

## **Sandra Regina Goulart Almeida**

[Personal site](#) Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil

[“Unsettling Voices: New Diasporas and Cosmopolitanisms in Contemporary Canadian Literature”](#) link to pdf now revised

The discussion video will be posted later.

The paper intends to discuss how contemporary voices in narrative fiction, especially by diasporic women writers, have “unsettled” Canadian literature over the past years. It will address the ways in which writers voice through their works this new vision of the present-day cosmopolitan nation and the new geopolitical spaces originated by the continuous emergence of diasporic movements in our contemporary globalized world. Many writers have recently focused on the production of what may be called diasporic fictions and, by doing so, engender new perceptions of the often multiple societies and cultures with which they inevitably become associated or affiliated. In this paper I will focus specifically on how the theoretical discussions about the new diasporas and cosmopolitanisms have informed these women writers’ works and how they have been instrumental in shaping contemporary Canadian literature.

The idealized and traditional notion of the city as a cosmopolitan space, in which citizens of the cosmos share a space of tolerance and acceptance is very often strongly negated by authors of this new diaspora. Several critics view contemporary cosmopolitanisms are deeply intertwined with the recent debates about the issues of diasporas, nationalism, globalization and multiculturalism. As the utopian dream of the nation is shattered and is replaced by the cosmopolitan state, there is the need to attempt to include in this new version of the nation a cosmopolitan reconfiguration that is supposed to include the new and old actors that were excluded from the historical processes. Likewise, there is the need to think about how to maintain an ethical attitude towards the other in this new cosmopolitan and diasporic space. In this paper I want to discuss how contemporary women writers voice in their works different models through which the experiences of diasporic subjects in this new cosmopolitanism are viewed, especially in gender terms.

**Sandra Almeida** is an Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literatures at Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Brazil, and a fellow researcher from the Brazilian funding agency, CNPq. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and did her Post-doctoral research sabbatical at Columbia University, sponsored by the Brazilian funding agency, CAPES (2000-2001). She was President of the Brazilian Association for Canadian Studies (2001-2003) and Director for International Relations at UFMG (2002-2006). She is the editor and co-editor of *Interseções: Diálogos com a Literatura e a Lingüística Aplicada no Canadá* (2001), *The Art of Elizabeth Bishop* (2002), *Gênero e Representação em Literaturas de Língua Inglesa* (2002), *Gender Studies and Feminist Perspectives* (2003), *Perspectivas Transnacionais* (2005) and *Brasil-Canadá: Olhares Diversos* (2006). She has published extensively on literary criticism, women writers, comparative literature and Canadian studies.

[Centro de Estudos de Culturas e Literaturas Anglófonas](#) CECLA

## **Christian Bök**

[Personal site](#) University of Calgary

[“The Xenotext Experiment”](#) link to pdf

The discussion video will be posted later.

“The Xenotext Experiment” is an artistic exercise that strives to interlink creative studies in the humanities with academic studies in the biosciences, integrating these two domains that might not have otherwise had any reason to interact, except under the innovative conditions of this unorthodox experiment. With the assistance of the expert geneticist Stuart Kauffman, the poetic researcher Christian Bök proposes to create an example of “living poetry” by using a “chemical alphabet” to encipher a short, lyric verse into a sequence of DNA, thereafter implanting this poem into the genome of a bacterium. The poet plans to compose this text in such a way that, when translated into the gene and then integrated into the cell, the text nevertheless gets “expressed” by the organism, which, in response to this grafted, genetic sequence, begins to manufacture a viable, benign protein—a protein that, according to the original, chemical alphabet, is itself another text. The poet hopes, in effect, to engineer a life-form so that it becomes not only a durable archive for storing a poem, but also a useable machine for writing a poem.

“The Cyborg Opera” 2 videos in QuickTime format are available at these urls

(I) 17:11 <http://tinyurl.com/546gwt>

(II) 11:24 <http://tinyurl.com/4oncaj>

## **Diana Brydon**

[Personal site](#) University of Manitoba

[“Negotiating Citizenship in Global Times: the Hérouxville Debates”](#) link to pdf

The discussion video will be posted later.

This paper investigates the “politics of visibility” (Ty) as they are engaged in what has come to be known as the Hérouxville controversy, sparked when a small town in Quebec published a list of standards instructing potential immigrants on the values of their town in January 2007. The incident received international attention for the inflammatory nature of these standards and prompted the premier of Quebec to launch a commission of inquiry into reasonable accommodation of cultural minorities (the Bouchard-Taylor Commission) as a result. Through a postcolonial reading of this media event and its aftermath, the paper analyzes how voice and vision function in influencing how citizenship is inhabited, contested, and negotiated in Canada today. I conclude that Hérouxville enacts a contest over claims to victimhood that is familiar to students of postcolonial history and discourse. The town’s actions “other” Muslims and English-Canada out of a sense that it is being “othered,” and consequently victimized, by these. In deriding and demonizing these concerns, without investigating them more carefully, English Canada risks reinforcing this spiral of competing victimhoods. Instead, ways must be found to break this cycle. These will include developing more nuanced critiques of “culturalism,” paying more attention to the role of autonomy, and considering the ways in which voice and vision interact within national and global imaginaries.

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**Diana Brydon**, Canada Research Chair in Globalization and Cultural Studies at the University of Manitoba, has published books on Christina Stead, Timothy Findley and Decolonising Fictions (with Helen Tiffin). She has edited Postcolonialism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies and co-edited Shakespeare in Canada (with Irena Makaryk), Renegotiating Community: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, Global Contexts (co-edited with W.D. Coleman) will be published by UBC Press in May 2008. Her current research investigating global imaginaries and Canadian culture is taking shape within the context of interdisciplinary team research on “Building Global Democracy,” “South-North Dialogue on Globalization Research” and “Critical Literacies, Digital Inclusions.”

