



## CONFERENCE PROGRAM

*Enlightened: Narratives and narrative strategies to awaken applied and creative humanism. 1st Narrative, Health and Wellbeing Research Conference, CQU, Noosa  
8 Feb, 2016*

The Health, Creative Arts, Humanities and Human Service Disciplines have much in common. This one-day multi-disciplinary conference showcases work that reveals the benefits to society of scholarship in these areas. We explore the concepts of applied and creative humanism, health and wellbeing.

Conference Organisers: Professor Margaret McAllister and Professor Donna Lee Brien  
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Time	Session (Room C1.14)			
8.30-8.50	Registration Refreshments			
9.00-9.05	Welcome and housekeeping			
9.05-9.20	Welcome to Country			
9.20- 9.50	Key Note Address: <b>The power and potential of storytelling as an educational methodology</b> Professor Tracy Levett-Jones, School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Newcastle			
9.50-10.10	Q and A, Morning Tea			
Parallel Sessions				
	Narrative & Healing Chair: Margaret McAllister Room: C.1.14	Narrative & Health Consumers Chair: Irene Rogers Room: C1.16	Narrative & Empowerment Chair: Matt Eliot Room: C1.20	Anatomy of a Narrative Chair: Julie Bradshaw Room: C1.21
10.15-10.45	<b>The benefits of Narrative research methods for nurses understanding cancer</b> Ann Framp	<b>My story, your agenda, my choice! The use of consumer story as an educational tool</b> Brenda Happell	<b>Transforming mental health services in Ghana</b> Francis Acquah	<b>Representing illness and disability and the altruism of self-reflexive writing</b> Katie Sutherland
10.45-11.15	<b>Telling lives: Women, stories and healing</b> Gail Crimmins et al	<b>Am I real, or am I fiction? Narratives of mental health challenges</b> Trudy Atkinson	<b>Triumph over adversity: Pockets of resilience in nursing students' stories</b> Colleen Ryan et al	<b>Narrating domestic violence in Marian Keyes' "This Charming Man".</b> Lauren O'Mahony & Kathryn Tees
11.15-11.45	<b>Narrative as a way of understanding mothering a child living with disability</b> Katrina Lane Krebs	<b>The person with intellectual disability and nursing care: A story from practice</b> Virginia Howie	<b>Weaving narrative family therapy practices and analysis within a PAR project</b> Annette Woodhouse	<b>The Australian death memoir: A preliminary taxonomical survey</b> Donna Lee Brien
11.45-12.15	<b>Blurred roles of health professional and carer: The role of narrative in easing the pain</b> Bambi Ward	<b>The Diary: Friend or foe?</b> June Alexander	<b>Power, participation and partnerships: Reflections on the co-creation of knowledge</b> Wendy Madsen & C. O'Mullen	<b>Writing things I almost cannot say: Awakening the soul and (en)lightening the load</b> Ali Black
12.15-1	Lunch			
1-1.40	Key Note Address: <b>Songs of fear and hope (Room C1.14)</b> Dr Louise Byrne, School of Nursing and Midwifery, CQ University, Australia			

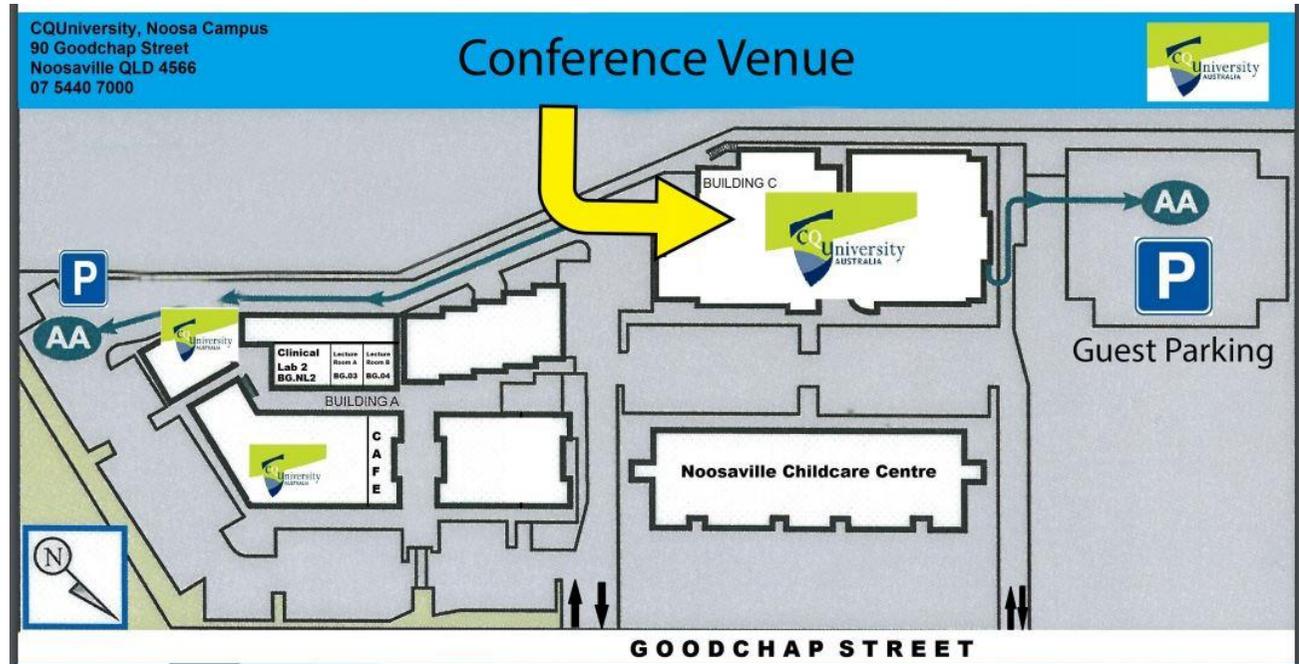
Parallel Sessions				
	Narrative & Identity Chair: Tracey Simes & Anthony Welch Room: C.1.14	Past, Present, Future Narrative Chair: Colleen Ryan Room: C1.16	Narrative & Healing Chair: Virginia Howie Room: C1.20	Anatomy of a Narrative Chairs: Donna Lee Brien & Leanne Dodd Room: C1.21
1.45-2.15	Allying heart and mind in narrative inquiry: The lived experience of women casual academics Gail Crimmins	A narrative of the past: Isabella Lewers Julie Bradshaw	Towards the ideal self: Potential uses of personal technologies to actively construct wellbeing Matt Eliot	Writing crime's aftermath: Poetry as Victim Impact Statement Nicole Anae
2.15-2.45	Ministry at four tables: An autoethnography Mervyn Lander	A strategy for resilience: Developing a narrative for the future Debra Phillips	Grief, time and the revelation of memory in digital space Melissa Deitz	Writing the broken (adopted) self: memoir and trauma Sue Bond
2.45-3.15	Talking to our Selves: The healing potential of narratives across thresholds Lara Bardsley	The Sugarbird Lady: Using historical narrative to inspire nurses to make a difference Irene Rogers	Ageing creatively: Creative writing as a tool for healthy ageing Rachel Morley	A prescription for action: The power of biographical writing Susan Currie
Break				
3.30-4	Making the invisible visible: Transformational narratives in research Heather Lovatt	Nursing's struggle for actualisation reflected in "The English Patient" Margaret McAllister	An emergency department experience Toby Price	Power in the moment: Using autoethnography to unlock understandings of intense collaborative music performance Judith Brown
4-4.30		Echoes of the centaur tragedy Pamela Blake	Use of healthcare consumer lived experience stories to increase student empathy in first year nursing education Penny Heidke & V.Howie	Plot interrupted: Reproducing the narrative benefits of trauma fiction in crime fiction Leanne Dodd
4.30-5	Narrative Structure and the Production of Reader Wellbeing: Chick Lit's Response to the Cult of Thinness and the Fear of Fat Lauren O'Mahony			Up close from afar Eugen Bacon
5-6	Wine and cheese and Art Space opening			

**Acknowledgements and thanks are given to:**

- The Advance Queensland Fund, in the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation for providing funding to support this conference
- Professor Margaret McAllister, Conference Convenor
- Professor Donna Lee Brien, Conference Convenor
- Ms Zoe Allen, Campus Administrator
- Mr Jamie Hay, Research Assistant
- CQUniversity Australia, Noosa campus
- Ulrike Sturm, Art Space Curator, CQU Noosa

**About the conference venue**

This inaugural Narrative, health and Wellbeing Research Conference, entitled “Enlightened: Narratives and narrative strategies to awaken applied and creative humanism”, will take place in the Collaborative Learning Space and breakout rooms of CQ University, Noosa. We are located just near Noosa Radiology in the medical centre complex, at 90 Goodchap Street, Noosaville, Qld, 4556. Bus 628 goes past the campus <http://translink.com.au>



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# The Power and Potential of Storytelling as an Educational Methodology

Tracy Levett-Jones

## Abstract

There is compelling research demonstrating that adults who are presented with a story linked to a series of facts retain significantly more information than those presented with facts alone. Storytelling also has the potential to help learners develop in-depth understandings of the unique insights and perspectives of people they may not normally encounter or engage with in their everyday lives. However, while the use of oral narratives is ubiquitous in healthcare, too often the key elements of effective stories are poorly understood and the potential power of this medium is not realised.

