



QUEEN'S GRADUATE CONFERENCE
IN LITERATURE



DIVERGENCE:

Departures from the Canon

MAY 24TH AND 25TH

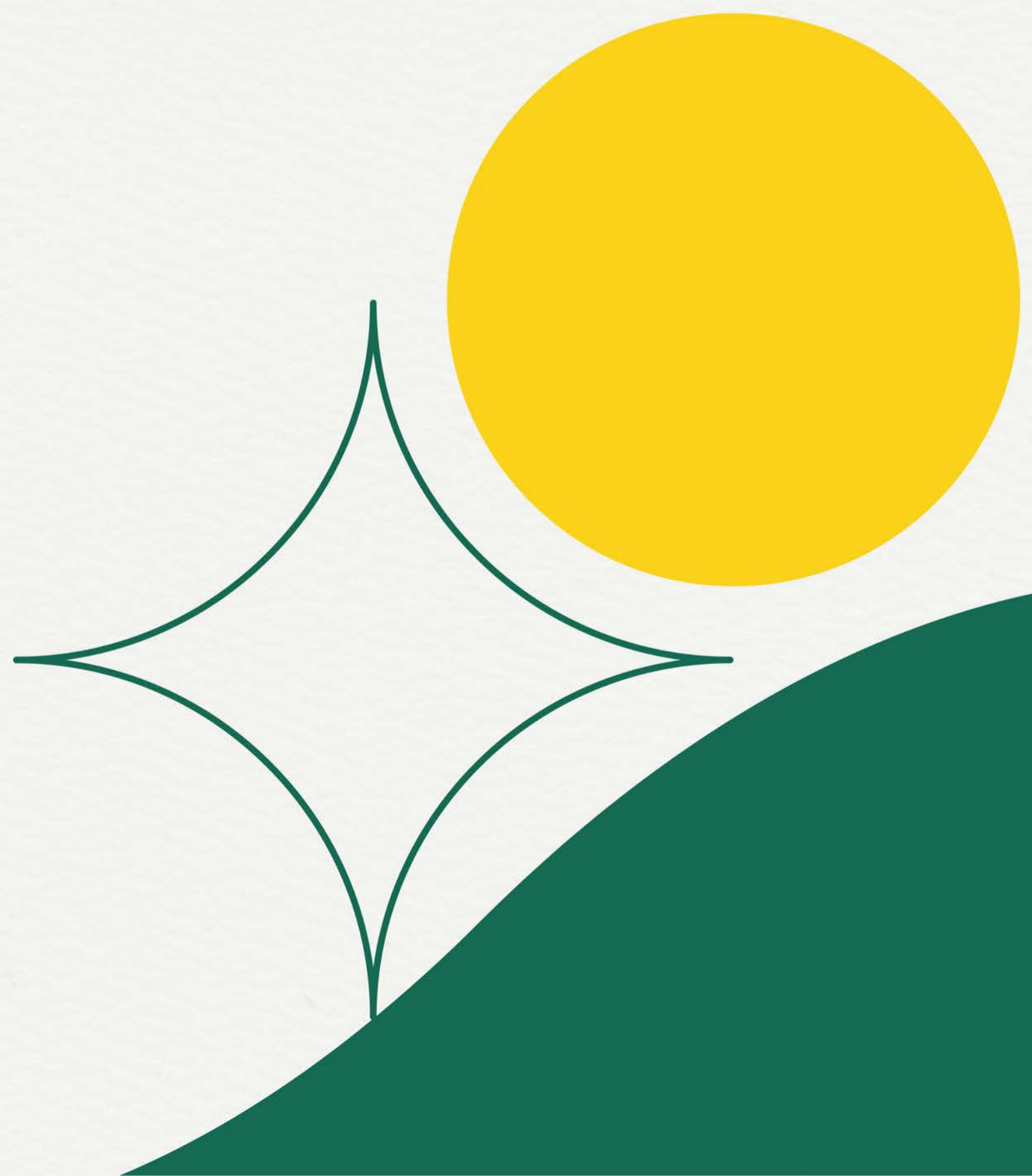
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
KINGSTON, ONTARIO

WATSON HALL - ROOM 517



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The QGCL Committee would like to respectfully acknowledge that the Department of English at Queen's University is situated on the land of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples. The QGCL encourages settler-scholars to take responsibility in building positive relationships between nations and in developing a deeper understanding of Indigenous peoples and their cultures.

