

MAY 27-29

CONFERENCE **C**
DYSTOPIA
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A

Organized by Imagining the Impossible

Funded by IRFD, Independent Research Fund Denmark //
DFF, Danmarks Frie Forskningsfond



ITI TEAM

Utopia & Dystopia Conference is organized by the two-year international project and Danish IRFD research network *Imagining the Impossible: The Fantastic as Media Entertainment and Play*.

It is done in collaboration with the Institute for the Study of Culture, SDU and is funded by IRFD, Independent Research Fund Denmark (DFR, Danmarks Frie Forskningsfond)



**DANMARKS FRIE
FORSKNINGSFOND**
INDEPENDENT RESEARCH
FUND DENMARK

STEERING COMMITTEE

Rikke Schubart, SDU

Angela Ndaliansis, SUT

Jakob Ion Wille, KADK

Cecilie Kirstine Thoke Knudsen, SDU

Sarah Sander, KU

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**DANMARKS FRIE
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INDEPENDENT RESEARCH
FUND DENMARK

Welcome

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Genres of the fantastic reign supreme in all media entertainment – film, television, games, toys, theme parks. We are surrounded by superheroes, fantastic beasts, courageous princesses, battles in dystopian futures, and quests to discover utopian dreams. The fantastic, once considered the domain of children, has become respected for its ability to break existing boundaries of normality and imagine the impossible and the unknown.

This conference invites new research on the fantastic. What theories capture the specific nature of the fantastic? What purposes do fantastic genres serve in terms of evolution, adaptation, sensory pleasures, and cognitive as well as social uses? How do we create fantastic stories across media platforms and in different aesthetic forms? How is worldbuilding used to create transmedia stories of the fantastic? How do new technologies and media aesthetics affect the fantastic in terms of production, distribution, and fan uses?

How do themes of utopia and dystopia figure in the universes of fantastic media?

The conference welcomes multiple theoretical approaches and perspectives. The aim is to understand the use, function, and role of the fantastic today; to engage with its various expressions across media; and to ask what powers and appeal all its genres hold, from fantasy and fairy tales to science fiction and supernatural horror. We believe the fantastic is especially suited to ask questions about human existence, pressing questions in times of today's pandemic (Covid-19) and ecological crisis, and with this call we want to ask those questions.

Timezone Disclaimer. Due to the fact that we are hosting the conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, the listed times in the schedule are according to Central European Central Time.

On behalf of the ITI team,

Welcome!

A series of white dots of varying sizes arranged in a curved, upward-sloping pattern in the bottom right corner of the page.

How to experience the conference



The UTOPIA & DYSTOPIA Conference on the Fantastic in Media Entertainment will take place online on Zoom via this link:

[CONFERENCE LINK](#)

Preceding the conference, the participants have uploaded their 15-20 minute presentations online at this link:

