumers' behaviour towards acceptance of PB food products, helping to meet varying food and dietary needs, and overall contributing to the UK and global food sustainability agenda.

Dr Lucy Razzall

At the beginning of a 1989 essay, Primo Levi proposes that ‘to fabricate a receptacle is a clue to two qualities, which, for good or evil, are exquisitely human’. These distinctive qualities are ‘the ability to think about tomorrow’ and ‘the capacity to foresee the behaviour of matter’. Levi lists some of the innumerable ‘receptacles’ made by humans, from ‘casks, pitchers, vials, bags’ to ‘cans for tomato paste, mail boxes, velvet-lined jewel cases’. Such objects are, for Levi, evidence of humankind’s intuitive sense of ‘tomorrow’. To ‘fabricate a receptacle’ is to reveal a uniquely human understanding of ‘the future’ that is both intellectual and tangible, and made legible in the material culture of the everyday.

My own research on ‘receptacles’ is concerned with similarly interdisciplinary questions about the relationships between material things and the ways in which we think. My first book, **Boxes and Books in Early Modern England** (CUP, 2021) explores the material and metaphorical significance of the box, a ubiquitous object in early modern England. In the context of the intense social changes of the Reformation, the box in its many forms, including parish chests, coffins, and reliquaries, often encloses complex temporalities. Such objects materialise beliefs about human time and divine time that are, during this period of change, often confessionally-charged, and contested. In textual sources such as wills, inventories, sermons, and poetry, imaginary versions of these boxes provide creative ways of conceptualising time, including the unimaginable time of eternity. These interests in material and visual culture and the dramatic changes of the Reformation also informed my contributions to a new undergraduate course, ‘Material Renaissance’, for final-year BA English students at Cambridge.

My next area of research builds on these interests in material culture and the history of containers and containment. I am at the beginnings of a project provisionally entitled ‘Cardboard Footprint’; an interdisciplinary, cross-collections history of materiality, infrastructures, and consumption. The project begins in the early modern period, where cardboard’s predecessor, pasteboard, was in many ways the equivalent to plastic. Pasteboard had many uses, from the making of models and instruments to setting bones and binding books. It also played a key role in the emerging infrastructures of global capitalism during this period. In England, pasteboard was in high demand as packaging for the burgeoning wool trade, and large amounts of waste paper were imported to manufacture pasteboard for this specific purpose.

Today, there is ever-increasing demand for cardboard: according to the Financial Times, its use rose by 40% during the pandemic, and shares in packaging companies are highly desirable. This ubiquitous waste piles up in the streets, but is often marketed as an everyday ‘green’ alternative to plastic, and has been used for innovative projects like the transitional ‘Cardboard Cathedral’ in Christchurch, New Zealand after the 2011 earthquake. In tracing the history of cardboard, its evolving affordances, and its role in the infrastructures of capitalism, this environmental humanities project will interrogate our relationship with this substance, and what our future ‘cardboard footprint’ might look like.

Dr Mary Robinson

My research and teaching experience centers on the linguistic consequences of contact between peoples. In the 21st century, three specific drivers of mobility result in such contact. The first is the climate emergency leading to mass movements of people whose current homelands may become uninhabitable. Another is political instability caused by military incursions and long-lasting effects of prior colonization. Finally, there is the widening wealth disparity between nations which encourages economic migration. In some cases, these population flows lead to formerly homogeneous nation-states becoming linguistically 'superdiverse'. These three processes can, however, also threaten indigenous or heritage languages and dialects to the point of extinction. The history of Ulster is instructive in this regard. The region's deforestation alongside the loss of peat bogs, have been important contributors to the climate change fueling the population flows of modern times. These processes have their roots in British colonization from the 17th century onwards causing displacement of the indigenous people, the confiscation of their lands and suppression of their language. More recently, Northern Ireland has seen rises in refugees and Eastern European migrants as a result of EU expansions in the early 2000s. Never before has the region been so culturally and linguistically diverse with Polish, rather than Irish, now being the second most common language after English (Census 2021).