This presentation will explore how well told stories can promote learning and change perspectives. Examples of different storytelling approaches and their impact on patient safety, empathetic care and social justice will be discussed. Finally, application of the key elements of effective stories for health care education and research using a range of media will be illustrated.

## Biography

Tracy is Professor of Nursing in the School of Nursing & Midwifery, at The University of Newcastle in Australia. She has authored ten books, and is the recipient of numerous research and teaching awards. She has led a number of funded educational research projects and her research interests include: clinical reasoning, storytelling, interprofessional education, cultural competence, simulation and patient safety. Tracy will speak on the power and potential of storytelling.

# Songs of Fear and Hope

Louise Byrne

## Abstract

A lived experience mental health worker has faced significant mental health challenges, used mental health services and experienced healing and recovery. The core skill for lived experience workers is an ability to utilise their life experience in a productive way within someone else's healing journey.

In her role as a lived experience worker, Dr Louise Byrne regularly shared parts of her own life story to connect with, inspire and suggest alternate ways of viewing for people currently struggling with their mental health. Within her academic role, Louise continues to utilise stories of her own recovery journey to connect with students, reduce stigma and increase empathy for people accessing mental health services.

Music played an important role in Louise's journey towards a more meaningful life and provides a creative and universal means of conveying narrative. In her address Louise will use a combination of song and prose to share some of her story and highlight the role of narrative in authentic connection and relationships.

## Biography

Louise is an academic within the School of Nursing and Midwifery, CQ University, and advisor to the Queensland Mental Health Commission. She works from the perspective of her lived experience of

mental health challenges. Her insights help to deepen students' empathy and skills for working collaboratively with consumers in their Recovery journey. Louise will draw on her musical talents to provide a melodic narrative.

## The Benefits of Narrative Research Methods for Nurses Understanding Cancer

Ann Framp

### Abstract

Cancer is an illness that universally evokes fear of death, pain, loss of control and family disruption. These days, focused new treatments mean that many cancers can be considered a chronic disease, and not a death sentence. In Australia, almost half a million people are living with cancer, and 67% will survive longer than 5 years after diagnosis. Within one family in New Zealand however, these uplifting statistics do not apply. The family is afflicted by a rare form of hereditary aggressive cancer. For each person, if they have one parent with the mutated gene, they have a 50% chance of inheriting it themselves. If they do inherit the gene, they have an 85% change of developing the cancer within their lifetime. The average age that the cancer manifests is 37, with the youngest known person 14 years old.

To understand how this unique family experiences, adapts and interacts with health professionals a narrative study was designed and undertaken. Throughout the process of inquiry, many stories were shared. In this presentation I will focus on stories of hope, fear and courage and I will utilise Frank's theory about illness narratives to explore how meaning can be made about this devastating illness.

### Biography

Ann Framp is the Program Coordinator and a Lecturer in Nursing for students enrolled in the undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing Science degree at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Ann is currently undertaking her PhD using narrative inquiry of the experience of members from a New Zealand family who are predisposed to hereditary diffuse gastric cancer. Ann's supervisors are Professor Margaret McAllister and Associate Professor Trudy Dwyer from Central Queensland University. Ann has had over 30 years nursing experience both in community and hospital settings and has particular interest in medical and surgical nursing practice.

## Telling Lives: Women, Stories and Healing

Gail Crimmins, Janice Jones, Sarah Loch, Ali Black and Lisa Albion

### Abstract

Over a year seven women agree to think about, write, and share narratives of living, surviving and being in the afternoon of their lives. During this year we use forms of communication that embrace poetry, image, song and story to create a polyvocal account of women's lives, voices, struggles and learning. What emerges during the deep and vulnerable personal writing, and the intimate and collective feedback and sharing of stories during writing workshops, is both empowering and healing. From sharing, reading and talking 'about' our writing, we find self-empowerment, affirmation, validation, support, encouragement and dignity and (re)discover both our unique and shared journeys as women. In making our stories public, stories we have not revealed before, stories

of lives we didn't choose or imagine but of lives we are given and are living through, we listen, hear, recognise and acknowledge experience – our own and others'. As we listen and hear we connect to ourselves and to the diversity, uniqueness, strength and depth of other women. And in so doing we find connection, healing and renewed courage to live meaningfully and wholly.

### **Biography**

Dr Gail Crimmins initially trained as an actor and director and worked as an actor, director and casting director in theatre, television and film in the UK. She is currently engaged as a Lecturer in Communication at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Gail's research values narrative inquiry and arts-informed research methods.

Dr Janice Jones is a Senior Lecturer (Expressive Arts) in the School of Linguistics, Adult and Specialist Education at the University of Southern Queensland. Janice's research interests include narrative, creative and arts-informed research including auto-ethnography. Janice values and facilitates creative and reflective practice for personal and professional growth.

Dr Sarah Loch has a background in school leadership and social work. Currently working at the University of Technology Sydney, Sarah's research and scholarly work employs poststructural ideas which seek to extend understandings about research methodologies and writing practices. Her publications include poetry and image and embrace connected and creative ways of looking at education.

Dr Ali Black is an arts-based and narrative researcher at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Her research and scholarly work seeks to foster connectedness, community, wellbeing and meaning-making through the building of reflective and creative lives and identities. Ali is interested in storied and visual approaches for knowledge construction, representation and meaning-making and the power and impact of auto-ethnographic and collaborative and relational knowledge construction.

Lisa Albion is currently a lecturer in the School of Education at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Lisa has over 25 years of experience working in early childhood, primary and higher education. She has vast cross-cultural experience developing curriculum and implementing education projects in the Pacific, SE Asia, the Balkans, Canada and Australia.

Julianne Impiccini is a lecturer and senior education advisor in the School of Education and the Arts at CQUniversity Australia. With a background in drama, theatre, and literature studies Julianne is interested in enabling people to flourish and connect. Her research values story, auto-ethnography and lived experience.

Angie Berryman is currently a prep teacher at St Bernard State School. Angie has three decades of experience in education working with children and families across a range of settings. Angie is a highly regarded early childhood educator interested in the role of creativity and health for supporting learning and wellbeing.

# Narrative as a Way of Understanding Mothering a Child Living With Disability

Katrina Lane-Krebs, Susan Rockloff and Anthony Welch

## Abstract

This paper explores narrative therapy in relation to the phenomenon of a mother's experience of the near death of her child and subsequent caring of a child living with disability. This depiction of the essence of the mothering is conveyed through a variety of literary media - contemporary memoir, poetry, prose; and other media including photography and dance. Exploring the experience of mothering enables:

- (i) the mother's voice to be heard,
- (ii) facilitates empathetic understanding
- (iii) challenges social constructs and stereotypes of disability

Lived-experience narratives become Lifelines - facilitating survival in the midst of the unimaginable. Narratives emerge as a place of beginning, where one's soul and spirit can recuperate and be restored. In the midst of despair, trying to maintain sanity, make sense of the current world or simply survive – often appears unattainable. While a plethora of medical advice exists, there is a void around the human perspective of such personal crisis. There is a need for something tangible that can be held... read... and then a survival response is invoked.

The process and products of narrative therapy enhance reflection, introspection and interpolation - assisting the individual with the recovery and resilience journey.

## Biography

Katrina Lane-Krebs is an academic at CQUniversity and an RN currently undertaking PhD. with interest in disability, inclusivity and cultural environments. Katrina also holds a M. Lit. with her research focusing on creative writing as a therapeutic intervention for mental health enhancement.

