

Transculturation and Aesthetics

Conference Abstracts

Workshop A1- Theory

Erik Falk, Södertörn University

Transculturation, translation, and the use of the exotic in Caribbean fiction

In his book on literary strategies in black South African culture, *Rewriting Modernity*, David Atwell uses the (Ortiz' and Pratt's) term "transculturation" to describe the transformation of foreign artistic modes into means for self-expression in resistance against colonial or apartheid ideology. While the value of the term "transculturation" for historical analysis of popular cultural forms is evident, its usefulness in readings of contemporary world literature is less certain. In silent dialogue with Atwell, this paper addresses two significant conditions of postcolonial and/or diaspora literature that are absent from his analysis: the frequent disconnection between author, "home," and audience that complicates ideas of literature as mode of collective self-expression; and the pressure on authors to capitalize on cultural difference which affects processes of cultural translation. Using a handful of Caribbean writers as examples, and David Dabydeen's literary output as a case in point, the paper will argue that the development of what could be called an aesthetics of the exotic exemplifies a literary strategy that balances contrary demands on representativity and singularity, difference and universality in an effort to assemble literary capital.

Gesa Mackenthun, University of Rostock, Germany

Digging Far and Deep: Archaeological Sites, Dislocations, and Heterotopes in Postcolonial Writing

Recent fictions by Michael Ondaatje, Barry Unsworth, Anne Michaels and others focus on the historical entanglement of imperial politics and archaeological ventures in various parts of the colonial world. While the cultural significance of archaeology in producing imperial and national imaginaries can hardly be denied, the nexus between scientifically motivated digs and imperial acts of taking possession has not yet been fully explored. Rather, the figure of the imperial archaeologist is a stock figure in more or less trivial adventure fictions (*Indiana Jones*) or horror fictions (*The Exorcist*). The above-named contemporary writers are employed in investigating the relationship between archaeological practice and empire more critically, for example by inventing archaeological sites as complex heterotopes in which various scientific and political interests clash within the same spatial zone, or by referring to the economic and ecological consequences of interfering with the natural layout of the land. In analyzing these fictional constructs, the paper will focus on the transcultural and translocal processes at work, as well as on attempts to move beyond the ubiquitous discourse of horror fiction and to invent alternative ways of relating to a culture's ancient past (e.g. in fictions by Amitav Ghosh).

Ania Spyra, Butler University, Indianapolis, USA

Transcultural Aesthetics of Multilingual Experiments

This presentation brings together the vocabulary of translation and performance studies to examine the transcultural aesthetics of literary works that transcribe linguistic mixtures into polyglot literary experiments. Multilingual writers (such as Christine Brooke-Rose or Susana Chávez-Silverman) switch among several languages within one text or blend them into syncretic linguistic forms even when these experiments defy the "common sense" and literary aesthetic standards and earn their

writings the dismissive name of macaronics.

Beginning with the observation that the etymology of translation in the Sanskrit word “anuvad” – “telling in turn” – moves us away from the idea of “carrying across” towards an understanding of translation as an act of retelling which creates new meaning in its every staging, I read multilingual experiments as a literary performance of transcultural identities. If performance is defined as reiterated or “twice-behaved” behavior (Richard Schechner), then texts that play with repetition of foreign languages perform both the transnational identity of their authors and the very act of translation. As an ultimate form of foreignization (Lawrence Venuti), such texts make the workings of translation visible in order to resist the monolingual and mono-national literary canons, positing transcultural aesthetics in their stead

Workshop A2 - Art and Literature

Anne Collett, Australia, Visiting Professor University of Tokyo, Japan

Looking Again: Olive Senior and Grace Nichols

They say that instead of a brush
he used a knife on me –
a savage geometry.
But I say, look again

In 2005 Caribbean-Canadian poet Olive Senior published a volume of poetry, *over the roofs of the world*, whose title is taken from Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* and which includes two poems that joust with Wallace Stevens – ‘Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird’ and ‘Misreading Wallace Stevens’. In 2009 Caribbean-British poet, Grace Nichols published a volume whose title, *Picasso, I Want My Face Back*, alludes to Picasso’s portrait of Dora Maar, and opens with a long poem, ‘Weeping Woman (Dora Maar)’. Both poets write back/write to/write through ‘white masters’ of modernist art (Wallace Stevens and Pablo Picasso), thereby writing themselves (the black woman artist) into a history of artistic transculturation. This paper will explore the complex heritage of two black women poets who draw extensively on folkloric and mythic traditions of the Americas, their fraught relationship to a white modernist colonizing male inheritance, and the means by which they renegotiate that relationship. Transculturation is used here to refer to the crossing over of many borders (of gender, of worlds, of artistic forms and practices) that both demarcates and messes up those borders. It is a complex move that both affirms and negates borders of belonging, and multiplies ways of seeing and being.

Stuart Sillars, University of Bergen, Norway

Eugène Delacroix and Shakespearean transculturations

From the 1820s until his death, Delacroix worked repeatedly on drawings, paintings and lithographs of subjects from the plays of Shakespeare, especially of *Hamlet*. In themselves these are remarkable acts of visual reconfiguration and textual interpretation, developing a fascination with individual character, as well as significant action and the idea of Shakespeare as creative genius, and offering important contrasts to paintings in England with which they are contemporary. Yet they are also part of an elaborate and extensive network of transculturation that takes in the translation of the plays, the comparison between acting and painting as performative acts, the different concepts of tragedy in different nations, and the relation between concepts of classicism and Romanticism. Delacroix’s journal offers further examples of transcultural practice, as well as engaging with the theory of such matters, in language that itself reveals the complexities of discussing aesthetic concerns between nations and across languages. His visual work begins at a time when the fashionable translations were those of Jean-François Ducis, that transformed the plays to accord with neo-classical principles of the French theatre, and ends with the versions of

Victor Hugo that embrace more fully the complex mingling of genres found in Shakespeare's originals. These orders and degrees of transcultural configuration – linguistic, theatric, political and painterly – will be the basis of this exploration.

Eleonore Wildburger, University of Klagenfurt, Austria

The 'cultural design' of Indigenous Australian art: (trans)cultural texts and aesthetics.

This paper is based on my book, *The 'cultural design' of Indigenous Australian art: A cross-cultural perspective* (2010) that investigates Indigenous Australian cultural texts as to their potential for cross-cultural knowledge creation and cross-cultural communication.

Classical Indigenous Australian artworks, like any artwork, hold various layers of meanings. As cultural theorist I am interested in cross-cultural communication and knowledge production; as a committed art lover I am critical of 'western' curatorial concepts of Indigenous art exhibitions. Both perspectives will be discussed in my talk.

Supported by the analysis of the painting *Bush Honey Dreaming* (1998) by Helen Kunoth Ngwarai from Utopia (NT), I will not only confirm that a cross-cultural art category needs to be defined (Morphy, 2008; Gigler, 2008); I will also present and define some criteria for such a category. The analysis of the painting mainly draws upon my field work with artists in Utopia (NT), and in consequence, of my many-year-long research activities in 'intersubjective, intercultural contact zones' (Langton, 1993; Wildburger, 2003).

In consequence, I will argue in favour of cross-culturally appropriate curatorial concepts of Indigenous art exhibitions and will conclude that such appropriate concepts hold a large potential for cross-cultural understanding and communication.

Workshop B1 – Diaspora

Jopi Nyman, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu

Problematics of Transculturation in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Pilgrims Way*: Diaspora, Melancholia, and Writing

Abdulrazak Gurnah's fiction is strongly characterized by a sense of displacement, dislocation and transculturation generated by colonial pasts and forced migration. As a sign of this, his diasporic protagonists, while often living in the West, tend to remain haunted by what they have left behind in the old country, suffering from guilt and an inability to communicate with their families. In this sense a potentially rewarding context for reading his novels is that of postcolonial theorizations of trauma and melancholia. As critics such as David Eng et al. (2003), Rey Chow (2008), and Sara Kaplan (2007) have suggested, racial melancholia is not a private psychic trouble but a collective structure of feeling relevant to understanding of traumatizing cultural memories. In Kaplan's view, the melancholic subject, upon coming to terms with and rearticulating the past may "produce meaning out of lost histories and histories of loss" (2007, 514). Melancholia, in other words, can be as a political practice countering the amnesia of official historiographies.

The focus of this paper will be on Gurnah's second novel *Pilgrims Way* (1988), a story of the hospital orderly Daud and his life in Canterbury in the 1970s. A migrant haunted by his rejection of his African family, and traumatized by his experiences of violence and racism in Britain, Daud becomes involved with the nurse Catherine, who helps Daud to counter his past and work through his internalized trauma. It will be argued that Gurnah's novel explores the problematics of transculturation as a narrative of racial and diasporic melancholia, seen in the novel at both the

level of the dislocated individual subject, his look of life, and feelings of shame, and at the more general level of his colonial and postcolonial past. In the analysis, particular attention will also be placed on the novel's use of such techniques mechanisms as Daud's creation of alternative colonial pasts for the people he encounters and his act of writing (imaginary) letters to various real and fictional characteristics which show how the novel's cultural memory is pervaded by the legacy of colonialist practices in Britain as well as in East Africa.

Sue Ballyn, Australian Studies Centre, Barcelona University, Spain

Sephardi Jews: Survival and Transcultural Diasporas

In il curtijo de Aḥmet, In Ahmed's courtyard,
ayí ḡugan a shesh-u-besh. they are playing at "six and five."
¿Qué volo diré, mi alma? What can I tell you, my dear?
Agora son las sex. It's now six o'clock.

(Eastern Sephardic Song in Ladino)

1492: Isabel and Fernando, the Catholic monarchs of Spain, have driven out the Moorish invaders after seven hundred odd years of occupation and now they turn their gaze towards the Sephardi Jewish Community. What had been a peaceful interweaving of the Christian, Moorish and Jewish Communities was about to be dispelled forever. The Sephardi Jews to whom Sepharad, Spain, was and still is their Holy Land, were about to fall foul of the Catholic Church under the reunification of Spain under a single Catholic crown. Convert, get out or face the Inquisition. These were the choices that faced Spain's own unique Jewish community.

