The background of the entire page is a dark, textured surface overlaid with horizontal bands of various colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple). Superimposed on these bands are numerous vertical lines of varying widths and colors, creating a spectral or barcode-like effect. Several Greek letters are scattered across the image:  $\alpha$  is at the top center;  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ , and  $\delta$  are near the top left;  $\beta\alpha$  is near the top right;  $\delta\gamma$ ,  $\epsilon$ , and  $\beta\alpha$  are near the middle left; and  $\beta\alpha$  is near the middle right.

**INNER WORLDS:  
GAIL JONES' FICTION**

**A One-day Symposium, Friday 21 June  
Western Sydney University**

**Program**



# Gail Jones: Inner Worlds

## Western Sydney University, Friday 21 June 2019

- 9:30am**                    **Opening: Ben Ehterington**  
Acknowledgement of Country, Introduction
- 10:00-11:00am**        **Session 1: Chair – Meg Samuelson**  
Lou Jillett: Constellations of Light and Image | Contemplations on Deep Space: Apparent Magnitude and Scale in the Work of Gail Jones  
Anthony Uhlmann: Communicating Disposition in *Five Bells* and *Sorry*
- 11:00-11:30am**        **Morning Tea**
- 11:30-12:30pm**        **Session 2: Chair – Louise D’Arcens**  
James Gourley: Gail Jones’s Untimely Modernism (*Sixty Lights*)  
Elizabeth McMahon: Bioluminescence: The Organic-Prosthetic Fold in Gail Jones’ *Sixty Lights*
- 12:30-1:30pm**            **Lunch**
- 1:30-2:30pm**            **Session 3: Chair – Elizabeth McMahon**  
Tony Hughes-D’Aeth: The Hysteric’s Discourse: Speaking Memory in Gail Jones’ *A Guide to Berlin*  
Brigid Rooney: Silent Propinquities: City, Self and Literary Community in *A Guide to Berlin*
- 2:30-3:00pm**            **Afternoon Tea**
- 3:00-4:30pm**            **Session 4: Chair – Brigid Rooney**  
Louise D’Arcens: The Meanings of Sicily in Gail Jones’ *The Death of Noah Glass* and Tariq Ali’s *A Sultan in Palermo*  
Meg Samuelson: Blueness and Light in the Art of Gail Jones (*The Death of Noah Glass*)  
Tanya Dalziell: Sleep and the Inner Worlds of Gail Jones’ Writing (*The Death of Noah Glass*)

# Abstracts and Biographies

## *Tanya Dalziell*

### **Sleep and the Inner Worlds of Gail Jones' Writing**

The interest of Gail Jones' work in the borders of sleep is suggested by the opening of *The Death of Noah Glass*, with Martin Glass remembering a story, hypnopompically, on the morning of his father's funeral. And throughout that novel, sleep is discussed by Martin and his sister, Evie, in a way that suggests that if "Sleep, perhaps, has never been philosophical," as Jean-Luc Nancy has claimed, then perhaps it is a fitting literary subject. If philosophy has hard time dealing with sleep because it is deemed antithetical to systematic thinking, consciousness and rational thought, then the attention Jones's writing gives to metaphor opens up possibilities for thinking about sleep even as, or because, many of Jones's protagonists are insomniacs. This paper will start to consider the productively difficulties that sleep poses to language, narrative, time and subjectivity in Jones's texts.



Tanya Dalziell works in English and Literary Studies at the University of Western Australia. Her most recent books include *Gail Jones: Word and Image* (Sydney UP, forthcoming) and *Half the Perfect World: Writers, Dreamer and Drifters on Hydra 1955-1964* (Monash UP, 2018), co-authored with Paul Genoni.

