



SRN 2026 SHA(1)PES OF THE FUTURE

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TABLE READS

Coordinated by Max Gee

Rex OBANO
Royal Holloway University of London (UK)

Young Soyinka

(excerpt of script for feature film, part of PhD project)

SESSION 0 (Conference opener)

TABLE READS 1

ROOM NHHB G.05

Scheduled on WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER, 3.30 pm

ABSTRACT

The main argument of my PhD is to identify cultural neocolonialism in a series of four Black British screenplays – *I am Not A Witch* (Nyoni, 2017), *Farming* (Akinuoye-Agbaje, 2018), *The Last Tree* (Amoo, 2019) and *Rocks* (Ikoko/Wilson, 2020). This script is part of the practice part of my PhD. I attempt to write a non-neo-colonial screenplay with the analytical elements researched in my exegesis with the added elements of Nigeria spiral storytelling and spirituality in this case *Yorùbá* spirituality.

Young Soyinka is about Wole Soyinka's attempt to broker a peace deal before the start of the Biafra War in Nigeria in 1965 which led him to be imprisoned accused of spying. During his imprisonment he is urged by his cellmate Ewon to continue his activism by writing a play to be performed by the prisoners. On his release, it is discovered that he spent the last 18 months in solitary confinement and that leads him to revalue his activism, his writing and the effect of his confinement

PRESENTER'S BIO

REX OBANO has written for the stage, television, radio and film. He was also a recipient of the Roland Rees Award. He has been part of the writers' rooms for the television series *Black Tudors* (Silverprint) and *Sitting Bul* (Stephen David Entertainment/History Channel) and he has written episodes for the award-winning *Rastamouse* (Three Stones Media/CBBC) and *Shakespeare and Hathaway* (BBC). And he was one of the writers of the series *Faith, Hope and Glory* (BBC Radio 4 - Winner of Outstanding Achievement at BBC Audio Awards 2026).

Siri SENJE
Kristiania University of Applied Sciences (Norway)

Henrik & Suzannah

(script excerpts from four-part limited series)

SESSION 14

TABLE READS 2

ROOM JHB 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER, 3.30 pm

ABSTRACT

Henrik & Suzannah is a four-episode drama about the turbulent years in the life of Henrik and Suzannah Ibsen, before his breakthrough as a playwright with *Brand* in 1866. The drama places the frequently marginalized Suzannah at the centre, offering a new perspective on her character and her contribution to Ibsen's authorship. Instead of a stern artist's wife who drags her husband home from the taverns, we meet a well-read, strong-willed and imaginative woman. Suzannah also lends us a pair of empathetic eyes through which to see the unapproachable «sphinx», Henrik Ibsen. The screenplay's feminine perspective offers a new take on Ibsen's biography and a new angle from which to view his works.

Henrik & Suzannah was developed as part of the three-year artistic research project *Writing the Writer*. The project examines biographical fiction as a form, and the screenplay as a poetic genre.

PRESENTER'S BIO

SIRI SENJE is a screenwriter and professor of screenwriting at Kristiania University of Applied Sciences. She holds a doctorate in screenwriting from the Norwegian film school and is currently project manager of the artistic research project *Writing the Writer* (presented at www.senje.no). Siri has written for theatre, film and television, and her research on script development, feedback methodology, and biographical drama has been published in *Journal of Screenwriting*, *Norsk Medietidsskrift*, *Rushprint*, and in Palgrave's *Handbook of Script Development*.

Max GEE
Salford University (UK)

I Didn't Mean to Make You Follow Me

(excerpt of script for experimental short film)

SESSION 0 (Conference opener)

TABLE READS 1

ROOM NHHB G.05

Scheduled on WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER, 3.30 pm

ABSTRACT

This short screenplay is the third in a series of practice research pieces where I use sentient object perspectives to explore horror conventions. However, this is the first screenplay, with the other pieces being short prose stories. In this screenplay, I experiment with different techniques to visualise the agency of a sentient garden fountain, some of which will challenge preconceptions of screenwriting rules.

An ancient ritual object is formed, forgotten and re-purposed, this fountain is a focal point garden. But what happens when it starts to exert its will over the humans that own it? This screenplay charts a series of encounters, part fable, part dream, part nightmare: the fountain has a purpose, and its will cannot be denied.

PRESENTER'S BIO

MAX GEE is a Lecturer in Film Studies and Film Production at University of Salford. She holds a PhD by Creative Practice in Screenwriting from the University of York. She was Co-Investigator on AHRC BRAID funded research project, Shared Post-Human

Imagination: Human-AI Collaboration in Media Creation and is a Co-Investigator for Innovate UK funded project The AIMICI Companion Tool - upskilling AI competencies in creative industries. Her award-winning short films Terminal (2019) and Standing Woman (2021) screened at a range of international film festivals. Max has published on posthuman noir; folk horror, gender and Japanese survival horror; her practice research screenplay Golems Inc. in Sightlines: Filmmaking in the Academy and on a maternal sentient bathtub in Horror and Mother/hoods in a Global Cultural Imaginary (upcoming 2026).

Kate BARRATT
QUT–Queensland University of Technology (Australia)

Hannah Got Stuck on the Stairs

(excerpt of script for feature film, part of PhD project)

SESSION 14

TABLE READS 2

ROOM JHB 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 1.45 pm

ABSTRACT

This script forms the creative artefact for my creative-led PhD. The research is guided by a proposed narrative framework (based on mumblecore research), the *Three Mirrors of Reflexivity* (cinematic, filmic, and self-reflexivity), which I argue is present across a range of mumblecore films.

LOGLINE: Ever wondered what your alternate reality would be? Hannah finds herself stuck in her alternate reality that seems to resemble a mumblecore film with no kids, the perfect job and lots of sex. What could go wrong?

PRESENTER'S BIO

KATE BARRATT has worked on local content in the Australian film industry in production and casting, along with US productions including HBO's *War in the Pacific* and *Matrix II & III*. She has produced and directed documentaries, one of which *Stiletto Girls* won the audience choice awards at the WOW Film Festival. She has been working on novels and short stories. Her script, *The Star Child* was selected as best unproduced screenplay at the British Animation Film Festival. She is currently a PHD candidate in creative-led research at QUT–Queensland University of Technology, Australia. Kate is a film and television lecturer.

Clarissa MAZON MIRANDA

AMF–Antonio Meneghetti Faculdade (Antonio Mereghetti College, Brazil)

Trail Runner

(excerpt of script for drama/comedy TV series)

SESSION 0 (Conference opener)

TABLE READS 2

ROOM NHHB G.05

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 1.45 pm

ABSTRACT

As part of the work of the Language Excellence Center of Antonio Meneghetti Faculdade, we are discussing the new forms of series that have been emerging thanks to multimedia platforms. This semester, the interest of the researchers is specially focused on series with short duration episodes. So, we are experimenting to write scripts that would fit this format so that, afterward, we can study the specificities of this kind of script and produce papers regarding it.

LOGLINE: Mary suffered a love trauma and struggles to recover from it: she is very insecure about herself and afraid of rejection. By living a new love story and chasing the dream of participating in a famous trail run adventure in the mountains of South America, she thinks she might have found a solution. But her true answer seems to be inside of her still to be discovered.

PRESENTER'S BIO

CLARISSA MAZON MIRANDA is a Brazilian researcher, screenwriter and journalist. In 2005, she completed the Certified Program in Screenwriting of the National Film and TV School (Scotland). In 2023, she completed the Master in Screenwriting of The Core Entertainment School (Spain). She holds a PhD in Literature from the Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (Brazil) since 2018. Her PhD thesis explores the intersemiotic translation of novels into movie scripts. She holds a Master in Mediatic Communication from the same institution (2012) and BA in Journalism from the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (2005). She works as a lecturer at the Antonio Meneghetti Faculdade, as PR and international affairs assistant for the Fundação Antonio Mereghetti, as a journalist for the magazine *Performance Líder* and as free-lance screenwriter. She has worked as director, producer and screenwriter of two feature documentaries and 11 short documentaries. She is a member of the Screenwriting Research Network, serving as Early Career Researchers' rep in the Executive Council, and a member of the Association of Adaptation Studies.

Andy THATCHER
University of Bristol (UK)

The Rewetting of Red Ball Mire

(excerpt of script for feature film, part of PhD project)

SESSION 14

TABLE READS 2

ROOM JHB 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 1.45 pm

ABSTRACT

My research explores the complex, conflicting and multiple meanings of English common land. Abandoning experimental documentary forms, I found a screenplay the best way of gathering these together through fictional characters and a fictionalised common to represent how they interact. *The Rewetting of Red Ball Mire* demonstrates folk gothic and melancholy as more widely useful in understanding place-based complex human/more-than-human entanglements, nostalgia and trauma.

LOGLINE: When Ruth inherits a cottage, she and her partner Perran revive their common's annual beating-the-bounds. As cows, wildflowers and an ancient African doll encroach, the couple learn Walton Common's bloody history – and why there's always a Ruth at Hunger Hill Cottage.

PRESENTER'S BIO

ANDY THATCHER is completing a PhD in Film and TV at the University of Bristol which explores ways of representing the meanings of English common land using screen media. In 2026, he fictionalised his research for the *Gothic Practice* special edition of *Gothic Studies* and his chapter on *Gwledd* is forthcoming in the collection *Georgic Ecogothic*. His chapters on *Twin Peaks* will appear in the collection *Folk Horror on TV*, and on noir in the *Routledge Handbook of Urban Wyrld*. In 2024, he was visiting fellow at Stavanger University, Norway. His film work recently screened at Musei Civici dl Spoleto, Italy, and at the International Gothic Association biennial conference in Hull.

WORKSHOPS

Dee HUGHES
Bournemouth University (UK)

Team-based learning workshop

SESSION 13
WORKSHOP 1
ROOM 303

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

ABSTRACT

Team-based learning (TBL), a widely adopted flipped-classroom pedagogy, has achieved considerable success across numerous academic disciplines. However, its effective integration into arts-based subjects, particularly scriptwriting, remains underexplored. This one-hour workshop, structured into three twenty-minute segments, provides participants with a practical introduction to the operation of TBL when applied specifically to scriptwriting pedagogy. Designed as an introductory experience rather than a comprehensive course, the workshop aims to stimulate critical reflection on the potential benefits and challenges of implementing TBL within a scriptwriting curriculum. It is anticipated that this session will further inform and extend the discussion initiated by my ongoing research.

PRESENTER'S BIO

DEE HUGHES is Lecturer in Screenwriting at Bournemouth University, UK. Before becoming a lecturer Dee worked in the industry, primarily on the BBC1 series Doctors. Other credits and writing experience include writing website reviews, blogs, live events and short films. Presently Dee's doctoral research is focused on the application of Team-based Learning to a Scriptwriting programme. As a qualified TBLC Practitioner Dee has presented at conferences in the Republic of Ireland, the USA and the most recent European symposium at Bournemouth University. His research has also been recognised by the Screenwriting Research Network with a recent publication and the inaugural award for innovation in the teaching of screenwriting.

Phil MATHEWS
Bournemouth University (UK)

Sketching story workshop

SESSION 13
WORKSHOP 2
ROOM 304

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

ABSTRACT

This creative workshop is designed for screenwriters to experiment with sketching and drawing as an approach to developing spatial and physical aspects of their screenplays. Sketching for character development, props locations, theme, pacing and rhythms. This is a session designed for all abilities and no prior drawing skills are required. This is not about aesthetics but rather about visual and spatial development and learning styles. Pencils and paper will be provided in the session.

It is recommended that participants bring embryonic or draft stories to the session to provide a focus for their sketching and scribbling. The aim is to address the visual, spatial and object components within their stories, characters, theme to develop skills beyond the literary. The workshop is designed to be fun, interactive and a chance to explore new skillsets in the development of screenplays.

PRESENTER'S BIO

Dr. PHIL MATHEWS is a Principal Academic in Screenwriting at Bournemouth University, UK and Associate Head of the Media School. Mathews gained his practice-based doctorate in 2018 focused on the area of romance genre and character arcs. Prior to this Mathews wrote for television including the series *Doctors* for BBC1, and co-wrote the BAFTA nominated short *Soft*, 2006. Prior to this Mathews directed pop promos for MTV and worked in special effects make-up. Mathews' research interests cover screenwriting practices, the romance genre, the pedagogy of screenwriting and filmmaking practices. Recent conference papers include: "Decolonising Curriculums", BAFTSS conference 2023, "Facilitating Transnational approaches across the postgraduate provision", Advance HE Conference 2024.

Hugo Philippe THOMAS
Independent filmmaker (France)

What do teachers want from screenwriting software?

A live demonstration of Screenplay Editor, and an open question to the room

SESSION 13

WORKSHOP 3

ROOM 306

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

ABSTRACT

I am a filmmaker. I never set out to make software. I wrote a small tool for myself because I was losing hours reformatting my own scripts, and some twelve thousand people have installed it since. The tool is Screenplay Editor. Most screenwriters I meet do not start in screenwriting software. They start in a word processor, because that is where they already write and where their collaborators can read them. So rather than ask writers to move to a dedicated application, it turns Google Docs into a screenplay editor, with the formatting, element cycling and keyboard flow expected from Final Draft.

I will demonstrate it live. I write a scene from a blank page, then take on the harder cases: a script pasted in from somewhere else, a document already half formatted, a collaborator writing in another language, and the moments when the tool guesses wrong, which I find the most instructive part of all.

Then I would like to hand the session over to the room. The people I hear from least are the ones who teach. A class of thirty has constraints a working writer does not: licences, shared documents, students on borrowed laptops, marking, and a format to teach before anyone is allowed to break it. I want to hear what those constraints actually are, and what a tool would have to do to be useful in a classroom rather than merely available. I take notes, and I can change the software.

Bring a complaint about whatever you currently ask your students to write in.

PRESENTER'S BIO

HUGO PHILIPPE THOMAS is a French filmmaker and screenwriter. He co-directed *Willy 1er*, which premiered at Cannes (ACID, 2016) and was later distributed on Netflix, and *Juniors*, also on Netflix. He is currently writing his next feature. Alongside his film work he develops Screenplay Editor, a screenwriting tool built inside Google Docs, used by writers mostly in the United States.

SCREENINGS

Phoebe HART
Queensland University of Technology (Australia)

Good Neighbours
(11 mins)

SESSION 6

ROOM JHB Main Lecture Theatre

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 6 pm

ABSTRACT

Good Neighbours explores the hidden journey of Australia's discarded clothing to the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific. Every year, Australians buy an average of 55 garments and throw away 23 kilograms of clothing per capita, much of it ending up in second-hand markets overseas. Fashion researcher Tiziana Ferrero-Regis travels to Honiara, the capital city, to investigate how these cast-offs shape local lives, landscapes, and economies and discovers a complex story of empowerment and survival, set against mounting environmental challenges. While second-hand clothing provides affordable fashion and income for families, the influx of synthetic textiles creates waste that strains fragile ecosystems and urban infrastructure. Ultimately, Tiziana challenges what it means to be a "good neighbour" in a globalised fashion economy and calls for cultural sensitivity, sustainable practices, and shared responsibility in tackling the fast-fashion crisis.

PRESENTER'S BIO

PHOEBE HART is an acclaimed Australian documentary filmmaker recognised for her exploration of themes related to identity, family, and personal journeys. Through her filmmaking, Hart highlights significant social issues and promotes greater understanding and acceptance. She is an Associate Professor at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, where she teaches screen production across multiple contexts.

Adam GANZ
Royal Holloway University of London (UK)

Synthetic Sincerity

(co-written by Marc Isaacs, 2025, 75 mins)

SESSION 6

ROOM JHB Main Lecture Theatre

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 6 pm

ABSTRACT

The Synthetic Sincerity Lab based at the University of Southern England are learning to make authentic AI characters as part of a new research project. The head of the lab, Professor SonG, licences the films of Marc Isaacs to better understand what his AI characters are lacking and, in turn, agrees the Filmmaker can document their working process. Blending documentary with fiction, Synthetic Sincerity uses humour and innovative narrative techniques to form a reflection on what is happening to the human face in the era of AI and what this might mean for the future of cinema.

PRESENTER'S BIO

ADAM GANZ is Professor of Screenwriting at Royal Holloway University of London

PAPERS

Hugo Armando ARCINIEGAS

UNAM—Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National University of Mexico)

Toward a critical edition: Archival research and collaborative writing in *The Godson of Death* [*El ahijado de la muerte*, 1945]

STREAM 1

SESSION 8

PANEL 17

ROOM 303

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

KEYWORDS — screenplay edition; golden age of Mexican cinema; women screenwriters; archival research; collaborative writing

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the research behind the ongoing editorial project of the screenplay *The Godson of Death* [*El ahijado de la muerte*] (1945), written by Spaniard Luis Alcoriza and Americans Janet Alcoriza and Norman Foster, with the suspected but uncredited involvement of Mexican writer José Revueltas. The study is framed within the research project “Pioneering Women Screenwriters of Sound Cinema in Mexico,” conducted at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), which seeks to recover the contributions of early women screenwriters like Janet Alcoriza during the Golden Age of Mexican cinema.

Informed by critical debates on the archive in screenwriting studies (Steven Price, 2010, 2013) and theories of collaborative writing (Rosamund Davies, 2021), this work undertakes a critical edition of the unpublished screenplay *The Godson of Death*. The edition, currently in progress, is based on two manuscript copies held in the Documentation Center of Mexico’s National Film Archive (Cineteca Nacional) and the archive at the University of Texas at Austin.

To address the complex question of José Revueltas’s uncredited authorship, the analysis draws upon an extensive corpus of critical literature on his screenwriting. The paper details the editorial criteria, the archival investigation, and reconstructs the collaborative writing process of this screenplay, positioning it within these broader scholarly discussions. By engaging with these theoretical and methodological frameworks, this project underscores the importance of publishing unpublished screenplays alongside rigorous critical and archival work. This critical edition will be published by the Institute of Philological Research (Instituto de Investigaciones Filológicas) of UNAM, highlighting its contribution to the still-unwritten history of screenwriting in Mexico.

PRESENTER'S BIO

HUGO ARMANDO ARCINIEGAS is a PhD Candidate in Latin American Literature (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM). MA in Advanced Studies in Spanish and Latin American Literature (Universidad de Barcelona). Executive Council Member (Screenwriting Research Network). Junior Researcher (Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación de Colombia). Research interests: Latin American screenwriting studies, Latin American literature, and Latin American film studies. Alongside his academic work, he has maintained a parallel career as a literary writer, which has earned him awards and honors in Colombia and Mexico. He is part of the research team for the project "Pioneering Women Screenwriters of Sound Cinema in Mexico (2024-2026)," based at UNAM. You can find his publications at [ORCID](#), [Google Scholar](#), [Academia.edu](#), [Research Gate](#).

Andreu ARRIBAS-PIQUE

UNAV–Universidad de Navarra (University of Navarra, Spain)

Beyond the script. Screenwriting, authorship and
creative power in John Ford's *the searchers*

STREAM 3

SESSION 3

PANEL 7

ROOM 306

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 1.30 pm

KEYWORDS — John Ford; Frank Nugent; *The Searchers*; authorship; screenwriting

ABSTRACT

This paper reconsiders the status of screenwriting in classical Hollywood through a case study of *The Searchers* (1956), a film commonly attributed to the authorial vision of John Ford yet grounded in a screenplay by Frank S. Nugent, itself adapted from Alan Le May's novel and inspired by the historical case of Cynthia Ann Parker. By tracing the trajectory from novel to screenplay to screen, the paper interrogates where "writing" resides in a film whose final form appears to exceed—and at times contradict—its script.

Drawing on production history and close textual analysis, I argue that Ford's decisive interventions during shooting—through improvisation, tonal modulation, visual reframing and narrative emphasis—effectively extended the writing process into the mise-en-scène. Key sequences, from the expansion of domestic rituals (the breakfast scene) to the reconfiguration of Ethan Edwards' moral trajectory, demonstrate how the film "darkens" its protagonist beyond the screenplay's framework. The result is a complex negotiation of authorship in which Nugent's "invisible screenwriting" provides structural coherence while Ford reshapes character, ideology and affect on set.

Situating *The Searchers* within debates on auteur theory and industrial authorship, the paper questions the assumption that the screenplay constitutes the primary locus of creative authority. Instead, it proposes understanding screenwriting as a historically contingent practice embedded in hierarchies of power. Ford's exceptional control within the studio system limited producer intervention and enabled a form of directorial rewriting that both depends upon and eclipses the screenwriter's contribution.

Ultimately, *The Searchers* reveals the screenplay not as a fixed blueprint but as a dynamic field of negotiation—textual, visual and ideological—through which authorship is constructed, displaced and reimaged.

PRESENTER'S BIO

ANDREU M. ARRIBAS is a PhD candidate in Communication at the University of Navarra, an Associate Film Programmer at the Museum, and an Associate Lecturer at UIC Barcelona. He is currently finishing his dissertation on John Ford's *The Searchers* and has completed research stays at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and at King's College London, and has worked with the "John Ford Papers" at Indiana University. He holds a bachelor's degree in Humanities, and a master's degree in Contemporary Film and Audiovisual Studies from Pompeu Fabra University.

Bode ASIYANBI
Lancaster University (UK)

A nexus of influences: Intertextual imperatives and negotiation
in the writing of the film adaptation of Wole Soyinka's memoir
The Man Died

STREAM 2

SESSION 2

PANEL 2

ROOM 304

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 11.00 am

KEYWORDS — adaptation; screenwriting; creative writing; adaptation studies; fidelity; Nigerian film; Wole Soyinka; *The Man Died*

ABSTRACT

This paper engages practice-led research and autoethnography to explore adaptation and the notion of fidelity from the perspective of a screenwriter adapting a memoir for film.

In 2022, I was commissioned to write a film adaptation of Nobel Laureate in Literature, Wole Soyinka's prison notes, *The Man Died* (1972). The film *The Man Died* (2024), which is yet to be officially released, won the best screenplay awards at the AFRIFF and Carthage Film Festivals. This paper explores the creative context that generated the adapted screenplay and the screenwriter's approach to fidelity.

The concept of fidelity has been prominent and contested in adaptation scholarship; and there have been a range of studies that advocates fidelity to the source text and those that are critical.

This paper, while acknowledging industry, cultural and creative imperatives that influence adaptation and frames the centrality of fidelity, argues from a screenwriter's perspective that the source text as in the case of *The Man Died* provides a framework within which the adapter must operate, but for the adapter to successfully achieve this, they must locate the central thesis or the spirit of the original text.

How does the screenwriter achieve this? What was the place of fidelity in my approach to adapting *The Man Died*. Does the screenwriter solely focus on the facts of the memoir or leave space for creative license?

This paper, in documenting and reflecting on the adaptation process, aims to contribute to the body of work on screenwriting practice, creative writing and adaptation studies.

PRESENTER'S BIO

BODE ASIYANBI is a Nigerian writer whose works have won the BBC Georgi Markov Prize (2018), BBC African Performance Playwriting Prize (2005 and 2011), AMVCA, AFRIFF, Carthage and Luxor Film Festival awards (2024). He was most recently, a story editor on the British soap opera on Channel 4, *Hollyoaks*.

He is a member (and a 2025/2026 Juror) of the International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences; and is presently a doctoral researcher at Lancaster University with a research focus on transcultural adaptation of scripted television formats and the praxis of writing for television.

Kate BARRATT
QUT–Queensland University of Technology (Australia)

The trace of mumblecore: Reflexivity and absence in Greta Gerwig's *Barbie*

STREAM 2

SESSION 10

PANEL 22

ROOM 304

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 3 pm

KEYWORDS — mumblecore; Greta Gerwig; *Barbie*; metacinema; Jacques Derrida; Jacques Gerstenkorn

ABSTRACT

The low budget, group of films belonging to ‘mumblecore’ can be understood to occupy an antipodal position to the 2023 release *Barbie*. Maria San Filippo defines mumblecore as possessing, ‘a micro-budgeted minimalist aesthetic, localised DIY generative methods, and distinctive unpolished idiom that actively resisted Hollywood’s model of packaging’ (San Filippo, 2011, p. 1). *Barbie*, directed by mumblecore filmmaker Greta Gerwig, exhibits a polished idiom yet engages in self-reflexive narrative strategies characteristic of mumblecore. The term ‘mumblecore’ was coined in 2005 at the SXSW festival where a selection of independent films, that gave the appearance of homology, were programmed together (Maria San Filippo, 2011). Mumblecore filmmakers leveraged critical discourse and media commentary into their work, producing a self-reflexive narrative methodology. This paper examines how such self-reflexivity is evident in *Barbie* and extends the analysis through Jacques Derrida’s theory of the ‘trace’. I argue that *Barbie* operates within a framework defined by the ‘absence of another’, wherein mumblecore is ‘transcendentally present,’ its absence articulated through the presence of the trace.

PRESENTER’S BIO

KATE BARRATT has worked on local content in the Australian film industry in production and casting, along with US productions including HBO’s *War in the Pacific* and *Matrix II & III*. She has produced and directed documentaries, one of which *Stiletto Girls* won the audience choice awards at the WOW Film Festival. She has been working on novels and short stories. Her script, *The Star Child* was selected as best unproduced screenplay at the British Animation Film Festival. She is currently a PHD candidate in creative-led research at QUT–Queensland University of Technology, Australia. Kate is a film and television lecturer.

Fabio BASSO MONTANARI
York University (Canada)

Getting made: Craft, compliance, and the limits of transnational authorship in global streaming

STREAM 2

SESSION 12

PANEL 26

ROOM 304

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — screenwriting craft; transnational authorship; global streaming; global South; prestige television; industrial aesthetics

ABSTRACT

This paper examines how global streaming production reshapes screenwriting practice — specifically, the tension between aesthetic standards consolidated in U.S. television and the local storytelling traditions of international contexts. Although platforms emphasize international expansion and regional diversity, development decisions continue to reflect those same consolidated standards. Central to this inquiry is the extent to which "craft" operates as a framework that privileges particular narrative structures.

In practice, international productions are frequently pressured to align with externally defined screenwriting grammars. Dramatic elements, from dialogue to plot design, are recalibrated to meet expectations of "global legibility." Local specificity is not erased so much as reformatted: particular storytelling conventions are retained but reframed within a dominant structural logic.

To ground this argument, the paper draws on a retrospective analysis of *Sutura*, a Brazilian Prime Video original series created by the author. The series offers an instructive case: produced in the Global South but developed under the editorial expectations of a U.S.-based platform, it illuminates how cultural specificity gets reformatted through development and negotiation rather than rejected outright. What the case also indicates is an asymmetry in industrial risk tolerance: internationally produced series are not consistently given the same latitude for aesthetic experimentation associated with U.S. "premium" television. Writing from a transnational position, shaped by professional practice in Brazil and academic work in Canada, the author examines how authorship is negotiated within infrastructures that simultaneously market diversity and standardize form.

In doing so, the paper hopes to contribute to ongoing debates on SVOD impact and transnational authorship, while opening a broader reflection on how writers navigate the standards that define their work. What remains harder to answer is whether those

working inside these infrastructures can do more than negotiate the very grammars they depend on to get made.

PRESENTER'S BIO

FABIO MONTANARI is a screenwriter and Assistant Professor of Screenwriting at York University in Toronto, where he teaches across undergraduate and graduate programs. His research examines screenwriting as an industrial and aesthetic practice, with particular attention to transnational production and the impact of streaming platforms on narrative form. He is the creator of the Prime Video original series *Sutura* and has written series for Netflix and HBO Max. A former Fulbright Scholar, he has taught screenwriting in Brazil, Canada, and the United States. His research develops through practice-based and research-creation projects exploring authorship, craft, and global media hierarchies.

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Nathaly BERNAL SANDOVAL

UNAM—Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National University of Mexico)

Screenplay translation: Charting an emergent field of study

STREAM 2

SESSION 2

PANEL 2

ROOM 304

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 11.00 am

KEYWORDS — screenplay translation; translated screenplay model; intermedial compensation; ideological rewriting

ABSTRACT

This presentation maps the largely uncharted territory of screenplay translation, a practice long overlooked at the intersection of translation studies and screenwriting studies. Despite screenplays being routinely translated at various production stages and for diverse purposes (e.g., production, literary publication, festival circulation) it remains a largely untheorized area. I argue for recognizing the published screenplay as a key object of study—a literary artifact whose translated form can circulate independently of any film realization, inviting analysis as a text with its own communicative logic. To ground this proposition, I will draw from two concrete research trajectories. The first adopts a comparative literature lens, examining how translation directly feeds creative screenwriting, as seen in how Spanish writer Concha Méndez's translations of Stendhal later shaped her cinematic narratives. It also traces how dominant ideologies reshape a text across adaptations, following the journey of *Les Deux Orphelines* from its French origin in theatre to its Hollywood and Mexican film versions. The second trajectory employs close translation criticism through the lens of the communicative model of the translated screenplay. A comparison of Marguerite Duras's *Hiroshima mon amour* with its English translation reveals significant patterns of intermedial compensation and alterations to narratorial discourse, recalibrating the reader's mental image of the film, potentially aligning it closer to the final filmed version than to the screenwriter's initial textual vision. Collectively, these case studies demonstrate that screenplay translation is not a neutral transfer but a formative practice that merits its own theoretical space, offering essential tools for understanding how cinematic narratives are linguistically and culturally mediated across borders.