## **Alison Calder**

[Personal site](#) University of Manitoba

“Collaboration and Convention in the Poetry of Pain Not Bread”

The Afterword to Pain Not Bread’s poetry collection Introduction to the Introduction to Wang Wei (Brick, 2000) begins as many afterwords do: with a description of how the poet became interested in the subject s/he writes about. “The first collection of Tang Dynasty poetry I came across was called The Jade Mountain,” it reads, going on to describe how the poet found the book in a local library and took it home, only to discover, mysteriously, that a copy of it was already on the bookshelf. The poet, bemused, had no recollection of purchasing the book, though distinctly recalled gazing at the colour of its spine before going to sleep at night. It is not until the next page that the reader learns that there is no poet: the first-person narrator is instead an invention, standing in for the complex identities of a three-person poetry collective. It is my argument in this paper that this kind of unsettling maneuver, directly challenging the idea that a lyric voice originates in individual experience, speaks directly to basic reader expectations about the lyric, and that a similar unsettling occurs repeatedly throughout the body of Pain Not Bread’s poems themselves, both in text and in performance. The result is a postmodern poetry that uses hybrid narrative agents to produce a dialogic or polyphonic layering of concealed voices that challenges notions of the individual poet and re-views the relation between artist, material, and audience. Pain Not Bread’s use of a highly stylized, “foreign” form, classical Chinese poetry, as a basis for their poetic experimentation allows an investigation into the relation between poetic voice and convention, ultimately demonstrating that the expression of individual thought or emotion often seen as central to the lyric poem may be as conventional a poetic element as is rhyme or metre. Pain Not Bread’s work further challenges ideas of poetic originality, suggesting that it is not rooted in the individual, but rather in convention itself; like the poet discovering the library book that is already on the bookshelf, originality lies in finding something new that is already there.

**Alison Calder** teaches Canadian literature and creative writing at the University of Manitoba. She is the author of one poetry collection, *Wolf Tree*, and has written numerous articles on various aspects of Western Canadian literature. She is the editor of *Desire Never Leaves: The Poetry of Tim Lilburn* and of a critical edition of Frederick Philip Grove's novel *Settlers of the Marsh*, and the co-editor of an anthology of critical essays, *History, Literature, and the Writing of the Canadian Prairies*. Her most recent publication is *Ghost Works: Improvisations in Letters and Poems*, a limited edition chapbook that she co-wrote with Jeanette Lynes.

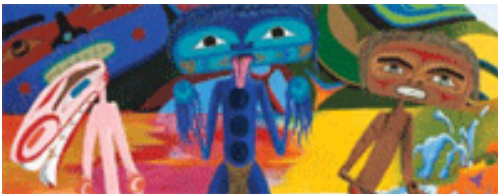
## Warren Cariou

[Personal site](#) University of Manitoba

“Old Masks and New Skins: The Surface of Indigeneity”

Like other labels of cultural identity, the concept of indigeneity tends to exist in a tension between surface and depth, outside and inside, construction and essence. This paper examines some recent representations of indigeneity produced by North American Aboriginal writers, artists and theorists, focusing on the image of the mask as a touchstone for an analysis of recent debates about the nature and the location of indigeneity. As a putative zone of demarcation between the inner and the outer, I argue that the mask provides a telling index of the ways in which recent Native artists are working through the theoretical problems posed by postmodernism and the more recent wave of “indigenist” theory.

In the 1990s, prominent postmodern Aboriginal artists and theorists engaged in a project of de-essentializing stereotypical representations of Native identity in order to liberate Native people from the weight of colonial stereotypes. The foremost theorist of this movement is Gerald Vizenor, who calls for the creation of a “Postindian” era in which stereotypes are deconstructed through parody, self-conscious irony, and other manifestations of what might be called a postmodern trickster aesthetic. However, at the turn of the twenty-first century a number of theorists such as Craig Womack, Jace Weaver and Robert Warrior began to criticize the postmodern approach for its complicity with colonial ideologies and for its negative focus on defining what indigeneity is not, rather than expressing what it is. In contrast, these theorists argue for the importance of asserting tribal-specific “insider” readings of work from within those particular communities. In outlining his version of this argument, Womack quotes Harold Adams writing: “Aboriginal consciousness cannot be a facade; it is an intrinsic or inner essence that lies somewhere between instinct and intuition, and it evolves from the humanness and spirituality of our collective, Aboriginal community” (Adams 45, Womack 5). This contrast between the “facade” of Indian identity and the “inner essence” of aboriginal consciousness is what I find reflected in contemporary representations of Native masks by writers such as Marvin Francis, Jeannette Armstrong and Eden Robinson and artists such as Brian Jungen, Barry Scow and Manik.



The mask is of course a common figure for the idea of constructed identity in many cultural traditions, but I argue that the masks in contemporary Canadian Aboriginal art and literature are more ambiguous in their associations. One reason for this is that in many coastal First Nations, masks represent not only a projected external identity but also a powerful symbol of community cohesion and spiritual tradition. Since these masks are also often associated with proprietary stories that are circulated only within restricted circles, the masks tend to gesture toward the idea of a closed, sovereign community. At the same time, however, these masks remain the objects of anthropological and touristic fetishism in non-Native cultures, and therefore they maintain some of the stereotypical associations that Vizenor’s Postindian theory attempted to dismantle. Thus, the image of the mask presents the prospect of an unstable indigeneity: a surface that is haunted by the possibility of depth (and vice-versa).

### Works cited

- Adams, Howard. *A Tortured People: The Politics of Colonization*. Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 1997.
- Womack, Craig. *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Voice and Vision/Voix et Vision 2009-01-15

Links:

Brian Jungen:

[http://www.catrionajeffries.com/b\\_b\\_jungen\\_works.html](http://www.catrionajeffries.com/b_b_jungen_works.html)

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun:

The Impending Nisga'a' Deal. Last Stand. Chump Change, 1996 detail above in text

[http://projects.vanartgallery.bc.ca/publications/75years/pdf/Yuxweluptun\\_Lawrence\\_43.pdf](http://projects.vanartgallery.bc.ca/publications/75years/pdf/Yuxweluptun_Lawrence_43.pdf)

Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun: Retrospective 1984 – 1988

<http://www.lawrencepaulyuxweluptun.com/retrospective.html>

**Warren Cariou** Canada Research Chair in Narrative, Community and Indigenous Cultures is the Director of the Centre for Creative Writing and Oral Culture at the University of Manitoba, and is an associate professor in the English department there. He has published works of fiction and memoir that are set in northern Saskatchewan, and he is now working on a novel and a documentary film about oilsands developments in the Canadian west. He has written articles on Métis culture, oral narratives, and other aspects of Canadian Aboriginal literature.

