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INDEX

PLENARY SPEAKERS

- **ALDERSON,** David. "Transmodernity, Cultural Materialism and Subcultural Critique". U. Manchester.

Abstract: The category of the transmodern, as articulated by Enrique Dussel, addresses the historic marginalization of various traditions by those of Western (philosophical) modernity. '*Trans-modernity*,' he writes, 'is a task that is, in my case, expressed philosophically, whose point of departure is that which has been *discarded*, *devalued* and judged *useless* among global cultures, including colonized or peripheral philosophies.' This project of recovery and revaluation is, in Dussel's case, allied to the political defence of traditional modes of life practiced especially in Latin America and allied to a philosophy of liberation.

This paper seeks to consider certain challenges this poses for a radical politics that remains substantially conditioned by the complex 'event' of the counterculture – and not only in 'the West' – especially in the case of the lesbian and gay liberation movements that both prefigured and have been (somewhat) reconfigured by queer politics and theory. The counterculture above all saw itself as contesting repressive bourgeois tradition, even as it promoted respect for those *non*-Western traditions that had been subject to colonial suppression. Today, an often thoroughgoing anti-normativity in queer

theory co-exists with expressions of respect for the norms of different 'cultures' that often appear reified as such. It is easy, rhetorically at least, to welcome difference and plurality, but does this very modern and Western discourse serve to obscure potential conflict and incompatibility? What, moreover, of aspirations to general transformation/liberation and the necessarily *critical* scrutiny of tradition this entails? Whose difference deserves priority, the community's or the individual's?

Writing from a cultural materialist position inspired by the work of thinkers such as Raymond Williams and Alan Sinfield, I return to the (often misunderstood) categories of dominant, residual and emergent, and consider them in dialogue with the work of Dussel and others in their thoughts on transmodernity. Both Dussel and cultural materialists prioritize the work of Gramsci after all. The queer subcultural production I focus on in this paper includes recent attempts to focus on conflicts between modernity and tradition in a variety of social contexts.

- **BURNSIDE,** John Burnside. "Não quero mais saber do lirismo que não é libertação."

John Burnside will talk about this statement of Manuel Bandeira (translated: I no longer want to know of lyricism that is not liberation) and what it means for poetry now, using his own poems and others to illustrate his argument.

• **DILLON,** Sara. "Mitchell and Memetics – An Analogue for the Transmodern".

Abstract: Through close engagement with David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004) and the Wachowski and Tom Tykwer's cinematic adaptation – *Cloud Atlas* (2012), this paper proposes that the theory of memetics presents a productive analogue for the idea of the transmodern. Memetics is a theory of cultural transmission developed itself out of loose analogy with Darwinian biological evolution. A meme, analogous to a gene, is a unit of cultural transmission that is passed on through vehicles – human brains, books, films and more – and transmitted by imitation from one vehicle to the next. As such, memetics offers a structural model for the transmodern interconnection of different temporalities, geographies, texts and cultures, one in which continuity and connection arise through imitative variation not identical repetition. Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* provides a paradigmatic case study for a literary exploration of memetics, concerned as it is with the repetition and transmission of ideas across time, and with a variety of vehicles of transmission – diary, letters, novel,

memoir, digital recording and oral culture. The fact that the contents of the novel has itself been transferred via imitation into another vehicle – film – provides a further avenue for exploration, and for developing a memetic theory of adaptation.

• **RODRÍGUEZ MAGDA**, Rosa María. "The Crossroads of Transmodernity" ("La encrucijada de la Transmodernidad")

Abstract (original): Llamamos Transmodernidad al paradigma que nos permite pensar el presente. Para ello es preciso distinguirlo de lo que ha significado la Modernidad y la Postmodernidad. Nuestra época no se define ya por el prefijo "post" sino por el prefijo "trans". La Transmodernidad, por más que existan interpretaciones equívocas, no se reduce a un discurso postcolonial, ni decolonial, ni multicultural, ni transpersonal, ni pretende ser una meta feliz que salde los errores de la historia. En su vertiente descriptiva propone analizar los procesos de transformación de la cultura actual, tecnoeufórica y a la vez inmersa en profundas crisis económicas y geopolíticas. Desde un punto de vista vital, intenta otear caminos de transgresión, para poder transcender las clausuras en las que el nuevo Gran Hecho de la Globalización pretende encerrarnos. Distingo pues **narrativas de la celebración,** que reiteran una tópica aceptada aunque pretendidamente novedosa, de las **narrativas del**

límite o de la fractura que pugnan por pensar y mostrar lo aún no conceptualizado, por decir lo que aún no tiene nombre. Únicamente desde éstas últimas podremos perfilar caminos hacia una vida más plena, un arte más innovador y una esfera social más vivible. Rosa María Rodríguez Magda

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Abstract (translation)*: We call Transmodernity the paradigm that allows us to think the present. For this it is necessary to distinguish it from what Modernity and Postmodernity have meant. Our time is not defined by the prefix "post" but by the prefix "trans". Transmodernity, however equivocal interpretations exist, is not confined to a postcolonial discourse, neither decolonial, nor multicultural, nor transpersonal, nor does it pretend to be a happy goal that bridges the errors of history. In its descriptive aspect it proposes to analyze the processes of transformation of the current culture, technoeuphoric and at the same time immersed in deep economic and geopolitical crises. From a vital point of view, it tries to trace ways of transgression, in order to transcend the closures in which the new Great Fact of Globalization intends to lock us in. I distinguish **narratives of the celebration**, which reiterate an accepted but supposedly novel topic, from the **narratives of the limit** or from the fracture that they struggle to think and show what has not yet been conceptualized, to say what has yet to be named. Only from the latter will we be able to outline paths towards a fuller life, a more innovative art and a more livable social sphere. *Translated by Jessica Aliaga Lavrijsen.

PAPERS

• **ADÁN HERNÁNDEZ**, Elsa. "Queering the writing of a diary: Margaret Prior and Selina Dawes' Palimpsestuous relation". U. Zaragoza. elsa.adan.hernandez@gmail.com

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explore *Affinity* (1999) —the second novel by the British writer, Sarah Waters— by focusing on its form. The novel tells a story of homosexual love and self-deception situated in Victorian London, which hides many controversial issues under the mystery that prevails till the end. In order to unravel this mystery, I will focus on the way in which the story is presented: Waters creates two female characters who express themselves through the writing of their respective diaries. Thus, the novel has recourse to the main conventions of diary writing but it innovates the genre by intermingling two different voices, thus echoing structurally the thematic twists of the main plot. This narrative structure begs for a reading of the novel alongside Sarah Dillon's definition of the terms "palimpsestic" and "palimpsestuous" in *The Palimpsest: Literature, Criticism, Theory*. Each diary

focuses on a different time and renders in totally opposed styles the subjective feelings and perception of the events of the two main characters. In this sense, they beg for a "palimpsestuous" reading —understood as a kind of horizontal reading. However, even if the diaries are horizontally juxtaposed to each other, they also beg for a vertical or "palimpsestic" reading, as they are intertwined with each other and cast light on the pasts of the two characters. Given the fact that the novel tells the story of two closeted lesbian women, the word "queer", employed profusely in its Victorian acceptation in the novel, begs the contemporary readers for a more complex interpretation alongside the horizontal or palimpsestuous pole that brings to the fore Waters's commitment with present day issues. My final contention is that each diary does not work to uncover the repressed or hidden layers of meaning of the other but rather points to the inseparability of past and present, and so, to the presence of the former in the new entries. In other words, even if the diaries do not focus on the same events, the total understanding of the plot arises from the complementary, horizontal reading of the two diaries, since it is their mutual interdependence —regardless of their differences, and consequently, their inseparability— that creates the ultimate significance of the novel. Here, I would like to quote Sarah Dillon, since she wittingly states that, "in order for concepts like the palimpsest and queer to remain critically effective they must stay open to the possibility of further reinscription" (125). This idea corresponds to our contemporary culture, since various social labels

still inhabit our daily lives and are still markers of difference and inequality, as is the case of queer subjects, an idea Waters revisits by focusing on Victorian times.

• **ÁLVAREZ CABALLERO**, Javier. "Storytelling and Posthuman Resilience in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx & Crake*" javi.alvarez.caballero@hotmail.es

Abstract: R. K. Narayan's sociological representation of South India and his particular interest focused on the lives of the average people –those unimportant subjects and their trivial and recognisable concerns– constitute the backbone of his works and the main reasons for which his short stories are therefore apt for contemporary critical interpretations. "Annamalai" describes the need of finding new alternative spaces for an effective inclusion of the Indian *other* –the ethnic and traditionally excluded caste-marked subject. This short story anticipates the conceptual description of Transmodernity and its glocal characteristics. In a humorous tone, "Annamalai" shows some of the conflicts that arise from a traditional/tribal agrarian economy –extremely poor and conditioned by social prejudices, illiteracy and superstitions– and the homogenising effects of globalisation on ancient beliefs, and more specifically, on the Indian joint family system. In this short fiction, Narayan conveys some referential particularities inspired on Indian traditions. He creates a linguistic site of subversion, where the protagonists

exhibit several misinterpretations due to their difficulty to understand each other's vernaculars, or *bhashas*. Annamalai's experiences the hardships of a communal agriculture of subsistence, which forces him to join the labour contingents demanded from tea gardens and foreign plantations. As the eldest son and heir of the ancestral home, he has to sustain the members of his large family. Annamalai suffers a transformation from his condition of peasant (depeasantation) to a situation of migrant worker for agroindustrial exploitations (proletarianisation), and then again, he is able to rebuild the profile of a free labourer within a different working space. This new space, the narrator's garden, symbolises Narayan's enunciation of a glocalised Indian community. The transmodern features that intervene in the conceptual definition of "*glocalization*" (Robertson 2010) also imitate the narrator's own world. This narrator is an imagined R. K. Narayan who employs a suspicious gardener with a savage and ferocious appearance. The narrator's intellectual approach to reality, economics and politics finds a remarkable adversary in his subaltern country-fellow. The open end of the text forces the reader to interpret the contextual and linguistic clues that the writer's subtlety spreads over the suggestive narrative. It may be argued that the fictional Narayan finally realises that the challenge posed by this primitive India and the image of himself as a reputed novelist, who enjoys an international audience, demands from him an active participation in order to preserve his own idea of an inclusive and reassuring Indian society. The primeval identities embodied

by subjects as Annamalai must therefore have a place within the multi-ethnic community of India as a modern nation-state. Hence, the narrator's influential position as an educated Indian citizen must be sided with the integration of these forsaken communities.