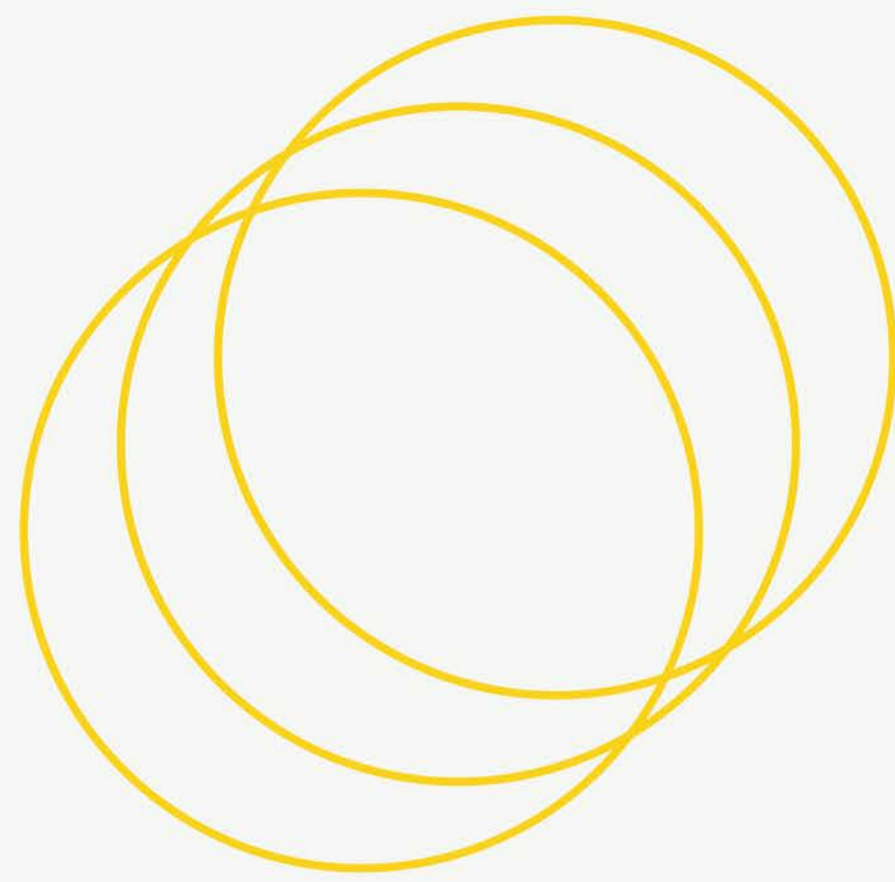


Organizer's Welcome

This year, the Queen's Graduate Conference in Literature asked graduate students to reach past the elusive boundaries of "the canon" and to imbue their academic and creative work with imagination. To "diverge" is to break free, to move away from, and to resist imitation of the old. It also involves charting new courses and finding exciting avenues of inquiry in unexpected places. Each of our exceptional panelists interprets the theme of divergence in a unique way—some have chosen to re-interpret canonical texts, exploring how we might read works differently, while others have chosen to literally read different works by searching for meaning and value in obscure texts. Our creative panelists join in by performing their own re-interpretations and divergences to answer one of our thematic and creative directors' central questions: "How can the imagination be a radical tool of divergence towards change?"

We are grateful for the time and effort of all those who have worked to make this conference a generative and successful event. Thank you to our featured speakers, Dr. Angela Facundo and Kai Cheng Thom, as well as to all of our moderators and panelists. Thank you also to the conference team, including our thematic directors, creative directors, communications co-ordinators, selections committee members, and our speaker selection chair. We are inspired by your dedication to this department and to the entire graduate community at Queen's University, and we could not have developed and presented this conference without you. We would further like to thank Dr. Sam McKegney, our department head, as well as our department manager, Meghan Brien, for their assistance and unwavering support of this event. Finally, we would like to thank everyone for their interest, attendance, and support: we are excited to share and celebrate with you at the 2024 QGCL!