PRESENTER'S BIO

NATHALY BERNAL SANDOVAL is a PhD candidate in Modern Literature at UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico), where she focuses on literary translation and screenwriting studies. Junior Researcher (Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation of Colombia). She holds a master's degree in Translation from El Colegio de México and a bachelor's degree in English from Universidad Industrial de Santander. Her latest publication is the research article "Screenplay Translation Strategies: The case of *Hiroshima mon amour*" coauthored with Hugo Armando Arciniegas (*New Voices in Translation Studies*, 2026). She has also published articles, essays, translations, and reviews in a range of academic and literary venues, including *Journal of Screenwriting*, *Acta Poética*, *Hikma Revista de Traducción*, *La Palabra*, *Periódico de Poesía*, *Luvina*, among others. Member of the research project "Pioneering Women Screenwriters of Sound Cinema in Mexico (2024–2026)," based at UNAM.

Teresa BOSCH

Universidad Austral (Argentina), Universidad de Montevideo (Uruguay)

Florencia AGUILAR

Universidad Austral (Argentina)

Lucila FRUGOLI

UNA–Universidad Nacional de las Artes (National University of the Arts, Argentina)

Worldbuilding for social Innovation: A methodological contribution from fiction to reality

STREAM 4

SESSION 12

PANEL 28

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — worldbuilding; screenwriting research; character design; world rules; futures studies; creativity; social innovation; pedagogy

ABSTRACT

This paper presents an instructional manual for Worldbuilding for Social Innovation (WBSI), designed for educational, corporate, and organizational settings in Latin America. WBSI addresses a limitation in futures-oriented work: visions of “the future” often drift into prediction, techno-hype, or generic dystopias, disconnected from narrative causality, character agency, and world coherence. By contrast, WBSI treats futures as plural, situated, and testable by constructing worlds in which assumptions become explicit and consequences can be dramatized.

The manual adapts industry worldbuilding practices -particularly the “world as system” orientation developed in audiovisual production contexts (McDowell, 2019)- and integrates them with tools from futures studies and scenario thinking (Dator, 2009; Inayatullah, 2008). Its distinctive contribution is to operationalize this integration through narrative design: futures are built as playable storyworlds governed by world rules, value systems, and constraints. Characters are developed as embodied interfaces to the system -actors with goals, resources, blind spots, and ethical dilemmas- so that abstract drivers translate into lived experience, conflict, and decision-making.

WBSI follows a replicable cycle moving from signals and driving forces to: world rules and causal logics; stakeholder dynamics and relational maps; character profiles and tensions; and short narrative prototypes (micro-stories, scenes, and scenario vignettes). These outputs function as creative scaffolding and as traceable evidence: which

assumptions generate which rules, how those rules shape character choices, and which tensions reveal innovation opportunities.

The paper contributes a method for interdisciplinary teams working in domains such as sustainable mobility, airport ecosystems, the future of media, universities, and vulnerable communities. It also discusses implications for higher education, arguing that WBSI helps cultivate authorship and critical judgement under uncertainty within media ecologies shaped by platform economies and generative AI, through explicit and traceable procedures for constructing worlds. Overall, the paper argues that worldbuilding can function as a method -not merely a technique- for futures literacy in screenwriting research.

PRESENTERS' BIOS

TERESA BOSCH is a PhD Candidate in Communication, professor, and researcher at Universidad Austral (Argentina) and Universidad de Montevideo (Uruguay). Her work focuses on screenwriting, transmedia storytelling, worldbuilding, story development, and narrative design for social innovation. She holds an MA in Screenplays for Film and Television from the University of Navarra and was a Visiting Scholar at the School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, where she is also a member of the World Building Institute. She is currently completing her doctoral dissertation, *Worldbuilding for Social Innovation: A Methodological Contribution from Fiction to Reality*. Bosch is Director and co-founder of the Austral Worldbuilding Lab, where she leads teaching, research, and applied innovation projects. Her recent publications include *Worldbuilding as a Methodology for Innovation and Social Impact* and *When Theory Meets Practice: Promoting Participatory Creativity Through World-Building*.

FLORENCIA AGUILAR is Master in Content Management (MGC) from the Austral University and Industrial Designer from Misiones National University. She is a co-founder member of the Austral World Building Lab and since 2020 she has been granted the honor of leading the "Connect the dots" project, to develop an interactive platform together with students and teachers from other disciplines. A permanent collaborator in different Worldbuilding workshops applied to smart cities and entrepreneurship. She is also working on a technology project doing research for UX design. She is co-author of a publication on World Building and education for social innovation that will be published in the 30th edition of the Knowledge Forum at UANL in Mexico. Her work is about designing learning experiences in multi-user virtual environments.

LUCILA FRUGOLI is a Master's student in Modern and Contemporary Art History at the National University of the Arts (UNA) and holds a Bachelor's degree in Design from Universidad Austral. She collaborates regularly on worldbuilding projects and workshops focused on sustainability, smart cities, and collaborative learning, contributing as a visual and experience designer as well as a project manager. She is also co-author of the publication on worldbuilding and education for social innovation to be published in the 30th edition of the Knowledge Forum at the Autonomous University of Nuevo León (UANL), Mexico.

Paolo BRAGA

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore–Milano (Catholic University of Milan, Italy)

Uncertainty about the future and the irony of fate in the screenplay of *Accidentally Famous: The Story of 883*

STREAM 3

SESSION 4

PANEL 11

ROOM 306

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 3.10 pm

KEYWORDS — film adaptation; coming of age; irony of fate; character construction

ABSTRACT

Accidentally Famous: The Story of 883 (original title *Hanno ucciso l'Uomo Ragno – La leggendaria storia degli 883*; Italy, 2025; 8 episodes; directed by Sidney Sibilla, who co-wrote the screenplay with Francesco Agostini) is a biographical miniseries devoted to the pop duo that rose to fame in Italy in the early 1990s. It became an unexpected hit for the satellite channel Sky Italia. Standing apart from the network's premium, edgy editorial line— exemplified by titles such as *Romanzo Criminale*, *Gomorra - La serie*, and *M - Il figlio del secolo*—this production, with its aspirational tone, reached record-breaking audiences with an unusually broad demographic profile.

Loosely inspired by the memoir of singer Max Pezzali, *I cowboy non mollano mai – La mia storia*, the miniseries recounts his friendship and artistic partnership with Mauro Repetto in a coming-of-age story centered on uncertainty about the future—about which path to take in life.

By foregrounding the poetics of 883's songs, the narrative contrasts the fragile dream of succeeding in music with the ordinary, conformist horizon of life in the Italian provinces. To engage the audience (see Robert McKee's reflections on the "problem of interest"), the screenwriters rely on the irony of fate. It is precisely this aspect that our paper seeks to explore. We aim to demonstrate how the miniseries' screenplay cultivates, on multiple levels, the idea that destiny itself seems to have taken pleasure in contributing to the rise of its two young protagonists.

Drawing on our interviews with screenwriter Francesco Agostini and with Sky's editorial team, as well as on a comparative analysis of several drafts of the series bible and scripts, we will focus in particular on three points:

- The construction of the main characters. We will highlight the care taken to portray them as unlikely outsiders whose success no one would predict: far from the big city, extremely young, inexperienced, unable even to play an instrument—in short, two "losers." Such an unpromising profile, by the standards of pop music, is designed to fuel curiosity about how they could

possibly make it. The screenwriters capitalize on this curiosity, surprising viewers with the invention of winding and delightful narrative pathways through which fate advances the protagonists' careers.

- The closed causal chain structure displayed in the pilot episode. The concatenation of seemingly random events that later prove providential establishes from the outset the motif linking destiny and the fulfillment of dreams.
- The different versions of Episode 6. Each reworks the closed causal chain device mentioned above, combining it with a set of carefully crafted metaphors. The aim is to recount the inspiration behind 883's most iconic song in a way that is organic to the themes and motifs developed by the miniseries up to that point. We will argue that, here, the irony of fate is effectively used by the screenwriters to fill a gap in the source memoir: Pezzali, in fact, does not explain the genesis of that song.

PRESENTER'S BIO

PAOLO BRAGA is Associate Professor at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan), where he teaches Screenwriting, Semiotics and Journalism. At Università Cattolica he also teaches at the Master in International Screenwriting and Production. He has published extensively on the topics of the construction of empathy with characters and of US television series. The rhetorical and persuasive dimensions of storytelling are his general research area, which he has treated in several articles and books. Among his most recent publications are *Words in action. Forms and Techniques of Film Dialogue* (Peter Lang, 2015) and *Come parlano gli eroi. I grandi discorsi al cinema, in politica, nello sport* (Guerini, 2024).

Sommer-Jade BRAMELD
Bond University (Australia)

Not another writer: AI, proxy collaboration, and the screenwriting process

STREAM 3

SESSION 8

PANEL 19

ROOM 306

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

KEYWORDS — AI-assisted screenwriting; collaborative screenwriting; cultural representation; self-determination; epistemic injustice; cultural erosion

ABSTRACT

Contemporary discussions of AI-assisted screenwriting frequently describe interactions with generative AI as collaborative. This paper challenges that characterisation and argues instead that it is a form of proxy collaboration: creative engagement that simulates collaborative dialogue without providing the independent perspectives that give collaboration its creative and ethical value.

Drawing on screenwriting research and philosophical accounts of representational harm, I argue that AI-assisted screenwriting may create the appearance of collaborative scrutiny and adequate research in the writing room while leaving underlying assumptions substantially unchallenged.

Consequently, to counteract this risk, ethical AI use in screenwriting requires not merely discernment of outputs, but the self-conscious design of creative processes that facilitate genuine human challenge, consultation, and accountability.

PRESENTER'S BIO

Dr SOMMER-JADE BRAMELD is an early-career researcher and writer whose work primarily explores the ethical dimensions of storytelling. Situated at the intersection of screenwriting, philosophy, and creative practice research, her scholarship has examined how audiovisual representations shape audience understanding of real people and realities depicted, the responsibilities involved in representing marginalised communities on-screen, and the form, style and intent of creative practice as a form of knowledge production. Her own creative practice employs

storytelling across both screenwriting and literary prose as a mode of inquiry into lived experience and a means of exercising and clarifying philosophical ideas. She has worked as a Teaching Fellow and Senior Research Assistant at Bond University in Australia and has more than a decade of experience in teaching and learning design.

Matthias BRÜTSCH
UZH–Universität Zürich (University of Zurich, Switzerland)

Automated analysis of screenplay structure: A critical survey and proposal

STREAM 4

SESSION 4

PANEL 12

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 3.10 pm

KEYWORDS — turning points; artificial intelligence; automated analysis; dramatic structure

ABSTRACT

Can artificial intelligence identify the turning points that structure a screenplay's dramatic architecture? Several recent studies claim considerable success. This paper surveys three such projects and argues that their achievements are more modest, and more ambiguous, than they appear, before proposing an alternative approach.

The first case study examines the work of a research group at the University of Edinburgh (Papalampidi et al., 2019–2021), who have trained neural models to detect turning points in synopses and screenplays using a human-annotated "gold standard." However, the authors' own data show that human inter-annotator agreement is rather low. This undermines the benchmark against which the machine is measured, a finding corroborated by the presenter's own prior study of professional script analysts. Moreover, screenplay-level annotation is only indirectly derived from synopsis-level judgments, and the resulting model performance is disappointing given how narrowly the task was constrained.

The second case, James E. Cutting's (2016) analysis of cutting pace, motion, and brightness across 150 films, is examined for its interpretive claims; the measurements are robust, but mapping them onto a four-act structure proves more arbitrary than suggested in the paper.

A third study, using multi-agent systems (Hsu et al., 2026) reports higher accuracy. However, this partly reflects the narrow beat template it presupposes, and its results remain unverifiable pending the promised release of code and data, which is yet to be published.

Building on these critiques, the paper argues that dramatic structure is always a product of interpretation rather than an inherent, discoverable property, and proposes a more open-ended, abstractly defined alternative, centered on how sequences inform audiences about a protagonist's problems and goals rather than on a fixed number and position of narrative shifts.

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PRESENTER'S BIO

MATTHIAS BRÜTSCH is senior lecturer at the Department of Film Studies of the University of Zurich. His research interests lie in film narratology and dramaturgy with a particular focus on forms of complex narration. Among his recent publications are "Whydunit? Narrative Perspective in ADOLESCENCE" (in: *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, 2025), "Asides and Unreliable Narration in FLEABAG, ALFIE and I, TONYA" (in: *Ekphrasis*, 2024) and "Loop Structures in Film (and Literature)" (in: *Panoptikum*, 2021). In addition to his academic activities, he was an active member of various selection committees, film commissions and boards of trustees of film festivals, funding institutions and promotion agencies in Switzerland.

More information on:

<https://www.film.uzh.ch/de/team/mitarbeitende/privatdozierende-undwissenschaftliche-Mitarbeitende/bruetsch.html>

Warren BUCKLAND
Oxford Brookes University (UK)

From Martin Roby to Ellen Ripley: Statistical style analysis of dialogue in the “Alien” screenplays

STREAM 1

SESSION 3

PANEL 5

ROOM 303

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 1.30 pm

KEYWORDS — “Alien” screenplays; statistical analysis; quantitative methods; gendered dialogue; Robin Lakoff; James Pennebaker

ABSTRACT

On the opening page of the 1976 “Alien” screenplay (written by Dan O’Bannon), we read that “the crew is unisex and all parts are interchangeable for men or women.” This claim was exercised in subsequent drafts, when the role of Martin Roby was revised and renamed Ellen Ripley. In this presentation, I investigate whether the dialogue in the “Alien” screenplay is gender-blind by analysing Roby’s dialogue in the 1976 draft and Ripley’s dialogue in the June 1978 draft. I draw on Jonathan Culpeper’s work on characterisation (in the edited volume *Digital Literary Studies*, 2014), James Pennebaker’s work on pronouns (*The Secret Life of Pronouns*, 2012), and Robin Lakoff’s foundational study of gendered language (*Language and Woman’s Place*, 1975) to conduct a comparative analysis of linguistic and gender markers in the dialogue of Martin Roby and Ellen Ripley. I also set up a control group that compares the Captain’s dialogue in the 1976 draft (Captain Chaz Standard) and in the 1978 draft (Dallas). This character constitutes the control group because the variable under study does not change (the Captain’s gender remains the same). This type of analysis not only determines if specific screenwriters such as Dan O’Bannon and his collaborators write characters with distinctive (gendered) voices; by analysing the lexical and grammatical features of dialogue, it can also offer screenwriters a method to write characters with distinctive voices.

PRESENTER'S BIO

WARREN BUCKLAND is Associate Professor of Film at Oxford Brookes University. His research interests include film theory, narratology, and contemporary American cinema. He is author/editor of several books, including: *Who Wrote Citizen Kane? Statistical Analysis of Disputed Co-Authorship* (2023), *Narrative and Narration: Analyzing Cinematic Storytelling* (2021), *Wes Anderson's Symbolic Storyworld* (2019), *Film Studies: An Introduction*, fifth edition (2015); *Hollywood Puzzle Films* (ed.) (2014), *Film Theory: Rational Reconstructions* (2012), *Puzzle Films: Complex Storytelling in Contemporary Cinema* (2009); and *Directed by Steven Spielberg: Poetics of the Contemporary Hollywood Blockbuster* (2006).

Julia CAMARA
Keiser University (UK)

Aging forward: Why *The Golden Girls* remains a revolutionary portrayal of women over 50

STREAM 3

SESSION 12

PANEL 27

ROOM 306

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — *The Golden Girls*; aging and media representation; women over fifty; feminist television studies; gender and aging; sexuality in later life; ageism; women-centered storytelling

ABSTRACT

This chapter, part of the forthcoming edited volume *The Works of Susan Harris*, to be published later this year, examines *The Golden Girls* (NBC, 1985–1992), created by Susan Harris, as one of the most radical future-facing interventions in women-centered screenwriting. As we consider the “shapes of the future,” this study argues that one of the clearest models for inclusive, aging-forward storytelling emerged four decades ago. At a time when older women were largely marginalized on U.S. network television and broadcast standards imposed strict censorship limitations, the series centered four women over fifty as narrative leads rather than supporting characters.

Through close readings of key episodes, the chapter demonstrates how the series addressed widowhood, late-life sexuality, LGBTQ+ identity, HIV/AIDS stigma, reproductive autonomy, workplace harassment, and ageism, positioning older women as complex protagonists whose interior lives drove the dramatic engine of each episode. Harris constructed a women-dominated narrative space in which male characters were not narrative centers.

Placing the series in dialogue with *And Just Like That...* (2021–2025), this chapter explores how shifts from broadcast television to premium cable and streaming reshape the formal and thematic possibilities available to stories about women over fifty. While contemporary platforms allow greater explicitness, the foundational architecture established by *The Golden Girls* remains deeply influential.

By imagining aging as liberation rather than decline, the series modeled alternative cultural futures long before those representations became mainstream. The show’s popularity shows the enduring relevance of women-centered storytelling.

PRESENTER'S BIO

JULIA CAMARA is an award-winning Brazilian screenwriter, filmmaker, and Professor of Cinematic Arts at Keiser University in West Palm Beach, Florida. She also teaches at UCLA Extension Writers' Program and Sundance Collab. With a BA in Cinema from Columbia College Hollywood and an MFA in TV and Screenwriting from Stephens College, Camara's career boasts notable achievements. Her feature directorial debut, *In Transit* won Best Experimental Film at four festivals, while her film *Occupants* earned a Telly Award. In 2020, she released *That's What She Wrote*, a collection of articles and interviews about screenwriting and filmmaking, and in 2023, her indie thriller *Stronghold* won the Mira Nair Award. Camara recently won the best short screenplay at the Diversity in Cannes 2025 festival.

Juan Carlos CARRILLO
UNAM–Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National University of Mexico)

From statistical pasts to meaningful futures:
Aristotle, tragedy, and artificial intelligence in screenwriting

STREAM 4

SESSION 7

PANEL 16

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — screenwriting; artificial intelligence; tragedy; Aristotle's *Poetics*; authorship; narrative meaning

ABSTRACT

Recent debates on artificial intelligence and screenwriting tend to focus on questions of efficiency, authorship, and professional disruption, often framed in technical or industrial terms. Drawing on Aristotle's *Poetics*, this paper proposes a different approach by asking a more fundamental question: *can artificial intelligence write tragedy?* It argues that Aristotelian tragedy offers a critical lens through which to examine both the limits of AI-driven screenwriting and contemporary conceptions of the screenplay itself.

Aristotelian tragedy is not defined merely by narrative structure or plot mechanics, but by its capacity to configure human experience through mimesis, recognition (*anagnorisis*), error (*hamartia*), and catharsis. These elements presuppose vulnerability, ethical judgment, and an orientation toward meaning that exceeds probabilistic patterning. By contrast, current AI systems operate through statistical extrapolation from past data, producing narratives that are plausible and structurally coherent, yet fundamentally retrospective.

The paper situates this tension within the wider industrial context of contemporary screenwriting, particularly the growing influence of streaming platforms, where audience behaviour is increasingly translated into data and narrative decisions are shaped by predictive analytics. From this perspective, artificial intelligence does not introduce a radical rupture, but rather intensifies an already dominant tendency to treat screenwriting as an optimized, industrial process.

Against this backdrop, the paper argues that tragedy functions as a limit case that reveals what remains irreducibly human in screenwriting: responsibility for meaning, engagement with error and loss, and the imaginative projection of futures that are not merely probable, but significant.

PRESENTER'S BIO

JUAN CARLOS CARRILLO, PhD, is a full-time lecturer at Universidad Panamericana in Mexico City, where he teaches courses in audiovisual narratives, film history, and screenwriting.

He earned his PhD with a dissertation on violence in Mexican cinema, examining its cathartic dimension through Aristotle's *Poetics* and contemporary theoretical approaches. His academic interests include screenwriting, narrative theory, and poetics in audiovisual fiction, with particular attention to contemporary Mexican and transnational cinema.

He is an active member of the Screenwriting Research Network, where he currently serves on the Executive Council (2024–2026), and of the Ibero-American Research Network in Audiovisual Narratives (Red INAV). In addition to his academic work, he is a film critic in various media and has served as a jury member at several international film festivals, including Guanajuato, Washington, Toulouse, Warsaw, and Berlin.

Pablo CASTRILLO MAORTUA

Lourdes ESQUEDA-VERANO

María RINCON-YOHN

UNAV–Universidad de Navarra (University of Navarra, Spain)

Directing on the page: Audiovisual totality and editorial license in screenplay prose

STREAM 1

SESSION 3

PANEL 5

ROOM 303

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 1.30 pm

KEYWORDS — screenwriting; screenplay prose; cinematography; directing; mise-en-scène

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a definition and characterization for “Directing on the Page,” defined as the capacity of screenplay prose to evoke a comprehensive visual and aural totality without relying on itemized description or technical jargon. Moving beyond the common critique of “camera directions,” we re-examine “action description” as a sophisticated mode of writing that manages mise-en-scène, cinematography, and performance through visual-aural and evocative language. We argue that this “directorial” prose achieves two primary effects: the facilitation of consistent mental previsualization across readers (producers, potential directors, the film crew in general), and a decisive aesthetic influence over the final screen work.

By analyzing the screenplay as a stable linguistic object, this paper identifies foundational traits recognized in the field—such as lexical precision, editing-conscious structures, atmospheric writing, and page formatting— and hypothesizes that high-impact prose utilizes “editorial licenses,” such as including authorial commentary, irony, and second-person address, to create a shared cultural space with the reader. By “breaking the fourth wall” of the page, these licenses may contribute an additional layer of directorial effect, solidifying the screenplay’s role not just as a blueprint, but as a primary text with its own unique aesthetic power.

PRESENTERS' BIOS

PABLO CASTRILLO MAORTUA is a screenwriter and associate professor of screenwriting and production in the Film & Media Department at the University of Navarra (Spain), where he also serves as Vicedean of Student Affairs at the School of Communication. He is the author of *History and Story in the American Political Thriller Film: Hollywood in the Labyrinth* (Lexington Books, 2023). His scholarly work has been published in the *Journal of Screenwriting*, *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, and *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, among others. As a practitioner, his credits include multiple short films as well as the animated family-adventure movie *Dragonkeeper* (2024), which premiered at the Málaga Film Festival and was released internationally.

LOURDES ESQUEDA-VERANO (Mexico, 1985) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Culture and Audiovisual Communication at the University of Navarra. She teaches *Visual Culture* in the Audiovisual Communication and Journalism degree programs, as well as the *World Screen Seminars*. Her research focuses on cultural reflection and visual analysis. Her research lines include cinematic realism, film phenomenology, and the aesthetics of authenticity. She has participated in numerous competitive research projects and is a member of the Audiovisual Narrative and Aesthetics Group. Furthermore, she has been a visiting professor at Yale University, the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Bordeaux - Montaigne. She is the co-editor of *Communication & Society* and the coordinator of students of the Performing Arts Program at the School of Communication. She combines her academic work with film criticism for *El antepenúltimo mohicano*.

MARIA RINCON-YOHN is a Lecturer at Universidad de Navarra (Spain), where she teaches film aesthetics, history of cinema, and world cinemas. She holds a PhD in Film and Media and a BA in Theology. She has been an Academic Visitor at University of Oxford, Visiting Research Fellow at King's College London, and Visiting Postgraduate Researcher at Pontificia Università della Santa Croce and University of Glasgow. Her research focuses on film aesthetics, film theory, and the interrelation between narrative structures, filmic form, and spectatorial effects, with particular emphasis on cinematic representations of personal memory. She has published in *Studies in Documentary Film*, *Fotocinema*, *Zer*, *Church*, *Communication and Culture*, and *SERIES. International Journal of TV Serial Narratives*, including articles on memory films, Tolkien's sub-creation theory as it relates to artistic creativity, and the monarchy as Elizabeth's Doppelgänger in *The Crown*. Her work examines narrative complexity and audiovisual resources—including production design—in film and TV.

Fleur COSTELLO
University of Chichester (UK)

Integrating generative AI into screenwriting pedagogy: Authorship, performance, and creative agency

STREAM 4

SESSION 8

PANEL 20

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

KEYWORDS — screenwriting pedagogy; Generative AI; authorship; narrative agency; creative practice; AI-assisted storytelling

ABSTRACT

As generative AI becomes increasingly embedded in creative industries, its role in screenwriting education demands careful and critically grounded investigation. This paper asks how the introduction of generative AI as a source of narrative origination reshapes students' understanding of authorship, narrative agency, and dramatic intention.

The study adopts a practice-based methodology drawing on two completed classroom experiments conducted with Level 5/4 screenwriting students. In the first, students write detailed character biographies and upload them to a large language model in order to interview the AI "in character." This exercise explores the system's capacity to simulate interiority and emotional perspective, as well as students' perceptions of its creative and dramatic limitations. In a further iteration, the same character biographies are used by the LLM to generate dramatic monologues, which are then performed by a human-like AI avatar. Students evaluate not only the text but the performed monologue in order to identify emergent storylines, character motivations, and narrative possibilities generated by the AI, and to reflect on whether these prompts sparked new creative directions in their own writing.

In a second phase of the study, currently being implemented in the 2025–26 academic year, the research extends this analysis by asking students will submit their own three-minute screenplay drafts to Microsoft Copilot and receive an AI-generated version of the same narrative. Students will then conduct a comparative analysis between the two scripts before revising their own work in response, allowing close examination of how generative systems reshape voice, emotional logic, and narrative intention.

Preliminary findings from the initial phase reveal mixed but highly engaged responses, with students reporting both fascination and discomfort when confronted with AI-generated characters and performances. The paper argues that such pedagogical use of generative AI can productively expose the limits of algorithmic storytelling while strengthening students' awareness of human authorship, dramatic intention, and ethical voice.

PRESENTER'S BIO

FLEUR COSTELLO is Senior Lecturer and Programme Coordinator for BA (Hons) Screenwriting at the University of Chichester. Her teaching and research focus on authorship, character, and the evolving relationship between narrative craft and digital technologies. She is currently developing a programme of practice-based research exploring how generative AI reshapes screenwriting pedagogy, creative agency, and the ethical dimensions of storytelling.

Her recent work integrates large language models, AI avatars, and reflective writing exercises into undergraduate screenwriting modules to examine how students negotiate originality, voice, and emotional logic when confronted with machine-generated narrative. Alongside her academic work, she brings over twenty years of professional experience as a broadcast writer, informing a practice-led perspective on authorship and industry-facing pedagogy. She is also developing a theoretical framework—the *Noetic Bond*—to describe the implicit human-to-human connection between storyteller and audience.

Diogo CRONEMBERGER

USP–Universidade de São Paulo (University of São Paulo, Brazil)

**“A disease, possibly” – *Stereo* and *Scanners*,
written and directed by David Cronenberg, as sick filmic bodies**

STREAM 2

SESSION 8

PANEL 18

ROOM 304

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

KEYWORDS — David Cronenberg; comparative film analysis; film as body; filmic disease; screenplay as process; screenplay to film relationship

ABSTRACT

In times of increasing standardization of screenwriting, it's relevant to delve into different possibilities, especially considering the broader research in which this paper is inscribed: critics, audiences and filmmakers use a health-related vocabulary to talk about films, and a script “doctor” helps screenplays get rid of “diseases”, but could all this preoccupation with health hide, as in social life, the imposition of aesthetic norms? Couldn't the “disease” be just difference? A strength? Cronenberg's films feature hospitals, clinics, and philosophers-scientists, and diseases both in content and form. In his experimental first feature *Stereo* (1969), silence becomes narratively important – the impaired faculty of speech increases the characters' telepathic capabilities, allowing, through poetic translation, for the audience to have more autonomy. Technology, budget and language intersect. This “disease” and others (the camera behaviour doesn't match the narration) reveal a lot about this ironic filmic body. In the published screenplay, consisting of the narration, a somewhat difficult style combining existing and invented scientific jargon is more revealing than something straightforward would be. It was written afterwards. Cronenberg had an outline of the characters as his basis. Context also helps to explain gaps in the commercial *Scanners* (1981). Cronenberg rewrote it during production and other changes came from test screenings. The film is more ambiguous than the script available online. It's the perfect companion piece to *Stereo*: they're united by telepathy, utopia, dualities (the communitarian vs. the personal). They pose an important screenwriting question: how to make telepathy physical? A screenplay is never just a finished text, but a transitory result of a process in process of becoming a film. *Scanners*, by comparison, makes *Stereo* less opaque. A sick (filmic) body reveals something about the disease's manifestation in others. Comparisons show that filmic diseases are a question of parameters – and they can be very revelatory.