- **AMBION**, Larry Javier. "Poetics of Gayspeak". San Beda U., Manila. Larry.ambion@gmail.com

Abstract: This study is centered on gay literature, specifically gay poetics. Gay literature may be works done by gay writers or by heterosexual writers which tackle homosexual issues, or works that employ gay speak. Recent and dated studies have discussed gay literatures and gay writings but nothing has done about gayspeak being included within the text or selections which assumed to have literary implications. The study aims to answer the following questions: What is gayspeak? How is gayspeak represented in literature? If so, is there poetics in gayspeak writings? What kind of stereotyping is represented in gayspeak? The study aims to find out if gay poetics or gay speak has a contribution in the development of literature and teaching literature specifically in the discussion of its literariness. This goal will be crucial in determining if there is a necessity for a separate unit in the curriculum dedicated entirely to the study of gay theory and gay literature. The study is beneficial to the academe since it will help in developing the curriculum by

enriching the subjects already offered. It will also aid in the individual progress of the student whatever his/her orientation since the student will have a broader perspective on the different genders that exist. This study has for its purpose the development and realization of gay speak as a literary language and pave the way for further studies on the said topic.

- **AMFREVILLE,** Marc. "Almodovar and Munroe" UNI marc.amfreville@free.fr

Abstract: Ten years after the publication of Alice Munro's *Runaway* (2006), Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar *used* three short stories that form part of the original Canadian collection as a *source* for his widely acclaimed movie, *Julieta.* Two words in the first sentence of this abstract can launch a debate, or at least create a form of unrest: did Almodóvar actually "use" Munro's text? Isn't the term 'source' a way of bypassing the whole question of "adaptation"? To both interrogations, the answer is yes. The movie-director obviously read and made *use* of three short stories, "Chance", "Soon" and "Silence" that taken together form the plot of what could be called the "Juliet Cycle", although they can be read autonomously and are neither less nor more separated from the rest of the texts than any two short stories in the volume. However, there is more to Almodóvar's creative act than just an "adaptation". To state the obvious, moving a plot and characters from Canada to Spain entails a transcultural reconsideration of every detail, among others the rebirth of

spirituality, both in the acceptation of the protagonist's daughter's alternative religious quest and in a more subtle sense, in the emphasis placed on the life of a beloved spirit, be it dead or simply absent.

While it is thus tempting to view this double creative process as *almost simultaneous* evidence of transnational, and even transcontinental concerns, this paper, much away from an exhaustive analysis of the similitudes and differences between text and film, will center on the nucleus of their common ground: a shared urge to represent the void that crosses cultural and aesthetic boundaries. Drawing on French psychoanalyst Pierre Fédida's *Absence,* the present study will highlight the all-informing paradoxical key sentence in the movie: "Your absence has filled my life" (not present in the short story), and thus uphold the idea that in "*Nachträglich*" fashion, it is precisely the filmic re-writing that accomplishes the potentialities contained in the short stories, while the latter evidently inform the former in a less obvious sense than just an altered reproduction. In other words, by imposing a transcultural movement, from one medium to another, from one country, one continent to the other, not to mention from one language to the other, art secures an emblematic transpersonal connection between Juliet and Julieta that creates the in-between necessary to the reader/viewer's identification and points towards what could be termed the intimate universal.

• **ARIZTI**, Barbara. "From Egology to Ecology: Elements of the Transmodern in
Tim Winton's Eyre". barizti@unizar.es

Abstract: According to Jeremy Rifkin in *The Empathic Civilization*, the present moment in history is defined by the race between two logics: the logic of empathy, an innate tendency biologically wired in humans, and that of entropy, evident, most scientists agree, in the destruction of the Earth's biosphere. "The most important question facing humanity", states Rifkin, "is this: Can we reach global empathy in time to avoid the collapse of civilization and save the Earth?" (2009: 3). Rifkin is not alone in prescribing —and/or describing— a change of paradigm as a way out of the current crisis. Rosa María Rodríguez Mazda adds a nail in the coffin of postmodernity and declares the advent of a new era, which, following Miret Magdalena, Dussel and Luyckx, she calls "transmodernity". The transmodern moment is, in her view, a dialectical synthesis of the modern thesis and the postmodern antithesis (2011), characterised, among other things, by caring, supportive individualism. In this line, Susana Onega foresees the future of academic knowledge as "informed by the ethical demand that we transform the self-centred and greedy individual subject produced by the ideology of progress into a loving and empathic, relational subject in harmony with nature and with other human beings" (2014: 499).

Fiction, always sensitive to social change, is providing proof of this paradigm shift. Christian Moraru in *Cosmodernism: American Narrative, Late*

Globalization, and the New Cultural Imaginary, detects in American letters "a new imagination modality" he labels "cosmodernism" whose defining trait is an emphasis on relatedness. For Moraru, cosmodernism is intimately connected with the notion of ecology, which he understands as "a cultural environment organized around the self's vital links to an 'other' whose radical difference [...] must be entertained as a possibility and cultivated in a world whose dominant thrust seems narcissistic" (2011: 8).

The purpose of my paper is to analyse how in *Eyre* (2013), Winton's latest novel, modern and postmodern values overlap and evolve in the course of the work towards a transmodern sensibility of care and affect. The modern is represented by the protagonist's father, Nev Keely, a deeply religious person, firm believer in justice, and known for his goodness and for always willing to help his neighbours in need. To a certain extent, Tom Keely, the main character, can be seen as standing for the postmodern principle of "there's nothing to do anymore, so let's do nothing". His is not, however, an inborn egotism but the result of the burden of the legacy of his father —who died of a massive heart attack caused by overwork and overconcern— together with his own failed experience as the spokesperson of an ecologist organisation. The unexpected encounter between Keely and Gemma —a former neighbour who, as a girl and the daughter of an abusive father, was taken under the protection of the Keelys— and her six-year-old grandson Kai will progressively prompt him into action. More importantly, the encounter

will disclose in Tom a capacity for caring different form that of his father in the sense that it does not stem from a grand ideal to be defended at all costs, even if that means generating dependence in those helped, but from the relation and interaction with the particular individual whose needs one must respect. Keely's transformation can be read, in my opinion, in the context of the series of unconventional caring males that populate much of Winton's fictional work.

• **BATTISTI**, Chiara. "Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*: the New Legal and Political Subjectivity of the Terrorist" U. Verona. Chiara.battisti@univr.it

Abstract: In a seminar devoted to the critical analysis of the complex and subtle relation between the new concepts embraced by transmodernism and political approaches, I will analyse the discursive narrativization of terrorism as proposed by Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man* (2007). The novel is thematically concerned with the symbolic nature of terrorist violence depicted through the mass media.

I will explore the new legal and political subjectivity of the terrorist as offered by Don DeLillo in order to demonstrate that this subjectivity has become a metamodern index of a juridical, linguistic, and literary 'superdiversity' which underlines that the very idea of the Other has been overtaken by an unsteady socio-economical, political, juridical interplay of variables.

De Lillo's novel suggests a fluid relationship between terrorist and victim in which the terrorist is not merely the "other," but becomes an example of the metamodern complexity of subjective categories. Terrorists, in fact, occupy and share their subjectivity with their victims. The penetration of the terrorists into 'our' narrative is made perceptible in the physical osmosis between terrorist and victim, as, in the novel, the body of the injured victim hosts fragments of the dead terrorist's flesh.

I will also focus my critical attention on the performance-artist dubbed "Falling Man" portrayed in the novel. Wearing business attire, the artist suspends himself upside-down in the pose of the man in the famous photograph of the same name by Richard Drew. I would suggest that Don DeLillo, with this image, reverses the perspective of Walter Benjamin: in a metamodern perspective, the technological reproducibility does not destroy the aura of the work of art, but the work of art itself. Its aura is, instead, the only thing that remains. The artistic performance of the "falling man" becomes only a pale imitation of the "performance" accomplished by the terrorists (a performance that the German avant-gard composer Karl Heinz Stockhausen has defined as "the greatest work of art ever", thus symbolizing the Sublime in the distruction). The artistic performance denounces a new metamodern reality in which the terrorists have replaced the novelists; they have created another historical narration in which reality died in the obsessive mediatic repetition of the 9/11 attack sequence.

- **BAYER**, Gerd. "David Mitchell's *Slade House* and the Non-Place of Transmodernism". U. Erlangen. gerd.bayer@fau.de

Abstract: From his first novel, *Ghostwritten* (1999), David Mitchell's fiction has returned to matters of space, spirituality, and the purpose of narrative. Mitchell's latest novel, *Slade House* (2015), the off-spring of a short-short first published as individual Twitter posts, extends these thematic foci and is built around the text's eponymous house, whose very existence in London, alongside the ontological status of its un-dead inhabitants, remains highly speculative. Mitchell's novel draws from various popular genres, including detective fictions, fantasy tales, and cyberfiction, to address how contemporary culture relates to history, to questions over identity, and to ethical questions in a post-religious age. As such, *Slade House* resonates with the very tension within postmodern paradigms of writing that has spawned transmodernist aesthetic discussions by critics like Enrique Dussel, with whom he shares a politically motivated interest in the power of religiosity as a path towards individual and social liberation. While Mitchell's narrative structures owe a clear debt to postmodernist writers like John Fowles, his nostalgic return to grand narratives, as demonstrated in the spiritualism that drives *Slade House* as much as it did *The Bone Clocks* (2014) and *Cloud Atlas* (2004), mark a departure from postmodern principles. This paper will read Mitchell's novel through the trope of its central building, arguing that the non-existence of this virtual or

purely spiritual house, its non-place, provides Mitchell with an opportunity to invest the place with the projections of its visitors, thereby revealing a deep-set desire on their part for what postmodernism had proclaimed to be mere simulacra, lost narratives, or mere spectacle. By investing the building with a cast of visitors that hail from various social, geographical, cultural, and other backgrounds, the narrative artfully invites its readers to reflect upon the global or cosmopolitan principles that aim to re-inscribe into postmodern political and cultural principles.

• **BAYSAL**, Kubra. "Notion of Post/Human and Sur/Reality in Steven Hall's *The Raw Shark Texts*". Kastamonu U, Turkey. kbaysal@kastamonu.edu.tr

Abstract: Recounting the unusual story of the protagonist Eric Sanderson in his *The Raw Shark Texts* (2007), Steven Hall makes a breakthrough debut in his literary career. Starting with Eric Sanderson waking up in an amnesiac situation and trying to figure out who he is and what happened to him, the novel reflects his endeavours to find his disconnected self once again in a postmodern and posthuman world. Discovering that he is the Second Eric Sanderson due to the letters, tapes and notes sent to him by the First Eric Sanderson, he realises he is in his current situation because of a "conceptual" Ludovician shark feeding on human memories and hunting down humans until they are unable to live with shattered selves any longer. In his struggle to

protect himself from the conceptual shark, he is lured into a quest in which he is to find Dr. Trey Fidorous and the Unspace Exploration Committee, exposing studies which are normally conceptual and impossible to exist in reality, to cure his disease and give him his "so called" normal life back. Accordingly, in the postmodern narrative and style of the novel, Hall raises many questions in one's mind with both the posthuman aura of the elements as well as characters and the sur/real atmosphere of the text leaving the reader with various possibilities about the notion of life, self, connection and/or disconnection with their environment in the contemporary world.

