

## KEYNOTE

David Aldridge, Brunel University, London

# An Ethics of Reading for Higher Education

## ABSTRACT

“O limed soule, that struggling to be free, Art more ingag’d” (*Hamlet* III.iii)

In higher education literature, student “engagement” is often equated with time spent working in the library, and “deceptively simple” (Kuh 2003) instrumental formulations, such as: *if you do the reading, you will get the results*. Insufficient attention is paid to the ethical significance of students’ becoming engaged in their reading, along with the event of personal transformation implied. This address draws on insights from hermeneutic phenomenology and existentialism to explore the ontological relationship between reading, engagement and subject matter. It links the locus of higher education engagement—“in-between” student, teacher, and subject matter—to the space of literary understanding. Two grammatical or etymological aspects of engagement are also explored: the recognition that engagement has both transitive and intransitive objects, and the close relationship between engagement and “courtship.” I will argue that the ontology of engagement thus developed carries a latent ethical significance, not least for those educators who present students with their “readings” and thereby implicate them in an event of human becoming. The ethical teacher models the virtue of receptive openness to transformation through dialogue, and dialogic reading.

## BIOGRAPHY

David Aldridge is Reader in the Department of Education, Brunel University, London. He sits on the executive boards of the *Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain* and the *Association for Moral Education*. He is an Assistant Editor of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education*.

## KEYNOTE AND PUBLIC LECTURE

Karen Manarin, Mount Royal University, Calgary

# Why Read?

## ABSTRACT

The answer seems obvious, at least to people likely to participate in this lecture. However, in this lecture I encourage us to think about reading more broadly. What is the point of reading—the sustained reading of difficult texts—in an age in which many people get their information from social media and their entertainment in digital form? What does reading offer us? Are we taking advantage of its possibilities? Or are we giving up on the dream of a literate citizenry?

Many have worried that twenty-first-century technologies are changing the way people read, or making reading irrelevant altogether, even as more research is being done on the cognitive and affective benefits of reading. In this lecture, I outline some of these larger trends before examining

reading in a specific context: an undergraduate education. Examining the question “Why read?” I draw on material from two populations: instructors from different disciplines and institutions, and students from different disciplines at my institution. Their answers reveal much about the ideals and realities of the twenty-first-century university, where reading can be a time-consuming and risky choice for a very busy, and often risk-averse, student body. I conclude the lecture by asking us to consider our own practices as instructors, as readers and as citizens. We need to champion critical reading.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Karen Manarin is Professor of English at Mount Royal University, a public undergraduate institution in Calgary, Canada. In her research, she examines how students read, undergraduate research and academic identity. Recent publications include the co-authored *Critical Reading in Higher Education: Academic Goals and Social Engagement* (Indiana UP 2015). She has also published in a variety of teaching and learning journals, including *Teaching and Learning Inquiry* and *Pedagogy*.

#### PUBLIC LECTURE AND KEYNOTE

Helen Sword, University of Auckland

## Reading and Writing with Pleasure

#### ABSTRACT

Most academics love to read, and many of us love to write. Our students, on the other hand, may regard critical reading and formal writing as irritating chores on the way to a degree, the educational equivalent of “Shut up and eat your vegetables.” A recent study of successful academics from across the disciplines and around the world revealed that their negative emotions about writing—dominated by *frustration* and *anxiety*—are almost invariably counter-levered by positive emotions such as *enjoyment*, *satisfaction* and *pleasure*. Seasoned writers, in other words, understand that the joys of writing are inextricably bound up with the hard labour of craftsmanship. For our students, unfortunately, that message is not always so clear. Books, blogs and websites aimed at undergraduate writers tend to focus mainly on analytical thinking skills, productive writing habits and stylistic conventions rather than on fostering intellectual nourishment and delight. But if our literature students don’t come away from university with a genuine love of attentive reading and well-crafted writing, what’s the point? How can we engage them in readerly and writerly practices that nurture creativity, pleasure and play?

#### BIOGRAPHY

Helen Sword is Professor and Director of the Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education at the University of Auckland. Her books on writing include *Stylish Academic Writing* (Harvard 2012), *The Writer’s Diet* (Chicago 2016), and *Air & Light & Time & Space: How Successful Academics Write* (Harvard 2017). See her website ([www.helensword.com](http://www.helensword.com)) for links to her books and articles, her digital poetry, and [The Writer’s Diet](#), a free diagnostic tool for writers.

Stephen Abblitt, Keypath Education and La Trobe University

# Halt and Catch Fire: Post-Human, Post-Print Pedagogies

## ABSTRACT

HCF. Halt and catch fire. This is a euphemistic machine code instruction commanding the central processing unit of a computing device to cease meaningful operation—a coded directive provoking the catastrophic failure of the entire system, necessitating a reboot. Pursued critically and creatively throughout this paper, this linguistic code becomes a synecdoche for the troubled state of literary studies as it encounters the digital.

New modes of literary production and consumption, new material supports and ideological forms, have emerged in the digital age to disrupt conventional, analogue, print-based practices of writing and reading. Technogenetic writing—composed in the mutually constitutive, hybridised interface of the living human and a digital technics—generates new epistemological, phenomenological, and ontological configurations. It generates novel and unforeseen semantic and hermeneutic codes, temporally and spatially, and engenders radical new economies of attention. It demands renewed critical, theoretical, and practical approaches.

Drawing on recent work by N. Katherine Hayles, this paper interrogates the changing angles from which we critically and creatively approach both print and post-print (digital or electronic) texts, and speculates on the impact of these changes on the present and future of literary studies pedagogy.

## BIOGRAPHY

Dr Stephen Abblitt is a literary philosopher, queer theorist, and educational researcher. He received his PhD in 2011 for a critical-creative thesis examining the hermeneutics of failure in Jacques Derrida's writings on James Joyce, and has since published and presented widely in the fields of literary studies, gender studies and queer theory, creative writing, and digital culture and higher education. His current research speculates on the possible futures of post-human pedagogies; in particular, it interrogates the impact of emergent digital reading practices on the present and future of literary studies pedagogy. He is an Honorary Associate in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at La Trobe University, and Managing Editor of the interdisciplinary open-access gender, sexuality and diversity studies journal *Writing from Below* ([www.writingfrombelow.org.au](http://www.writingfrombelow.org.au)).