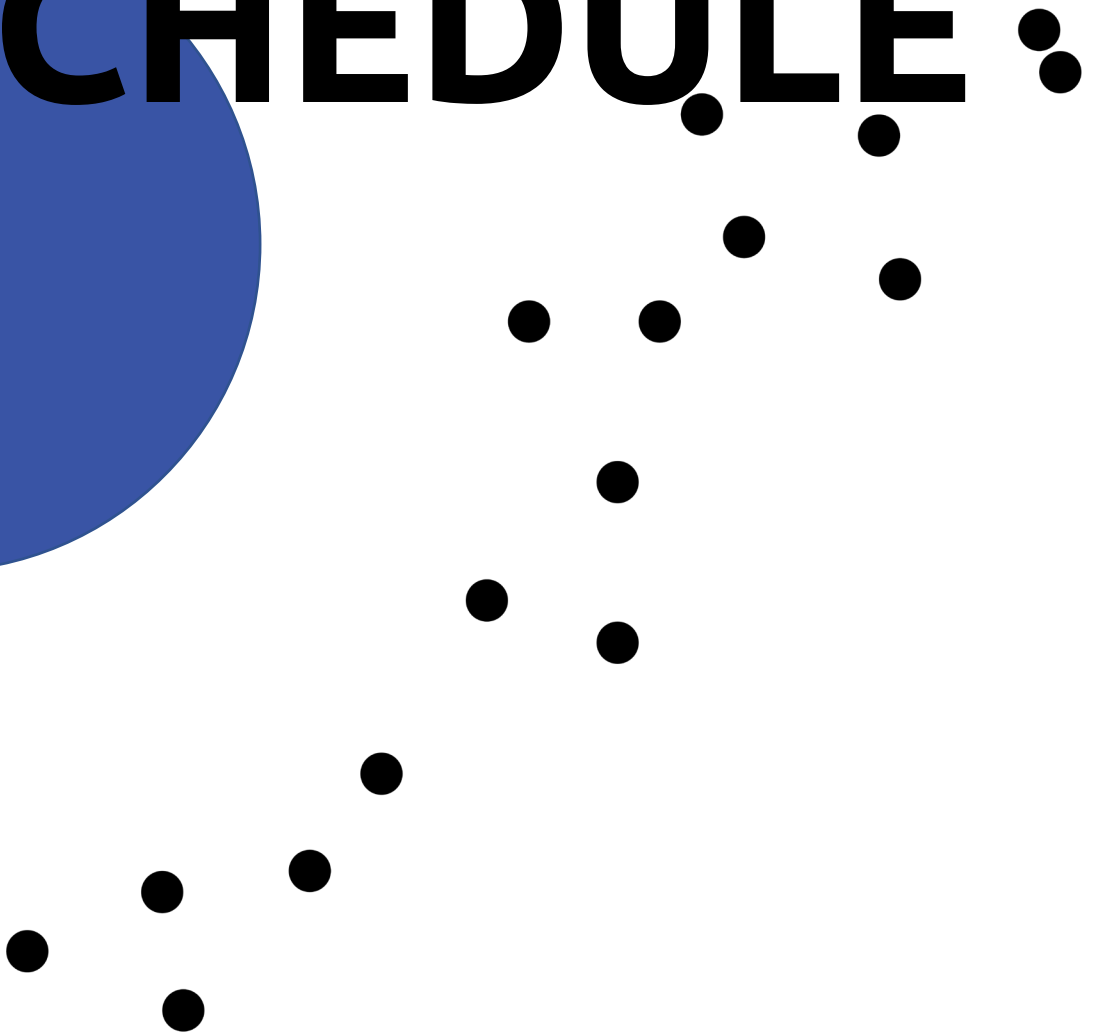
[PRESENTATIONS LINK](#)

The panels will assume attendees have watched the corresponding presentations and build their discussions upon this with a steering chair on each panel.

The panels will have time for questions from viewers and must be within the time limits, as the following presentations will take place on the same Zoom link.

Thank you for attending our conference!

UTOPIA & DYSTOPIA SCHEDULE :





DAY 1

Thursday, May 27, 2021

The time is stated in Central European Time (GMT+2)

08.00-08.15	Welcome by Head of Institute Per Krogh Hansen & Rikke Schubart
08.15-09.15	Panel 1: US Consciousness: Reality through the Fantastic
09.15-09.30	Break
09.30-10.30	Panel 6: Dystopia 1: Empathy & Morality
10.30-10.45	Break
10.45-11.45	Panel 5: Fantastic Women 1: Trauma and Dark Play
11.45-12.00	Break
12.00-13.00	Panel 11: Television and Storyworld Design
13.00-13.15	Break
13.15-14.15	Panel 9: Fantastic Women 2: Smash, Subvert and Rework
14.15-14.30	Break
14.30-16.30	Writing the Nordic Fantastic: <i>Author Panel</i> Cecilie Eken, Josefine Ottesen and Mats Strandberg
16.30-16.45	Break
16.45-17.45	Panel 19: Fantastic Worlds 1: Solarpunk and afro-futurism
17.45-18.00	Break
18.00-19.00	Panel 16: Failed Utopia
19.00-19.15	Break
19.15-20.15	Panel 20: Fantastic Worlds 2: Beasts, Monsters and Dragons