Associate Professor Anthony Welch has a specific interest in Mental Health and the philosophical framework of Phenomenology.

Dr Susan Rockloff is a lecturer in Sociology with a specific interest in Health and Medical Sociology.

# Blurred Roles of Health Professional and Carer: The Role of Narrative in Easing the Pain

Bambi Ward

## Abstract

When health professionals find themselves in the role of carer for a family member who has been diagnosed with a serious or chronic medical condition, it can either feel like a blessing, a curse, or both. The health professional may know too much information, resulting in them experiencing greater levels of anxiety than a lay person. On the other hand, their health background may make them a more effective patient advocate, as they will often know what questions to ask, what possible treatment options are available, and how to navigate through the often impersonal health system.

Being a carer and a health professional can also result in blurred roles, particularly if the latter is a medical practitioner. It is not easy for a doctor to sit on the other side of the consulting desk and hear bad news about a loved one's health.

This paper outlines ways in which the author, a medical practitioner, used narrative to assist her in coping with the grief and feelings of helplessness she felt after finding out about health challenges of two family members. Excerpts of her writing will be included in the presentation.

### **Biography**

Bambi Ward is a PhD student in creative writing with Central Queensland University. Her creative work is a memoir of her spiritual journey. Bambi is based in Melbourne. She has a background in general practice, medical education and oral history, and has written articles for peer-reviewed medical journals.

## **My Story, your Agenda, my Choice! The Use of Consumer Story as an Educational Tool**

Brenda Happell

### **Abstract**

The involvement of consumers in teaching mental health to nurses and other health professionals has increased over recent decades. The telling of story is a common way consumers contribute to the education process. In many instances they are specifically asked to tell their story of being diagnosed with a mental illness and mental health service use. The use of story is controversial, yet there remains a paucity of research exploring its use and impact. This paper presents findings from a qualitative exploratory study of consumer participation in mental health nursing education in Australia from the perspectives of consumer educators and mental health nurse academics. Story was identified as a major theme. Nurse participants focused on the use of story as a powerful learning tool which enhanced student empathy. Some consumer participants shared this view, however with much greater critique of the concept. Vulnerability and contention; and expectation of the role were articulated by consumer participants. Achieving the goal of genuine and effective consumer participation in the education of health professionals requires critical analysis of the story as a learning tool and philosophical approach. This paper makes an important contribution to this issue.

### **Biography**

Professor Brenda Happell is Professor of Nursing and Executive Director of Synergy, Nursing and Midwifery Research Centre at University of Canberra and ACT Health. Brenda is a passionate advocate for mental health nursing. She is an active researcher with a strong track record in publication, supervising higher degree students and obtaining competitive research funding. She is a Board Member of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses, and former Editor of the International Journal of Mental Health Nursing. Her research interests include: consumer participation in mental health services, physical health of people experiencing mental illness and mental health nursing education.

# Am I Real, or am I Fiction? Narratives of Mental Health Challenges

Trudy Atkinson

## **Abstract**

The telling and hearing of personal stories by people who have experienced mental health challenges is part of a larger social discourse, informed by multiple perspectives and dominant paradigms of 'mental illness' constructs. Consumers may share their stories based upon a Recovery-oriented narrative assuming that specific, and sometimes confronting, details will be heard as a means of educating others. In mental health peer support, sharing of stories can also be problematic. While some people share stories in ways that can lead to mutual learning and growth, others share in a manner of mutual commiseration that reinforces their marginalized and sick-role identity that fails to promote growth/recovery (Mead, 2001).

Listeners engaged in the hearing of such stories may encounter these details through a lens of 'horror' and the audience engages with the horror story, in a voyeuristic rather than empathic manner and this overshadows the message intended by the story-teller. In this way, people sharing their stories are inadvertently buying into a fiction that does not adequately represent who they are, or what they are aspiring to.

This presentation explores stories of lived experiences of mental health challenges using a Transactional Model of communication to reveal impacts, interactions and intersections between story-teller and audience. I explore stories that build empathy rather than feed into horror stories and storytelling, in ways that model how consumers can share transformative stories that build understanding and promote recovery.

## **Biography**

Trudy is a lecturer within the school of nursing and midwifery, who has a passion for human rights and social justice, particularly for people experiencing mental health challenges.

# The Person with Intellectual Disability and Nursing Care: A Story from Practice

Virginia Howie

## Abstract

I was a nurse working in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and allocated a 32 year old patient with Down Syndrome admitted because he had suffered a possible stroke. I went into the afternoon handover, expecting from my colleague, an objective précis of his progress, but what I encountered was a highly subjective report, which left me shocked and unsettled. "James" was a difficult patient, the nurse said. He was really trying everyone's patience, he went on, because James refused to eat or drink, even though his swallowing had not been affected. James was also reportedly "faking" the lack of motor responses in his left leg during routine neurological observations, since the handover nurse reported that he had seen James move his leg when seemingly unobserved. But when I eventually had an opportunity to meet James, my assessment of his condition, his needs and abilities were very different to that reported. This paper will retell a story from nursing practice, and analyse the events, assumptions, and practices by exploring hidden aspects about intellectual disability in acute care.

## Biography

Virginia is an RN and Nursing Lecturer who coordinates a course called Inclusive Practice which explores factors that contribute to poorer health outcomes for vulnerable groups.

# The Diary: Friend or Foe?

June Alexander

## Abstract

This discussion explores how the diary, in traditional pen and paper and online formats, can be a powerful healing tool in patient-centred care. Drawing on eating disorders as an example, I explore how the diary can help improve communication between patient and therapist, and encourage self-care for both. Noting that evidence-based research on the value of diary-writing as a therapeutic medium for people with eating disorders is scarce, I argue the diary deserves a higher profile and scrutiny in science. The diary can be a great self-help guide, but as my auto-ethnographic book, *Using Writing as a Therapy for Eating Disorders: The Diary Healer*, shows, having an experienced mentor is vital, to avoid the diary becoming aligned with the illness rather than true self. This presentation offers diarists across all disciplines guidance in writing in a constructive way for self, rather than in a 'self-destructive' way. It is about providing a tool for health practitioners to engage with, and learn from, their patients. It is about helping diarists apply techniques to achieve integration of mind with body, and to use their diary as a confidante, and a reflective, problem-solving, recording and healing tool

## Biography

When June developed Anorexia Nervosa, at age 11, diary writing became a survival tool. Since recovering from this illness at age 55 in 2006, she has written seven books, combining life experience and professional skills to disseminate evidence-based research for health practitioners and

mainstream readers. She is a PhD candidate in Creative Writing at CQUniversity, exploring how diary writing can be therapeutically applied in healing from eating disorders.

## Transforming Mental Health Services in Ghana: Blending traditional healing with contemporary medicine

Francis Acquah

### **Abstract**

The West African country of Ghana is situated just north of the equator bordering the Atlantic Ocean. Ghana's tropical beaches and picturesque countryside are starkly contrasted by the destitute and inhumane living environments of people living with mental health conditions who often find themselves subjected to archaic treatment regimes as articulated in the report "Like a Death Sentence", Human Rights Watch (2012).

The Mental health foundation of Ghana (MHFGH) was formed as a direct result of this report and comprises mental health professionals and academics mainly based in the diaspora. It is a registered charity and contributes to government, community and private efforts to promote mental health and wellbeing in Ghana.

I am a mental health nurse working in Australia, but originally from Ghana, I lead the MHFGH as its current president. As a Ghanaian, I bring knowledge of local culture and health beliefs and partner them with my contemporary western health qualifications and expertise bridging the void between cultures.

Our work has led to numerous achievements. We host an international conference each year in Ghana, which we coincide with the annual world mental health day. In addition we are involving local mental health clinicians in research projects and education programs in partnership with Ghanaian and overseas educational institutions. We are already seeing the beginnings of mental health transformation.

The aims of this paper are to: discuss important stories of the foundation's development; explore some of the personal stories of those living with mental health conditions; and raise awareness of shared concerns about health and wellbeing that cross transcultural borders.

### **Biography**

Born in West Africa, Francis qualified as a Mental Health Nurse in the United Kingdom and is a Credentialed Mental Health Nurse accredited by the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses. He has over 25 years of experience across youth, adult, public and private health care in Australia and the United Kingdom and has undertaken a range of roles, including clinical, managerial and educational. He has also served as a Specialist Pharmaceutical advisor for a leading pharmaceutical company.

