

## History of LGBTQIA+ Narratives – 1:30-2:00pm GMT

### **The Dystopian Horror of Homosexuality: The Progressing LGBTQIA+ Narrative in *Battle Royale* and *Angels' Border***

**Abstract:** This paper will focus on representations of LGBTQIA+ students in two works of manga inspired by Koushun Takami's dystopian horror novel, *Battle Royale* (1999). The first part of this paper will focus on the manga adaptation of the same name with a focus on the harmful stereotypes portrayed through Sho Tsukioka, the only openly gay student in the class. There will be an examination of his portrayal as 'predatory' and the artistically exaggerated features of how effeminate he is, as well as the portrayal of his lifestyle as abhorrent. There will be an examination of how, despite his pride in his sexuality, the manga guarantees that if he does not die at the hands of his classmates, a footnote in his file indicates that he would be shot by a government official, indicating that LGBTQIA+ identities are not permitted any place in the dystopian world depicted.

There will then be an examination of the depiction of a closeted lesbian student in *Angels' Border* (2012) in a side story written by Takami. There will be a focus on how her portrayal is less harmful and more nuanced, as well as how her internalised lesbophobia is informed by the country's disdain for the LGBTQIA+ community. There will also be a focus on how her story enriches the tragedy and horror of her death in the original novel. I ultimately aim to question if *Angels' Border* indicates a progression on the depiction of LGBTQIA+ students in a dystopian society, or if Takami believes that LGBTQIA+ stories are only acceptable if one is ashamed of their identity.

**Bio:** Laura Mulcahy (she/her) is a second year PhD student at University College Cork researching representations of trauma in the works of Stephen King. She has previously a first-class MA thesis on representations of trauma in Stephen King's *It*.

### **Queer History in *Marvel's Voices Pride* – Archive and Reclamation**

**Abstract:** Marvel Comics has not had overt LGBTQIA+ representation until recently in large part due to its adherence to the Comics Code Authority until 2001 which prevented most characters from being openly queer. Despite this, the use of metaphor, subtext and, in some rare cases, rejection of the Code has created a rich, but complex, history of queer characters and narratives. In 2021, the company released *Marvel's Voices Pride*, an anthology of different writers and artists taking this history and reframing it through the lens of the queer experience, centring on both old and new characters.

In this paper, I look at the anthology as a form of queer history, acting simultaneously as an archive of struggle and a reclamation of formerly suppressed narratives. With the creators

all being part of the LGBTQIA+ community as well, the stories feel authentically intersectional. In addition to actively rejecting erasure of bisexual, asexual, trans and non-binary lives, it also deals with trauma, immigration and refugee status, misogyny, racism, disability, body politics, and other multiple marginalisations.

By doing in-depth readings of specific story points, I argue that the anthology fulfils an empowering function by speaking truth to power and offering meaning in absences – both key aspects of historical storytelling from marginalised perspectives. As such, I view *Marvel's Voices Pride* as part of the wider tradition of queer history, and a vital addition to the LGBTQIA+ canon.

**Bio:** Ibtisam Ahmed (he/him) is a PhD student at the University of Nottingham. His work is included in [The Politics of Culture](#), [Ancillary Review of Books](#) and [Imagining the Impossible](#). He is a co-director of LSFRC, a member of the Beyond Gender Collective, and the Policy and Research Manager at LGBT Foundation.