Jessica Caravaggio & Wilde Ferris
Conference Organizers



FRIDAY
MAY 24

9:00am - Dr. Angela Facundo Keynote

- “Why Would You Write This Book?":
Divergences of Hanya Yanagihara’s *A Little Life*”

10:30am - PANEL 1

- Divergences in Drama and Poetics

12:00pm - LUNCH

1:00pm - PANEL 2

- Divergent Geographies

2:45pm - PANEL 3

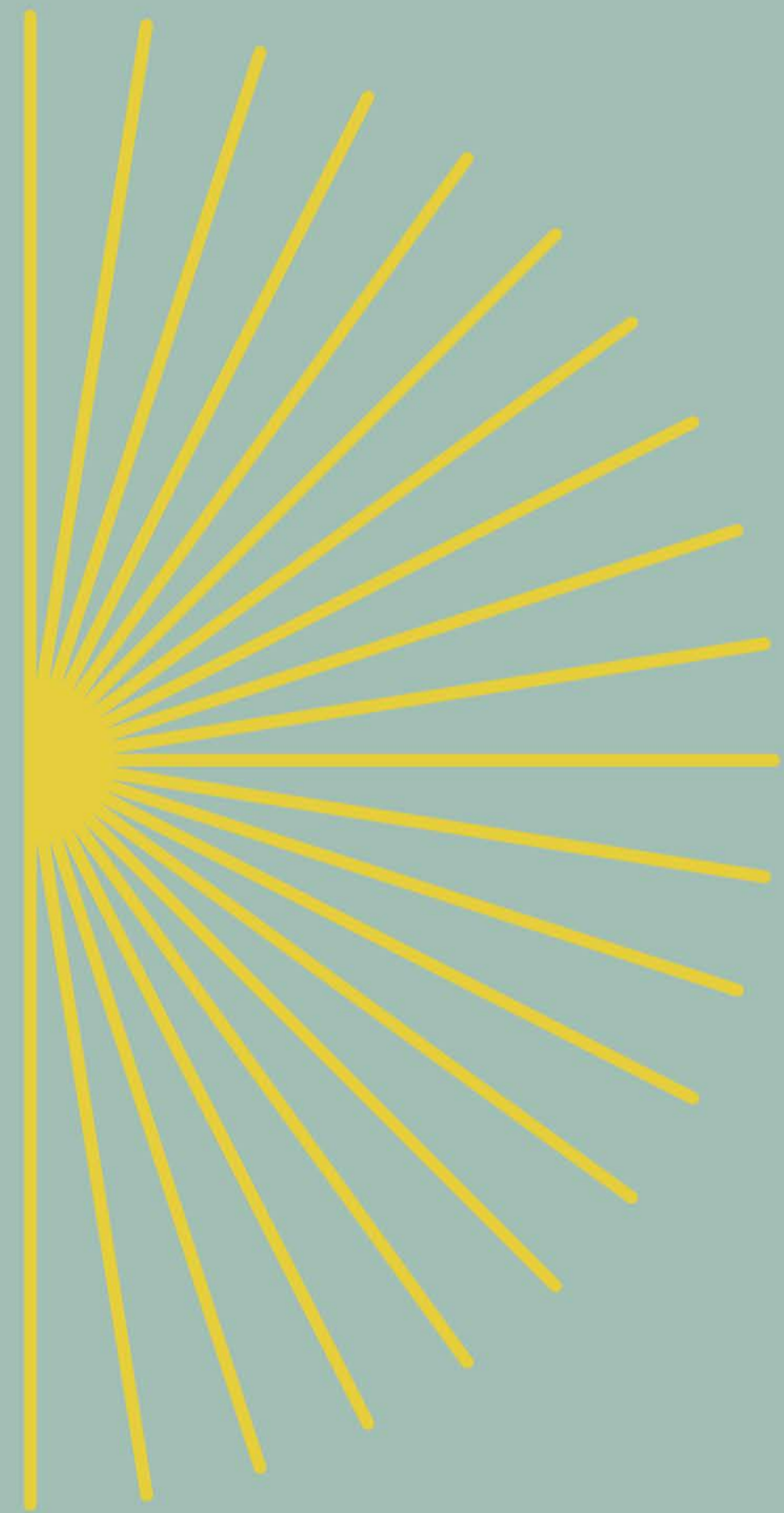
- Divergent Stylistics

End of Day One



KEYNOTE

Dr. Angela Facundo



Dr Facundo (she/they) is an Assistant Professor in the English Department here at Queen's and a registered psychotherapist in private practice based in Toronto. Dr Facundo specializes in psychoanalysis, queer theory, and contemporary fiction, and their current research explores the relationship between literature and mental health, broadly speaking. Their Book *Oscillations of Literary Theory: The Paranoid Imperative and Queer Reparative* (2016), historicizes the split between the antisocial and reparative debates in Queer Theory to develop a new theory of reading.