In this paper I want to discuss how the Sephardi community dispersed across Europe and elsewhere, taking with them their traditions, the literary, musical, liturgical, and their language: Ladino. The song above illustrates quite clearly how the Sephardi related to their hosts, The Ottoman Empire, living side by side with Muslims just as they had in Sepharad for five hundred years. By looking at both how those Sephardi who chose to remain in Spain as "conversos" and those who left survived, we can begin to understand how a unique culture moved across the world until today. In order to illustrate this paper I will use examples of Sephardi singing and cooking together with visual representations of them over time.

Chih-wei Chang, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan

The Erotics of Queer Diaspora in Chiang Hsun's *Yu ai shu: xie gei Ly's M (Epistles of Eros: Letters to Ly's M)*

This paper explores the erotics of queer diaspora constructed by Taiwanese writer Chiang Hsun in his *Yu ai shu: xie gei Ly's M (Epistles of Eros: Letters to Ly's M)* (2000, 2010). A well-known painter, poet, essayist, fiction writer, and aesthetic educator in Taiwan, Chiang is especially praised for his ability to combine both Western and Eastern traditions to formulate his own brand of aesthetics. In addition to being border-crossing in his thinking and creative activities, Chiang also advocates wandering and traveling as practices to break up the boundaries set up by society and the nation-state. His *Yu ai shu* is a sort of travel writing in the form of epistles aiming at scripting a queer erotics of diaspora for the new age through appropriating different ethnic groups' diasporic histories. Beginning with a scene of parting, Chiang's book takes the form of thirteen love letters addressed to "Ly's M" after the lovers separated from each other. The first-person writer-lover embarks upon a journey through Europe and Southeast Asia to contemplate his love against the background of many significant cultural sites. It is important to note that the writer-lover figures

his love/journey as an exodus from the heterosexual system of consanguinity. While combining nostalgia for the homeland with longing for the beloved, the epistles draw upon cultures and histories of the foreign cities to script imaginary scenarios and ideal forms of love between the lovers. In particular, the diasporic histories of Christian slaves in ancient Rome, the Bohemians, and the Buddhist Khmer Empire are appropriated to symbolize situations of the queer lovers in a world of conflicts, struggles, and changes. Thus the book represents Chiang's effort to transcribe multiple diasporic histories and merge different cultural traditions, especially Plato, Christianity, and Buddhist belief in reincarnation, to create a queer ethics of love.

Panel - Transculturation and the Authentic

Participants:

Veronica Davidov, Leiden University College, The Hague, The Netherlands

Claire Solomon, Oberlin College, USA

Yago Colás, University of Michigan, USA

Fantasies of the authentic are indissociable from a colonial episteme; and literature abounds with visions of the authentic located in certain places or attributed to certain social actors; they are frequently symbolized by "nativeness" and "indigeneity," and correlated with an imaginary prehistorical and even pretemporal immanence, all of which functions as a collection of aporias which can deconstruct the assumptions inherent in the colonial order every time it "surprisingly" rears up in thinking about or writing about the authentic.

In this panel we want to explore the transcultural construction and circulation of these fantasies of (and desire for) "authenticity" through an examination of several such "locations" where hybridity and alterity, diaspora and loss give rise to symbolic and material practices? Is there a continuity or set of continuities that can be meaningfully theorized between the practices of curating cultural remnants whose referents are extinct (such as the scavenging of folklore in modern novels); the co-construction of the Amazon by novelists, tourists, and pharmaceutical researchers as a pharmacopia of "authentic" substances that can alleviate the ailments and anxieties of contemporary Western society; and the emergence, within the aggressively globalized universe of basketball, of a new aesthetic that, when viewed through the lens of transculturation, at once confounds essentializing narratives of basketball authenticity and releases surprisingly subversive political meanings.

Veronica Davidov, Leiden University College, The Hague

The Amazon as Pharmatopia

Two recent popular American fiction novels have based their pivotal plot twists around imagined, fictional substances accessed and ingested by their soul-searching protagonists in the depths of the Amazon rainforest. The protagonist of Benjamin Kunkel's "Indecision" undergoes a transformative experience when he encounters a magical fruit explained thusly by his (anthropologist) travel companion: "When you eat from this fruit then whenever you put your hand on a product, a commodity, an article, then, at the moment of your touch, how this commodity came into your hands becomes plainly evident to you. Now there is no more mystification of labor, no more of a world in which the object arrives by magic -- scrubbed, clean, no past, all of its history washed away." In Ann Patchett's best-selling "State of Wonder," which the New York Times book review called her "Amazon Wonder Drug Novel" a pharmaceutical researcher uncovers the secret of an indigenous tribe, whose women, due to chewing the bark of a tree unique to the region, are able to continue bearing children until old age. Using these two narratives as starting points I want to explore how the Western imaginary of the Amazon as a pharmatopia is produced and circulated in popular culture, and how it connects both to historical projections of

“authenticity” onto the Amazon region and its denizens, and the contemporary industries of ecotourism and pharmaceutical research that imagine the Amazon as the repository of symbolic and material substances that “unique” yet that can be “translated” or reproduced for Western consumption, and thus mediate between the imagined “authentic” and the longing for it.

Claire Solomon, Oberlin College, Ohio, USA

Self-alienation as transcultural authenticity: Narrative Tourism of the Self

How do we narrate the self in an age in which we believe the natural world to be dying? In the overexploitation of the natural world, is there a corollary exhaustion of the symbolic world? Could our literary imagination recede like the polar ice caps?

While literature in some way always participates in a search for the authentic,

I see a trend in contemporary literature of a flattening of the symbolic wilderness both inside and outside of the main characters in pared-down novels about a grim present (or near-future).

In particular, narratives of displacement, of the longing to belong – protagonized by characters who find themselves culturally “in between” – take place today in a dimmer and less varied literary universe, whether urban or rural, where the environment doesn’t feel real and neither do the characters, where there is less an identification with the protagonist than shared sense of apathy and low expectations.

In a sense, these narratives are structured like tours, as though the authentic self – either the protagonist’s or the reader’s – could only be discovered by “accident”, as though stumbling across overwrought symbols of “the authentic” along the way: it might be a Masai warrior, a monster, or a box of forgotten letters. References to “fauxlore” – invented or wikied references to the most superficial understanding of folk traditions, preferably of people about whom the reader neither knows nor cares – situate a clinical discussion of characters who seem about to be admitted to a 19th century hospital, but instead begin a plot arc on which we are expected to want to follow them. Where?

In this paper, I will juxtapose Julio Cortázar’s *Hopscotch* (1963) and Pola Oloixarac’s *The Savage Theories* (2008) in order to illuminate the changing subjectivity of “the transcultural authentic” in narratives of self-discovery.

Yago Colás, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

“No Longer Hoosiers With Subtitles”: Manu Ginobili, Race, Globalization, and the Art of the Game”

In this paper, I examine the little-studied globalization of the game of basketball from the vantage point of transculturation. Nearly from the time of its invention in the United States in 1891, basketball was exported by Christian missionaries and US servicemen stationed abroad. But the 1980s and 1990s saw an unprecedented expansion of this process of globalization under the aegis of the US-based National Basketball Association (NBA). The very effectiveness of the aggressive expansion of the NBA into foreign markets, however, spurred international interest in the game. Today, as of the start of the 2011-2012 season, 186 of the 450 players in the NBA were foreign born, up from 10 in 1985. Not only has the number of players increased, but their relative importance to their teams and to the league as a whole has augmented as well. Moreover, these players have had a profound impact on the cultural discourses, particularly racialized narratives, that have defined basketball in the US for most of its history. This paper will explore this phenomenon via a close reading of the play of and cultural narratives surrounding the Argentinean born NBA star Manu Ginobili. US-based commentators have struggled to capture Ginobili’s style and impact within conventional racialized categories, failing to grasp the cultural specificity of Ginobili’s style of play. Transculturation can help to illuminate the interplay of local and global in Ginobili’s style and, in the process, highlight the potential athletic, cultural, political, and economic implications of his game and his story. At the same time, Ginobili’s “transcultured” game, when

more subtly contextualized in this way, confounds racialized, essentializing narratives that seek to pin down the essence of authentic basketball.

SATURDAY

Workshop C 1 Canada

Martin Leer, Université de Genève, Switzerland.

Canadian Multiculturalism *in piam memoriam*

With multiculturalism declared dead and a failure by both Angela Merkel and David Cameron, we seem to have entered the WalMart monoculture of the downsizing transnational corporation: “*Wir müssen sparen!*” This paper tries in a quiet, modest way to counter the all-conquering spirit of transnational discount xenophobia by a high humanist eulogy for the literature of the only ever officially multicultural society in the rich West: Canada.

A survey of the classic literature of the multicultural decades in Canadian literature from Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan* (1981) through Michael Ondaatje’s *In the Skin of a Lion* (1987) to Wayson Choy’s *The Jade Peony* (1995) finds no flag-waving identity politics, but rather a mutual “coming out” of “submerged population groups” within what Charles Taylor called a “politics of recognition”. This literary multiculturalism is dialogic: transculturation happens through metaphor and compassion, through generic cross-overs between poetry, short stories and novels and through cross-cultural transcreation as between working-class Montréal in Michel Tremblay’s *Les belles-soeurs* and the Cree reservation in Tomson Highway’s *The Rez Sisters*.

The paper will conclude by asking whether multiculturalism has “failed “ through normalisation (viz. the questions in the Reading Group Guide at the end of my copy of *The Jade Peony*) – or whether there may be some kicks left on the WalMart shelves. A case in point may be the highly popular film *Bon Cop, Bad Cop* (2009), a *Sprachgeist* comedy in which a perfectly stereotyped Québécois and a perfectly stereotyped Ontarian policeman need each other in the fast-paced hockey-driven plot to prevent the total corruption of the national game.

Maggie Bowers, University of Portsmouth, England

Storytelling, transcultural aesthetics and the search for literary self-determination.

This paper explores the connection between transcultural aesthetics in Native North American writing and issues of sovereignty. It considers the use of Native North American storytelling traditions incorporated into the western novel tradition, as an act of self-conscious cultural translation, which aids a move towards cultural sovereignty.