## *Louise D'Arcens*

### **The Meanings of Sicily in Gail Jones's *The Death of Noah Glass* and Tariq Ali's *A Sultan in Palermo***

In *The Death of Noah Glass*, Gail Jones presents us with a Sicily that is a vibrant cultural and historical crossroads: for her eponymous hero "Palermo was fantastically complicated, a puzzle of styles and peoples. Africa was here, and the Arabs, and the energy of ages intermingling". But with its palmless palm trees, roofless churches, and headless corpses, it is also a place of corruption, dilapidation, and decapitation. And our hero also loses his head, falling in love late in life and committing an inexplicable crime. In this respect Jones's modern Sicily could not seem more different from the Norman Sicily depicted in Tariq Ali's *A Sultan in Palermo*. Here, Palermo is a place of plenitude that still has its palms and its fabled one hundred mosques, while its leader, the "baptised sultan" King Roger II rules with integrity over a thriving multi-faith society. Yet Ali's Sicily is also threatened with the loss of its head: set in the final year of Roger's life, it depicts the *convivencia* over which he rules as a fatally imperilled arrangement. In my paper I will trace the representations of Sicily in these two novels, exploring the island's relationships to mainland Italy and the Mediterranean. I will also consider the role played by visual art and poetry in Jones and Ali's respective portrayals of Sicilian cultural heritage.



Louise D'Arcens is Professor in the Department of English at Macquarie University. Her publications include the books *Old Songs in the Timeless Land: Medievalism in Australian Literature 1840-1910* (2011), *Comic Medievalism: Laughing at the Middle Ages* (2014) and the edited volumes *The Cambridge Companion to Medievalism* (2016), *International Medievalism and Popular Culture* (2014), and *Maistresse of My Wit: Medieval Women, Modern Scholars* (2004). She is currently writing *World Medievalism: The Middle Ages in Global Textual Cultures* (forthcoming 2020). She has also published chapters on medievalism and articles in journals such as *Representations*, *Screening the Past*, *Studies in Medievalism* and *Postmedieval*.

# James Gourley

## Gail Jones's Untimely Modernism

Jones's novels, as well as her academic writing, are remarkable for their consistent and deep engagement with literary modernism, and *Sixty Lights* (2004) is exemplary in this regard. Considering the primacy of modernism in Jones's *oeuvre* and in *Sixty Lights*, this paper seeks to provide an answer as to why the two primary intertexts of *Sixty Lights* are Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860-1) rather than, for example, *Mrs Dalloway* and *Speak, Memory*. In doing so, I argue for the 19<sup>th</sup> century novel in *Sixty Lights* as a form of generative technology; one that is the Strange children's inheritance, as it is *Sixty Light's* formal inheritance as well.



James Gourley is a senior lecturer in literary studies at Western Sydney University and a member of the Writing and Society Research Centre. His research addresses modern and contemporary literature. His recent work on modernism and its relation to contemporary literature appears in *College Literature* and *English Studies*.

# Tony Hughes-D-Aeth

## The Hysteric's Discourse: Speaking Memory in Gail Jones' *A Guide to Berlin*

Lacan's theory of discourse situates the speaking subject in a matrix of pleasure, knowledge, power, truth and loss. In this paper, I consider Gail Jones' novel, *A Guide to Berlin* (2015) in terms of its basic discursive structure. The novel centres upon an impromptu group of Nabokov devotees who meet one winter in Berlin and exchange personal stories. In homage to Nabokov's seminal memoir *Speak, Memory* (1951), they call these stories their 'speak memories' and these six stories form a central part of the novel. The novel opens up important questions about the nature of speech, subjectivity, sociality and criminality. My argument is that the coterie in the novel constitute a hysterical community, which is another name for a utopia—a society glued together, then torn apart, by the desire for desire.



Tony Hughes-d'Aeth is the Director of the Westerly Centre and the Chair of English and Literary Studies at the University of Western Australia. He is the author of *Like Nothing on this Earth: A Literary History of the Wheatbelt* (UWAP 2017), *Paper Nation: The Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* (MUP 2001), and numerous articles on Australian literature, film and cultural history. Tony was the co-editor of *Westerly Magazine* from 2010 to 2014.

