

SPECIAL PANELS



Monday, June 7, 16:00-17:30

“Cultural Specificity and the Problem of the Postcolonial in Reading Eden Robinson”

Coordinator: James Mackay (European University Cyprus)
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The widely praised works of Haisla/Heilsuk writer Eden Robinson provide an opportunity to analyze the dual place of Canada as both product of colonialism and continuing perpetrator of cultural genocide. Each of the papers in this panel takes up the theme of the “stroke” to interrogate this complex of subject positions within the context of Commonwealth criticism.

Richard Brock suggests that postcolonial paradigms invite critics to paint across aboriginal cultures in strokes too broad to accommodate their specificities. He argues that much extant criticism is trapped in a problematic “temporality of the authentic,” in which the Native writer is doubly articulated as a figure with access to a “primal” cultural heritage prior to the colonial encounter, and simultaneously as a belated historian of this encounter. A means of overcoming such fraught temporalities in theorizing *Monkey Beach* might lie in the variety of atemporal objects through which the novel negotiates cultural exchange. As refuges from the temporalities of “pre” and “post,” the novel’s constructions of objecthood resist the categorization of aboriginal writing as either “primal” or subordinate to the colonial encounter.

James Mackay concentrates on a trope in *Monkey Beach* and the short story collection *Traplins*: the use of metaphors of techno-modernity to describe natural scenes (e.g. the description of the sea’s surface in *Monkey Beach* as being “like crumpled aluminium”). The paper places Robinson’s novel in a long tradition of Indigenous American writing which actively celebrates modernity and the availability of mechanized tools to a society often identified primarily with nature. Recent anthropological studies, such as Kenneth Ames’ 2002 investigation of Haida seafaring technology, will support this reading. In preferring the 4-stroke outboard motor to the romantic stroke of a paddle in the water, Robinson claims a stake in this modernity, positing it as a positive force to overcome historical trauma.

David Stirrup notes that *Monkey Beach* relies on a multivalent sense of the term “passage,” drawing on imagery of both spatial and temporal movement (between places and stages of life), and of transition (between states of being, and

moments of/outside of time). What results is a complex overlaying of the ways in which indigeneity is “rooted in and routed through” particular spaces. Stirrup argues that the interconnection of storied emplacement, the novel’s precolonial and postindustrial cartographies, and its spatial collapse between “parallel territories,” constructs a theoretical container for the interrogation of indigenous sovereignty in terms discrete from the ideological models of the European nation-state.

All three papers critique the standard postcolonial model’s imposition of a narrow set of readings on the texts under discussion, asking whether the postcolonial lens reinscribes colonial discourse on indigenous literary production.

Bios:

Richard Brock is a PhD candidate at the University of Calgary, specializing in Canadian and postcolonial literatures and visual art. His essays have appeared, among other places, in the *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, a special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education* entitled “Art, Literature, and Place,” and the *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*. He is currently completing a dissertation entitled “Reading Canada and the Postcolonial: An Ekphrastic Methodology.”

James Mackay is a lecturer in Comparative Literature at the European University Cyprus. His published work includes articles on Pauline Johnson, Gerald Vizenor and Diane Glancy, and his edited collection *The Salt Companion to Diane Glancy* is due to be published in December. He is currently engaged in editing a special issue of the journal *SAIL* (on tribal constitutions as Native literary expression) and co-editing, with David Stirrup, the collection *Tribal Fantasies: Native Americans in the European Imaginary 1910-2010*.

David Stirrup is a lecturer in American Literature at the University of Kent. His publications include articles on Gordon Henry, Jr., Joan Crate, Andrew Blackbird, and Louise Erdrich. His monograph on Louise Erdrich’s work is forthcoming with Manchester University Press. Current projects include editing a special issue of *ARCS* on ‘Culture and the Canada-US border’ and co-editing, with James Mackay, the collection *Tribal Fantasies: Native Americans in the European Imaginary 1910-2010*.