Native North American literary criticism has long recognised the significance of the cultural specificity of storytelling traditions incorporated into Native North American writing, whether in Thomas King’s *Interstitial Literature* or Kenneth Lincoln’s focus upon ritual and the ‘power of words’. This presentation explores these ideas further in relation to the more recent discussion of cultural sovereignty, and the need for intellectual self-determination, as posed in Jace Weaver’s *Other Words*. The analysis will focus upon the transformative aspects of cultural translation and the ritual aspect of texts incorporating storytelling traditions such as Thomas King’s *Green Grass Running Water*, Sherman Alexie’s *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* and the work of N Scot Momaday and Leslie Marmon Silko.

What this paper proposes is that the self-conscious incorporation of storytelling tradition in Native North American writing is an enactment of cultural translation that creates new possibilities while focussing attention upon cultural difference, thereby preparing the ground for the discussion of the move towards sovereignty and self-determination. The question that the paper reaches towards is whether the illustration of cultural difference and the creation of a distinct transcultural

aesthetics in Native American literary tradition have any *significant* influence upon the move towards cultural sovereignty, and how, if ever, is this to be achieved.

Eva Rein, University of Tartu, Estonia

Transculturation in Roy Kiyooka's *Transcanada Letters*, *Pacific Rim Letters* and *Mothertalk: Life Stories of Mary Kiyoshi Kiyooka*

This paper aims to analyse the epistolary and auto/biographical writings of the Japanese Canadian Roy Kiyooka, a 20th century Renaissance man of arts. He started as a painter and then moved to writing, but he was also a photographer and a musician. Kiyooka's works that are the focus of this study actually defy any easy categorisation. The labels "epistolary" and "autobiographical" are employed not by way of an anchor but rather a tentative foothold to enable an inquiry into his works that cross all the possible borders – geographical, national, linguistic, mental, and that of genre, to name some of the most prominent ones.

The most suitable theoretical concept for theorising Kiyooka's texts and the contexts that inform them appears to be transculturation, as developed by Fernando Ortiz and some other thinkers who have elaborated on his concept. While the Latin American and Canadian cultural and social settings might first seem to be too far apart to enable an application of the term to Koyooka's works, it is precisely some of its specificities that come closest to appreciating the merits of the oeuvre of "a white Anglo-Saxon protestant, with a cleft tongue," as Kiyooka identified himself, and as someone who claimed that "Everytime I find myself talking /.../ I feel the pulse of my thots in a North American/West Coast dialect of the English language with all its tenacious Indo-European roots", but who also invented a way to capture the cadences of the Tosa (Kochi City in Japan) dialect in his writing in what he called "inglish."

Workshop C3 Australia and Translation

Oliver Haag, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

Australian Aboriginal Literature in Dutch and German Translation

Published Aboriginal Australian literature has never been confined to a national market. On the contrary, it has been translated, published and distributed overseas. Since the late 1970s, Aboriginal books have been translated into well over seventeen different languages, with continental Europe being the most prolific and largest market for this literature in translation. Translated Australian Aboriginal literature is, furthermore, surrounded by specifically European influences: firstly, there are countless books (mostly fiction) authored by Europeans about Aboriginal cultures, which are nonetheless often advertised as explicitly 'Aboriginal' literature. Thus, the issue of authorship—so central within Australia—has met with a different level of awareness in Europe. Secondly, there is a tendency in Europe to perceive the translations in terms to their cultural and historical rather than literary value. For example, books are often advertised as 'first-hand' insights into Aboriginal cultures and history, while literary features seem to be less central. Thirdly, the European reception of Aboriginal literature is reflected by different European images of and discourses on Aboriginal cultures, which thus influence the reception of this literature; most evidently, these are exotic and romantic images, although political and socio-critical discourses also affect reception.

This paper compares the translation of Aboriginal literature into German and Dutch, focusing on the different strategies of how Aboriginal Australian cultural contexts have been translated into the cultural contexts of the target culture. The focus is on the different techniques of how cultural contexts have been rendered intelligible to Dutch and German readers. An important topic discussed in the paper is also how historical information has been conveyed in translation.

Katarzyna Williams, University of Lodz, Poland/Visiting Fellow, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

Investigating cultural borders: migrant writing and Eastern European understanding of Australia

Migrant literature belongs, with a few exceptions, to marginalized forms of writing both in the country where migrants choose to live and in their mother country. It is often treated as a reaction to a crisis which defines individual situations or as a way to vent nostalgia or disappointment with a new reality. However, migrants' poetry and prose, though sometimes lacking the artistic merit of works produced by professional writers, is important not only for preserving collective cultural memories, but also for understanding the foundations on which both cultural myths and cross-cultural relations are built. In the writings of migrants we find manifestations of their own culture as well as of their *understanding* of the host country. Though these two broad categories are subject to transformations, they both serve as variables in defining who the migrants are. While the representations of diaspora's native culture are an obvious focus of various historical, cultural, sociological studies, the migrants' expectations of and approaches towards the host country, persistently though often indistinctly present in their literary works, usually escape attention.

Eastern Europeans present one of the largest groups of immigrants with a non-English speaking background in Australia. Among them, Poles belong to those migrants who most easily and quickly assimilated to the Australian society. Extensive sociological research has been conducted on assimilation processes, patterns of settlement, attitudes to native language, or other census-based findings. However, little interest has been displayed in examining literature of, for example, Polish post-war or "1980s" migrants, which becomes a witness to the negotiation between their expectations rooted in their native culture and actual experiences in Australia, to the transformations they underwent in terms of understanding where they belong and what they call "home". Apart from exposing stereotypes and biases, this marginalised commonwealth literature discloses numerous cultural "walls" Poles and other Eastern European migrants did not manage to collapse and, in some cases even erected themselves.

Danica Cerce, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Writers and Their Translators: Sally Morgan and Doris Pilkington in Slovene and Italian Translation

By examining the Slovene and Italian translations of Sally Morgan's *My Place* and Doris Pilkington's *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence*, this paper seeks to highlight whether the translators succeeded in transposing the narratives into Slovene cultural environment without sacrificing the original texts.

In particular, and in accord with the view that the act of translating is not "mere linguistic transference of signifiers," but a complex task involving difficult negotiations across cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts, I aim to analyse how particular narrative styles and cultural markers of Aboriginal writing (such as oral and colloquial expressions and words in Aboriginal English) have been adapted from the source to the target texts, and scrutinise different strategies employed to bring Aboriginal writing to Slovene and Italian readers (Suoqiao 2009, 374).

Joshil Abraham, Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, India

Subtitles and Dubbing in the process of creating a standard Culture

Movies have been travelling beyond designated boundaries of language or culture. Now when this viral movement of movies happen how does it negotiate with different cultures? This paper would analyse how movies by the use of subtitles and dubbing negotiate with different cultures by ways of distortion and standardization. The first part of the paper would be an analysis of some popular Hollywood movies been dubbed and subtitled for the viewership of Indian (Hindi, Malayalam,

Tamil) audiences. The second part of the paper would analyse the subtitling and dubbing of Indian (Hindi, Malayalam and Tamil) movies into English. The third section of the paper would relate the questions of presence of varying cultures in the Indian context which makes the process extremely complicated and fragmentary. The discussion of the caste system prevalent in India would be important for this analysis and here I would highlight three aspects, one of the subtitling of surnames and the subtitling of dialogues which refer to caste and subtitling of dialogues which are spoken in caste dialects. By a discussion of the caste system and the power stricken discourse of the official Indian culture and its imperialism in the subtitling and dubbing of the movies, the paper would unravel the flaws prevalent in the mechanism. Taking various theoretical postulations made on culture and cinema, the paper would argue towards a rethinking of readings made on cinema through the mediated realm of subtitles and dubbing.

Workshop C3 – Transcultural experience

Milda Danyte, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

Living in Simultaneity: Objects, Rituals and Buildings as Forms of Memory

Although a Greek philosopher once claimed that we cannot step into the same river twice, referring to life as a past-present-future flow that cannot be reversed, both in reality and in literary texts people do this all the time. Memories can occupy our minds so wholly that the so-called real time and place simply disintegrate around us. The process can be both wonderful and horrifying; those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder are often subjected to repeated returns to the past, both in consciousness and in sleep. Furthermore, physical objects, ritualized performances and constructions like large buildings can induce this state of living simultaneously both here and there, now and in the past. In this paper I am interested in exploring both some real objects, rituals and buildings that function as forms of memory and the literary treatment of this topic. In general I use mostly Canadian texts, autobiographical ones and novels (eg. Sharon Butala, Irene Guilford, Antanas Sileika), but also look at Icelandic-Canadian Kristjana Gunnars and the Swedish writer Karin Alvtegen. The common thread among these writers and the realia I consider is that these people (or characters) experience exile, foreignness and unease in their place of settlement, while they themselves provoke sensations of unease in those around them in public spaces as well. Some of the texts are about ethnic minority members, while others are about people who are marginal in their society or who cross borders so often as to confuse both themselves and those close to them.

Anna Leena Toivanen , University of Eastern Finland

Diasporic Romance Gone Bad: Impossible National Homecoming in Véronique Tadjo's *Loin de mon père*

In the current postcolonial paradigm, transnational mobility is primarily conceived in terms of postcolonial subjects' migrations from the Global South towards western metropolises. Conceptions of mobility have not, however, always been constructed along such unidirectional lines: different panAfricanist discourses, motivated by histories of imperialism and slavery, have adopted Africa as their destination and embraced the idea of return to origins. The notion of return remains a recurrent motive in diasporic literatures, even though the post-independence era has witnessed the rise of less romanticized accounts. The romantic imagery of the return to Mother Africa has also been repudiated by critical feminist rewritings. In Black women's diasporic narratives, which often disrupt the intertwined narratives of home and nation, quests for mythical homelands are highly questioned.

This paper looks into the ways in which Véronique Tadjo's novel *Loin de mon père* (2010) rewrites the diasporic romance of return from a gendered viewpoint, exposing the inhospitable nature of the postcolonial African nation-state towards the female revenant. The novel's protagonist Nina, a cosmopolitan daughter of an Ivorian father and a French mother,

returns momentarily from her Parisian life to the war ridden Ivory Coast in order to organize her father's funeral. Unlike more traditional narratives of return, the novel rejects the idea of homecoming romance from the very outset by conceiving the return in tragic terms, with several obstacles on its way.