## ***Lou Jillett***

### **Constellations of Light and Image | Contemplations on Deep Space: Apparent magnitude and scale in the work of Gail Jones**

This paper will examine Jones's use of the night sky as a metaphorical map, a means of navigating the labyrinthine inner worlds of human circuitry and emotion. Drawing on examples from across her body of work, I will explore the notion of the self as a site of intersection for those infinite worlds without and within, looking particularly at the way her various characters contemplate deep space, forming constellations of grief, love, memory and desire, in order to make sense of and give form to their multi-faceted inner lives.



Lou Jillett recently completed her PhD at Western Sydney University. Her thesis investigated the theme of wandering within the worlds of James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Cormac McCarthy's *Suttree*. She co-convoked the three-day international McCarthy conference here at The Writing and Society Research Centre in July 2014, and was editor of the 2016 collection of essays that arose from conference proceedings, both of which shared the title: 'Cormac McCarthy's Borders and Landscapes'. Lou's current research focuses on ecocritical approaches to the theme and representation of disappearance in Australian literature, and the function of walking within that literature: as record, as remembrance and as reclamation of space.

## ***Elizabeth McMahon***

### **Bioluminescence: The Organic-Prosthetic Fold in Gail Jones' *Sixty Lights***

MISSING ABSTRACT



Elizabeth McMahon is an associate professor in the School of Arts and media, University of New South Wales. She researches in the fields of Australian literature and Island Studies and her recent monograph, *Islands, Identity and the Literary Imagination* (2016), won two national awards. With Brigitta Olubas she has edited numerous book collections, the most recent on the fiction of Elizabeth Harrower (2017). A forthcoming collection on Antigone Kefala will be published by University of Western Australia Press in 2019. She has edited journals continuously since 1997: *Australian Humanities Review* for ten years; and *Southerly* since 2008.

# Brigid Rooney

## Silent Propinquities: City, Self and Literary Community in *A Guide to Berlin*

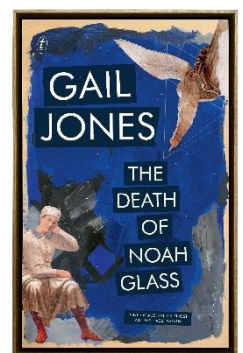
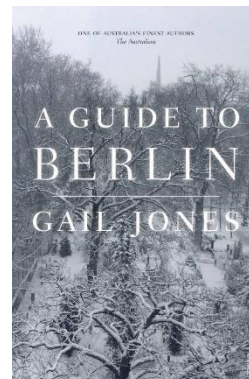
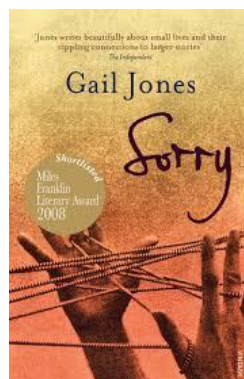
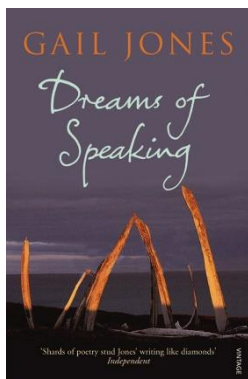
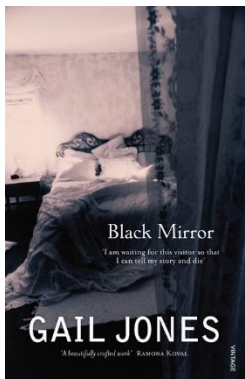
*A Guide to Berlin* by Gail Jones engages a metaphors of the city that doubles its metaphors of the self, conceiving of self and city in relations of chiasmus, or as organisms in metabolic exchange. Umbrella-like interiors and exteriors fold and unfold through narrative's sequential scenes of storytelling. We shift between things sequestered and things exposed in configurations evocative of the autopoiesis of organism and environment.