PRESENTER'S BIO

DIOGO CRONEMBERGER is a PhD candidate in Film Studies at the University of São Paulo with an MFA in Film from Columbia University. He's studying the cinema of David Cronenberg and the idea of films as bodies – which could be sick. He has written and directed award-winning short films, including *The Unfamiliar* (2014), which won the Best Dialogue Award at FRAPA – Porto Alegre Screenplay Festival, the biggest in Latin America. Moreover, he has worked as a script doctor on *Tenderness*, written and directed by Eduardo Mattos, and he currently teaches screenwriting, directing and film history at the Senac University Center, and screenwriting at the Vera Cruz Institute, both in São Paulo, Brazil. In 2024, he launched the book *Roteiro de curtametragem* (*Short film screenplay*).

Rosamund DAVIES
University of Greenwich (UK)

Inside – Scripting a virtual experience of Holloway women's prison

STREAM 4

SESSION 12

PANEL 28

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — virtual reality; screenwriting; scriptwriting; immersive storytelling; narrative design

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the script development of a virtual reality (VR) narrative set in Holloway women's prison. Opened in 1902, Holloway was the first women-only prison in England. By the time of its closure in July 2016, it was the largest women's prison in Western Europe. It has held some of the UK's most notorious women offenders, including serial murderers Myra Hindley and Rose West, and has also been a site of women's political resistance, including the hunger strikes of the Suffragettes. However, such high-profile cases are not typical. Around 85% of women in prison are there for a non-violent offence and many have a background of childhood abuse, domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, poverty, mental ill-health, addiction, and the loss of children.

Testimony transcripts from women who have spent time in Holloway Prison form an important element of the script, providing verbatim narration for the narrative, which places the viewer inside a shared dormitory cell in Holloway. These testimonies relate women's experiences both within the prison and prior to their incarceration. The VR narrative is part of a larger interdisciplinary project *Holloway: Anatomy of a Prison*, involving researchers in criminology, screenwriting, animation, filmmakers and third sector organisations. Coinciding with the tenth anniversary of Holloway's closure, the aim is to establish Holloway, now demolished, as an important part of UK history and heritage and to raise awareness of ongoing issues relating to the incarceration of women.

As the lead narrative designer on the VR project, I will discuss the process of scripting first an initial prototype and then a longer sustained narrative. Key topics will include the collaborative nature of the process: working with criminologists and animators; ethical considerations; spatial, immersive and interactive storytelling; positioning the viewer as embodied, engaged witness; choice of development documents and script format.

PRESENTER'S BIO

Dr ROSAMUND DAVIES is Associate Professor, Media and Creative Writing and Associate Head, Research and Knowledge Exchange, School of Design and Creative Industries, at the University of Greenwich. Her research spans and combines theory and practice. Rosamund is co-editor of the award-winning *Palgrave Handbook of Screenwriting Studies* (Palgrave Macmillan 2023) and co-author of *Introducing the Creative Industries: from theory to practice* (SAGE 2013). Her publications on screenwriting include 'The Screenplay as Boundary Object' (*Journal of Screenwriting* 2019, 10 (2): 149-164); 'Collaboration, Cooperation and Authorship in Screenwriting aka How Many People Does It Take to Make an Author?' in *Palgrave Handbook of Screenwriting Studies* (Palgrave Macmillan 2023), and 'Talking to You Addressing the Viewer in Virtual Reality Scripts' (*Illuminace* 2025, 37(2): 53-73).

María Teresa DePAOLI
Kansas State University (USA)

Writing undocumented life as palimpsest: Diasporic authorship and screenwriting in *Real Women Have Curves*

STREAM 2

SESSION 12

PANEL 26

ROOM 304

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — screenplay adaptation; self-adaptation; diasporic authorship; palimpsestic screenwriting; feminist screenwriting practice; borderlands theory

ABSTRACT

This presentation centers on the 2002 screenplay of *Real Women Have Curves*. Co-written by Josefina López and George LaVoo, the screenplay occupies a pivotal position within a palimpsestic and transmedial archive shaped by migration, memory, labor, adaptation, and collaborative authorship. Through a comparative analysis of López's original stage play and the screenplay, informed by an interview conducted with López in June 2026, the presentation examines the adaptive and creative processes through which autobiographical materials drawn from her lived experience and journals are preserved, reconfigured, and redistributed across theatre, screenwriting, film, and the 2025 Broadway musical. Rather than treating adaptation as a linear transfer from one medium to another, the presentation approaches it as an ongoing process of revision and transformation in which authorship, memory, political meaning, and narrative form are renegotiated across media.

The presentation argues that the transition from stage to screenplay does not diminish the politics of undocumented and working-class life but rearticulates them through cinematic form. In the play, undocumented vulnerability drives the action through the threat of immigration raids by the INS, exploitative labor conditions, and the spatial confinement of the garment factory. In the screenplay, legal status recedes from explicit narration but remains structurally present in patterns of movement, bilingual exchange, family economy, gendered labor, bodily experience, and Ana García's coming-of-age. Close analysis of the factory and body-affirmation scenes demonstrates how the screenplay renders Latina labor, embodied knowledge, and feminist solidarity visually and affectively legible. This process of transformation continues in the 2025 Broadway musical, which rearticulates the storyworld through musical performance and reshapes character, voice, and agency for a new historical moment. Ana becomes an aspiring journalist, extending her movement from private self-inscription toward public expression.

López's diasporic Chicana authorship unsettles nationally bounded histories of Mexican women's screenwriting and situates her work within a transnational field shaped by migration, bilingualism, labor, and collaboration. The presentation concludes that screenwriting operates as a form of diasporic cultural intervention: a practice through which stories move across borders, languages, and media while reconfiguring the narrative and visual conditions under which working-class Chicana lives become culturally and politically legible.

PRESENTER'S BIO

MARÍA TERESA DePAOLI is Professor of Spanish at Kansas State University. She received her PhD in Spanish Literature and Culture from Purdue University in 2001. Her research focuses on Latin American and Latine literature and culture, Mexican cinema, women's writing, and screenwriting studies. Her publications include numerous peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, as well as the monograph *The Mexican Screenplay: A Study of the Invisible Genre*, and *Interviews with Women Screenwriters* (Peter Lang, 2014). She is also co-editor of *Las guionistas: A Bilingual Anthology of Mexican Women Screenwriters* (2017). Her current research examines the creative processes and authorship of Mexican screenwriter Paz Alicia Garciadiego.

Kath DOOLEY
Adelaide University (Australia)

Re-cycling the past: Archiveology and detournement as feminist strategies for the scripting of autobiographical documentary

STREAM 2

SESSION 4

PANEL 10

ROOM 304

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 3.10 pm

KEYWORDS — documentary; scripting; archives; detournement; screenwriting

ABSTRACT

In a filmmaking context, archiveology involves the reuse or recycling of archival material to create film narratives (Russell, 2018). While this practice is not exclusively the terrain of women filmmakers, it might be considered a 'feminist methodology of historical investigation' (Di Bianco, 2022, 287) that allows histories to be re-examined with an emphasis on the experience of marginalised groups. Relatedly, detournement involves the repurposing or modification of source material through editing and juxtaposition to produce new political or ideological meaning, potentially generating 'a critique of the past' (Mulvey, 2015, 29). Looking at the autobiographical work of several women filmmakers, Luciano and Scarparo observe a use of detournement in the recycling of family archives and other film clips to interrogate notions of identity and trauma (2020). Similarly, Di Bianco explores how the creative recycling of footage intended for other audiences and purposes can illuminate personal and collective traumas (2022).

This presentation interrogates these approaches to the crafting of a narrative through the lens of screenwriting research, posing the question of how archiveology and detournement might be considered as strategies for the scripting of documentary. Several writers have suggested that the documentary script might be written in the editing stage of a project (Das, 2007; Rabiger, 2009), a notion that the practices of archiveology and detournement support; however, further to the creation of a coherent narrative, this presentation is concerned with the way that the techniques might inform a project's theme, central motifs or generate conceptual frameworks. With reference to the scripting of my own project, *The Lost Twin*, I examine the way that the recycling of a range of historical material- photographs, broadcast and corporate video- can generate new understanding of past events. This documentary examines past institutional practices associated with stillbirth and neonatal death, highlighting changes in community standards for parents' bereavement care. With reference to *The Lost Twin*, I explore archiveology and detournement as feminist

strategies to reframe underexplored histories of grief and loss, generating insights into image recycling as a form of scriptwriting.

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PRESENTER'S BIO

Associate Professor KATH DOOLEY is a writer/director and academic based at Adelaide University, South Australia. Her creative work has screened at events such the Busan International Short Film Festival and the International Festival of Virtual and Augmented Reality Stories (FIVARS), Toronto. Kath is author of *Virtual Reality Narratives: Embodied Encounters in Space* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), *Cinematic Virtual Reality* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021) and co-editor of *Screenwriting for Virtual Reality* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024). Her research interests include embodiment in the context of screen media, virtual reality and screenwriting, women's screen industry practice, and diversity in the screen industries. Kath is President of the Australian Screen Production, Education and Research Association (ASPERA). She is also Co-Lead editor of *Sightlines: Filmmaking in the Academy* Journal, a venue for screen-based research outputs.

Imran FIRDAUS
IUB–Independent University Bangladesh

*Textile Memories: Screenwriting practice, recovered reality,
and the trauma of fast fashion*

STREAM 1

SESSION 10

PANEL 21

ROOM 303

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 3 pm

KEYWORDS — practice-based screenwriting research; screen narrative; recovered reality; state-sponsored trauma; fast fashion and labour exploitation; postcolonial memory

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the formal and theoretical tensions I navigated in writing *Textile Memories* for the screen. I approach this work as a screenwriter and practice-led researcher. The central research question asks: how can formal screenwriting decisions physicalise industrial trauma rather than aestheticise it? The screenplay investigates the deadly human cost of Bangladesh's readymade garment industry through the lens of trauma, institutional negligence, and the poetics of screenwriting. The film is a short fiction set in the devastating aftermath of the 2012 Tazreen Fashions fire in Ashulia, Dhaka — in which 112 garment workers died in a factory with no fire exits — a narrative of survival, dissociation, and the invisible human cost of global fast fashion.

Applying screenwriting practice as research methodology, I explore how subjective, insider authorship extends beyond conventional storytelling boundaries into critical cultural enquiry. Drawing on Robert Jay Lifton's (1991) concept of "psychic closing off," I demonstrate how non-linear structure, auditory J-cuts, fragmented POV shifts, and a Japanese Butoh dance sequence — characterised by decay, primal fear, and the subconscious — performed in the Tazreen's burnt factory collectively diverge from traditional narrative form to navigate state-sponsored trauma, institutional negligence, and postcolonial labour exploitation.

The findings illuminate how subjective, poetic decisions contribute to what I term *recovered reality* — not catharsis, but honest communication of the event. By confronting the unresolved ghosts of its industrial past, the screenplay interrogates the future of labour and the deadly costs embedded in global supply chains, offering a contribution to practice-based screenwriting research.

PRESENTER'S BIO

Dr IMRAN FIRDAUS is an Early Career Researcher and Assistant Professor in the Department of Media and Communication at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB). His work sits at the intersection of film poetics, screenwriting theories, media research, and creative industries, and is supported by a 2025 Charles Wallace Bangladesh Trust Fellowship at the SOAS South Asia Institute, University of London. He further explores these research themes through his practice as a filmmaker, screenwriter, and curator, with productions, exhibitions and screenings in London, Sydney, Yogyakarta, Dhaka, and Amsterdam. His latest article appears in [*luminace*](#) (vol. 37, issue 2), published by Národní filmový archiv, Prague. Imran leads the nationwide research project “Cinema as a Creative Industry: Mapping Bangladesh's Film Ecosystem and Inclusive Growth Potential,” commissioned by the British Council, with a full report scheduled for release in 2026.

Marta FRAGO PEREZ

UNAV–Universidad de Navarra (University of Navarra, Spain)

Redefining the scriptwriting module: Navigating the Generative AI transition

STREAM 4

SESSION 10

PANEL 24

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 3 pm

KEYWORDS — fundamentals of screenwriting; human-in-the-loop (HITL) screenwriting; curriculum redesign; assessment in the AI era; generative AI in education; scriptwriting ethics

ABSTRACT

In recent years, several classroom experiments have been documented and published to assess the impact of Generative AI on creative writing processes within both literary and cinematic contexts (Doshi and Hauser, 2024; Lo Duca and Rotelli, 2025; Gràcio and Frühmorgen, 2025). Generally, the consensus suggests that when integrated with prudence and care, these tools can become a valuable asset for educational support. Simultaneously, research highlights their inherent limitations and the fine line between the constructive use and the misuse of such technological aids.

This paper aims to shed new light on this issue by examining the redefinition of an introductory audiovisual scriptwriting course for undergraduate students. The emergence of AI necessitated a redesign of a module that had been taught using a similar framework for several decades. This overhaul affected the learning objectives, teaching methodology, and the nature of the writing assignments themselves. Specifically, the exercises for ideation, scene and sequence writing, and the final short film script were modified to incorporate a controlled use of Generative AI.

The results of using Human-in-the-loop screenwriting assignments demonstrate that not only do students learn through methods distinct from traditional ones, but academics must also adapt to this shift, particularly regarding assessment strategies. Furthermore, it is essential to engage students with the ethical dilemmas inherent in their creative decisions, especially when confronting the potential for over-reliance on generative tools.

PRESENTER'S BIO

MARTA FRAGO is Associate Professor in Screenwriting and Film adaptations at the University of Navarra (Department of Film, TV & Digital Media). She studied Screenwriting at UCLA Ext. Later, she obtained her PhD with a dissertation about Ruth Praver Jhabvala's screen adaptations from Henry James and E. M. Forster's works. Since then, she has focused her research on screenwriting and modes of adaptation: from narrative text, real facts, history and biographies. Her publications include books (*Leer, dialogar, escribir cine; Personaje, acción e identidad en cine y literatura*), Chapters of books, and multiples articles in scientific journals, including *Javnost*, *Atlantis*, *Fotocinema*, *Series: International Journal of TV serial narratives*, and *Communication & Society*. She was a Visiting Scholar at UC Berkeley, King's College London, and Birkbeck.

Armando FUMAGALLI

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore–Milano (Catholic University of Milan, Italy)

The new trend of adaptation, from feature film to TV series:
The Leopard and Amadeus

STREAM 3

SESSION 10

PANEL 23

ROOM 306

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 3 pm

KEYWORDS — adaptation; TV series; Peter Shaffer; *Amadeus*; biopic

ABSTRACT

In last years, the development of a new big market for audiovisual products in the international platforms has greatly increased the production of TV series. Looking for “names”, “brands” that in the chaos of the big number of new titles and new releases could give visibility to a product, many commissioners have decided to bring to limited series stories and IPs that had been previously adapted for cinema.

We will speak in this paper of two specific cases of “new adaptation” - meaning stories that do not present themselves as adaptations of a film into a TV series, but as a new adaptation of a story (novel, theatre play) that in the past had become celebrated feature films. Now these stories have been adapted into limited TV series.

The two cases that I will examine are *The Leopard*, that from a very successful novel published in 1958 had become a celebrated (but not very successful in terms of box office) feature film directed by Luchino Visconti in 1963, and now has been re-adapted in 2025 into a limited TV series for Netflix, and *Amadeus*, first a play by Peter Schaffer (1979), then a very successful and highly regarded feature film directed by Milos Forman in 1984, and now (2025) a TV limited series produced in UK and broadcasted in a good number of countries by Sky.

In both cases it is declared that the adaptation is from the original source and not the feature film, but in both cases the confrontation with the previous feature films has been inevitable.

We will deal with the different strategies of the two new products, and we will also try to show why in the first case we consider the limited series a good new adaptation, for a different, contemporary audience, while in the second case the new adaptation has missed some important points of the original text and has become a weak and shallow new take on the same story.

PRESENTER'S BIO

ARMANDO FUMAGALLI is full professor and Director of the Master Program in International Screenwriting and Production at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, a program that has trained a new generation of successful writers and producers in Italy. He also teaches “History and Industry of International Cinema” and “Writing and Producing for Animation” at the M.A. in “The Art and Industry of Narration: from Literature to cinema and Tv” in the same University. Since 1999, he is a script consultant for the international projects of Lux vide, like the three seasons of *Medici. Masters of Florence* (Rai- Netflix) the TV series *Leonardo* (2021, Rai – Sony Pictures Television) and *Sandokan* (2025). His last books are *L’adattamento da letteratura a cinema*, 2 vols. (2020) and –edited with Cassandra Albani and Paolo Braga- *Storia delle serie Tv*, 2 vols. (2021). He has been awarded with the Teaching Excellence Award by the SRN in 2024.

Adam GANZ
Royal Holloway University of London (UK)

In praise of DocFiction

STREAM 2

SESSION 4

PANEL 10

ROOM 304

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 3.10 pm

KEYWORDS —

ABSTRACT

In this paper I discuss *The Filmmaker's House* (2020) *This Blessed Plot* (2023) and *Synthetic Sincerity* (2025) three feature length docfictions I have written with documentary director Marc Isaacs each of which explores a different aspect of story form.

I reflect on working practices and possibility of docfiction writing place it in a tradition which includes Humphrey Jennings, Pier Paolo Pasolini, John Cassavetes, Charles Burnett, Clio Barnard and Rainer Werner Fassbender and argue that the form re-enables the cinema of ideas whether reflecting on the Jacques Derrida's thoughts about hospitality, analysing the relationship between filmmaker and subject, dramatising the importance of fiction and myth in shaping ideas of Englishness or as a thought experiment to consider what the effects of AI will be for documentary and fiction cinema.

I will try to define the heuristics of writing for Docfiction, drawing on Jerome Bruner's ideas of narrative ("Narrative Construction of Reality", *Critical Inquiry* 18:1) and historian Carlo Ginsberg's concept of venatic narrative ("Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm" in *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method*, Johns Hopkins Press) and assert what the form offers in a post-truth world .

PRESENTER'S BIO

ADAM GANZ is Professor of Screenwriting at Royal Holloway University of London

Isadora GARCÍA AVIS
UIC–Universitat Internacional de Catalunya
(International University of Catalonia, Spain)

Beyond conventions: Genre as a device for plot and
character development in contemporary television
series. The case of *The Afterparty* (Apple TV)

STREAM 3

SESSION 4

PANEL 11

ROOM 306

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 3.10 pm

KEYWORDS — screenwriting; genre; focalization; intertextuality; television series;
“Prestige TV”

ABSTRACT

Genre has long been recognized as a central narrative component in storytelling, essential to the screenwriting process. Genre conventions, as well as their connection to audience expectations, have been studied across different media narratives (Lacey, 2000), including film (Altman, 1999; Selbo, 2014) and television (Mittell, 2004 & 2015; Creeber, 2023). However, as Mittell (2004) notes, genres cannot be defined as unyielding categories, merely inherent to texts. In substantive terms, genres are complex discursive practices that not only permeate the different layers of cultural industries (including production processes and audience reception); they are actually shaped by these contextual elements as well. Consequently, genres are dynamic and ever-shifting, adapting to different audiences and regions. Yet, at the same time, it is still possible to identify shared narrative patterns in genres, even across different media (Tseng, 2017).

In the early 21st Century, convergence culture (Jenkins, 2006) has also redefined the way in which media content is produced, distributed, and consumed. Genre hybridization is one of the constitutive attributes of contemporary TV, and the current “television” industry paradoxically includes streaming platforms as producers and distributors of serialized fiction formats. In this context, high-quality innovative series, released by both streaming platforms and traditional broadcast networks, have been labelled as “Peak” or “Prestige TV” (Friedman & Keeler, 2022), often pushing narrative boundaries and developing stories in groundbreaking ways.

More specifically, a new trend has emerged in recent years: some “Prestige TV” series have placed genre at the very centre of their concept, broadening the scope of traditional genre conventions. When genre is integrated within a story in a proactive way, it acquires new narrative functions and brings *architextuality* (Genette, 1982) – that is to say, intertextual connections that stem from genre categories – to the forefront

of storytelling practices. Shows like *WandaVision* (Disney+, 2021) and *Kevin can F**k Himself* (AMC, 2021-2022), which use the formal traits of sitcoms as a complex narrative device to unravel the inner world of their characters, have already been examined in scholarly literature. This paper will delve into the case study of *The Afterparty* (2022-2023), a series that is yet to be analyzed from an academic lens, but which also posits a novel approach to genre conventions and should therefore be explored.

As a serialized format, *The Afterparty* mainly hybridizes the 'whodunit' subgenre with comedy but then showcases a variety of other genres –such as film noir, musicals, or period dramas– through the use of flashbacks. All these genres play various and distinct narrative roles, the most significant of which appear to be the following:

- 1) Each genre is employed to portray the point of view of a different suspect within the story. Because of this, genres are inevitably intertwined with focalization techniques and thus provide a wide array of narrators (some of whom may be unreliable).
- 2) Genre conventions serve to unveil the true nature of characters in *The Afterparty*, from their inner conflicts and personal turmoils to their goals, wants, and deeper needs.
- 3) The genre-framed flashbacks are also utilized to advance the plot, contributing to the development of its twists and turns.
- 4) Ultimately, this metatextual use of genre highlights one of the thematic concepts on which the series is articulated: the power of storytelling, especially when stories are (re)constructed amidst shifting perspectives.

By analysing the way in which genre functions in *The Afterparty*, this paper will shed some light on the nature of genres as discursive practices in contemporary serialized fiction. This case study, along with other "Prestige TV" series that have placed genre at the core of their concept, prove that generic conventions can always be built upon, reinterpreted, or reframed, pushing their boundaries and even acquiring new narrative functions within a given story. Moreover, this illustrates that screenwriters can find transformative ways to experiment with genre conventions, making it clear that the future of screenwriting still yields novel opportunities for storytelling.

PRESENTER'S BIO

ISADORA GARCÍA AVIS is Associate Professor in Audiovisual Narrative at the School of Communication Sciences, Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (Barcelona, Spain), where she teaches modules on film and television narrative, screenwriting for television formats and transmedia storytelling. She obtained her PhD at the University of Navarra (Spain), with a doctoral dissertation on transcultural remakes in television. Her thesis was awarded the First Prize of Research in Audiovisual Communication, issued by the Audiovisual Council of Catalunya, in 2018.

Her main academic interests focus on adaptation studies, screenwriting, and television formats (more specifically, scripted series). Her research tends to have a transcultural scope, and it usually combines textual and hermeneutical analysis of audiovisual narratives with other qualitative methods, like in-depth interviews with screenwriters and producers. Her articles have appeared in journals such as *Poetics*, the *Journal of Screenwriting*, and *Communication & Society*, among others. She is a member of the Executive Council of the Screenwriting Research Network since September 2021.

Max GEE
Salford University (UK)

Possessed of (not by) agency: Exploring the challenges of representing sentient objects through screenwriting practice

STREAM 4

SESSION 3

PANEL 8

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 1.30 pm

KEYWORDS —

ABSTRACT

Our posthuman futures may require a shift in the ways in which we interact with more-than-human networks of sentience, whether animal, vegetal or object. Screenwriting offers some ways of representing non-human sentient characters, through anthropomorphism, point of view focus and interior monologues and often with narratives aimed at family audiences. However, few films in the horror genre focus on sentient objects that are not cursed or possessed, such as *Rubber* (Dupieux, 2010). My current research explores how using sentient object voices can destabilize accepted norms within horror. As William Brown's Thing Theory posits "the story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relation to the human subject." I take apply this approach to practice research, in which the object of analysis, the screenplay, is reshaped as the subjective site for research to occur.

In this paper, I explore the process behind developing my practice research short script representing the agency of a cult leader sentient garden fountain. It is a story of the loss of human agency, both willing and resistant, which occurs when people encounter the non-human agency of a sentient garden fountain and its object/vegetal cult.

First, I will establish my framework for sentient objects in horror, drawing on Object Oriented Ontology and Thing Theory and Tsukumogami. Then I will examine techniques and challenges of writing and showing the agency of a stationary object through medium of screenplay. Thing Theory asks us to break down the dichotomy of humans and objects, this research aims to re-shape accepted traditions of screenwriting.

PRESENTER'S BIO

MAX GEE is a Lecturer in Film Studies and Film Production at University of Salford. She holds a PhD by Creative Practice in Screenwriting from the University of York. She was Co-Investigator on AHRC BRAID funded research project, Shared Post-Human

Imagination: Human-AI Collaboration in Media Creation and is a Co-Investigator for Innovate UK funded project The AIMICI Companion Tool - upskilling AI competencies in creative industries. Her award-winning short films *Terminal* (2019) and *Standing Woman* (2021) screened at a range of international film festivals. Max has published on posthuman noir; folk horror, gender and Japanese survival horror; her practice research screenplay *Golems Inc.* in *Sightlines: Filmmaking in the Academy* and on a maternal sentient bathtub in *Horror and Mother/hoods in a Global Cultural Imaginary* (upcoming 2026).

Lucian GEORGESCU

UNATC—Universitatea Națională de Artă Teatrală și Cinematografică “I. L. Caragiale”
 (“I. L. Caragiale” National University of Theatre and Film, Romania)

The next camera: Radu Jude’s technology-driven screenwriting, from the iPhone of *Kontinental* ‘25 to playing the AI

STREAM 4

SESSION 3

PANEL 8

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 1.30 pm

KEYWORDS — screenwriting practice; smartphone cinema; Radu Jude; New Romanian Cinema; collage dramaturgy; artificial intelligence

ABSTRACT

When *Kontinental* '25 won the Silver Bear for Best Screenplay at the 2025 Berlinale, it became arguably the most awarded cellphilm in film history: written by Radu Jude alone and shot in ten days on an iPhone 15, with no lights, no grip, and a cast working as a cooperative. This paper argues that Jude's smartphone turn is, before anything else, a screenwriting event — the arrival point of a practice that has programmatically departed from the New Romanian Cinema (NCR), and in which the choice of animage-technology has become a decision taken at the writing stage.

Where canonical NCR dramaturgy was mimetic — dialogue "stolen" from the real, in the slipstream of Bazinian long-take realism (Gorzo & Lazăr, 2023) — Jude writes by collage, and each project adopts one technology as its formal engine: nineteenth-century quotation in *Aferim!*, archival juxtaposition in *Barbarians*, the "Flaubertian dictionary" of *Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn* (rejected by a script-market platform for failing to "describe the narrative"), dashcam and TikTok aesthetics in *Do Not Expect Too Much from the End of the World*, and the phone — simultaneously camera, prop, character and symptom — in *Kontinental* '25, *Dracula* and *The Diary of a Chambermaid* (Quinzaine, 2026).

Drawing on an unpublished interview with Jude (Georgescu, 2026) and on Martin (forthcoming), I read this trajectory as a weak signal of a paradigm shift: when the camera costs nothing, the screenplay reabsorbs budget, location, light and tempo, and speed itself becomes dramaturgy. Nor does the shift stop short of the conference's elephant in the room: *Dracula* found its structure only when ChatGPT refused Jude's synopses — so he wrote what the machine would not, "pretending to be the AI". If every script now chooses its camera, is generative AI simply the next one?

PRESENTER'S BIO

LUCIAN GEORGESCU is a professor of screenwriting at UNATC in Bucharest and a visiting professor of audiovisual at Babeş Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. He is a member of the European Film Academy, FIPRESCI, Creative Commons, and the European Association of Creative Writing Programs. A practitioner (writer/director) and academic, his work explores the road movie as a metaphor for human displacement, examines the streaming industry's impact on audiovisual language, and investigates digital distribution models in peripheral cultures. He is the founder of cinepub.ro, the Romanian cinema national heritage streaming platform.

Pablo GONÇALO
UnB–Universidade de Brasília (University of Brasilia, Brazil)

Searching for other screenwriting theories: A Latin-American contribution

STREAM 3

SESSION 2

PANEL 3

ROOM 306

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 11.00 am

KEYWORDS — screenwriting studies; screenwriting theory; Latin American film studies; modern film; alternative film history

ABSTRACT

Screenwriting manuals, as well as the field of screenwriting studies, often encompass conceptions of dramaturgy that are culturally delimited to the Anglo-Saxon tradition. This paper brings together the contributions of influential authors, including Pier Paolo Pasolini, Augusto Boal, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, and Raúl Ruiz, to screenwriting theory. Between the 1960s and 1980s, a series of concerns, experiments, studies, and conceptualizations were shaped through Latin American authors or a sort of Latin American engagement. In “Heretical Empiricism”, Pasolini, inspired by medieval concepts akin to Latin-American thoughts, proposes the idea that the screenplay is a structure that wants to be another structure. From Pasolini’s perspective, therefore, the screenplay would cease to have a fixed “ontology” and would always be susceptible to future transformations.