## Triumph Over Adversity: Pockets of Resilience in Students' Stories

Colleen Ryan, Penny Heidke, Nicole Blunt and A/Prof Moira Williamson

### Abstract

Feeling a sense of belonging to nursing has been highlighted as a key predictor for retention both in undergraduate studies and the nursing profession (Levett Jones, Lathlean, McMillan, & Higgins, 2007; However, many students report experiencing the opposite – they often feel alienated, and unsupported in their clinical placement experiences (Gilbert & Browne, 2012). Efforts to promote retention in nursing are important because it has been suggested that in 10 years, Australia will be experiencing a shortage of over 100,000 nurses (HWA, 2012).

As educators within a Bachelor of Nursing program, we were witness to many students' stories of alienation. A blog style assessment was offered to students to capture their reflections of clinical placements. A qualitative study was designed to explore these blogs. 255 student posts were thematically analysed. This paper will present preliminary results that illuminate moments when students: did feel a sense of belonging; experienced triumphs over an experience of alienation; and displayed encouraging signs of resilience and strength of character.

Relevant stories will be retold to offer a range of memorable lessons for academics and clinicians.

### Biography

Colleen Ryan is an RN and Associate Lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at CQUniversity, Noosa campus. Colleen has recently completed the Masters of Health Professional Education and plans to further research clinical facilitators and preceptors in the clinical teaching environment. Colleen worked as a clinical facilitator at several facilities on the Sunshine Coast. Her most recent publication is on the Enrolled nurses' experiences learning the nurse preceptor role.

## Weaving Narrative Family Therapy Practices and Analysis Within a PAR Project

Annette Woodhouse

### Abstract

The transformative power of narratives is explored in a discussion of my previous PhD participatory action research study. Within this research participants' individual stories were analysed as narratives to create overall themes linked to community connectedness. From a social constructionist and poststructural feminist positioning, narratives within this study are discussed as: The telling of stories of rural family therapy practices and experiences by my professional colleagues as research participants; A transformative process for participants within a yearlong focus group; A dialogical/performance within my analysis Riessman (2008) to develop overarching themes for this study; Part of narrative therapy practices of outsider witnessing, within my research methodologies; My own story of becoming as a feminist researcher.

Overall consistent with a narrative therapy approach (White, 2007), my ongoing hope from this study is that my participants' narratives of rurality will evoke further such stories from other rural practitioners. As such, these stories provide a source of inspiration for us as family therapists, sustaining ourselves professionally so that we can remain available to families experiencing rural adversities, such as the ongoing drought and evolving lifecycles of families and their communities.

## **Biography**

Dr Woodhouse is an RN and Nursing Director of Mental Health and Addiction Services on the Sunshine Coast. Her approach to family therapy and mental health nursing practice is one of partnership with clients and families to address issues brought to therapy or raised in practice. She has worked in the mental health field for over thirty years between Australia and New Zealand.

## **Power, Participation and Partnerships: Reflections on the Co-Creation of Knowledge**

Wendy Madsen and Cathy O'Mullan

### **Abstract**

Narrative writing was used to critically reflect on the reasons for the success and failure of two research partnerships: one between the authors and a community group; the other between the authors and academic colleagues. Both research partnerships were part of the same project, yet while one was successful in producing outcomes, the other was not. The reflections are outlined in this paper through a vignette and an analysis informed by Wenger's Communities of Practice framework. This helped draw out issues around power and participation as fundamental for successful research partnerships, particularly multidisciplinary partnerships, intent on the co-creation of knowledge. Such issues related to recognising partnerships and underlying assumptions when these partnerships cross boundaries, transparent communication, power and decision making processes, critical self-awareness, and negotiated meaning and identity.

### **Biography**

Dr Wendy Madsen

Wendy has been undertaking qualitative and history of health research for almost 20 years, including history of nursing practice, nursing services, and public health. In recent years she has also been researching community resilience and exploring participatory health research approaches as part of her health promotion work. Thus, narratives have been an enduring feature of her research: in writing the stories of nurses and health services, through oral histories, and through exploring the contribution of social narratives and social memory to community resilience.

Dr Cathy O'Mullan

Cathy is a lecturer in Public Health at CQ University, Bundaberg. Cathy is passionate about applied research, and has a particular interest in using qualitative approaches to give voice to vulnerable and marginalised groups. Cathy has a particular interest in health promotion research, and her primary focus is on sexual health and sexuality. Her Doctoral research, completed in 2015, used phenomenology to explore women's experiences of coping with the sexual side effects of antidepressants.

## **Representing Illness and Disability and the Altruism of Self-Reflexive Writing**

Katie Sutherland

### **Abstract**

Auto ethnographic stories about illness and disability are usually written for and with readers in mind, engaging in the “reciprocity that is storytelling [whereby] the teller offers herself as a guide to the other’s self-formation” (Frank, 1995, pp. 17–18). While self-reflexive narratives can be immensely healing for the writer, they also invite readers to reflect upon the issues at hand and bring about a shift in their own thinking.

As such, self-reflexive writing can be a powerful tool for advocacy and for challenging the status quo. By allowing readers to empathise and connect with the subject matter at a very personal level, vulnerable writing can illuminate nuanced moments of adversity or insight, and capture a depth of understanding that more traditional texts may not always depict.

This presentation will examine two texts that successfully create social awareness around illness and disability, and more specifically, around parenting children with difference. The exemplar texts are: *Far from the tree: Parents, children and the search for identity* by Andrew Solomon (2014) and *Raising Henry: A memoir of motherhood, disability and discovery* by Rachel Adams (2013). The presentation will discuss how Solomon and Adams embrace reflexivity as a way of better understanding themselves and representing their subjects, and how this helps to ultimately illuminate a common theme that difference is a value worth nurturing.

### **Biography**

Katie Sutherland is a freelance journalist and Doctoral Candidate at Western Sydney University’s Writing and Society Research Centre. Her Doctorate of Creative Arts project involves writing a book of narratives about families living with high functioning autism, drawing on an auto-ethnographic framework. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (English) and Bachelor of Communication (first class Honours), with her Honours thesis titled *Illness narrative and the sense of connection*.

## **Narrating Domestic Violence in Marian Keyes’ “This Charming Man”.**

Lauren O’Mahony & Kathryn Tees

### **Abstract**

Marian Keyes is a prolific author of contemporary women’s popular fiction. Since her debut *Watermelon* in 1995, she has written twelve novels, two short story collections and one cookbook. Popular fiction for women, especially the genres of romance and ‘chick lit’, have been variously criticised and derided for their focus on love plots and superficial themes. Yet Keyes’ novels, while structured often loosely as romances, indubitably explore serious contemporary issues including relationship breakdowns, infidelity, alcoholism, depression, body dysmorphia, sex discrimination in the workplace and domestic violence. This paper examines the representation of one topical issue, domestic violence, in Keyes’ novel *This Charming Man* (2008). The novel utilises a multi-story plot that gradually weaves together the histories and experiences of four central female characters. Each female protagonist has had a different amount of romantic involvement with one ‘charming man’, the rich and powerful Irish politician Paddy de Courcy. In this paper, we examine the narrative techniques used in *This Charming Man* to represent and explore domestic violence. We argue that Keyes cleverly combines an engaging and at times, entertaining narrative, with what are sometimes deeply disturbing acts of intimate partner violence.

### **Biography**

Lauren O'Mahony is a Lecturer in Communications and Media Studies in Murdoch University's School of Arts. Her PhD focused on the narrative conventions of romance and feminism in Australian chick lit. She teaches units in media studies, audience research and the evolution of screen culture. In 2013, Lauren won a Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Award.

Dr Kathryn Trees teaches in Media and Communication at Murdoch University. Her teaching focuses on socio-political and economic processes of globalisation and the ways they affect gender and cultural politics. She has taught across the School of Law and the Australian Indigenous Studies Programme and English and Comparative Literature at Murdoch University. Her current research focuses on death and dying. She is particularly interested in links between theoretical and practical work.

## The Australian Death Memoir: A Preliminary Taxonomical Survey

Donna Lee Brien

### Abstract

While most memoirs of death and dying could be broadly classified as illness memoirs, there are also a small, but visible, number of popular first-person autobiographical book-length memoirs that focus on the work of the undertaker currently in circulation, as well as a series of other texts that could be classified under the umbrella of 'death memoir' yet are not about dying from an illness. None of these works have been explored as a group in detail in the Australasian context as a discrete sub-set of the autobiographical memoir. Surveying the development of these texts as a sub-genre of memoir, their themes, tropes and prominent metaphors, as well as their modes of writing, publication and public reception, can contribute to our understanding of both this interesting and revealing auto/biographical practice, and practices of writing and publishing memoir more generally in the Australasian region.