Tuesday, June 8, 9:00-10:30

“Cross-Dressing and Cross-Gendering in Post-colonial Literature”

Coordinator: Bénédicte Ledent (University of Liège)

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Petra Tournay-Theodotou (European University Cyprus)

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“Race and Gender-Crossover in Caryl Phillips’s *Dancing in the Dark*”

In my talk I trace the development of the novel’s protagonist, Bert Williams, the famous American black minstrelsy entertainer and the implications and consequences of the “anomaly of a black person performing in blackface” (Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests*, 1990: 281) on a personal as well as on a larger societal and cultural level. All the while painfully attempting to preserve his personal integrity and dignity in view of his adopted role, Bert becomes the embodiment of Ralph Ellison’s “‘sacrificial’ figure” engaged in a self-humiliating and self-effacing act. More specifically, in my analysis of the novel I contend that minstrelsy can be conceptualized as a form of transvestite theater, in which the black man appearing in blackface – that is a caricature of “blackness” – turns into an unintentional crossover figure. In his performance of the stupid, shuffling buffoon, Williams becomes a sign of emasculated ridicule, reassuring the white audience of the black man’s inconsequence in majority culture. Ultimately, the black entertainer’s body becomes readable, or misreadable, as a sign of femininity. Williams’s performance of the black man donning the black minstrel mask can hence be regarded as a simultaneous form of racial and gender-crossover.

Daria Tunca (University of Liège) dtunca@ulg.ac.be

“Portrait of the Artist as a Cross-Dresser: Chris Abani’s *The Virgin of Flames*”

Cross-dressing is a pervasive motif in the novel *The Virgin of Flames* (2007) by Chris Abani, an author of Nigerian-British descent. Indeed, the story, set in Los Angeles, features at least two characters with an ambiguous sexual identity: on the one hand, a painter of Nigerian-Salvadorian parentage nicknamed Black who regularly dresses as the Virgin Mary and constitutes the focus of the book and, on the other, a transsexual stripper known as Sweet Girl, with whom the protagonist is obsessed. In this paper, I would like to concentrate on Black’s personality, his artistic vision and his relationship with Sweet Girl, in the hope of demonstrating that the act of transgressing the boundaries of gender in *The Virgin of Flames* cannot be solely understood as an expression of troubled sexuality. More specifically, I wish to argue that cross-dressing acts as a metaphor for the main character’s search for identity both as a person and as an artist. These two facets are inextricably intertwined: Black’s transformation may be considered a man’s attempt to come to terms with his racial and religious background and his troubled family history; at the same time, his repeated acts of cross-dressing may also be interpreted as reflections of the artist’s desire to find a place for himself in his own created world. I shall further suggest that the transvestite painter’s double position as creator and shape-shifter reflects his

yearning for the absolute, and that the novel reveals this quest to be profoundly ambiguous. This complexity is most apparent in the book's provocative ending, which I shall attempt to analyse in the final part of my presentation.

Bénédicte Ledent (University of Liège) B.Ledent@ulg.ac.be

“Cross-Dressing and the Ghost of Otherness in Jackie Kay’s *Trumpet*”

Jackie Kay’s 1998 novel *Trumpet* focuses on Joss Moody, a famous jazz musician who was born a woman but spent much of his life as a man, with a wife and an adopted son. He is presented as living in a multicultural society which seems to have found a form of accommodation with otherness, racial or otherwise. However, the realization of his cross-dressing after his death comes as a tremendous shock, to society as a whole but also to his son, Colman, who regards his father’s ambiguous identity as a betrayal. The argument I would like to put forward in this paper is that cross-dressing functions in Kay’s novel as the ultimate difference, as a kind of ghost of otherness that comes to haunt Britain, a society represented here as apparently post-racial. My discussion of this issue will also refer to other ‘cultural texts’, notably to Neil Jordan’s film *The Crying Game* (1992) and Pauline Melville’s short story, “You Left the Door Open”, published in her 1990 collection *Shape-Shifter*.