[Centre for Creative Writing and Oral Culture](#) to open

## **George Elliott Clarke**

[Personal site](#) University of Toronto

“My Trudeau: The Politics of Adapting a Political Icon for the Operatic Stage”

This paper argues that "Trudeaumania"—the mass English-Canadian adulation of the newly-minted Liberal Party leader and Canadian Prime Minister in Spring 1968-- was not merely a case of Expo 67-spillover enthusiasm. Rather, I maintain that the phenomenon must be understood as a domestication of then-current, social-progress movements, occurring worldwide, including Senator Robert Kennedy's campaign to be the U.S. Democratic Party's presidential candidate, the May Events in France, and the "Prague Spring." The analysis also examines the ways in which Pierre Elliott Trudeau both mirrored and played to Pop culture. It concludes that "Trudeaumania" was doomed to collapse as an inspirational campaign due to Trudeau's contradictions, including, especially, his own mania for bureaucracy.

A native of Windsor, Nova Scotia, George Elliott Clarke is a 7th-generation Canadian of African-American & Aboriginal heritage. Currently the E.J. Pratt Professor of Canadian Literature, he has pioneered the scrutiny of African-Canadian literature, as his landmark volume, *Odysseys Home: Mapping African-Canadian Literature* (2002) attests. Also a celebrated poet, novelist, and librettist, his *Execution Poems* (2001) received the Governor-General's Award for Poetry. His newest work is *Trudeau: Long March / Shining Path* (2007), which is also an opera composed by D.D. Jackson.

## Daniel Coleman

[Personal site](#) McMaster University

[Epistemological Cross-Talk: Melancholia, Historical Trauma, and Spiritual Cosmology](#) [link to pdf](#)

The discussion video will be posted later.

Over the past fifteen years, the theory of melancholia, derived from Freud's essay "Mourning and Melancholia," has inspired important assessments of the psychodynamics of sexuality (Butler), racism (Cheng), diasporic trauma (Mishra, Cho), and British postimperial nostalgia (Gilroy). Taking Freud's suggestion that melancholia differs from healthy mourning because it refuses to relinquish the lost object as mourning does and instead constructs an identity out of the continuous and repeated consumption of that loss, these and many other cultural theorists have elaborated melancholia as an explanatory model for why the wounds of history, both individual and social, retain such a stubborn, determining power over the *longue durée*. The value of this work has been undeniable, especially for understanding the constitutive losses that often remain unconscious for privileged people.

But is anybody besides me getting tired of melancholia? Who can afford the theory of melancholia? And when does this theory become a vortex that obliterates other voices and visions? To pursue these questions, I will examine two recent Canadian novels, David Chariandy's *Soucouyant* (2007) and Lee Maracle's *Daughters Are Forever* (2002). On first glance, both novels invite a reading through the lens of melancholia, but on more careful consideration it becomes clear that both very deliberately choose a different way to deal with historical trauma. Chariandy's novel addresses the effects of ongoing Caribbean diasporic trauma in the lives of a woman suffering from dementia and her "melancholy" son in Scarborough (194), while Lee's novel traces the persistent suffering of a Salish social worker who lives ever-conscious of the "wound that is North America" imposed upon Turtle Islanders. Rather than elaborating the psychodynamics of melancholia, however, both novels set their narratives in the domain of spiritual cosmology—Chariandy in the Trinidadian legendary figure of the vampire-like *soucouyant*, and Lee in the Salish cosmology of the eternal dance of the four winds. Perhaps, by attending to the "sacred labour" (a term I am borrowing from Jacqui Alexander) charted in these stories, we can find alternatives to the treadmill of melancholia.

**Daniel Coleman**, a professor and Canada Research Chair in Diversity in Canadian Literary Cultures at McMaster University, teaches and carries out research in Canadian Literature, the literary and cultural production of categories of privilege such as whiteness, masculinity, and Britishness, and, most recently, the spiritual and cultural politics of reading. He has published *Masculine Migrations: Reading the Postcolonial Male in "New Canadian" Narratives* (U Toronto P, 1998), *The Scent of Eucalyptus: A Missionary Childhood in Ethiopia* (Goose Lane Editions, 2003), and has co-edited seven scholarly volumes. His most recent book, *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada* (U of Toronto P, 2006), won the Raymond Klibansky prize for the best Canadian English-language book in the Humanities published under a subvention from the ASPP. With Smaro Kamboureli, he is currently co-editing a volume entitled *The Culture of Research: Retooling the Humanities*. His book, *In Bed With the Word: Reading, Spirituality, and Cultural Politics* is slated for publication with the University of Alberta Press late in 2008.

## **Pilar Cuder Domínguez**

[Departamento de Filología Inglesa](#) Universidad de Huelva Spain

[“Portraits of the Artist in Dionne Brand’s \*What We All Long For\* \(2005\) and Madeleine Thien’s \*Certainty\* \(2006\).” link to pdf](#)

The discussion video will be posted later.

This paper focuses on two recent novels by Canadian women writers: Dionne Brand’s *What We All Long For* (2005) and Madeleine Thien’s *Certainty* (2006). I have been drawn to these novels because they feature women artists striving to make sense of their family history through their craft. Brand and Thien tackle the role of the artist in contemporary society. Is the author truly dead? Both Canadian writers appear to support a view of the artist as committed to her community, giving voice to its concerns. Their novels thematise the testimonial value of art. Whether their chosen medium is sound or image, these artists record the suffering of whole communities striving to survive in the direst circumstances, as well as each individual’s personal history of grief. They negotiate the gaps between private grief and public loss, war and peace, individual and community, history and geography. In so doing, they give voice to their communities and they find complex shapes for a polyphonic, multicultural vision.