### Biography

Donna Lee Brien is Professor, Creative Industries at Central Queensland University, Australia; Special Issues Editor, *TEXT: Journal of Writing and Writing Courses*; Past President, Australasian Association of Writing Programs, and Convenor of the inaugural Australasian Death Studies Network conference (Noosa, October 2015). She also supervises Masters and Doctoral candidates working on, and in, the memoir genre.

## Writing Things I Almost Cannot Say: Awakening the Soul and (En)Lightening the Load

Ali Black

### Abstract

During a tumultuous transition phase in my life I use creative writing and storying to piece/peace together painful and everyday experiences and reconcile past and present loss and trauma. Using poetry, story fragments and life history writing I work to connect to what matters to me and make sense of my life and my living. As I do this I discover that writing my stories into being, writing my particular points of view, at points in time, examining what I think I have learned in my conflicted and ruptured relationships, and in my moments of connection and love, matters – a lot. Writing the

things I almost cannot say, stories written in the dark, to the dark, through the dark, and with the dark, offer me ways to remember what I have learned. Writing offers to me a way of being-becoming out the darkness into which I have fallen, out of the depression and discomfort that accompanies me, out of the wounding and numbness that follows me, and into a space to stop and rest. And listen. And remember. And heal. The depth of pain fully felt, allows light into my dark hours and awakens me to the life and love I have, have had, and will have.

### **Biography**

Dr Ali Black is an arts-based and narrative researcher at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Her research and scholarly work seeks to foster connectedness, community, wellbeing and meaning-making through the building of reflective and creative lives and identities. Ali is interested in storied and visual approaches for knowledge construction, representation and meaning-making and the power and impact of auto-ethnographic and collaborative and relational knowledge construction.

## **Allying Heart and Mind in Narrative Inquiry: The Lived Experience of Women Casual Academics**

Gail Crimmins

### **Abstract**

The form of research communication is an integral aspect of the research process and not merely a post-research dissemination activity. As such person-centred researchers need to employ research communication processes that align to the tenets of their humanistic approach to research. This paper discusses how an arts-informed narrative inquiry into the lived experience of women casual academics employed person-centred strategies to both elicit, restory and share the stories of women sessional staff in Australia. In particular, it discusses how the dramatic re-presentation of the women's stories elicited an emotional, fully embodied, and humanistic response from its audience. The reaction of the audience, a professional gathering of scholars (Denzin, 2000), validated the participants' experience and provoked them to share their personal stories of academia. The audience response also revealed that the dramatic re-presentation of narrative data can act as a voice for Others 'yet to be voiced' (Arnot & Reay, 2007), and prompt personal reflection, collegial discussion, and the possibility of both personal and institutional change. Consequently, it is argued that performed data supports person-centred research, humanises the research readers' response to research data, and prompts personal and organisation change.

### **Biography**

Gail Crimmins is an Early Career Researcher at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia, where she co-coordinates a large first year course, Communication and Thought, the largest course in Australia that is delivered face to face. Prior to moving to Australia Gail was a UK-based actor, director and casting director and taught Drama at universities and conservatoires. Gail's research combines the arts with narrative inquiry in arts-informed research projects which explore the lived experiences of various marginalised women, such as women casual academics, mothers with rheumatoid arthritis, and women survivors of domestic and family violence.

# Ministry at Four Tables: An Autoethnography

Mervyn Lander

## Abstract

In life I have been graced to minister in a variety of contexts, especially at four tables. The four tables are the operating table as a paediatric surgeon, the altar table as an Anglican Priest, the butsudan (table) in the Zen meditation room as a Zen Roshi, and the kitchen table as a family man and friend. The metaphor “Tablelander” arose as appropriate to a Lander ministering at these tables.

Autoethnography has provided me with a methodology to tell the stories of my professional and family life and my life amongst friends. It has allowed me to review my ministry within its cultural contextual and has allowed me to examine my life and ministry with reflective and reflexive lens. This has been a transformative journey.

Data has been collected from many sources including those that are self-observational, self-reflective, as well as textual sources that include sermons, lectures and presentations and published articles. The data has been coded, grouped into categories and themes, analysed, and interpreted. Conversations from the four tables have occurred at the “Conversation Table”, which is, in reality, a further incarnation of the Kitchen Table, and has allowed the exploration of common underpinning concepts.

## Biography

Mervyn is a retired paediatric surgeon, Anglican Priest, Zen Roshi, Family guy and friend as well as PhD candidate.

# Talking to Our Selves: The Healing Potential of Narratives Across Thresholds

Lara Bardsley

## Abstract

Within us are many stories, some known, some perhaps are unknown even to ourselves. These narratives guide our perception of life and our engagement with all we encounter. If we seek to listen to these narratives, live with them in a mindful and embodied way, perhaps we can deepen our own understanding of the human experience and move toward a compassionate agency in all our relationships. In the healing professions, holding the space for these narratives can help us to listen with presence, to be more integrated practitioners and provide a safer environment for those whom we encounter. As artists and researchers, the creative voice can offer us a language to speak directly through the liminal to the selves within us all.

While in the fields of psychology and film, ‘narrative’ has been variously defined, there is a common thread in the communication of lived experience and the making of meaning. This presentation will involve a short filmic and art based performance and a discussion of the emergent themes and transformative impact of a project that explores the depths of the human psyche, the spiritual and the intuitive, through creative narrative.

## Biography

Lara is an Artist and a Transpersonal, Clinical and Counselling Psychologist. For the past 30 years she has pursued her interest in narratives of transformation through training in Creative Arts, Jungian and Transpersonal psychology, Buddhism, meditation and mindfulness practices. She is a professional artist, film-maker, practicing psychologist for 20 years and a registered supervisor of clinicians. She is currently completing her PhD in Humanities and Creative Arts on extraordinary stories and emergence of the transcendent in the everyday.

## A Narrative of the Past: Isabella Lewers

Julie Bradshaw

### Abstract

Historical research has the potential to construct narratives that provide a way of engaging with those at the centre of the narrative. This paper tells the real-life story of Isabella Lewers, an Asylum inmate from the mid-nineteenth century Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum, Queensland. The narrative of Isabella Lewers, constructed from Government documentation, is capturing. It provides insights into what life was like inside a colonial lunatic asylum life for staff and patients. However, it is the very human side of Isabella's narrative that fosters a sense of empathy: a young woman arriving in Queensland as a new immigrant full of hopes for a new future; an asylum patient enjoying the privileges as a favoured asylum inmate; and as a victim who suffered because of Government decision making and community moral expectations. Isabella's story demonstrates how constructing a narrative can expose the human in historical research and offers the researcher a way of imagining and identifying with those from the past and ultimately making historical research more meaningful.

### Biography

Julie Bradshaw is a lecturer from the School of Nursing and Midwifery, CQUniversity and Head of Program (Post-graduate Mental Health). Julie's paper comes from her PhD titled 'Façade of Success; Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum 1865-1869'. This PhD has been submitted and Julie is 'painfully' waiting to hear the results.

## A Strategy for Resilience: Developing a Narrative for the Future

Debra Phillips

### Abstract

This presentation considers the use of a narrative about the future as a strategy for resilience. I explore a current research project that analyses women's memoirs to determine if acting upon a narrative about the future precipitated the move from hardship or trauma. Narrative Inquiry is used as the core of a mixed methods approach to analyse my auto-biographical memoir and an exegesis. The memoir is written using raw data from journals I wrote in 2010 during a time of emotional distress and the time when I imagined a future in which I had become an artist. My project analyses the published memoirs of Australian females to determine if their experience included acting upon an imagined future.

Results: In the memoir of Ruth Cracknell (2000), Penelope and Jessica Rowe (2005), Gemma Sissia (2007), Mary Coustas (2013), Anne Gorman (2015) and others there are statements describing how these women have imagined their future and made a decision to bring that future into being. This is reflected in the raw data of my 2010 journal entries. A narrative of the imagined future is different

to current narrative therapies for it demands we live the narrative as a reality. The doing of the plan is a characteristic of resilience.