Pia Thielmann, Germany

No Home, Nowhere?: South Asian Women Writers on the Search for a North American Identity

In my presentation, I will discuss five novels by women writers from India and Pakistan whose female protagonists share the experience of having crossed political and social borders by leaving their home for the USA or Canada. The female protagonists by Pakistan-born Bapsi Sidhwa (*An American Brat*, 1994), Indian-born Bapsy Jain (*The Blind Pilgrim*, 2008), Manju Kapur (*The Immigrant*, 2008), and Bharati Mukherjee (*Jasmine*, 1989; *Desirable Daughters*, 2002) carry a large variety of aspects of identity determined by their nation, gender and gender roles, caste and education, religion, region, and many more, with them to their respective destination. There, these pieces of the identity puzzle clash with the Western "way of life" so that the women have to navigate between their own and their relatives' expectations of them and their new lives. As different as the protagonists' background and preconditions for a new life may be, their struggle for survival and a new, hyphenated identity displays common traits: Through their transcultural experience, they change—and they change and enrich their environment while not denying their South Asian roots.

Workshop D 1 Border crossings

Kristina Aurylaite, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

Bodies, Borders, Crossings, and Performance: Guillermo Verdecchia's *Fronteras Americanas/American Borders* and Kent Monkman's Miss Chief Share Eagle Testikle

The focus of my paper is the workings and aesthetics of the body in Canadian ethnic solo performance/monodrama in which an actor performs multiple roles, crossing borders between races and cultures, foregrounding the mutability of the borders, the possibility of the coexistence and interaction of distinct cultures, and potential transcultural effects, as highlighted by the single body of the actor accommodating them.

In Canada, an early example of this genre is the famous case of Emily Pauline Johnson-Tekahionwake of mixed white and Aboriginal origin (1861–1913). In the readings of her own texts which involved donning, alternately, Western and Native costumes, she can be seen as using her body as a site from which to problematize the border separating Canada's white and indigenous people. Using an elegant evening dress, which gave her access to her white audience, and a purposefully exotic "Indian" costume, which othered her from it, Johnson constructed a fixed and stereotyped binary opposition between an accepted norm and an otherness, which served to secure order and safety. Hosted and signified by one performing body, though, the two identities became indivisible. This was not simple cross-dressing; for Johnson, both identities were lived parts of her self. The costumes allowed her to undo the border between them and replace it with a creative tension that could reconcile them, through a performance and in a specific "time-space" that the performative action created.

Contemporary artists, my main focus in this paper, exploit similar strategies for more pronouncedly subversive effects. Argentinian Canadian Guillermo Verdecchia's (b. 1962) monodrama *Fronteras Americanas/American Borders* (1993), performed by Verdecchia himself, oscillates between two roles: a troubled Argentinean immigrant to Canada undergoing an identity crisis and a "flamboyant stereotype," a Latino male who performs various roles routinely attributed to South American men by Western people (bandito, macho man, Latin lover, tango dancer, etc). In

several of his works, multimedia artist and performer of Cree ancestry Kent Monkman (b. 1965) embodies the persona of Miss Chief Share Eagle Testikle, an Indian princess and a drag queen, reminding of Cher in her *Half-Breed*, equipped with an ornamental Native headdress, high heels, and a Louis Vuitton quiver, inhabiting landscapes reminiscent of 19th paintings by white Euro-American and Canadian artists.

Both artists engage in what Judith Butler calls “subversive bodily acts” to counter and parody dominant normative ideals as well as processes/effects of stereotyping and objectification. At the same time, both base their aesthetics on drawing on elements from multiple cultures and the creative effects/tensions their coexistence and interaction produce, resulting in the performer’s body seen as a transcultural site.

Maria N. Ng, The University of Lethbridge, Canada

Transcultural daughter and immigrant mother: the politics of filial positioning in immigrant narratives

This paper examines the marginalization of the mother’s voice in immigrant narratives and argues that, in a realistic narrative genre such as life writing, the narrative voice of the transcultural daughter becomes dominant. The voice of the immigrant mother, often a woman from a patriarchal society, in which her role is to be the good wife and wise mother confined to the domestic sphere, is inevitably silenced. This privileging of the narrative voice of the younger and more educated generation of immigrants raises multiple issues intersecting gender, postcolonial identity, and mother/daughter relationship. While a transcultural woman would want to establish her own identity within a postcolonial context and is educated/empowered to do so, it is often not the case for the mother’s generation. Implicated in this gap is the relationship between mother and daughter, and the politics of affiliation to the new culture as opposed to the culture of origin. To theorize this border-position in writing, and specifically life writing, critics of life writing such as Thomas Couser and Paul John Eakin, feminist critics of mother/daughter narratives such as Andrea O’Reilly, and critics of postcoloniality, especially Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* and Rey Chow in *Writing Diaspora*, are useful. In addition, I will reference my autobiographical work, *Pilgrimages: Memories of Colonial Macau and Hong Kong*, in this paper. The texts to be analysed are daughter-centric narratives written by second- and third-generation Canadians of immigrant background: *Runaway* by Evelyn Lau and *The Concubine’s Children* by Denise Chong.

Sbiri Kamal, University of Eastern Finland

Found in Translation: Transcultural encounters and the crossing of frontiers in Fadia Faqir’s *My Name is Salma*

This paper seeks to engage in the contemporary debate of border crossings in affecting the transcultural encounters by analyzing one of the key contemporary postcolonial texts by the Arab-British writer Fadia Faqir. The flux of identities caused by the perpetual process of border crossings has created identities that have been lost in translation. Yet the process remarkably inspires new belonging in translation. In other words, if the actual belonging is lost for certain subjectivities the moment borders are crossed, for other, it has been found in translation. By leaning on the postcolonial theory, I will argue that *My Name is Salma*, though it problematizes the notion of identity in home culture, it shows that belonging can also be found in writings in other tongues, such as writing in English. This is so because the indifference and racial abuse that the migrant may encounter in the receptive culture may only be negotiated in its transcultural context, which is the English language in the case of Faqir’s novel.

Workshop D2 - East v. West

Wenche Ommundsen, University of Wollongong, Australia

**On heartache and headscarfs:
Transculturation as biopolitics in young Muslim women's fiction**

Girls and young women perform key roles in the negotiation between cultural preservation and cultural change. In diasporic communities their functions are multiple and varied: from objects of exchange in patriarchal marital economies to custodians of cultural knowledge; from vulnerable beings in need of vigilant protection to dangerous rebels; from exploited labour to agents of change. Young Muslim women growing up in Western nations navigate the terrain between home and host as adept double agents, translating the one to the other, striving to bridge the gap of mistrust and misunderstanding which separates their different spheres of cultural belonging. Dilemma, conflict, and trauma frequently become part of their personal and cultural make-up, as does remarkable resilience and capacity for adaptation.

With particular focus on the young woman's body as site of transcultural negotiation, this paper examines three books by and for young women which trace the lives of Muslim girls in English-speaking Western nations: Mohja Kahf, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006, US), Randa Abdel-Fattah, *Does My Head Look Big in This ?* (2005, Australia) and Shelina Zahra Janmohamed, *Love in a Headscarf* (2010, UK).

Sarnou Dalel, Mostaganem University, Oran, Algérie

A. Soueif's *The Map of Love*: a new postcolonial, transcultural perception of West vs. Orient

With the rise of the postcolonial writings and the boosting of literary productions which seek to change the mis-representation of the Orient (as defined by Edward Said, the Orient is about the *Other* who is not Western) in the West, a collateral rise of **inter-culturality**, **trans-culturalism** and the **multicultural** facet of literary writings was also witnessed.

Soueif's novel, *The Map of Love*, can be perceived as an "East-West" romantic 'pot-boiler', and a cultural reconciliation between the West, Britain represented by Lady Anna, and America represented by Isabel, and the Orient, represented by Leila and Amal. Amal, the Cairene central narrator of the novel also stands at the very crossroad between two cultures and two generations, possessive about her English 'ancestor' Lady Anna's story.

In this paper, we seek to explore Soueif's philosophy of reconciliation between the West vs. Orient relationship through a feminine, peaceful cross-cultural meeting between the four female, protagonists of *The Map of Love* (Lady Anna, Isabel, Leila and Amal) belonging to different cultures, different linguistic backgrounds and different generations. This meeting is about an interesting linguistic and cultural contexture (meeting). This contexture is also represented through the different relationships between the various characters.

Ulla Rahbek, Copenhagen University, Denmark

Dual lives? Constructing individuality in contemporary British multicultural memoirs

According to Kenan Malik, Britain is becoming more tribal. While the ideal of a multicultural perspective on life is, in the words of Bhikhu Parekh, intercultural dialogue, the reality is often the opposite. In fact, even literature that is advertised as portraying multicultural Britain often tends to reveal a monocultural Britain instead, or perhaps more correctly, and this time in the words of Amartya Sen, a society characterised by plural monoculturalism. This paper focuses on three memoirs – Sarfraz Manzoor's *Greetings from Bury Park: Race. Religion. Rock 'n' Roll* (2007), Sathnam Sanghera's *The Boy with the Topknot: A Memoir of Love, Secrets and Lies in*

Wolverhampton (2008) and Yasmin Hai's *The Making of Mr Hai's Daughter: Becoming British* (2008) – which attest to and critique the surprising development of a multicultural yet tribal Britain. All three writers are journalists born in the early 1970s who probe their lives and those of their families to construct an individual subjectivity in an environment that wants them to represent their ethnic groups – their tribe. This tight script, in the Appiahian sense, leaves little room for the configuration of a self that does not adhere to, on the one hand, the Muslim or Sikh religious script, or on the other, a British national identity. Their self-fashioning is shown to run counter to a series of prescribed scripts and as a departure from their perceived dual lives in between multicultural Britain epitomised in the journalistic world of the capital city and the monocultural lives of their parents epitomised in the “crap towns” of Luton and Wolverhampton, they attempt to create truly multicultural selves that somehow capture who they perceive themselves to be. In contrast to the politics of recognition that only recognises group cultural rights, our writers stake a claim for a politics of recognition for the individual. This paper explores how their individual conundrums are (almost) solved through the process of textualising the self in the popular genre of the memoir.

Workshop D3 –North America

Michael J. Prince, University of Agder, Kristiansand, Norway

“Smooth and Striated Space in Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*: Sal Paradise encounters the Fellahin.”

This paper uses the insights from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* to discuss treatments of identity and space in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. White cultural space and its attendant interpellations imbue much of the non-road space within the novel with an implicit ideological grid. The only territory where some degree of ecstasy persists is in Mexico, the object of Part Four of the novel.