Clare Archer-Lean and Sandra R. Phillips, University of the Sunshine Coast

# Close, Reflective and Resistant Reading: Indigenous Literature Assessment as Transformative Practice

## ABSTRACT

This paper responds to a problem identified in the "Teaching Australian Literature Survey" (Mead 2010) that compromises the reading of Indigenous

literature within the tertiary sector. While most tertiary-educator respondents in the 2010 Survey indicated a desire to include Indigenous perspectives and taught a few Indigenous works on their Australian literature courses, there were few dedicated Indigenous literature courses or assessments that recognised a need for difference in reading approaches. In English literature study, the primary method of initial reading is through close reading to trace initial impressions and track observations of literary devices that will form evidence for later arguments (Belsey 2005). Indigenous literature risks colonisation when encountered by non-Indigenous students as an objective if it is read as easily interpretable, without nuance or context.

This paper explores the impacts and processes in constructing an innovative reading practice amongst tertiary students. Experienced First Nations academic, publisher, and editor Dr Sandra Phillips initiated and applied the innovative, deep reading model for new reading practice at the University of the Sunshine Coast in 2012-13. This reading model has been continued (in consultation with Dr Phillips) by non-Indigenous educator Dr Clare Archer-Lean through 2014 to 2017. The model aims to create a reading practice that accounts for the position and influence of the reader in the cross-cultural (or co-cultural) reading process. The reading method is grounded in reflective reading journal assessments designed to enable students to develop a complex and nuanced reading practice. Such reading is informed by Susan Suleiman's focus on the interaction between "observer and observed" (1980, 4); in this case the space between reader and text provides a newly productive site for learning and analysis. This theoretical insight is combined with those of First Nations' philosopher Mary Graham and her focus on the importance of reflective thought as a means to allow learners to accept contemplation as a mechanism for change and recognition of the other in any encounter (2008). This paper is a dialogic reflection on the experience in teaching and developing this reading model from two different subject positions. It also analyses and reflects on some student survey feedback data on the model. We ask how far new forms of reflective reading practice can reduce racial and cultural prejudice or assumptions, and what is required to optimise efficacy in this goal?

#### BIOGRAPHIES

Dr Sandra R. Phillips teaches professional writing, editing, and publishing studies with QUT Creative Industries. Her engagement in Indigenous and literary sectors is sought after and highly regarded. Sandra's research interests are Indigenous story and publishing, and practices of reading. She is Chair of the First Nations Australia Writers' Network Inc. (FNAWN) and Member of the Library Board of Queensland. Sandra's First Nations Australia status is Wakka Wakka and Gooreng Gooreng.

Clare Archer-Lean is leader of English Literature at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Clare's research focuses on the ways in which literary representations inform human perceptions of their own identities and their place in the natural environment. She has publications and grant funding in critical animal studies, ecocriticism and Indigenous story telling. Clare is a non-Indigenous Australian, of English migrant parents.

Alison Bedford, University of Southern Queensland

# Reading and Responding: Literature, Ethics, and Citizenship

## ABSTRACT

Martha Nussbaum's argument that literature cultivates "powers of imagination that are essential to citizenship" centres on literature as a vehicle for empathy. Yet Suzanne Keen suggests "a society that insists on receiving immediate ethical and political yields from the recreational reading of its citizens puts too great a burden on both empathy and the novel" (168). While Nussbaum and Keen offer differing positions on the social function of literature, both focus on its ethical function, suggesting reading should affect readers' sense of responsibility to others in society. Geoffrey Galt Harpham explains: "Ethics is the arena in which the claims of otherness—the moral law, the human other, cultural norms, the Good-in-itself etc.—are articulated and negotiated" (394). This paper will offer a reading of Mary Shelley as a Foucauldian founder of discourse. In doing so, it will argue that Shelley established a new way for readers to navigate ethical questions: *Frankenstein* results in the reader responding to "the claims of otherness" precisely because Shelley does not provide them with a response—she leaves it to the reader to decide which ethical consideration takes primacy. She "articulates" but allows the reader to "negotiate." It is this new discourse, most often articulated through the genre of science fiction which explores "who we are and might be" (Nussbaum), that results not only in an empathetic response but in an ethical one. Literature, and particularly the unanswered "what if?" of science fiction as established by Shelley, provides readers the space to engage with the ethical demands of their citizenry.

## BIOGRAPHY

Alison Bedford is writing a PhD that focuses on Mary Shelley as a founder of discourse as it is defined by Michel Foucault. Using the method of contextual biography to establish Shelley's works within their place and time, Bedford argues that the discourse Shelley establishes underpins the genre of science fiction and provides a new way of speaking about scientific developments, the ripple effects of which continue to shape discourse today.

Victoria Bladen, University of Queensland

## Reading in the Literary Studies Summer School: Communal Engagement and Experiential Learning

## ABSTRACT

This paper explores the potential of pedagogical practices and learning experiences in the extra-curricular context of the literary studies summer school. Since 2010 I have designed various literary summer schools at the University of Queensland and abroad: in Florence (2013), Rome (2014), Stratford-upon-Avon (2015), and Oxford (2016), with a fifth program planned for Ravello in 2017. The series abroad is co-convened with Associate Professor Maddalena Pennachia (University of Roma Tre) as we have a shared interest in exploring how cultural tourism may enhance teaching and learning experiences in literary studies, for

students, general readers and scholars. The literary summer school constitutes an environment that offers alternative learning experiences to supplement and enhance the studies of undergraduates, as well as outreach possibilities for tertiary institutions to connect with general readers and those in the community interested in a deeper engagement with literary texts. The programs abroad have facilitated international dialogue and unique opportunities for cultural exchange within a learning environment. They also reflect on how the experience of place, particularly the sites of living history in Europe, can inform and add depth to understanding literary texts and contexts. In the paper I also consider aspects of experiential learning—the programs include play readings, with participants on their feet— and how the value of these pedagogical approaches has been recognised in the critical literature. These programs facilitate creativity in the learning and teaching of literary texts, the development of a cultural imagination and the potential for transformative learning experiences.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Dr Victoria Bladen teaches in literary studies, adaptation and poetics at the University of Queensland, Australia, and has received a Faculty award for teaching excellence. She has published on Shakespeare, Austen, early modern poetry and the pastoral genre. Victoria is on the editorial board for the series *Turismi e Culture* published by Università Roma TrE-Press, Rome.

