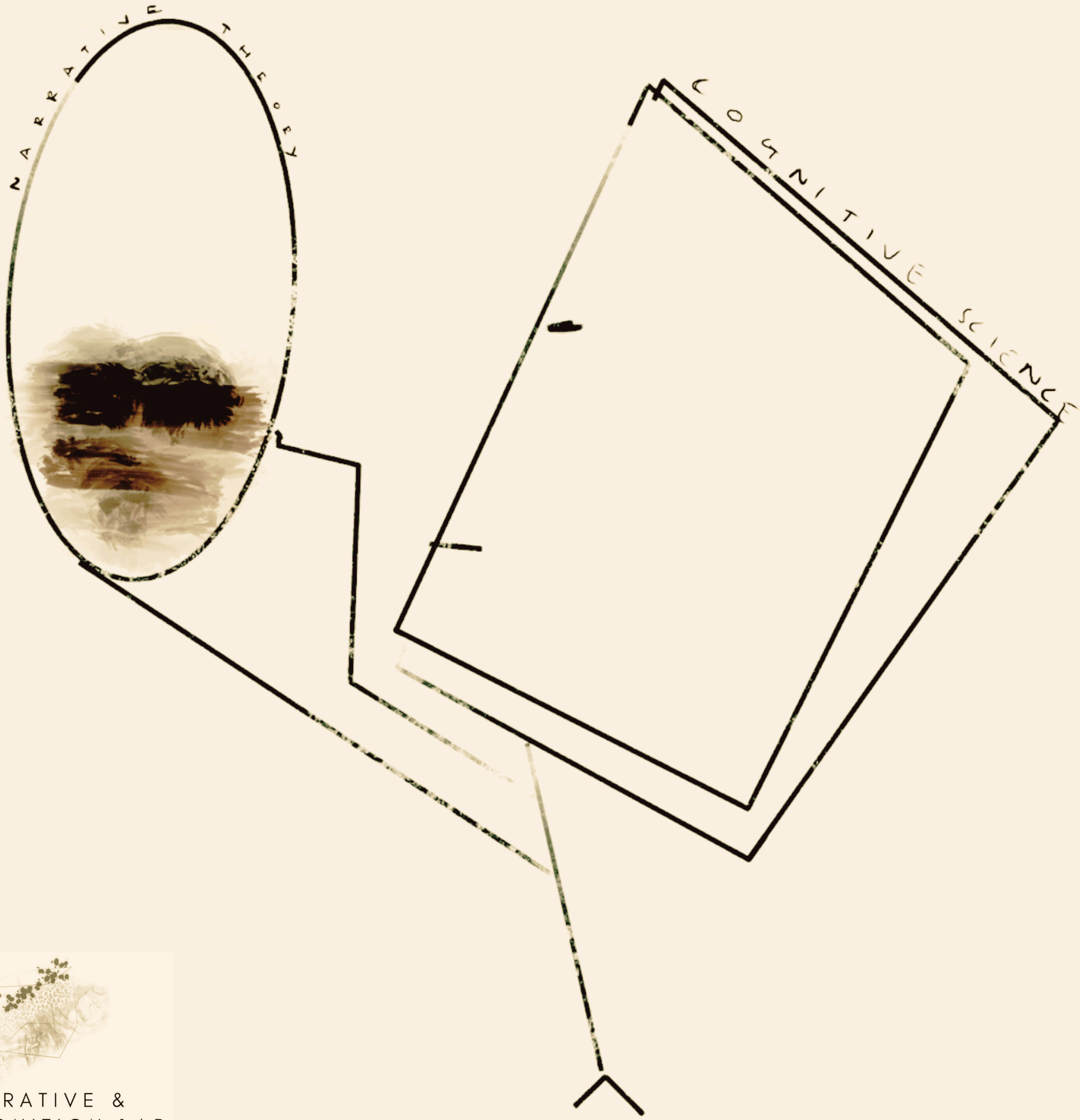

NARRATIVE &
COGNITION LAB

1ST INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

MAY 31,

9AM-5.30PM (GMT+1)

DURHAM & ONLINE

NARRATIVE THEORY & COGNITIVE SCIENCE: STILL A PROBLEMATIC RELATIONSHIP?