Bios:

Petra Tournay-Theodotou is an Associate Professor of English Literature at European University Cyprus, where she teaches Postcolonial, British, African-American and Women’s literature. She obtained both her Masters and PhD in English and Spanish language and literature from the RWTH Aachen, Germany. Her publications include essays and book chapters on 19th and 20th century Spanish (Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, Manuel Rivas), Latinamerican (Carlos Fuentes, Jorge Luis Borges) and British (John Banville, Lawrence Durrell, Zadie Smith, Caryl Phillips, Leone Ross, Bernardine Evaristo) literature and a monograph on the Spanish poet Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer.

Daria Tunca currently works as an F.R.S.-FNRS Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Liège in Belgium. Her areas of research include postcolonial literature (with a focus on Nigerian fiction) and stylistics. She has published articles on Ben Okri, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Chris Abani and New Zealand writer Janet Frame, and has co-edited a collection of essays on British-Caribbean author Caryl Phillips with Bénédicte Ledent (forthcoming with Rodopi). She maintains a website on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (<http://www.L3.ulg.ac.be/adichie>) and an online bibliography of works by and about Ben Okri (<http://www.L3.ulg.ac.be/okri>).

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Tuesday, June 8, 14:00-15:30

“Of Strokes, Waka and Ocean Voyages: Pacific Literature on the Move”

Coordinator: Alice Te Punga Somerville (Victoria University of Wellington) Alice.TePungaSomerville@vuw.ac.nz

The salty truth of Pacific Literary Studies is that the field is experiencing something of a crisis: while Pacific people write more widely and more confidently each year, unprecedented limits are placed on the circulation of these texts by two institutions of publishing and academia. Pacific writers may well be writing, but Pacific texts are (still) not as mobile as we might hope. Although it is something of a cliché to describe Pacific Literature in terms of navigation, given the almost unaccountable distance across which Pacific people have travelled around our beloved ocean, in this panel we take the metaphor of the voyaging waka/ vaka/ va'a/ wa'a in order to interrogate the limits and possibilities of textual mobility. Responding to the question of who determines the stroke by which a canoe is propelled, this panel attempts to shift the focus of Pacific Literary Studies from strategies of mobility that echo the physically strenuous and fast pace of paddling (waka ama) to reflection on the ways in which the voyaging canoe uses currents and wind in order to move with purpose across large expanses in rather more risky, but ultimately more sustainable, journeys. This panel will interrogate this specific predicament of restricted movement in our region while, at the same time, it foregrounds the dynamic claims about mobility that are both described and enacted in the vast and fabulous texts of the Pacific region. Rather than focussing on the texts themselves – yet returning again and again to the texts for direction and grounded theory – the papers on this panel each foreground the mobility of Pacific Literatures. Specifically, the individual papers will foreground three different aspects of textual mobility: the politics of publishing Pacific Literature; the teaching of Pacific Literature in universities and schools; and the various ways in which Pacific texts might be expected and allowed to travel differently. Maori poet Robert Sullivan's 1999 collection *Star Waka* is made up of 101 poems and 2001 lines: these numbers peek over the new millennium and, thereby, the space and time beyond popular focus.

IN 101 POEMS

STROKING Y2K

STANZAS PEOPLED WITH STARS AND WAKA

AND SEA STROKING PAST TWO THOUSAND LINES

If Pacific people have managed to cross the largest ocean in the world, surely there are lessons to be learned in order to navigate a way through these times of constriction.

Bios:

Alice Te Punga Somerville (Maori) – Victoria University of Wellington Alice.TePungaSomerville@vuw.ac.nz; **Selina Tusitala Marsh** (Samoa/Tuvalu) – University of Auckland s.marsh@auckland.ac.nz; **Sina Vaai** (Samoa) –

National University of Samoa, smtvaai@yahoo.com

Selina and Alice are the co-Chairs of SPACLALS: they teach Pacific Literature at the Universities of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington respectively. Both are active scholars and poets. Dr. Sina Vaai was born in Fiji of mixed Samoan-Fijian ancestry and now lives in Apia, Samoa where she works at the National University of Samoa in the Faculty of Arts, Department of English and Foreign Languages, as the Associate Professor of English. Her major research areas include identity and literary representations in Pacific Literatures, especially from Western Polynesia and its associated diasporas as well concerns with literacy in the second language. She also helps promote computer literacy and learning via computers through her chairing of the Science Foundation of Samoa.