DAY 2

Friday, May 28, 2021

The time is stated in Central European Time (GMT+2)

08.00-09.00	Panel 3: Gender and Questioning Power
09.00-09.15	Break
09.15-10.15	Panel 12: Reproductive Dystopias across Media
10.15-10.30	Break
10.30-11.30	Panel 7: Game worlds and contexts
11.30-11.45	Break
11.45-12.45	Panel 13: Interacting and Immersiveness
12.45-14.15	<i>Online hangout (Bring your lunch)</i>
14.15-15.15	Panel 14: Parallel realities and the bio-fantastic
15.15-15.30	Break
15.30-17.30	Keynote 1: Monsters in the Snow: Slavic Fantasy (Irina Golovacheva, Julia Kuznetski, Larisa Fialkova, Marina Balina)
17.30-17.45	Break
17.45-18.45	Panel 17: Dystopia 2: Reflections
18.45-19.00	Break
19.00-20.00	Panel 18: Sci-fi, Bio-Politics, and Nature

DAY 3

Saturday, May 29, 2021

The time is stated in Central European Time (GMT+2)

09.15-10.15	Panel 4: Dystopia 3: Imagining Catastrophe
10.15-10.30	Break
10.30-12.30	Designing the Fantastic: <i>Creative Industry Panel</i> (Esben Toft Jacobsen, Gunnar Wille, Isabella Eklöf)
12.30-12.45	Break
12.45-13.45	Panel 10: Worldbuilding in Comics and Graphic Novels
13.45-14.00	Break
14.00-15.00	Panel 15: Haunted Spaces
15.00-15.15	Break
15.15-16.15	Panel 8: Scripts, Worlds and Writing
16.15-16.30	Break
16.30-18.30	<i>Keynote 2: Prof. Jonathan Gratch, Director of Virtual Human Research, Inst. For Creative Technologies, University of Southern California</i>
18.30-18.45	Break
18.45-19.45	Panel 21: Fantastic Worlds 3: Appropriation and politics

UTOPIA & DYSTOPIA TALKS

Day 1

Thursday 27th May

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[PRESENTATIONS](#)



Panel 1:

US Consciousness: Reality through the Fantastic

**Honore,
Christie**

The X-Files:
Critical Realism
in the Fantastic

**Howell,
Amanda**

The American
Dream and the
American
Nightmare: US
Social History in
the Funhouse
Mirror of Jordan
Peele's *US* (2019)

**Webster,
Guy**

'Weird
Modernism':
Mapping the
Relationship
Between Weird
Fiction and
Modernist Affect

Time

08:15-09:15



Theme

Explore American
anxieties through the
reflections of fiction
and real life in
dystopic scenarios.

Chair

Zoë Spratt

Panel 6:

Dystopia 1: Empathy & Morality

Harkin, Stephanie

Slaying the Wolf and
Playing the Wolf:
Reapproaching
The Last of Us series

Favaro, Marco

Antiheroes in the
Rubble: Exploring
the possibility of
heroism in the
dystopias, from
Alan Moore to
The Last of Us

Marchetti, Emanuela

Human Rights Games
and Negative
Brainstorming -
Dystopia and Sense
Making in Games

Bouzó, Xiana Vázquez

From enmity to
empathy: the
evolution of
dinosaurs in the
Jurassic Park and
Jurassic World
sagas

Time

09:30-10:30

Chair

Stephen Joyce

Theme

How do we understand
morality in fiction, and
particularly in dystopic
scenarios?

Panel 5:

Fantastic Women 1: Trauma and Dark Play

Schubart, Rikke

Physical Trauma
as Deep and
Dark Play in
Maleficent and
*Maleficent:
Mistress of Evil*

Green, Stephanie

Playing at being
a Superhero:
Trish Walker in
Jessica Jones

Schepp, Lukas

Fantastic
Maturation:
Overcoming
Trauma Through
Disobedient
Symbolism in
Guillermo del
Toro's *Pan's
Labyrinth* and
*The Devil's
Backbone*

Time

10:45-11:45

Chair

Delilah Bermudez
Brataas

Theme

What hides under the
surface of a person?
Why are we drawn to
dark fantasy?