Pilar Cuder-Domínguez is Associate Professor at the University of Huelva (Spain), where she teaches British and English-Canadian Literature. Her research interests are the intersections of gender, genre, nation, and race. She is the author of *Margaret Atwood: A Beginner’s Guide* (2003), and the (co)editor of five collections of essays (*La mujer del texto al contexto*, 1996; *Exilios femeninos*, 2000; *Sederi XI*, 2002; *Espacios de Género*, 2005; and *The Female Wits*, 2006.). She has been visiting scholar at universities in Canada, the US and the UK: McGill (1997), Dalhousie (1999), Northwestern (2002), Toronto (2004 and 2007), and Cambridge (2006). Her current research deals with Canadian women’s transnational poetics.

## Frank Davey

[Personal site](#) University of Western Ontario

[Not Just Representation: The Sound and Concrete poetries of The Four Horsemen.](#) link to pdf

The discussion video will be posted later.

The sound and concrete poetries of The Four Horsemen (Rafael Baretto-Rivera, Paul Dutton, Steve McCaffery, and bpNichol, active 1972-88), together with the evolving aesthetic and notational theories that informed them, raise numerous questions about the relationships among drawing, the alphabet, speech, and non-semantic or 'prosesemantic' utterance, as well as about transnational ideological and aesthetic projects. Sound and concrete poetries in the 1970s and 80s were much more trans- and international in character than national, as the anthologies and festival catalogues of those decades indicate. Those of McCaffery and Nichol were also multi-national in their sources -- which included not only the Futurists, Dadaists and Russian Formalists, but also Derrida, Deleuze, Kristeva, and Bataille. The question of who 'speaks' for The Four Horseman remains a somewhat troubled one. McCaffery has written the most extensively about his theories of sound poetry -- a genre he rejected on political grounds some time ago. Nichol left a few scattered comments before his death in 1988. Dutton continues to compose and perform but to my knowledge has offered little discursive commentary other than framing his work as an exploration of the human voice. Most audiences of the time seemed to perceive the group as entertainers -- "the zany Four Horsemen" as one radio station host introduced them, seemingly unaware of their ideologically grounded dismissal of representational aesthetics and easily consumed language; a recent (2007) theatre company re-creation of the group continued that misperception when it billed its production as "a cheeky love-in with the swinging seventies." I will look primarily at McCaffery and Nichol's comments about the group, and particularly at the changes and self-criticism evident in McCaffery's theories.

### [Open Letter](#)

Frank Davey has been a poet, editor, small magazine publisher, literary critic, and cultural critic in Canada since 1961. He is editor and co-founder of the influential poetry newsletter Tish (1961-63) and since 1965 editor of Open Letter, the Canadian journal of writing and theory. With Fred Wah in 1984, he founded SwiftCurrent, the world's first on-line literary magazine, and operated it until 1990. He has published more than 40 books, including at least two -- *Surviving the Paraphrase* (1983) and *Post-National Arguments: The Politics of the Anglophone-Canadian Novel Since 1967* -- that marked important shifts in anglophone-Canadian criticism. Among his cultural criticism are books on Canadian prime minister Kim Campbell and governor-general Adrienne Clarkson. His recent poetry publications include *The Louis Riel Organ and Piano Co.* (1985), *The Abbotsford Guide to India* (1986), *Cultural Mischief* (1996), and *Back to the War* (2005). His writings on the global and multicultural contexts of contemporary Canadian literature and criticism are being published next year as *The Spanish Lectures: Offshore Lectures on Canadian Literature*.

## Marta Dvořák

[Personal site](#) Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3

[Voices lost in time: Getting from nowhere to the far bank](#) link to pdf

The discussion video will be posted later.

This paper addresses the hybrid forms of the writerly mouthpieces or masks that narratologists have strived to map into taxonomical classifications. These hybrid forms take part in a strategy of destabilization undermining the perlocutionary network of relationships set up between producers and receptors of discourse. They range from multiple and polyphonic narrators and an exponential multiplication of focalization overlapping with voice, to double voicing and a chronotopic indeterminacy through polyphonic overcoding. Equally at the heart of such a strategy of destabilization can be a deliberate conceptual play with the Third Space of enunciation. Homi Bhabha has posited this as a complex interstitial territory between the distanced image of the represented object and the enunciative stance, disembodied yet rooted in personal authorial experience, which interrelates with an extratextual reality, in turn intricately linked to the fluid, always contemporary reality of the protean receptor. This Third Space is remarkably illustrated by J.M. Coetzee in the metatextual incipit of Elizabeth Costello: "There is first of all the problem of the opening, namely, how to get us from where we are, which is, as yet, nowhere, to the far bank." Coetzee's "simple bridging problem" (EC) foregrounds the modes of entry, which include the postmodern trademark of textualized orality and ventriloquism. Investigating the latter notion will lead me to examine Gérard Genette's notion of transtextuality, and to explore what I suggest is a new form of transtextuality, a transtextuality which moves beyond intertext, and in which exegesis becomes story. A new form of metafiction seems to have taken shape, metafiction which is no longer self-reflexive but interpretive, calling attention not to its own process but to a hypotext which has been all but erased by the subsequent layers of palimpsestic overcoding. My paper will then engage with the dynamics of dialogism, focusing on figurations and configurations of motifs such as the headless horseman which have travelled across time and space, from the medieval European romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (anonymous) to Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820) and finally to Margaret Atwood's "The Headless Horsemen" (2006), which are apparently no longer part of a cultural continuum identifiable to a wide readership. The dialogue with Dickens's *Great Expectations* which provides the building material for New Zealand writer Lloyd Jones's *Mister Pip* (2006) seems to suggest that the original Victorian novel is hitherto accessible only through a mediated, simplified reconfiguration. In today's publishing industry regulated by the market forces of consumer society and catering to an audience more comfortable with visual and audial forms of fiction, are the master narratives at all readable? Or are they reduced to surviving solely through the spin-off products of their hyper-texts?