Wednesday, June 9, 11:00-12:30

“TransCanada Institute”

**Coordinator: Smaro Kamboureli (University of Guelph,
TransCanada Institute) Smaro@uoguelph.ca**

The discourse of the commonwealth and ethics and politics of the common/uncommon (2010 ACLALS CFP) fall within the scope of the TransCanada project (www.transcanadas.ca). Our proposed panel explores how the "commonwealth" signifies in the context of TransCanlit where scholars are grappling with how they can discursively and practically resist the logic of the global market economy, which has already refashioned the university as a source of corporatized knowledge and asymmetrical wealth generation. The panel will address the dialectic of complicity/resistance by engaging critically with the formation of Canlit as a commonwealth discourse coming to terms with colonialism and its (debatable) postcolonial state and the recent interrogation of what "common" and "wealth" signify in relation to the Canadian nation-state.

Len Findlay's paper will engage with some of the key determinants of literary and cultural production in Canada today. "Soft Sovereignties and Strokes of Genius: Situating the Indigenous Humanities within Canada as a Multilateralist State and Middling Cultural Power" will show how a new intellectual formation calling itself the Indigenous Humanities combines legal, educational, and cultural theory, the Honour of the [British] Crown and the moral suasion of the United Nations, to circumvent the neoliberal apparatuses of the Canadian State. The Honour of the Crown lies at the heart of treaty federalism, allowing First Nations intermittent and strategic parity with colonial and neo-colonial power along the axis of soft sovereignty. Meanwhile, in a stroke of genius at the UN, Indigenous peoples have exposed the racist resistance in Canada and other prominent white-settler states to cognitive, cultural, and political justice for all their citizens.

Smaro Kamboureli's "From the 'Commonwealth' to the 'Antianæsthetic': Canlit Translated in Transnational Terms" will re-visit, through Larissa Lai's novel, *Salt Fish Girl*, and Erin Moure's (selected) poetry and poetics, the epistemic foundations of CanLit as a national tradition. By investigating the political, economic, and cultural implications of three of the key concepts that emerge from these authors' writing--"transelation" (Moure), genetically modified bodies (Lai), and the polis/Republic conceived in transnational terms (Lai/Moure)--she will argue for a notion of community which, though it remains complicit with the logic of capitalism and that of a nation-state structured around sameness, radically reconfigures the contours that shape the commonalities that link its subjects/citizens.

Ashok Mathur's paper, "The Trans(re)sistor: performing literary reversals," addresses the role of refuting static models of identity (gender, race, sexuality, citizenship) in the revisioning of a commonwealth that disengages from the

seat of empire. Looking at various modes of literary/artistic presentation that, like original transistor radios, broadcast new forms of creative practice that resist conventional models of distribution/production, this paper suggests a wave of Canlit that transmogrifies the past into a complicated present. Performance artists David Bateman, Lori Blondeau, David Roach, and Adrian Stimson use texts, drag, and visual representations to trouble Canadian histories of indigenous contact, gender roles, and race/sexuality matrices to create a CanLit that, through parody and protest, redefines the commonwealth imaginary.

Bios:

Len Findlay is Professor of English and Director of the Humanities Research Unit at the University of Saskatchewan. Widely published on nineteenth-century literature and on literary theory, he is the co-editor of *Pursuing Academic Freedom: 'Free and Fearless?'* (Purich 2001), editor and translator of *The Communist Manifesto* (Broadview 2004), and author of essays such as "Spectres of Canada: Image, Text, Aura, Nation" (*University of Toronto Quarterly*, spring 2006), and "After Systemic Racism: The Canada We Can Be" (*Directions* [Canadian Race Relations Foundation] 2009). His *Oral Cultures and Book History* is forthcoming from University of Toronto Press.