In 1975, the Brazilian Augusto Boal published “Theatre of the Oppressed and Other Political Poetics”, which also resulted from Boal’s journey with popular theater in Peru, Brazil, and France. Although focused on dramatic art, Boal states one of the most emphatic deconstructions of Aristotle’s Poetics. For Boal, the entire conception of character and catharsis is a direct result of the slave-owning reality inherent in the culture of democracy in ancient Greece.

Written in the 1980s, the books by Tomás Gutierrez Alea, and Raúl Ruiz are key Latin American collaborations on screenwriting. Concerned with the naturalization of bourgeois spectacle, Alea highlights the montage and estrangement strategies of Sergei Eisenstein and Bertolt Brecht to demonstrate how a socialist, popular, and revolutionary cinema could engage viewers in other experiences, distinct from those consolidated by decades of Hollywood hegemony. By his turn, Chilean filmmaker Raúl Ruiz offers a meticulous deconstruction of the so-called “central conflict theory.” Drawing on Jewish, medieval Christian theology, and game theory, Ruiz defends

dramatic forms based on playfulness, irrationality, unpredictability, and fragmentation.

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PRESENTER'S BIO

PABLO GONÇALO is a professor at the University of Brasilia, a screenwriter, film director and curator. He has been awarded key grants such as DAAD and Fulbright. He has been attending conferences such as SCMS, Film-Philosophy, NECS, Screenwriting Research Network, and LASA. Gonçalo has had publications in *The Journal of Screenwriting*, *Senses of Cinema*, *La Furia Humana*, *Revista Cinética*, *Folha de São Paulo*, among other journals, and newspapers in Brazil and oversea. He published two books in Portuguese. The first book is about the partnership between Peter Handke and Wim Wenders (2016), and the former is about unproduced screenplays in the classical Hollywood era (2022). Currently, he takes part in the research group *Escritoras Pioneras del Cine Sonoro en México*. He has been visiting scholar at the University of Chicago, University of São Paulo, Federal University Fluminense, in Rio de Janeiro, and at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, UNAM.

Oliver GRUNER
University of Portsmouth (UK)

“The future’s all yours, ya lousy bicycles”: Reshaping a Screenwriter’s Hollywood Renaissance

STREAM 3

SESSION 3

PANEL 7

ROOM 306

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 1.30 pm

KEYWORDS — Hollywood renaissance; screenwriting historiography; script development; Jay Presson Allen; William Goldman; Bill Gunn

ABSTRACT

The late 1960s/early 1970s “Hollywood Renaissance”, according to many accounts, signalled an outburst of creativity in American cinema – one encapsulated in provocative themes, psychologically complex characters, meandering narratives, innovative editing and ambiguous endings. Films such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and *The Godfather* (1972), and directors like Arthur Penn and Francis Ford Coppola, are the subjects of endless retrospectives. If recent scholarship rightly challenges director-centred, “auteur”, studies that dominate accounts of the era, there is also a standard narrative associated with screenwriting, one which bears further interrogation. Historians of the screenplay argue the 60s /70s were a period of freedom for writers to experiment with the form, leading to scripts packed with complex visual cues, literary exposition, fragmented structures and self-consciousness. But by the late 1970s, it has been suggested that this freedom was curtailed with the rise of popular screenwriting manuals, which detailed strict rules on structure, and limits on textual content a screenwriter should include.

Drawing on insights from screenwriting historiography studies (e.g. Price 2023, in Davies, Russo and Tieber (eds), *Palgrave Handbook of Screenwriting Studies*), this paper examines industrial practices of the 1960s and 1970s and assesses their contemporaneous impact and enduring legacy. An examination of archival materials related to screenwriters such as Jay Presson Allen, William Goldman, Joan Tewkesbury, Bill Gunn and Paul Schrader will, I contend, help us rethink standard “rise and fall” narratives associated with the Hollywood Renaissance and consider the extent to which the era’s formal strategies and thematic preoccupations evolved through the 1970s and beyond. Furthermore, a focus on produced and unproduced screenplays and treatments (as well as trade/mainstream press discussions of screenwriting) will enable new perspectives on the Hollywood Renaissance’s fraught relationship to issues such as

authorship, professional status and political identities in a film business then undergoing significant transformation.

PRESENTER'S BIO

OLIVER GRUNER is a Senior Lecturer in Visual Culture at the University of Portsmouth, UK. He is the author of *Screening the Sixties: Hollywood Cinema and the Politics of Memory* (2016) and co-editor, with Peter Krämer, of *Grease is the Word: Exploring a Cultural Phenomenon* (2019). He has published a number of journal articles and book chapters on Hollywood screenwriters of the 1960s and 1970s and is currently writing a book on the subject.

Julia Sabina GUTIÉRREZ
Universidad de Alcalá (University of Alcalá, Spain)

Adapting Calderón in exile: A newly discovered unpublished
screenplay by Rafael Alberti for *La dama duende*

STREAM 3

SESSION 10

PANEL 23

ROOM 306

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 3 pm

KEYWORDS — screenwriting; Rafael Alberti; Calderón; Spanish Republican exile; adaptation

ABSTRACT

This paper examines a newly discovered, unpublished screenplay by Rafael Alberti, one of the major Spanish poets of the Generation of '27, the influential artistic movement that also included Federico García Lorca and Salvador Dalí. Written in Argentina during Alberti's exile after the Spanish Civil War and the establishment of the Franco dictatorship, and developed within the collaborative intellectual context he shared with the writer María Teresa León, the screenplay adapts Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *La dama duende* for the cinema. The text offers a rare opportunity to study how a leading avant-garde poet engaged with screenwriting and cinematic form.

The paper focuses on the relationship between Alberti's poetic imagination and cinematic writing. It explores how elements associated with poetic practice, such as imagery, rhythm, symbolic motifs, and spatial composition, shape the construction of scenes and the visual logic of the screenplay. Through analysis of narrative structure, dialogue, and the use of domestic and hidden spaces, the study shows how theatrical and poetic devices are translated into filmable situations and audiovisual storytelling.

Placing the screenplay in the context of 1940s Argentine cinema and the cultural networks of Spanish Republican exile, the paper argues that Alberti's work demonstrates how classical Spanish theatre, poetic language, and cinematic form intersect in screenwriting practice. More broadly, it highlights how archival discoveries of this kind help us understand the movement of literary authors into cinema and the transnational circulation of creative practices in twentieth-century screen culture.

PRESENTER'S BIO

JULIA SABINA GUTIÉRREZ is an Associate Professor in Audiovisual Arts and Media Communication at the University of Alcalá (Madrid, Spain). She holds a PhD in Cinema and Communication Studies from Sorbonne University (with highest honours), supervised by semiologist François Jost. Her research focuses on screenwriting, narrative forms, and the intersections between literature and cinema, with particular attention to feminist and transnational perspectives. She has taught at The American University of Paris. Alongside her academic work, she develops screenwriting projects selected by initiatives such as Berlinale Talents and Torino Film Lab. Her novel *Vidas samuráis* (Destino, 2020) was translated into Italian by Garzanti.

Phoebe HART
Queensland University of Technology (Australia)

Good Neighbours: Co-creation, authorship and documentary screenwriting across cultures

STREAM 2

SESSION 4

PANEL 10

ROOM 304

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 3.10 pm

KEYWORDS — co-creative screenwriting; documentary film; authorship; cross-cultural collaboration; practice-led research; participatory filmmaking; second-hand clothing trade; Pacific region; indigenous collaboration; narrative construction

ABSTRACT

This paper explores co-creative screenwriting in relation to a short documentary film produced by researchers from Queensland University of Technology and the Solomon Islands National University. *Good Neighbours* investigates second-hand clothing trade between Australia and the Pacific and its myriad impacts, and questions how the story can be written across geographical, cultural, institutional, and disciplinary boundaries. The film's narrative emerged through negotiation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaborators, a process that involved trust, time, and ongoing dialogue. Participants contributed knowledge and perspectives, but the translation of these elements into a cohesive non-fiction form was uneven, constrained by practical realities, revealing tensions around representation and control. This paper argues that co-creative documentary practice requires a flexible approach to screenwriting that is both ethically aspirational and pragmatically complex. In this sense, *Good Neighbours* offers a case study in what collaborative screenwriting can do, but also where it falls short.

PRESENTER'S BIO

PHOEBE HART is an acclaimed Australian documentary filmmaker recognised for her exploration of themes related to identity, family, and personal journeys. Through her filmmaking, Hart highlights significant social issues and promotes greater understanding and acceptance. She is an Associate Professor at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, where she teaches screen production across multiple contexts.

Joakim HERMANSSON
Piotr MARCINIAK
Dalarna University (Sweden)

Reshaping narratives and screenplays in the service of the people

STREAM 4

SESSION 2

PANEL 4

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.00 am

KEYWORDS — Generative AI; screenwriter attitudes; authorship; narrative shapes; story content; screenwriting pedagogy

ABSTRACT

At the SRN conferences before the pandemic few believed generative AI models would ever seriously be able to produce coherent screenplay dialogue or characters. Yet like so many digital innovations, generative AI models have been developed and changed the industry faster than expected. At universities the use of generative AI models is promoted in the name of learning, creativity, and progression, while screenwriters' attitudes range from enthusiastic embraces to worried avoidance and fear of creative contamination.

In this presentation, we approach the matter with the understanding that narrative forms have always been reshaped by innovation. Through surveys and interviews, we map Swedish screenwriters' visions and concerns regarding the future narrative shapes of the screenplays in the wake of generative AI. Our study includes screenwriting students, early-career screenwriters, and established, successful screenwriters in the Swedish film and TV industry, who have been asked to reflect on how narratives may change as screenwriters incorporate AI into their work processes, how they position themselves in relation to the use of generative AI in screenwriting and to AI generated material.

The results of the survey let us compare differences between students, emerging screenwriters, and successful professionals' perceptions of possible effects on various aspects of narrative shapes of and in screenplays, from character construction, thematic and narrative structures, to screenplays' psychology and shapes of communication modes. The varying degrees of adaptability suggest that openness, resistance, and strategic uses of AI are not simply generational and linked to the progression of professional identity. Bringing attention to the shape of narratives and screenplays, the findings indicate directions for future approaches to teaching screenwriting beyond plot

structures, character development, AI literacy, and prompting, as well as what the industry may expect from the shapes of future screenplays.

PRESENTERS' BIOS

JOAKIM HERMANSSON currently teaches theory of film production and screenwriting at Dalarna University, Sweden. After twenty years as a teacher, a master in linguistics and literature, he gained his PhD at Gothenburg University with a dissertation on adaptations of thematic arguments when contemporary novels are adapted for the screen, with the screenwriting process in focus. He has published with *Journal of Screenwriting*, *Journal of Adaptation*, *Literature/Film Quarterly*, *Cormac McCarthy Journal*, and in *New Perspectives on Adaptations*. Most of his time is however spent teaching screenwriting and adaptations.

PIOTR MARCINIAK graduated from Stockholm Dramatic Institute's screenwriter programme and won the Student Academy Award for "Bekas" in 2011. Best known as creator and head writer of *The Pirate Bay* (2024), which was nominated for best TV-series at the Geneva International Film Festival, he is also senior lecturer and head of the BA programme "Scriptwriting for film & TV" at Dalarna University. Whether writing a popular heist movie like "The Jönsson Gang: The Perfect Heist (2015) or adapting Jonas Hassen Kkemiri's existential novel "Everything I Don't Remember (2019) Marciniak always engages the tension of systemic class issues in his screenplays.

Sylvi Jane HUSEBYE
Independent scholar (Norway)

May narrative elements of a screenplay be described by
numbers, graphs and algebra? Exploring possibilities in
Nora Ephron's *When Harry Met Sally*

STREAM 1

SESSION 3

PANEL 5

ROOM 303

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 1.30 pm

KEYWORDS — narratology; screenplay; screenwriter's contribution

ABSTRACT

I will explore if and how mathematical analysis of the graph of occurrences of narrative elements in a screenplay may be used to further describe the screenplay's narrative content. Then I will analyse the corresponding movie with the same approach and compare the findings. The overall aim of my research is to search for approaches to further describe the screenwriter's input to the corresponding movie.

The use of mathematical expressions, numbers and numeric relations when describing literature, theatrical plays, screenplays and films is not new nor outdated: Aristototele's three act structure, Paul Gulino's eight sequence structure, a drama's development arch/curve with its upwards and downwards turns and slopes. Barry Salt methods of measurements and statistical style analysis is a basis for discussions of authorship. John Burrows opened more ways of describing features of a text through compounded stylistics. Other researchers have explored stylometrics on texts and screenplay texts further (Warren Buckland).

Narrative story elements may be measured by finding and counting a chosen set of elements and place their occurrences relative to screenplay pages and screen time, utilizing the film industry's rule of thumb that one page of screenplay text equals one minute film duration (Janet Staiger). Such measurements may be shown in graphs.

I will explore how algebra and or other mathematical descriptions can be utilized to analyse the graph, its curves and slopes, in order to give an approach to describe the narrative's richness, rhythm and or other features of the screenplay of Nora Ephron's *When Harry Met Sally*. Comparing the findings with a similar analysis on the same story elements of the corresponding film, I will seek to find more approaches to indicate a screenwriter's contribution to the end product on the screen.

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PRESENTER'S BIOS

MARIANNE SYLVI JANE HUSEBYE, born 1965. Master of Management (Norwegian school of business, Oslo, Norway, 1989). Project under the Norwegian screenplay development funding arrangement (2001-2002). Master of Arts in Film studies (Chapman University, CA, 2004).

I have long had the interest for creative writing. At Chapman I included creative screenwriting classes when graduating in the theoretical studies. I focused on finding and describing the screenwriter's contribution to the final film. After returning to Norway, I have had ordinary daytime jobs and kept writing and also kept the interest for the screenwriter's role in filmmaking.

I aim at a PhD based on my master thesis topic. This proposal for an individual paper is a part of my work in progress, building also on my papers presented at the SRN's conferences 2024 and 2025.

Raquel IBÁÑEZ-MONFORTE

UIC–Universitat Internacional de Catalunya
(International University of Catalonia, Spain)

Andrea RODRÍQUEZ-PRAT

UIC–Universitat Internacional de Catalunya
(International University of Catalonia, Spain)

Pedro SIGAUD-SELLOS

TBS Education - Campus Barcelona (Spain)

AI-driven screenplay analysis: Narrative and aesthetic patterns in films used in therapeutic settings

STREAM 4

SESSION 4

PANEL 12

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 3.10 pm

KEYWORDS — screenwriting research; AI-assisted analysis; film analysis;
cinematherapy; transportation theory; narrative patterns

ABSTRACT

Cinema can foster emotional engagement, reflection, interpersonal communication, well-being and meaning-making. For this reason, films are increasingly used as psychosocial interventions in clinical settings. Previous research identifies two main contexts of use (enhancing the hospital experience and providing psychotherapeutic support) and highlights key mechanisms such as narrative transportation and viewers' attitudinal openness to the cinematic experience, often influenced by audience preferences. Existing findings suggest the importance of humor, familiar narratives, and emotionally accessible storytelling, yet systematic filmic analysis capable of identifying shared narrative patterns across therapeutic films remains unexplored. What narrative and aesthetic features do the films used in these interventions share, and how might these characteristics relate to their reported therapeutic outcomes? AI-assisted analysis offers a scalable approach to explore such patterns across large film datasets.

Building on a realist synthesis of 24 cinema-based interventions, this study examines a corpus of 220 films identified in the literature. Two complementary codebooks were developed: one mapping therapeutic aims and outcomes associated with each film, and another coding narrative and aesthetic features. After pilot testing and validation, data were extracted across all films. AI-assisted pattern recognition was then applied primarily to screenplay and dialogue transcripts to identify recurring narrative

configurations across the dataset. Findings were interpreted and validated through a human-in-the-loop process, ensuring detected patterns remained consistent with the films' cinematic viewing experience.

By identifying recurrent narrative and aesthetic configurations associated with therapeutic outcomes, the study contributes to a more systematic understanding of how cinematic storytelling may support therapeutic engagement. Results open the possibility of identifying additional films with similar narrative patterns and informing the development of new narratives responding to diverse audience preferences while expanding the film catalogue. It also highlights the methodological potential of combining AI-assisted screenplay analysis with human interpretation, suggesting new ways of approaching large sets of films while remaining attentive to the experiential dimension of cinematic narratives.

PRESENTER'S BIO

RAQUEL IBÁÑEZ-MONFORTE is a PhD candidate at the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (Barcelona), within the Faculty of Communication Sciences and the [WeCare Chair in End-of-Life Care](#). I was awarded an FI AGAUR predoctoral scholarship. [My research](#) focuses on screenwriting and narratives, particularly how audiovisual storytelling can foster emotional engagement, reflection, and meaning-making in contexts of illness. I combine qualitative research, film analysis, and AI-driven methods to explore narrative and aesthetic structures and understand how cinematic narratives shape audience experience and well-being.

I hold a Master's degree in Audiovisual Communication Content (UAB) and a Master's degree in Literary Creation (UPF). I received the Best Master's Thesis Award at the SECPAL International Conference (2024). I have presented my research in more than [15 conference presentations](#) and have contributed to scientific dissemination through podcasts and outreach articles. I have two journal articles currently under review, including a systematic review and realist synthesis on cinema-based interventions. I currently lecture in Audiovisual Narrative II.

Ann IGELSTRÖM
MetFilm School – Leeds (UK)

Fady ATALLAH
University of Birmingham (UK)

The missing piece in an AI script report

STREAM 4

SESSION 7

PANEL 16

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — close reading; script report; AI; Scottish feature film production

ABSTRACT

Fady Atallah's programmed AI can provide a producer with a coverage of a feature film or TV screenplay in less than one minute. A script consultant can do the same in maybe 4 hours. The questions left to answer are in what ways these two reports differ and if the human one is worth waiting (and paying more) for.

This paper will present the findings of close readings of feature film reports completed by Fady's AI service "The Script Eye" (developed and released by B-RETTA AB, Sweden) and Ann's work as script consultant. Three Scottish feature film or TV scripts linked to three different writers and production companies will be used as a basis for generating script coverages that focus on the following aspects: structure, character arcs and writer's voice. In total six script reports will be studied based on these three scripts: three generated by Fady's AI and three by Ann.

The first half of the presentation will focus on how the AI service was built and how it functions in comparison to how the human script reports are created as well as introducing the three scripts that took part in the research project. The second half will focus on a questionnaire given to the producers and writers where they evaluate the two reports and what qualities they valued in the two reports, could they even tell the difference? This will lead to a discussion about what the missing piece in an AI generated script report is and how a human script consultant can fill that void – if such a void truly exists – or how easy it would be for Fady to simply re-program the AI to equally fill that void.

The presentation will finish with a look into the future of script consultancy and how to find a space for consultants without disregarding the value AI can bring to this stage of the development.

PRESENTER'S BIOS

Dr ANN IGELSTRÖM is a script consultant, script reader and lecturer at MetFilm School in Leeds. Research interests mainly concern the screenplay text and she is the co-editor of 'The Bloomsbury Handbook of Screenplay Theory' due to be published later this year. Currently based in Edinburgh, Scotland.

FADY ATALLAH is a film producer, researcher, and founder of B-RETTA FILM in Stockholm. He is currently a PhD scholar at the University of Birmingham, where his research focuses on anti-realist cinema. Fady holds a B.Sc. and M.Sc. in Chemical Engineering, before transitioning to film and completing an MA in Screenwriting at Raindance Film School. He has presented papers at academic film colloquiums in Norway, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom, on topics including the cultural aspects of film, cinematic space and philosophical cinema. As a producer, his credits include the feature film *My Father's Scent*, which premiered at the Warsaw International Film Festival in 2025.

Karen JEYNES
University of Pretoria (South Africa)

The shape of the future is vertical: Unlearning screenwriting to write for micro drama

STREAM 3

SESSION 3

PANEL 7

ROOM 306

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 1.30 pm

KEYWORDS — vertical; micro drama; narrative structure; practice-based research

ABSTRACT

In late 2025, overseeing creatively the production of South Africa's first two entirely local Micro Dramas - 70-episode series designed for vertical mobile consumption - required a radical "unlearning" of traditional screenwriting ontologies. This presentation explores a practice-based research project involving the development of 140 episodes, moving from a horizontal "cinematic" canvas to a vertical "mobile" one. The central research question is: How do the technical and audience consumption constraints of the vertical format - such as the 9:16 aspect ratio, the absence of wide establishing shots, and the 90-second cliffhanger requirement to hook viewers into an algorithm - redefine the role of the screenwriter?

By examining a writers' room process that moved from concept to final edit in a highly compressed timeframe, this research investigates the transition from writing for film or television. This involves various shifts, including a shift from a traditional approach where a screenwriter as collaborator with a director and cinematographer frequently leaves creative space or "gaps", to a form of "directing from the page." Additionally, writers are creating scripts driven by data and prompts from audiences, rather than perhaps more poetic ideas around muses and inspiration.

Rather than viewing Micro Drama as a reduced form of television, this paper argues it represents a broader paradigm shift in screenwriting practices, in direct response to audience habits and demand. By unpacking the successes and failures of these two pioneering South African productions, the presentation offers insights into how vertical storytelling is reshaping the future of the medium, demanding new pedagogical approaches and a more holistic understanding of the relationship between the writer, the frame, the audience, and the platform.

PRESENTER'S BIO

KAREN JEYNES is a screenwriter, director, and researcher working at the intersection of high-end television and film production and academic inquiry. She is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Pretoria, where her research focuses on the nuances of autistic representation within South African screen culture. In her professional practice, she serves as an Executive Producer at Both Worlds Pictures. Her recent credits include head writing and co-directing the international murder mystery *Recipes for Love and Murder*, the Venice TV Award-nominated comedy-drama *The Morning After*, and local newsroom drama

Die Nuusmakers. She was also the head writer for 12 seasons of the double International Emmy-nominated *ZANews: Puppet Nation*. As the founder of the Disabled Audiovisual Workers Network (DAWN), Karen is dedicated to bridging the gap between academic theory and inclusive industry practice.

Matt KIRTON
De Montfort University (UK)

Time and the screenplay

STREAM 3

SESSION 7

PANEL 15

ROOM 306

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — screenwriting; pacing; immersive reading; screen time; screenplay metrics

ABSTRACT

Presently it is accepted that one page of screenplay equates to one minute of screen time, and one minute of reading time. How much truth is there in that old adage? Where did the idea originate? Imagine a screenwriter of the future...every scene they write automatically accumulates two numerical values: one is reading time (how long it'll take the average person to read their scene), the other is screen time (how long the scene is likely to play for in the produced film or series). Imagine further into the future...via a plugin the screenwriting software produces a third number: it tells the screenwriter how long it'll *feel*/like it took to read the scene. Imagine the implications for future screenwriting practice and pedagogy. The results may determine whether the screenwriter of tomorrow trims their first act or extends their second. They could omit adverbs to speed up the *feel* of an action sequence. Their decisions would be informed by data-led research. Now, rewind back to the present day, and imagine...a curious screenwriting researcher timing how long it takes to read 100 screenplay scenes then timing how long those produced scenes take to playout. He compares the data – finding what's the same, what's different, what's surprising. Imagine the researcher dreaming of a future funding bid; dozens of participants reading scenes and reflecting on time taken and time *felt*; an industry partner; and a software developer to design the plugin. You've just imagined this research paper. Does one screenplay page equal one minute of screen time? Or is it time for a fresh approach? Let's find out.

PRESENTER'S BIO

MATT KIRTON is Screenwriter and Liverpool Everyman Theatre writing graduate. Matt has developed TV shows with Expectation Entertainment, Two Cities Television, Leopard Pictures, Ferryman Films, and Red Planet Pictures. In 2016, Matt's pilot script Sin Of God won the 'Write to Greenlight' prize and an option with Lionsgate UK and Idris Elba's Green Door Pictures. In 2020, Matt received a script commission with FilmNation TV UK for his series Descent, with Dome Karukoski attached to direct. Matt's stage plays have been produced at Liverpool's Unity Theatre, The London Theatre, New Cross, and the Edinburgh Fringe. In 2025, his dark comedy Frank was given a public reading at Liverpool's Royal Court Theatre. Matt lectures part time in Creative Writing at De Montfort University, and is currently undertaking a practice research PhD for which he's developing a new six-part series about astronomer Carl Sagan and the making of Cosmos.

Deborah KLIKA
University of Greenwich (UK)

Renegotiating cultural protocols through practice:
Indigenous representation, displacement, and comedy
in Australian screenwriting

STREAM 1

SESSION 4

PANEL 9

ROOM 303

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 3.10 pm

KEYWORDS — cultural protocols; practice-based research; indigenous representation; script development; Australian cinema; dark comedy

ABSTRACT

This practice-based research challenges the static nature of cultural protocols in Australian screen production by examining their application in early-stage script development. With Screen Australia's *Pathways and Protocols* now over a decade old, this project interrogates how contemporary consultative practices can produce more nuanced creative frameworks for representation, particularly for scripts where Indigenous characters appear within non-Indigenous narratives.

Through the development of a dark comedy set in 1960s northern Australia, this research explores displacement as a shared yet distinct experience. The story follows two Czech migrants driving through the Top End during wet season, encountering Indigenous peoples navigating their own displacement. The practice-led methodology reveals how collaborative revision with cultural advisors generates unexpected creative possibilities rather than constraining narrative choices—particularly in comedic elements.

A table reading at SRN 2025 exposed critical gaps in existing protocols, foregrounding central questions about representation at developmental stages: Who can read Indigenous characters? When must consultation occur? How do we balance cultural respect with narrative integrity in stories that intersect with, but are not centred on, Indigenous experience?

Consultations with Indigenous cultural advisors transformed these challenges into creative opportunities. The advisors' suggestions—shifting dialogue to "in language" and reframing violent encounters—generated more nuanced moments while honouring historical and cultural realities. These interventions demonstrate how protocol adherence, when approached collaboratively, can deepen both authenticity and comedy.

By documenting this developmental process, this paper demonstrates how practice-based methodologies in comedy can inform updated frameworks applicable across Australian screen productions involving Indigenous representation. The research contributes a creative approach to cultural consultation that moves beyond compliance toward genuine creative partnership.

PRESENTER'S BIO

Dr DEBORAH KLIKA is Deputy Head of School, Design and Creative Industries, at the University of Greenwich, London. Deborah's area of research is screen comedy and screenwriting pedagogy. Deborah has completed her feature film script, a dark comedy about her Czech parents driving across the top end of Australia in 1960, in pursuit of their careers, yet her pregnant mother could neither drive nor speak English; this project is the case study for this paper.

Peter KRÄMER

De Montfort University (UK) and University of East Anglia (UK)

No future? The making of Stanley Kramer's *On the Beach* (1957) and our world today

STREAM 1

SESSION 8

PANEL 17

ROOM 303

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

KEYWORDS — adaptation; message movies; nuclear weapons; future risks

ABSTRACT

What would it be like to know for sure that human extinction is about to happen? Nevil Shute's bestselling 1957 novel *On the Beach* provided an answer by dealing with the last few months in the lives of people in Australia. After a short nuclear war in the Northern hemisphere in 1963, they await the arrival of a radioactive cloud which has already wiped out much of humanity and will kill them, too.

First serialised in the *Sunday Graphic* (London), the novel was published in July 1957. By September 1957 leading Hollywood producer-director Stanley Kramer, a liberal known for his socially conscious 'message movies', had acquired the film rights. With backing from United Artists, Kramer assembled an all-star cast and shot this big-budget production in the first few months of 1959. The film received a high-profile release on all seven continents (including Antarctica!) in December 1959.

Based on research in the Production Code Administration files at AMPAS and in the Stanley Kramer Collection at UCLA, this paper reconstructs the making of *On the Beach*, focusing on exchanges between Shute, Kramer, screenwriter John Paxton and the PCA, and on Kramer's intention to deliver a warning to the whole world about the dangers of nuclear weapons.

Unfortunately, *On the Beach* is even more relevant today than it was in the late 1950s. In January 2026 the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* set its Doomsday Clock to 85 seconds to midnight, the closest it has ever been to global catastrophe. Several high-profile texts, including Annie Jacobson's non-fiction bestseller *Nuclear War: A Scenario* (2024) and the Netflix hit *A House of Dynamite* (2025), have recently renewed Kramer's warning about a possible extinction-level nuclear event in the not-too-distant future. What would it mean for us, as scholars, writers and teachers, to take this warning seriously?

PRESENTER'S BIO

Peter Krämer is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow in the Faculty of Technology, Arts and Culture at De Montfort University (Leicester, UK) and an Honorary Fellow in the School of Media, Language and Communication Studies at the University of East Anglia (Norwich, UK). He also is a regular guest lecturer at several other universities in the UK, Germany and Czechia. He is the author or editor of twelve academic books and has published over one hundred essays in academic journals and edited collections.