But the appeal of this deterritorialization is not solely (or even mostly) in the ecstasy. It is in terms of relief, or actually two senses of relief, that the author can fully depict what is "American" as a "foreground" to a non-American "relief." Mexico in this sense becomes what the United States isn't. So, the trip to Mexico, serves to further emphasize the American quality of the other sections, e.g. border crossing, where "everything changed when we crossed the mysterious bridge over the river and our wheels rolled on official Mexican soil" (249). Paradise notices the differences in the striations exerted upon his body and cognitive faculties, and it immediately conjures up another sense of *personal* relief. "Behind us lay the whole of America and everything Dean and I had previously known about life, and life on the road. We had finally found the magic land at the end of the road and we never dreamed the extent of the magic" (251). Almost on cue, they enter the smooth space of the desert.

This paper investigates the contrast between the smooth "human" space of the native Fellahin and the striated spaces of the United States that Sal Paradise has been trying to liberate himself from throughout the novel.

Sandhya Devesan Nambiar, University of Delhi, India.

Caught Mapping: (Real)izing identity in Travel Literature

Withdraw allegiance from the old categories of the Negative (law, limit, castration, lack, lacuna), which Western thought has so long held sacred as a form of power and an access to reality. Prefer what is positive and multiple, difference over uniformity, flows over unities, mobile arrangements over systems. Believe that what is productive is not sedentary but *nomadic*.¹ (Foucault, 2001: 109)

¹ Michel Foucault. "Preface to Anti-Oedipus," in *Power* (Vol. 3), edited by James D. Faubion, translated by Robert Hurley et al. London: Allen Lane, 2001

Evidently structures are never static and limiting in themselves, and are constantly in a state of flux, though the many processes of change may not be immediately evident. The nomadic discourse of travel writing exemplifies this tradition of wandering truths and personifies the metaphor of the nomadic nature of truth in the very being of the writer. This marginalized nomadic ontological category denoted by Foucault in his preface to Deleuze and Guattari's seminal *Anti-Oedipus* shall be the focus of the paper, which I shall argue, is central to putative western notions of India in national as well as trans-national discourses.

To this end I shall chart the process of the mapping and construction of the subject (in this case, the cartography of the Indian/ colonial through Western narratives) as exemplified in the realist mode of travel literature, by writers such as Paul Theroux, V.S. Naipaul, William Dalrymple, Alexandra David-Neel, Patrick French, Colin Thubron and Sam Miller, charting a diverse spatiotemporal course. The idea would be to view these writers as flaneuring truth-tellers and raconteurs of the constructions of the human life, which include the real as well as the unreal or the surreal.

The paper shall attempt to problematize the notion of the real itself as a stable, homogeneous category, and instead attempt to highlight its fluidity, and hermeneutic character, especially in the context of nation, modernity and post-coloniality. The objective of the paper is to study these perceptions as cross-cultural and transcultural narratives not so much hierarchical but rhizomatic, à la Deleuze and Guattari; not as unified and hegemonic, but as engaged and engaging nomadic realisms and nationalisms.

Rūta Šlapkauskaitė, Vilnius University, Lithuania

The Cultural, the Eccentric and the Paranormal in Hiromi Goto's *The Kappa Child*

The present paper is an attempt to read Hiromi Goto's novel *The Kappa Child* (2001) as a narrative that explores the construction of transcultural identity by way of harking back on the tradition of Canadian prairie writing as well as the discourse of Japanese myth, particularly the Trickster figure called Kappa. In using the *topos* of the prairie as a Canadian cultural icon as well as a historical site of diasporic displacement, *The Kappa Child* makes use of the aesthetics of magic realism to find a medium through which it may reinterpret the prairie as a space of transcultural interaction and historical revision. In light of these considerations the current analysis of the novel picks up on Linda Hutcheon's idea of postmodern *eccentricity* and Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of *carnavalesque* to look at how Goto rethinks transculturation as *alien-(n)ation*. Effectively, *The Kappa Child* courts a reading sensitive to the boundaries of irony that aims both to make sense of and challenge the dominant modes of thought about identities associated with eccentricity, transgression and paranormality.

Workshop E1 – North America

Pekka Kilpeläinen, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu

At the Meetin' Tree: Reading, Storytelling, and Transculturation in Daniel Black's *They Tell Me of a Home*

The tension between different cultural codes and conventions in the novel *They Tell Me of a Home* (2005) by the African American writer Daniel Black provides interesting premises for a transcultural reading. After ten years of absence, the protagonist, T.L., returns to his rural home in Swamp Creek, Arkansas, from New York, with a Ph.D. in black studies. This reveals fundamental contradictions between T.L. and his family and community, which must be resolved before any meaningful connections and lines of communication can be established. In this paper, I will discuss the process of transculturation that occurs at the intersection of the conservative, rural values of Swamp Creek and T.L.'s more liberal and progressive values. In the novel, these sets of values are ideologically juxtaposed and represented through their own respective narrative cultures: oral narratives and literary narratives. The people of Swamp Creek have a tradition of gathering at the

“Meetin’ Tree” to tell stories, while T.L. embodies African American literary narratives with his passion for the works of Langston Hughes and James Baldwin. The Meetin’ Tree becomes a transcultural space as the collective cultural practice of storytelling assumes a huge significance in the text as a means of communal interaction and also provides T.L. a chance to experience a sense of mutuality and belonging from which he has until then been excluded. On the other hand, he also initiates a change in the attitudes of the people at the Meetin’ Tree through his extensive knowledge of black history. This may be conceptualized as a utopian dimension of transculturation, a process in which the conflicting cultures negotiate towards mutual understanding and the possibility of learning from each other.

Željka Švrljuga, University of Bergen

“In this time brown did not stick around”: Fred D’Aguiar’s Poetics of Slavery

The proposed paper seeks to explore Fred D’Aguiar’s *Bloodlines* (2000), a revisionary novel of slavery, which weaves subjectivity (agency), and subject position (politics) into the fabric of identity. The two parameters will be explored through the prism of Franz Fanon’s and Kelly Oliver’s insights that address and deconstruct issues of the colonial (oppression and domination) and seek resolutions in what Oliver labels “a social theory of sublimation” (135). Thus, as a product of a mixed-race relationship and rape, the central protagonist-narrator/poet “I and I” (1, 145) ponders the “contact zone” of his body and being (Pratt 6)—a literal embodiment of the master-slave dialectic—in order to understand how coercion and racial inequality have shaped him. The paper will explore how the trope of rape as a colonization of the body and as a metaphor for slavery paradoxically leads to love and life (embodied in the love child) on the one hand and separation (from the lover) and death (of the lover/mother/child) on the other. Slavery, D’Aguiar purports, is not an issue of the past; it is deeply ingrained in the racism of today, with which the novel negotiates the past-present nexus.

Johan Höglund, Linnaeus University, Sweden.

The Discordant Aesthetics of the New Imperial Gothic in Justin Cronin’s *The Passage*

In the wake of what David Harvey has termed New Imperialism, the imagination of the early twenty-first century has become increasingly catastrophic. In Hollywood blockbusters, best-selling novels, computer games, popular music, art and even political speeches, the world is consumed by vampires, zombies, meteors, aliens, viruses and terrorists. These overtly gothic descriptions articulate and even help produce new forms of imperialism. Building on, and often retelling, the British “imperial gothic” (Brantlinger 227) of the late nineteenth century, the new imperial gothic is obsessed with race, gender, degeneration, invasion, the destruction of society and the collapse of modernity. In this way, contemporary gothic comes across as fundamentally conservative and, to quote Teresa Goddu, in *Gothic America*, remains “continuous with official narratives, even when it apparently contradicts them.” (2).

From this perspective, it is tempting to dismiss the new imperial gothic as a hopelessly conservative and commercialized cultural formation that is best ignored. However, a focus on the contradictions that Goddu mentions with the aid of transcultural theory produces a more nuanced view. With a focus on Justin Cronin’s apocalyptic and critically acclaimed novel *The Passage* (2010), this paper seeks to investigate how contemporary gothic is sometimes able to query the very power structure that has arguably spawned it. This ability can be related to the novel’s creation of contact zones where transcultural meetings take place. These meetings are described as simultaneously catastrophic and necessary and the hybrids that are produced are similarly double natured; at the same time the monstrous Other and images of our own imperial desires. In this way, the novel allegorically maps both the current imperial landscape and suggests ways in which the borders that separate real and imagined categories can be crossed or dissolved.

Workshop E2 - Identity

John A Stotesbury, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu

Constructions of Transcolonial Identity in M. G. Sanchez's *Rock Black: A Gibraltar Fiction* (2006)

"...and all the queer little streets and the pink and blue and yellow houses and the rosegardens and the jessamine and cactuses and Gibraltar as a girl where I was a Flower of the mountain yes..."

What little study has thus far been made of Gibraltarian cultural identity has focused primarily on one of two main fields: its precolonial and colonial history, continuing into the present, or the emergence of linguistic diversity within a remarkably confined geopolitical space, with particular emphasis on the creolized Andalusian Spanish spoken, alongside English, by a significant proportion of Gibraltar's now-indigenous population. Despite the post-Second World War resettlement of the evacuated civilian population and the consolidation of an increasingly pro-British Gibraltarian civic identity under the impact of Francoist Spanish exclusionary policy, little original writing of note has emerged in English, apart from a few (quite readable) historical detective romances by local writers such as Sam Benady and Mary Chiappe. In the present century, however, Mark Sanchez, writing mainly from without the colony, has attempted in his *Rock Black* to explore the conflicted nature of his own Gibraltarian identity in a series of interlinked prose vignettes that draw on his experience of the colony in the period immediately succeeding the restoration of parliamentary democracy in Spain. In the process, his narratives appear to forge a new, self-conscious aesthetic capable of rendering that sense of indeterminacy both accessible and comprehensible.

Written in *ottava rima*, which harks back to Lord Byron's *Don Juan* and Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, this novel in verse forges its aesthetics of transculturation by yoking the African American vernacular to a rigid poetic format which may appear to be at odds with its theme, the genre of the neo-slave narrative, and the colloquial idiom. However, the paper will argue how the apparent discordancy follows the politics of *coersubmission*, whereby the space of literature becomes a contact zone of possibilities, contestations, and potentialities.