'Environment' here encompasses encounters with others, with community. *A Guide to Berlin* is most deeply concerned with the value, ethics and possibility of longed-for literary community, that ideal environment in which isolated selves may at last connect in and through the 'silent propinquity' of reading. 'Silent propinquity' aptly characterises selves in conditions of modernity, side-by-side yet apart, reading books or travelling on trains. What are the contours and conditions of literary fellowship, and what possibilities does it yield? And crucially, how robust is literary community in the face of brutality, suffering and violence? Can literary community be a basis for moral integrity?

In my reading of *A Guide to Berlin*, I consider these questions in connection with Berlin, with its network of spaces, monuments, streets and transit systems that bring order to the body of the city and host its community of selves. Literary community is primarily figured through the narrative's circle of six tourist-readers of Nabokov and their ritual speak-memories. In particular I attend to the significance of three apartments – Oblomov's, Kępiński's and Cass's – three interiors that stage and figure the novel's questions about selves in response to, or withdrawal from, community.



Brigid Rooney teaches Australian literature in the Department of English at the University of Sydney. She has written widely on twentieth century and contemporary Australian literature and has co-edited scholarly collections on such topics as Christina Stead and Australian literature as world literature. She has published two sole-authored books: *Literary Activists: Writer-Intellectuals and Australian Public Life* (University of Queensland Press, 2009) and *Suburban Space, the Novel and Australian Modernity* (Anthem Press, 2018).





# Meg Samuelson

## Blueness and Light in the Art of Gail Jones

Gail Jones's narrative worlds, and her southern settings in particular, are light-saturated. Across her oeuvre, she also addresses light as a medium of illumination or dazzlement and, in her persistent reflections on photography, as what Roland Barthes describes as 'an emanation of the referent' or 'umbilical cord' that 'links the body of the photographed thing to my gaze'. Viewed in light of this preoccupation, her most recent novel, *The Death of Noah Glass*, might be said to perform a prismatic function, dispersing a beam to isolate a single colour and thus invite readers 'to think about blue'. Pervaded by blue, the narrative draws attention to the significance of the colour across Jones's oeuvre, where it functions as reflective touchstone and vital component of her scene-setting palette. Tracking blueness and light across Jones's oeuvre, my paper will consider how they inform, inter alia, the properties of art, narrative world-making, and external referentiality while articulating a position on the planet and way of being in the world that is both located and drifts.



Meg Samuelson is an associate professor in the Department of English & Creative Writing at the University of Adelaide, Australia, and an associate professor extraordinary at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. She has published widely in Southern African literary and cultural studies. Her recent and current research engages with photography in Zanzibar, coastal form in narrative fiction from the African Indian Ocean littoral, surfing cultures and the Indian Ocean shore-break, sharks as uncanny figures of racial terror in the Anthropocene, the southern orientations of J. M. Coetzee's writing, the oceanic south and world maritime literatures.