Sarita Cannon, San Francisco State University

## New Paradigms of Literacy in Audre Lorde's *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*

#### ABSTRACT

Composition instructors have long assigned autobiographical texts in order to teach the art of personal narrative. In addition to offering useful writing models, the study of autobiographical texts also provides an opportunity for students to think about the impact of literacy on others and themselves. From Richard Wright's forged note that allows him access to the public library in *Black Boy* to Helen Keller's epiphany at the water pump with her teacher Anne Sullivan in *The Story of My Life*, there are many moments in American Life Writing that illustrate the empowerment that accompanies learning how to read. Despite the belief that all kinds of literacy lead to upward mobility and the development of empathy, literacy can be "conflicted," as Wendy Ryden articulates in her 2005 article on Frederick Douglass. Particularly for members of historically marginalised groups, literacy may be both empowering and stifling. In this paper, I examine Audre Lorde's relationship to reading and writing in her 1982 biomythography *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*. As the subtitle suggests, Lorde's ability to embrace her identity as a queer black disabled working-class woman is intertwined with her manipulation of language. This manipulation manifests in many ways in the text, from surpassing the low expectations of her white teachers by excelling at reading and writing, to creating a hybrid literary genre called biomythography, to breaking grammatical and usage rules by not capitalizing certain words (such as "america," "catholic," and "white house") to indicate her refusal to worship the

ideals that those signifiers represent. Lorde learns to navigate a hostile society that dehumanises her by creating new ways of reading and writing that reflect her values and experiences.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Sarita Cannon is Associate Professor of English at San Francisco State University. She holds an AB in Literature from Harvard University and a PhD in English from University of California, Berkeley. Dr Cannon's scholarship has appeared in *Interdisciplinary Humanities*, *The Black Scholar*, *Asian American Literature: Discourses and Pedagogies* and *MELUS*. A global citizen committed to cross-cultural exchange, she has presented her work at conferences in France, Spain, Japan, South Africa, Tunisia, Morocco and Ghana.

Robert Clarke (University of Tasmania) and Maggie Nolan (Australian Catholic University)

## Reading Fiction, Talking Reconciliation: Australian Book Clubs, Book Talk and the Politics of History

#### ABSTRACT

In *Postcolonial Theory* Leela Gandhi suggests that “the colonial aftermath calls for an ameliorative and therapeutic theory that is responsive to the task of remembering and recalling the colonial past” (Gandhi 8). For some postcolonial literary scholars, such a theory has meant developing *reading practices* that facilitate readers' reckoning with the past through the medium of fiction. However one frames inquiries into the role fiction plays in the postcolonial refashioning of national historical narratives towards some notion of reconciliation, it is clear that we need to reframe our understanding of the *reading subject* of such theory. This involves a shift from a reader assumed to be an academic who occupies some position within or in relation to formal, usually tertiary, educational institutions: not unlike the theorists who posit such views in the first place. A perhaps unintended consequence of such views is that the reading practices, and what we call the *vernacular criticism* of lay readers, are often either ignored, discounted or rendered suspect.

This paper reports on our research into the reception of Australian historical fiction amongst lay readers—and a specific subset of lay readers, namely book club readers. We consider a group of novels we term *fictions of reconciliation*. Given their popularity, the controversies they have in some instances incited, and the way they foreground contemporary ethical and political concerns about Australian race relations, these novels provide an opportunity to explore the legacies of colonial violence, and the role of reading in thinking through these legacies. We are concerned with the assumptions that critics make about the intellectual, moral and political perspicacity of so-called ordinary readers, a term that we seek, among other things, to rethink.

#### BIOGRAPHIES

Robert Clarke is a Senior Lecturer in the English Studies Program, School of Humanities, University of Tasmania. He is the author of *Travel Writing from Black Australia: Utopia, Melancholia, and Aboriginality* (Routledge 2016), and editor of *Celebrity Colonialism: Fame, Power and Representation in Colonial and Postcolonial Cultures* (Cambridge Scholars 2009), and *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Travel Writing* (CUP, forthcoming).

Maggie Nolan is Deputy Head of the School of Arts on the Brisbane campus of Australian Catholic University. Her research has focused on questions of race and identity in Australian literary studies and more recently she has been working with Robert Clarke on Australian book clubs. She is a co-editor of the *Journal of Australian Studies*.

Kate Douglas, Flinders University

## ‘The Reading Lab’

### ABSTRACT

In 2014 and 2015 I coordinated a first-year Literary Studies subject—“Approaches to Literature.” “Approaches” has an enrolment of over 400 students. In one of the lecture slots I trialled a large-group learning and teaching activity—“The Reading Lab.” The Reading Lab is a series of lectures devoted to the practices of reading. The lab sessions seek to address a problem that various reading pedagogy scholars have communicated: that our university students are often not very resilient readers and that students often do not complete set readings. The Reading Lab focuses on the theory and practice of close reading and on making reading skills visible to students. Over 10 weeks, the students practise skills including slow reading, active reading, (reading) time management, and critical approaches to reading and interpretation. These skills are never approached in abstract ways: they are applied to the subject’s set primary texts.

In this paper I reflect on what I achieved (and perhaps also failed to achieve) in The Reading Lab. In particular, I want to consider the ethics of trialling innovative reading methods with the (likely) stronger, self-selecting “present” students who choose to attend lectures rather than those who choose to watch the lectures on-line/on delay.

### BIOGRAPHY

Kate Douglas is an Associate Professor in the School of Humanities and Creative Arts at Flinders University and Head of Department of English, Creative Writing and Australian Studies. She is the author of *Contesting Childhood: Autobiography, Trauma and Memory* (Rutgers 2010) and the co-author (with Anna Poletti) of *Life Narratives and Youth Culture: Representation, Agency and Participation* (Palgrave 2016). Kate has published on teaching in journals including *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, *Higher Education Research and Development* and *Antipodes*.

Philippe Pamela Dungao, Ryerson University, Toronto

## “This Is How You Are a Citizen”: The Politics and Poetics of Empathy in Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen: An American Lyric*

### ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of empathy in politics and literature, often a subject of contention amongst several academic fields. Most have focused on how the study of



literature has been used as a pedagogical tool to develop the capacity for empathy and expression. Such a focus has simplified and necessitated the value of reading with the assumption that literacy can change social behaviour and make people more altruistic citizens. In this way, empathy has become a political and rhetorical tool that has the potential to either inspire political action or reject it. This paper therefore seeks to locate the complexities of empathy in literature and how the turn to literary empathy offers a more reflexive exercise in encountering black literature. Through examining the role of spectatorship in Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014), it analyses the exhausted, uninhabitable second-person *you* that unsettles the lyrical conventions and problematises the position of the reader as multiple, diverse and localised when forced to bear witness to the micro- and macro-aggressions inflicted against the black body. In doing so, it highlights the tension between visibility and invisibility that profiles and polices black subjectivity against the "post-racial, colorblind" landscape of America and the limitations of the white imagination. Rankine transforms the spectator and makes complicit the *you* throughout the text. This paper will argue that literary empathy interrogates the white imagination that has turned a blind eye to the lives and experiences of black citizens.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Philippe Pamela Dungao graduated from the University of Toronto in 2015 with an Honours BA in English and History. She is completing her Master's at Ryerson University. Her research interests include contemporary North American literature with a particular focus on the study of rhetoric, protest literature and public art.