Eckhard Breitingner, Bayreuth African Studies, Eckersdorf, Germany.

How Chic is "Immigrant Chic"

Milan Kundera complained in his famous 1984 essay "The Tragedy of Central Europe" (New York Review of Books) that well-meaning West European critics perceive Central European literature and culture only as a subordinate part of Soviet cultural imperialism and its cultural uniformity. 30 years later, Gary Shteyngart coined the term "Immigrant Chic" to explain the commercial success of (Eastern) immigrant writers in the West.

In my paper, I will concentrate primarily on the works of Wladimir Kaminer, whose bestseller *Russen Disco* came into the cinemas in March 2012, and Gary Shteyngart's *Absurdistan*. Both writers – although writing for very different audiences, chose a farcical and satirical approach to explore their dual identities and cultural backgrounds. They compare the "Then" and "Now", i.e. their old soviet selves and their new capitalist selves. Communism once promised to create "the new man", Kaminer's and Shteyngart's "new man" seems to be the absolute perversion of the original concept. Kaminer & Shteyngart play on the synchronicity of the un-synchronous (Ernst Bloch). Both authors pursue a dual "anthropological" narrative approach with a duplicity of meanings. The narrator explores his own "old self" – what he used to be. He is at the same time emotionally involved, since he researches his own former self/ his own past. But since he is

looking back to his former self from the perspective of his new Western self, he assumes an outside perspective, claiming a certain objectivity of approach. The same duplicity applies of course the other way round. When looking at his new self, the narrator is conditioned by the experiences and the socialisation of his former (soviet) self. This narrative technique offers plenty of opportunities for farcical distortions, for absurdist encounters à la *Gulliver's Travels*. In this way, the texts engage also in the highly sensitive (or at least allegedly sensitive) political debate about immigration and integration.

To broaden the view, I will briefly touch on other writers, i.a.:

Melinda Nadj Aboni: *Tauben fliegen auf* (2011) Croatia/Switzerland – Deutscher Buchpreis (2011); Téa Obreht, *The Tiger's Wife* (2011), Serbia, US; Olga Grjasnowa, *Der Russe ist einer der Birken liebt* (2012) Aserbedjan/ Germany; David Bezmozgis, *The Free World* (2011) Latvia/ Canada

Jena Habegger-Conti, University of Bergen, Norway

Redrawing allegiances: Configurations of identity on a global scale

A recent article in the *Atlantic Monthly* titled “The Rise of the New Global Elite” states: “[T]oday’s super-rich are also different from yesterday’s . . . less connected to the nations that granted them opportunity—and the countrymen they are leaving ever further behind.” In other words, ideas of transnationalism and globalization, which emphasize shifting and disappearing national allegiances through many and various border crossings, have reconstrued the way in which identity is configured. Instead of finding roots in a nation, in ethnicity, or in a particular culture or heritage, certain allegiances are currently being made on a global level along economic rather than cultural lines. However, the critical emphasis on this new class of global elites flaunting a cosmopolitan optimism tends to overshadow other global socio-economic classes: in particular, a working class of migrants. Political economic theorist E. B. VanAppeldoorn points out that “the organized power of this transnationalist capitalist class [...] contrasts starkly with that of [...] labour, which remains fragmented and weak, and certainly does not constitute a transnational class.” (Van Appeldoorn, 2003, p. 152.) In other words, only *some* of us have the economic means to let go of our national ties and float the world as transnationalists; other, less economically powerful groups hold strongly to ideas of nationhood and the homeland. Chrystia Freeland underlines this in *The Atlantic Monthly* article by quoting G. K. Chesterton’s *The Man Who Was Thursday*: “The poor man really has a stake in the country. The rich man hasn’t; he can go away to New Guinea in a yacht.”

An investigation of configurations of belonging and identity in Julian Barnes’s *Pulse* (2011) and Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger* (2008) will serve as a starting point for a discussion of literary representations of the new global social classes.

Workshop E3 - Language

Benedikts Kalnačs, University of Latvia, Riga

The Aesthetics of Literary Transculturation: The Latvian Case

In my paper I will continue delving into creative output of the Latvian writer Rūdolfs Blaumanis (1863–1908) who in his literary works scrutinized the conditions of Latvian peasants and their relationships with German landlords during the late 19th and the early 20th century. My focus will be on Blaumanis’ novella *Andriksons* (1898) where the narrative begins from the perspective of a local landlord but then switches to that of a subjugated peasant. The sudden revelation of the uncanny aspects of this confrontation as well as representation of issues of stereotype and mimicry will be under discussion. The most intriguing questions linked to this particular literary work are thus global ones focusing upon aspects of writing back from the

margins of society as well as the ways of negotiating between cultures. In Blaumanis' work, the colonial narrative is both dismissed and reconstructed delving into the inescapable hybridity of cultural contacts. Also the question of literary genre will be involved. Contrary to novel form as representative for Western (colonial) narratives of the 19th century, Latvian writer chooses seemingly more modest form of novella for subverting the authoritarian message.

Piret Peiker, Tallinn University, Estonia / University of Turku, Finland

Language, translation and modernisation: the case of the Young Estonia movement

I propose to discuss Estonian debates on the Estonian language as a case study illuminating processes of modernisation and cultural translation. Habitually the Estonian language is considered at least in some respect the embodiment of the national cultural world as a whole (Herder). What is noteworthy to follow, however, is the attitudes towards what the language is considered to be *for* (performative, communicative, constitutive aspects), and how different political angles on modernity, tradition and change focus on the language issue as a nexus of debate. I will focus on the debates on the culturally and aesthetically modernising Young Estonia movement (1905-1915) and its project to "renew" the Estonian language, centrally executed through its extensive translation activity from a variety of languages. A further consideration that enters here is the relationship between language and literature and the role of artistic creativity in forging the language.

In the wake of the Young Estonia's 100th anniversary (2005) there are continuing debates, often much more charged than customary in academic conversation, what this movement meant in the context of Estonian culture and what it did to that culture. All sides would probably agree that in more ways than one Young Estonia was engaged in a cultural translation project. However, was it creativity or mimicry? What should we call it today, *tour de force* modernisation or regrettable "self-colonisation"? What is the significance of the Young Estonians' translating French fin de siècle poets or the psychological nuances of D'Annunzio? - topoi apparently alien for the Estonian peasant - petty bourgeois sociocultural world. How to regard Young Estonia's utopian project of engineering a better new language for the Estonians of the future?

Tatjana Bicjutko, University of Latvia

Language of Stereotyping in Roddy Doyle's "The Deportees"

Stereotyping is a cognitive process and as such it has a heavy imprint on any idiolect. In its own turn, characterisation is partially achieved through the portrayal of the language spoken by a character in question. Thus the research into linguistic strategies employed by characters similarly to the one in social sciences may help to say more about the socio-cultural processes depicted in a book.

Roddy Doyle's collection of short stories "The Deportees" initially written to be published in the immigrants' newspaper "Metro Eireann" covers the newest pre-crisis history of Ireland, that is, the rise of the Celtic Tiger and the concomitant prosperity. Each story is a sort of an anecdote based on social encounters between newly arrived and '100-percent' Irish, the encounters being the separate facets of a wider panorama of multiple contact zones.

Doyle's famous accuracy in dialogue portrayal allows to hypothesise that linguistic means of labelling employed by his characters may fuller reveal the social spaces where native-immigrant cultures meet. Using notions from cognitive theories, and especially schema theory, the paper aims to disclose differences and similarities in stereotyping strategies used by both parties. Appearing as a traditionalist and highly conservative society in Doyle's collection, the Irish of the beginning of the 21st c seem to be unprepared for the rapid social change. Paradoxically, for immigrants, stereotyping becomes part of transculturation and as such a successful strategy of blending in.

Panel: Department of English - University of the Fraser Valley, BC Canada

“So Are You a *Real* Indian?”: Canadian Sites of Transcultural indigeneity”

In this panel session we will engage in indigenous and diasporic ways of forging an intercultural dialogue and constructing an authentic identity as “Indian.” The body will be used as a site of intercultural exchange around what it means to be racialized as “Indian” (South Asian) and “Indian” (First Nations or indigenous) in Canada. The negotiation of these identities and the slippage of these semantics suggest a specific historical site of colonization and, simultaneously, provide a wider concept of transcultural indigeneity interconnectedness. The interdisciplinary approach used by this panel offers multiple sites of entry to the discourse of *transcultural vs. postcolonial* and each panelist seeks to both identify and challenge the often conflicted role of the “Indian” in national narratives. Using postcolonial Canadian literature and drama as sample texts, we evaluate transcultural aesthetics and transcultural indigeneity. These three Western Canadian scholars start this panel with a look at the consumption of the mixed race body in literature and media, then examine the “absent presence” of the indigeneity in South Asian literature and close with an intercultural performance of a new play that centers on transcultural indigeneity. All three presentations will foreground the performative aspects of both “Indian” identities in Canada.

- Hybridity in Canadian literature and drama- a powerpoint based on a forthcoming book “Living, Writing and Staging Racial Hybridity” looks at how Canadian writers represent mixedness in ways that reflect our unique historical and cultural context where indigenous mixed race bodies stand in for intercultural moments (La Flamme)
- S. Asian and Diaspora literature in Canada- Transcultural indigeneity is the focus of this presentation that features a critical analysis of the construction of the absent-presence of the “Indian” in South Asian literature (Prabhjot)
- “Me Indian- How?”- a staged reading of a new play featuring Indian and FN characters (Dhawan)

Questions that will hope animate our discussion include the following:

How does this transcultural indigenous body relate to cultural and identity politics?

How does literature describe or reinscribe indigeneity?

What socio-cultural and historical conditions create a frame for this analysis?

How does this transcultural body become symbolized in these texts?

What is unique about Canadian discussions and representations of transcultural indigeneity?

Michelle La Flamme, Department of English - University of the Fraser Valley, BC Canada

Rac(e)ing the Body in: An Analysis of Contemporary Canadian narratives representing Racial Hybridity

This presentation offers a crossgeneric and crossracial analysis of contemporary Canadian literature and drama. It will explore the semiotics of the racialized gaze and the semantics of hybridity in order to propose the different ways in which the racially mixed body functions symbolically in both literature and drama. Given the overdetermined nature of the racially hybrid body as a visual narrative and, in light of the insistent scopophilia with regards to racially hybrid bodies, the presentation will use both visual advertisements and sample texts from Canadian literature and drama to make visible some of the landscape in this discussion of the representation of mixedness.