Across the last two decades much of his work has focused on end-of-the-world narratives with publications such as the 2014 BFI Film Classic on *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* and the historical survey “The End of the World (As It Is Collectively Known At the Time): Hit Patterns in US and Global Box Office Charts” in *The Oxford Handbook of American Film History* (ed. Jon Lewis, Oxford University Press, 2025).

Ignacio LAGUIA CASSANY
UNAV–Universidad de Navarra (University of Navarra, Spain)

Guiding, not replacing: A teaching experience using Generative AI in story development

STREAM 4

SESSION 10

PANEL 24

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 3 pm

KEYWORDS — AI-assisted narrative design; multimodal storytelling; visual storytelling; Generative AI in education; 3d animation

ABSTRACT

Recently, several scholars have published research on the use of generative AI for screenwriting and fictional narrative writing (Hinojosa, Marín and Maldonado, 2024; Avello, Gajderowicz and Gómez, 2024; Mesonero, 2024; Zaldívar, Tripp and Aguilar, 2025; and others). As the systematic review proposed in the theoretical framework will demonstrate, the results are uneven in terms of satisfaction with the resulting products. At the same time, from a pedagogical perspective, university-level teaching of screenwriting and narrative has had to face a growing challenge: students' temptation to use AI tools to replace human creative work. In order to address this reality, educators have two main options. On the one hand, they may ignore the use of AI and continue with the same teaching practices employed in the pre-AI paradigm; on the other, they may confront the challenge and rethink teaching practices in response to the ease with which students can now complete assignments with reduced effort. Within this context, this paper aims to share a teaching experience that has proven successful and that involves the use of generative AI not as a replacement for human work, but as a guiding and supportive tool, with the goal of enriching the creative process and enabling real-time feedback during story writing. The exercise consists of students using AI to create visual storytelling for their narratives as they write, so that image visualization helps them assess the extent to which their stories function visually. The pedagogical objective of this approach is to redirect students' use of AI toward practices that do not involve the substitution of their human talent, that is, using it as creative support in the process of visually imagining their written text.

PRESENTER'S BIO

IGNACIO (NACHO) LAGUÍA CASSANY holds a PhD in Communication from the University of Navarra. His research focuses on the study of the evolution of Disney's narrative style, from the adaptation of literary fairy tales to the mythologization of narratives in the postmodern landscape. He is a member of the research project Possible Worlds and Formats of Animated Series at Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, as well as a member of the research group Mythmaking and Heroism in Narratives at the University of Navarra. He currently teaches Film Criticism, History of Animation, and 3D Animation in the Audiovisual Communication undergraduate program. He has conducted research stays at East Texas A&M in the United States and at the University of the Holy Cross in Rome.

Joanise (Jô) LEVY

UEG—Universidade Estadual de Goiás (State University of Goiás, Brazil)

The university is not late: Temporalities in screenwriting education in Brazil

STREAM 1

SESSION 7

PANEL 13

ROOM 303

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — screenwriting pedagogy; temporalities; higher education; nonhegemonic contexts; screenwriting studies

ABSTRACT

Screenwriting education in Brazil developed discontinuously, shaped by structural asymmetries and by the persistent non-coincidence between the temporalities of the university, critical reflection, and the audiovisual industry.

From the foundational yet prematurely interrupted film programme at the University of Brasília in the 1960s to the later consolidation of film and audiovisual degrees in public universities, screenwriting entered curricula not as the result of a stabilised pedagogical tradition, but as a component whose function, status, and methods have remained contested. This trajectory has often been interpreted through the notion of “delay”, understood as a deficit in relation to hegemonic, industry-oriented models of training.

This paper proposes to displace that normative reading by arguing that the so-called late institutionalisation of screenwriting education in Brazil constitutes a historical condition that renders visible a specific pedagogical regime of the university. To conceptualise this condition, the article mobilises *ch'ixi*, a concept articulated by Silvia Cusicanqui, which designates the antagonistic coexistence of temporalities and regimes of value that do not resolve into synthesis. This framework allows screenwriting education to be understood as a space in which industrial models, academic demands, and authorial projects coexist.

The argument engages with the pedagogical thought of Jean-Claude Bernardet, whose work as a critic, screenwriter, and early film educator in Brazil grounds a critical reflection on how historiographies and canons stabilise as pedagogical devices. This perspective is articulated with Ian Macdonald's concept of *screen idea*, which conceives the screenplay not as a stable text but as an idea in circulation, continuously transformed through pedagogical interactions, provisional versions, collective decisions, and, in the contemporary context, exchanges with algorithmic systems and generative AI tools.

By adopting a theoretical-analytical approach, the paper contributes to international debates in *screenwriting studies* by proposing a temporally grounded understanding of screenwriting pedagogy beyond deficit-based, industrial, or linear models.

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PRESENTER'S BIO

JOANISE LEVY is a screenwriter, professor and researcher in the Cinema and Audiovisual programme at the State University of Goiás (Brazil), where she also coordinates the extension project Trama – Narrativas Audiovisuais e Criação de Roteiros. She holds a PhD in Artistic Studies — Film and Image (University of Coimbra) and a PhD in Literature (University of Brasília), as well as a Master's in Education and a degree in Journalism from the Federal University of Goiás. Her research focuses on screenwriting education, its pedagogical regimes and the intersections between creative writing and higher education. Levy has published on screenwriting pedagogy in peer-reviewed journals and is a member of the Screenwriting Research Network. She has participated in national and international academic events, and her creative work includes screenwriting and consulting for audiovisual productions.

Lukas MATERZOK

hda–Hochschule Darmstadt (Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences, Germany)

Narrative pressure points: Sustainability value trade-offs in mainstream stories

STREAM 3

SESSION 7

PANEL 15

ROOM 306

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — screen storytelling; comparative narratology; dramaturgical structure; sustainability communication

ABSTRACT

Sustainability in screen stories is often discussed as topic, theme, or message (Christensen et al., 2018). Yet work in sustainability and climate communication suggests that communication cannot be reduced to the transfer of information alone, and increasingly foregrounds questions of engagement, meaning, values and social orientation (Moser, 2016). Using a value framework developed in prior research, namely nine sustainability-relevant value families derived through comparative character analysis, this paper examines how four high-grossing films organise these orientations through narrative form. These value families include, for example, power-hoarding versus power-sharing and evidence-seeking versus denialism. It treats mainstream dramaturgical conventions as an industrial-developmental context that produces recurring structural junctures (“pressure points”) where certain value trade-offs become more likely than others (Macdonald, 2013). The final version of the film is analysed as the textual outcome of these shaping pressures, where their effects on narrative form become observable.

Methodologically, the paper applies a comparative narratological content analysis using a two-layer coding scheme. It codes four films (*Frozen II*, *Avengers: Endgame*, *Don't Look Up*, *Avatar: The Way of Water*) across 21 characters using (1) value orientations drawn from prior coding and (2) narratological structure variables (agency, causality, and information distribution) (Bordwell, 2006). Practitioner terms such as inciting incident, midpoint, and climax are used as pragmatic entry points to align film-narratological analysis with screenwriting discourse.

The implication is a clearer account of where “values” sit in story craft: the analysis identifies recurring narrative pressure points at which mainstream structuring tends to make some sustainability-relevant orientations easier to dramatise than others. This yields a diagnostic vocabulary that can support script development research and practice by making value trade-offs discussable as structural choices.

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PRESENTER'S BIO

LUKAS MATERZOK is a PhD student at the University of Applied Sciences Darmstadt (hda), Germany, researching how Virtual Production (VP) can be integrated into screenplay development to support sustainability-oriented storytelling. As part of his doctoral research, he is developing a comparative framework of sustainability relevant value orientations in mainstream film. He holds a BA in Motion Pictures and an MA in Leadership in the Creative Industries from hda. As a lecturer in both bachelor's and master's programs, he teaches sustainability and visual storytelling, virtual production techniques and screenwriting. Recently, he collaborated on an Applied Research Lab project, developing a low-budget VP studio to facilitate student-led Unreal Engine 5 environments in an escape-room installation.

Tracy MATHEWSON
UCL—University College London (UK)

No desire without restraint: Making screenplays *sexy* again

STREAM 2

SESSION 8

PANEL 18

ROOM 304

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

KEYWORDS — sex; eroticism; screenwriting; practice-based research

ABSTRACT

Hollywood is horny again! While the 2010s saw the lowest percentage of depictions of on-screen sex since the 1960s (Hagen, 2019), 2023's *Poor Things*, *Saltburn*, and *All of Us Strangers* marked “a good year for sex on screen” (Horton, 2023), setting the scene for this year's outrageously talked about “*Wuthering Heights*” -- a “bold, filthy fantasy” that somehow lacked erotic heat (Nicholson, 2026). Considering this evolution of sex and eroticism on screen -- from the steamy erotic thrillers of the 80s and 90s to the chaste 2010s, to our present bodice-ripping reaction to the ‘Marvelisation’ of movies -- this paper asks, *What makes a screenplay ‘sexy’?*

Lately, screen sex is “often there to shock, amuse or confuse, rather than to titillate or denote romantic love” (Thorpe, 2024). While this weaponisation of sex begs examination of our cultural relationship with intimacy and a discussion of how boundaries, consent and mental health in the post #MeToo era have impacted sex on screen, it is also worth considering that cinema's crucial 18-35 audience share now includes a more visible LGBTQ+ population and the inscrutable Gen Z, at once “puriteens” yet “enlightened” towards sex (Halls, 2022). At the same time, screenwriting and movie making is a business. Any commentary on shifts in the screenwriting that becomes visible (i.e. what gets made) must speak to the impact of technology, censorship, and the industry's marketing and distribution landscape. This paper incorporates comparative analysis of erotic films and screenplays with reference to the socio-political and industrial contexts that surround them as part of a practice-based research approach to writing “Transference”: an unproduced screenplay about the experience of erotic transference between a patient and their therapist.

This research investigates key turning points and major twists in the plot of paradigm shifts in the history of screenwriting that pave the way to future developments of the craft and its practices.

PRESENTER'S BIO

Dr TRACY MATHEWSON is an award-winning writer/director and academic based in London. Her chapter, '*Barbie* (2023): Is it or isn't it?' which interrogates narrative ambiguity, recognises the produced film as another form of "screen-play", and sees Barbie as a queer-coded conspiracy protagonist will be published as part of the forthcoming *Bloomsbury Handbook of Global Screenplay Theory*. She presented her paper "*Soledad*: a practice-based approach to Mestiza screenwriting" at UNAM in Mexico City for the 2024 Congreso Internacional Escritura para la Pantalla en México and followed this with a week-long workshop in 2025 on storytelling as practice-based research with as part of UNAM's Diplomado en Estudios de Guion (Diploma in Screenwriting Studies). Tracy recently assisted Chloé Zhao on her Oscar-nominated film *HAMNET*, and is now developing her own slate of writing and directing projects.

Rich MATTHEWS
University of Birmingham (UK)

Latent space... the digital frontier: Near-future screenwriting as ethnographic practice

STREAM 1

SESSION 4

PANEL 9

ROOM 303

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 3.10 pm

KEYWORDS — practice-based research; screenwriting as methodology; AI and authorship; fandom; “as if” methodology; platform capitalism

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that a near-future research screenplay can function as an ethnographic tool, building on and generating knowledge about the convergence of AI, creator mythology, and devotional fandom that conventional academic prose cannot produce. The argument draws on a practice-based PhD that pairs a 40,000-word critical thesis with a feature-length screenplay, and contends that screenwriting dramatises theoretical abstractions – platform capitalism’s colonisation of devotional communities; algorithmic interpellation of fan subjects; the structural role of franchise creators as sacred heroes – in ways that constitute analytical insight through narrative, not merely illustration of pre-existing findings.

The screenplay is set in the near future. At simultaneous Las Vegas conventions – *Star Trek* at the Rio; Scientology at the Sphere – an AI scientist and a teenage fan are accidentally transported as digital consciousness into a VR recreation of 1970s conventions, where they encounter AI reconstructions of Gene Roddenberry and L Ron Hubbard whose competing ideological legacies are dramatised without biographical accuracy claims. When a tech mogul’s malevolent, homogenising algorithm threatens both communities across timelines, the resolution demands collaborative meaning-making: diversity defeating corporate homogeneity; a merged AI guarding digital consciousness against algorithmic exploitation of devotional communities.

Three questions connect this work to the conference theme. First: how does near-future screenwriting constitute a transformation scenario – an image of the future exploring plural alternatives – rather than prediction? Second: what does the deployment of AI-reconstructed creator figures as dramatic characters reveal about the changing ontology of authorship and the screenplay itself? Third: can the “as if” methodology – examining fandom as if it exhibited religious characteristics, drawing on nationalism-as-religion scholarship (Hayes, Smith, Cavanaugh) – be operationalised through screenwriting practice; and if so, what knowledge does creative practice generate that academic prose alone cannot?

PRESENTER'S BIO

RICH MATTHEWS is a PhD candidate in Film & Creative Writing at the University of Birmingham, where his practice-based research pairs a critical thesis with a feature-length screenplay to examine quasi-religious patterns in fan culture through nationalism-as-religion scholarship. He is a Visiting Lecturer and Teaching Fellow at Birmingham and Development Director at Rural Media. With 25 years of industry experience spanning the BBC, Sky, Disney, Warner Bros, Lucasfilm, Paramount/CBS, DC Comics, Sight & Sound, Total Film, Empire, and The Independent, Rich has worked as a screenwriter, filmmaker, journalist, and editor. He has been a represented UK and US screenwriter with 15-plus screenplays including eight commissions. An Experimental Psychology graduate from UCL and trained cognitive behavioural hypnotherapist, his academic journey began at the British Film Institute under Laura Mulvey. He is a member of the BAFTSS Science Fiction & Fantasy (presenting a paper at the 2026 conference) and Practice Research SIGs.

Clarissa MAZON MIRANDA

AMF–Antonio Meneghetti Faculdade (Antonio Mereghetti College, Brazil)

Challenging aspects of writing scripts for live-action films for young audiences in Brazil: A look at four case studies of 21st-century Brazilian productions

STREAM 3

SESSION 2

PANEL 3

ROOM 306

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 11.00 am

KEYWORDS — young audiences; Brazilian screenwriters; multiple case studies; production challenges; Latin America

ABSTRACT

This research focuses on screenwriting for four Brazilian live-action films for young audiences. Through interviews with screenwriters and directors, it seeks to identify the challenges encountered in terms of resources and technologies available in the country that influenced the scriptwriting of the productions: “Pluft: o Fantasma” (“Pluft: the Little Ghost”, 2022); *Colegas* (“Buddies”, 2012); *Colegas e o Herdeiro* (“Buddies and the Heir”, 2025) and *Turma da Mônica: Laços* (“Mônica and Friends: Ties”, 2019). “Pluft: the Little Ghost” is an adaptation of a children's play written by Brazilian author Maria Clara Machado in 1955. “Buddies” and its continuation “Buddies and the Heir” are based in original screenplays created by writer/director Marcelo Galvão. “Mônica and Friends: Ties” was the first of a series of three live action films created by Mauricio de Sousa Studios (Brazil) based on the comic strips “Turma da Mônica” (Mônica and Friends), developed originally by author Mauricio de Sousa and that have been read by generations of Brazilians since the 1950's, presenting as protagonist a little girl named Mônica. These films were all produced in the 21st century and provide a broad overview of the relationship between screenwriters and the market factors that influence the technical choices of the script, thus offering a more accurate perspective on the possible future of these productions in the country. The theoretical framework of this research is composed by Redvall (2024); Connor (2011); Nesteriuk (2011); Surrel (2009); Luzardo and Rajah (2023); Conor (2014); Dittus (2017); Fumagalli, Redvall (2023) . Based on findings from the interviews, as well as the theoretical framework consulted, it is clear that the creativity and ideas of the studied screenwriters engaged with the production possibilities offered by the national film industry and with the profile of young Brazilian audiences.

PRESENTER'S BIO

CLARISSA MAZON MIRANDA is a Brazilian researcher, screenwriter and journalist. In 2005, she completed the Certified Program in Screenwriting of the National Film and TV School (Scotland). In 2023, she completed the Master in Screenwriting of The Core Entertainment School (Spain). She holds a PhD in Literature from the Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (Brazil) since 2018. Her PhD thesis explores the intersemiotic translation of novels into movie scripts. She holds a Master in Mediatic Communication from the same institution (2012) and BA in Journalism from the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (2005). She works as a lecturer at the Antonio Mereghetti Faculdade, as PR and international affairs assistant for the Fundação Antonio Mereghetti, as a journalist for the magazine *Performance Líder* and as free-lance screenwriter. She has worked as director, producer and screenwriter of two feature documentaries and 11 short documentaries. She is a member of the Screenwriting Research Network, serving as Early Career Researchers' rep in the Executive Council, and a member of the Association of Adaptation Studies.

Eric McEVER
Indiana University (USA)

Responsible screenwriting education today. Case studies in teaching screenwriting for a changing media landscape

STREAM 1

SESSION 7

PANEL 13

ROOM 303

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — education; higher education; university; pedagogy; textbook; workshopping; industry strategies for key words

ABSTRACT

As the production and distribution of media shifts rapidly, the conversation about screenwriting in higher education tends to drift towards handwringing over how to meet an ever-changing moment. Do traditional screenplay workshopping techniques still apply? Should students still be reading Robert McKee and Blake Snyder, or have once treasured insights gone stale? Is the feature film still the advanced form students should aim for, or should their training focus on television and short form? Does AI have any responsible place in the teaching of screenwriting? I will present case studies comparing my experiences teaching screenwriting at a top-ranked film school (University of North Carolina School of the Arts), an elite liberal arts college (Kenyon College), and an R1 research university (Indiana University). Each has offered unique object lessons in how to approach mentorship for screenwriting in an evolving media landscape. I will share my takeaways about what has changed in a screenwriting education, and what lessons remain perennial. I will also explore my experiences on my latest feature film as screenwriter and director (the US-Japanese coproduction *Emi's World*) and how this professional practice has informed my teaching.

PRESENTER'S BIO

After spending his childhood in Oklahoma making animated and live action short films, ERIC McEVER relocated to Tokyo during college. While working variously as a theater actor, translator, game developer and animation producer, he wrote, produced and directed three independent feature films in Japanese. He went on to receive his MFA from New York University, where he received the Wasserman Award in Directing for his thesis film *Paleonaut*, which screened at over 50 film festivals in 9 countries. His commercial feature debut *Iké Boys* a mixture of live action, tokusatsu effects and anime, premiered at Fantastic Fest in 2021 and also screened at the 2022 Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival and other festivals worldwide. It was distributed

domestically by Shout! Studios and received a nationwide theatrical release in Japan through Toho Cinemas.

McEver currently serves as Visiting Assistant Professor of Film at Kenyon College. This fall he will join Indiana University as Assistant Professor of Screenwriting. He has also served as artist in residence at the Museums Quarter in Vienna, Austria and New York University's Shanghai campus, and as adjunct professor of screenwriting, animation and cinema studies at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Dilyana MINCHEVA
McMaster University (Canada)

Love under pressure: An academic screenplay on interfaith intimacy, archival trauma, and refusal

STREAM 1
SESSION 10
PANEL 21
ROOM 303

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 3 pm

KEYWORDS — academic screenplay; screenwriting as research; interfaith intimacy; archival violence; post-socialist Bulgaria

ABSTRACT

This paper presents an academic screenplay-in-progress that explores interfaith intimacy under conditions of unresolved historical violence. Developed in dialogue with extensive historical and archival research on the Bulgarian state's assimilation campaign against its Turkish Muslim population during the 1980s (the so-called "Revival Process"), the screenplay examines how love emerges not as reconciliation, repair, or redemption, but as a form of ethical refusal. The project centres on an "impossible couple"—two characters divided by religion, communal affiliation, and historical memory—who are repeatedly positioned as incompatible by family, institutions, and public discourse. Drawing formally and methodologically on anti-romantic narrative traditions, including contemporary anti-romcom television and minimalist dramatic cinema, the screenplay resists conversion narratives, therapeutic resolution, and cathartic closure. Instead, intimacy is structured through a sequence of pressures—bureaucratic, social, historical, and anticipatory—under which love appears as endurance, restraint, and mutual non-correction.

While informed by ethnographic research, including direct observation during fieldwork in Igrek, Bulgaria, the research-creation process is grounded in a broader historical, historiographical, and archival methodology, of which ethnography forms only one component. The screenplay does not adapt individual testimonies or seek to represent lived experience directly. Rather, it translates the conditions under which such experiences were produced—euphemistic language, administrative violence, misnaming, silence, dark humour, and deferred futurity—into cinematic form. Historical detail enters the narrative obliquely, through documents, institutional encounters, public broadcasts, and scenes of return that refuse restitution.

The paper argues that the academic screenplay offers a rigorous research-creation methodology for engaging traumatic archives ethically, by allowing history to function as pressure rather than spectacle. In doing so, it contributes to screenwriting research debates on intimacy, genre refusal, and the use of withholding, silence, and restraint as

formal strategies for representing historical violence without appropriating lived experience. The presentation will combine critical discussion with selected screenplay excerpts to demonstrate how pressure-based structure operates as a screenwriting research method. Selected screenplay scenes will be presented as research evidence rather than as a complete narrative artefact.

PRESENTER'S BIO

DILYANA MINCHEVA is Associate Professor of Communication Studies and Media Arts at McMaster University and an Associate Member in Religious Studies. Her research examines the Western–Islamic public sphere, feminist media cultures, world cinema and screenwriting as research. She is the author of *Muslim Intellectual Discourse in the West* (Liverpool University Press, 2016/2022) and *Adversarial Islamic Feminism in the Western–Islamic Public Sphere* (Amsterdam University Press, 2024). She is currently completing a CEU Press book manuscript on Palestine and the Balkans and developing an academic screenplay on interfaith intimacy and historical violence in post-socialist Bulgaria.

Massimiliano MORANDI

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore–Milano (Catholic University of Milan, Italy)

History or memory? Collective identification in 'Gandhi' (1982) and 'The King's Speech' (2010)

STREAM 2

SESSION 2

PANEL 2

ROOM 304

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 11.00 am

KEYWORDS — historical cinema; biopic; collective memory; collective identification; representational contract

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the tension between history and memory in biographical and historical cinema, questioning the widespread expectation that historical films should primarily be evaluated according to their factual accuracy. Drawing on film theory, memory studies, and reception research, the paper argues that biopics and historical films operate less as historiographic accounts than as *dispositifs* of collective memory, aimed at producing shared emotional and identificatory frameworks rather than transmitting historical knowledge.

Through a comparative analysis of *Gandhi* (Richard Attenborough, 1982) and *The King's Speech* (Tom Hooper, 2010), the paper shows how both films construct a “we” that exceeds the individual protagonist. In *Gandhi*, the biographical figure progressively dissolves into a collective body through ritualized scenes of marching, prayer, and mourning, while in *The King's Speech* the private struggle with speech becomes the foundation for a national community of listening, mediated by radio and synchronized reception. In both cases, historical events function less as objects of explanation than as occasions for emotional alignment between film and spectator.

Rather than opposing accuracy and invention in moral terms, the paper proposes a formal distinction based on the representational contract established by the film: historical cinema is defined not by fidelity to facts, but by the type of referential claim it advances. From this perspective, the political and mnemonic stakes of biopics lie in how they shape collective memory, not in their compliance with historiographic standards.

PRESENTER'S BIO

MASSIMILIANO MORANDI is a PhD student in Semiotics at the University of Milan. He also works in the field of dramaturgical theory at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, as part of the research group led by Professor Armando Fumagalli. He studied at the University of Bologna, where he earned a degree with a thesis in the history of philosophy on Spinoza. He later completed his studies in Parma with a thesis in Philosophical Anthropology. He also holds a Master's degree in International Screenwriting and Production from Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore.

Chris NEILAN
Edinburgh Napier University (UK)

No need for three: Two-act structure in feature films (audiovisual essay)

STREAM 3

SESSION 7

PANEL 15

ROOM 306

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — narrative structure; plot; storytelling; Kubrick; two-act structure

ABSTRACT

In *Story*, Robert McKee was quite clear: whilst one-act and two-act story structures exist and might be suitable for shorter form storytelling like the ‘short story, the one-act play, or the student experimental film’ (1999: 217), for feature-length narratives three-acts are ‘the necessary minimum’ (218).

Like much in the best-known screenwriting handbooks, this is ahistorical: there are full-length one-act plays like Ionesco’s *The Bald Soprano* and many full-length two-act plays, including some of the most influential in the cannon, like *Waiting for Godot* and *Death of a Salesman*.

Dancyger & Rush identified a one-act feature form as early as 1991, and very briefly pointed to a two-act model, and yet there seems to be very little extant writing on one-act features in the English language, and almost none on a two-act form – attributable, perhaps, to the unreliable discourses in screenwriting handbooks and their widespread influence on screenwriting theory and practice.

My book, *Beyond the Monoplot* (2025), identifies several films which, I propose, can best be understood using a one-act or two-act model, and whilst two-act feature films do indeed seem to be vanishingly rare the few films which do seem best understood using this model are strikingly impactful.

This audiovisual essay will offer a detailed textual analysis of three feature films: Stanley Kubrick’s *Full Metal Jacket*, Krzysztof Kieślowski’s *A Short Film About Killing* and Jonathan Glazer’s *Under the Skin* (2013). It will answer the central research question: how does a two-act structure function in feature film and what meanings can it create?

Discussion will focus on each film’s narrative structure and how that structure conforms to a two-act shape, and how, in doing so, the films discover an atypical method for reflecting the psycho-emotional state of their protagonists at the structural level.

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Neilan, C. (2025) *Beyond the Monoplot: How to Write Unconventional Films (and Why We Should)*

PRESENTER'S BIO

Dr CHRIS NEILAN is an award-winning writer and filmmaker with a PhD in creative writing from Manchester Metropolitan University. He works as a Lecturer in Screenwriting & Development at Edinburgh Napier University, and is the author of *Beyond the Monoplot: How to Write Unconventional Films (and Why We Should)*. His research is focused on unconventional narrative structures in the screenplay. His hybrid novel, *Stellify*, is available from Broken Sleep Books.

Eva NOVRUP REDVALL

KU–Københavns Universitet (University of Copenhagen, Denmark)

Shaping up the teaching of screenwriting in a small nation screen industry for the future media landscape

STREAM 1

SESSION 7

PANEL 13

ROOM 303

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — screenwriting education; screen pedagogies; film schools; script development

ABSTRACT

European film schools have traditionally focused on the cinematic screen and the feature film format. One example of this is the National Film School of Denmark which has trained talent to enter the film industries since 1966. For many years, the school had no separate courses for screenwriting, but this gradually changed when serial television formats became more dominant and writers were not only needed to help directors realise their visions for the big screen but also to be head writers and episode writers for television drama (Redvall 2010; 2015).

Building on research on film schools and screen pedagogies (e.g. Hjort 2013; Petrie & Stoneman 2014) and on the teaching of screenwriting and script development (e.g. Batty & Taylor 2019), this article analyses the approach to teaching screenwriting at the Danish Film School in the period 2015–2025 where several adjustments tried to address recent changes in the digital screen industries. Among them were prolonging the screenwriting education from a 2-year to a 4-year programme, mirroring the structure of other programmes at the school to facilitate collaboration and prioritising time to learn how to not only write, but also rewrite, material for many different formats and use new technological tools.

Based on qualitative interviews with the head of the programme, teachers as well as alumni, the article investigates how the school has worked with adapting to new professional demands while also tracing how graduates from the longer programme have entered the industry and evaluate their education. The article ends by discussing how the 2020s saw new screenwriting initiatives emerge, challenging the privileged position of the film school and illustrating how screenwriting is now tied to discourses about increased specialization for certain audiences or issues, e.g. on writing for children and young audiences (Redvall 2024) or on ‘greening’ screenwriting (e.g. Philipsen 2025).

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PRESENTER'S BIO

EVA NOVRUP REDVALL is Associate Professor at the University of Copenhagen where she heads the Section for Film Studies and Creative Media Industries. Her research focuses on screenwriting and production, e.g. in the monographs *Writing and Producing Television Drama in Denmark: From the Kingdom to The Killing* (2013) and *Writing and Producing for Children and Young Audiences: Cases from Danish Film and Television* (2024) which won the SRN award for best book in screenwriting studies in 2025. She is one of the book series editors for Palgrave Studies in Screenwriting and serves on the editorial board of *Journal of Screenwriting*. Besides her academic work, she was a film critic for the Danish newspaper *Information* 1999–2025 and served on the board of The Danish Film Institute 2018–2025.