• **BERMUDEZ DE CASTRO**, Juanjo. "Trans Culture in Contemporary American TV Series". U. Islas Baleares. j.bermudezcastro@uib.es

Abstract: In 1965, popular TV series *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour* (NBC) aired the episode "An Unlocked Window" in which a nurses' killer in the area is finally revealed to be a psycho transvestite. It was the first time a transgender character appeared on a TV series. Until the late 80s that was the most stereotypical representation of the T in the LGBT community in films and TV series: as psychopaths and serial killers. In the 90s the paradigm changed a little but not for good: transsexual characters became more frequent but now as objects of mockery and disgust in comedy TV series and films. The "heterosexual male who literally throws up when discovering that the girl he

has just kissed wasn't born a female" became a classic gag in many 90s and early 2000s movies and series. However, since the late 2000s transgender characters are starting to be represented as people with whom spectators can empathize. In 2014 trans actress Laverne Cox was the first transsexual person nominated for her performance as a regular character in the TV series *Orange in the New Black*. Also in 2014, the series *Transparent*, which portrays the transition from male to female of a retired professor and parent of three thirty-something youngsters, won two Golden Globes and eight Emmy Awards in the categories of best TV series, best director and best actor, among others. Today, it is undeniable that we are living in the golden age of a trans cultural representation, although there is still a lot of work to be done to achieve a fair, accurate and inclusive portrayal of sexual and gender diversity. This paper will briefly address the history of the representation of transgender identities on TV series and the current transcultural period we are living.

• **BONILLA**, Cruz. "Annamalai: A View on the Transmodern Nature of R. K. Narayan's Short Story". Independent researcher. cruzbonilla15@gmail.com

Abstract: R. K. Narayan's sociological representation of South India and his particular interest focused on the lives of the average people –those unimportant subjects and their trivial and recognisable concerns– constitute the backbone of his works and the main reasons for which his short stories

are therefore apt for contemporary critical interpretations. "Annamalai" describes the need of finding new alternative spaces for an effective inclusion of the Indian *other* –the ethnic and traditionally excluded caste-marked subject. This short story anticipates the conceptual description of Transmodernity and its glocal characteristics. In a humorous tone, "Annamalai" shows some of the conflicts that arise from a traditional/tribal agrarian economy –extremely poor and conditioned by social prejudices, illiteracy and superstitions– and the homogenising effects of globalisation on ancient beliefs, and more specifically, on the Indian joint family system. In this short fiction, Narayan conveys some referential particularities inspired on Indian traditions. He creates a linguistic site of subversion, where the protagonists exhibit several misinterpretations due to their difficulty to understand each other's vernaculars, or *bhashas*. Annamalai's experiences the hardships of a communal agriculture of subsistence, which forces him to join the labour contingents demanded from tea gardens and foreign plantations. As the eldest son and heir of the ancestral home, he has to sustain the members of his large family. Annamalai suffers a transformation from his condition of peasant (depeasantation) to a situation of migrant worker for agroindustrial exploitations (proletarianisation), and then again, he is able to rebuild the profile of a free labourer within a different working space. This new space, the narrator's garden, symbolises Narayan's enunciation of a glocalised Indian community. The transmodern features that intervene in the conceptual

definition of "*glocalization*" (Robertson 2010) also imitate the narrator's own world. This narrator is an imagined R. K. Narayan who employs a suspicious gardener with a savage and ferocious appearance. The narrator's intellectual approach to reality, economics and politics finds a remarkable adversary in his subaltern country-fellow. The open end of the text forces the reader to interpret the contextual and linguistic clues that the writer's subtlety spreads over the suggestive narrative. It may be argued that the fictional Narayan finally realises that the challenge posed by this primitive India and the image of himself as a reputed novelist, who enjoys an international audience, demands from him an active participation in order to preserve his own idea of an inclusive and reassuring Indian society. The primeval identities embodied by subjects as Annamalai must therefore have a place within the multi-ethnic community of India as a modern nation-state. Hence, the narrator's influential position as an educated Indian citizen must be sided with the integration of these forsaken communities.

• **CARPI,** Daniela: "The virtual world, transhumanism, science, technology and literature." U. Verona. daniela.carpi@univr.it

Abstract: WHAT AFTER POSTMODERNISM?

If many critics speak of the death of postmodernism, what has come after it? We meet many definitions that try to cope with the transformations of the term in the twenty-first century: Metamodernism, Remodernism,

Transmodernism, Pseudo-modernism, Posthumanism, New Materialism, Transhumanism.

In my presentation I will focus on the aspects of Posthumanism or Transhumanism, which offer a rich debate on the impact of technological and scientific developments in the evolution of the human species; and still, they hold a humanistic and human centric perspective. Posthuman is an integral redefinition of the human: "...posthumanism, in its radical onto-existential re-signification of the notion of the human..." (Francesca Ferrando) Posthumanism stresses the urgency for humans to become aware of pertaining to an ecosystem which, when damaged, negatively affects the human condition as well. In such a framework, the human is not approached as an autonomous agent ,but is located within an extensive system of relations. In this sense the posthuman can be seen as a consequence of the transhuman: the frankensteinean perspective where the human, through implants and explants, aesthetic surgery, has transformed itself into a new human. This can impinge itself also on penal law, where the culprit can transform himself through surgery into a new individual with new finger prints, a new face in order to become indiscernible and evade the law. Through a transhumanist approach you force the law to confront a new individual.

"...for some transhumanists, human beings may eventually transform themselves so radically as to become posthuman, a condition expected to follow the current transhuman era."

If Catherine Hayles debates on how we became posthuman (1999) and on the dismantling of the humanist subject in cybernetics discourse, Rosi Braidotti in *The Posthuman* (2013) asserts that the debates in "mainstream culture range from hard-nosed business discussions on robotics, prosthetic technologies, neu-trans-humanism and techno-transcendence". Transhumanism therefore celebrates the new frontiers in critical and cultural theory.

In my presentation I will choose two movies to exemplify these theories: *Transcendence* by Wally Pfister (2014) and *Her* by Spike Jonze (2013) that deal with problems concerning the delimitation between the human and the techno: how the human can be recreated through technology from an anthropological but also ontological level. The technological goes beyond the literally human so as to create a new entity which evades the legal realm and boundaries. The law must take into consideration the redesigned human of the future. (Martin Heidegger: "technology is a way of revealing", *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt, New York: Harper Torchbooks [1953] 1977, p. 12.]

- **CLARK**, Colin. "Halting States- The Transmodern Virtual as cultural Avant Garde in Moderns Scottish Fiction". scoczech@gmail.com

Abstract: Transmodernism represents an attempt to express the new paradigms of society and may be a method of inducing a new form of society

in the case of Scotland, an ancient nation and culture in rapid flux. Examples of such societies are relatively rare; a mature democracy within what may seem a stable union with the UK. Recent events have exposed the fault lines at the heart of this and shown that Scotland is on a different, tangential trajectory to the UK. The form of nationalism expressed and sandboxed in its literature is qualitatively at odds with Westminsterism. In the case of Scottish Literature a form of new cosmopolitanism of the sort courted by civic nationalism is at large and so is a keen engagement with post- humanism and its attendant geists. The connection between this and transmodernism is evident when one analyses the output of Scots writers like Christopher Brookmyre, Charles Stross, Jenni Fagan and others : a keen engagement with transitional technologies, virtual realms and their mirror-functions and the capacity of speculative fiction to act as a pioneer species of cultural product, testing new landscapes for viability and establishing outposts in the unknown.

 In particular focus in this paper is Charles Stross's novel *Halting State* a form of ideological detective story situated in a glocalised and independent near-future Scotland in which a crime presents an opportunity to explore the bridges between virtual and meatspace , the liquid modernism of its structures, and thereby foreground the temporal fraying that seems inherent in transmodernism.

Brookmyre is one of many Scottish authors who cut his teeth in detective fiction. In the form of the grungy Jack Parlabane detective novels ,but who

has also essayed into the speculative and virtual .In the case of Bedlam(2013) and Pandemonium(2009) both constitute a homage to his love of Gaming Culture, but also exploring the capacity of metaphor (in Ricoeurean terms) within the   tradition of French reflexive philosophy, to comprehend the processes of self-awareness within complex contexts and to iterate thought and identification starting from a lived experience of reflexive consciousness, of communal and personal self-consciousness. For Brookmyre, the realm of the PC game presents a crucible within which we are developing a new idiolect, new paradigms of action and thought and also a metaphysical consideration of change, stasis and the responsibilities of technology in relation to free will.

 Jenni Fagan's recent *Sunlight Pilgrims* (2016) exemplifies transitionals of all sorts: a trans teenager and her marginalized mother and outsider lover, living in a caravan park in a Scotland experiencing the brunt of global climate change .Keenly aware of the gradual nature of transition, the absurdities of prejudice, otherness and the stunning naiveté of late capitalism, this is a text which represents something of a cutting edge in Scottish Transmodern Fiction.

Together, these texts and speak loudly of the Scottish engagement with the transmodern through our literature in search of new cultural modalities. No longer content with the clichés of bipolarisms, or the often trite syntheses offered as a counterpoint to these, these novels offer examples of a new grammar of modern identity and of deeply experimental and transitional aesthetics.

- **DOBROGOSZCZ**, Tomasz. "The re-cycling of the planet in contemporary speculative fiction". U. Of Lodz. dobrogoszcz@gmail.com

Abstract: The article analyses four contemporary novels by critically acclaimed writers that touch upon the issue of the overflow of human race destroying its natural habitat: *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood (2003), *Cloud Atlas* by David Mitchell (2004), *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy (2006), and *Stone Gods* by Jeanette Winterson (2007). All of the books prophesise some form of a self-purification of the Earth, which obviously involves the doom of the human race. Employing different literary devices, the four writers suggest that although history repeats itself in circles, human beings are incapable of learning from past mistakes. The article attempts to situate the novels discussed in the tradition of dystopian literature and to put their post-apocalyptic scenarios in the context of self-mutilating activities of human race which destroys its natural surroundings as well as its own cultural milieu.