Panel 11:

Television and Storyworld Design

**Hilarius–
Kalkau, Heidi**

A Narrative Investigation –
with focus on
contemporary
Danish
television
dramas

**Hermida,
Alberto &
Hernández-
Santaolalla,
Víctor**

Technological
alienation and
dystopian detour
in alternative
worlds: Cognitive-
aesthetic
interactions in tv-
series

**Wille, Jakob &
Steijn, Arthur**

Flash Forward -
Story World and
Speculative
Design teaching

Chair
Jesper Juul

Theme
A discussion on
aesthetic techniques in
film and TV to promote
certain moods and
story worlds

Time
12:00-13:00

Panel 9:

Fantastic Women 2: Smash, Subvert and Rework

**Coopey,
Louise**

Representation,
Otherness and
Fantastic
Storyworlds:
Smashing
Gender Binaries
and Reworking
Identities in
Game of Thrones

**Fabricius,
Charlotte
Johanne**

Imagining the
Super-Girl: The
Fantastic in
Contemporary
Superhero
Comics

**Toft-Nielsen,
Claus**

Fantastic
franchising.
Reading Star
Wars toys as
paratextual
gendering of a
fan space

Time

13:15-14:15

Chair

Sharon Khalifa-Gueta

Theme

How do
tackle the
This panel
women are
across new

modern fictions
question of gender?
explores how
portrayed
media.



Josefine Ottesen

Another extremely popular Danish author of books for children and young adults in Denmark. She too is especially known for her fantasy and fairytale novels and has also received many awards for her storytelling. She is among other works known for "Regnbuestenen", "Eventyret om Fjeren og Rosen" and "Dæmonernes hvisken".

**Time:
14:30-16:30**

Mats Strandberg

A best-selling author who has been hailed as "the Swedish Stephen King". His novel THE END, asks questions such as: How do you want to spend the last weeks? What do you want to say to the ones you love? How does it feel to know the exact date and time of your death? THE END has been translated into 15 languages and won multiple awards such as the IBBY Honour list and was an honoured title by the Global Literature in Libraries Initiative.

Cecilie Eken

A very well known Danish author with a bunch of literary awards behind her. She has a broad range of genres in her authorship but is especially known for her fantasy and fairytale novels. She is known for books like "Sikkas fortælling", "Mørkebarnet" og "Karanagalaksen-serien".

ITI is happy to present a panel filled with some of the greatest Nordic minds in fiction.

**Chair
Heidi Philipsen**

AUTHOR PANEL

**Writing the Nordic
Fantastic**

Panel 19:

Fantastic Worlds 1: Solarpunk and afro-futurism

**Atasoy,
Emrah**

Hope in Speculative
Literature: Utopia &
Dystopia on the
Screen

**Lubawa,
Katarzyna**

Utopia Inspired
by African and
Asian Cultures:
Literary
Realization of
Solarpunk Ideas

**Stephan,
Matthias**

Unknown
Depths: Utopia,
Cli-Fi and The
Supernatural in
Nnedi Okorofor's
Lagoon

Time

16:45-17:45

Theme

Travel with the
participations into a
discussion of a
fantastic future and
technology.

Chair

Thomas Kristjansen

Panel 16: Failed Utopia

**Golovacheva,
Irina**

War, Revolution,
and Numbers in
Brave New World

**Schaefer,
Alan**

Fantasy,
Dystopia, and
Detective
Instinct: Jess
Franco's
Diabolical Dr. Z
and *Attack of
the Robots*

**Spiegel,
Simon**

THE EPCOT
FILM – Walt
Disney's Failed
Utopia

Time

18:00-19:00

Theme

A discussion on the
bleeding boundaries of
dystopia and failed utopias.