KEYNOTE

“Why Would You Write This Book?”: Divergences of Hanya Yanagihara’s *A Little Life*”

Dr. Angela Facundo

I want to talk about the strange life of Yanagihara’s text, *A Little Life*, particularly its reception and its place in literary history. At first glance, the novel doesn’t seem divergent at all, based on its critical acclaim, its mainstream commercial success, and its adherence to conventional narrative form. Published in 2015, the novel follows the life of Jude and the vulnerabilities of his male friendships as he struggles with sexual abuse, disability, trauma, and self-harm. Garth Greenwell from *The Atlantic* describes the text’s engagement with queer aesthetics: “by violating the canons of current literary taste, by embracing melodrama and exaggeration and sentiment, it can access emotional truth denied more modest means of expression.” This mode of canon violation, however, also evokes strong critiques of its emotionally manipulative excess. Tiktok videos abound in which readers record their real time reaction to finishing the text, ranging from speechless, weeping devastation to moral outrage at gratuitous violence. My paper considers the deep ambivalence about Yanagihara’s text as either trauma porn or high literature, an ambivalence fueled perhaps by the waning preeminence of trauma studies from the previous decade. Yanagihara tests what we have appetites for and when. While I remain mindful of the passages I share with the audience, I read the novel’s representations of trauma and mental illness as necessarily excessive (not aesthetic) and realistic. What readers either identify as tasteless or aestheticize as queer sentimentality pinpoint the most difficult realities of mental illness that we can neither tolerate nor metabolize.

DIVERGENCES IN DRAMA AND POETICS

10:30 am

Mod. Megan Gorsalitz (she/her)

Nancy Mỹ Nghi La (she/her)

“Take the Fool Away”: The Anti-Clown in Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night

Aditi Jain (she/her)

A Poetry of Thought: Language and its Paucity in the Works of Arthur Hugh Clough

Carlotta Failla (she/her)

Oedipus Dies at Estuary: The Geographical Borders of Canonicity

Thea Bergh Skeide (she/her)

"The poem must be finished. It will be finished": The Intertextuality of Incompletion in Hyperion (1989)

DIVERGENT GEOGRAPHIES

1:00pm

Mod. Sidney Robichaud (she/her)

Sharri Dewey (she/her)

Mapping A Divergent Worldview: Heterotopias in Neil Gaiman's
Neverwhere

Mihir Seth (they/them)

Destabilising Acceptance, Recreating Belonging: Imaginations
of Queer Lives in 1990s Kolkata

Sabrina Zacharias (she/her)

Re-Calibrating the Victorian: Digital Slumming in Assassin's
Creed: Syndicate

DIVERGENT STYLISTICS

2:45pm

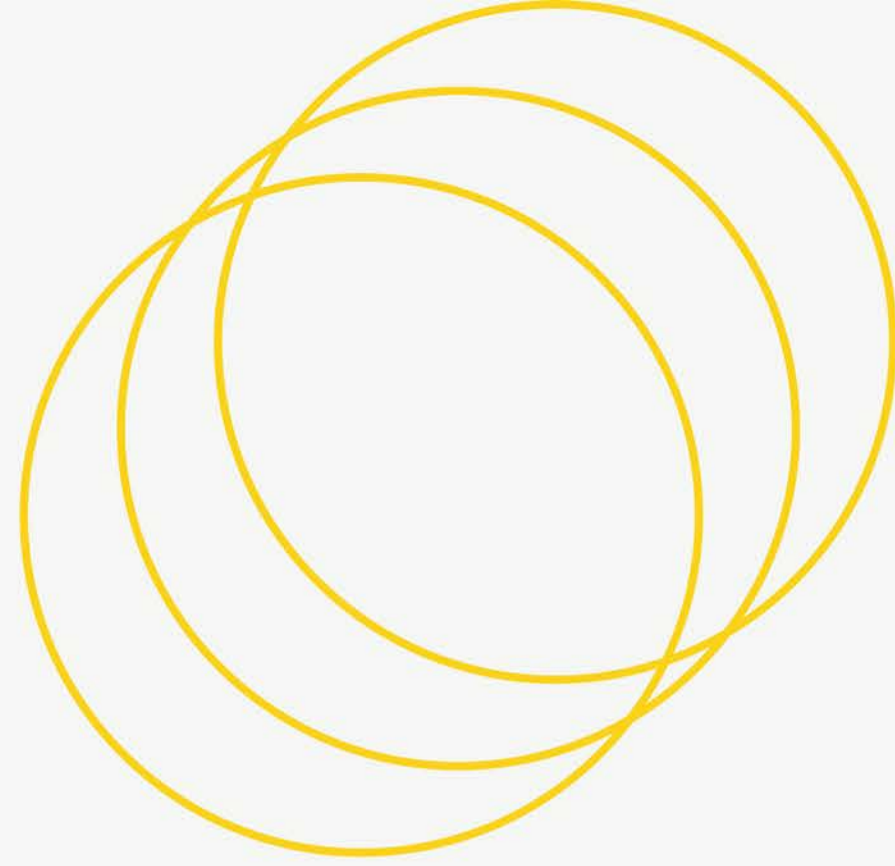
Mod. Rowan Li (they/them)