Marta Dvorak is a Professor of Canadian and Commonwealth Literatures at the Sorbonne Nouvelle. She is former Associate Editor of *The International Journal for Canadian Studies* and Editor-in-chief of the journal *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*. She is co-director of the Centre d'Etudes Canadiennes at the Université Paris 3-Sorbonne Nouvelle as well as the President of the French Société d'Etudes des Pays du Commonwealth. Focussing her research on modernity, interculturalism, rhetoric and narratology, she has authored and edited over 20 books, and has contributed chapters to the Cambridge University Press's Cambridge Companion series (the CC to Canadian Literature, the CC to Margaret Atwood, and *The Literary History of Canada*). Her most recent books, *Carol Shields and the Extra-Ordinary* (co-edited with Manina Jones) and *Tropes and Territories: Short Fiction, Postcolonial Readings, and Canadian Writings in Context* (co-edited with W.H. New), were published by McGill-Queen's UP in 2007. The latter in particular investigates the concomitant spaces of territory and writing, and studies writing and reading practices across cultural divides as well as the interconnections between socio-political issues and strategies of style.

[Centre d'Etudes Canadiennes](#)

## Ajay Heble

[Personal site](#) University of Guelph

## Winfried Siemerling

[Personal site](#) University of Sherbrooke

[Voicing the Unforeseeable: Improvisation, Social Practice, Collaborative Research](#) link to pdf

This paper will address some core issues arising out of the [Improvisation, Community, and Social Practice](#) (ICASP) project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada's Major Collaborative Research Initiative (MCRI) program. The ICASP project argues that musical improvisation is a crucial model for political, cultural, and ethical dialogue and action. Taking as a point of departure performance practices that cannot readily be scripted, predicted, or compelled into orthodoxy, it looks at how the innovative working models of improvisation developed by creative practitioners have helped to promote a dynamic exchange of cultural forms, and to encourage new, socially responsive forms of community building across national, cultural, and artistic boundaries. Involving an international research team of 33 scholars from 18 different institutions, the project seeks to make interventions in our understanding of how research is done and how its results are implemented and disseminated, both within and beyond the academy.

Our paper will, first of all, draw attention to the many ways in which improvisation and jazz have often played important roles in such intersemiotic practices as the use of musical patterns, for instance, in novels and other modes of writing. Such practices make use of the often-surprising effects that result from the unforeseeable juxtaposition and collision of different art forms. Similar encounters, we will then argue, ensue in musical improvisatory practices themselves, which bring different forms of meaning-making into creative and collaborative collision. If musical improvisation enables people coming from different cultural traditions and contexts to engage in shared, collaborative social practice, then it is important to note that such forms of social collaborative practice often bear significant elements of unforeseeability (one of the etymological meanings of improvisation) that are not contained in given protocols of knowledge production.

Our paper will also consider some of methodological challenges that we face in this extended collaborative project. We hope that our collaborative research practices themselves will help to explore, benefit from, and perhaps even model some of the potential creative advantages of improvisatory social practice and methodological intermediality. In addition, in the concluding section of our presentation, we will voice some examples of the unforeseen, as we discuss the reception of the project thus far, and speculate about the opportunities, but also the risks, involved in our collaborative work.

MCRI [Improvisation, Community, and Social Practice](#)

**Winfried Siemerling** is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the Université de Sherbrooke, and affiliated with the [W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research](#) at Harvard and the [Institute for the Study of Canada](#) at McGill University. His books include *The New North American Studies* (Routledge 2005), the *Bibliography of Comparative Studies* (2001, co-author), *Cultural Difference and the Literary Text* (1996/97, co-ed.), *Writing Ethnicity* (1996, ed.), and *Discoveries of the Other* (1994). He is currently co-editing *Canada and Its Americas* and writing the chapter on the Canadian novel for the *Cambridge History of the Postcolonial Novel*. He works also on a SSHRC-funded project on transculturalism and double consciousness in African and Asian Canadian writing and in an international SSHRC Major Collaborative Research Initiative (MCRI) on [Improvisation, Community, and Social Practice](#).

**Ajay Heble** is Professor of English in the School of English and Theatre Studies at the University of Guelph. He is the author or editor of several books including *Landing on the Wrong Note: Jazz, Dissonance, and Critical Practice*, *The Tumble of Reason: Alice Munro's Discourse of Absence*, and *New Contexts of Canadian Criticism*, and he is the Artistic Director and Founder of the award-winning Guelph Jazz Festival and Colloquium. He is also a founding co-editor of the journal *Critical Studies in Improvisation/Études critiques en improvisation* ([www.criticalimprov.com](http://www.criticalimprov.com)), and Project Director for Improvisation, Community, and Social Practice, a large-scale Major Collaborative Research Initiative, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. He is also a pianist, and his first CD, a live recording of improvised music with percussionist Jesse Stewart, has been released on the IntrepidEar label.

## **Chelva Kanaganayakam**

[Personal site](#) University of Toronto

“Diasporic Appropriations: Exporting South Asian Culture from Canada”

Starting in the 1980s, there has been a growing trend among writers, film producers, dance choreographers, and musicians to market their talents in South Asia. Diasporic culture has taken on a more autonomous role in the recent past, with the consequence that the notion of South Asian culture can no longer be defined only in relation to South Asia. While mimicry accounts for much that takes place in Canada, it is also true that diaspora and the larger cultural context of Canada have shaped the articulation of South Asian culture in unique ways. While there is no easy consensus about the value or significance of what is produced in Canada, it is evident that within the framework of "Canadian multiculturalism" new and innovative trends have begun to emerge. This paper looks specifically at literature, film, and dance in order to address the more troubling issues of cultural appropriation, language, experiment, authenticity, and representation in order to locate Canadian culture within a South Asian context.

## Ric Knowles

[Personal site](#) University of Guelph

“Chocolate Woman Workshops the Milky Way: Monique Mojica and Native Performance Culture Research”

In November 2007, Monique Mojica (Kuna and Rappahonock) spent ten days of intensive workshop time with collaborators Floyd Favel as director (Cree) and Oswaldo DeLéon Kantale as visual artist and cultural consultant (Kuna) to create the first version of her play [Chocolate Woman Dreams the Milky](#)

[Way](#). It was given a workshop presentation at the MacDonald Stewart Art Gallery in Guelph, Ontario, on Wednesday, November 21st, 2007. The performance is part of Mojica’s project of moving Native theatre “beyond the victim narrative,” in large part by attempting to heal the rupture effected by colonization and forge connections with pre-contact culture, traditions, and performance forms. It explores relationships and intersections between traditional and contemporary Aboriginal visual art forms and theatrical performance through mola textiles, cosmo vision, and pictographic writings of the Kuna.