These population movements have shown how ill-equipped even the wealthiest countries are to deal with accelerated population growth, and have resulted in populist backlashes like Brexit, which has particular long-term consequences for the island of Ireland where my current research is focused. There are potential impacts for the Good Friday Agreement which set out to protect the rights of both major ethno-nationalist groups in Northern Ireland. Respect for linguistic diversity is a central pillar of the legislation and extends to the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and ethnic minority languages.

To ensure this intangible cultural and linguistic heritage is not lost, it is necessary to protect it in practice as well as in policy. In my research, I investigate listeners' social judgments about others based on their language. I find that speakers of heritage languages or English dialects are perceived negatively compared to speakers of Standard English. These attitudes can have real-life consequences in employment practices, but it is also crucial to confront the more casual negative stereotypes reflected in a corpus of Northern Irish interviews with young people that I have been investigating.

These negative stereotypes are often based in linguistic ideologies that are created and sustained in the classroom. In keeping with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, there is value in creating and strengthening cultural and educational programmes for not only immigrants, but also for the communities that receive them. I have experience doing this through research-led teaching in classrooms in Poland, the US, and the UK. In my practice, I discuss and celebrate the linguistic diversity of the students. Many will not become linguists, but they will retain the notion that no language varieties are 'better' or 'worse' than any other.

Dr Gareth Robinson

At a time of perceived ‘permacrisis’, the future for communities in Northern Ireland experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage is less than certain. These communities, characterised as being ‘left behind’ places, where less favourable outcomes tend to concentrate, have been hit disproportionately hard by rising costs of living and the pandemic—in part, because they had already been enduring lower standards of living and services as a consequence of austerity. There is an obvious urgency to mitigate the harms of these exogenous shocks, however, the bigger challenge for disadvantaged communities is ensuring that persistent and intractable issues don’t propagate. A possible solution to this is to build capacity for ‘self-renewal’, by becoming active agents for transformation, with the intention of bringing stability in uncertain times and longer-term prosperity. My role, as part of an initiative called Queen’s Communities and Place, supports local urban, working-class, communities in Belfast to adapt and thrive in future socioeconomic realities. Our approach is transdisciplinary using participative methods, in which research is integrated with engagement to co-produce socially relevant knowledge, by bringing those from the academic ecosystem together with community stakeholders in ways that raise local voice—in other words, every research output has a tangible impact for our partner communities.

I work primarily with communities that are urban, true to the values of working-class Irish and British heritage, and who have experienced change across a number of generations. The most significant factor in the trajectory of these communities has been ‘The Troubles’. Northern Ireland is a post-conflict society with patterns of segregation, and the future here is often tangled up with legacy issues—despite relative peace for a generation, the negative impacts of the conflict on health, education, and employment remain. Further still, the need for a peace dividend is exacerbated in the context of a rapidly changing urban landscape, shift to a knowledge-based society, and plans for large-scale technological transformation through ‘Smart Belfast’. The assumption is that everyone in this type of setting can freely access, produce, and use knowledge to improve conditions for themselves and others. Yet, the concerns locally, are that communities who have traditionally provided blue-collar workers, will find themselves further disadvantaged with less opportunities, as advanced growth sectors with high barriers to entry continue to expand around them.

These challenges provide the rationale for my research, which explores the relationship between working-class communities, education, and urban futures. The principal aim is to promote a more inclusive knowledge economy and empower underserved communities with increasing involvement in knowledge processes—at a basic level this is about improving educational outcomes and opportunities in ways that equip these communities for the future.

My contribution to this programme will offer a perspective on the topics of educational futures—particularly how this relates to community and societal outcomes—and transdisciplinary research. I welcome opportunities to collaborate across jurisdictions, disciplines, and the intersections of concepts including, but not limited to: democratisation of knowledge; addressing the digital divide; educational underachievement; urban futures; civic-led innovation; citizen science; and climate justice.