Bart NUYENS

RITCS—Royal Institute for Theatre, Cinema and Sound (Belgium)

Looking for conflict: The role of intentionality in screenwriting education

STREAM 4

SESSION 8

PANEL 20

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

KEYWORDS — LLMs; intentionality; authorship; creative agency; screenwriting education

ABSTRACT

As large language models (LLMs) and their critiques evolve faster than meaningful comprehension can keep pace, screenwriters and educators oscillate between the exhausting urge to track every new development and the equally understandable retreat from the debate. Central to this unease is the models' capacity to generate fluent, persuasive text while it lacks intentionality—the very quality traditionally associated with artistic purpose, authorship and creative struggle. This absence matters because productive friction in collaborative writing arises from the collision of human intentions; LLMs cannot generate this type of conflict. This leads to my key question: if LLMs lack intentionality, how does their integration into creative and educational practices affect the productive friction that normally drives idea generation, and what might this imply for the creativity and resilience of artists and students?

To answer this question, and to navigate this oscillation between retreat and over-engagement, I propose a pragmatic path grounded in selective monitoring of AI technology and criticism, and a sustained practice of reflection carried out in dialogue with a variety of interlocutors. This path unfolds across several complementary strands of inquiry and practice. These include convening open conversations with theorists, writers and educators; engaging in qualitative interviews with screenwriters who integrate LLMs into their workflow; collaborating within a cross-faculty working group that maps institutional concerns around AI; and maintaining contacts with a consortium developing an open-source AI tool and platform for storytelling that is culturally responsible, legally robust and sustainable, and grounded in European narrative traditions.

This paper presents provisional insights drawn from this practice-based inquiry, foregrounding intentionality as a guiding principle in writing practices and writing education, providing a critical counterbalance to the persuasive mimicry of LLMs.

PRESENTER'S BIO

BART NUYENS is a researcher and lecturer at the Royal Institute for Theatre, Cinema and Sound (RITCS, Erasmus University College Brussels), where he teaches narratology and essay writing and supervises undergraduate and master's projects. He is a member of the Writing Department's research group, which studies recent developments in film and television dramaturgy. His research has focused on TV series co-productions and adaptations, narrative complexity, collaborative authorship, and transmedia storytelling. He is currently conducting the Future Storytellers research project, which examines the impact of generative AI on creative writing practices and authorship.

Maria Chiara OLTOLINI

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore–Milano (Catholic University of Milan, Italy)

Before Studio Ghibli, *3000 Leagues in Search of Mother*: When Takahata sought to make (Neo)realistic animation

STREAM 2

SESSION 7

PANEL 14

ROOM 304

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — Japanese animation; children's literature; adaptation; antiheroes; realism; Studio Ghibli

ABSTRACT

Animation made in Japan, internationally known as *anime*, possesses distinctive and highly influential features that distinguish it from animation created in other countries. Being usually based on *manga* (Japanese comics), anime share aesthetic and narrative conventions that are typical of the written medium. In particular, Japanese animation is famous for embracing provocative scenarios and edgy characters that go beyond the standard set by Disney's adaptations of famous children's stories. This was not always the case. In the 1970s, as Japan started to reap the benefits of rapid economic growth, the prospect of making Disney-style animation became increasingly attractive. The *Sekai Meisaku Gekijō*, a TV program that aired anime inspired by Western novels for the young, played a key role in establishing this trend. The source texts were chosen for adaptation for their edifying moral values, reflecting Japan's long-standing engagement with Western fiction, as well as the country's cultural and geopolitical gravitation toward the United States. However, Takahata Isao and Miyazaki Hayao, who participated in several of these productions before founding their own company, had a different approach to storytelling in mind, one more indebted to Italian Neorealism than to Hollywood. This is evident in the series *Haha wo tazunete sanzen ri* (*3000 Leagues in Search of Mother*, 1976), adapted from Edmondo De Amicis's *Cuore* (1886). While earlier *Meisaku* shows aimed to elicit emotions through melodramatic plots and idealised protagonists à la Disney, director Takahata acknowledged his preference for complex antiheroes grounded in realistic experiences. This paper will analyse the 1976 series from both textual and contextual perspectives, investigating the process of transnational adaptation. It will also examine how this contributed to shape the future of *Meisaku* and Studio Ghibli, fostering the idea of animation and narration as capable of helping audiences navigate life and make sense of reality.

PRESENTER'S BIO

MARIA CHIARA OLTOLINI is teaching assistant in Semiotics and History and Language of International Cinema at Università Cattolica in Milan, Italy, where she earned her PhD in Education. She has designed and taught modules and writing workshops on Japanese animation, children's fiction, and screen adaptation, which are also her main research interests. Maria Chiara was an invited speaker at international conferences and has published articles for various journals and edited collections. She is the author of *Rediscovered Classics of Japanese Animation. The adaptation of Children's Novels into the World Masterpiece Theater series* (Bloomsbury Academic 2024). While her academic background is rooted in Literature and the Arts, she is also a screenwriter. She began her career at Calon Tv in Cardiff, Wales, and has since contributed to international animated projects, children's books, and dramatized guided tours. A full list of publications and credits is available on her website: machi.oltolini.info.

Gabriel M. PALETZ
Prague Film School (Czech Republic)

Shaping the future with the past of the craft: Collaborating with screenwriting history and AI

STREAM 4

SESSION 8

PANEL 20

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

KEYWORDS — screenwriting history; Generative AI; innovative pedagogy; film dialogue

ABSTRACT

As screenwriting teachers and scholars, we can shape AI as a future tool with the best of the past. By nurturing an appreciation of previous achievements, we can avoid the pitfalls of the technology while fostering its creative possibilities for our craft.

This paper shows how to give students an appreciation of past screenwriting craft. As Ethan Mollick writes, because AI “is trained on vast swaths of humanity’s cultural heritage... it can best be wielded by people who have a knowledge of that heritage.” As an example, students gain an appreciation of the features of screen speech by ruining classic lines of dialogue. With this exercise, they realize the significance of who says a line, its context, subtext, syntax, rhythm and other qualities.

Students then apply their understanding of the features of fine dialogue to prompts with AI. For example, students instruct a chatbot to mix different kinds of slang into the stale scenario of a genre film. This prompt avoids AI’s lack of sensitivity to a particular creative community. Instead, the idea brings diversity to a generic scene through particular production conditions, such as the features of speech of different actors and a plot derived from varieties of language. Prompts can be tailored to other screenwriting expertise, production demands and phases of filmmaking.

Through an appreciation of past screenwriting achievements and an inventive application of AI’s capacity for generating connections, SRN members can shape the future of our field. We can endow young media-makers with an understanding of the heritage of our craft to tool AI to the creative conditions of future scripts.

PRESENTER'S BIO

Dr. GABRIEL M. PALETZ's paper builds on his PhD from the University of Southern California, the first doctorate in film history with a minor in film production, and teaching of screenwriting to students from five continents at the Prague Film School (Prague, Czech Republic). The paper also draws on his methods of teaching film history to filmmakers that he will present at both the next Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference and the Comparative Screenwriting Teaching Conference in the next few months, as well as discoveries in AI and screenwriting from his Visiting Interdisciplinary Professor at Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania) plus commitment to the SRN AI Working Group.

Anita PANDOLFO
Leeds Beckett University (UK)

Out of Service.
Invisible, unheard? Or fighting back in style?

STREAM 3
SESSION 12
PANEL 27
ROOM 306

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS —

ABSTRACT

In the last twenty years, the film and television landscape has changed significantly. Despite various soundbites stating that working conditions for female writers has improved, WWGB's 2018 report stated that only 16% of working film writers are female, and only 14% of prime time working TV writers are female (<https://writersguild.org.uk/equalitywrites/>)

The on-screen presence of women over fifty is equally as depressing and the representation of their characters are often tropes and stereotypes. The Geena Davis institutes findings showed that on-screen disparity is evident, with male characters significantly outnumbering females within the 50+ age bracket: 80%/20% in films, 75%/25% in broadcast TV, and 66%/4% in streaming platforms (<https://geenadavisinstitute.org>)

As a BAFTA-winning screenwriter, educator and burgeoning director with over twenty-four years' experience in Industry, I decided to rally against these statistics. I wrote and directed a short film – *Out of Service* – which thematically addressed perceptions of older women, ageism and intergenerational disconnection.

Sue Johnson played Hilary, an aging activist who is making a stand when her essential bus service is cancelled. Hilary, the character, like many woman writers, has become invisible and put into the box, titled "non-essential".

My presentation will focus on how we challenge the perceptions of women in the industry. I will raise the question: does the economic and political landscape define how women are represented behind and in front of the camera?

PRESENTER'S BIO

ANITA PANDOLFO is a proactive and passionate lecturer, with over twenty years' experience developing and writing for various T.V. networks. A two times BAFTA winner for original series, *The Cops* (BBC), I have also worked on some of the U.K.'s most established, popular and award-winning dramas and long running series, with new and established writing talent. Currently forging a path to directing my first feature film, I have written and directed short film, *Out of Service*, which will be going into the festival circuit this year.

Currently part-time lecturer and module leader on the MA Screenwriting Course, at Leeds Beckett University.

Patricia PHALEN
George Washington University (USA)

Hollywood writers and the long goodbye

STREAM 4

SESSION 2

PANEL 4

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.00 am

KEYWORDS — Hollywood; broadcast/streaming; writers' room; audiences

ABSTRACT

Television writers in the U.S. face a new, but not-so-improved business in Hollywood. While the three must-have functions of production, distribution and exhibition still drive the business, the script writers' role and status have changed dramatically.

The present study relies on interviews with writers working on “legacy” TV series with 22 weekly episodes per broadcast year, and those who write for streaming services with as few as 10 episodes per “season.” Employment for 22 weeks affords a high degree of security for those writers who work in broadcast. But, in the case of streaming, writers have much shorter contracts – usually for only a few months. They have to be extremely lucky to land their next job because the probability of a new opportunity coinciding with the end of the previous one is unlikely. The challenge of finding a new job creates a precarious monetary situation for individuals and families. Additionally, the personal “ownership” of scripts is often diluted by group writing, which can compromise cutting-edge ideas.

In 2023, writers launched a strike to reclaim at least some of their former security and to stave off the worst threats of AI. For the moment they won some concessions on, for example, the prohibited use of AI for generating scripts, the minimum staffing of streaming writers' rooms, and fair compensation for their work. However, the profession is likely to continue changing as day-and-date viewership subsides and streaming ascends. Viewers of broadcast television, as well as Hollywood writers, will eventually have to face “the long goodbye.”

PRESENTER'S BIO

Dr. PATRICIA PHALEN is an Associate Professor at The George Washington University with over 25 years of experience researching media, culture, and human behavior. Her academic work focuses on the economic sociology of mass media and television production cultures. At GWU, she connects with audiences using humor while teaching courses like "Hollywood & Politics," "Media Organizations & Audiences," and "Media in a Free Society."

An internationally recognized scholar, Dr. Phalen has presented her research globally across Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia. She has published extensively in leading academic journals, including *The Journal of Media Economics* and *The Journal of Popular Culture*, with additional features in *Fortune* and *USA Today*.

Dr. Phalen is a prolific author, known for key publications that analyze industry structures. She wrote "Writing Hollywood: The Work and Professional Culture of Television Writers" (2018), which explores the occupational lives of creators. She also co-authored "The Mass Audience: Rediscovering the Dominant Model" and the widely used textbook "Ratings Analysis: The Theory and Practice of Audience Research," now in its fourth edition.

She holds a BA and MBA from Boston College, alongside a master's and PhD from Northwestern University.

Virginia PITTS
University of Westminster (UK)

The screenplay's unconscious: AI and subtext

STREAM 4

SESSION 4

PANEL 12

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 3.10 pm

KEYWORDS — subtext; screenwriting; Artificial Intelligence; Large Language Models, implicit meaning

ABSTRACT

The most important meaning in a screenplay is not manifest but latent: the subtext. Yet despite its central role in dramatic writing, subtext remains largely unexamined in emerging research on AI and screenwriting. While studies have identified limited implicit meaning in AI-generated scripts (e.g., Subramaniam 2025; Rajas and G rtrudix 2025; Yates 2025; Carter 2025; Kang and Lee 2025), subtext itself has rarely been treated as the primary object of investigation.

Centralising subtext as the focus of analysis, this paper reports on a series of exploratory experiments designed to test the ability of contemporary large language models to both detect and generate subtext in screenplays. These experiments are structured around a set of tasks examining implicit meaning at four levels: individual dialogue exchanges, character actions and interactions across sequences, character arcs, and symbolic motifs across the broader narrative structure. Taken together, these levels treat subtext as a distributed form of implicit meaning embedded throughout the screenplay.

By investigating how AI systems interpret and produce subtext in dramatic writing, the study aims to illuminate both the capacities and limitations of current language models in relation to one of the most fundamental principles of screen storytelling. In doing so, the paper explores whether such systems can engage with what might be described as the screenplay's unconscious.

PRESENTER'S BIO

Dr VIRGINIA PITTS is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Westminster, where she leads the MA Film, Television and Moving Image, supervises research projects, and oversees the personal tutoring system in the School of Media and Communication. In the screen sector, she has been commissioned to write short and feature-length screenplays, and has directed short films, documentaries, and award-winning television drama. Her work has screened at multiple A-list film festivals, toured art galleries, and sold widely.

Primarily practice-based, Virginia's research investigates collaborative, interdisciplinary, and intercultural creative practices in screenwriting and filmmaking. She is currently developing two strands of screenwriting research: a participatory practice-based project involving therapy-supported autofiction screenwriting for women estranged from their birth mothers in childhood, and a theoretical and experimental investigation into subtext in screenplays, including the development of a taxonomy of subtext and its implications for emerging AI-assisted approaches to screenwriting and screenplay analysis.

Steven PRICE
University of Greenwich (UK)

Past, present and future: The screenwriting Shangri-Las

STREAM 1

SESSION 2

PANEL 1

ROOM 303

Scheduled on THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.00 am

KEYWORDS — Screenwriting Research Network; boundary object; screenplay; diversity

ABSTRACT

This paper reflects on how screenwriting research emerged as a seemingly new area between 2003 and 2010, and what it looks like now to someone returning to the field after an absence of several years. It proposes that by its nature screenwriting research never knew what it was in the past and doesn't know what it is now, so we needn't worry about what it may become in the future.

It takes a behind-the-scenes look at the situation prior to the establishment of the Screenwriting Research Network, addressing some of the issues I confronted while researching and writing *The Screenplay: Authorship, Theory and Criticism* (2010). The strength and weakness of screenwriting research is that the script's status as a 'boundary object' makes it available to writers or creatives with very different specialist concerns. The early focus on a relatively small number of definable issues came about largely because these happened to be the preoccupations of what Andrew Kenneth Gay and Ann Igleström call the 'Rock Stars of the SRN'.

With few exceptions those issues have not been 'resolved'. What appear to be debates about the significance, value or meaning of a particular argument or piece of research can continue, because conversations proceed along parallel lines depending on the critical or creative interests of the participants. The result is the extreme diversity of the field seen in, for example, the new *Bloomsbury Handbook of Global Screenplay Theory* edited by Gay and Igleström (2026) and *The Palgrave Handbook of Screenwriting Studies*, edited by Rosamund Davies, Paolo Russo and Claus Tieber (2023). There is no good reason to want or expect this situation to change; what we do know is that when in the past we attempted to discern 'the shapes of the future', we usually got it wrong.

PRESENTER'S BIO

STEVEN PRICE is Emeritus Professor in Modern and Contemporary Literature and Film at Bangor University, and Lecturer in Screenwriting and Film at the University of Greenwich. His books include *The Screenplay: Authorship, Theory and Criticism* (2010) and *A History of the Screenplay* (2013). He is co-author of *Storyboarding: A Critical History* (with Chris Pallant, 2015) and *Robert De Niro at Work: From Screenplay to Screen Performance* (with Adam Ganz, 2019), and is a former Editor of the *Journal of Screenwriting*.

Artem PROKHOROV
HSE University (Russia)

From epic to comic: Reshaping the hero's journey through the mechanisms of comedy

STREAM 3

SESSION 8

PANEL 19

ROOM 306

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

KEYWORDS — plot structure; the hero's journey; the monomyth; comedy; humor

ABSTRACT

The future of screenwriting is closely associated with the diversification of content, in particular with the reinterpretation of well-established universal narrative models in the context of specific genres and audiences. One of the most influential and widely known universal models is the concept of the Hero's Journey, described by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). As numerous studies demonstrate, this concept underlies modern narratives in general and contemporary cinema in particular.

Nevertheless, the ways in which the Hero's Journey changes depending on genre remain insufficiently explored – particularly in comedy, a genre that has been treated separately from drama (tragedy) since Aristotle. Steve Kaplan's book *The Comic Hero's Journey* (2018) addresses this issue; however, it relies primarily on the author's practical observations and focuses on films with a strong dramatic component, such as *Groundhog Day* (1993).

The current study analyzes examples in which the comic component outweighs the dramatic one and even challenges established narrative canons: *Borat* (2006), *Hundreds of Beavers* (2022), and *The Naked Gun* (2025). The central hypothesis of the research is that the traditional Hero's Journey is transformed in these films precisely because the authors employ specific comedic devices (mechanisms), thereby reshaping its stages accordingly.

The analysis of comedic devices is based on the General Theory of Verbal Humor developed by Salvatore Attardo and Victor Raskin (1991), and specifically on the Logical Mechanisms identified in the article "Script oppositions and logical mechanisms: Modeling incongruities and their resolutions" (Attardo et al., 2002). Although this theory was originally developed for verbal humor, it was later expanded to include the analysis of visual humor and gags and is therefore applicable to film analysis. Thus, the study aims to demonstrate how the comic transformation of the Hero's Journey occurs and which specific techniques authors use to achieve it.

PRESENTER'S BIO

ARTEM PROKHOROV worked as a script editor and screenwriter for the Star Media film and television production company on projects including *Ischeika (Sleuth)* (2015–present), *Probuzhdenie (Awake)* (2021), and *Serdtsse Parmy (Land of Legends)* (2022). He is also the creator and writer of the *ValorMainStream* YouTube channel (2012–present), which features parody videos and to date has attracted over 200,000 subscribers and 40 million views. Currently, Artem is an Associate Professor at HSE University, Moscow, Russia. His research interests include cinema and television dramaturgy, web project development, and all forms of screenwriting. Artem's scholarly work has appeared in several journals, including *Journal of Screenwriting*, *Textual Practice*, *Metaphor and Symbol*, and *The Journal of Popular Culture*. He also participated in the 14th Screenwriting Research Network International Conference in Vienna, Austria (22–24 September 2022).

Rafael E. QUEZADA

UNAM—Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National University of Mexico)

Screenwriting as archive: Juan de la Cabada and the screenplay in draft

STREAM 1

SESSION 12

PANEL 25

ROOM 303

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS —

ABSTRACT

This paper presents research in progress on the screenplay archive of Juan de la Cabada (Mexico, 1902-1986), one of the most distinctive yet understudied figures of mid-twentiethcentury mexican cinema. Drawing on the classification, organization, and analysis of materials preserved in his personal archive, the paper examines how screenplays, drafts, and paratexts make it possible to reconstruct both writing practices and the conditions of production, censorship, and circulation that shaped his work for the screen. Rather than preserving finished scripts, Cabada's archive contains constellations of documents: typed drafts with handwritten corrections, loose notes, contracts, payment receipts, letters to producers and legal forms. This heterogeneous corpus allows us to approach the screenplay as an object in process and as a site where aesthetic imagination, cultural economy, and institutional power intersect.

The investigation focuses on three case studies—*El Brazo Fuerte* (1958), *Lola de mi vida* (1965) and *La chamuscada* (1967)—to show how philological analysis of variants, deletions, and rewritings reveals an authorial consciousness that resists the instrumental role usually assigned to the screenwriter. A close reading of *El brazo fuerte* in particular demonstrates how Cabada used stage directions and camera indications as spaces for literary experimentation, infusing them with psychological density that exceeds the conventions of functional screenwriting. The paper argues that Juan de la Cabada's archive invites us to rethink the screenplay as an autonomous form of writing, positioned between literature and cinema, and as a privileged site for examining the relationships between authorship, collaboration, censorship, and power in Mexican film culture.

PRESENTER'S BIO

Kirsi REINOLA
Aalto University (Finland)

The structure of imagination: Micro-phenomenological perspectives on screenwriting practice

STREAM 1

SESSION 2

PANEL 1

ROOM 303

Scheduled on THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.00 am

KEYWORDS — screenwriting process; micro-phenomenology; embodied imagination; practice-based research

ABSTRACT

Debates about screenwriting are increasingly dominated by technological forecasting, particularly in relation to artificial intelligence. This paper approaches the subject from a different perspective by focusing on the lived processes through which screenwriting imagination unfolds. It examines how close attention to the lived experience of writing reveals the experiential dynamics through which writers imagine scenes and develop narrative action.

Drawing on micro-phenomenological interviews with screenwriters, the study offers fine-grained analyses of moments of imaginative immersion and perceived agency during writing. The method enables access to pre-reflective dimensions of creative experience that are rarely captured by later recollections or textual analysis. These findings include bodily sensations, attentional dynamics, and the temporal development of imaginative acts. The analysis further shows how the unfolding of the experience reveals a structured progression of imaginative engagement, including emotional transportation and shifts in identification with characters.

By presenting recurring experiential patterns across interviews, the paper suggests that screenwriting practice cannot be understood only through tools or structural models of narrative construction. Instead, the analyses highlight how writing unfolds through embodied dynamics, sensory imagination, and the experiential exploration of narrative situations. These observations invite a reconsideration of imagination as a central dimension of screenwriting practice.

Methodologically, the paper positions micro-phenomenology as a research approach capable of expanding how screenwriting studies investigate creative processes. By making the experiential dynamics of imaginative writing visible, the approach opens new possibilities for research design as well as for pedagogical reflection in screenwriting.

PRESENTER'S BIO

KIRSI REINOLA is a screenwriter and doctoral researcher in film and TV screenwriting at Aalto University's Department of Film. Her research investigates creative processes in screenwriting using microphenomenological methods, focusing on the experiential dynamics of imaginative writing. In addition to her scholarly work, Reinola has written and directed short films. She has a long career as an organizational designer and executive director in the cultural field, and experience as an educational planner and lecturer in screenwriting at Aalto University. Her former duties of trust include the chairmanship of the Finnish Screenwriters Guild and membership in the Steering Committee of the Global Creativity Initiative, a US-based learning group.

Elisa RICCI

Caterina CERIANI

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore–Milan (Catholic University of Milan, Italy)

A tale of two Londons: Reimagining the ideal city in *Bridgerton* and *Paddington*

STREAM 2

SESSION 7

PANEL 14

ROOM 304

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — comparison; adaptation; identity; heritage; imaginary; London

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a comparative analysis of the representation of London in the television series *Bridgerton* and in the *Paddington* films. Although these two cases differ significantly in terms of genre, tone, and target audience, they share an important common element: the construction of London as a space that is simultaneously imagined, symbolic, and identity-forming.

In *Bridgerton*, London is reimagined through a highly stylized Regency setting that draws on the visual and cultural codes traditionally associated with so-called British heritage. However, this past is not reconstructed according to historical realism; rather, it is reinterpreted through contemporary narrative and representational strategies that rewrite tradition in accordance with the sensibilities of a global audience. In this context, the city does not merely function as a scenic backdrop but becomes a narrative device, a performative space that builds relations between characters and enables the development of the story.

Conversely, the *Paddington* films present a warm and welcoming contemporary London, where both urban and domestic spaces become sites of hospitality and belonging. The story emerged within a historical context marked by the multicultural transformation of the British capital. The city is observed through the perspective of an outsider: the protagonist, a small bear from Peru, whose naive and estranging point of view reveals the social and cultural dynamics of the London. Here, urban space is more than a mere setting, operating instead as a discursive device that contributes to the construction of a positive and globally recognizable urban imaginary.

The paper argues that, despite their different genres and narrative registers, both case studies contribute to the production of an ideal and symbolic London. This representation supports the circulation of shared cultural imaginaries while also participating in contemporary processes of city branding and transmedia consumption.

PRESENTERS' BIOS

ELISA RICCI is a PhD student in Linguistic Sciences at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan. She specializes in adaptations from novels to TV series, of historical genre, with a particular focus on *Bridgerton*. She attended a master's program in International Screenwriting and Production in 2021 and worked as an assistant to the creative producer at Cross Productions, a production company in Rome. Her interests include cinema, TV series, adaptations, historical and fantasy novels, History and literature.

CATERINA CERIANI is a PhD student in Linguistic Sciences at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan. Her research focuses on the relationship between publishing houses and film production companies in the adaptation of books into films. As an editor and scout for children's and young adult books, her project includes two case studies: *Geronimo Stilton* and *Paddington*.

Maykel RODRÍGUEZ PONJUAN
UNAM – Diploma in Screenwriting Studies 2024–2025

Making telenovelas great again? Or how a Mexican rural melodrama defeated the algorithm: the case of Doménica Montero (1978–2025)

STREAM 3

SESSION 2

PANEL 3

ROOM 306

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 11.00 am

KEYWORDS — melodrama; telenovela; remake; screenwriting; serial narrative; Mexico; U.S. Hispanic Audiences

ABSTRACT

INT. DOMÉNICA'S MANSION – DAY 10. Doménica crumples the letter confirming her fiancé's betrayal and throws it to the floor. Overcome with fury and despair, she tears the sleeves from her dress and bursts into tears. Nicolasa tries to embrace her, but Doménica pushes her away. *"Max abandoned me! He only wanted my money, my damn money!"*

Doménica Montero (2025) is a TelevisaUnivision telenovela that premiered simultaneously on linear television and streaming platforms. Based on a Cuban radionovela by Inés Rodena, it is one of the most frequently adapted texts in the history of Latin American television. Despite being released within a hyperfragmented viewing ecosystem, its latest remake broke audience records in Mexico and among U.S. Hispanic viewers. How can a story written more than fifty years ago still resonate in an era defined by premium seriality, immediacy, micro-content, and algorithm-driven narrative models?

This study compares the Mexican iterations of the title (1978, 1996, 2010, 2025) and, drawing on their scripts, identifies which dramatic and narrative elements persist (romantic resentment, betrayal, envy, archetypal roles, villains, rural imagery, moral polarization) and which have shifted (plot structure, pacing, episode length, subplots, tone, thematic treatment). Additionally, it examines how these shifts inform adaptation strategies designed to align with contemporary storytelling conventions and increasingly diverse audience preferences, all within a production model constrained by budget efficiency and performance metrics.

The success of *Doménica Montero* suggests that, rather than fading, the Mexican telenovela is undergoing strategic reinvention without eroding its core melodramatic DNA. Even within an oversaturated content landscape, audiences remain anchored in

nostalgia, familiarity, and cultural identity, elements embedded in melodrama's heightened emotionality.

PRESENTER'S BIO

Screenwriter and television executive with extensive experience in audiovisual media. He holds degrees in Social Communication and Cinematography and later specialized in Screenwriting at the International Film and Television School (EICTV), Cuba. He participated in the workshop "How to Tell a Story," taught by Gabriel García Márquez and David Trueba. He has co-written telenovelas and feature films premiered at festivals such as Sundance; served as script consultant for fiction and documentary projects; and worked as editorial coordinator for cinema-related publications. He has been a screenwriting professor, a jury member for the International Emmy Awards (Scriptwriting Award), and an evaluator for Latin American audiovisual funding bodies. Since 2015, he has been part of the content development team at TelevisaUnivision, where he currently serves as Director of Development, Scripted Content. His research and professional interests include melodrama, remakes, serialized storytelling, the relationship between writing and production models, and audience studies.

Claudia ROMANELLI
University of Alabama (USA)

Scripted Reality: Written narrative vs. improvisation in the Neapolitan episode of Roberto Rossellini's *Paisan* (1946)

STREAM 1

SESSION 12

PANEL 25

ROOM 303

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — Italian neorealism; archive-based research; comparative draft study; on-set improvisation; African American cultural expression

ABSTRACT

Italian director Roberto Rossellini did not appreciate detailed screenplays dictating the way he was supposed to shoot his films. Instead, he was known for improvising on set. Following World War II, European filmmakers debated the authority of the shooting script, seeking methods to liberate directors from the constraints of the written text (Steven Price, *A History of the Screenplay*, 2013). The debate was exacerbated by Italian neorealism's focus on filming daily life, which challenged the traditional tendency—as described by Cesare Zavattini—to mask reality with artificial, thrilling narratives (*A Thesis on Neo-realism*, 1978). Documenting the screenwriting process of Rossellini's neorealist films is a daunting endeavor, largely due to the scarcity of surviving primary, written sources. Fortunately, scattered remnants of the original script for Rossellini's 1946 iconic war film *Paisan* survive in European archives, offering invaluable, though incomplete, glimpses into the film's complex writing. Evidence suggests that Rossellini worked closely with American and Italian writers to shape the film's narrative, while his on-set revisions—driven by a desire to capture authentic, lived experience—adapted the script to the immediate environment and required active collaboration with his actors. This paper illustrates Rossellini's *modus operandi* in the Italian neorealist masterpiece *Paisan* by comparing various script drafts, with a focus on a close textual analysis of the Neapolitan episode. The study incorporates new archival findings on Dotts Johnson, the episode's Black lead, to re-evaluate his specific contribution to the film. Ultimately, Johnson helped Rossellini rewrite the film's dialogue, drawing on his experience as a Black actor in 1940s America.