Molly Stewart (she/her)

Escaping the Story: Challenging the Rules of Fantasy in Terry Pratchett's *Witches Abroad*

Thavishi Dharmawimala (she/her)

Digressing from the Centre: Writing in English (es) and Otherness in Southeast Asian Fantasy Literature



S A T U R D A Y
MAY 25

9:00am - PANEL 4

- Divergent Adaptation

10:30am - PANEL 5

- Divergence in Creation

12:00pm - LUNCH

1:00pm - Kai Cheng Thom Plenary Talk

End of Day Two



DIVERGENT ADAPTATION

9:00am

Mod. Fred Hook (they/them)

Miranda Williams (she/they)

Analyzing Harry Potter Fan Creation: The Marauders, Canon Divergence, and the Author/Fan Dynamic

Adiba Quonita Zahroh (she/her)

Sherlock in Stilettoes: The Peaks and Pitfalls of Gender-Swapped in Archontic Detective Narrative

Emma Kristjanson-Gural (she/her)

From Kraken to Merman: The Transformation of Queer Narratives in Our Flag Means Death

9:00am

DIVERGENCE IN CREATION

Creative Writers in Conversation

Moderated by Nikta Sadati (she/her)

Vijay lakshmi Kachru (she/ her)

The Mirror Effects

Vijay Lakshmi is a Ph.D. candidate in English Literature at the University of Saskatchewan. Her research area is comparative postcolonial literature from the Commonwealth countries, emphasizing women's writings. Vijay earned an MFA in writing in 2018 at the University of Saskatchewan and was awarded Dick and Mary Edney Masters Scholarship for International Understanding through Humanities and Fine Arts. Before her arts vocation, Vijay consulted for corporations in Canada, the United States, and Britain. She has served on the board of Saskatchewan Book Awards, Saskatchewan Craft Council, and The Word on The Street Saskatoon.

Katie Cooke (she/her)

Sunshine in San Francisco

Katie Cooke is a writer from Collingwood, Ontario. She is a recent graduate of Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec, having completed an Honours Bachelors of English and Creative writing. As an undergraduate student, she won the Gabriel Safdie Award in Drama for her play "The System". She is a current Master's student of the same university, and is pursuing a career in screenwriting. As of now, she is working on completing her first fantasy novel.

PLENARY TALK

Kai Cheng Thom (she/her)



Kai Cheng Thom, Master of Social Work, MSc Couple & Family Therapy, is a Certified Somatic Sex Educator, Qualified Mediator, Clinical Hypnotherapist and Certified Professional Life Coach based in Toronto/Toronto. She is the author of six award-winning books in various genres, including the Publishing Triangle Award-winning essay collection on Transformative Justice, *I HOPE WE CHOOSE LOVE*, the *New York Times*-featured picture book *From the Stars In the Sky to the Fish in the Sea*, and the instant Canadian national bestseller *Falling Back In Love With Being Human*, which was shortlisted for the 2024 Pat Lowther Memorial Award.

DIVERGENCE:

Departures from the Canon

Conference Organizers

Jessica Caravaggio
Wilde Ferris

Thematic Directors

Drumlin Crape
Fred Hook
Sidney Robichaud

Creative Directors

Nikta Sadati
Sophia Charyna

Communications Coordinators + Media Managers

Wilde Ferris
Sidney Robichaud

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Sophie Been
Jessica Caravaggio
Drumlin Crape
Valentine Gaio
Fred Hook
Jennifer Jakob
Nicholas Marcelli

Speaker Selections Chair

Drumlin Crape

Thank you to all of
this year's committee
members, moderators,
presenters, and
attendees!