- **DUCE**, Violeta. "Adichie's 'The American Embassy' and 'Jumping Monkey Hill': a Transmodern Response to the Contemporary Cultural Paradigm" violeta.ducesarasa@gmail.com.

Abstract: This paper aims to address the question of the ending of postmodernity, and the way in which globalization, new technologies and the geopolitical changes caused by major historical events are leading the contemporary society to a new paradigm. One of the first authors in talking about this rupture was the philosopher Rosa María Rodríguez Magda, who argued for the beginning of "la Transmodernidad". She pointed out the importance of the prefix 'trans', which she relates to the transcendence of Modernity and constant transformation of the society, but also to concepts such as transnationalism, transmissibility, transculturality and transtextuality. Similarly, other authors such as Enrique Dussel describe Transmodernity as a project which "bonds center to periphery, woman to man, race to race, ethnic group to ethnic group, class to class, humanity to earth, and occidental to Third World cultures" (in Martín Alcoff 64).

Mainly because of this globalized, multicultural and technological society, the literary paradigm is changing too. Nowadays, contemporary authors deal with questions such as identity formation, transculturalism and translingualism. One of the approaches currently used by many scholars is the palimpsest and 'palimpsestous' reading of texts. Sara Dillon coined the term 'palimpsestuous', which refers to the resultant structure of the layering process of the palimpsest and implies a significant "subsequent reappearance of the underlying script" (245). This intertextuality has been analyzed by authors like Daniel Cooper Alarcón, who believes that "the palimpsest's structure of

interlocking […] prevents the dominant voice from completely silencing the others" (in Dillon 255). In the same way, Max Silverman talks about palimpsestic memory as a possibility of recovering the local and unique memories in this global age.

With all this in mind, in this essay, I analyze Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's short stories 'The American Embassy' and 'Jumping Monkey Hill', as textual spaces that lay bare the transmodern responses of 'subaltern' authors to this change of paradigm. Born in Enugu, Nigeria, Adichie received a Western education and grew up professionally in the United States. This makes her a transcultural individual and allows her to create stories where characters living between two worlds and cultures echo her own outsider-insider ambivalent status. As I will argue, her narratives are best analyzed from the perspective of memory understood as a palimpsest which recognizes formerly suppressed memories and voices in connection an opposition to dominant ones. Of special use will be Rodríguez Magda and García Aguilar's transmodern feminist views, centered on the necessity of a new feminist ethics which revises issues such as exclusion, identity, emancipation and visibility. The fact that Adichie's stories often present a woman fighting for autonomy and recognition as a protagonist consolidates her position as feminist—argued for in her book *We Should All be Feminists*—and shows her passionate contribution to the endless fight for the visibility of women. As I contend, Adichie's stories and the various levels of "trans-" which articulate them, offer an excellent example of the

changes that are being observed in the current cultural paradigm, contributing to conforming and defining it.

- MARTÍNEZ-**FALQUINA**, Silvia. "Susan Power's *Sacred Wilderness*: Native American Fiction and the Transmodern Paradigm" smfalqui@unizar.es

Abstract: In turbulent times like those we are living in, where equality, freedom or justice are far from generally granted to millions of people around the globe, Native American particularities and problematics still have to be made visible and vindicated, as proved by recent events around the Dakota Access Pipeline protests among others. But the mutual influences of indigenous people with relation to the broader American and global context also require further analysis, which is where a close attention to current paradigm changes becomes due. This dual aim connects to the ongoing debates around the two main trends in Native studies that have been around in the last few decades, namely, the nationalistic vs. the hybrid or cosmopolitan: when taken to extremes, the former emphasizes difference to the point of becoming too self-centered and essentialized, whereas the latter focuses on relation and therefore risks erasure and assimilation. The convenience to negotiate the two trends in order to avoid those risks is not only still arguable but also very interestingly supported in the light of certain contemporary literary texts like the one I will be analyzing.

Sacred Wilderness (2014) is the last published novel by Minnesota writer Susan Power, an active member of the Standing Rock Sioux nation who was born and raised in Chicago, and simultaneously educated in Catholicism and Native traditions. The purpose of this paper is to explore the Native symbols of transmodernity in connection to the Native tradition in *Sacred Wilderness*. Elements like the powerful mask which, after having been exhibited as a work of art in a basement for years, finds its way to connecting her unaware owner to her past; or like the healing relationship established between the visiting spirits of Maryam, mother of Jesus, and that of Jigonsaseh, mother of seventeenth century Kanien'kehá:ka leader Ayowantha, are best understood as symbols of transformation and transcendence, the basis of Rodríguez Magda's definition of the Transmodern paradigm (1989; 2011; 2015). The way in which these and other elements in this novel lead to redemption and healing also interestingly confirms the recognition of Native writing's "primary ceremonial motivation, broadly understood as an opening for the possibility of transformation for the participants in the process" (Martínez-Falquina 2009, 191). In addition, their simultaneous combination of resurgence and relation makes them significant examples of the recently rediscovered palimpsest metaphor, revising it to incorporate both its palimpsestuous and its palimpsestic understandings, as conceptualized by Dillon (2005; 2007) and Der Groote (2014), and directed to relation and difference, respectively. All in all, in the way they do not simply affirm the differences they vindicate but also

make a point of emphasizing relation, these symbols call for an acknowledgement of the need for the other in order to know the self, and the notion of being as *being-with*, an ethical positioning that we can connect to indigenous tradition as well as to Moraru's definition of Cosmodernism (2011), another useful rethinking of the contemporary paradigm.

- **FIORATO**, Sidia. "Piercing the Core of Transmodernity: Suzanne Collins' Dystopian Narratives". U. Verona. sidia.fiorato@univr.it

Abstract: Speculative fiction continuous reinvents itself, driven by a typical postmodern dissatisfaction with traditional genre boundaries; it creates literary intersections and interactions in its cognitively stimulating and inescapably metaphoric architextual space. The visions proposed are embedded in cultural history which is opened to new potentialities. For this reason, the genre can be seen as a framework to address contemporary transmodern concerns.

According to Rosa Maria Rodriguez Magda, the term transmodernity refers to the dialectical synthesis of modernity and postmodernity in the direction of a globalized and technological society, characterized by the opposition to otherness while at the same time penetrating and assuming it (as it has been pointed out in the description of this conference). Such elements attune with the defining features of contemporary dystopia, in particular in Suzanne Collins' Hunger Games trilogy. These novels underline

the dominion of a visual globalized society, opening the reflection to its related features, such as hyperreality and simulacra (Baudrillard), the visual dimension of law (Sherwin); at the same time they manage to address relevant contemporary concerns in the multiplicity of their fragmented ramifications, such as the body and the image, ecocritical concerns, cyber-reality, bioethical issues, community formation. In its articulated structure, the novels manage to pierce the narrative frame and involve the reader, engaging him in a deep theoretical reflection.

- **GANTAEU**, Jean-Michel. "Refracting the Transmodern: Harry Parker's *Anatomy of a Soldier*". U. Paul-Valéry. Montpellier. Jean-michel.ganteau@univ-montp3.fr

Abstract: Harry Parker's *Anatomy of a Soldier* (2016) has been hailed as an experimental novel with a strong ethical and political orientation. Building up on the conventions of the it narrative, it is made up of a series of first-person narratives produced by singular objects that accompany the eponymous protagonist from the battlefields of Afghanistan to his rehabilitation period in Britain, after he underwent a double amputation after stepping on an IED. The novel privileges the time-honoEred, quaint device of prosopopoeia to narrate the life of a contemporary subject in relation to his past military action in a

faraway country and in relation to the professional care-givers and members of his family on his return to his home country.

As suggested in these lines, *Anatomy of a Soldier* is obviously concerned with global relationships, and in many ways qualifies as a global novel. Likewise, it shows the world as a perpetual flux of interconnections and communication, in which time has been replaced by instantaneity, place by "ubiquitous trans-border space", and the body by an enhanced, "post-corporal" reality. One may have recognized in the preceding list a series of items that Rosa María Rodríguez Magda considers as characteristic of transmodernity. Still, my point in this presentation will be precisely to demonstrate that Parker's first novel resists the alternative totalizing claims of the transmodern. In fact, the narrative delineates the situatedness of distinct, singular localities and puts them in relation with one another without their being subsumed by any global sense of totality. Moreover, it uses the ironic image of instantaneity to sound the deep causes and long-term effects of highly singularized moments that resist the banalization of high-speed flux. Against the dominant new model of "connected isolation" or "solidarity-based type of individualism", it provides through the experiential rendering of disability a vision of the subject as radically dependent on others and, beyond this, as caught in a web of interdependence.

Against the background of what might pass as the hegemony of the transmodern, *Anatomy of a Soldier* takes pains to address temporal, spatial

and individual singularities as means of resistance. Over the "society of knowledge" it privileges the qualities of attention and attentiveness to such singularities. It resists any temptation towards totalization by considering the subject in his/her vulnerability, as inherently and genuinely relational, thereby promoting the vision of an anthropological interdependence that it recommends as ethical praxis. This is does through the simultaneously defamiliarising and empathy-provoking fragmented form of the prosopopoeic it narrative. Along such lines, the transmodern becomes a prism through which the contemporary is defined, a lever to provide a definition of the contemporary, even while it is itself refracted.