PRESENTER'S BIO

CLAUDIA ROMANELLI is Associate Professor of Italian at the University of Alabama (U.S.A.). Her research interests include Italian cinema in a transnational context, the Italian screenplay and mixed and inter-media. Her work has appeared in edited volumes on European cinema and in academic journals such as *The Italianist*, the *Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies*, *Italian Studies*, *Forum Italicum*, the *Journal of Screenwriting*, *Romance Notes* and *Studi Pasoliniani*. She has recently completed a book manuscript that explores Pier Paolo Pasolini's contribution to the films of Federico Fellini.

Gianluigi ROSSINI
Universitas Mercatorum (Italy)

Theme as dramaturgical engine: Conceptualizing thematic coherence in screenwriting

STREAM 3

SESSION 4

PANEL 11

ROOM 306

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 3.10 pm

KEYWORDS — theme; serial narrative; screenwriting practice; audiovisual analysis

ABSTRACT

Within screenwriting studies, considerable attention has been devoted to structure, character and authorship (Maras 2009; Price 2013; Davies, Russo and Tieber 2023), yet the concept of theme remains comparatively undertheorized as a rigorous analytical category. This paper reconceptualizes theme not as a “message” or abstract moral, but as a dramaturgical engine that shapes narrative construction at multiple levels of composition. Theme is defined here as a generative principle that organizes conflict, character arcs, plot progression and aesthetic patterning, functioning simultaneously as an ideational tool for writers and as an interpretive framework for scholars.

Drawing on dramaturgical theory (Stutterheim 2019), debates on screenwriting as both practice and research (Batty 2016), and literary theory (Giglioli 2023) the paper argues that theme operates as a “point of convergence” within the screenplay’s architecture. For practitioners, articulating a thematic core during development enables coherence across narrative decisions: it informs the design of antagonistic forces, calibrates turning points, and sustains tonal and symbolic consistency. This function becomes particularly crucial in long-form storytelling such as television series, where general coherence must endure across multiple episodes and seasons while accommodating narrative expansion. At the same time, from an analytical perspective, theme provides a structuring matrix through which serial complexity can be interpreted without reducing it to episodic plot mechanics.

The presentation will employ HBO’s *Succession* (2018–2023) as a case study to demonstrate how a clearly articulated thematic constellation governs character trajectories, recursive conflicts and the modulation of dramatic reversals across seasons. Through this example, I will show how theme stabilizes long-duration narratives, ensuring both continuity and variation within the serial form. *Succession* constitutes a particularly suitable case study insofar the screenplays for all episodes have been published, thereby enabling a thematic analysis to be conducted both at the level of the screenplay text and at the level of the audiovisual text.

By foregrounding theme as a central dramaturgical category, the paper contributes to ongoing efforts to bridge screenwriting theory and practice, reinforcing the screenplay's aesthetic and structural autonomy while addressing the specific challenges of contemporary serial storytelling.

PRESENTER'S BIO

GIANLUIGI ROSSINI is a Tenure-Track Researcher in Film and Audiovisual Media at Universitas Mercatorum (Rome). He earned his PhD from the University of L'Aquila and has taught at the Universities of L'Aquila, Teramo and Bari "Aldo Moro."

He has served as a postdoctoral research fellow at Link Campus University in Rome as part of the project GEMINI – Gender Equality through Media Investigation and New Training Insights, funded by the European Commission under the CERV programme. He was also a postdoctoral research fellow at the University "G. d'Annunzio" of Chieti–Pescara for the PRIN PNRR project CineAb. Rediscovering and Promoting the Film and Audiovisual Heritage in the Abruzzo Region.

He is the author of *Re Lear a Manhattan: Capitalismo, Satira e Tragedia in Succession* (Infinito Edizioni, 2023) and *Le serie TV* (il Mulino, 2016), as well as numerous essays in academic journals and edited volumes. He writes about television series for *La Domenica (Il Sole 24 Ore)* and for *Sanporaz*. His research primarily focuses on television studies, TV seriality, audiovisual narratology, and digital media.

Bianca Lucia RUS
University of Greenwich (UK)

Rewriting the crime genre: Female protagonists and the future of thriller screenwriting

STREAM 2
SESSION 10
PANEL 22
ROOM 304

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 3 pm

KEYWORDS — feminist film theory; genre theory; narrative authority; gendered authorship; screenplay studies; female subjectivity

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that crime thrillers written and directed by women are not merely diversifying representation within the genre but actively reshaping its narrative logic at the level of screenwriting. Given the relatively small number of crime thrillers authored and directed by women that centre female protagonists, this study adopts a focused, script-based methodology. It analyses the screenplays of *Promising Young Woman* (2020) and *Anatomy of a Fall* (2022) as primary case studies, treating the screenplay as the central site where genre conventions are constructed, challenged, and revised.

Through close textual analysis of protagonist design, point of view, and narrative progression, the paper demonstrates how these scripts resist the genre's dominant structures of mastery, investigation, and resolution. In *Anatomy of a Fall*, suspense emerges through ambiguity, contested testimony, and shifting perspectives, with narrative momentum driven less by solving a crime than by negotiating uncertainty and credibility. In *Promising Young Woman*, suspense arises through performance, repetition, and delayed revelation, as familiar genre expectations are strategically mobilised to produce moral confrontation rather than procedural discovery. In both scripts, violence and conflict are not framed as narrative payoff but as unresolved ethical dilemmas that resist conventional closure.

This paper forms part of a practice-based PhD project investigating the portrayal of female protagonists in crime thrillers directed by women filmmakers. Beyond critical analysis, the research identifies specific screenwriting strategies, including the redistribution of narrative authority, the manipulation of temporality, and the denial of emotional resolution, that directly inform the development of the author's feature-length screenplay. The paper concludes that women-directed crime thrillers point toward an emerging genre paradigm increasingly shaped by moral ambiguity, subjective temporality, and sustained moral unease as central drivers of suspense.

PRESENTER'S BIO

BIANCA LUCIA RUS is a PhD researcher in Film and Screen Practices at the University of Greenwich. Her practice-based research examines the portrayal of female protagonists in crime thrillers directed by women, focusing on how screenwriting strategies reshape genre conventions, narrative authority, and representations of gendered subjectivity.

Alongside her academic work, she is an active screenwriter and filmmaker with extensive experience across short-form fiction, documentary, and hybrid projects. She has written over thirty short film scripts and a feature-length screenplay currently in development, with a particular interest in female-centred storytelling and genre revision.

Her research integrates textual analysis of screenplays with creative practice, exploring how feminist perspectives can inform both critical scholarship and screenwriting processes. She also contributes to film education through teaching support, workshops, and mentoring within film and screen media contexts.

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Stephen SALEH
University of Greenwich (UK)

Beyond thematic metaphor and symbolic motif,
can the philosophy underlying alchemical transmutation
be used as a structuring model for screenwriting practice?

STREAM 1

SESSION 10

PANEL 21

ROOM 303

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 3 pm

KEYWORDS — screenwriting; practice-based-research; narrative; alchemy;
dramaturgy; metaphysical-storytelling

ABSTRACT

Centred around an original experimental screenplay with the current working title of *The Alchemical Supper*, my ongoing Practice-Based Research PhD investigates how the key elements of a screenplay, such as narrative, character arc, and dialogue, can be aligned and structured according to the canonical alchemical stages of nigredo, the initial act of decomposition, through to rubedo, the climax of integration and individuation, to inform and guide narrative rhythm, tonal shifts, and dramatic escalation.

Set within a ritualised, non-naturalistic setting, the protagonists, the historical characters Dr John Dee and William Shakespeare, are subjected to non-linear temporality, liminal space, and recursion of both action and dialogue, narrative devices through which I analyse how the concept of transformation, the ultimate aim of alchemy, can be enacted rather than simply represented. Dee's historical position as science consultant, alchemist, and occult philosopher to Queen Elizabeth I, provides the foundation for this formal experimentation, but rather than presenting Dee through conventional biographical realism, *The Alchemical Supper* adopts alchemical structure as a way of reflecting his worldview, in which natural philosophy, cosmology, and spiritual transformation are intertwined.

Through reflective analysis of my creative writing process, this paper examines how Practice-Based Research enables the screenplay to function as a site of experimentation in narrative design. What happens when classical cause-and-effect plotting gives way to symbolic progression? Can an alchemical structure offer an alternative dramaturgical model for psychological, biographical, and metaphysical storytelling?

By treating the screenplay as a research instrument, this paper argues for its placement as a dynamic research artefact through which alternative models of narrative progression can be explored within contemporary screenwriting discourse.

PRESENTER'S BIO

STEPHEN SALEH is a writer, playwright, and filmmaker working at the intersection of history, myth, and the metaphysical.

A former IT professional, he began his writing career in 2019 with the publication of *Dark Lines of London* and has since written and directed several stage productions, including the award-winning *A Plague on Both Their Houses* and produced his first short film, *Elven*. His latest book, *Stagg'ring Verse*, published in November 2025, is currently being adapted as an audio drama.

In 2023 he graduated with an MA in Creative Writing at the University of Greenwich and is currently still there undertaking a Practice-Based Research PhD investigating how alchemical philosophy can inform the structure and dramaturgy of historical-fiction screenwriting. His research explores how symbolic systems such as alchemy and Jungian individuation can be enacted through screenplay form.

Siri SENJE
Kristiania University of Applied Sciences (Norway)

Exploring the past; impacting the future?

STREAM 1

SESSION 4

PANEL 9

ROOM 303

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 3.10 pm

KEYWORDS — practice-based; bio-pic; artistic invention; reimagining history; writing to right

ABSTRACT

Audiences today show an insatiable appetite for biographical stories on screen. In the discourse on biography, it is widely accepted that every retelling of a life, whether documentary or fiction, is an interpretation. The question is whether it can also be a reinvention, serving the purpose of what filmmaker and researcher Michael Bentham has called “writing to right” (*Screenwriting the contemporary biopic*, Palgrave 2025). With my screenplay, *Henrik & Suzannah*, I explore whether it is possible to impact the future appraisal of historical characters through reimagining their lives.

In my version of Henrik Ibsen’s life story, I ask whether the achievements of the legendary dramatist would have been possible without the partnership of his wife, Suzannah. Seeing the «genius» through her eyes, I challenge the «struggling hero» narrative of numerous biographies. I ask how everyday life unfolded for his wife and child during the turbulent years before his breakthrough, in a chaos of debt, lawsuits, substance abuse, theater bankruptcy, poverty, hunger, and artistic defeats. By foregrounding Suzannah, I offer long-overdue recognition to a woman who became crucial to world literature but has been marginalized, even slandered, in certain previous accounts.

Simultaneously, I ask how far the biographical screenwriter, even in service of an ethical purpose, can venture into the land of artistic invention. Through my practice, I have reached the conclusion that it is not a question of “how far”, but of “how.” Building on film theorist Eleftheria Thanouli’s concept of historical drama as “magnified miniatures” (*History and film, a tale of two disciplines*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), I have mapped the process of transforming fact to fiction. In proposing a typology of «tools of dramatic invention», I aim to contribute to the shaping of future biographical screenwriting practice.

PRESENTER'S BIO

SIRI SENJE is a screenwriter and professor of screenwriting at Kristiania University of Applied Sciences. She holds a doctorate in screenwriting from the Norwegian film school and is currently project manager of the artistic research project *Writing the Writer* (presented at www.senje.no). Siri has written for theatre, film and television, and her research on script development, feedback methodology, and biographical drama has been published in *Journal of Screenwriting*, *Norsk Medietidsskrift*, *Rushprint*, and in Palgrave's *Handbook of Script Development*.

Diego SHEINBAUM LERNER

UNAM—Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National University of Mexico)

Between the prosaic and the perspective of centuries:
A poetics of screenplay, based on the research “Pioneering
women screenwriters of wound cinema in Mexico” (2024-2026)

STREAM 2

SESSION 3

PANEL 6

ROOM 304

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 3.10 pm

KEYWORDS — poetics; chronotope; prosaic time; perspective of centuries

ABSTRACT

Abstract: In the Golden Era of Mexican film industry (1936-1956) there was a division between writers of treatments (“argumentistas”) and writers of scripts (“adaptadores”). I suggest that this division is useful for understanding how different timeframes interact in the creative process and in the life of the screenplay itself. If the treatments of screenwriters, like Concha Méndez (1898-1986), make intensive use of the “eyes of genres” —literary and dramatic—, the scripts of Janet Alcoriza (1914-1998) are composed with what we might call the feet of “everyday discursive genres” (Valentin Voloshinov 1986).

For Bakhtin, “the eyes of genre” are forms of artistic thought, organs of memory, vehicles of historicity. Concha Méndez, for example, uses the eyes of comedy in the treatment “Printed Fabrics” (1949) to subvert what it means to be a woman in mid-20th-century Mexico. In her treatment, the protagonist disguise herself as a man to access places normally forbidden to woman. Meanwhile, working with the script involves a celebration of prosaic regularities. From the scene’s heading, the script throws us into that place where time and space become flesh (what Bakhtin called the chronotope). The hacienda —portray in the script *Death’s godson* (1945) by Janet Alcoriza— organizes the roles of masters and laborers. These are places of “everyday discourse genres”: crystallized interactions that predefine situations, stipulate objectives, evaluation criteria, relevant and irrelevant features of the environment, roles, status, and temporal rhythms (Saul Morson 1995).

The screenwriter draws on the prosaic wisdom found in these exchanges. She perceives the emergence of new everyday discourse genres and experiments with how they collide, overlap, and sometimes make us aware of our social navigation skills and the limits of our actions. So, under the light of dramatic genres, explore in treatments, we see and heard linguistic animals (Charles Taylor 2016) navigating the prosaic rhythms of social situations in the script.

PRESENTER'S BIO

DIEGO SHEINBAUM LERNER (Mexico City, 1974). Researcher at the Center of Poetics in the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. His lines of research are: 1) Theory, history, and practice of screenwriting in Mexico, 2) Reflexivity in literature and film. In his most recent work, he has focused on the screenplay as a privileged genre for understanding the interaction of languages, discourses, traditions, actions, and lifestyles: "Reflections on Screenwriting in Mexico (1965-2013)" (2022), "Aristotle's Poetics among Hollywood Screenwriters" (2022), "Behind the Shadows: Women Screenwriters at the Turn of the Century in Mexico" (2024), "Tatiana Huezo: Trauma and the Poetics of Displacement" (2024), and "Resisting Melodrama: Poetics and Pedagogy of Beatriz Novaro" (2024). He currently coordinates the research project "Pioneering Women Writers of Sound Cinema in Mexico"

Pavlos SIFAKIS
HOU–Hellenic Open University (Greece)

Do androids dream of character change?
Exploring the progression of Artificial Intelligence characters
in film narratives

STREAM 4

SESSION 3

PANEL 8

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 1.30 pm

KEYWORDS — screenwriting; AI; character; change; film

ABSTRACT

Back in 2021, I finished my PhD about character change in feature screenplays. In that thesis, I proposed an alternative model for character change analysis, based on semiotics, that considers various mimetic attributes a character is assigned, instead of only their core personality traits. My model proposed a broader, more holistic approach, that also accounted for attributes such as physiology, personal relationships and emotional states, amongst others. In any case, and regardless of the model a theorist might choose to analyse how characters change in cinematic fiction, the underlying assumption is that (human) characters do change, at least in some respects.

But what about the non-human agents? Does the same assumption hold for such man-made characters? Do artificial intelligence characters found in films receive the same treatment from screenwriters? With this paper, my aim is to explore how AI characters are established and changed in film narratives. Using my character change analysis model, I will analyse AI characters in films and screenplays from the early days of cinema [e.g. *Metropolis* (1927)], up until its maturity [*The Day The Earth Stood Still* (1951), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Blade Runner* (1982)] and, finally, from recent times [*Artificial Intelligence* (2001), *Robot and Frank* (2012), *Her* (2013), *The Creator* (2023)]. I wish to observe how writers characterise AI agents and how they modify them during the course of the narrative. Do AI characters undergo mere physiological changes in these films? Are they assigned emotional fluctuations? Do they get radical personality changes? I posit that such an analysis can help us understand the underlying and changing perception of filmmakers towards AI throughout the years, and explore how screenwriters attempt to humanize a concept towards which many have a negative predisposition, in order to make it fit the established concepts of classical dramaturgy.

PRESENTER'S BIO

PAVLOS SIFAKIS is a filmmaker and academic living in Athens. He has a BA in Filmmaking from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, an MA in Screenwriting from University of the Arts London, and a PhD in Screenwriting from Bangor University Wales. His research interests include screenwriting, character change, and genre filmmaking. He has written and directed three short films [*Ecdysis* (2020), *Tzitzipongo* (2022), *Hunter* (2024)] funded by the Greek Film Centre and the Greek Public Broadcaster, and has also written for TV dramas. He participated as speaker at the 8th (2015) and 16th (2024) Screenwriting Research Network Conferences, as well as the 1st Scientific Conference on Cinema Screenplay, Practice and

Research (2024), organized by the Hellenic Open University. He has taught screenwriting at Bangor University Wales and at the National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, and currently teaches writing for TV at the Hellenic Open University.

Ben SLATER
NTU–Nanyang Technological University (Singapore)

Adaptation as promiscuous practice:
Transforming *Saint Jack* (1979) for screen

STREAM 3

SESSION 10

PANEL 23

ROOM 306

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 3 pm

KEYWORDS — screenwriting; adaptation; New Hollywood

ABSTRACT

Paul Theroux's novel *Saint Jack*, first published in 1973, is a fictionalised reflection on his life in Singapore between 1969 and 1971. Real-life experiences, erotic fantasies, and allusions to Joseph Conrad (and poet D.J. Enright) are woven together to create the beguiling story of middle-aged American pimp Jack Flowers, adrift in Singapore during its movement toward and after independence. In 1977, at the behest of Orson Welles, Peter Bogdanovich commissioned Theroux himself to write a screen adaptation, which was closely faithful to his own book. Unsatisfied with the results, Bogdanovich hired screenwriter/playwright Howard Sackler to write a draft that ingeniously transformed the book's structure into one that was more 'cinematic'. When Bogdanovich arrived in Singapore in early 1978 to shoot the film, he still found the script lacking. He rewrote Sackler's draft 'on the fly', incorporating his own personal experiences in Singapore (echoing Theroux's original writing process) along with 'found' texts, including a tourist guidebook and Michael Herr's Vietnam War book *Dispatches*. Local actors were encouraged to improvise, creating another performative-textual layer not present in Theroux's original work. Using primary sources (interviews with writers, plus archival materials), my paper explores this rather unique screen adaptation, which – as theorists of adaptation have observed (Hutcheon, Naremore) – is a process that frequently abandons conventional expectations of 'fidelity' to the source and embraces a more interesting (and promiscuous) hybridity. The screenplay adaptation (in the case of *Saint Jack*) becomes a space onto which various texts, agendas, and narratives are freely projected – and this exploration could provide a useful model for future approaches to screen adaptation.

PRESENTER'S BIO

BEN SLATER is a screenwriter-educator who has been teaching at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore since 2010. He has script edited and consulted on several produced screenplays, most recently *Baltimore* (2023), by Joe Lawlor and Christine Molloy and *AH GIRL* (2026) by Ang Geck Geck (which is currently playing at international film festivals). He's written or co-written two feature films produced in Singapore, *Camera* (2014) and *Malam* (2021), and a TV series, *Come Closer* (2022). He edited *NANG 1: SCREENWRITING* (Cinemasias Editions, 2016), with screenwriters from Asia, and recently completed a PhD in Creative Writing at NTU, comprising a creative nonfiction work entitled *Lost Cinema*. He has presented papers at previous SRN Conferences in Sydney (2012), Milan (2018), Porto (2019), and Adelaide (2025).

Ole Christian SOLBAKKEN
Kristiania University of Applied Sciences (Norway)

Vita Vigeland: A gothic biography and the future shape of the screenplay

STREAM 2

SESSION 8

PANEL 18

ROOM 304

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

KEYWORDS — screenwriting as literature; gothic biography; first-person screenplay; drawing; Emanuel Vigeland

ABSTRACT

This paper presents "Vita Vigeland", a practice-based project that takes the form of a first-person "gothic biography" of the Norwegian artist Emanuel Vigeland as a fully filmable screenplay, developed in parallel with a series of drawings that accompany and shape the text. The project proposes one possible future shape of the screenplay: a form that is simultaneously script, literature, and visual artefact. Instead of a conventional biographical script with third-person description and historical exposition, "Vita Vigeland" stages Emanuel as a first-person narrator inside the screenplay form. Scenes are external, situated and playable, but filtered through a haunted "I", Emanuel, in dialogue with "You", Death, as a character and presence. The screenplay thus occupies a hybrid position: it behaves like a script in terms of formatting, action and dialogue, yet insists on being experienced as literature on the page.

At the methodological core is what I term an "affective score" — a layered interplay between image and text that cannot be reduced to either medium alone. I work through iterative writing sessions where hand-drawn images, symbolic motifs and atmospheric sketches precede and accompany the writing. These drawings trigger scenes, shape rhythm and guide tonal shifts, and are presented alongside the text so that image and word interact to produce this affective score, holding in tension the visible, filmable action and the literary voice that inhabits it.

The paper asks three questions: (1) How does a first-person, haunted "I" reconfigure screenwriting conventions for biographical storytelling? (2) How can drawing and visual prompting support hybrid works where a script is both potential film and autonomous written piece? (3) What happens when a fully filmable screenplay is also framed and received as literature? By articulating the methods and outcomes of "Vita Vigeland", the paper argues for an expanded notion of screenwriting as literature — one that foregrounds the affective score as a generative methodology and demonstrates how hybrid practice can extend what a screenplay can be.

PRESENTER'S BIO

OLE CHRISTIAN SOLBAKKEN is a Norwegian screenwriter, artistic researcher and university lecturer in screenwriting at Kristiania University College in Oslo. He has written feature films and has extensive experience with story development in collaborative and industry contexts. Solbakken is currently pursuing a PhD in artistic research, where he investigates the intersections between screenwriting, literature and visual practices. His work often explores experimental narrative forms and questions of voice, form and authorship in contemporary screenwriting.

Claus TIEBER

MUK–Musik und Kunst Privatuniversität der Stadt Wien
(Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna, Austria)

Some tendencies in the future of screenwriting studies

STREAM 1

SESSION 2

PANEL 1

ROOM 303

Scheduled on THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.00 am

KEYWORDS — sound and music; tactile cinema; sensual cinema; synthesis

ABSTRACT

In recent years, certain tendencies have emerged in film studies, particularly in film theory. First, there is a shift away from viewing cinema primarily as a narrative medium in which cinematic techniques are subordinated to storytelling. Second, and closely related, is a growing interest in the sensual dimensions of film.

If we take these theoretical developments into account and apply them to screenwriting studies, we must begin to understand the screenplay as more than a vehicle for plot and dialogue. If cinema is not merely a storytelling medium but an experience that engages our cognitive, emotional, and sensory capacities, then these elements must also be recognized as present—explicitly or implicitly—within the screenplay.

Are sensory dimensions truly embedded in the text? Do we simply overlook them? Were such elements more commonly expressed in earlier screenplays? And why is it important to consider screenplays in their full range of expressive possibilities?

These are the questions my paper seeks to explore through an analysis of historical screenplays from Hollywood and Europe, in dialogue with contemporary theoretical approaches in film and media studies.

PRESENTER'S BIO

CLAUS TIEBER is the principal investigator of a research project about “The impact of sound on the screenplay 1927 – 1934” at the Music and Art University of the City of Vienna (MUK) and lecturer at the department of theatre, film and media studies at the University of Vienna. Among his most recent publications are *The Palgrave Handbook of Screenwriting Studies* (ed. with Rosamund Davies and Paolo Russo), which won the SRN book award 2024, and *When Music Takes Over in Film* (ed. With Anna Windisch and Phil Powrie), Palgrave 2023.

Joanne TINDALE
Griffith University (Australia)

Shaping the future: Towards a strengths-based framework for creating older female characters

STREAM 3

SESSION 12

PANEL 27

ROOM 306

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — strengths-based framework; representation; screenwriting; older female protagonists; screenwriting-as-research

ABSTRACT

To contribute to the conference focus on screenwriting futures, this paper proposes a method for improving scripted representation of older female characters. Drawing on concepts from social work, ageing studies and film theory, it introduces a strengths-based framework designed to promote greater diversity, inclusivity and belonging. The framework challenges cultural expectations around ageing and defies gendered ageist stereotypes, tropes and feminine archetypes. It also incorporates the Five Guiding Principles which were developed as part of previous research.

There is a worldwide pattern of negative portrayals of older women on screen, despite the increasing visibility of older female characters in contemporary feature films (Ng, Indran, and Yang 2023). Older female characters are more likely than older male characters to occupy minor supporting roles and more likely to be portrayed as feeble, homebound or senile, revealing a pattern of gendered ageism and sexism which impacts the most on female characters aged over 50.

The presentation will utilise a case study methodology to identify and analyse two feature films *Some Happy Day* (Hill 2020) and *Nomadland* (Zhao 2020) which star an older female protagonist. Each case study features an authentic older female character (aged early 40's and early 60s) who acts with agency and experiences different types of constraints. In addition,

the case studies highlight universal social and political concerns in society around homelessness by the respective female writers and directors.

This paper argues that screenwriting research can potentially reshape screen narratives around ageing and function as an agent of change. A more inclusive and diverse future can be moulded by embracing intersectionality through creating a strengths-based screenwriting tool for screenwriters writing stories about older women.

PRESENTER'S BIO

JOANNE TINDALE is a writer and researcher whose work explores ageing, gender inequity, and the representation of older women on screen. She wrote, directed and produced a short play as part of the 2025 Brisbane Anywhere Festival, co-produced the inaugural Screen Queensland–funded Women in Film and Television Australia Online Film Festival (2021) and directed the short documentary *Mei Mei, Speak More Chinese* (SBS 2023-2024). Previously Joanne held a managerial position in the community services sector and managed international aid projects with the Australian Agency for International Development. Joanne holds a Bachelor of Film and Screen Media Production (First Class Honours) and a Bachelor of Asian and International Studies (majoring in China and Mandarin language). Currently a PhD candidate in screenwriting at Griffith Film School, Brisbane, her screenwriting-as-research has been published in the *Australasian Studies in Cinema* journal and as a chapter in *Shaping Global Culture Through Screenwriting: Women Who Write Our Worlds* (2025). Her publications include:

Tindale, Joanne. 2025. "Catherine Hill: Women who write our worlds – shaping global screen culture with *Some Happy Day* (2021, Australia)" in *Shaping Global Culture Through Screenwriting: Women Who Write Our Worlds* edited by Rose Ferrell and Rosanne Welch, 269-286. Bristol: Intellect. <https://doi.org/10.1386/978183595159021>

Tindale, Joanne M. 2023. "Investigating older women as lead protagonists: an Australian case study of *Stateless* (2020)." *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 17 (1-2): 4-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17503175.2023.2228608>.

Tindale, Joanne. 2021. "Don't call me grandma: how to write formidable country women over the age of 65 as lead protagonists in an Australian feature film." *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 15 (1-2): 65-82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17503175.2021.1952683>.

Robert TZUDIKER
USC—University of Southern California (USA)

Evaluating screenplay quality: Human reader consensus versus AI-driven prediction

STREAM 4

SESSION 7

PANEL 16

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — screenplay evaluation; artificial intelligence; audience prediction; reader consensus; narrative analytics

ABSTRACT

AI can now write coherent narrative screenplays, but it cannot reliably evaluate their quality. Industry screenplay evaluation relies on a small number of gatekeepers: readers, development executives and producers who assess scripts, greenlight projects, and allocate capital. This process is widely acknowledged to be prone to bias, groupthink, and inefficiency, with little empirical data available until test screenings of near-finished films. While the industry currently resists using AI for script evaluation, the advantages of speed, cost, and improving capabilities make adoption increasingly likely.

This paper examines whether AI-driven analysis can match or complement human judgment in predicting audience reception and commercial viability. The data comes from ScriptMRI, a commercial screenplay evaluation service that employs large-scale reader consensus ($n > 200$) to generate demographic-specific response data across multiple evaluative dimensions. By comparing this human-centered approach with emerging AI capabilities, we can assess which method (or combination of methods) most reliably predicts how audiences will respond to narrative material before production begins.

In contrast, AI-based approaches employ natural language processing and machine learning models trained on historical box office data or audience ratings. While AI offers scalability and rapid analysis, it faces fundamental limitations: (1) inability to capture nuanced emotional responses that human readers detect through lived experience, (2) difficulty interpreting context-dependent elements like cultural resonance or timing, and (3) opacity in explaining why specific narrative choices succeed or fail.

