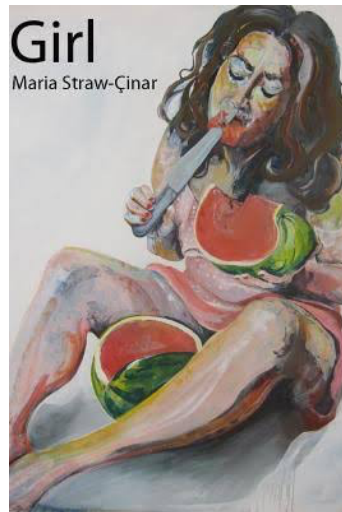


Maria Straw-Çinar (26 May 1970 to 14 October 2022)



Maria sadly passed away this October. She was a valued member of the Media Discourse Centre, Leicester Media School, Doctoral College community at DMU, and a superb PhD student. Maria had made significant progress towards completion of her PhD entitled 'Queer Women of the Left Bank: Channelling Natalie Barney and her Sapphic Circle - Creating biographical narratives via transmedia technologies'.

Maria grew up in the Salvation Army church and from 1988 studied at the University of Warwick, completing a BA in Theatre Studies and Dramatic Arts. After a Postgraduate Diploma at the Courtyard Theatre, Maria travelled the world with a troupe of actors performing in Ireland, Spain, and New York. One of her most memorable roles was as Yeats' muse, Maud Gonne. Maria then trained to teach English as a foreign language, working in Prague, Paris, and the United Arab Emirates. Their daughter was born in 2011. Maria studied to be a drama teacher at the Central School of Speech and Drama going on to work as Head of Drama at Walthamstow School for Girls, 2008-2014. She also gained a Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics with the Open University.

Her novel *Girl* was published in 2015 drawing on her experiences of love, travel and adventure and was shortlisted for the Cinnamon Press Novella Award. Her poetry collection *Afeto* was published in 2018, for which she was a Ted Hughes Award nominee 2019. Maria was an exceptional performer and writer, and combined this with a unique intellectual curiosity. Maria will be sorely missed by her friends and family and is a great loss to the university. She was inspired by the Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca and lived out his words: "Every step we take on earth brings us to a new world."

Maria saw possibility in everyone and everything. Her vivacity and enthusiasm for life, love and freedom of expression drew her deeply into this project. It was a privilege to immerse ourselves in the rich tapestry of these women's lives, so full of colour and adventure - much like Maria's own life.

Tragically, we can only wonder at what Maria's final piece of writing would have been, but I have no doubt it would have been a genius reflection of these women's lives that would have enthralled us all and fulfilled her desire to reclaim the female narrative. Natalie Barney's self-composed epitaph reads, "I am this legendary being in which I will live again", and therefore, in honour of Maria, and the women by whom she was so fascinated, we will travel to Paris and re-enact the salon. The legacy she leaves behind is huge: her extraordinary book, 'Girl', together with a collection of incredible poetry, her beautiful daughter, and a love of empowering women and a friendship we will always be grateful for.

Rachel Sutton, friend, and actor working with Maria

As a person she exuded positivity, kindness and goodness

Dara Hanley, who runs the Exceptional Academics group, where Maria worked as a tutor

.....

Dr Fernanda Amaral, who gained her PhD from the Media Discourse Centre, gave her paper ‘Racialised regimes of remembrance: the politics of trivialising and forgetting the killing of black children in Brazil’, at Newnham College, Cambridge, 15th November.



Dr Fernanda Amaral and Right, the Newnham College Library

This one-day interdisciplinary workshop was part of the events to mark the year of the Bicentenary of Brazil’s Independence (7th September 1822). It provided a collaborative space for postgraduates to publicise their research, engage in interdisciplinary conversations and build networks between academic communities. Under the overarching themes of *autonomy* and *democracy*, researchers were invited to present papers reflecting on marginalised groups’ continuous struggle for emancipation in contemporary Brazilian society 200 years after the country’s independence.

Fernanda’s paper began with the notion of collective memory as a source of power and meaning, and drew from the concepts of activist memory to reflect on the existence of a racialised regime of memory in Brazil. Considering the social struggles involving black people and the decades of fights for voice and justice, her investigation examined the media practices and general public recollections around the death of black children under the optics of Hall’s (1997) concept of racialised regimes of representation. This work uncovers evidence of a different set of practices to report and remember the death of white and black children and considers the impact of those practices by analysing the remembrance rates through the data collected.



Newnham College, Cambridge

.....