### **Biography**

Debra is a PhD candidate at Australian Catholic University (North Sydney campus) using diaries and memoirs for evidence of a self-determined Narrative of the Imagined Future. She is a practising artist and will soon be undertaking a summer school in narrative studies in Denmark.

## **The Sugarbird Lady: Using Historical Narrative to Inspire Nurses to Make a Difference**

Irene Rogers

### **Abstract**

Nurses who perceive themselves as powerless tend to lack self-efficacy, feel stressed and burn out quickly. Yet nurses who recognise they are empowered - that is they know they have power for use in their own lives, in their communities and in their societies, and act on issues that they define as important - can enjoy a fulfilling career that makes an enormous contribution to society. In this paper, an historical narrative about "Sugarbird Lady" presents an inspirational story to remind nurses and others that knowledge, resourcefulness and hard work brings personal and social rewards. In 1967, Robin Miller, a triple certificate nurse, recognised the need to carry out a polio vaccination program in the remote northern areas of Western Australia. She was a qualified pilot and borrowed money to purchase a Cessna to cover the vast distances. Within two and a half years she had travelled 69,200 kilometres, administered over 37,000 doses of Salk vaccine by sugar cube, hence the name "Sugarbird lady" given to her by Aboriginal children. Robin then joined the Royal Flying Doctor Service as a nurse pilot and was saving lives, often alone, in dangerous and difficult circumstances. She was recognised for her contribution to aviation by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale and the British Women Pilots' Association. At the age of 34, a year after being married, Robin was diagnosed with melanoma but continued her work and was still answering emergency calls up until two weeks before her death in 1975. Her story inspires and challenges all nurses to examine the power, privilege and opportunity they have to make a difference.

### **Biography**

Irene Rogers is a PhD candidate at the CQU School of Nursing & Midwifery researching the history of Australian non-military nursing during World War One. Irene is a trained nurse who specialises in Humanitarian Nursing in areas of conflict and post-conflict. She has jointly published articles on the use of drama in nursing education and on reusing the archives in oral history projects.

## **Towards the Ideal Self: Potential Uses of Personal Technologies to Actively Construct Wellbeing**

Matt Eliot

### **Abstract**

Technologies extend cognition beyond the boundaries of the body in myriad ways: mirroring, stimulating, and reinforcing both the best and the worst in the human spirit. This paper reports on

an exploratory study of the potential for personal digital technologies to support the creation and maintenance of psychological well-being. Ryff (1995) reports that psychological well-being is a state of being under constant construction and maintenance, rather than the result of external circumstance. In this spirit, this study sought to investigate how digital technologies could aid the purposeful construction of psychological well-being.

Participants were first interviewed about an object they cherished, exploring emotional associations and patterns of interaction. Then through creative processes, these participants were asked to design a handheld digital device that would replicate the emotional associations they had with their cherished object – producing product drawings and verbal descriptions of the product’s functioning. A common theme across the participants was the ongoing production of personal narrative and meaning-making as the foundation of well-being. Additionally, these participants described an idealised self that was invoked as a guiding force. Both the paper and the presentation will explore the role of the ideal self in the purposeful construction of well-being for these participants.

### **Biography**

Dr Matt Eliot works with Learning and Teaching Services at CQUniversity where he focuses on Learning and Teaching Grant Development. He received his PhD in 2009 from the Human Centred Design & Engineering program at the University Of Washington in the US. Since joining CQUniversity in 2009, Matt has taught multiple workshops and seminars on education research and learning theory both within the University and for stakeholders including the Australasian Association for Engineering Education, University of Southern Queensland, and Swinburne University of Technology.

# Grief, Time and the Revelation of Memory in Digital Space

Melissa Deitz

## Abstract

I am a story that is happening to me, to quote Barthes, but sometimes the words are unfaithful to the things, as Bachelard once said. I walk in the ruins, between two eternities, in the space between being and non-being, between the realm of things and the realm of thought (Benjamin 2009:235).

The need to create stories to make order out of disorder and find meaning in the meaningless is particularly relevant to the study of grief. The necessity of 'grief work' has long dominated grief literature and practice (Freud, 1917=1957; Lindemann, 1944; Worden, 1991, 2002) however in the grief work I have undertaken since the death of my young daughter, I consider the limitations and strengths of non-linear storytelling. In a narrative of Bakhtinian multivocality, I present a digital collage: part film, part spoken word, part critical essay. Using Barthes work on mythology and Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, I reconstruct my daughter's life through photographs, toys, calendars, tickets, cards, text messages, Facebook posts, cloth and keepsakes. My own voice is not used because I am not myself. My daughter cannot be identified as she has another mother, and I am not revealed because my daughter's brother is my son. In my struggle to reconstruct my identity after bereavement, I have discovered I am not who I thought I was. (Finlay, C. and Krueger, G. 2011; Miller, L. 2013)

## Biography

Dr Milissa Deitz lectures in communication and creative writing at Western Sydney University. She is a journalist and novelist. Milissa's book *Watch This Space: The Future of Australian Journalism* (2010) was published by Cambridge University Press. Her novel *Bloodlust* and non-fiction title *My Life As A Side Effect* are both published by Random House. Her research and scholarly interests include grief, identity and family; voice and the marginalised within digital storytelling (*The Right To Know: 100 Years of the Australian Red Cross International Tracing Service*, Immigration Museum, Melbourne 2015); and young people, wellbeing and technology ([www.invisiblecity.org.au](http://www.invisiblecity.org.au)).

# Ageing Creatively: Creative Writing as a Tool for Healthy Ageing

Rachel Morley

## Abstract

By 2050 the projected life expectancy in Australia will be 95 for women and 92.3 for men with almost one million Australians living with some form of dementia (Access Economics, 2012). With many Australians living in Retirement Villages for two to three decades, the problem of how to develop effective strategies to facilitate healthy ageing and ward off cognitive decline is crucial. This paper outlines a pilot project undertaken by Western Sydney University during 2015 that saw the delivery of purpose-designed creative writing workshops in two aged care facilities in Western Sydney in order to explore how creative writing can be used as a tool for promoting healthy ageing and which activities might be best for improving ageing outcomes. For while it has been demonstrated that sharing stories is beneficial and increases the sense of wellbeing felt by those in aged care, the best methods for establishing writing habits that allow people to exercise their minds and share their stories with others has yet to be investigated. Our project aims to research and test teaching methods in order to develop guidelines and models for encouraging the writing and sharing

of stories. This paper reflects on the first stage of this research, which tested two distinct methods, yielding surprising results for both the researchers and the communities of interest.

### **Biography**

Rachel Morley is a Lecturer in Writing and Communications in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts at Western Sydney University and a member of the Writing and Society Research Centre and the Digital Humanities Research Group. She is Postgraduate Editor of *Global Media Journal - Australian Edition* and convenor of the award winning, national postgraduate training event, 'Creative Ecologies: A Postgraduate Retreat in Creative Arts Scholarship'. Rachel is a regular contributor to the *Sydney Review of Books* and co-hosts the TVS literary arts show *Shelf Life* on TVS (channel 44).

## **Writing Crime's Aftermath: Poetry as Victim Impact Statement**

Nicole Anae

### **Abstract**

Recent years have seen developments in the affective function and textual form of Victim Impact Statements (VISs). While not without controversy, VISs were first introduced in the United States in 1976, and have since been adopted by Canada (1988), Australia (1989), New Zealand (1993), and Northern Ireland (1993), among other countries, as material tendered before the court by prosecutors for the purposes of informing the judge of the degree and extent of any loss or damage to property and/or any physical or mental harm, suffered by a victim as a result of a crime. In this paper, I explore narrative modes in VISs looking specifically at poetry as 'impact' storytelling. Presenting victims' accounts of emotional and physical suffering using the form of poetry tracks affective shifts in the cultural expression of emotion and the political forums in which such expressions emerge publicly. From the perspective of humanism, I argue that the "graver kinds of poetry," to quote David Hume, emerging in VISs fulfils dual functions, both affective and rational. On the one hand, the poetic language employed by the victim is the language of inwardness, of emotional damage and trauma, resonant with suggestions of affective possibility (sometimes, although rarely, including a return to well-being). On the other, this same language is a principal means by which a victim inserts a form of emotion culture into the institutionalised and rational setting of legal and juridical discourse. So while this form of poetry might not make possible the victim's escape from the terrors of the violent crimes' aftermath, the poem itself does represent an expression of experience, and by extension, is created in order to give some meaning to the impact of crime and the vitalness of creativity to being human.