Smaro Kamboureli is Professor and Canada Research Chair Tier 1 in Critical Studies in Canadian Literature at the School of English and Theatre Studies and the founder and Director of TransCanada Institute at the University of Guelph. Her recent publications include a reprint of *Scandalous Bodies: Diasporic Literature in English Canada* (WLUP 2009) and *Trans.Can.Lit.: Resituating the Study of Canadian Literature*, co-edited (WLUP 2007). She has edited the anthology *Making a Difference: Canadian Multicultural Literatures in English* (Oxford UP 2006) and co-edited the special TransCanada issue, "Discourses of Security, Peacekeeping Narratives, and the Canadian Cultural Imagination," *University of Toronto Quarterly* (2009).

Ashok Mathur is an Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair in Cultural and Artistic Inquiry, Departments of Visual & Performing Art and English & Modern Languages, at Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, B.C. He directs the Centre for innovation in Culture and the Arts in Canada (CiCAC), an artist think-tank and residency, and works and publishes on the intersections of research and creativity. His most recent novel, *A Little Distillery in Nowgong*, was released in the fall of 2009.



Wednesday, June 9, 14:00-15:30

“Historical Cultures and the Postcolonial Situation”

Coordinator: Eva Ulrike Pirker (University of Freiburg)

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There have been times past when popular culture has been infatuated with the with history, but the current boom has no precedent: History is *en vogue*, and a widespread interest in historical themes can be observed not only in the realms of literature, drama, and film, but also on the internet, in computer games, and other popular media. Simultaneously, the more traditional manifestations and sites of historical cultures are equally thriving: Commemorative monuments are constructed even in times of financial crisis and museums draw more visitors than ever. As a field in which political and institutional frameworks converge with economic interests, historical culture is, of course, contested. Postcolonial contexts provide a wealth of examples that can serve to highlight the complexities inherent in the acts of researching, presenting, and commemorating history. This has considerable implications for the historiographical project. As early as the 1980s, Bhabha observed that the “struggle against colonial oppression changes not only the direction of Western history, but challenges its historicist ‘idea’ of time as a progressive, ordered whole.” (Bhabha 1986) Today, the former colonial metropolises from which historical imaginings were proliferated, are increasingly regarded as postcolonial spaces themselves, which have been “provincialized” (Chakrabarty 2000) by contemporary, postcolonial trends in historiography. Whose history dominates in postcolonial societies? How is the colonial past (with its many ‘unspeakable’ historical chapters) remembered? What shifts have taken place in regional historical cultures in recent times? How do these affect the emergence and dominance of certain historical narratives and the form that these narratives take? Our panel contributes to what is becoming a thriving field of research into (popular) historical cultures. It presents three case studies that assess contributions to, as well as the debates surrounding, the colonial past in three regional contexts from what is still understood as the Commonwealth: Britain, Australia, and the Caribbean. Thus, our panel will examine historical cultures in these three distinct post colonial spaces — the former colonial ‘centre’; a former ‘white settler colony’; and, the prototypical mixed space of the Caribbean.

Anja Schwarz (University of Konstanz) anja.schwarz@uni-konstanz.de

“Counterfactual Histories of Colonialism: Kate Grenville’s neo-Victorian Novels”

Over the last ten to fifteen years, fiction, in which the nineteenth century is re-imagined from the perspective of the present, has flourished. Increasingly, this genre of neo-Victorian literature is receiving critical attention, prompting a

range of edited collections and book length studies (Kucich and Sadoff 2000; Krueger 2002; Taylor and Wolff 2004; Kaplan 2007) as well as the recent founding of the *Journal of Neo-Victorian Studies*. As discussions about this genre have predominately focussed on British novels, critics have tended to overlook the fact that for some years now the nineteenth century has been a major preoccupation of writers from former settler colonies such as Australia and New Zealand. Through an in-depth analysis of two recent novels by Australian author Kate Grenville (*The Secret River*, *The Lieutenant*), my paper argues that within these novels a particular 'settler-colonial' inflection of the neo-Victorian is evident. These texts share a manner of engaging with the nineteenth-century colonial past that invites readers to imagine counterfactual histories of colonialism. In doing so, they strive to articulate a renewed and 're-fixed' connection between the settler-colonial subjects and their land.