• **HERRERO**, Dolores. "The Aftermath of Terrorism in the Transmodern City as Reflected in Tabish Khair's *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*". dherrero@unizar.es

Abstract: The controversy over Salman Rushdie's polemical novel The Satanic Verses and, over and above everything, the traumatic aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, have prompted many Western readers to show interest in fiction that delves into the threat of Islamic extremism and the cultural and political reality of immigrant life in Western societies. In keeping with some of the main concerns of Monica Ali's Brick Lane (2003) and Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007), Tabish Khair's novel gets inside the minds of people Westerners are eager to know more about, and brings to the fore the

Western –and non-Western– compulsive need to rely on stereotypes that are often invalidated by real-life people and situations. Khair's novel portrays, among other things, Indian and Pakistani characters who make the most of Western social and ideological freedoms, but are nonetheless slightly alienated and isolated by an allegedly multicultural Denmark of liberal sensibility that is still inadvertently prey to old-time prejudices. Although Aarhus is depicted as a transmodern cosmopolitan city that apparently strives to reconcile progress with respect for cultural and religious differences, the spatial duality public vs. private discloses the barrier that still detaches the rich and cultivated, most of whom fail to uphold any particular set of beliefs, from the poor and uncultivated, who cling to religion as a quintessential part of their identity, and as their main means to make sense of their existence in a world to which they find it difficult to belong. This presentation will try to deplore the binary thinking that pits the cultural spaces of a Western liberal state against the minority enclaves of Islamic population living within it. In tune with Homi Bhabha's theories, I will claim that these categories remain blind to the complex dynamics of negotiation that allegedly lie at the core of transmodernity, and through which displaced populations make sense of their lives across contesting cultural values and traditions. As is well known, for Bhabha such experiences should not be seen to form a distinct and self-contained cultural space but to signal a process of 'cultural translation' between traditions [Bhabha's "Beyond Fundamentalism and Liberalism", The

New Statesman and Society, 2 (39): 34-5], to the effect that, in the end, very little is what it seems to be, identities are always hybridised, and conventional types of mapping are put to the test, since they fail to account for the rupturing of boundaries resulting from the flows of both legal and illicit border traffic

• **IBARROLA,** Aitor. "*Darling* by Richard Rodriguez: A New Form of Spirituality and of Transmodern Relationships". U. Deusto. aitor.ibarrola@deusto.es

Although the latest collection of essays by Richard Rodriguez is subtitled *A Spiritual Autobiography*, it is difficult to think of it either as a conventional autobiography (although it does refer to key events in the author's life, mostly post-9/11) or a book about religion (even if it is framed as an exploration of his own Catholicism in the contemporary secular world). In fact, if something becomes clear early in the collection, it is precisely that his faith is very far away from what he sees as the deadening dogma of "mitered, bearded, fringed holy men" (be it in the form of religious zealots or the new atheists who would consider religion the greater evil in our societies). Although the book sets out allegedly to investigate the aspects that bring together what the author calls "the desert religions" (Christianity, Judaism and Islam), it soon becomes apparent that what we are reading is more like an ecology of the soul. And Rodriguez's soul—like that of most people—is deeply marked (and troubled) by personal beliefs, doubts, and choices. As Lesley Hazleton noted

in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the collection offers something much more sweeping and supple than an individual spiritual journey, it is "a rich tapestry, a Persian carpet of a book."

Darling (2013) shows immense skill at finding ties among disparate people and events and at excavating patterns and signs where most people would just see the chaos of the contemporary world. The book offers an original and complicated worldview—not unlike the one we hear from supporters of Transmodernism—in which ideas travel and intersect in unexpected ways: the gay rights movement is seen as a beneficiary of both the suffragist movement of the 19th century and other forms of women's resistance to the subjugation originating in the desert religions; unforgiving landscapes (in Holy Land and America) are viewed as the source of enduring faith; the close relationship between cities (and other places) and their scribes is considered; and, of course, Rodriguez tries to explain how he has learnt to live with the paradox (or contradiction) between his homosexuality and his Catholic faith. Some of these intersections can easily be studied through the prism of transmodern relationships across different areas of specialization— from Gender Studies to Ecocriticism, or from Religious Studies to Social Ethics.

- **IZMIR,** Sibel. "Theorizing Contemporary Theatre Aesthetics". sibeleceizmir@gmail.com

Abstract: If the concept "transmodernity" is taken as an umbrella term to define a cultural aesthetics in which modernity and postmodernity are both incorporated and transcended, one of the crucial art forms that displays such a tendency is contemporary theatre. With the turn of the 20th century and post World War II, the appearance of avant-garde movements had their tremendous effects in theatre and this led to the existence of new theatrical movements such as epic theatre, theatre of the absurd, in-yer-face theatre and theatre of cruelty, to name but a few. The experimental methods and innovations exercised in avant-garde plays undoubtedly shook the grounds on which traditional and realistic drama depended. Yet, there was still a commonly accepted hierarchal system: the playwright and the text still had the upper hand in a theatre production followed by the director, actors/actresses and décor, etc. However, as the German scholar asserts in his groundbreaking book entitled *Postdramatic Theatre*, since 1960s there has been a "rhizomic" system in performances which paves the way for multiplicity and subversion of hierarchal signs. In other words, the text is no longer valorised above other theatrical components; it is only one layer of a theatre production. The assertion that especially Western theatre no longer conforms to the established hierarchal rules and Lehmann's argument that the term postmodern falls short to express the recent developments on the stage seem to be in parallel with what Rosa María Rodríguez Magda means by the term "transmodernity". The aim of the current study will be to explore

transmodernity as a theoretical phenomenon in theatre studies and investigate the similarities and differences between transmodern and postdramatic aesthetics with illustrative examples from contemporary British plays.

• **KOCOT**, Monika. "Poetry of Consciousness: a Transmodern Perspective". University of Łódź. monika.b.kocot@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper will have a look at poems by Alan Spence in which he embraces the non-dualist perspective of being in the world and affirms the philosophy of *mushin* (no-mind) and *munen* (nothought). Spence's poetry might be described as poetry of consciousness and experience; its key themes such as concentration, contemplation, meditation, and self-realization introduce the reader into the realm of Zen. In my theoretical framework, I will attempt to show how the philosophy of *mushin* and *munen* may be linked with Kenneth White's geopoetics, Willis Harman's transmodernism, and quantum activism as proposed by Amit Goswami.

• **LAGUARTA BUENO**, Carmen. "Things Can Always Change: Challenging Homophobia in Ali Smith's *Girl meets boy*". U. Zaragoza. claguarta@unizar.es

Abstract: Since Ali Smith published her first short story collection in 1995, she has become one of the most celebrated contemporary British writers. Smith can be considered a politically concerned writer, as in her works she deals with some of the main problems of contemporary society: consumerism, gender inequality, homophobia, anorexia... In fact, in the introduction to a critical book on the author, Monica Germanà and Emily Horton highlight Smith's concern with "ethical and political preoccupations", and describe her writing as subversive and politically powerful (1-2). Her novel *Girl meets boy*—which was first published in 2007— is a good example of this. The novel follows the lives of two Scottish sisters, Imogen and Anthea Gunn, as they struggle to define their identities in the midst of a conservative society which does not tolerate difference. On one side we have Imogen, an anorexic working for a bottled water company who quits her job after being asked to betray her own ethical principles for the sake of the company. On the other we have Anthea, who works for the same company but is fired because of her difficulties to fit in. Anthea then falls in love with Robin Goodman, a feminist activist with whom she starts a relationship that will not be devoid of obstacles.

Although the novel tackles, therefore, many different political issues that are worth analyzing, in this paper I am going to focus mainly on the ways the lesbian characters are discriminated against and on the strategies used by Ali Smith to criticize this discrimination. As I contend, the writer portrays in *Girl meets boy* a narrow-minded and prejudiced society in which people with non-

normative sexual behaviour patterns suffer from all kinds of oppression. Furthermore, by establishing many parallels between the society depicted in the novel and present-day society, Smith seems to be saying that this discrimination is not something of the past. The writer also seems to be aware that, in order to put an end to this discrimination, mainstream society's attitude towards difference must change. In this way, in *Girl meets boy* she sets out to contest the traditional prejudiced views on lesbianism by portraying it as something positive and natural instead. As Germanà and Horton state, "in *Girl meets boy* [...] Smith undermines conventional gender and sexual prejudices, embracing instead a perspective of gender fluidity and sexual open-mindedness" (2-3). My ultimate aim is, therefore, to demonstrate that *Girl meets boy* can be considered a transmodern novel, as by putting the emphasis on gender fluidity and queerness and celebrating transmodern relationships, it gives visibility to a group which has often been relegated to a marginal position.

• **LELÉN**, Halszka. "Poetics of Garbage and Fragmentation in John Berger's Fiction". University of Warmia and Mazury. halszka.lelen@uwm.edu.pl

Abstract: John Berger (1926–) should be viewed as a truly transmodern author who can also be described as a deliberate subaltern storyteller. His education and career as an art critic gives him a particular sensitivity for the spatially

framed patterns of perception attained when point of view is shifted, displaced and aesthetically foregrounded through the principle of de-formation.

For all this, it is not surprising that in his fiction, Berger experiments with adopting novel viewpoints on the glocal communities by moving the narrative focus to the spatial and existential peripheries. One of his favourite techniques is offering a disjunctive inside story of some peripheral community by adopting the narrative patterns of fragmentation and transmutation. On the level of spatial patterns, many of his narratives relate the story of a vignette of life of some subaltern Other. The lives of his displaced and rejected characters are situated against the space of poverty of some sort. They are aesthetically foregrounded through the post-modernist technique of poeticizing some sort of garbage and the (trans)modern way of engaging in fragmentation of some spatial wasteland.

It seems worthwhile to consider how in his fiction (and some non-fiction), Berger explores the treasure-trove of literary techniques and cultural sources to attain the symbolic, mythopoeic effect. Berger exploits for artistic purposes the naturalist focus on the repugnant aspects of life as well as its typical, plot-demonstrated stance that characters have no control over their lives while they remain ambiguously (un)heroic in their aspirations and their failures. The fact that Berger is associated with the techniques of naturalism is apparently motivated by his Marxist orientation. But there is also some other the tradition which has influenced him, like the magic realism of Latin

American authors such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez. In Berger's *King*, some techniques seem to be derived from Émile Zola and his English disciples like George Gissing, with *The Nether World*. These elements of naturalist aesthetics inspire also the techniques of portrayals of peasant's lives in *Into their Labours* trilogy as well as some essays on his own life in the Alps in his non-fiction.

The determinist vision of subaltern character in Berger's fiction is justified by their social and economic conditions expressed through the patterns of some ramshackle space, with profusion of rubbish. Berger's space of periphery is marked with the quality of substitution and fragmentation marking the character's survival skills. The influence of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution is also to be detected in the application of a kind of social Darwinism in the discussed novels and short stories. It is to be found in the way in which the physical and social environment of Berger's fiction - the *milieu* of deprivation - influences and shapes the individuals and, *vice versa*, how the experience of character's life influences the textual patterns of environment.