#### ROUNDTABLE

Bill Beach, Gillian Hallam, Angela Hannan, Tom Ruthven, University of Queensland

## Evolving Libraries: Technologies and the Impact on Student Engagement

#### ABSTRACT

UQ Library acts as a point of access for students to material they are required to engage with as part of their studies. The twenty-first-century library has seen a rapid shift from print to electronic-based reading material, and this has had a great impact both on how lecturers can make reading material available to students and how students in turn engage with this reading material. In response to the rise of digital texts, UQ Library has established an e-preferred policy, increased its focus on providing support for the development and acquisition of eTextbooks, digitised non-commercial material (including theses, photographs, manuscripts and audio material). This has required a shift in support services to include more technical skills and digital literacies as part of our programs.

Panelists will provide information, insights and perspectives on how the increase in digital content has impacted on the Library's decision-making, policy development, support for information and digital literacy, and how we supply content. Overarching themes used to generate discussions include the tensions between e-versions and print, how student

engagement changes between these forms, and the impact on best practice for reading and writing in the twenty-first-century classroom.

UQ Library comprises various areas with different organisational responsibilities. Panelists have been selected from across the organisation to reflect the range of interests and investments: Information Resources, Information and Digital Literacy, the Centre for Digital Scholarship and Liaison Librarians.

#### BIOGRAPHIES

Bill Beach

Manager of The Centre for Digital Scholarship (CDS), UQ Library. The CDS provides a unique teaching, research and presentation space that will be ideal for analysing, visualising and interacting with most types of digital content in a highly collaborative environment. The Centre for Digital Scholarship [CDS] opened in early May 2016. UQ Library is a partner working with the various disciplines to provide an open space with expert support provided for the various digital focused activities that can occur in the teaching and collaborative spaces within the Centre.

Gillian Hallam

As Manager, Information and Digital Literacy with UQ Library, Gillian Hallam is responsible for the University's strategic framework for information and digital literacy which aims to shape the policies and practices to support high quality learning experiences and internationally significant research outcomes in the contemporary academic world. In recognition of her academic career as an educator, researcher and consultant to the library and information sector, Gillian is Adjunct Professor with Queensland University of Technology.

Angela Hannan (moderator)

Liaison librarian for the School of Communication and Arts, Angela engages with academics, higher degree researchers and students providing support with library services and resources, and research consultations. Angela works collaboratively with the Digital and Information Literacy team and CDS to develop, implement and provide support for services and resources aimed at fostering research, teaching and learning. With a background in teaching, she is keenly interested in how technologies affect students reading and writing habits.

Tom Ruthven

As Director of Information Systems and Resources Services at UQ Library, Tom Ruthven has responsibility for the Library's collection budget, digitisation of the Library's rich collection and delivery of learning resources to students. He oversees the coordination and management of the online user experience and ensures the Library's technology meets client needs.

Miri Jassy, Sydney Boys High School

## Creative Reading: Creativity and Competition in Secondary School English (Towards a Creative Reading Continuum)

## ABSTRACT

Creative Reading is a term I use to instigate an explicit adherence to challenging reading. Teaching English with a Creative Reading focus fulfils my pedagogical aims in the context of an academically selective secondary school, where writing is subject to a competitiveness, in which creativity is scrutinised for fast acquisition and pragmatic application to attract results. My question is whether the quest for results inhibits rather than improves quality, and how Creative Reading can support student creativity.

I arrived at the term Creative Reading as a companion cause to the ongoing teaching of creative writing, which remains a feature of the Australian Curriculum and NSW HSC English Syllabus. A Creative Reading approach is one way to work within a range of pedagogical practicalities.

I will show examples of a Creative Reading approach from a Year 11 theme-study (Identity), using Judith Beveridge's poetry. Further examples will show how a Creative Reading approach to Craig Silvey's novel *Jasper Jones* has affected and influenced the creative writing of Stage 5 (Year 10) students.

This paper explores the ways in which rigorous reading contributes to substantial writing in an educational climate of competitiveness which purports to encourage creativity. A question as to the possibility for competitive reading arises, in which student reading is driven by the quest for complexity rather than quantity. What I would like to establish eventually is a Creative Reading Continuum that writes back to the impersonal Literacy Continuum, a document that privileges functionality over creativity.

## BIOGRAPHY

Miri Jassy completed her PhD on the antipodes in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* at the University of New South Wales. She teaches English at Sydney Boys High School.

## ROUNDTABLE

Kerry Kilner, Jennifer Clements, Natalie Collie, University of Queensland

# Exploring *Cirrus*: A Digital Learning Platform for Engaged Reading, Analysis and Writing

## ABSTRACT

In 2016 and 2017, the University of Queensland funded the development of a new teaching and learning environment using, in part, the technology and content management affordances of the [AustLit](#) resource. *Cirrus* allows academics to embed into their courses technology-enhanced learning activities such as text, image and video annotation to develop close reading and interpretation skills, or online exhibition and illustrated long form writing options. Integrated with AustLit's publication platform, *Cirrus* also provides students with an opportunity for publication in an annual *Best of* student work.

In this roundtable Kerry Kilner will demonstrate how *Cirrus* works and how it has been applied in a variety of learning contexts, speaking about plans for the future roll-out of the platform. Natalie Collie will discuss online annotation and how it helps students to engage with literary texts and other kinds of writing in new ways. Jennifer Clements will discuss the development of a new book history course that will use *Cirrus* to create both online and physical exhibitions. The use-cases for *Cirrus* are designed to develop skills in reading and interpreting texts and images; in writing for public consumption; and in the processes required for online delivery. In this roundtable, we are keen to explore the extent to which digital literacies are becoming fundamental to contemporary teaching and the extent to which our work with *Cirrus* is helping us address some of the challenges of contemporary tertiary environments. Our discussion will be informed by the literature on digital literacy, pedagogy and the digital humanities. Rita Felski's defence of the humanities and its multiple roles in society—curating, conveying, criticising and composing—will also inform our analysis.