Barbara Korte (University of Freiburg)
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“Cricket Strokes across Cultures: C.L.R. James and Post-War Migration to the 'Motherland' in *Wondrous Oblivion*”

Before World War II, C.L.R. James, the black intellectual born in Trinidad, discussed the impact which Britain's (former) colonies would have for the future formation of a British post-imperial identity. Migration from the Commonwealth after the war and its consequences for the (self-)understanding of contemporary multi-ethnic Britain provide a testing-ground for James's assumptions. These connections are negotiated for a popular audience in the feature film *Wondrous Oblivion* (UK 2003, written and directed by Paul Morrison). The film, which employs genre conventions of the family film and the sport film, is set in London during the 1960s and uses sport (with its elements of competition and common play) as a metaphor to explore the challenges of West Indian migration – both for the 'mother country' and the arrivals who found the country less motherly than they desired. The film refers to C.L.R. James as "a political theorist and the best cricket writer in the world", and it is through cricket, a sport specifically associated with the Commonwealth, that James's ideas about political and cultural relations in a post-colonial (English-speaking) 'family' are made accessible for a mainstream audience in Britain of the early 21st century. Against today's background of more complex and conflicted migration on a global scale, the film seems to cast a nostalgic light on an earlier phase of migration and a cross-culturality mediated by shared historical experiences, values and cultural practices within the Commonwealth (such as a shared love of cricket). However, the film also points to the racism that has persisted in Britain until today and, through its second focus on a family of Jewish refugees, indicates that migration to Britain has always had 'un-common' and competing elements.

Eva Ulrike Pirker (University of Freiburg) ulrike.pirker@anglistik.uni-freiburg.de

“Clio Between Celebration and Doom: Historical Culture in the Caribbean”

As a consequence of long-term domination by changing European colonial powers, of the collective trauma of uprooting, slavery and diverse diasporas, and, finally, of an asynchronous, very heterogeneous process of emancipation and (re-)organisation of Caribbean societies (which in turn is influenced by affiliations with 'mother countries', '*grandes nations*' or the Commonwealth), historical culture in the Caribbean has been a complex matter for a long time. As a result, its associated debates shift between loudness and silence, acts of overcharging and forgetting. In such debates, writers and artists have – as is often the case with 'difficult' memory discourses – assumed an influential status early on. This paper outlines the discursive formation as well as some influential positions in relation to the question of how to write (display, enact, screen) Caribbean history. It particularly focuses on some of Derek Walcott's long poems and poetic essays that centre on this theme and assesses his propagation of a "New World Aesthetics" in light of the general upsurge of historical culture in Western and many postcolonial contexts. Walcott has assumed an uncomfortable, even radical position in the debate about Caribbean at an early stage. His texts will be examined against the backdrop of the historical situations from which they have emerged, but also against the discourses surrounding historical culture in the Caribbean and beyond.

Bios:

Anja Schwarz holds a PhD from the Freie Universitaet in Berlin and teaches Postcolonial Literatures at the University of Konstanz. Her current research interests include historical reenactments, as well as late-eighteenth century historiography and travel. She has published on reenactments, multicultural politics and the Australian beach as a postcolonial site of memory.

Barbara Korte teaches British literature and culture at the English Department of the University of Freiburg, Germany. Recent research interests include representations of multi-ethnic Britain in literature and film, as well as popular history, which is the topic of an interdisciplinary Freiburg research group, *Historische Lebenswelten*. Selected Publications: (with Claudia Sternberg), *Bidding for the Mainstream? Black and Asian Film in Britain since the 1990s*. (2004); *Represented Reporters: Images of War Correspondents in Memoirs and Fiction* (2009); (ed.) *The Penguin Book of First World War Stories* (2007); (co-ed.) *Multiethnic Britain 2000+: New Perspectives on Literature, Film and the Arts* (2008).