Chair

Sabrina Mittermeier



Panel 20:

Fantastic Worlds 2: Beasts, Monsters and Dragons

Feldt, Laura

Religion, magic, and fantastic beasts: world-construction and media aesthetics in *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*

Bacchilega, Cristina & Greenhill, Pauline

Monsters in the Forest: *Pokot* (2017), "Little Red Riding Hood" Crimes, and Ecologies of the Real and Fantastic

Khalifa-Gueta, Sharon

Daenerys Targaryen and the Woman and the Dragon Motif

Theme

Dive into the fantastic world of beasts and how they reflect our human nature.

Time

19:15-20:15

Chair

Ida Yoshinaga

UTOPIA & DYSTOPIA TALKS

Day 2

Friday 27th May

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Panel 3:

Gender and Questioning Power

Austin, Izzie

The Power of Friendship: Community Building and Queer Solidarity in *Cloudpunk* and *Motor Crush*

Sprott, Zoë E.

The 'Great Un-Thoring': Grappling with Hegemonic Masculinity and Patriarchal Power in *Thor: Ragnarok*

Brugué, Laura Luque

Subverting Gendered Magic Conventions in Fantasy: Pratchett's Portrayal of Witches and Wizard's Magic in the Tiffany Aching series

Ilina, Olga

Gender aspect in Modern Russian dystopia of Victor Pelevin

Theme

How does the fantastic play with representation of gender and sex?
How does that lead to shifts in power?

Chair

Emanuela Marchetti

Time

08:00-09:00

Panel 12:

Reproductive Dystopias across Media

Sebastian-Martin, Miguel

Robotic Sex-Dolls or Terminators in Drag? The Ambivalences of *Westworld* (2016) as an Estranged Critique of the Commodification of Reproductive Labour(ers)"

Lopez-Serrano, Lucia

Fighting the Reproductive Dystopia: Strategies of Resistance in Leni Zumas' *Red Clocks* (2018)"

Guerrero, Paula Barba

Trading (M)other Flesh: Reproductive Bioeconomies in Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* Trilogy



Time
09:15-10:15

Theme

What are we made of?
How are we made?
Join the discussion on how bodies work in the fantastic.

Chair

Marc Malmdorf Andersen

Panel 7:

Game Worlds and Contexts

**Joyce,
Stephen**

Fantasy Video
Games and
Transmedia
Worldbuilding

**Walther, Bo
Kampmann &
Larsen, Lasse**

Even Better
than the Real
Thing: Thoughts
on Epic Fiction,
Wild Historicity,
and Player

Empowerment
in the Realm of
Computer
Games and the
Fantastic

Juul, Jesper

What just
happened?
Subjective
Realities in
Independent
Video Games

Time
10:30-11:30

Chair
Susana Tosca

Theme

Plug in and play when this panel presents their ideas and thoughts on video game worlds – from franchises to in-game experiences.

Panel 13:

Interacting and Immersiveness

**Christensen,
Jørgen Riber**

The three
fantastic worlds
of Location
Based Mobile
Gaming

**Mittermeier,
Sabrina**

The Society of
Explorers and
Adventurers
(S.E.A.):
Fantastic
Immersive
Storytelling at
Disney's Theme
Parks

**Andersen,
Tem Frank**

Making the
Fantastic Real:
From Design
Fiction to
Engineering
Fandom

Time

11:45-12:45

Chair

Mathias Clasen

Theme

Where do the lines blur
between the media and the
viewer? Join this panel for a
discussion on audience
immersion and participation.

Panel 14:

Parallel realities and the bio-fantastic

Hill, Rachel

A Pop Star
Demonology:
Planetary
Personifications
and The Fantastic
in Grimes

**Imen, EL
BEDOUI**

Bio-fantastic as
an aesthetic
concept: bio art
as a field of
research

Ekman, Stefan

Urban Fantasy: A
Genre of Mixing
and Mashing

Time

14:15-15:15

Chair

Thomas Kristjansen

Theme

How do we consider the fantastic?
Whether it is in nature or in the urban
or even in music, how does it reflect
in the environment around us?

KEYNOTE 1

Monsters in the Snow: Slavic Fantasy

ITI is pleased to present a panel that will explore the dark mythos of Slavic and Soviet Fantasy.