Prabhjot Parmar, Department of English - University of the Fraser Valley, BC Canada

“the Land I stand on calls me”: Indigenous People in the Literature of the South Asian Diaspora in Canada

In the last two decades, the literary productions in English and vernacular languages, specifically Punjabi, have emerged as a strong expression of South Asian diasporic voices in Canada that have dealt with multiple issues including migration, belonging, language, transculturation, sexual politics, racism, and so on. Whereas the primary focus has been on the issues that have had and/or continue to have a direct impact on the South Asians, missing from most of these narratives, however, is the indigenous subject. Where are the First Nations peoples in these narratives and why have most writers not portrayed the other “Indian”? How have different writers responded to multicultural Canada and positioned themselves with regard to the indigenous peoples? In what way have the nation and national subject been perceived and depicted? By focusing on these questions, this paper examines the indigenous presence through its absence and explores its limited representations in the South Asian diasporic literature. In so doing, it argues that invoking myths and mythology offers an intertextual and transcultural strategy to engage with intergenerational experiences of exclusion and racism.

“Me Indian- How?” (provisional title)

Rajnish Dhawan, Department of English - University of the Fraser Valley, BC Canada

Reading of a new play

This presentation takes as its starting point 1) the notion that intercultural performance has the potential to bring into being new aesthetic forms and new diasporic, hybrid and intercultural social identities and 2) the idea of postcolonial theatre has utility as political intervention that promotes intercultural exchange.

The play explores the trails that connect the two communities who share the same titular identity-- Indian; an identity that connects one of these communities with its far off native land and evokes nostalgic images, while for the other it signals a disconnect from its immediate native land. Despite the fact that the Canadian First Nations (still governed by the Indian Act), and the East Indian immigrants have been sharing the same geographical space for more than a century, there is hardly any evidence of a dialogue between these two communities. The internal as well as external factors have created an atmosphere within the Canadian geographical space where the absence of this dialogue is considered a natural patch in the Canadian multi-cultural fabric. This play is a method to understand these internal and external factors and, at the same time, create space for the initiation of a dialogue among these "Indians".

SUNDAY

Workshop G1 - Africa

David Tambu, University of Yaounde I, Cameroon.

Bole Butake’s Dramaturgy: Holisticity and Universality in his Blue Cover Plays

In this paper, I set out to illustrate in what perspectives the plays of (Anglophone) Cameroon prolific literary baobab, Bole Butake could be read and viewed in terms of the territorial realm from which he emanates as well as the universal sphere. Of his nine published plays and one collection, I focus on his blue cover plays – *Lake God, And Palm Wine Will Flow, Lake God and Other Plays*, and *Zintgraff and the Battle of Mankon* (co-authored with Gilbert Doho). A study of

Butake's point of view in these plays reveals that his dramaturgy is relevant at the beyond border sphere. In other words, what the dramatist writes about his native land holds sway for other continents through what Thomas Sebeok calls global semiotics. Through an approach that is at once semiotic and holistic, I undertake a critical study of such manifest elements as paratextuality, characterization, setting, the playwright's socio-philo-biography, signs/objects, phenomena, publication languages/places, readership/audience, and other production aspects. I therefore arrive at universal phenomena from specific concepts. The semiotic theories of the likes of Charles S. Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure are also useful in this regard. In addition, I attempt to enkindle more interest in the art world on Bole Butake's perceivable and invaluable input in the definition of a dramaturgy that is concurrently African and universal – a craftsmanship that responds to the inter-cultural, inter-disciplinary, inter-continental, transcultural potential or cultural migration motive of committed literature - what Umberto Eco, Roland Barthes, and other semioticians call "text".

Vicki Briault Manus, Université Stendhal-Grenoble 3 and Université de Savoie at Chambéry, France.

The Aesthetics of Indigenization in Post-apartheid Black South African Literature

The situation in present-day South Africa is somewhat different from that observed in other cases of migrations and border-crossings. Transculturation here involves constructing bridges between indigenous African cultures co-existing side by side with the English and Afrikaans-based cultures of the former colonial powers. The segregation policies of the colonial period culminated in the apartheid regime (1948-1994) which enacted stringent policies, including racial classification and job passes, and forced Africans to live either in ethnic reserves (bantustans) or urban ghettos (townships).

This inheritance has had two major deleterious effects on indigenous South African cultures: on the one hand, the languages were denigrated, and stagnated instead of evolving to suit the exigencies of the modern world; on the other, although segregation has ended, the vast majority of South Africans still live in the same ethnic communities as in the past. Despite a progressive language policy on paper, English retains its pre-eminence as the language of government and commerce, while being a minority language (less than 10% mother-tongue speakers).

Thus, the majority of South Africans remain excluded by their language -- whether a Bantu language or one of the emerging urban creoles -- from "mainstream" South African literature, which continues to be written in English and, to a lesser extent, Afrikaans.

The paper touches briefly on language issues before focussing on the aesthetics of indigenization of English in South African fiction of the 21st century: *Coconut* by Kopano Matlwa, *The Story-teller* by Don Mattera, *Fanie Fourie's Lobola* by Nape 'a Motana, the late Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to our Hillbrow* and *David's Story* by Zoë Wicomb. It will focus particularly on the various creative devices used by each of these authors to bridge the gap between their inherited culture and the English language.

R. Kavu Ngala, University College of Telemark, Norway

Shakespeare and the Black World of Sophiatown: Transmediation in Can Themba's *Requiem for Sophiatown*

My paper explores how the concept of transmediation extends the use of Shakespeare by black people beyond the prevailing conceptualisations of cross-cultural writing. Arguably, Shakespeare was the marker of a putatively sophisticated identity throughout much of the colonial period in the Anglophone black world. Yet black people within and without Africa used Shakespeare to validate notions of shared literary experiences and expressions of ideas of human being. In seeking to validate intersectional but discrete experiences, issues of cultural difference, aesthetics and agency are foregrounded by black appropriators of Shakespeare in manners that reveal the processes by which identities transfigure themselves through transmediatory experiences. The dynamic of

identity negotiation involved in these processes is the main subject of my paper. It suggests the way in which different peoples internalise and transmute cultural structures and traditions of others, moulding them to embody self-definitive traits of their own identity, creating with them discrete cultures. Can Themba's *Requiem for Sophiatown* exemplifies how the Shakespearean universe intersects with and helps create a distinctly black experiential world. In Themba, the black identity in the urban space of Sophiatown is conceptualised through a deployment of Shakespeare's words, ideas, plays and themes as crucial coincident points with African experiences. In this way, Themba offers an example of how cultures in general and literary cultures in particular continuously take possession of phenomena from elsewhere to fashion and refashion themselves. In doing so, his approach broadly reveals, firstly, how literary culture as an aesthetic structure and a performative tradition constitutes and expresses itself. Secondly, the approach also reveals the ways by which literary cultures continually foster exchanges which imply them as unstable, intersectional and discrete structures of self-performance and human self-invention as well as reinvention.

Workshop G2 - India

Joel Kuortti, University of Turku, Finland

Ability to be so many people: Aesthetic Challenges to Established History in Tabish Khair's *Filming*

The project of narrating historical events in Indian literature receives various forms, not least in Tabish Khair's novel, *Filming* (2007), which combines cinematic, novelistic and historical modes of representation in its presentation of major events such as Partition in Indian history. The novel foregrounds the discrepancy between everyday and grand narratives. As such, the novel not so much tells history but highlights how it is performed, thus calling into question established historical truths of Indian national history.

Furthermore, Khair addresses colonial and postcolonial interests in a non-hegemonic manner which falls outside the purview of mainstream narrative positions invested in and operating under the axis of the metropolitan vs. the margin. This paper discusses the diverse means by which Khair's novel charts possibilities for narratibility existing beyond conventional modes of narration. The multiplicities of narrative structure, narrators, genres and geographies in the novel render any simplified reading of Indian histories suspicious, and, instead, offer a balanced consideration of Indian people across difference, be the question of different classes, genders, religions or times. The proposed paper taps into how *Filming* casts a critical view at established spectacles of representing Indian national history.

Maria Belville, Aarhus University, Denmark

Silence as a transcultural space – approaching the unspeakable Jhumpa Lahiri's short fiction

The binary of speech/ silence is arguably one of the most powerful of political tools in modern history. It negotiates a relationship to language that can be fearful and defined by hierarchy and ideology and this oppressive aspect of silencing as a means of exclusion has received much attention in theory and academic discourse. From a postmodern/ postcolonialist angle, politically based discourse produces silences and furthers apathy toward the other. Foucault proposes that 'there is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case'.

However, from an alternative perspective we can see that silence can also be a necessary and constructive thing. Silence is not inevitably a violence. Silence can afford a space for dialogue to begin and for creativity to emerge. As Luce Irigaray notes, in encountering 'the other': 'the first word we have to speak to each other is our capacity or acceptance of being silent... silence is the word, or the speaking, of the threshold – a space of possible meeting, of possible hospitality to one another'. As such, silence is an important transcultural space in artistic and aesthetic terms. Responding to this idea, my paper will examine the place of silence and the unspeakable in short story collection that explores important transcultural issues Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*.

Arnaud Barras, University of Genève, Switzerland.

"The Aesthetics of the Tide: The Ecosystem as Matrix for Transculturation in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*"

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* explores the meeting of different cultural environmental attitudes in the Sundarbans, a mangrove and tidal region at the border of India and Bangladesh, where the fresh waters of the river Ganges encounter the seawaters of the Gulf of Bengal. The confluence of sea and river water currents in the countless channels composing the delta creates a profuse mangrove ecosystem where diversity thrives. In the novel, Ghosh makes an analogy between the confluence of water currents and the confluence of cultural currents: he uses the ecological phenomenon as a frame of reference for representing the cultural diversity brought about by the many migration waves of the 20th century. The ecosystem of the Tide is a matrix for representing transculturation.