#### BIOGRAPHIES

Kerry Kilner is the Director of AustLit and Project Lead on the *Cirrus* project. Her academic career has centred on the development of online tools and databases supporting research and teaching in areas that intersect with Australian culture.

Jennifer Clement and Natalie Collie are both lecturers in the School of Communication and Arts at UQ. Jennifer's research covers several areas including early modern literature and religion, adaptation studies and the history of print culture. Natalie's research has a focus on cities, communication and identity. Both explore the potential for digital technologies to transform how we learn and teach in the humanities.

Victoria Kuttainen, James Cook University

## Building a Reading Community: From Textual Hospitality to the Ethos of Care

#### ABSTRACT

Recent work on book clubs has focused on the way ordinary readers respond to complex texts and to the dynamics of literary sociability fostered by the affordances of the text. This paper shifts the focus from responses to the text to fix its optics on interactions between various kinds of readers. Rather than presuming a captured readership, it considers a book club that attempts to build a community of readers, to address the breakdown of the link between readers in secondary school classrooms and enrolments in university English classes.

This reading group was designed to build relationships between academic readers and the community's secondary school teachers and students. It is situated in the context of a low-SES regional university town in which very few students elect to study the humanities at university, and in which the most talented students as well as already disengaged secondary school students increasingly pursue vocation-centred programs instead.

It calls on Brian Leuthwaite's research on the need for a "pedagogy of difference," built on an ethos of "caring about" and "caring for," to effectively arrest disengagement. As such, this paper considers the way in which Derek Attridge's work on the hospitality of the text, and Buss's work on acts of textual identification might be extended as a framework for

building communities of readers, encouraging mutual trust and understanding, and fostering re-engagement with the humanities in and out of school.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Victoria Kuttainen is a Senior Lecturer in the English and Writing program at James Cook University and the Margaret and Colin Roderick Scholar of Comparative Literature. She is currently undertaking a Diploma of Secondary Teaching as part of a broader investigation into how to foster links between the secondary and tertiary sectors and stimulate re-engagement with the humanities in a regional city and vocation-centred tertiary environment.

Stephanie Liddicoat, University of Melbourne

## How Can Narrative and Fictocriticism Enhance the Teaching of Architectural Design?

#### ABSTRACT

Reading and writing have powerful abilities to effect change, and immersion in reading and writing can propel students to new awareness, dissemination and critical reflection. This paper considers the role of narrative and fictocriticism within the design studio context, whereby writing is harnessed for its transformative potential, enabling students of architecture to better envision, develop and communicate their designs. Architects pursue parallel aims of user experience and functional outcomes when they design, yet achieving this balance within the undergraduate architectural design classroom is often a struggle. This paper developed from the author's observations as she taught undergraduate students in design studios, using a method of narrative and fictocriticism to foster the students' abilities to critically engage, produce and reflect. The role of narrative emerged as a key method within design process, and will be explored in this paper. Firstly, narrative and fictocriticism will be defined, and a series of examples from studio work illustrated. A discussion of the significance of narrative and fictocriticism to architectural students follows this, concluding with recommendations for teaching and practice.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Stephanie graduated with a Master of Architecture from Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand, with her final thesis examining the design of environments for mental health. This piqued her interest in narratives in architecture and built environments, and how engagements with architectural space are where stories unfold. She uses writing to inspire and direct her teaching and design practice.

Jessica Mattox, Radford University

## Spectacles of Empathy: Shopping at Dr. T. J. Eckleburg's for an English 11-Advanced Placement Unit Plan on *The Great Gatsby*

## ABSTRACT

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is taught in high schools across the United States. Due to high-stakes standardised testing, lack of student readiness and rigid unit schedules, most high school English classrooms stick to a New Critical approach in literature instruction. Using New Critical principles, secondary English students learn to critique assigned novels from the perspective of plot, characters, themes/meanings and symbols—but their exploration usually ends there. Other literary theories are largely overlooked. I submit that high-school English teachers can enhance their pedagogy through the use of contemporary literary theory to help students understand the complex relationships between author, text, historical context and reader in order to improve their students' critical thinking skills and increase their personal engagement with literature.

I integrate Marxist, Feminist and New Historicist literary theories as pedagogical strategies so that Advanced Placement (AP) English students can gain a more informed, comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of *The Great Gatsby*. In my paper, I present the chronology and rationale for an original unit plan designed for use in an English 11 AP class taught in the state of Virginia. It helps students consider how to make the familiar—*The Great Gatsby*—unfamiliar, new and applicable to their real experiences.

## BIOGRAPHY

Jessica Mattox holds a BA in English with a concentration in creative writing as well as music from Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia. She is pursuing an MA in English Education at Radford University, serving as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. Jessica is passionate about the teaching of literature and writing. Her review of *Practical Poetry: A Non-Standard Approach to Meeting Content Area Standards* was published in the Promising Young Scholars section of the *Virginia English Journal*.

Lindsey Moser, University of Auckland

# Tongues of Fire: Literary Eroticism in Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* and Margery Kempe's *Book*

## ABSTRACT

What is the contemporary classroom to make of the elusive paradox of religious and sexual expression in medieval literature? Is attributing the monastic erotic literature, promulgated during the evolution of literate, vibrant monastic orders, to repression initiated by celibacy and asceticism an accurate reader response, or is a reading informed by an allegorical exegetical discipline truer to authorial intention? This paper will examine the strategic use of erotic discourse in Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum*, an astute and erotically charged exposition of the biblical text by the twelfth-century abbot, and the *Book* of Margery Kempe, a later medieval autobiography in which Kempe envisages herself as a character acting out an intense "paramystical" aftershock of the religious fascination with sexual metaphor and imagery. These texts share a treatment of ecstatic religious experience as a sublimated encounter with the divine, a climax of the contemplative soul (anima) born from the carnality of the body. Sexual metaphors arise in both texts to convey

complex spiritual intuitions concerning the impact of affective piety on the religious individual. This paper will lift an appropriate methodology for introducing this literary theme to the contemporary classroom for approaching the phenomenon of medieval literary eroticism with suggested points of argumentation and interpretation of these texts as a unified body of illuminating—and revealing—work. Finally, this paper will attempt to reconcile these specific sexual discourses with the fruitful broader context of these two—and other medieval—texts.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Lindsey Moser completed her undergraduate thesis on medieval literary eroticism at Hollins University (Roanoke, Virginia) and is currently working on her Master's thesis concentrated on Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermones super Cantica Cantorum* at the University of Auckland. She is a teaching assistant for the University of Auckland and volunteers as an ESOL tutor. Moser holds an MAR in Theology from Liberty University (Lynchburg, Virginia) and serves at Epsom Baptist Church as an associate minister.