Dr Antonia Thomas

My research and teaching explore the connections between Contemporary Art and Archaeology. Ostensibly occupied with the present and the past respectively, I am fascinated by the way in which both contemporary art and archaeology offer powerful lenses through which to view the future.

The shared pasts of art history, antiquarianism and archaeology have long provided a context for critical investigation in art. But since the start of the millennium, there has been a clear shift in the way that contemporary artists have engaged with archaeological subjects and methods. Archaeology has emerged as a powerful tool for critique, with the remains of the recent and contemporary past, and the imagined futures of modernism, receiving particular attention from contemporary artists. While contemporary art has been experiencing an ‘archaeological turn’, archaeology and heritage have also been expanding their remit to take in contemporary society, places, and things. These disciplinary turns have wide-reaching implications. The recognition of contemporary societies as worthy of archaeological investigation carries with it an acknowledgement of the way in which all pasts (and all potential futures) exist and are understood in the present.

This allows archaeology to be seen as a future-making practice. Both contemporary art and archaeology can therefore bear witness to the failings of past futures and serve as politically engaged cultural critique on the present. These critical contexts provide the foundation for the interdisciplinary MA Contemporary Art and Archaeology, a unique online course which I lead at UHI. The MA encourages a collaborative approach combining contemporary art theory and practice with archaeological study, allowing students to explore both the deep past, and contribute towards a sustainable, creative future. Its flexible digital delivery allows engagement from across the world, taking students from a range of backgrounds and in various locations in the UK, Europe and the USA. My experience teaching this programme has highlighted the radical and democratizing potential of online learning, particularly when applied to creative subjects. In this way it can help prepare students for the ‘fourth industrial revolution’ and the digital-first world of the future, and I am keen to build on this experience by developing further interdisciplinary programmes.

My teaching is complemented by the approach taken by the International Network for Contemporary Archaeology in Scotland (INCAScot). As Co-Investigator on this Royal Society of Edinburgh-funded project, I am jointly leading the development of a research framework for Contemporary Archaeology in Scotland, in collaboration with the Scottish Archaeology Research Framework (ScARF). Through interdisciplinary case studies which tie directly to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we are questioning traditional archaeological practices, and providing a foundation for inclusive, future-oriented research, as we look beyond the challenges of the current political, economic, and social landscape. Such an approach is essential if we are to respond to the complexity of the contemporary world and the unprecedented environmental and social crises that we face in the future. I look forward to discussing these ideas, and building on my research, in this symposium.

Dr Lexi Webster

I am keenly interested in the future of a techno-social reality wherein boundaries are ever-diminishing. Between online and offline, fantasy and reality, humanity and artificiality, borders are becoming blurrier, parameters less clearly delimited, and possibilities less constrained. These boundaries are reimagined and become re-imaginable due in so small part to technological advancements. However, these changes also have significant social and cultural implications. My intended contribution, then, is to examine these boundaries, their relationship to techno-social evolutions, and how futures are imagined in light of their de(con)struction.

My interest in these ever-diminishing boundaries is driven by an apparent dissonance among some between ideological constructions of techno-progressive futures and a bio-conservative past. However, where existing debates on this dualism centre antagonism between individuals and groups, I am keen to explore how both ways of thinking are manifested in the cognitive models of individuals and ideological communities. For example, Elon Musk has machinations for a utopian technological future. His company, Neuralink, is developing a neurological chip intended to restore vision for the visually impaired and ‘full bodily functionality’ for those with spinal cord injuries. At the same time, Musk derides the use of ‘irreversible surgery’ in gender confirmation for trans individuals. Both are technological interventions towards enabling an individual’s autonomy over the form and functionality of their body. However, one is a component of an imagined cyborgian techno-progressive future. The other is a very real intervention in the present day. Musk’s derision, like other so-called ‘gender critical’ positions, hark back to socio-historical legacies of a bio-conservative past of physiological determinism. This example of dissonant positioning indicates an ideological boundary between legitimate and illegitimate techno-social futures. As such, it raises many questions, including:

- How are the constraints of humanity (re)constructed in imagined techno-social futures?
- Which re-imaginings of humanity, including society and culture, are (de)legitimised in these techno-social futures?
- What (un)intended consequences do these imagined futures have for rights, recognition, and regulation across – inter alia – national borders, social categories, and communicative contexts?