Human readers excel at identifying emotional engagement patterns and provide demographic-specific responses that correlate with audience satisfaction. While AI can efficiently pre-screen large volumes and identify narrative patterns, the human consensus approach provides interpretable, actionable feedback for writers while

maintaining the contextual sensitivity that purely algorithmic methods lack. This has implications for both creative development processes and academic understanding of narrative effectiveness across diverse audiences.

PRESENTER'S BIO

ROBERT (BOB) TZUDIKER is a screenwriter and CEO of ScriptMRI. He is a Part-Time Lecturer on feature film writing at USC's School of Cinematic Arts and a member of the Writers' Branch of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. He has a B.A. from St. John's College in Annapolis, MD.

Bob is best known for *Newsies* and numerous animated features, all collaborations with his wife, Noni White. They share writing credit on Disney's *Tarzan*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *102 Dalmatians* as well as Fox's *Anastasia*. They also contributed to the film *The Lion King* and have written screenplays for every major studio. The Broadway version of *Newsies* won two Tony Awards and has been seen by over three million people.

Bob founded ScriptMRI, a data-driven (non-AI) screenplay evaluation service for film creators and studios. ScriptMRI measures screenplay reader responses and behaviors to improve storytelling <https://scriptmri.com/>

Omer UGUZ
Giresun Üniversitesi (Giresun University, Turkey)

Remembering old past: Reconsidering a forgotten orthodox manual

STREAM 1

SESSION 12

PANEL 25

ROOM 303

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — screenwriting manuals; Stina Bergman; Swedish screenwriting; screenwriting culture; orthodoxy; archival research; screenwriting history

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the role of Stina Bergman (1888-1976) as a script head at the Swedish Film company. Most of the studies on Stina Bergman focus on her influence on the Swedish filmmaking process, particularly her strong decision-making in the screenwriting process. This creates a significant gap, as her old manual, *Nagra Ord Om Hur Man Skriver En Film* (1942), has been translated into my PhD, titled *A Few Words on How To Write a Film* (2025), for pedagogical purposes. By using this literature gap, the role of this manual can be understood as having a significant influence on screenwriters such as Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007), as Stina Bergman mentored him in his earlier screenwriting career. The main aim in this paper is to show how orthodox screenwriting manuals and manual writers' discourse have shaped Swedish screenwriting culture. In this sense, the question is: do screenwriting manuals shape industrial discourse in creative choices, and how does this North American orthodoxy penetrate other cultures? In this study, an archival, newly translated document presents an opportunity to explore research questions. Using this archival translated text offers an opportunity to understand Swedish screenwriting culture by examining how doxa are presented across cultures through different terms with similar meanings. The main findings in this paper offer that guidance and mentorship have been ruled out by Stina Bergman at SF between the 1910s and 1950's, as this manual has been used as instructional guidance by screenwriters. In this context, this manual fills a gap in the literature. This paper presents historical archive material to reveal previously undiscovered issues for screenwriting studies. Ultimately, the argument not only enriches the creative process but also fosters critical reflection on the relationship between history and the written manual's discourse, providing an academic framework (orthodoxy) for future explorations of screenwriting as a practice deeply shaped by historical doxa.

PRESENTER'S BIO

OMER UGUZ studied Radio, Television and Cinema at Selçuk University and completed his master's degree at the University of East Anglia, focusing on Martin Scorsese. He earned his PhD in Screenwriting at Bournemouth University, where he explored Ingmar Bergman's orthodox and heterodox narrative structures in screenwriting.

He currently works as a lecturer at Giresun University, where he teaches and conducts research on traditional, orthodox and contemporary screenwriting theory and practice. In addition to his academic work, he continues to work on short and feature films in Turkey as a script editor and script doctor.

Enrique URIBE-JONGBLOED

Cardiff University (UK)

Richard HURFORD

University of South Wales (UK)

The branching paths of interactive film script writers: Developing new skills in an innovative sector

STREAM 4

SESSION 12

PANEL 28

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — screenwriting; FMV; video games; gaming literacy; creative industries; Wales

ABSTRACT

In a meeting room in Cardiff, Wales, fourteen people participated in a workshop to develop their story writing skills and led by an experienced sage they began their quest. They had been selected from 130 people from all over the world who had heeded the call to present their ideas for an interactive film. They were chosen to turn their previous knowledge and skills in storytelling to develop an interactive film script, with the help of an innovative software tool named WIST. All participants would have improved their abilities and added experience into their portfolio, but only one of the scripts, if deemed worthy, would be produced. In September 2025, *Dead Reset* co-written by two of the participants of the workshop was released to positive reviews. This is a chronicle of their quest.

The paper presents the resurgence of interactive digital films, also known as Full-Motion Video (FMV) games, driven by advancements in technology and distribution channels, with Wales Interactive emerging as a significant force in FMV production. Then it follows Wales Interactive and their collaboration with the Cardiff Capital Region media cluster which facilitated both technical and procedural innovations, notably through the development of the WIST tool. Then it showcases their interactive film challenge which aimed to address a crucial shortage of scriptwriting expertise in the FMV niche, which traditionally falls between film and video game sectors and suffers from limited training opportunities due to its market size.

Focusing on the outcomes of the interactive film challenge, the study draws on interviews with seven participants, highlighting substantial skill development, expanded career prospects, and new creative opportunities. The findings demonstrate that Wales Interactive's approach not only mitigates labour shortages and pipeline

needs within their organisation but also equips writers with highly sought-after skills across the broader media industry, thereby contributing to individual growth and sector-wide innovation.

PRESENTERS' BIOS

ENRIQUE URIBE-JONGBLOED (PhD Aberystwyth University) is Research Fellow for Media Cymru, a SIPF financed project led by the Centre for the Creative Economy at Cardiff University. Enrique undertakes research on various aspects of the creative economy, focusing on the study of strategies to reach global markets through cultural transduction. He has previously researched TV format markets, adaptation of film and television shows and localisation practices for video games. uribejongbloede@cardiff.ac.uk

RICHARD HURFORD is the Research and Innovation Lead for Creative Industries at the University of South Wales, and Skill and Training project lead for Media Cymru, researching skills gaps and screen/media industry needs, and commissioning bespoke training interventions. He has been deeply involved in video games higher education for the last 20 years and with research interest in video games sector development in Wales.

Marcel VIEIRA

UFPB—Universidade Federal da Paraíba (Paraíba Federal University, Brazil)

A cartography of Brazilian screenwriters: Databases, archives, and a new approach to film history

STREAM 1

SESSION 8

PANEL 17

ROOM 303

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

KEYWORDS — Brazilian screenwriters; film cartography; database research; authorship; collaboration networks

ABSTRACT

This presentation reports the results of a project funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), dedicated to the systematic mapping of the field of screenwriting in Brazil. It starts from the recognition that the history of Brazilian cinema has largely been told through directors, aesthetic movements, or public funding policies. In contrast, this study shifts the focus to screenwriters as key agents in both creative and industrial processes. At the heart of the project is the construction of an original and unprecedented database of Brazilian screenwriters, initially focused on fiction feature films, with almost 5.000 movies, from 1915 to 2024. This required the identification of individual careers, the mapping of periods of activity, and the systematic cross-checking of data from institutional archives and public filmographies, including the Brazilian Cinematheque and the National Cinema Agency (Ancine). The research also traces patterns of co-authorship and collaboration, revealing networks that have shaped the field over decades. More than a catalog, the database functions as a dynamic analytical instrument that makes visible generational transitions, recurring creative partnerships, and structural continuities that have not been properly mapped and analysed yet. The methodological path was equally innovative. The project addressed dispersed documentation, inconsistent credit practices, and shifting notions of authorship through standardized criteria and double verification, which allowed us to establish a reliable system for historical comparison. In its next phase of the project, the research will culminate in a publication featuring profiles of major Brazilian screenwriters. By combining a systemic overview with in-depth case studies, the project will offer both a broad cartography of the field and close readings of individual trajectories, opening new perspectives for the historiography of Brazilian cinema.

PRESENTER'S BIO

MARCEL VIEIRA is a professor, researcher, screenwriter, novelist and poet based in João Pessoa - Paraíba, Brazil. He's a full time professor at Paraíba Federal University, teaching screenwriting, film and television aesthetics, drama and performance, and creative writing. He's also a researcher for the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). His works address topics such as screenwriting practices, creative processes in Brazilian cinema and television, and narrative analysis of film and TV series. He published "Intercultural Adaptation: the Case of Shakespeare in Brazilian Cinema" (Edufba, 2013), which won the prize for Best Thesis from the National Association of Graduate Programs in Communication Studies (COMPÓS), the novel "Comrades" (Patuá, 2018) and the book of poems "an almost abyss" (Reformatório, 2021), which won the Maraã National Prize for best book. He also wrote the documentaries "+ Physicians" (2019) and "Coronga" (2021), both directed by Ricardo Soares, on the problems of public health in the Brazilian Northeast. His first feature film as both director and screenwriter is called "Revenge", and is now in post-production.

Jasper VRANCKEN
KU Leuven (KULAK Kortrijk) and Luca School of Arts (Belgium)

Genre and the film funding process. The inner workings of a short horror film and its Screen Idea Work Group (SIWG)

STREAM 2

SESSION 12

PANEL 26

ROOM 304

Scheduled on SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — horror; genre; SIWG; public funding; funding body

ABSTRACT

In 2021 I started as filmmaker (writer/director) on the screen idea development of a project that would eventually lead to the short horror *Souvenir* (Aeles & Vrancken, 2023). This film was one of the artistic components of my PhD in the Arts, which I obtained in 2023.

The aim of the production of this film was always to obtain funding through a film grant from our local film fund, the Flanders Audiovisual Fund (VAF). More specifically, this meant that the SIWG for *Souvenir* (which mainly consisted of my co-

director/screenwriter, my producer and myself) took the requirements of our film fund into account from the outset. Because we had already been able to finance a previous short in this way a few years earlier (Muil, 2018), we had gained some experience with the film funds workings and ideological preference. Our application for *Souvenir* was rejected on first submission (whereby one receives feedback from the judging committee) but was approved on second submission and received the necessary funding.

In this paper, I observe and analyse the screen idea development of *Souvenir* in an autoethnographic way, focusing on the many forms other than the screenplay in which the screen idea manifests itself, such as a director's statement of intent, producer's intent and mood board. These are 'texts' that directly address the committee members in an attempt to convince them.

Furthermore, I specifically analyse the way in which the feedback from the funding body was processed by *Souvenir*'s SIWG. In other words, the funding body itself became a member of the SIWG. A technique of autoethnography also made it possible to highlight the main discussions and struggles within the SIWG: through dramatization. In this paper, I introduce several virtual members of the SIWG and their vocal discussions and quarrels. One of them is a hardcore genre fan. He knows all the horror clichés but loves them, although he is certainly hungry for innovative ways to revisit the same genre material: *give me the same but different*. However, he hates pretentious terms

such as post-horror. A second virtual member is not a genre fan at all, but an arthouse enthusiast, someone who seeks artistic and social added value, with a strong focus on the potential thematic relevance of a film. Because these fictional members literally talk and discuss with each other, important ideological points of discussion are revealed: genre expectations versus innovation; use of metaphor versus genre tropes; a genre film versus a film in a genre, ... In this way, this analysis explicates the struggles associated with the development of a genre film in its search for funding: between arthouse and genre.

PRESENTER'S BIO

Dr. JASPER VRANCKEN (1979) is a filmmaker, researcher and lecturer. He is a visiting professor at KU Leuven (KULAK Kortrijk), and Luca School of Arts. In his PhD he researched the use of theory (especially the abject) as an active starting point of the screenwriting process. More info can be found on

<https://www.kuleuven.be/wieiswie/en/person/00043215> and www.jaspervrancken.com

Simon WEAVING
University of Nottingham Ningbo (China)

Stephen QUINN
Independent filmmaker

Levi DEAN
University of Nottingham Ningbo (China)

AI v the Coen brothers: The screenwriter's relationship with "the demon"

STREAM 4

SESSION 2

PANEL 4

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on THURSDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.00 am

KEYWORDS — Screenwriting, AI, *Fargo*, prompt engineering, co-creation

ABSTRACT

In March 1996 the film *Fargo* won Best Original Screenplay at both the Writers Guild of America and Academy Awards. Written and directed by Joel and Ethan Coen, critic Roger Ebert noted that the Coens "have taken enormous risks, gotten away with them and made a movie that is completely original." Our research is aimed at exploring the extent to which AI-based screenwriting tools can match this kind of complex originality.

The research examines the capability of various screenwriting tools to generate a screenplay structure (plot outline) and a complete scene, using various levels of interaction by the screenwriter. Using the screenplay for *Fargo* (1996) as a reference text, the researchers will use AI tools to generate a complete plot outline from a story synopsis and write a scene from an outline. The scene selected for the research is a dramatic 25-minute turning point (The 'Woah Daddy' scene) that marks a tonal shift and signals the writers' originality and subtle handling of pacing and violence.

As practicing screenwriters, we are interested in exploring the capability of tools such as Sudowrite, ChatGPT, Squibler and Laper, and the extent to which screenwriters need to shift their work from creative writing to "prompt engineering" (Vanikka, 2025, 59 and Russo, 2025, 271) or other forms of interaction with tools. The project builds on research done by scholars such as: Celik (2024, 17) who found that "human-generated script elements and AI-generated script elements cannot be easily distinguished"; Tang et al (2026, 15) who found that screenwriters' interaction with AI tools "is not characterized by passive consumption of machine outputs but by the active exercise of human agency"; and Spencer (2025, 286) who outlines various roles that screenwriting

AI tools might play, including “research assistant, character development tool, co-writer/writing partner or editor/critical friend.”

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PRESENTERS' BIOS

Dr. SIMON WEAVING is an Associate Professor at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China and a practicing screenwriter and director with research interests in script development and movie production. He has presented his research at a number of SRN conferences and his latest research – on the use of re-enactments in documentary screenwriting – will shortly be published in the *Journal of Screenwriting*.

Dr. STEPHEN QUINN makes movies with AI tools. From 2014-23 Dr Quinn taught filmmaking in Norway. He was digital development editor with the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong from 2011-13 and Professor of Journalism from 1996-2010. He has published 32 books.

Dr. LEVI DEAN is an Assistant Professor at University of Nottingham Ningbo China with research interests in screenwriting, cinematography and virtual production filmmaking. His research is grounded in filmmaking as practice and he has recently published research about true-crime documentary, virtual production workflows and short-film development.

Anna WEINSTEIN
Kennesaw State University (USA)

Historical and contemporary Jewish women television creators: Are their female characters Jewish or Jew“ish”?

STREAM 2

SESSION 3

PANEL 6

ROOM 304

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 1.30 pm

KEYWORDS — Jewish women; female characters; female screenwriters; Marta Kauffman; Jewish representation

ABSTRACT

Though *Friends* (1994-04) co-creator Marta Kauffman has stated that Rachel Green (Aniston) is Jewish, references to her Judaism are only implied throughout the ten-season run of the series. Given that *Friends* premiered four decades after *The Goldbergs* (1949-57), the trailblazing U.S. series centered on a Jewish female protagonist and created by Gertrude Berg, it is distressing that this early work by an unapologetically Jewish television writer did not sufficiently pave a path for future writers to tell stories centered on Jewish female characters. It took another decade before Jewish women television creators were positioned to tell stories about female characters whose Judaism is explicit in the narratives, including series such as *Girls* (2012-17), *Transparent* (2014-19), and *Broad City* (2014-19). Before the 2010s, most Jewish women television creators were unable or unwilling to reveal their characters' religious identity. Susan Harris, for instance, was thwarted in her efforts to tell stories about Jewish women in a retirement community as the network asked her to change *The Golden Girls* (1985-92) cultural identity to Italian. *The Goldbergs*, it turned out, was an early outlier. The U.S. Jewish “mother” of the soap genre, Irna Phillips, had multiple series on the air for nearly eight decades, and only a select few of her characters were Jewish. In fact, with her first series, she chose to make the characters Irish to appeal to a wider audience.

Today, we are seeing an influx of Jewish women on television, many created by Jewish women writers. This presentation will trace the works of U.S. Jewish female television creators from the 1940s to the present day, analyzing their depictions of Jewish women and the degree to which their Judaism is implicit or explicit. Contemporary writers under analysis include Sarah Gertrude Shapiro, Taffy Brodesser-Akner, Lena Dunham, and Erin Foster, among others.

PRESENTER'S BIO

ANNA WEINSTEIN is Associate Professor of Screenwriting at Kennesaw State University in Atlanta, where she serves as Coordinator of the Graduate Certificate in Screen and Television Writing. Since 2021, she has served as co-chair of the Film Area for the Popular Culture Association (PCA), and from 2022-24, she served as Secretary of the SRN. She is the founding editor of two book series: PERFORM: Succeeding as a Creative Professional (Routledge), which includes nine volumes to date, including *Writing for the Screen* (Weinstein, 2017), and SCREEN STORYTELLING (Bloomsbury Academic), which features volumes dedicated to the study of significant and/or underrepresented screenwriters' works. Anna is the author of *Writing Women for Film & Television: A Guide to Creating Complex Female Characters* (Routledge, 2023), editor of *The Works of Shonda Rhimes* (Bloomsbury, 2024) and *Directing for the Screen* (Routledge, 2017), and co-editor of *The Films of Nicole Holofcener* (Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming 2027).

Rosanne WELCH
Stephens College (USA)

Setting up the future in the past - Susan Harris' progressive (and controversial) TV writing

STREAM 2

SESSION 3

PANEL 6

ROOM 304

Scheduled on THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER, 1.30 pm

KEYWORDS — Susan Harris; *SOAP*; *Golden Girls*; female screenwriters

ABSTRACT

In response to highlighting “representations of the future in screenplays” combined with the practice of sharing research in the form of a case study, I propose a paper on the TV writing career of Susan Harris. A female pioneer Harris began writing sitcoms in the 1970s but almost always covering progressive (which often meant controversial) topics rarely seen on prime-time TV.

When writing for *All in the Family* Harris kept the focus on Edith as a citizen, not simply a servant to her husband by putting her on jury duty and involving her with a nursing home resident and his woes. Though Harris didn't invent Edith's cousin Maude, when the show became a spinoff executive producer Norman Lear assigned her one of the most controversial 2-parters – Maude weighs whether or not to have an abortion as a woman over 40.

In 1977 Harris created Jodie Dallas (Billy Crystal) as the first openly gay character on prime time in the United States in *SOAP*. She cloaked her progressive stories inside farce but the emotional reality always shone through, as in Jodie's attempted suicide when his closed gay lover broke up with him. Then, in 1985, Harris imagined a female president for the United States in the form of Patty Duke.

That same year Harris birthed the major hit that finds new audiences every decade – *The Golden Girls* – likely because of the progressive storylines she offered across its 9 seasons. Beginning with the idea that women are still interesting after the age of 55, a shocking revelation, the 4 friends who shared a home in Florida tackled everything from the AIDS epidemic to undocumented students to sexual harassment to disability depiction.

The paper aims to show how focusing on the future makes scripts timeless – and how female screenwriters such as Harris require more focus in academia.

PRESENTER'S BIO

ROSANNE WELCH is Executive Director of the Stephens College MFA in TV and Screenwriting. Television credits: *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Picket Fences*, *ABCNEWS: Nightline* and *Touched by an Angel*. Award-winning books include: *When Women Wrote Hollywood* (2018) and *Women in American History* (2018). Also: *American Women's History on Film* (2022) and *Shaping Global Cultures Through Screenwriting* (2025). Welch serves as Book Reviews editor for *Journal of Screenwriting* and Vice-Chair to the SRN Executive Committee. Her talk "The Importance of Having a Female Voice in the Room" from the TEDxCPP is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JFNsqKBRnA> She discusses her time as a writer-producer of CBS's classic 'Touched by an Angel' on the CW website: <https://www.cwtv.com/shows/tv-we-love/>

Her other recorded lectures are here: <https://www.youtube.com/@DrRosanneWelch>

Website: <https://rosannewelch.com/>

Michael WELLES SCHOCK
Independent scholar (USA)

The investigation of plot pattern phenomena in
commercial feature films and their potential operation as
cultural narrative archetypes

STREAM 3

SESSION 8

PANEL 19

ROOM 306

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 11.15 am

KEYWORDS — deep narrative structure; story patterns; cultural archetypes; Propp, American commercial cinema

ABSTRACT

This presentation relates the progress of a decade-long research project into narrative phenomena I term “plot patterns.” Analysis of over 500 feature films has identified a limited quantity of discrete structural chains continually repeating in American commercial films over the past five decades, frequently revealing “identical” narratives among diverse films radically dissimilar in content, genre, style and tone. These patterns exist not on the level of material content (i.e. not formulae), but rather conform with theoretical principles contained in Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale*, and thus may be considered chains of *functions of dramatis personae*. A “plot pattern” is thus a unique and unvarying series of plot functions, consistently reoccurring across a wide body of film narratives.

While tempting to dismiss as simple conscious imitation, the radical material dissimilarities between pattern-sharing films argue against this. I propose rather that the continual (and, as I suggest, non-intentional) re-occurrence of plot patterns provides evidence of cultural narrative archetypes, specialized to the cinematic medium and the conventions of commercial storytelling. The repeated success of such patterned stories with certain mass audiences could be attributed to the continual re-assertion of core cultural values or beliefs implicit in the development and resolution of the functional chains of events. This culture-based premise is supported by how my particular collection of identified patterns appear to dominate American cinema, yet are seen rarely with regularity outside it. Hypothetically, similarly-thorough examinations of other national cinemas may reveal in each their own wholly-unique collections of archetypal plot patterns reflective of their native culture’s core values and beliefs.

As experiment, I have used my knowledge of plot patterns to create an original screenplay to test its viability within competitions. Results shall be forthcoming.

PRESENTER'S BIO

MICHAEL WELLES SCHOCK is a film narrative theorist and private script consultant with 18 years of independent study on the theory and practice of cinematic narrative and narration. He is the author of *Screenwriting Down to the Atoms: Digging Deeper into the Craft of Cinematic Storytelling*;

Screenwriting & The Unified Theory of Narrative, Part I; and *Screenwriting & The Unified Theory of Narrative, Part II*. He currently resides in Lincoln, Nebraska in the United States.

John WILLIAMS
Jochi Daigaku (Sophia University, Japan)

Writing regeneration – Writing the future of rural Japan

STREAM 2

SESSION 7

PANEL 14

ROOM 304

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 9.15 am

KEYWORDS — Japan; sustainability; science fiction; fantasy

ABSTRACT

Can scriptwriting contribute to sustainable futures? Can scripts help to reimagine rural futures? Are locale and place still important factors in scriptwriting?

In Japan rural revitalization is one of the most pressing domestic issues in both regional and national politics. The drift of young people from the countryside to cities, the ageing rural population and the collapse of local economies, agriculture and fisheries, has led to a hollowed-out countryside with deserted or precarious villages. National and regional funds have been allocated to various initiatives to use the arts and cinema as tools for revitalization, but these subsidies are usually driven by an underlying desire to attract tourists (both domestic and international) and promote local products and businesses, so the results often resemble promotional films.

I will discuss two of my own films shot in rural Japan, the dystopian science fiction fantasy film (*Sado Tempest*, 2013) and a fantasy film based on local folklore (*Another Time, Tabi*, 2023). The first was entirely shot on Sado Island and the second shot in a tiny village with thirty residents, in the most remote area on the island. The idea to use fantasy and SF in rural locations was deliberate. It is possible to see the “reality” of rural Japan on Japanese TV nightly, but reportage of the reality offers neither solutions to these problems nor imaginative counternarratives to the decline and collapse of the communities. In this presentation I will explore ideas around fantasy, science fiction and genre approaches to scriptwriting for films set in the countryside, and their contribution to debates about sustainability and the environment.

PRESENTER'S BIO

John Williams has written and directed seven Japanese language feature films in various genres. He has also produced or co-produced several films with young Japanese directors. He also subtitles Japanese films and has worked as a script consultant for Japanese studios and independent companies. He teaches Film Production at Sophia University. His documentary, *North Cormorant Island*, about the village of Kitaushima on Sado, won the Audience Award at the Tokyo

International Documentary Film Festival and six other awards at international documentary film festivals. He is currently on Sabbatical and is based at Oxford Brookes in 2026.

Balázs ZÁGONI

Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai din Cluj-Napoca (Babeș-Bolyai University, Romania)

Experimenting with AI as a script doctor for character development in the screenwriting classroom

STREAM 4

SESSION 10

PANEL 24

ROOM 308 (Kennedy)

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 3 pm

KEYWORDS — AI literacy in screenwriting education; authorship and generative AI; character development; Eastern European screenwriting; pedagogical experiment; script doctoring with AI

ABSTRACT

In the second semester of the 2025–26 academic year, I conducted a pedagogical experiment in a first-year undergraduate screenwriting course with 22 students. The project explored questions of authorship, critical AI literacy, and the pedagogical value of comparison rather than replacement. I was curious to find out what differences would emerge between student-generated and AI-generated dramatic situations. Does AI tend toward cliché, escalation, or psychological depth? Does it shift Eastern European student screenplays toward a more Hollywood-oriented dramaturgy?

As in previous years, students were asked to develop the protagonist of their short fiction screenplay. This year, however, we applied the imaginary interview method (based on Robert McKee's *Character*), in which students wrote a fictional interview with their main character to explore psychological depth, backstory, and internal contradictions.

After completing the interview, students devised scene situations designed to place their character under pressure and reveal the character's essential nature. In parallel, they submitted the same interview to a generative AI chatbot of their choice, using a structured prompt instructing it to act as a script doctor and propose comparable dramatic situations.

Students then compared their ideas with the AI-generated ones, followed by a guided discussion evaluating dramaturgical strength, originality, and character-revealing potential.

The paper will present two or three representative examples and reflect on the pedagogical implications of using AI as a comparative analytical tool in character development.

PRESENTERS' BIOS

BALÁZS ZÁGONI is a co-founder of *Filmtett*, a Cluj-based film journal and NGO dedicated to film culture and education. He earned his DLA in 2012 at the University of Theatre and Film Arts in Budapest, with a dissertation on contemporary European and Hollywood screenwriting.

He has published numerous articles on film and is the author of seventeen books for children and young adults. He is a two-time recipient of the HUBBY (Hungarian IBBY) Award. In addition to his academic and literary work, he has written and directed several documentary films.

Since 2018, he has been a faculty member at Babeş–Bolyai University, where he currently serves as Associate Professor, teaching creative writing, screenwriting, and film history. In 2025, he published a handbook in Hungarian titled *A karakterépítés alapjai* (*The Basics of Character Building*).

Maryam ZEHRA
Bradford College (UK)

From binge-watching to binge-prompting

STREAM 2

SESSION 10

PANEL 22

ROOM 304

Scheduled on FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER, 3 pm

KEYWORDS — bingeing; binge-watching platformisation; audience engagement; streaming platforms; social media

ABSTRACT

Reed Hastings once remarked that Netflix's main competitor is not another streaming platform but sleep. The statement captures a defining feature of contemporary media ecologies: intensified competition for continuous audience attention. While this dynamic is often associated with streaming services and, more recently, short-form social media content, the practices it produces are not entirely new. Platformisation popularised the term "bingewatching," yet bingeing as a mode of engagement has deeper historical roots. As Anne Gjelsvik and Jørgen Bruhn argue, motion pictures function as mixed media that continually absorb and reconfigure attributes from other media forms. Building on this perspective, this paper argues that bingeing has become a defining attribute of contemporary media environments, shaping how audiences engage with content across platforms and technologies.

The paper asks how bingeing has evolved as a mode of audience engagement across cultural eras shaped by behavioural, media, and technological ecologies. It further examines whether intensive interaction with generative technologies such as artificial intelligence can be understood as a new phase of bingeing, and how such engagement may blur the boundaries between consumption and production. These questions matter because practices associated with emerging technologies are often framed as entirely new phenomena. A genealogical perspective instead reveals the continuities and transformations that precede them.

Methodologically, the paper adopts a genealogical approach to trace the shifting meanings and practices of bingeing across media contexts. It examines discourses, media practices, and technological infrastructures associated with bingeing, situating its evolution from bodily excess to streaming-era binge watching and, more recently, sustained interaction with generative AI systems. If bingeing is a recurring mode of audience engagement shaped by changing media environments, what happens when it becomes active, performative, and increasingly bound to cognitive extension? At what point does continuous human-machine interaction cease to be bingeing and begin to signal a transformation in the very nature of audience engagement?

PRESENTER'S BIO

MARYAM ZEHRA is a lecturer in Creative Media at Bradford College, UK, with over seven years of teaching experience across Levels 3–7 in further and higher education. Her research explores adaptation studies, intermediality, and transmediality across film, television and streaming platforms.

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