Time

15:30-17:30

Chair
Rikke Schubart

Julia Kuznetski

**Contemporary Russian Dystopia
on Netflix: To The Lake**

She is the author of a number of publications in these areas, for example *Women on the Move: Body, Memory and Femininity in Present-day Transnational Diasporic Writing*, co-edited with Silvia Pellicer-Ortin (Routledge, 2018) and, most recently, "Disempowerment and Bodily Agency in Margaret Atwood's *The Testaments* and *The Handmaid's Tale* TV Series"

Irina Golovacheva

**Gogol's Monsters in
the 21st Century Film**

Her major publications include three books in Russian: 1) *A Guide to "Brave New World" and Around* (Moscow, 2017); 2) *Fantastika and the Fantastic* (Saint Petersburg, 2013); 3) *Science and Literature: the Archeology of Aldous Huxley's Knowledge* (Saint Petersburg, 2008).

KEYNOTE 1

Monsters in the Snow: Slavic Fantasy

Time

15:30-17:30

ITI is pleased to present a panel that will explore the dark myths of Slavic and Soviet Fantasy.

Larisa Fialkova

*Fantastic Kiev/Kyiv between
Baroque and Modern*

Published papers on fantastic in Bulgakov's, Andrei Bely's, Remizov's writings as well as on contemporary Russian and Ukrainian fantastika, e.g., "M. Bulgakov, A. Akhmatova and N. Gumilev as Literary Characters in Contemporary Russian Fantastic Fiction" and "Alternative Slavic Fantasy of American Writers"

Marina Balina

*Carving a Model Citizen:
Screen Adventures of
Soviet Pinocchio*

The focus of her scholarship is on historical and theoretical aspects of 20th century Russian children's literature. She is editor and co - editor of eleven volumes, most recently on Hans Christian Andersen and Russia (with Mads Sohl Jessen, Ben Hellman, and Johs. Norregaard Frandsen), University Press of Southern Denmark, 2020.

Panel 17:

Dystopia 2: Reflections

**Graulund,
Rune**

Desert Dystopias:
From Dune to
Mad Max

**Taylor,
Audrey**

Disability and
Dystopia in
Anne McCaffrey

**Tosca,
Susana &
Klastrup,
Lisbeth**

Performing
Dystopia:
Transmedial
World Memes

Time

17:45-18:45

Chair
Emrah Atasoy

Theme

Discover the multitude
of nuances to how we
experience dystopias.

Panel 18:

Sci-fi, Bio-Politics, and Nature

**Hardack,
Richard**

The Fantastic
Nature of
Corporations:
Outer as Inner
Space in Avatar

**Mousoutzanis,
Aris**

Bare Life, States
of Exception
and the
Biopolitics of
Dystopia

**Rieder,
John**

Genre and the
Fantastic in
Mass Culture

Chair
Jakob Wille

Time
19:00-20:00

Theme
How does environment reflect
the human state of mind in the
fantastic? This panel uncovers
how we are tied to our
surroundings.

UTOPIA & DYSTOPIA TALKS



Day 3

Saturday 29th May

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Panel 4:

Dystopia 3: Imagining Catastrophe

**Vladimirovna
Demkina,
Anna**

The Images of
Children and the
Ecological
Catastrophe: The
Fear of the Future
in the Late Soviet
Science Fiction
and Movies

**Ndalianis,
Angela**

Covid-19,
pandemic media
and the social
imaginary

Time
09:15-10:15

Chair
Angela Ndalianis

Theme
What world are we leaving
behind? This panel
discusses the dystopic
catastrophes we face,
whether ecological or viral.

Creative Industry Panel

Designing the Fantastic

ITI is proud to present a panel filled with some of amazing fantastic fiction creators in film and TV.

Gunnar Wille

This Danish writer, director and illustrator, will also be attending our conference and give his take on the Fantastic in Scandinavian Media Entertainment. He is especially known for writing and illustrating several children's books such as "Skrumpen fra det ydre rum", "Magiske Mads" and "Tryllefløjten".