I have engaged with the concept of borders and boundaries throughout my career. In my doctoral and subsequent research on the platformed antagonism over transgender recognition on Twitter, I have explored how the boundaries of gender, sex, and sexuality are manifested online. This research also dealt with the confluence of transgender politics in online and offline spheres, discussing how discursive constructions of rights, recognition and regulation on Twitter are reflected in Western socio-legal contexts. My work at the boundaries of past, present, and future is more recent. For example, I collaborated on an interdisciplinary project exploring the cognitive-affective impact of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. This led to an examination of how respondents projected intended memories of the present into an imagined future, highlighting how contrasting evaluations of the past and present were used to construct imagined futures and behaviours. Most recently, I have begun work exploring the language and legacy of subcultures of the last fifty years, including their relationship to political-economic realities of both past and present.

British Academy Seed Funding Form

Please email the completed application form to s.saleem@thebritishacademy.ac.uk Any applications received after 3.00pm will be deemed ineligible.

Details of Applicant (1)	
Name	
Position	
Affiliation	
Email Address	

Details of Applicant (2)	
Name	
Position	
Affiliation	
Email Address	

You are welcome to have more than two applicants and please just add further applicants to the form if desired.

Description of the proposed collaboration (max 500 words)

Details of Proposed Collaboration

--

Summary of the impact of the proposed collaboration (300 words). Applicants should identify any outputs that they seek to pursue through this collaboration. This will be measured based on the originality and perceived added value of the proposed collaboration.

Potential Impact

--

Provide details of how you plan to use the funding, including total cost and a breakdown of costs (see eligible costs in Notes for Applicants below).

Financial Statement

Applicants' Declaration
<p>I confirm that the proposed research collaboration has yet to receive funding either from external or internal sources and is not under consideration for funding from any other sources.</p> <p>I understand that if awarded the funding, I shall be required to write a brief report on the outcomes of the collaboration, to provide a brief account of expenditure and to adhere to the expectations set out in the notes below.</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Date:</p>

Notes for Applications:

1. The British Academy is inviting proposals Ireland and UK-based researchers who participated in the Knowledge Frontiers Symposium in London for small grants to facilitate collaboration between Irish-based and UK-based early career researchers.
2. Awards are of 18 months in duration and must be completed by 30 September 2024.
3. The value of the award is set at a maximum of £5000. Funding can be used to support: research expenses; travel and accommodation; networking, meeting and workshop costs. The following items are not eligible for funding:
 - Any hardware including: computer hardware including laptops, electronic notebooks, digital cameras, etc;
 - Books and other permanent resources;

- The preparation of camera-ready copy, copy-editing, proof-reading, indexing, nor any other editorial task;
 - Subventions for direct production costs (printing, binding, distribution, marketing etc);
 - Cost of publication in electronic media.
4. Collaborations should be based on equitable partnerships. Partnerships should be transparent and based on mutual respect. Partnerships should aim to have clearly articulated equitable distribution of resources, responsibilities, efforts and benefits. Partnerships should recognise different inputs, different interests and different desired outcomes. Awards will be paid in full on acceptance of the award.
 5. Award holders will be required to submit a statement of expenditure and a short report (two pages) indicating how their collaboration met the objectives outlined in the impact statement within a month of completing their collaborative work, and no later than 31 October 2024.
 6. Applicants must ensure that the proposed project will be carried out to a high ethical standard. They must ensure that any potential ethical issues have been considered and must also explain how these will be addressed. The British Academy requires the research it funds to be conducted in an ethical manner.
 7. Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:
 - Potential impact of the collaboration.
 - Originality and excellence of the proposed collaboration.
 - The collaborative value of the proposed project.
 - Value for money

Successful applicants will be informed of decisions by the end of February 2023.

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