### **Biography**

Nicole Anae graduated from Charles Sturt University with a B.Ed. and Dip.T. before earning her PhD through the Faculty of English, Journalism and European Languages at the University of Tasmania. She is Senior Lecturer in Literary and Cultural Studies at Central Queensland University but has also worked at the University of South Australia (Mawson Lakes), the University of the South Pacific (Laucala Bay Campus in Suva, Fiji), Charles Sturt University (Wagga Wagga), and the University of Southern Queensland (Springfield). Her research interests include colonial and postcolonial writing, embodiment and performance, and the interplay between literature, performance and identity.

## Writing the Broken (Adopted) Self: Memoir And Trauma

Sue Bond

### **Abstract**

In writing a memoir about living with my adoptive parents, issues of health, illness, and the traumatic effects of adoption, secrets, and emotional abuse figure prominently. All three members of our family experienced ill health, with my adoptive father and myself suffering depression and anxiety. His psychological ill health, partly stemming from his war experiences, had profound effects on our family. I am interested in the mind-body connection and the relationship between traumatic events and health and illness, and in this paper will explore their expression in memoir, particularly adoption memoir by late discovery adoptees.

### **Biography**

Sue Bond is a PhD candidate in creative writing at CQU, writing an adoptee memoir and an exegesis on adoptee memoir as testimony literature. She has published short stories, essays, and book reviews in various print and online journals, and has degrees in medicine, literature, and creative writing.

## A Prescription for Action: The Power of Biographical Writing

Susan Currie

### **Abstract**

My presentation has as its theme, the power of biographical writing. Pursuant to a PhD project in Creative Writing at CQU, I wrote a biography of Dr Janet Irwin, a doctor who played a significant role in many areas of health in Queensland including the development of university health services; improving medical education and training; expanding the concept of occupational health and safety to include such matters as sexual harassment; and in defeating restrictive abortion legislation under the Bjelke-Petersen government. Janet also played a national and international role in relation to health issues, particularly those affecting women.

In my thesis, I explore the importance of motivation. What was it that led Janet to become an activist on health matters? What was it that led me to write her biography? The answer to both questions lies in the desire for a more enlightened and humane society.

The value of telling the narrative of Janet's life lies in the inspiration it provides for readers. And that inspiration is provided in practical terms. We get to see, for example, how Janet used research effectively to counter prevailing mythologies; how her medical practice was grounded in teamwork with other health professionals; how she focused the narrative of the doctor-patient interview on building a relationship of trust. We also witness how Janet was able to inspire others to join forces with her, and even to take to the streets to 'protest in pearls' against inhumane laws and practices.

### **Biography**

Susan Currie BA/LLB (UQ), MA(Research)/MLaws (QUT) has worked as a lawyer, academic, teacher and librarian. As well as numerous journal articles, book reviews, short stories and poems, she has written a textbook on legal studies for Queensland schools, and seven significant profiles for A Woman's Place: 100 Years of Queensland Women Lawyers.

## Making the Invisible Visible: Transformational Narratives in Research

Heather Lovatt

### Abstract

Why choose narratives as a methodological approach when quantitative research is often considered the gold star? Shedding light on this question is a recent doctoral study with female foster and kinship carers in Queensland. This post-structural feminist study took the unconventional approach of progressively sharing control of the study with female carers in a series of unstructured, in-depth interviews. This paper firstly outlines the design, scope and methodologies utilised in the research study. It then describes the benefits of viewing narratives through a feminist post-structural discourse analysis lens, enabling narratives to be deconstructed and subsequently reconstructed. Lastly, the transformational aspects of a narrative approach in research is discussed encompassing the new, unexpected and rich findings which emerged in this study. The findings include hitherto invisible or 'hushed' discourses being made visible and the development of an aspirational exemplar for caring for children and their vulnerable parents.

### Biography

Dr Heather Lovatt is Senior Research Officer with the Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research at CQ University. She has recently completed her doctoral study '*Unravelling foster care and finding family support*'. Heather has an abiding interest in women's studies, a gendered analysis of violence against women, and women's role in caring for children.

## Narrative Structure and the Production of Reader Wellbeing: Chick Lit's Response to the Cult of Thinness and the Fear of Fat

Lauren O'Mahony

### Abstract

In 1996, the publication of Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* and Candace Bushnell's *Sex and the City* ushered in a new genre of women's fiction. Commonly known as 'chick lit', such novels feature urban heroines aged between eighteen and forty-five navigating romantic relationships, careers, friendships, family life and the ageing body. Chick lit has been praised for offering readers engaging representations of women in the prime of their lives. However, the genre has been criticised for its emphasis on heroines who appear to do little more than "shop" and "diet" (Merrick 2006). Indeed, Kaminski and Magee's (2013) study on the effects of chick lit argued that the novels may even "negatively impact" the self-esteem and body image of readers. This paper responds to concerns about chick lit's representation of body image and its supposed effect on readers. Rather than isolating brief examples in the novels, this paper examines the narrative construction of body-related issues. This paper argues that bodily concerns around dieting, thinness, fatness, appearance and ageing are introduced and explored across a range of chick novels in largely positive ways. The narratives frequently position readers to interrogate idealised bodily norms and affirm lifestyles associated with optimum health and well-being.

### Biography

Lauren O'Mahony is a Lecturer in Communications and Media Studies in Murdoch University's School of Arts. Her PhD focused on the narrative conventions of romance and feminism in Australian chick lit.

She teaches units in media studies, audience research and the evolution of screen culture. In 2013, Lauren won a Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Award.

## Nursing's Struggle for Actualisation Reflected In "The English Patient".

Margaret McAllister

### Abstract

The English Patient, a novel by Michael Ondaatje (1993) adapted to film, is a romantic drama set in the chaos of Europe at the end of World War II. In the ruins of an Italian church, a terribly burned man is being tended to by Hana, a young nurse too traumatised from her own war experiences to return home.

Within this paper, Hana's struggles are read as a metaphor for those that similarly confront nurses. She's a vulnerable young person thrust, because of the nature of her work, into the harsh realities of adulthood. She aspires to a kind of nursing that is attendant and gentle, and able to meet all of her patient's needs. Yet the world she is forced to work in is chaotic, unpredictable and stripped of resources. The patient she tries to comfort is moribund and he endures agony and loss. In her interactions with him she learns about love, beauty, humility and, ultimately, resilience. In this way the literary narrative connects to a cultural narrative that at once embodies nursing's struggles and illuminates transcendence.

### Biography

Margaret McAllister is Professor of Nursing at Central Queensland University, in Noosa, Australia. She is an award winning educator, sought after research supervisor and is experienced in working across disciplines. She has co-authored several books: The Clinical Helper, Stories in Mental Health, The Resilient Nurse and Solution Focused Nursing.

## Echoes of the Centaur Tragedy: A Web-Based Oral History Project to Engage and Inform Undergraduate Nurses

Pamela Blake

### Abstract

The Centaur Memorial Fund for Nurses (CMFN) was established in 1948 to honour those who died on the 14th of May 1943 when the Australian Hospital Ship (AHS) Centaur, with 332 medical personnel and merchant seamen on board, was torpedoed and sunk off Southeast Queensland by a Japanese submarine. The sinking of AHS Centaur was a war crime as the hospital ship was registered with the Red Cross and the Japanese government had been notified of her status. The only nurse to survive, Sister Ellen (Nell) Savage, was awarded the George medal for her courage and heroism.

The Fund itself is a living memorial to that tragedy and provides scholarships and awards to Queensland nurses in order to advance their professional development through education and research.

This paper will discuss a web-enhancement project that has set out to modernise the CMFN website by including oral histories on the site to inform and engage visitors. Web based oral histories are a communication paradigm that link peoples to their culture, cultural change and history. They also

cross the boundaries of linear and non-linear communication that is difficult to traverse with any other media form. However, in terms of the instantaneous nature of the Internet, many are slow-paced and often only of interest to historians and researchers. By investigating how to publish the CMFN oral histories online this project seeks to answer the question: how can oral histories be made more accessible, engaging and informative for the digital generation?

### **Biography**

Pamela Blake began her profession in the creative arts as a sculptural weaver where she completed major commissions for corporate collectors. She also taught weaving privately and at a number of TAFE colleges. Since 1994 Pamela has been a co-owner, graphic designer and web developer/designer of GP Design Network, a design studio based on the Sunshine Coast. Pamela is presently completing a Master of Creative Arts and is a sessional course coordinator/tutor in electronic media at the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC). She completed a Bachelor of Computer-based Design at USC in 2012 and was awarded a Faculty Medal.