PLACES ARE LIMITED

(50 IN-PERSON / 50 ONLINE),

PLEASE REGISTER **HERE**

NARRATIVE &
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9 SPEAKERS
12 SHARED READINGS
PAST SINS & PROMISES

WHERE TO NOW?

More than twenty years have passed since the call for a ‘cognitive revolution’ in narrative theory. Proposals were published for a future ‘cognitive narratology’ and for narrative studies to be integrated into the cognitive scientific agenda, domain, and method. The proposals made quite a splash, raising perplexities and enthusiasm in equal measure.

Where are we at today? How did we score against such foundational promises and perplexities on cognitive approaches to narrative artefacts and narrative cognition? Is the relationship between cognitive science and narrative studies still a ‘problematic’ one, as Marie-Laure Ryan famously called it?

This workshop will host international, world-leading players in the debate. **Each speaker will respond to a foundational article, promise, or perplexity picked from a shared basket of selected readings** (see next page) in the history of this interdisciplinary field.

The audience is encouraged to familiarise a little with the same reading package in advance. We will then collectively assess past achievements and sins while looking at the future. In the closing session, we will evaluate how the NCL can help create a more conducive workspace for research on narrative and cognition.

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THE SHARED BASKET OF READINGS

1997 -2023

PROPOSALS:

Jahn, Manfred. "Frames, preferences, and the reading of third-person narratives: Towards a cognitive narratology." Poetics today (1997): 441-468.

Richardson, Alan, and Francis F. Steen. "Literature and the cognitive revolution: An introduction." Poetics Today 23.1 (2002): 1-8.

Herman, David. "Narrative theory and the sciences of mind." Literature Compass 10.5 (2013): 421-436.

Fludernik, Monika. "Narratology in the twenty-first century: The cognitive approach to narrative." Pmla 125.4 (2010): 924-930.

Wheeler, Michael. "What Have the Arts and Humanities Ever Done for Us?: Disruptive Contributions and a 4E Cognitive Arts and Humanities." Worlding the Brain. Brill, 2023. 258-273.

PERPLEXITIES:

Adler, Hans, and Sabine Gross. "Adjusting the frame: Comments on cognitivism and literature." Poetics Today 23.2 (2002): 195-220.

Ryan, Marie-Laure. "Narratology and cognitive science: A problematic relation." Style 44.4 (2010): 469-495.

Sharrock, Alison. "How do we read a (w) hole?: Dubious first thoughts about the cognitive turn." Intratextuality and Latin Literature (2018): 15-31.

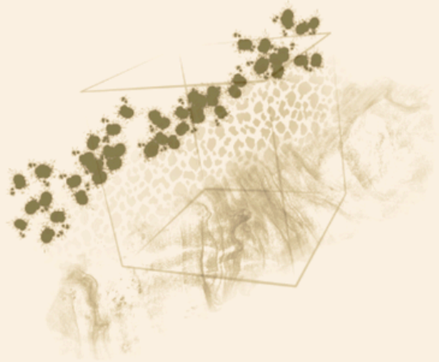
Carney, James. "Thinking avant la lettre: A Review of 4E Cognition." Evolutionary studies in imaginative culture 4.1 (2020): 77-90.

MANIFESTOS:

Kukkonen, Karin, and Marco Caracciolo. "Introduction: What is the “second generation?”." Style 48.3 (2014): 261-274.

Carney, James, and Emily Troscianko. "Manifesto for the literary humanities." Beyond Crisis: Visions for the New Humanities, Online. Durham. https://www. dur. ac. uk/chi/tasks/23 (2014).

(Emily’s updated manifesto, 2023) https://troscianko.com/an-updated-manifesto-for-the-literary-humanities/



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“A bunch of scholar-pirates who plunder for their purposes troves of hypotheses, bright ideas, and yes, rigorous scientific work”

(Porter Abbott on ‘cognitive literary studies’, in Abbott H. Porter. 2006. “Cognitive Literary Studies: The ‘Second Generation.’” Poetics Today 27 (4): 711–22. Porter’s opinion is actually a positive one - of what he also called “benign predation” - and his work has been pioneering and influencing many directions in the field).