# Anthony Uhlmann

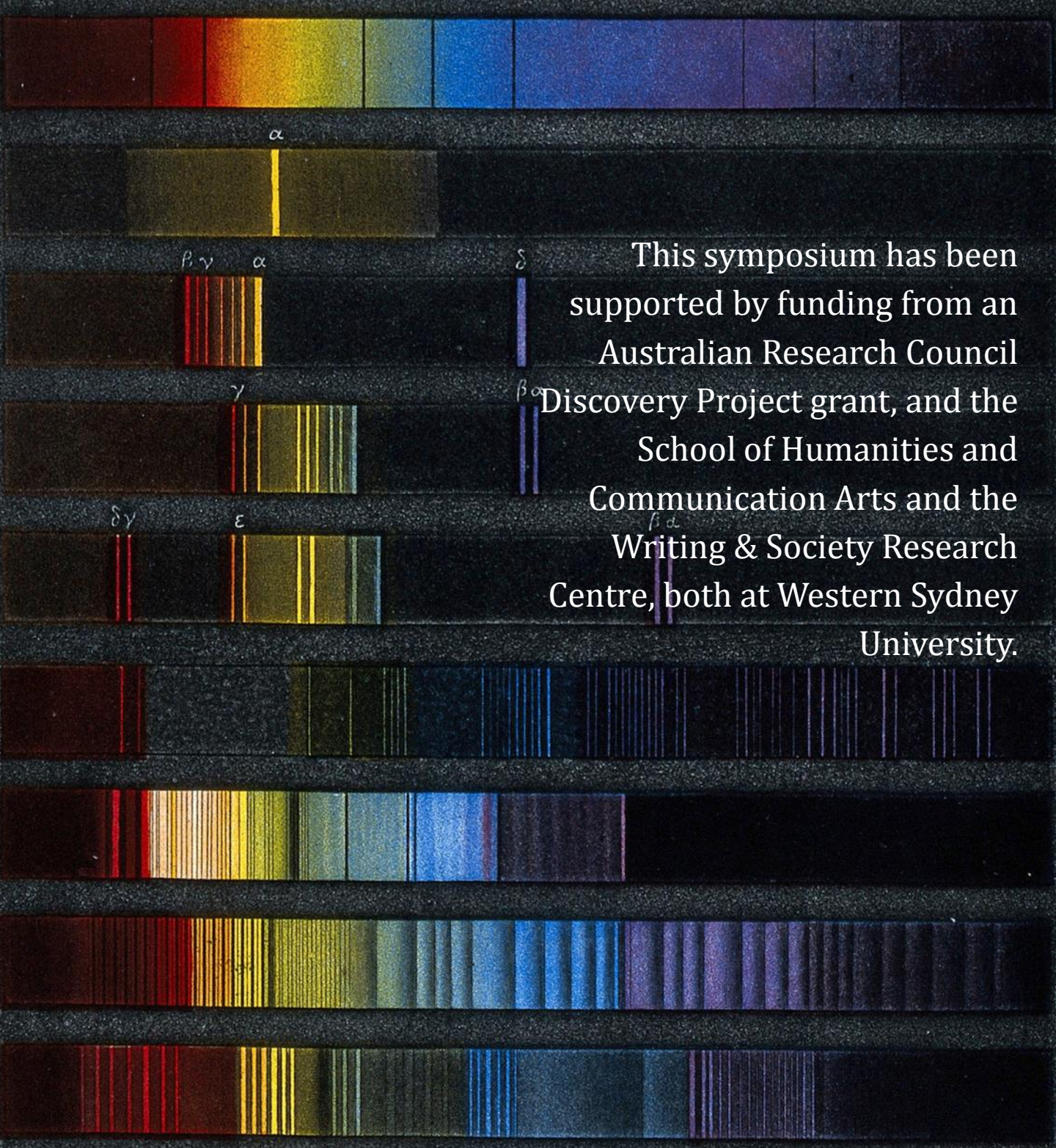
## Communicating Disposition in *Five Bells* and *Sorry*

MISSING ABSTRACT



Anthony Uhlmann is Director of the Writing and Society Research Centre at Western Sydney University. His first novel, *Saint Antony in His Desert*, was published by UWAP in 2018. He is the author of two monographs on Samuel Beckett, and most recently *Thinking in Literature: Joyce, Woolf, Nabokov*. His work focuses on the exchanges that take place between literature and philosophy and the way in which literature itself is a kind of thinking. Besides *Other Worlds* he is currently working on a project on Spinoza and Literature with Moira Gatens.





This symposium has been supported by funding from an Australian Research Council Discovery Project grant, and the School of Humanities and Communication Arts and the Writing & Society Research Centre, both at Western Sydney University.

## OTHER WORLDS: FORMS OF WORLD LITERATURE



WRITING AND SOCIETY  
RESEARCH CENTRE