The latest recruit to the Media Discourse Centre is Mark Charlton. Mark is Associate Director of Sustainable Development Goal Impact, and Net Zero Research Theme Director, leading on the United Nations Academic Impact Global hub for Sustainable Development Goal 16, based at DMU. Currently Mark is currently developing new research projects focussing on politics and democracy in Climate Action, particularly using the voices of underrepresented groups. Before joining DMU, Mark worked as a journalist.



.....

Congratulations to Beverley Cooper-Chambers, who was awarded her PhD on 22nd November, 2022. The External examiner was Professor William Anthony Henry, of the University of West London, and Professor Stuart Price was Internal. Beverley's thesis was entitled 'Righting and Re-Writing the Blueprint: the creation of an Afrofuturistic television series and a self-sustaining television network to disrupt the misrepresentation of the Caribbean Family in British Television Drama'. The creative element of the work comprised a TV series script and associated cultural artefacts.



Left to right, Tracy Twell, Dr Beverley-Cooper Chambers, Michelle Haggerty-Wood (DMU MA TV Screenwriting graduate) and Professor Jason Lee: in the right-hand image, Professor Henry.

.....

This month saw the Stephen Lawrence Research Centre, and the Media Discourse Centre collaborate on staging the event ‘The Global Politics of Black Lives’, which included screenings of documentaries made by film-makers Esther Figueroa (Jamaica), Chris Ivey (Pittsburgh), Alberta Whittle (Barbados/UK), and Jennifer Ere-Mendie (Nigeria/UK) who obtained her PhD from the Media Discourse Centre.

The Film Festival generated public conversations about the ways these films depict Black lives, as they continue to be shaped by the politics of global capitalism, labour, the degradation of the natural and social environments, the global politics of blackness, race and racism, representations of sexuality, and the cumulative effects of power, control and exploitation.



(Left to Right) Dr Lisa Palmer, MDC member and Director of the Stephen Lawrence Research Centre, Chris Ivey (Pittsburgh), Esther Figueroa (Jamaica), and MDC member and Dr Jennifer Ere-Mendie (UK/Nigeria)



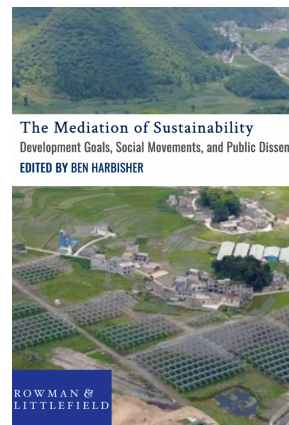
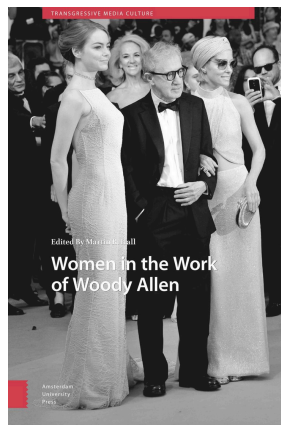
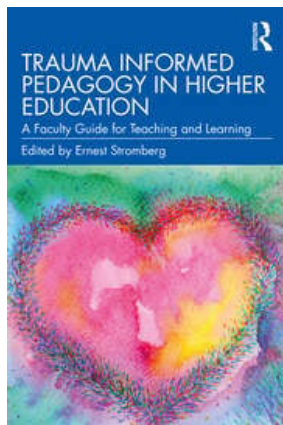
Displays at the Film Festival and Centre, Dr Lisa Palmer

.....

Professor Jason Lee, with Beverley Hancock-Smith and Dr Zara Hooley at DMU, and Eleanor McSherry at UCC, have just completed ‘LGBTQ+ Trauma Informed Pedagogy in a Transnational Context’ published in the Routledge book *Trauma Informed Pedagogy in Higher Education*.

[Trauma Informed Pedagogy in Higher Education: A Faculty Guide for Teaching and Learning \(routledge.com\)](https://www.routledge.com/Trauma-Informed-Pedagogy-in-Higher-Education-A-Faculty-Guide-for-Teaching-and-Learning-in-Higher-Education/book/9781138111111)

In addition, the IRL version of *Women in the Work of Woody Allen* in Professor Jason Lee’s Transgressive Media Culture book series with Amsterdam University Press is now out, which includes his chapter, ‘Too Much, Too Young? Woody Allen’s Life, Work and Women in the #MeToo Era’. Meanwhile, a new book on the *Mediation of Sustainability* contains chapters by three members of MDC - Jason Lee, Stuart Price, and Jennifer Ere-Mendie.



.....