## **An Emergency Department Experience**

Toby Price

### **Abstract**

It was another busy night in the emergency department. Rushed off my feet, I was looking forward to a hot cup of tea, when triage called regarding another assessment. Quietly and without emotion, the patient explained how he had walked waist deep into a dam wanting to end his life. His wife filled in the missing parts of the story; his worsening mood, visiting the GP, starting antidepressants, seeing a psychologist, and coming here. She seemed to be the glue holding him together.

As the assessment came to a close, I explained the immediate need to commence what is called a discharge plan. "A discharge plan?" said his wife, whose composure started to fall away before my eyes. "But he hasn't even been admitted. We can't lose him, and I can't go through this hell anymore"...

As a clinician, retelling their story back to them, provided the patient and his wife with hope for the future. In this presentation I draw upon Story Theory and Recovery to more fully understand emergency presentations, and show how intentional dialogue can promote patient self-understanding, self-in-relation, create ease and promote recovery. The paper highlights opportunities for clinical development and research.

### **Biography**

Toby Price (RN) has degrees in Behavioural Science and Nursing; and a Masters in Health Services Management. He is a clinical nurse working at Nambour Hospital Emergency Department for the Sunshine Coast Mental Health Service. He assesses people who present in to the emergency department with mental health concerns, complex needs and acute risks.

## **Power in the Moment: Using Autoethnographic Narrative to Unlock Understandings of Intense Collaborative Music Performance**

Judith Brown

### **Abstract**

Music performance is a creative activity that frequently occurs in collaboration with other musicians. These collaborations usually require an intense commitment on behalf of each of the participants to reach a point where the skills of each of the collaborators match the challenges and requirements of the music being performed. When such a balance is achieved, participants often experience an intense feeling of satisfaction, sometimes described as peak experience or flow. Flow was first studied by the American psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi in the late 1970s and refers to an experience of highly focused attention when one is engaged in a challenging activity where participants often recall themselves being 'lost in the moment' and eager to participate in this activity for the sheer enjoyment of it, rather than for any extrinsic motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

This paper examines some of the highly focused musical collaborations between a pianist and a choir drawing on an autoethnographic narrative that explores various aspects of this type of musical collaboration. Written from the perspective of the piano accompanist, the narrative is able to make known to the reader the particular thoughts and actions that occur for a piano accompanist while performing with a choir in an intense collaborative performance (Gabrielsson, 2010). The paper concludes that while this is a temporal activity, which is captured by the power of an autoethnographic narrative, the analysis of this narrative facilitates an understanding of the phenomenon of flow for a piano accompanist within this type of musical collaboration with a choir.

### **Biography**

Professor Judith Brown is the Director of the Central Queensland Conservatorium of Music within CQUniversity, Australia. She supervises a number of post-graduate students in the creative and performing arts and continues to perform regularly as both a solo and collaborative pianist. Building on this creative practice, her doctoral thesis used autoethnography to examine the experience of flow in collaborative music performance as a piano accompanist. In 2009 she was the recipient of the CQUniversity Vice-Chancellor's Teacher of the Year Award, and in 2010 she received an Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Citation for outstanding contributions to student learning.

## **Plot Interrupted: Reproducing the Narrative Benefits of Trauma Fiction in Crime Fiction**

Leanne Dodd

### **Abstract**

Trauma distorts time and interrupts the natural flow of peoples' life-stories. Whitehead (2004: 3) suggests that in trauma literature 'novelists have frequently found that the impact of trauma can only adequately be represented by mimicking its forms and symptoms'. Narrative strategies used in trauma fiction to distort time, such as fragmentation (prolepsis, analepsis) and repetition (mirroring, motifs), may be aligned with crime fiction strategies (red herrings, hooks, cliff hangers) to develop a creative work that moves beyond the prevailing conventions of crime fiction to incorporate the well-being benefits of trauma literature. Through a critical reflection of how writers have engaged with trauma in contemporary fiction, this paper demonstrates how crime fiction can offer an opportunity to empower large audiences with empathetic knowledge of trauma. This may transform perceptions, remove stigmas and combat marginalisation, while also providing a safe narrative space for readers to confront and work through their own fears brought on by our graphic modern-day exposure to traumatic events. This research may also prove significant in developing a framework to

classify a form of crime fiction that can direct readers into safe, controlled and custom-written environments where they may better empathise, explore and experiment with their responses to trauma.

#### Reference

Whitehead, A. (2004). *Trauma Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

#### Biography

Leanne Dodd is a PhD candidate at Central Queensland University, researching the representation of trauma in crime fiction. Under the pen name of Lea Scott, she has published three crime novels with developing themes of trauma and co-authored three short story anthologies with Brisbane writers' groups. Leanne serves in an Executive Management Committee position with Queensland Writers Centre and is an appointed mentor for emerging writers. She has appeared on seminar panels and facilitated writing workshops throughout Queensland.

## Use of Healthcare Consumer Lived Experience Stories to Increase Student Empathy in First Year Nursing Education

Penny Heidke and Virginia Howie

#### Abstract

Empathy is a desired attribute of a registered nurse and essential in understanding the health care needs of people who identify as belonging to a vulnerable, disadvantaged or stigmatised population group. Empathy in nursing students is declining for various reasons (Ward et al 2012). Teaching empathy on-line is a challenging task for lecturers and it was thought that involving healthcare consumers would better evoke the desired student understanding rather than from a lecture alone. It is well recognised in the literature that students relate to real life narratives as a way of learning as this helps them connect the experience to practice (Chapman & Clucas, 2014). In addition, allowing consumers to have a voice empowers them by acknowledging their unique insights and perspectives in contributing to future practice.

Video recorded interviews of 13 health consumers from the community were conducted over time and integrated into a first year nursing course. The research examines whether the integration of the videorecorder interviews throughout the term has had an impact on student empathy towards patients from vulnerable, disadvantaged or stigmatised population groups. The potential of this project lies in improving empathetic behaviours in nursing students, leading to improved patient safety and satisfaction. Also for consumers to be included more in both the sharing of their experiences and contributing to course content and curriculum design in partnership with the school of nursing and midwifery. Findings and recommendations of the study will be described further in this presentation.

#### References

Chapman, H. M., & Clucas, C. (2014). Student nurses' views on respect towards service users — An interpretative phenomenological study. *Nurse Education Today*, 34(3), 474-479.

Ward, J., Cody, J., Schaal, M., & Hojat, M. (2012). The empathy enigma: an empirical study of decline in empathy among undergraduate nursing students. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 28(1), 34-40.

## Biography

Penny Heidke is an academic within the School of Nursing and Midwifery, CQ University. She has 16yrs experience as a clinical nurse in the Operating theatres in charge of orthopaedics. She is coordinator of Inclusive practice in the Bachelor of Nursing program. She is completing her Masters of Health research and has a keen interest in engaging healthcare consumers in the education of undergraduate nursing students.

## Up Close from Afar

Eugen Bacon

### Abstract

I wrote 'Up close from afar' after the death of my sister Flora. The emotion is raw, honest—I connect with it personally. It is the story of an African migrant in Australia, a tale of hybridity, being between worlds. It started with a skeleton: a narrative about grief. The rest was experimental. The writer as reader is connected with the character(s), with the story. Creation does not detach. Even the most reclusive writer connects with something. The artist does not watch from a distance. Integration with the work positions the author within a Freudian 'process of sublimation': refining basic drives, such as those of grieving or aggression, and converting them into creative and intellectual activity. Using the character Sienna, the story subconsciously, and then consciously, unravels forms of grieving and guides its ghost players (author, character, reader) toward reconciliation with loss and self. It is a story manipulated to find healing.

### Biography

Eugen Bacon (MA, MSc) studied at Maritime Campus - Greenwich University, UK, less than two minutes' walk from The Royal Observatory of the Greenwich Meridian. Her arty muse fostered itself within the baroque setting of the Old Royal Naval College, and Eugen found herself a computer graduate mentally re-engineered into creative writing. She is now a PhD candidate in Writing at Swinburne University. Eugen's work is published in *TEXT*, *Meniscus*, *Bukker Tillibul* and *New Writing*. Her short story 'A puzzle piece' was shortlisted in the Lightship Publishing (UK) international short story prize 2013 and is published in *Lightship Anthology 3*.