The interdisciplinary and intercultural work is also part of a long-standing research project, “Native Performance Culture Research,” initiated by Floyd Favel, which works across different First Nations, and across latter-day national borders, by applying principles and structures from the traditional narratives and performance forms of indigenous peoples to script development for the contemporary theatre.

This paper will draw on my own work with Monique Mojica, on conversations with Mojica and Favel, and on the (partly pictographic) script and workshop performance to explore the relationship between process, form, and (inter)culture in *Chocolate Woman Dreams the Milky Way* and its implications for Native Performance Culture Research.

Ric Knowles is Professor of Theatre Studies at the University of Guelph. He is Editor of *Canadian Theatre Review*, former editor of *Modern Drama*, and General Editor of the book series, *Critical Perspectives on Canadian Theatre*. Among his books are *The Theatre of Form and the production of Meaning\** (1999), *Shakespeare and Canada* (2004), and *Reading the Material Theatre* (2004). He is currently Vice President of the American Society for Theatre Research, and Vice President (Research and Publications) of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education.

## **Katalin Kürtösi**

Department of Comparative Literature, University of Szeged, Hungary

Voices and Visions of Canadian Culture in Hungary after the Political Changes

The paper will examine how a European 'small nation's' cultural life is responding to a 'less-known' culture, that is Canadian art after the political changes. The research project is a follow-up of a systematization of the Hungarian translations of Canadian literature between 1920 and 1985.

This time the main areas of interest are

- How the changes in cultural policy (publishing) influenced what kind of books have been translated and published.
- Translatability (in the sense Walter Benjamin discusses the issue), personal experiences as translator of Canadian works both from English and from French.
- The role of anthologies.
- Canada on Hungarian stages (Canadian companies visiting – very few Canadian plays staged in Hungarian).
- 'Canadian Voice': songs by L. Cohen in Hungarian.
- 'Visions of Canada': exhibitions (sculpture, photos, painting) – active participation in Hungarian cultural festivals.

The paper will use a theoretical framework and offer a table of Canadian literature in Hungarian translation.

**Katalin Kürtösi** is associate professor (and Dr. habil.) at the Department of Comparative Literature, Faculty of Arts, University of Szeged, Hungary. She studied Canadian literature at Carleton University, Ottawa (1983-84) and was a post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Comparative Literature, Université de Montréal (1993). Her specialization is theatre and drama in Canada (in English, in French and by ethnic playwrights) - her monograph entitled *Reality or Illusion? Metadramatic Elements in North American Plays* (in Hungarian) was published in November 2007. She has been editor-in-chief of the Central European Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes en Europe Centrale since 2001.

[Central European Association for Canadian Studies - Association d'Etudes Canadiennes en Europe Centrale](#)

[Personal details](#)

## Catherine Lanone

L'Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail

[“Revisiting Intertextuality, Ghostly Voices and Visions in Jane Urquhart’s Changing Heaven”](#) link to pdf

Jane Urquhart's *Changing Novel* entwines past and present, voice and vision, Canada and England, life and death. The protagonists of the novel include a Canadian researcher who comes to Haworth and—literally— the ghost of Emily Brontë. Urquhart thus playfully addresses the stereotypes of reading and writing, cultural constructs, as opposed to what survives, what blows in the wind, the voice of texts like *Wuthering Heights*. Using Michel Serres' theory of parasitic interference, this paper will focus on the polyphonic nature of the novel, which challenges the visionary Gothic clichés associated with ghosts and haunting. For Urquhart does not write from a nostalgic stance. She ties up Brontë and Canada in order to question the construction of femininity and the masculine discourse of narcissistic exploration embodied by the quest for the Arctic. Recalling Emily Brontë's fascination for Parry, the Arctic explorer, Urquhart daringly, masterfully uses historical figures like Emily Brontë, Lily Cove (a parachutist who died in 1906 near Haworth) and the Swedish explorer Andrée whose balloon disappeared in the Arctic to recreate her own characters and her own postcolonial parodic textual maze, in which the male quest for the Arctic is demystified and opposed to the playful feminine voices. She uses as a frame the paradigm of weather conditions and barometers, rippling echoes from today's radio or TV meteo charts, resemiotized to map emotional conditions, a wonderful twist on explorers' journals (such as Sir John Franklin's) with their constant preoccupation with latitude and longitude, as well as weather conditions, conditions which have to be carefully measured and written down, as if that entailed control over one's wild environment.

**Catherine Lanone** is a Professor of English Literature at the University of Toulouse II. She has written a book on Emily Brontë, and is currently working on Franklin's journals and Arctic exploration.

[Le laboratoire « CULTURES ANGLO-SAXONNES »](#)

## Christine Lorre

[Personal site](#) Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3

“You must see to understand...”: Orientalist Clichés as Visual Codes in Robert Lepage’s *La trilogie des dragons* (2005)

What does Asia look like in the Canadian collective imagination? What images of Asia does the Pacific Ocean mirror back to Canada? This metaphor of interface with otherness, which Ying Chen also uses in one of her essays (*Quatre mille marches : Un rêve chinois*, 2004), is implicit but central to Robert Lepage’s *La trilogie des dragons*. The script, which is mainly in French, also includes English, Mandarin, Cantonese and Japanese, these languages corresponding to the variety of the cast of characters, and the real or imagined, familiar or alien worlds visited by the Quebecois protagonists. The play relies on clichés of the Orient: a Chinese laundry, opium, gambling, a geisha, a rickshaw, tai-chi, and more. Following Lepage’s trademark style, the staging also relies on multimedia, movement, light and sound to set free the audience’s perception, perspective and imagination—a critic has referred to Lepage’s dramatic work as “imagistic theatre”. Text recedes to give way to theatricality, so much so that there is no official script of the original version of the play, which was performed as a trilogy for the first time in 1987.



Based on the performance of the revised, expanded version of the play that was given in Paris in October 2005, and on the script that was published the same year, this paper will examine the function of Orientalist clichés in the production. The three parts of the trilogy are set in three different Canadian Chinatowns—Quebec City, Toronto and Vancouver—and span the lifetime of the protagonists, Françoise and Jeanne. In a context of globalization, Lepage revisits how Asian “others”

have been viewed in various times and places of Canada, so the play is an exploration of selfhood as much as of otherness. Lepage’s transnational, multi- and transcultural theatre thus presents a paradox: out of clichés, it manages to trigger fresh images that open up the mind, giving way to new possibilities.