Esben Toft Jacobsen

The Danish animation director, creator and visual supervisor will here be giving his perspective on Designing the Fantastic in Scandinavian Media Entertainment. He is, beyond his other amazing works, known for his huge part as a writer and director in the creation of the Netflix hit-series "The Rain" and the beautiful 2011 animation film "The Great Bear".

Isabella Eklöf

This Swedish writer and director will be attending our conference with huge works in her filmography. She is among other works known for writing and directing award winning movies such as "Border" and "Holiday"

Chair
Jakob Ion Wille

Time:
10:30-12:30

Panel 10:

Worldbuilding in Comics and Graphic Novels

Jiménez-Varea, Jesús

Real-World
Logics as the
Cognitive Door to
Dystopia: Alan
Moore's
Influence on the
Serial Figure of
the Superman in
Contemporary
Narratives

Brataas, Delilah Bermudez

Restart:
Fantasizing
Creation,
Cosmogony and
Utopic Nothing-
ness in Lucifer
and The Sandman
Universe

Albertsen, Anita Nell Bech

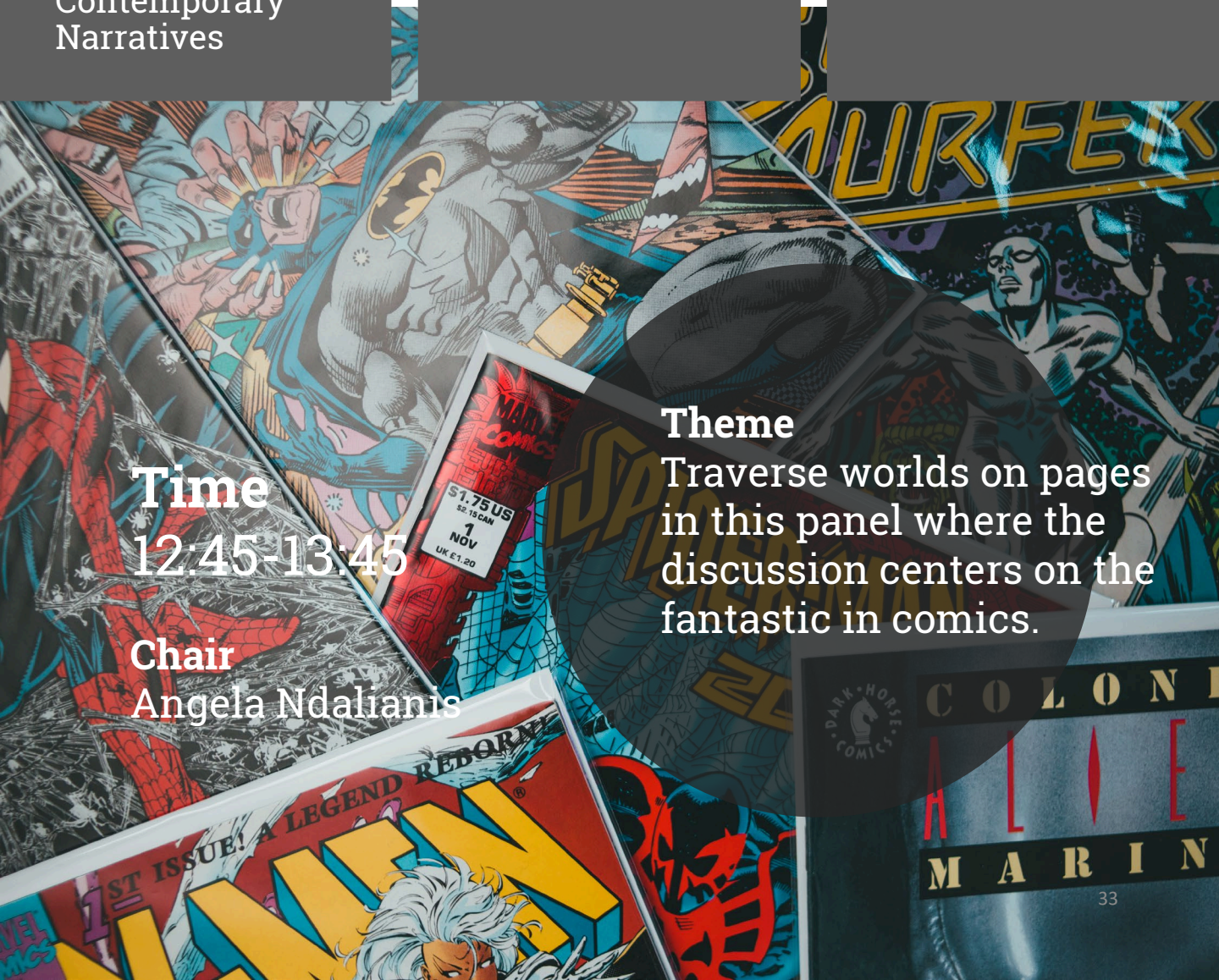
Transmedia
Worldbuilding
and Mashup
Cosmology in the
Penny Dreadful
TV series and
Comic Book
Series