Richard Nile, James Cook University

## Wonder and the Intimate Sociability of Reading

#### ABSTRACT

Despite its cultural significance since at least the fifteenth century, reading remains poorly understood. Historian Martyn Lyons hit this familiar “snag” in *A History of Reading and Writing* (2010): “If we dissolve the history of reading into myriad free agents, all arriving at unexpected conclusions, we have a state of subjective anarchy in which no generalisations are either possible or legitimate.” Of course, Lyons recognises Pierre Bourdieu's “sociological perspective” in which “taste” is shaped by social and cultural conditioning as one means by which readers and reading may be read. Lynne Pearce maintains a similar paradigm, postulating a distinction between the “implicated reader” and the “professional reader,” while conceding that “*all reading is a process in which we are ‘positioned’ and not wholly in control.*”

One of my favourite books is Alberto Manguel's *A History of Reading* (1997), gifted me by a friend with whom I regularly discussed books until he died unexpectedly in 2012. “Implicit in the possession of a book is the history of the book's previous readings,” argues Manguel. “[E]very new reader is affected by what he or she imagines the book to have been in previous hands.” This is an invitation to engage in and share the “wonder” of our experiences of reading and to listen well as others describe theirs.

I will explore the intimate form of sociability that is reading through a consideration of the transition from oral to silent reading in the late-nineteenth century but from the perspective of another transition: that from print to digital reading in the twenty-first century. In the process, I will touch on the importance and significance of different forms of reading and their applications to “deep reading” in the present time.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Richard Nile is Professor and Head of Humanities at James Cook University. A former Deputy Head of the Menzies Centre at the University of London, he had led research institutes and centres at the University of Queensland, Curtin University and Murdoch University.  
Roger Osborne, University of Queensland

## Scholarly Editing and Textual Criticism in the Literary Studies Classroom

### ABSTRACT

Scholarly editing and textual criticism are not widely found in the literary studies classroom these days, but methodologies drawn from these ancient fields of scholarship still offer some of the best tools to study the life of literary works. This is even more relevant to today's students of literature, because the computer and the Internet have transformed the field, introducing digital modes of enquiry and publication that change the way we think about the literary work. This paper proceeds from the oft-quoted words of Shakespeare scholar Gary Taylor: "How can you love a work, if you don't know it? How can you know it, if you can't get near it? How can you get near it, without editors?" Taylor's questions encourage a type of close reading and editorial decision-making that propels the reader towards multi-faceted encounters with the richly textured material and cultural life of texts. I will reflect on such encounters with reference to my recent teaching experience, and with suggestions for the ways in which the methodologies of scholarly editing and textual criticism can be deployed in the literary studies classroom.

### BIOGRAPHY

Roger Osborne has taught Australian and American literature at several Australian universities. He is a contributing editor to the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Joseph Conrad (*Under Western Eyes* and *Nostramo*), and publishes widely in the fields of book history and digital humanities. His book with David Carter, *Australian Books and Authors in the American Marketplace 1840s-1940s*, is forthcoming from Sydney University Press.

Deborah Pike, University of Notre Dame Australia

## The Future of Literary Studies: A Discussion

### ABSTRACT

This paper considers the ideas and projections of leading scholars and practitioners in the field of literary studies education. Drawing from live interviews with Steven Connor, Maria Nikalojeva, Marina Warner and Adam Phillips, among others, the paper seeks to develop a picture of current philosophies of literary pedagogy, as well as future directions in the field. While the paper addresses teaching methods, it also pushes further into exploring bigger questions: What is the point of literary study? Can a case still be made for the discipline? What is literary studies' place in the humanities more broadly? Are literature and the humanities in need of defending? Or is their time up? What future? While entertaining different points of



view and a variety of responses to these questions, the paper hopes to offer a way forward into the twenty-first-century classroom.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Deborah Pike is a Senior Lecturer and discipline head of English Literature at the University of Notre Dame Australia, Sydney campus. Her research interests cover literary modernism, wellbeing studies and English as a discipline. She is author of *Zelda Fitzgerald and Modernism* (Missouri UP, 2017) and co-editor of *On Happiness: New Ideas for the Twenty-First Century* (UWA Press, 2015) and *Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Play: From Birth to Beyond* (Springer, 2017).

David Rawson, Harvard University

## Towards Critical Thinking in Reading: Celebrating Student Voice in the High-School English Classroom

#### ABSTRACT

Distinguished Harvard educator Eleanor Duckworth posits that it is not possible to *teach* children how to think critically. “You can only teach them about poetry and then about bean plants,” she says. Duckworth’s point is that regardless of the discipline, students have to be curious and engaged deeply in the material before they can think critically about it. As teachers, how might we foster curiosity in students about what they read so that their critical engagement with our class texts is genuine and sustained? In an era of parent-pleasing assessment often designed to produce a report card grade, how might we shape learning opportunities in ways that foster appreciation of reading? English teachers fear that their curriculum and assessment imperatives will spoil students’ experience of reading for pleasure. Thus, this paper will explore how pedagogy and assessment can be used to empower students to share their insights and verbalise their confusion. Drawing on the Queensland and US contexts of education, it aims to highlight how teachers can lead students towards critical and creative thought by giving their wonderings airtime in the classroom. It will demonstrate how stepping back as the teacher and allowing students to build a shared understanding through conversation about the text can be a powerful tool for deeper engagement. In the way that children studying an introductory biology unit might wonder how a bean plant grows from one day to the next, so too must the English classroom represent a space for hypotheses and discussion—where assessment means listening to understand.

#### BIOGRAPHY

David is a secondary-school English and French teacher with professional interests in student assessment, teacher leadership and school improvement. A Frank Knox Fellow at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education, David recognises the transformative potential that reading has in the lives of his students. His Honours research at the University of Queensland explores the performance of depression in contemporary cinema as a way to understand film’s capacity for building understanding and empathy.