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THE MENU

9am -5.30pm

Registration	**9.00**
Opening Remarks	**9.30**
John Sutton	**10.00**
Merja Polvinen	**10.30**
Lars Bernaerts	**11.00**
Coffee Break	**11.30**
Richard Walsh	**11.45**
Marco Bernini	**12.15**
(Intro to ReaderBank)	**12.45**
Lunch	**1-2pm**
Marco Caracciolo	**2.00**
Peter Garratt	**2.30**
Mike Wheeler	**3.00**
Coffee break	**3.30**
Emily Troscianko	**4.00**
Workshop Collective Loops	**4.30**
Closing Remarks	**5.00**

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THE SPEAKERS

John sutton is a cognitive philosopher, working on memory and skill. he is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and Cognitive Science at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. he is now a Leverhulme Visiting Professor at the University of Stirling in Scotland, working with cognitive philosopher and cognitive humanist Mike Wheeler and colleagues for the year 2023-24. he works in the philosophy of mind, cognition, and action, in cognitive psychology, and in the interdisciplinary cognitive humanities. his research topics are autobiographical and collaborative memory, embodied memory and skilled movement, distributed cognition, and cognitive history.

Merja Polvinen is Senior Lecturer in English and Associate Professor in Comparative Literature at the University of Helsinki, Finland. She is a former fellow of Institutes of Advanced Study at both Helsinki and Uppsala (Sweden), and one of the team PIs in the consortium Instrumental Narratives: Limits of Storytelling and New Story-Critical Narrative Theory (iNARR). She was a member of the original steering group of the Cognitive Futures in the Arts and Humanities network, and currently part of the research group Enhancing Enactivism at the University of Helsinki. Her book Self-Reflective Fiction and 4E Cognition: An Enactive Approach to Literary Artifice is out in the new Routledge series on Cognitive Humanities.

Lars Bernaerts is a Professor of Duthc literature at Ghent University. His research, teaching, and publications focus on modern and experimental fiction in Dutch, the contemporary novel, literary neo-avant-gardes, narrative theory, and the literary radio play. Together with Hans Vandevoorde and Bart Vervaeck, he founded and coordinates the Center for the Study of Experimental Literature (www.sel.ugent.be), which has its own book series. SEL is part of the research network ENAG (European Neo-Avant-Gardes). He has made many contributions to cognitive narrative theory, including an article in the *Style* special issue on "Cognitive Literary Studies: Second-generation Cognitive Approaches" (2014) and has co-edited the volume *Stories and Mind: Cognitive Approaches to Narrative*" (Nebraska Press, 2013).

Richard Walsh is a Professor of Narrative Studies in the Department of English and Related Literature at the University of York, UK, and the Founding Director of York's Interdisciplinary Centre for Narrative Studies. He is a past President of the International Society for the Study of Narrative, the author of Novel Arguments (1995) and The Rhetoric of Fictionality (2007), and co-editor of Narratology and Ideology (2018), Narrating Complexity (2018) and Fictionality and Literature (2022). His work ranges over literary, cultural and cognitive topics in narrative theory, including reflexiveness and ideology in fiction; fictionality within and beyond fiction; narrative across media; emergent and interactive narrative; narrative and selfhood; narrative creativity and authority; and narrative cognition.

Marco Bernini is Associate Professor in Cognitive Literary Studies at Durham University (English Studies Department). His research focuses on narrative theory, modernist and contemporary narratives, and cognitive science. He recently published a monograph on Samuel Beckett and cognition (*Beckett and the Cognitive Method: Mind, Models and Exploratory Narratives*, OUP, 2021) and is currently co-editing a volume on dreams and narrative (*Dreams, Narrative, and Liminal Cognition: An Interdisciplinary Framework*) forthcoming with OUP in 2025. He has just established and leads the 'Narrative and Cognitive Lab' at Durham University, funded by Wellcome.