• **MUÑOZ GONZÁLEZ**, Esther. "*The Autobiography of My Mother*. Looking at the Past with Old Eyes." U. of Zaragoza. emunozgonzalez@hotmail.com

Abstract: *The Autobiography of My Mother* (1996) is a pseudo-autobiography written by another person than the mother of the title. Xuela, traumatized

from birth, narrates the supposedly actual experience of her young self even if the distinction between facts and imagination, truth and lies is not the crucial point when an author is trying to narrativize its own traumas. This paper argues that, to a certain extent, the narrator recreates the story of her life in order to justify a desolate present. Jamaica Kincaid —born Elaine Potter Richardson in Antigua (1949)— is the author of *The Autobiography of My Mother* and even if the novel is a fictional work, it also contains autobiographical elements. Xuela the protagonist of the novel "moves between the imaginary world of the text and the real world of Kincaid's life" (Edwards 116-17). Kincaid is very critical with the European process of colonization in the West Indies, especially with the "Eurocentric construction of the history of the West Indies" (Gregg 920), that is, she criticises the colonized deprivation from their own cultural and historical identity and the reconstruction of it by the European colonizer. The Palimpsest metaphor —the erasing of text from books to rewrite its surface— can be useful to represent not only the process of colonization itself but the 'palimpsesting of her identity' that Xuela does in her autobiography. The novel as a palimpsestic performance does what, according to Johannessen, Jean Rhys previously did in *Wide Sargasso Sea*: "from the outset the novel signals its subject matter's entanglement with larger historical vectors" (889). Using the Palimpsest metaphor, old Xuela —the novel's first person narrator— overwrites 'the text' of her life in an exercise of layering in which her life's narrative can be read as "Palimpsestuous" that is, there is a

"simultaneous relation of intimacy and separation" (Dillon 3) between the young protagonist and narrator in which both of them make their presence felt in the surface of the text. The final perception of Xuela's identity is inextricable from the combination between old Xuela's narration and what is inferred from young Xuela, the protagonist of the novel. That is, the exercise of memory that old Xuela does, implies a selection of experiences, a "palimpsestic exercise" in which the surface makes it possible to perceive not only the young Xuela but the person she never was and the life she did not allow herself to live. Xuela's anxiety for control has impeded her to reach happiness and we can read under the surface of the novel what is not written, "the person I [Xuela] did not allow myself to become" (Kincaid 228).

• **NEUMANN**, Peter. "Gender Roles: Strategic Simulation or Socially Inscribed Subject Positions? Rodriguez Magda's Transmodernity vs. Fay Weldon's Play Action Replay." U. of Zaragoza. cpneuman@unizar.es

Abstract: This paper intends to establish a dialogue about gender roles between Spanish philosopher Rosa María Rodríguez Magda and British author Fay Weldon. In quite postmodern fashion (see Williams 1991), Rodríguez rejects both "sameness feminism" and "difference feminism" as equally essentialist (Rodríguez Magda 2005, pp. 68-69). But, in order to overcome the "lack of identity" (p. 76) of the female subject that results from such a rejection, Rodríguez proposes what she calls a transmodern feminism that consists in

the creation of a strategic subject through the use of simulation (Rodríguez Magda 2015, p. 43). Rodríguez' theory seems to suggest a certain degree of freedom with which individuals can intentionally choose gender role simulations and consciously put them to strategic use in the pursuit of one's purposes. The strength of such a theory lies in the fact that it reestablishes the individual's agency that had become problematic in postmodernism (Weedon 1999, p. 107).

Fay Weldon, whose own stance towards feminism has been changing and often ambiguous (e.g. Franks 2013, pp. 190-191), projects a more skeptical view on gender roles in her experimental play *Action Replay*. Formally, the play shares many features of the Theatre of the Absurd, such as an apparent inconsistency of character and a conspicuous incoherence of dialogue (see Esslin 2001, pp. 22-25). A deeper look into the play, however, reveals that it is much closer to the tenets of chaos theory: under the surface of seeming incoherence, "deep structures of order" (Hayles 1991, p. 1) emerge. These deep structures affect the roles and attitudes adopted by both female and male characters of the play. These roles are shown to be socially and discursively defined, offering each gender a limited number of subject positions. Once a particular discourse is set in motion by the adoption of one role or another, it influences the roles the other characters adopt, turning seemingly incoherent reactions into logical conclusions, often to the disadvantage of women in a male-dominated society. Far from being deterministic, however, the play

encourages women to step outside this logic, but it also implies that this presupposes the difficult process of ridding oneself of false consciousness. Setting the two authors' positions off against each other, this paper intends to find a middle ground for the adoption of gender roles.

• **ONEGA JAÉN**, Susana. "Oulipian Games, Transpersonality and the Logic of Potentiality in David Mitchell's *Ghostwritten*". U. of Zargoza. sonega@unizar.es

Abstract: The publication in 1999 of his first novel, *Ghostwritten*, firmly established David Mitchell as a most audacious, thrilling and, above all, entertaining young British. A surprisingly innovative and readable novel, Mitchell's prize-winning *opera prima* combines a wealth of intertextual echoes to a whole range of earlier writers—from Woolf, Joyce and Nabokov to Italo Calvino, Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, Paul Auster and Haruki Mukarami, among others—and literary genres and modes—including cyberpunk, science fiction, the gothic dystopia and travel writing—as well as to such disparate disciplines as cognitive science, transpersonal psychology, Buddhist cosmology, quantum physics, cybernetics and the politics of cultural translation. Divided into nine chapters and a short coda and narrated in the first person by characters of various nationalities and cultures living in and/or moving across such disparate places as Okinawa, Tokyo, Hong Kong, the Holy

Mountain, Mongolia, St. Petersburg, London, Clear Island and New York City, the novel displays a rhyzomatic structure that allows Mitchell to set the physical displacement of the characters against their own disparate cultural, political, religious, affective, scientific and technological idiosyncrasies, thus bringing to the fore the areas of friction and rupture in the systemic and ongoing changes in the dominant (Western) culture taking place in our globalised world. Starting from these premises, the paper seeks to demonstrate that *Ghostwritten* shares with Raymond Queneau, Georges Perec, Italo Calvino and other members of the Oulipo (French acronym for "workshop for potential literature"), not only the love for games, puzzles, and language play, but also their programmatic attempt to reconcile CP Snow's two cultures, and so that the form, characterization and ideology of the novel respond to the holistic and transcendent approach to human knowledge advocated since the 1980s in all areas of study, which may be said to form part of the shift towards the transmodern paradigm.

- **PASCUAL GARRIDO**, Marisa. "Transmodern experience in Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth*" U. Córdoba. ff1pagam@uco.es

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to analyze Jhumpa Lahiri's stories in *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008) as a collection that renders the experience of transmodern subjects at the turn of the millennium. The author writes about

Bengali-American characters who relate with large- and small-scale communities, trying at the same time to preserve their self-identity and their personal autonomy. I contend that Lahiri's short stories epitomize transmodern experience by focusing on the "in-betweeness", the dynamic or transformative "essence" of transmodern characters. The characters as well as their stories do have a transcultural appeal too.

In order to identify transmodern traits in Lahiri's short-story collection, I will draw on the notion of the transmodernity as developed by the Spanish thinker Rodriguez Magda (2004). Another concept that will be applied in this analysis of transmodern subjects is that of "inoperative community" (Nancy 1991), which considers that the existence of an operative community where the subject feels fulfilled and reaches personal transcendence is only a utopian wish. Looking for a working model to describe the complexity of the present moment in history, Rodriguez Magda has reflected on both the crisis of the modern project of the Enlightenment and the exhaustion of postmodern culture. She claims that the transmodern model is not a panacea that will be effective in solving the problems brought about by the globalized, sophisticated, high-tech age we are immersed in. Quite on the contrary, the transmodern paradigm offers provisional lines of action to live on in a fast-moving world and to cope with the collapse of the modern and postmodern frameworks of reference. Transmodernity then implies being "in-between" those two moments, immersed in a dynamic process of transformation,

overcoming antithetical positions to adopt a synthetic and pragmatic approach in order to be able to deal with a multifarious and complex panorama. Hence, far from implying a total neglect of the modern and postmodern: "La transmodernidad … [recoge] en su mismo concepto la herencia de los retos abiertos de la Modernidad tras la quiebra del proyecto ilustrado… asumiendo las críticas postmodernas [y delimitando] un horizonte posible de reflexión que escape de nihilismo, sin comprometernos con proyectos caducos pero sin olvidarlos" (Rodríguez Magda 1997: 18)

In the present paper I will focus on the experience of transmodern characters in Lahiri's collection. I contend that Lahiri's Bengali-American characters are prototypically transmodern subjects who cannot claim a transcendental essence or a stable identity—self-identity is dynamic in this model. They also prove to be strategic subjects, trying to escape from a meaningless existence by attempting to fit into community while struggling to build their self-identity. Lahiri's hybrid characters are beings in motion both physically (travelling, moving) and metaphysically (engaged in an endless process of self-transformation). They are depicted adapting themselves to the environment, adopting strategies to avoid conflict, pain, isolation and disappointment, attempting to develop meaningful relationships with others. They wish to belong and find a sense of self-transcendence in community but that is almost never granted or not for a long time. Travelling and secrecy play important strategic roles in the stories narrated in *Unaccustomed Earth*.

- **PELLICER,** Silvia. "Crossing Boundaries: A Transmodern Approach to Michelene Wandor's Short Stories" spellice@unizar.es

Abstract: *False Relations* (2004) is a collection of short stories whose time span goes from Biblical times to the present moment, and whose settings move across the globe. Diverse literary genres are re-written as well as multifarious voices interact, transcending time and space boundaries. Historical characters like Salamone Rossi and Claudio Monteverdi, biblical figures such as those of Esther and Queen Vashti, or the voices of contemporary Jewish and Arab subjects, among others, shape a polyphonic collection of stories that British-Jewish writer Michélene Wandor has pieced together to represent the hybrid and unstable nature of the contemporary subject, with a focus on the Jewish individuals and communities.

Drawing on three of these twelve stories – "False Relations", "The Story of Esther and Vashti", and "Yom Tov" –, the main aim of this paper is to analyse the narrative mechanisms that allow the author to provide a transmodern outlook on such complex socio-individual constructions as religion, gender and race. Wandor's recourse to alienated characters, the time and space boundaries crossed within each story as well as the connections among them, the abundant presence of metafictional and intertextual references, and the recurrent use of metaphors linking the stories are some of the mechanisms that help the author i) claim for the failure of hetero-patriarchal Western

discourses in favour of the minorities' voicing of their "counter-(hi)stories" (Nelson, 2011); and ii) foster a transmodern view of human relationships (Rodríguez Magda, 2015).