Gillian Ray-Barruel, Griffith University

## “The Peg Refuses to Fit into the Hole”: Reading Sue Bridehead in the Era of Neurodiversity

### ABSTRACT

Since the publication of Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* in 1895, critics and readers have variously interpreted the character of Sue Bridehead as degenerate New Woman, hysterical, frigid, narcissistic, egotistical, feminist, lesbian and, most recently, autistic. Such a range of readings is possible because readers are influenced by their own gender, personal history and cultural beliefs, as well as the dominant discourses of their own era. In *Jude*, Hardy negotiates the competing and sometimes contradictory discourses of Victorian femininity: woman as angel, woman as inferior or degenerate, woman on the cusp of emancipation. Hardy's acquiescence in and resistance to received ideas about femininity make Sue a complex creature, and misreading Sue is written into the text itself. She is constantly being questioned and interpreted by the other characters in the novel, setting up a challenge for Hardy's readers. In this paper, I analyse the contradictory readings of Sue Bridehead as a response to contemporary cultural discourses, and examine how available discourses of disability and difference both inform an author's construction of fictional characters and shape the twenty-first-century reader's interpretation of neurological diversity.

### BIOGRAPHY

Dr Gillian Ray-Barruel is a postdoctoral research fellow at Griffith University in Brisbane. In addition to her continued strong career in nursing research, Gillian received the University of Queensland medal in 2007 for her Honours thesis on Anglo-Irish writer Elizabeth Bowen. In 2015, she completed her PhD, which explored the history of representations of intellectual disability in nineteenth-century English literature.

Simon Rogers, University of Queensland

## Fear and Hope, Conformity and Resistance: Appreciation of Contemporary Dystopian Narratives in Secondary School Contexts

### ABSTRACT

This paper suggests that the popularity (and proliferation) of dystopian texts among younger audiences is due, in part, to their engagement with the direct and indirect thematic emphasis on notions of belonging, (in)justice, and a search for understanding, meaning or purpose in society. Using relevant examples, it suggests that a deeper appreciation of this popularity can be fostered through the analysis of fear, hope, conformity and resistance in relation to these notions, with specific emphasis on thematic and character development. In doing so, this paper seeks to articulate and apply an adaptable framework that could be utilised in Film, Media or English classrooms to assist students in the more critical reading and appreciation of dystopian texts from a range of authors and socio-political or cultural

contexts. While pitched primarily at the critical reading and viewing of film texts, the emphasis on thematic and character development in dystopian narratives is readily adaptable to dystopian literature.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Simon is a Brisbane-based educator with an interest in text analysis and helping students generate a more critical appreciation for the cinema and literature they enjoy. He has worked as a Film and Television and English teacher and English Head of Department and completed a Master of Educational Studies with a focus on pedagogy, curriculum and social justice. Simon has also written about melodrama and screen aesthetics in Screen Education and continues to work with SBS Outreach and Cool Australia on a range of curriculum materials for high-school teachers and students.

Juliane Roemhild

## Beyond Critique—Personal Engagement and Critical Enquiry in the Classroom

#### ABSTRACT

Enchantment—Knowledge—Recognition—Shock: In *The Uses of Literature* Rita Felski has reminded us of four fundamental ways in which literature can move us, engage us and, ultimately, change us. These reading modes are difficult to reconcile with the critical, even suspicious attitude of the academic reader trained in the analytical methods of Deconstruction. Felski's call for the broadening of our critical horizons is part of a growing concern with the "the limits of critique" among researchers, but it also speaks to students who will dutifully discuss what's on the syllabus but protect their private reading from the critical gaze because it "ruins the fun."

In my paper, I will present some of my current attempts at encouraging students to take the emotional and personal dimension of reading seriously as a productive force in any critical enquiry into literature. For the second-year English core subject "Narrative Analysis" I am currently developing a series of interactive podcasts that introduce Felski's four reading modes and model their application to the texts on the syllabus. They are the starting point for a series of learning activities inside and outside the classroom that invite students to explore and articulate their personal engagement with the set texts with a focus on literary form. Together with critical readings, they open the discussion of how students' experiences can be brought into a meaningful dialogue with the existing critical frameworks and the theoretical apparatus of literary studies.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Juliane is a lecturer at La Trobe University and publishes on British and German interwar literature. She is particularly interested in women's writing and the "eudaimonic turn" in literary studies. Her first book, *Femininity and Authorship in the Novels of Elizabeth von Arnim* (Fairleigh Dickinson UP) was published in 2014. Juliane publishes in Teaching and Learning and currently holds La Trobe a Teaching Development Fellowship. She has co-designed the English first- and second-year core subjects with a focus on reading resilience and student engagement.

## WORKSHOP

Judith Seaboyer, University of Queensland

# Fostering the contemplative art of deep reading in a digital age

### ABSTRACT

Students in the humanities don't read; so runs one thread of the debate in the media and the academy around the future of reading in a digital age. This complex problem certainly predates the web, but it is exacerbated by changing technology. Skimming and keyword spotting have become essential techniques for coping with "the pace of information production" (Ziming Liu, 2005), but it's clear constant scanning risks impatience and incompetence when it comes to deep reading. At the same time, online synopses proliferate on sites from eNotes to Shmoop to Wikipedia, and bespoke essays are increasingly easy to access—irksome time-consuming reading for class can be dispensed with altogether! Technology, then, compounds the long-standing habit of cherry-picking just enough from a "compulsory" reading list to achieve a pass. As long as we allow such pragmatic approaches to coursework reading to substitute for the transformative process that is an education in the humanities, we fail our students who may never develop what neuroscientist Maryanne Wolf terms the *contemplative* deep-reading skills that will enable them to explore and engage the texts that scaffold their discipline.

This workshop will discuss theories of reading together with my empirical research that shows feedback-rich online quizzes result in an exponential increase in pre-class reading of the deep, skillful, risky, engaged and profoundly enjoyable kind that depends on what Sven Birkerts has termed "the slow and meditative possession of a book." We will discuss practical ways of adopting or adapting these skills in our classrooms.

### BIOGRAPHY

Judith Seaboyer is a Senior Lecturer in contemporary literature at the University of Queensland. She has been researching resilient student reading since 2012 and has received University of Queensland and national awards for this work. Her publications focus on British and American contemporary fictions and pedagogies of reading.