Eva Ulrike Pirker holds a PhD from Freiburg University, Germany, where she teaches in the fields of (post)colonial literatures and British cultural studies. Her publications in these fields include analyses of literature, film and photography and the co-edited volume *Multiethnic Britain 2000+: New Perspectives on Literature, Film and the Arts* (2008).



Thursday, June 10, 9:00-10:30

“Disgrace and after: the Post-colonial as Both Perpetuation of and Attempted Recovery from the Trauma of Apartheid in Recent South African Writing”

**Coordinator: Eva Hunter (University of the Western Cape)
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J M Coetzee has explored the political and cultural climate of South Africa as thoroughly and sensitively as any author, and has moved to Australia. His last two novels (*Slow Man* and *Diary of a Bad Year*) have Australian backgrounds, even though in *Diary of a Bad Year* momentary reference is made to South African phenomena, and the protagonist, Signor C, is an ex-South African. The novelist’s move to Australia, then, has not involved a denial of his past. The paper by Margaret Lenta will seek to determine, through its examination of Coetzee’s work, what nationality, family, and place have meant to Coetzee in *Disgrace* and his autobiographical works, *Boyhood*, *Youth*, and *Summertime*, and what nationality can mean in colonies and post-colonies to the descendants of colonisers.

The paper by Margaret Daymond will examine what place community, nation, and the concept of ‘belonging’ have in the autobiographical elements of investigative journalism by authors such as Jonny Steinberg (*Three Letter Plague*) and Kevin Bloom (*Ways of Staying*), and in the essays (mostly by academics) collected in *At Risk* and *Load Shedding* (both volumes subtitled *Writing on and over the Edge in South Africa*) edited by Sarah Nuttall and Liz McGregor. In these volumes the contributors have written short autobiographical essays inquiring into particular incidents in their lives. Following on from an inquiry into the uses of a personal note in the book-length journalism, the paper will ask what bearing the brevity of these essays might have on a treatment of community, nation, and belonging at the present juncture in South Africa, and it will be informed by concepts like Nuttall’s ‘entanglement’.

The third paper, by Eva Hunter and also incorporating Nuttall’s concept ‘entanglement’, will focus on the most recent work of two leading Afrikaner writers, both white women. Both Antjie Krog, in *There Was This Goat*, and Marlene van Niekerk in *Agaat*, depict the perpetuation of and attempted recovery from trauma caused by apartheid. Antjie Krog’s collaborative work is ground-breaking in many senses: it is the product of research undertaken with two academic colleagues whose knowledge of their language, isiXhosa, and

culture are set alongside Krog's own whiteness and Afrikaner identity. Together they investigate problems raised by academic research methods, by methods used in the Truth & Reconciliation Commission, and by existing divisions among South Africans, not only between 'black' and 'white' but also among rural and urban isiXhosa-speakers. Also depicting and probing previously unexplored areas of trauma inflicted under apartheid is Van Niekerk's novel *Agaat*, a major work. Both texts are forward-looking while remaining critical.

Bios:

Margaret Lenta is a senior research associate and an emeritus professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. Her research interests are in eighteenth century prose writing and contemporary South African texts. Her most recent book is *Paradise, the Castle and the Vineyard: Lady Anne Barnard's Cape Diaries* (2006), and in 2008 she published two articles: 'Sentencing Slaves: Verdicts of the Cape Courts, 1705 -1794' and 'History Effaced: The International Defence and Aid Letters'.

Margaret J Daymond is Professor Emeritus and Fellow of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. Her publications are mostly on African women writers, the most recent being on Sindiwe Magona in *Twelve Best Books by African Women* (Ohio U Press, 2009). She edited *South African Feminisms: Writing, Theory and Criticism, 1990-1994* (Garland, 1996) and co-edited *Women Writing Africa: the Southern Region* (Feminist Press, 2003). She was a founder editor of *Current Writing*, now in its twenty-first year.