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THE SPEAKERS

Marco Caracciolo is an Associate Professor of English and Literary Theory at Ghent University in Belgium. Drawing inspiration from cognitive science, the philosophy of mind, and the environmental humanities, his work explores the forms of experience afforded by narrative in literary fiction and other media (especially video games). He is the author of several books, including most recently Contemporary Fiction and Climate Uncertainty: Narrating Unstable Futures (Bloomsbury, 2022) and Contemporary Narrative and the Spectrum of Materiality (De Gruyter, 2023).

Professor Peter Garratt is Head of Department and Chair of the Board of Studies. Peter's research interests lie mostly in Victorian literature and culture. He is currently finishing *vol 2. of Nineteenth-Century British Literature and Philosophy* (forthcoming from Routledge, 2024). Other books he has written and edited include *Victorian Empiricism* (2010); *The Cognitive Humanities* (2016); and *Distributed Cognition in Victorian Culture and Modernism* (2020), co-edited with Miranda Anderson and Mark Sprevak. Peter has been the recipient of funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for 'Cognitive Futures in the Humanities' (2012-14) and then (as Co-Investigator) 'A History of Distributed Cognition' (2014-18). He has served on the Executive Committee of the British Society for Literature and Science.

Michael Wheeler is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Stirling. His primary research interests are in philosophy of science (especially cognitive science, psychology, biology and artificial intelligence) and philosophy of mind. In pursuing these interests, he often finds himself developing ideas at the interface between the analytic and the continental philosophical traditions. He has published widely on the nature of, and the prospects for, so-called 4E (embodied-embedded-extended-enactive) cognition, with a special focus on the subtle and complex ways in which human beings intimately couple with technology to transform, enhance, and sometimes impede, psychological performance. His most recent research tries to bring 4E cognitive science into a mutually productive relationship with the arts and humanities.

Emily Troscianko is a coach, writer, and researcher affiliated with the University of California, Santa Barbara and the University of Oxford. She is interested in mental health, readers' responses to literature, and how the two are linked—as well as what both have to do with human consciousness. Her monograph Kafka's Cognitive Realism (2014) explores the strange phenomenon we call the "Kafkaesque" and her Hunger Artist blog for Psychology Today investigates the science and experience of eating disorders and recovery, while the latest edition of Consciousness: An Introduction (2024), co-authored with Sue Blackmore, offers a guide to thinking through the mystery of consciousness from the ground up.

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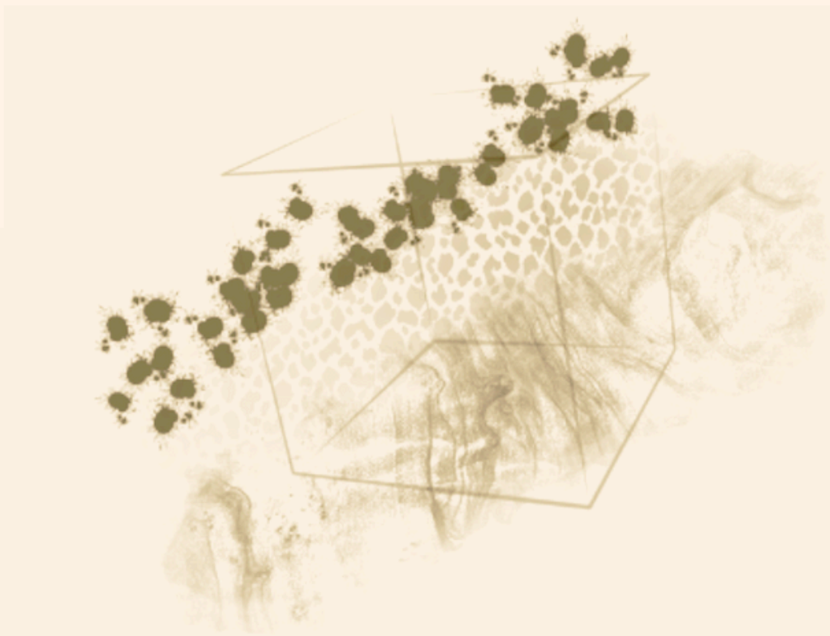
BRING YOUR THINKING TOOLS