In this presentation, I will argue that *The Hungry Tide* creates a unique aesthetics of transculturation based on the tidal ecosystem of the Sundarbans: in the novel, transculturation ought to be seen as the confluence of cultures. This Aesthetics of the Tide allows the reader to think the process of transculturation in new ways: cultures are perceived as dynamic forces that shape the environment, each other and human populations; they are an integral part of the ecosystem. Thus, when the foreign protagonists enter the Sundarbans, they undergo a trans(cultural)formation that gives them an insight into the way of life of the local population: the boundaries between cultures are dissolved—just like the boundaries between river and sea are dissolved. In many ways, the Tide Country is a locus of transculturation.

Workshop H1 – Identity

Matthias Stephan, Aarhus University, Denmark

The Danish Identity Construction, A Continuous Encounter with the Other

In John McLeod's concept of the transcultural threshold, he envisions a point at which interaction with another can be perceived positively through all aspects of communication. "The transcultural threshold can *productively* be thought of as one of conversation *and* silence, engagement *and* displacement, where cosmopolitan and postcolonial approaches productively inform each other rather than short-circuit an attempt to build ethical, hopeful mondialisation." (McLeod 11) In a novel which has characteristics of magical realism, Peter Høeg's first novel, *Forstilling om det tyvende århundrede*, presents a series of transcultural encounters. These are characterized by understanding through silence, and the difficult interaction across cultural boundaries, yet with positive, hopeful consequences. This novel further provides the opportunity to explore the effect of transculturation as utilized in the construction of an individual and national identity. Transcultural theory presents a dialectical approach to identity, in which the interaction with another culture is a critical move towards a synthesis that produces a greater understanding. This development is based on a dialectical process which does not develop linearly but which forms always only further

elements and interstices of difference, and reflects neither the complete assimilation nor the refutation of either a social norm or otherness. This paper will attempt to explore Høeg's understanding of the modern Danish national identity, its development through aspects of culture both within and across the Danish borders, and how transculturation and transcultural encounters play a vital part of the process which, in Høeg's understanding, remains ongoing.

Anne Lise Brox Larsen, University of Tromsø, Norway.

When Jays Fly to Bárpmo: Negotiating identity between ethnicity, generation and gender

In this paper, I shall focus on the connection between categorisation and identity formation where there is a dynamic relationship between discourses of national identity and culture on the one hand and identity formation and practices among individuals on the other. Margaret Balderson's 1962 novel, *When Jays fly to Bárpmo*, portrays the development of a young female character in a Norwegian setting during the 1940s. The fictionalised village, Draugoy, presents an ethnic diversity stereotypical of rural settlements in the county of Troms. The negotiation and construction of identities that the transcultural, but also isolated, setting invites its characters into is complex. The contrasts between spring and winter, the midnight sun and the dark time, echo the contrast between the people of Draugoy, who are referred to as "some strange mixture of Norwegian, Kvaen and Lapp". The light metaphor denotes the differences between the various groups in the village. For example the dark time and the midnight sun seem to be used metonymically to denote the Norwegian and the Sami culture respectively. Is the Sami culture in the novel also symbolical of a happy and carefree existence? Is the Sami culture connected to a female and emancipatory project in the novel? Is this romantic notion of freedom in the Arctic setting a key issue in the main character's liberation project? Or is it, as one of the characters in the novel suggests, a setting in which one "will only stay if you do not belong anywhere else and if you cannot make up your mind exactly who and what you are" (p.20). Being a novel about Northern youth, an arctic novel of formation, from the perspective of an Australian writer, this novel belongs to an arctic discourse of Bildung.

Sandra Meskova, University of Latvia.

National Identity Constructions in Latvian Playwright Māra Zālīte's Drama

Māra Zālīte is a renowned Latvian poet and playwright who started her literary career in the 1970s and reached the peak of popularity in the period of national awakening the late 1980s and 1990s. Being a popular and recognized literary figure, she also took an active part in the activities of the Popular Front as a representative of creative intelligentsia that had a very important role in the process of regaining independence and the initial stage of the reconstruction of Latvia in the post-soviet period. Critics usually note the "social mission", the patriotic urge in Zālīte's poetry and drama, her attempts at building a positive Latvian collective identity; they interpret the popularity of her works as a token of the public's general acceptance of the identity models suggested by the author.

In her early dramas written in the late soviet period in the 1980s, Zālīte produced the folklore and mythological framework for Latvian national identity reconstruction referring to Latvian folklore ("Pilna Māras istabiņa" (1981), "Dzīvais ūdens" (1986)), history ("Tiesa" (1982)), national romanticist literature ("Lāčplēsis" (1986)). This resonated with the popular strivings of that time to re-imagine the collective past as that of century long oppression by foreign colonial powers, confirm national or people's values of Latvians.

However, in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century, Zālīte's drama shows more variety of national identity models, including transitional, peripheral, border, and negative ones. They are basically drawn from the history of Latvia but also represent intertextual variations on Latvian, German, Danish, Norwegian and other literary traditions. She specifically focuses on identity-in-transition and border identities.

In the suggested paper, the identity-in-transition will be regarded in the play “Eža kažociņš” (1990) and border identities in “Kaupēn, mans mīļais” (1998) and “Pērs Gints nav mājās” (2007). I will focus on such identity components as agency and gender, bringing out the specific functioning of the hero in these texts and masculinity as an important ideological tool.

Workshop H2 - Memory, Travel and Identity

Lotta Strandberg, University of Helsinki

Lived stories and imagined communities – transculturation on an Indian context.

In my paper, I attempt to circumscribe the notions of biography and autobiography in an Indian context, their role and position and the relationships between the individual and the collective in constructing a notion of community. I will address the issue from three different perspectives.

First, central autobiographies such as M.K. Gandhi's *The Story of Experiences with the Truth* (1927-1929) allows for inquiry into the generic definitions of autobiography and how the Indian contexts reformulate the generic conventions and affects an understanding of autobiographies. These autobiographies demonstrate the interdependence between the individual life story and a communities' sense of identity. The importance of individual lives as idols, martyrs, heroes depicted in biographies and their influence on a communities' identity is well known. How do these Indian autobiographies impact the relationship between the individual and the collective?

Second, life-story writing as a social phenomenon in contexts of tremendous social upheaval is familiar. Also in the Indian context, the fast changing societies result in tendencies to document and pass on experiences of realities, which are disappearing fast or have disappeared all together. The recent rise in biographies of parents and grandparents demonstrate this tendency. The documentation of past lives and lived experiences serves various purposes but how does it impact a present understanding of the community and its continuity?

Third, the old Indian hagiographic tradition functions differently and links to an oral storytelling tradition. As it documents history, passed events and remarkable personalities, it creates a common history and an understanding of a common legacy. How can this ancient tradition be linked to more contemporary biography and life story writings? In different ways all three perspectives, serve to construct a notion of community which is based on different relationships between the individual and the collective.

Maija Burima, Daugavpils University, Latvia

Travelogues in Latvian Literature since Regaining National Independence (1991): Border Deconstruction and Reconstruction

In the Soviet times, the genre of travel narratives, thematic of travel and images of other countries or regions were not very widespread in Latvian literature. This may be accounted for by the suspicious attitude initiated by the Soviet ideology towards all regions that were not a part of the socialist block. Therefore travel descriptions mostly cover either travels around the Soviet Union or socialist states and their partisans, e.g. Cuba, India. Writers were often invited to join the exchange visit delegations and their travel impressions inspired descriptions of these travels.

After regaining the independence of the Baltic States in 1991, all taboos were lifted from the genre of travel narratives. Gradually, after gaining the opportunities and financing for traveling, many people started traveling intensely in different directions. Among them were many writers who conveyed their travel impressions in books. Besides, a number of TV and radio programs and TV shows appeared that focused on travel topics.

The genre of travel narratives is represented not only by professional writers but also publicists, as determined by the particularity of the genre of travel narratives, i.e. its intention of providing comments on new spatial experience. Writers, when explicating their experience, supplant the

thematic standpoint by the equally important manner of literary expression, narrative aesthetic, atmosphere, personal experience and feeling depiction, forming a dialogue with the depicted place. Publicists aim at partiality, revelations of striking details and their precise characteristics, representing themselves as mediators between the depicted place and the readers of their texts.

Eva Birzniece, Daugavpils University, Riga.

Women's Identity in the Latvian Narratives about Deportation to Siberia

The narratives - autobiographies and autobiographical novels - about deportations of civilians of Latvia to Siberia in 1941 and 1949 by Soviet government construct and represent changes in the women's identity under political and social pressures. These narratives were published in Latvia after the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991) as before 1991 these types of narratives were censored at least in a twofold way – they were not officially allowed by the state and deportations were a taboo topic in the society generally.

Women and men were separated in their interments, and children always stayed with women, thus women also had objectively very different deportation experience from men. Female experience has been marginalised for multiple reasons and in multiple ways both in life and representation in literature. Thus, when included in literary representation, the women really formed a voice unheard before. Because women's experience was so different from that of men, and their voices either marginalized or ignored, the women's voice has become individuated and distinct. This leads to understanding that "... the most individuated are those subjects who are placed on the margins of the social" (Simon During).

The narratives about deportations depict shifts in the identity of Latvian women who experienced life in displacement as compared to their personal integrity in their typical self in Latvia before deportation. The narratives construct the identity of very strong and capable women who take care of their own and their children's lives – they show rationality and extreme will to survive in intolerable and unfair conditions. Latvian women are well-educated in comparison to the local inhabitants and education becomes their entrance ticket to best qualified jobs in displacement and also a source of social status at least in the local Latvian community.

To some extent the intensity of familial and female solidarity in general is unusual in the narratives about deportations as the usual image of Latvians is that they are people who do not cooperate easily. This view is also very strong in some narratives written by men. Women's drive to survive is expressed also in appreciation of Siberian nature and attempts to start their own home, or at least household, even in the poverty of Siberia. This is a way of being responsible and trying to regain control over one's own life. Regardless of strong female identity and discourse of resistance created in the narratives about deportation, there are several themes that are silenced. These include gender crimes against women, collaboration of Latvians with the Soviet functionaries who deported people and later, after people returned from Siberia, kept penalizing and ostracizing them.

A Latvian-British anthropologist Vieda Skultans believes that through deportation narratives people have agency that they did not have at the time when they were persecuted and no decisions concerning their lives were dependent on themselves. Creating a story about what happened is a way to shape it in a liveable and dignified way.