Rebecca Thompson, University of Queensland

# Reading graphic narrative: encouraging interpretive reading practices

### ABSTRACT

Visually engaging and intellectually stimulating, graphic narrative is fast becoming an integral part of many literature, history and media studies classrooms. Not only are they an interesting alternative to written texts, graphic narratives also provide unique opportunities for explicit teaching of interpretive reading practices. Comics, with their meld of word and

image, encourage a kind of slow, deep reading that draws students' attention to the way they produce meaning from the page in front of them. Additionally, the particular genre of non-fiction or documentary comics connects students with the world, and asks them to form empathetic bonds with people and experiences that might otherwise be beyond them.

In this presentation, I will make a case for reading graphic texts in the classroom and outline some of the theoretical work being done to explore their characteristics and functions. Using examples from Joe Sacco and Shaun Tan, I will demonstrate the kinds of analytical and evaluative processes that can be strengthened by reading graphic narrative and will finish with some ideas for practical strategies and activities for approaching teaching graphic texts.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Bec Thompson is a Research Higher Degree candidate in the School of Communication and Arts at the University of Queensland. Her focus is on the graphic narratives of Joe Sacco and Shaun Tan, and how they interact with human rights discourses, humanitarianism and ethics.

Before taking leave to complete further study, Bec taught Literature and History in secondary schools in Queensland and Victoria. She undertook the role of Leader of Pedagogy, working to improve teaching and learning outcomes across curriculum areas.

#### ROUNDTABLE

Karen Orr Vered, Flinders University

## Taking time for writing and making reading relevant: pedagogy for reading, thinking and writing inside the disciplines

#### ABSTRACT

Since most assessment in the humanities is presented in written forms, instructors often identify writing as a key problem for students and, consequently, a key challenge for teaching. At the same time, assessment of student reading practices occurs less frequently and with less confidence. Is the writing problem equally a reading problem?

Students enter university with little experience in persuasive writing and even less experience in reading the sorts of non-fiction we assign in relation to research practice and theory building. How do we teach students to read and meaningfully experience the non-fiction of research and theory? How do we teach deep reading of non-fiction? How do we increase student accountability for reading?

This presentation will share a set of pedagogical practices designed to teach critical reading of non-fiction through linked writing practices. Informed by approaches developed for Writing across the Curriculum and using Writing to Learn techniques, these collaborative in-class writing tasks help make writing practice less private and increase accountability for reading through visibility. Taking time for writing in tutorial sessions can encourage collaboration on writing and make the connections between reading and writing more explicit. We happily give tutorial time to oral discussion but, outside the creative writing class, we are less inclined to take time for writing. Writing the reading is a powerful learning

experience that teaches reading strategies and connects them explicitly to disciplinary discourse and writing practice. The concepts and methods discussed here may be adapted to suit any discipline and any year level.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Karen Orr Vered is Associate Professor of Screen and Media at Flinders University. She facilitates a university community of practice for Writing Across the Curriculum and Inside the Disciplines. In 2016, she hosted the symposium “From the Margins to the Centre” and was also recognised with an Office of Learning and Teaching citation for “Leadership in pedagogy that moves literacy development from the margins to the core of student learning experience and teaching practice—making writing ‘everyone’s business’.”

#### ROUNDTABLE

##### Joy Wallace, Charles Sturt University

How do we teach and assess “reading” throughout the English major?

I lead the national project on behalf of the Australian Universities Heads of English, supported also by CSU funding, to establish Threshold Learning Outcomes (TLOs) for English. My return to full-time teaching and research in 2017 sees me engaged in and reflecting on the teaching and assignment strategies that best set students on the path to meet the literacy-focused TLOs by third year. This workshop addresses the themes of the conference by focusing on these TLOs, in particular. The aim is to explore, through guided activities, what aspects of “reading” we might be asking for when we set particular learning activities and—importantly—assessments.

This is a practical workshop. Participants will be sent the draft TLOs in advance, and a copy of the Good Practice Guide for English, produced under a recently completed Office for Learning and Teaching funded project, “Designing first year curricula in the humanities and social sciences in the context of discipline threshold standards.” Participants are invited to bring to the workshop examples of learning activities and assessments for any level that guide and/or assess students in specific TLOs. While the Good Practice Guide focuses on first year, the aim of the workshop is to consolidate and explore what TLO-directed learning might look like across the English major.

You are invited to address an issue that this project—and the TLO work by other disciplines—has yet to confront. Even when TLOs have been established, the work has stopped at the “what”: that is, what skills and knowledges do we expect graduates in the discipline to have? We still have much work to do to establish and benchmark “how much” or “to what degree” a particular skill or knowledge needs to be evidenced at any level for the design of sequenced curricula. We will attempt to answer that question, at least for the reading-centred TLOs.

Joy Wallace is Senior Lecturer in English at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst. She was for seven years Associate Dean Learning and Teaching (ADLT) in the Faculty of Arts. She was a member of a project team of ADLTs that won an Office for Learning and Teaching grant to investigate the design of First Year curricula in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities in the context of discipline Threshold Learning Outcomes (TLOs) and leads the national project to establish TLOs for English.

Ika Willis, University of Wollongong

# Always Historicise: Reading the History of Reading

## ABSTRACT

In *From Codex to Hypertext: Reading at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*, Anouk Lang writes that reading in this moment of print/digital transition is characterised by “hybrid practices...a meshing of old and new technologies and established and emergent modes of interaction,” with “many points of continuity...between [contemporary] modes of reading...and those of previous eras” (2012, 4).

With Lang, I believe that we can best understand contemporary reading regimes by placing them in a comparative historical context, exploring “complex patterns of continuity and change.” The importance of this insight for the twenty-first century literary studies classroom is twofold. Firstly, as teachers, by historicising, and recognising the hybridity of the contemporary moment, we can escape the false dichotomy between cyber-utopian celebrations of all things digital and apocalyptic predictions of an irreversible decline in deep reading. We can develop teaching practices based on a better understanding of the relationship between our own reading practices and those of our students. Secondly, historicising gives students tools for reflecting on, owning and developing their own reading practices, both as readers of literary texts and as emerging researchers.

In this paper, I flesh out these arguments using examples from my experience teaching a second-year undergraduate subject that uses book history, media history and reception theory to explore the long history of reading practices in their relationship to technological and social change. I conclude by offering some suggestions about how these insights might inform practice in the literary studies classroom more broadly.

## BOIGRAPHY

Ika Willis is Senior Lecturer in English Literatures at the University of Wollongong, with a background in Classics and Cultural Studies. Her work in literary theory focuses on reception, broadly conceived, and she has published on texts from Virgil's *Aeneid* to *Harry Potter* fan fiction. She has just completed a book on *Reception* for Routledge's New Critical Idiom series.