Eva Hunter is a Research Fellow and former Associate Professor at the University of the Western Cape. Her publications are mostly on women writers in Africa. Her most recent publication was "Gender Politics and the Gothic in Karel Schoeman's *This Life*."



Thursday, June 10, 11:00-12:30

“Rethinking Indian Performances and the Legacies of Empire”

Coordinator: Teresa Hubel (Huron University College)

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Performance is at the very heart of South Asian life, and it is often through street and stage theatre, dance events, film, religious ritual, and television that political and cultural issues are tackled and either temporarily resolved or brought to a crisis. Given the pervasiveness of performance in mainstream South Asian culture, the radical shift in performance traditions that occurred as the result of

the colonial encounter between Europe and the people of the subcontinent, and the fact that performances such as cinema have been among the most notable cultural products that South Asia exports and which function therefore as prime identity-defining practices for members of the global South Asian diaspora, it is surprising that postcolonial theory and interpretation, which has tended to focus so single-mindedly on narrative and the novel, has only recently begun to analyze the significance of this area of representation and meaning. Novels are generally produced by and for the literate classes; performance, however, reaches farther into this subcontinental population, often linking classes, castes, and religions and even creating bridges across the staggering multilinguality that is modern South Asia. It could be argued that the marginalization of performance as a scholarly subject is, in part, a consequence of the reality that in South Asia professional performers have historically hailed from groups that are non-elite, such as lower castes and working classes, and also non-literate groups who are less likely to contribute to scholarship.

This panel brings together papers that examine filmic, dance, and theatrical representations that allow for a productive dialogue on performance practices shaped, complicated, and interrupted by the cultural and political legacies of the Empire. These representations range from the 2008 film *The Last Lear*, which both affirms and interrupts the construction of Shakespeare as a signifier of colonial authority; courtesan films that address the consequences of the 1857 mutiny (called the first war of independence in Indian nationalist discourse) on the tawaif culture and traditions, with the fall of Awadh; and Ayub Khan Din's *Last Dance at Dum-Dum*, a play about Anglo-Indians that uses dance as its central trope to explore the corollary of imperial policies for Anglo-Indians and partition in colonial India. The titles of the three papers are as follows:

Bios:

Nandi Bhatia is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Western Ontario. Her books include *Acts of Authority/Acts of Resistance: Theatre and Politics in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (University of Michigan Press and Oxford University Press, 2004), *Modern Indian Theatre: A Reader* (Oxford University Press, 2009) and *Partitioned Lives: Narratives of Home, Dislocation, and Resettlement* (Pearson, 2008, co-ed.). She has also guest-edited a special issue of *Feminist Review* on "Postcolonial Theatres," and co-edited a special issue of *Fashion Theory* on "Fashion and Orientalism." Additionally, her articles on Colonial and Postcolonial theatre, film, and literature have appeared in *Theatre Journal*, *Modern Drama*, *Centennial Review*, *Feminist Review*, *South Asia Graduate Research Journal*, *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, *Gamma* and book collections.

Teresa Hubel is an associate professor of English at Huron University College, the University of Western Ontario, in London, Ontario, Canada. She has written numerous essays on a variety of subjects, most of which have arisen out of her continuing captivation by the literature, dance, film, and history of India and which have been published in such journals as *Ariel*, *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, *Modern Asian Studies*, *Modern Fiction Studies*,

Dalhousie Review, and *Kunapipi* as well as in diverse collections of essays. Duke University Press published her book, *Whose India? The Independence Struggle in British and Indian Fiction and History* in 1996. With Neil Brooks, she also edited a collection of essays entitled *Literature and Racial Ambiguity*.

Prabhjot Parmar is a SSHRC postdoctoral fellow in the Department of English at Royal Holloway College, University of London. Recovering the marginalized experiences of Indian soldiers who fought in the First World War, her postdoctoral project examines their letters as cultural artifacts within the context of war testimonies. She is the co-editor of *When Your Voice Tastes Like Home: Immigrant Women Write* and has published articles on the literary and cinematic representations of Partition. Currently she is teaching a course on Postcolonial Literature at the University of Western Ontario in Canada.