Time
12:45-13:45

Chair
Angela Ndaliansis

Theme

Traverse worlds on pages
in this panel where the
discussion centers on the
fantastic in comics.



Panel 15: Haunted Spaces

**Andersen, Marc
Malmdorf &
Clasen, Mathias**

Playing with Fear:
Empirical
Investigations in a
Haunted House

**Schweitzer,
Dahlia**

The Ghost Down the
Street: How (and
Why) Haunted
Homes Have
Invaded Hollywood

**Kjeldgaard-
Christiansen,
Jens**

The Voice of Evil: An
Empirical Analysis of
Regan's Voices in
The Exorcist

Bøgh, Jonas

The Danish co-
founder of Dystopia
Entertainment
which is a group of
event-designers that
designs and
arranges horrifying,
interactive events
all over Denmark.

Theme

Enter the horror space with us
as we discuss the phenomena
of haunted spaces – both in
academic, films and real-life
entertainment experiences.

Time

14:00-15:00

Chair

**Dahlia
Schweitzer**

Panel 8:

Scripts, Worlds and Writing

**Bøggild,
Jacob**

Hans Christian
Andersen and
the Literary
Fantastic

Koch, Ulla

Fantastic
Knowledge -
ancient scripts
as fantastic
bridges to
knowledge

**Kristjansen,
Thomas**

How the Brain
Builds Fantasy
Worlds

Time
15:15-16:15

Theme

This panel is a small
masterclass in literary
creation – from how the
classics did it, to how your
own brain creates fantasy.

Chair
Katarzyna Lubawa

KEYNOTE 2

Fantastic AI Beasts: Fantasy or Inevitable?

**Prof.
Jonathan
Gratch**

**Director of Virtual Human
Research, Inst. For Creative
Technologies, University of
Southern California**

Chair
Rikke Schubart

Time
16:30-18:30

ITI is pleased to present a keynote from Prof. Gratch, whose research focuses on computational models of human cognitive and social processes, especially emotion, and explores these models' role advancing psychological theory and in shaping human-machine interaction.

Panel 21:

Fantastic Worlds 3: Appropriation and politics

**Thompson,
Kirsten
Moana**

Global Fantasy
and Indigeneity:
Appropriation,
Storytelling and
New Markets

**Hundertmark,
Svea**

'Who's the
unfairest of
them all?' –
Depicting the
Political
Dimension of
Fairy Tales in
21st Century
Fairy Tale Films

**Yoshinaga,
Ida**

The Fantastic
Precariat: The
Politics of
"Scripting" and
the Participatory
Magicks of
Immaterial Labor
Inequality

Chair

Richard Hardack

Time

18:45-19:45

Theme

Finish out the
conference with this
insightful panel on
the impact of the
fantastic in the real
world and its politics.

Interested in more...?

Check out our website for more network activities such as:

**IMAGINING THE IMPOSSIBLE:
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR THE
FANTASTIC IN CONTEMPORARY MEDIA**

Our very own journal which is set to come out mid 2022!

See more on our website:

<https://www.imaginingtheimpossible.com/>