“Thinking tools work. Wether you use them to nibble away at a problem until it gradually takes on a new and valuable shape (my usual method, philosophical whittling, you might say) or to blow bad assumptions to smithereens, you should frequently stand back to see how it’s going and adjust course as necessary. Here’s my advice to would-be philosophers: don’t worry too much about your IQ or how fast you can compose an objection; add few more tools to your kit and learn how to use them, and you’ll soon be able to avoid digging yourself into the trenches your warring colleagues are stuck in. You do take risk when you stay out of the trenches”

(Daniel Dennet, I Have Been Thinking, 2023; Dennett inspired many in the field of cognitive approaches to narrative and the arts, but also cautioned us against the epistemic allure of deceptive ‘intuition pumps’ or anchoring arguments with ‘skyhooks’. In spite of these disclaimers, he provided many intuition pumps and thinking tools to interdisciplinary scholars, and his generative legacy will surely continue into the future)



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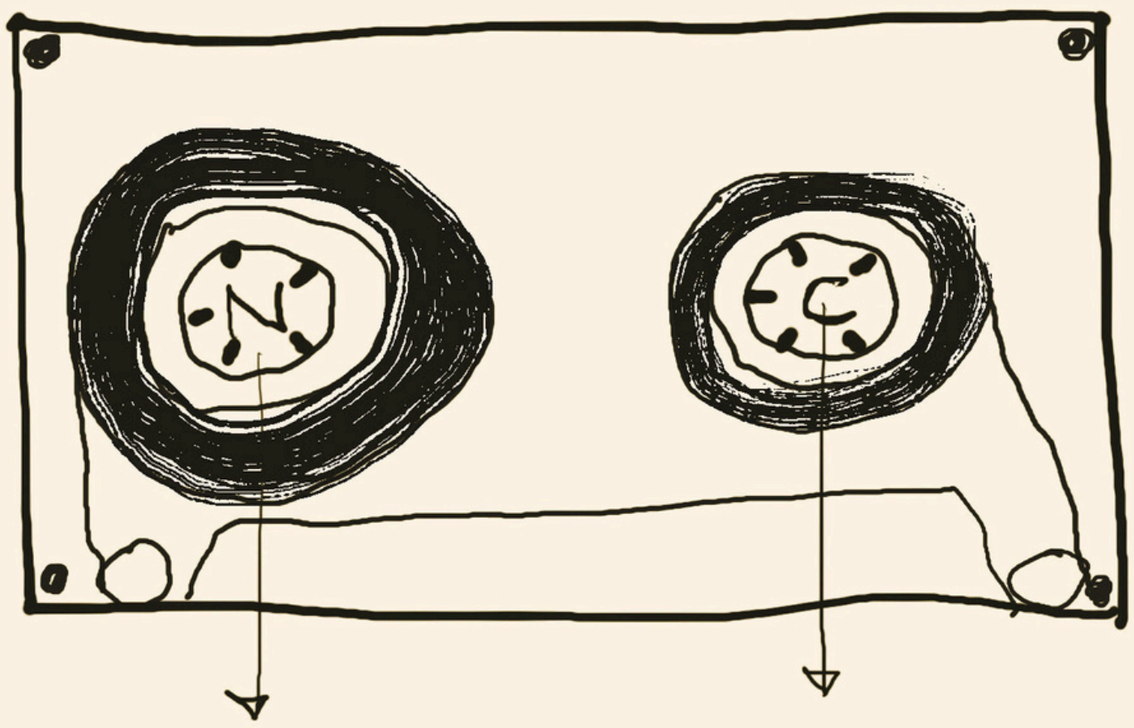
FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONTACT: MARCO.BERNINI@DURHAM.AC.UK



A-SIDE
COG. SCIENCE
TRACTION

B-SIDE
NARR. THEORY
AND CREATIVITY
TRACTION

NARRATIVE COGNITION

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