### Related websites:

Video: 01:23 Windows Media Video 9

<http://www.tv5.org/TV5Site/chut/index.php?id=125>

Pictures:

<http://www.epidemic.net/photos/lepage/trilo.html>

**Christine Lorre** is a senior lecturer (*maître de conférences*) in the English Department at the University of Paris 3 – Sorbonne Nouvelle. She did her doctoral dissertation on Clark Blaise’s writing (U Paris 3, 1999). Her area of research is contemporary fiction in English (Canada, the US, New Zealand), with a focus on short stories by women, and fiction by writers of Chinese ancestry. Her publications include book chapters on Nancy Huston (*Vision/Division: l’œuvre de Nancy Huston*, U of Ottawa P, 2004), Carol Shields (*Carol Shields and the Extra-Ordinary*, McGill-Queen’s UP, 2007), Janet Frame (*Tropes and Territories: Short Fiction, Postcolonial Readings, Candian Writings in Context*, McGill-Queen’s UP, 2007), and Ying Chen (Wilfrid Laurier UP, forthcoming), as well as journal articles. In 2007, she was visiting scholar at the Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies, at Victoria University in Wellington.

[Centre d’Etudes Canadiennes](#)

## **Marc Maufort**

[Personal site](#) University of Brussels

[Journeys Towards Healing: Voice and Vision in Contemporary Multi-ethnic Drama in Canada](#) link to pdf

For the past two decades, multi-ethnic drama has formed a prominent feature of Canadian theatre, featuring quasi-canonical works by such playwrights as Tomson Highway, Drew Hayden Taylor and Guillermo Verdecchia, to cite but a few examples. This impulse away from an exclusive focus on Anglo-Celtic stage production continues to proliferate at the dawn of the new millennium. A myriad of ethnic and First nations playwrights are now building on the tradition established by their elders, thereby further enacting the voice and vision of marginalized constituencies in post-colonial Canada. One of their main concerns still resides in the articulation of the themes of the quest for home, belonging, and identity, in a culturally rigid society. In this essay, I plan to show how similar and yet radically different the plays of these artists can be in their attempts to dramatize the vision of their cultural roots. While the similarity precisely lies in the quest motif itself, the difference can be detected in the socio-cultural inflections of this very theme. My case studies exemplify how it is impossible to homogenize the “Otherness” of these playwrights, a difference expressing itself in the divergent theatrical techniques used by these artists. In these pages, I plan to focus on Trey Anthony’s ‘Da Kink in my hair, as an instance of Canadian Jamaican playwriting, Sunil Kuruvilla’s *Rice Boy*, as an example of South East Asian dramatic writing and Marie Clements’ *The Unnatural and Accidental Women*, as an illustration of a Métis stage work. While they all focus on notions of belonging, these dramas possess a highly distinctive theatrical idiom. In enacting these journeys towards some kind of epiphanic healing, they force us to reconsider the boundaries of what constitutes such literary categories as postmodernism and postcolonialism.

Marc Maufort is a professor of English, American and postcolonial literature at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium). He is the author of two monographs: *Songs of American Experience: The Vision of O’Neill and Melville* (1990), and *Transgressive Itineraries. Postcolonial Hybridizations of Dramatic Realism* (2003). He has edited or co-edited a number of critical anthologies, including *Staging Difference. Cultural Pluralism in American Theatre and Drama* (1995), *Siting the Other: Re-visions of Marginality in Australian and English-Canadian Drama* (2001), *Crucible of Cultures: Anglophone Drama at the Dawn of a New Millennium* (2002), and *Performing Aotearoa: New Zealand Theatre and Drama in an Age of Transition* (2007). Maufort is currently working on a monograph study of contemporary multicultural dramaturgies in the U.S, scheduled for publication in early 2010.

## **Igor Maver**

[University of Ljubljana](#) Slovenia

[“Post-ethnic Canada? Contemporary Diasporic Literature and Transnational Identity”](#) link to pdf

In the processes of globalization, cross-fertilization and transculturation, diasporic literature and culture appear particularly important. Diasporic writers translate reality and their own personal experiences in two different systems, which is why their work can be regarded an enrichment of both cultures, the source and the target one. In recent theoretical debates diaspora and its writing has frequently been connected with the constructed and transnational nature of identity formation, for the concept refers to both voluntary and involuntary migrations and movements. Contemporary Canadian writing by diasporic writers from a wide variety of diasporic communities traces the connections to various locales in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, South America or Eastern Europe (several literary authors from the Caribbean and Eastern Europe will be examined in the paper as case studies); perceives Home as several locales, liberated of the spatial concept of location, which is, however, deeply embedded in the collective cultural memory of a migrant and her/his personal biography. Indeed, contemporary Canadian diasporic literary production is becoming pluralized and globalized by transcending individual traditional categories of 'Canadianness', especially as regards the Canadian locale and its cultural memory.

## Claire Omhovère

Université de Nancy 2

["The Artialisation of Landscape in Jane Urquhart's Fiction"](#) link to pdf

Starting from Alain Roger's reflections on the "artialisation" through which external space becomes transmuted into an aesthetic artefact, I propose to analyse the interactions between landscape and narrative fiction in five of Jane Urquhart's novels. With the exception of *Changing Heave* – a testimony to a life-long admiration for the Brontës -- Urquhart's novels are all set in southern Ontario and record the influence of lakes and rivers on characters surrounded by the brooding presence of the North-American continent. In each novel, the plot brings a local artist figure to cohabit, sometimes uneasily, with a more accomplished peer: Patrick, *The Whirlpool's* poet, fails to distract his paramour from Browning's verse. In *The Underpainter*, the china painter who serves as another avatar of the Canadian artist becomes acquainted with a well-known American painter. Subsequent works similarly pair fictional and historical figures, such as the dancer Aidan Lanighan and the orator D'Arcy McGee in *Away*, the sculptors Klara and Walter Allward in *The Stone Carvers*, or Jerome and Robert Smithson, the two land artists in *A Map of Glass*.