I will have recourse to the theoretical background provided by current scholars working on the transmodern paradigm – Ateljevic (2013), Dussel (12004), Ghisi (1999), Rodríguez Magda (2004, 2015), Sendón de León (2015) – in addition to those researchers drawing on the ethical implications behind this urgent interest in seeing our lives as closely bounded to the rest of the humanity (Hooks, 2000; Rifkin, 2009; Rothberg, 2009, 2013). Further, some ideas about diaspora, hybridity and Jewishness will also be essential for the ensuing analysis. To begin with, if transmodernity has been characterised by an optimism that may "provide hope for the human race (...), a *planetary vision* in which humans (...) realize that we are all (...) connected into one system", and it is also seen as essentially "*postpatriarchal*" and "*postsecular*" (Ateljevic, 2013: 203, original emphasis), I would like to prove that these stories embody this transmodern worldview. The deconstruction of national, racial, religious boundaries in the stories fosters the transmodern potentiality "to move beyond traditional dichotomies; to articulate a critical cosmopolitanism beyond nationalism and colonialism" (204). Moreover, this hermeneutics of complexity, which escapes from cause-effect relationships while it acknowledges miscellaneous and simultaneous levels of existence (Sendón de León, 2015), will be related to specific questions concerning Jewish identity by

questioning whether this transmodern model may provide Jewish identities with invigorated ways of relating inside and outside their communities. And finally, the horizontal and vertical dialogues exposed in this work are expected to point at the need of a "global empathy" (Rifkin, 2009), a relational consciousness that can help the contemporary subject to accept contradicting and multicultural realities. Thus, my ultimate aim will be to demonstrate that Wandor offers an optimistic perspective on the way the transmodern paradigm may offer a refreshed version of the whole humanity in general and of Jewish identity and Arab-Jewish relationships in particulat, whose (hi)stories could be understood as part of this "new shared story" (Ateljevic, 2013: 203).

• **PÉREZ GARCÍA**, Fernando. "Psychogeography and Paracosmic Vancouver in Wayde Compton's The Outer Harbour". U Oviedo. UO189253@uniovi.es

Abstract: On my intervention I will elaborate on Black Vancouver's Afroperipheralism and transcultural urban experience through critical analysis of Wayde Compton's *The Outer Harbour,* a short story collection in which characters and the urban space merge to make narrative exploring identity, place, gentrification and racism through blueprints, grant applications and straight prose. Places speak in the way that they shape us.

The key element of the collection is the geological development of a volcanic island in Vancouver's harbor and how different individuals and collectives

claim this space throughout a twenty-four years span, becoming the site for radical First Nations activists, to a luxury apartment tower and finally a prison for illegal immigrants. This claiming for a racialized space in the city stems from the invisibilization and uprootedness of the black community after the demolition of Hogan's Alley, the only black neighborhood, during the urban renewal of the 1970s. These claims for local Canadian, Vancouverite roots, far from the Pan-African discourse and writing against elision by the national narrative is reflected on the dis/embodied urban encounters, the use of holograms and the superimposition of racialized imaginary spaces and alternative realities in the actual space of the city through live action role playing-games. Finally, the confusion of holograms with immigrants reveal the nation-state discourse failure to recognize racialized bodies in the post-colonial world.

On the other side, Compton addresses the transnational features of the Black Vancouverite community with many members coming from the United States of America and the problematic development of a Black Canadian identity in a cosmopolis on the margins of the Diaspora while resisting the hegemonic Afro -American cultural discourse. This search for a more complex, rhizomatic identity in the glocal context of Vancouver is seen in the traumatic relation of Albert and Donald, Canadian-born craniophagic sons to an American immigrant and their struggle to develop an identity of their own in a land that deems them invisible.

Stemming from urban theories of space such as David Harvey's 9-way matrix, Edward Soja's Thirdspace, Doreen Massey's progressive sense of place and Odile Hoffman's vision of spatial capital, I will analyze the dis/location of the racialized body in the city and the performance of-through urban space to disrupt the dominant metanarrative reflected in Compton's work and I will develop the concept of Afroperipheralism from a former assimilationist community demanding a place of their own in the national narrative. I think this concept will prove a useful contribution to the current debate on transmodern perspectives.

• **PÉREZ ZAPATA**, Beatríz. "From the glocal to the transnational in Zadie Smith's work". U. Zaragoza. abperez@unizar.es.

Abstract: Zadie Smith's writings are usually located in North West London, an area which has often been described as multicultural and representative of the glocal culture of the new millennium. Smith's stories portray diasporic groups that resist homogeneization and have a complex relationship with the ideas of home, departure, and return. The experience of these characters in a metropolitan setting is defined by ethnicity in its intersection with class as well as gender and sexuality and it recurrently brings to the fore discourses that aim to keep otherness in *place*. Yet, there is space for resistance.

Smith's work has a strong decolonizing component in terms of identity, culture, and knowledge. One of the ways in which decolonization is achieved is through the establishment of more transnational relationships that construct a vision of the "universal" in Aimé Césaire's terms, that is, a "universal rich with all that is particular". In the same line, I would argue that Smith's work aspires to the construction of a "Black Atlantic" identity, which for Paul Gilroy comprises elements from British, Caribbean, African, and American cultures and allows a multifold vision.

This paper will analyse Smith's depiction of glocal characters situated in North West London and those who undertake more transnational journeys. In addition, I would also pay attention to those narratives strategies that suggest a transnational and decolonizing intention. For this purpose I will concentrate on the study of *On Beauty* (2005), *NW* (2012), and *Swing Time* (2016). *On Beauty* explores the transnational identities of African-American, British, and Caribbean characters that emphasize a complex and entangled history of (de)colonization. *NW*, although more local in terms of place, contains a high number of references and intertexts to global artists, critics, writers, and philosophers that inscribe the protagonists in a transnational milieu that defines their identities and relationships to the past. Lastly, *Swing Time*, which is more deliberately transnational, with parts of the novel taking place in London, New York, and West Africa, provides a vision of transnationalism influenced by the media and with a certain degree of commodification.

Nevertheless, it shows a conscious effort to reclaim an Atlantic and universal black identity.

The study of these three novels will reveal an evolution of transnationalism in various forms in Smith's novels and the formulation of a common, yet heterogeneous, sense of universal self through the decolonization of identity, form, and knowledge.

- **PUSHMANN-NALEZ**, Barbara. "In the Narrative Fiction of a Globalised Society There Are No Closed Spaces Any More". Ruhr U. puschbbc@gmail.com

Abstract: In "Globalization as Transmodern Totality", the first chapter of Rosa María Rodríguez Magda's philosophical essay *Transmodernity* (eng. 2008, span. 2004), she claims that at present no radical avant-garde innovation is needed, but an overstepping of oppositions such as modernism-postmodernism. According to her, globalisation and networking demand a totality in theory not known until recently. The title of my proposal presents a slightly altered phrase from Rodriguez Magda's text. It hypothetically states that for narrative fictions of the third millennium the blurring or suspension of literary boundaries as well as of diverse thematic fields has become an option, if not a necessity. "Closed Spaces" are primarily, yet not exclusively, to

be understood in the figurative sense. My proposition interrogates the transgressing "totality" displayed in some novelistic works and asks whether a narrative concept of transmodernity has emerged there.

Even though categorisation forbids itself when working with Rodriguez Magda's theoretical approach the focus on transcending of borderlines may vary in importance. I wish, **first**, to look at the **trans-rational** kind of narrative transgressing, which addresses alternatives to the Reason of the Enlightenment. **Second**, a literary example where **trans-ethnic and trans-historical** relations take centre stage is questioned, and, **third**, the **trans-human** thematised in novels shall serve as a flagrant 'violation' of closed spaces.

However, apart from narrative trans-mediality the overrunning of well-defined narratological and generic markers by postmodern storytelling has continued in the stage of transmodernity and enlarged the existence of hybrid and shifting forms. This fourth aspect can be exemplified by the selected texts as well.

The novels under consideration are, in correlation with the first three characteristics mentioned above:

A.S. Byatt, *A Whistling Woman* (2002). The novel thematically and generically integrates diverse fields of knowledge and human experience, in particular science and the humanities, the cognitive and the mysterious, politics and magic or esoteric religiousness. The epistolary and personalised

narration alternates with 'zero' focalisation of medical or scientific observation. The narrative also shows that to manage this balancing act demands a high adaptability in the reading process and renounces (or stretches) the concept of unity.

Caryl Phillips, *The Lost Child* (2015). The main branch of the novel's action addresses situations of trans-ethnicity in family and social community in the late 20th century. That the thematised problems are not restricted to this period becomes obvious in the connected narrative about Heathcliff, his 'life-story' and his Victorian author. The trans-lated elements – also in the sense of literary history – confer to this text a diversity which integrates the imaginary and metafictional into the 'realistic' portrayal of trans-ethnic family relations in the UK.

Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and *The Heart Goes Last* (2015). The trans-human is depicted in dystopian worlds with an emphasis on the ambiguity of (literally) 'closed spaces'. The novels raise fundamental questions about values transmitted in the tradition of Enlightenment and humanism without providing definite answers.

• **RIAÑO ALONSO**, Cristina. "Refugees' Experiences of Detention in the UK".

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Abstract: This paper seeks to examine refugees' experiences in the process of

seeking asylum in the United Kingdom, as reflected in the book *Refugee Tales* (2016), where a group of established writers worked together in a project to retell the individual stories of a Group of refugees. Drawing from Sara Ahmed's theories of affect, this paper will first of all analyse how fear constructs the collective image of the refugees as a black male body.

Secondly, in line with what Zygmunt Bauman called "securitization" and the "adiaphorization" of the migrant issue, it will interrogate whether Detention Centres in the UK work as a projection of our fear of violence and terrorism. It argues that we are sacrificing justice in favour of a sense of security, exempting our policies and behaviour towards them from moral examination, and restricting the movement of some individuals who have committed no crime. There are 11 of these centres, where the process of detention is described as an administrative process not a criminal procedure. However, 4 f these centres are managed by the Prison Service. For the remaining ones, the Home Office has outsourced their management to private security firms. "The Dependant's Tale" by Marina Lewycka specially comments the case of Yarl's Wood Detention Centre, which has been accused of sexual abuse and inhumane and degrading treating of the detainees. Part of the process of constructing the object of fear is recurring to stereotypes, such as reducing these migrants to animal or bad; using dehumanization to justify the violence exerted upon them. My paper makes special emphasis on the issue of indefinite detention of refuges, the detrimental effect to detainees' health

and the government's refusal to establish a time limit. Just as we are told in "The Detainee's Tale" by Ali Smith: "And being out of detention and knowing they can put you back in detention? It is all like still being in detention. Detention is never not there." Thirdly, it focuses on the particular experiences of women in Detention Centres, the lack of gender-specific standards (that we do find in the prison state since 2008), and whether this is another traumatic experience for female victims of sexual violence and abuse. For instance, Ali Smith recalls how – after the interview with the Vietnamese detainee victim of human trafficking – she is devastated when she discovers that there isn't such a thing as therapeutic help for people in detention. Moreover, it discusses the necessity of a specific gender commission to deal with female applications for asylum. Many times female victims that have suffered violence have to face disbelief or marginalisation on the part of the authorities concerned. In "The Friend's Tale" by Jade Amoli-Jackson we are told the story of Alice, who left Nigeria escaping from the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) of her daughters. The male judge who dealt with her case questioned her credibility and Alice and her children were deported back to Nigeria. As Slavoj Žižek stated, until we can reach the utopic society where nobody is forced to leave their homes we should resort to "pure voluntarism" in the face of catastrophe. That its to say, we should provide refugees with the best treatment that ensures their dignity and helps their psychological and physical recovery from their horrors they are escaping.