Beyond differences in terms of plot or period, these novels recurrently feature the type of characters for which Bernard Demont has coined the phrase "personnages porte-regards," that is perceptual focalizers funnelling the reader's apprehension of landscape, a representational mode in which vision and voice have always been mutually dependent. In this respect, the corpus under study presents a thorough examination of the cultural mediations through which a settler culture forms affective ties with its environment, a process geographer Yi-Fu Tuan has identified as topophilia. The shaping of space into landscape is shown to be the result of both a habituation and an education of the eye discriminating form in indifferent space. From *The Whirlpool's* grisailles to experiments with photography in *A Map of Glass*, Jane Urquhart has never stopped reflecting in her writing upon the contribution of the visual arts to the expression of an intimacy with landscape. Considered at a second remove, the narrative representation of visual representations draws attention to the complexity of the couplings between text and reality. This paper will then conclude on the question of reference to determine what image of Canada Jane Urquhart's novels have contributed to disseminating among their international audience.

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**Claire Omhovère** is an Assistant Professor of English at University Nancy 2 (France). She has published articles in French and Canadian journals and contributed book chapters on the novels of Robert Kroetsch, Aritha van Herk, Thomas Wharton, Rudy Wiebe and Anne Michaels (notably in *Tropes and Territories*, McGill-Queen's UP, 2007; *History, Literature, and the Writing of the Canadian Prairies*. U of Manitoba Press, 2005; *Towards Defining the Prairies: Region, Culture, and History*, U of Manitoba Press 2001). She is the author of *Sensing Space: The Poetics of Geography in Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction* (Peter Lang, 2007). She is currently engaged in a research project on representations of the void in Canadian literature and iconography.

## **Christine Raguet**

Université de Paris 3-Sorbonne Nouvelle

[“West Indian Voices in Translation”](#) link to pdf

The discussion video will be posted later.

Orality is one of the main features of Caribbean literature and quite representative of Olive Senior’s style. The voices of her characters (and narrators) reflect their local and social origin, their sex or professional activities, thus the author creates an “effet de réel” that poses many problems to the translator in her/his attempt at transferring the subtle sounds into the “other” tongue for the “other” ears.

As Maria Tymoczko tried to show, post-colonial literature and translation can both be regarded as a “carrying across”. Since, the writer is transporting a culture when the translator is expected to be transporting a language. But translators cannot be expected to transport the language without being burdened with a mixture of cross-cultural elements and completely foreign cultural elements. This is due to the fact that all textual elements are “fixed” whereas cross-references vary according to the receiving audience; as a consequence, cultural disjunctions cannot be muted or obscured, but they cannot be foregrounded either. This is when colloquialisms and exoticism collide. At this stage in the translating process “decoding operations” may lead to “re-encoding familiar tones” and result in “defamiliarization”, creating cultural distance, but welcoming what sounds alien. The versatility of cultural cross-references may tend to create confusion in the minds of the readers of the translated versions. Moreover the overall effect is enhanced by the jubilatory manipulation of the language on the author’s part, which is to find the utmost form of its expression in the voice that the mind’s ear is supposed to hear. Consequently, the translator’s creativity is at work and also twice removed as it fabricates new layers of texts aiming at reproducing heteroglossy, heterology and heterophony, appealing to the senses in order to invite new responses from the readers.

## **Charlotte Sturgess**

Université Marc Bloch, Strasbourg

[“Questions of voice, race and the body in novels by two Asian-Canadian women writers”](#) link to pdf

The discussion video will be posted later.

Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms* and Larissa Lai's *When Fox is a Thousand* both privilege the play of voices over the stability of a singular narrative authority. Emphasis is thus shifted from establishing a stable point of view to promoting contact zones between diverse cultural discourses: those of myth and fable, of history and of sensory perceptions. The labile aspects of voice in *Chorus*, in its confounding of distinctions between inner and outer - subjective and objective - reality, serve to questions such distinctions and to privilege the corporeal and the sensory. *When Fox is a Thousand*, by lending a voice to a mythical figure also questions the process of identification that invests narrative agents with authority, and the social norms underlying that authority.

Both novels thus locate voice with the textual play of surfaces as a product, as much as a producer of the text's play of differences. They both, through their strategies, address the question of racial difference and its construction and locate voice not just within an aesthetics but also within a politics, contributing to the rethinking of epistemological categories, of historical continuities and of the place of the "hybrid" subject within them.

Charlotte Sturgess is Professeur of North American literature at Marc Bloch University, Strasbourg, France and directeur of the Centre for Canadian studies. Her research is centred on Canadian women's writing in English and concentrates on the overlapping and intersecting of postcolonial and gender discourses and meanings in such writings. Her current research concentrates particularly on ethnic fictions in English and the concept of "rewriting" in relation to Canadian discourses of nationhood.

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## John Thieme

[Personal site](#) University of East Anglia United Kingdom

“Global Positioning in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*”

Piya, the cetologist protagonist of Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*, includes binoculars and a GPS (Global Positioning System) in the equipment that she carries with her on a research trip to the Sundarbans, or “tide country”, region of West Bengal and these can be seen as an index of the novel’s concern with cosmopolitan perspectives on the local. *The Hungry Tide* provides multiple optics on the Sundarbans’ threatened eco-system of mangrove-forested islands and mudflats, representing the constant transformations it undergoes, because of daily tidal flows, with sections of land being temporarily submerged, and with seawater and freshwater intermingling. It also demonstrates the extent to which the tide country has been a contested site, as a consequence of the differing visions of the many stakeholders in the region – state politicians, local inhabitants, conservationists and tigers among them – and at bipolar extremes has variously been seen as uninhabitable and as fertile territory for utopian projects.

Drawing on recent work on place and space in the field of cultural geography, this paper considers ways in which *The Hungry Tide* debates ecological issues and projects a human geography that attempts to mediate between cosmopolitan and subaltern voices. The paper suggests that Piya’s situation, as an American of Bengali descent who is returning to her ancestral homeland on a professional mission, refracts back on the novel’s own positioning in relation to its localized South Asian setting.