- **RODRÍGUEZ DOÑATE**, Javier. "The Paroxysm of Exhaustion: The End of the Postmodern Paradigm and the Death of the Author in Will Self's Dorian: An Imitation (2002)". U. of Zargoza. 610867@unizar.es

Abstract: Will Self's *Dorian: An Imitation*, first published in 2002, can be regarded as an extraordinarily accurate depiction of the process of decadence undergone by the postmodern paradigm which had prevailed since the 1960s. The date of publication of the novel justifies our contention that it heralds the death of postmodernism, since the most salient cultural trends that question the predominance of the postmodern paradigm originate a few years after the publication of the novel. The aim of this essay is to analyze the way in which this demise of the postmodern paradigm is foregrounded in *Dorian: An Imitation* through its deployment of major postmodern textual devices such as metafiction or intertextuality. The theoretical background to the analysis will rely on Linda Hutcheon's and Patricia Waugh's notions on these issues while Brian McHale's and Roland Barthes' insights into the issue of authorship will be essential for analysis, in the first section, of one of the most noticeable features of postmodernist fiction: the roles of author and reader. The second section of the essay will focus on Baz Hallward's work of art, *Cathode Narcissus* as the novel's main postmodern artifact, characterized by mass-media elements that blur the ontological boundaries between reality and its

representation. Finally, the essay will draw on the insights of philosophers of history such as Jean Baudrillard and Fredric Jameson for the analysis of the ideological stance of the novel. The aim of analyzing the novel from all these perspectives is to demonstrate that Will Self's rewriting of Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray* problematizes the postmodern paradigm before it was generally contested and points towards the beginning of a new cultural paradigm emerging out of, and in reaction to the postmodern paradigm. By so doing, Self's novel may be said to repeat the iconoclastic gesture of Wilde's original with respect to the Victorian tradition.

• ROYO, Maria Pilar. "The Creation of a Transcultural Community in Gail Jones's *A Guide to Berlin* (2015)". U. of Zargoza. prg@ubnizar.es

Abstract: The ever-increasing migratory movements, the faster flow of information communication and economic exchange worldwide have given rise to a reconceptualization of the notions of culture and identity. In the contemporary digital and globalized context, the traditional notion of identity understood as a monolithic and static entity constrained by national borders proves to be inadequate. As Gilsenan Nordin, Hansen and Zamorano Llena (2013) argue, although the notions of "interculturality" and "multiculturality" appear to offer a wider understanding of culture and identity, they also fail to acknowledge the effects and transforming power that the existence of

difference within one's identity may have. In contrast to these two terms which seem to rely on a self-contained notion of culture, these critics highlight the concept of "transculturality" as the most proper term to address the problems and social changes that are taking place in our contemporary globalized context. Unlike "interculturality" and "multiculturality," these critics point out, the concept of "transculturality" approaches difference not as a threat or something alien to one's culture, but as its inherent quality. Transculturality studies cultures relationally and seeks to find the plausible connections that may exist among them. The acknowledgement of the foreign within is seen as the vehicle that may open up a path towards others and one self.

This paper will look at how the transcultural is represented in Gail Jones's novel *A Guide to Berlin* (2015). In this novel, the Australian writer brings together six characters from different age and geographical positions (Australia, Japan, Italy and the United States) into Berlin. Just as difference is one of the driving motors of the transcultural, these six characters become bound not only by their shared love for Nabokov's work, but also by their status of foreigners within Berlin. Every week these characters meet in an uninhabited apartment of the German capital in order to tell their speak-memories.

Significantly enough, Berlin is presented as city haunted by untold stories and invisible people. However, as this paper seeks to demonstrate, this discourse of silence is challenged by the transcultural community that these six

characters form. Through their transcultural encounters, they strengthen their bonds and disclose those untold personal stories and memories that had troubled them throughout their lives. The main aim of this paper will be to analyse and discuss the novel's representation of these transcultural encounters. For this purpose, the paper will look at the meaning and function of the novel's multiple symbols. Through the use of these symbols, the paper will argue, the novel manages to knit a network of connections among the characters which transcends physical and temporal borders.

• **SARIKAYA-SEN**, Merve. "Imagining an Alternative World through Speculative Fiction: Tom McCarthy's *Satin Island".* Baskent Universitesi. mervem82@yahoo.com

Abstract: Speculative fiction is usually regarded as one of the sub-genres of science fiction. As defined by Darko Suvin, science fiction is "a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and the interaction of estrangement and condition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment" (1979: 7-8). From a different yet related perspective, Margaret Atwood argues that speculative fiction explores "the consequences of new and proposed technologies ... the nature and limits of what it means to be human in graphic ways ... the relations of humanity to the universe ... [and] proposed changes

in social organization" by speaking not only of "what is past and passing" but also "especially of what is to come" (2004: 515). Starting from Atwood's definition of the genre, this paper proposes a reading of Tom McCarthy's *Satin Island* (2015), Man Booker Prize short listed novel, as a salient example of speculative fiction which presents us with the role of fiction in understanding the complexities of the twenty-first century marked by technology. The pivotal concern of the novel is the project of a corporate anthropologist named U., who works for the Company. The project is entitled to determine what is happening in our world which has been characterized by fragmentedness. In McCarthy's words, U is "mapping this new emergent landscape of fragments, and constellating these into new microsystems. It is a very political book: at one point U. is thinking of becoming a kind of revolutionary and blowing everything up" (2015: 140). Besides, he states that the novel is "a sort of disinterring of a set of back histories, and allowing them all to operate at the same time, under the guise of being contemporary, or of being a disconnected, floating attempt at naming the contemporary and failing" (2015: 152).

Accordingly, drawing on McCarthy's definitions of the novel and the tools provided by speculative fiction, this study aims to carry out an analysis of *Satin Island* as one of the most important novels of the twenty-first century that evokes the possibility of imagining an alternative world and future. The starting hypothesis explored in this study is that the novel explores one's

epistemological and ontological limits in a graphic way. The study aims to demonstrate that the novel is an artistic representation of the relationship of humanity with the universe which questions changes in the past and present as well as those in the future. In doing so, the novel edges towards a political manifesto of our age.

• **SARNOU**, Dallel. "Faqir's *Willow Trees Don't Weep: a* transmodern journey of deserted femininity". University of Abdelhamid Ibn Badis, Argelia. Sar_dalal@yahoo.fr

Abstract: Recent years have been marked by an alarming rise of fundamentalist terrorism worldwide. At the same time, in many Western countries, xenophobia, Arabo-phobia, Islamophobia and many forms of racism have sternly increased to act in response to terrorist attacks that have hit major cosmopolitan cities like Paris, Brussel, London, Madrid and New York. To face an unfair generalization of terrorism over all people coming from the Middle East, Anglophone Arab writers have assumed responsibility for uncovering truths about *Arabness*, Islam-related issues and women treatment in the Middle East through their works of fiction to a Western readership that is *orientalist* par excellence. By celebrating trans-modernity and *glocality*, these writers attempt to re-localize Muslims and Arabs within the international community. The British Jordanian author Fadia Faqir is considered as a leading

figure in transnational literature. After having published her fifth novel, Faqir's books' reception in the West have a reached an important increase due to the rise of interest in understanding the *Other* who is considered as a threat to the West. In *Willow Trees Don't Weep*, Faqir has defeated censorship-phobia and decided to write about the life of a terrorist and his deserted family. The novel exposes the mess contemporary world is experiencing. While some people think they are fighting for saving humanity, they end up horrifying people. This is the case of the protagonist's father who begins a journey to save the Islamic world but winds up as a terrorist. As for Najwa, his daughter, she sets out to save herself, but she eventually ends as a dislocated immigrant in Durham. A story of hatred and love, forgiveness and accusation, broken promises and dreams, and father and daughter, *Willow Trees don't Weep* takes the reader in an epic journey with the protagonist to discover the mysterious country of Afghanistan and to learn untold truths about Jihad and Islamism. The present paper offers a transmodern reading of Faqir's latest novel *Willow Trees Don't Weep* (2014).

• **WESTMORELAND**, Trevor. "Transmodern Time-space in Don DeLillo's *Zero*". Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. trevor.westmoreland@estudiante.uam.es

Abstract: DeLillo's 2016 novel *Zero K* is exploring a new type of transgression – of space-time – for the American author, himself known for his career-long

blending of both modern and postmodern sensibilities. His latest novel takes the thematic focus into the near future and a time post-largescale human disaster, itself significant in that his novels have always engaged the pressing questions of their day in an fictional present rather than a speculative future. In its emphasis on the protagonist's wanderings through the rhizomatic, subterranean tunnels of a desert compound built to facilitate an escape from temporality though cryogenics, the novel finally takes the questions of spatiotemporal compression evident in DeLillo's post 9/11 novels to a full engagement. It is as if DeLillo, through his creation of the protagonist of *Zero K*, is finally forced to take his critique of the perceived direction of (transmodern) society into the fictional future, something a host of other speculative writers have long done but which was not necessary for DeLillo and his engagement with the present until now – until the pressures of time-space compression have reached a breaking point.

The subject of analysis which most aligns with the questioning of the transmodern paradigm is multifaceted; the novel seats itself in the heart of the question of transmodernity, asking just exactly what it means to be human in the contemporary moment. The effects of spatiotemporal compression are taken to their limit, causing some humans to kneel before the power of technology in a way that becomes spiritual, embracing the cryogenic concept of 'the Convergence': a "faith-based technology. That's what it is. Another god. Not so different, it turns out, from some of the earlier ones. Except that it's

real." The protagonist loses his father and stepmother to this technology, and the second element thus apt for this analysis is in the subsequent attempt he makes to continue life in the 'present' of his life in a future New York City.

The proposed paper will therefore engage with DeLillo's novel with the following questions in mind: what sorts of spaces are formally employed to represent the transmodern present? This question falls within the scope of the broader one, which asks if the paradigm has shifted from the postmodern some fifteen years ago, how would one go about defining the transmodern chronotope in the way that Paul Smethurst attempted to define that of the postmodern in the year 2000? With such an analysis in mind I propose to rework Bakhtin's still powerful theory of the chronotope into the present through a geocritical lens, as laid out by Bernard Westphal in his 2007 study *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, ultimately attempting to answer the question: in which way is the chronotope of the underground complex in the unnamed desert in dialogue with the protagonist's maneuvering of the hyper-transmodern city in which he lives, and what does this suggest about transmodernity in general?

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