

Writing Diaspora: Myth, History and Reinvention of the Self

Coordinator: Dr. Hudson Moura

Date: March 18-20, 2016

Time: 10:30 am - 12:15 pm

Room: Sever 110

Harvard University

How much (or, what) influence does exile exert in literary writing? Accounts of exile and diaspora show that the attempt to relate the experience of displacement leads to a renewal of narrative. The experience of displacement dictates writers and artists' conceptions of the world and sense of belonging. How does this '*duality*' of living between two or more cultures affect relationships and perceptions of the Other and the Self? Historically, diaspora has been related to the scattering, because of some event (war, persecution), of any community that once lived together in a single location. Can we generalize the notion of diaspora to anyone who feels "out-of-home" and detach its conception from the experience and memory of trauma and cultural displacement? From this perspective the experience of diaspora is associated with a state of mind and is not necessarily related to an historical or social displacement, thus, attaching the term to the impossibility of returning or reestablishing a self-identity. As Maurice Blanchot suggests, these writers are engaged in a personal quest on the act of writing and its *impossibilities*. Any displaced person, not only physically dislocated from a place, could be identified as a 'diasporic' writer. Today's generations that feel more and more attached to the trendy label and practice of cross-national productions have enough of a perspective to fully embrace the idea of displacement related to diaspora, thus they also embrace the traumatic memory of being detached and dispersed from their land. These discussions have transformed the historical phenomenon of diaspora into an analytical and conceptual field. Due to revisionist history, diaspora is no longer merely about the dispersion of communities, but it also features their cultures and their roots, and it establishes their place of belonging, which affects the hosting societies. Diaspora writers and artists experience space/time differently, and their unique gaze affects and transforms our comprehension of the world. This seminar proposes to examine the foundational myth of diaspora as well as the effects of its accounts in contemporary literature and film.

ROSTER

Day 1 – FRIDAY, March 18: *Act of Writing*

The Diasporic Musings of Arturo Alfonso Schomburg

Vanessa Valdés, The City College of New York

Ricardo Sternberg and the Reinvention of the self

Hudson Moura, University of Toronto

Space and Diaspora. Mexican Women Writers living in the United States: Cristina Rivera Garza and Valeria Luiselli

Adriana Pacheco, Universidad de las Américas Puebla, Mexico

Making Absence Present: Writing the Impossible in Mahmoud Darwish's Memory for Forgetfulness

Evren Akaltun, Stony Brook University

The Three-lives Diasporic Nobel Laureates: Gao Xingjian vis-à-vis Pearl S. Buck

Meiling Wu, California State University, East Bay

Day 2 – SATURDAY, March 19: *Diaspora Literatures*

Diasporic Entanglements in Brazilian and South African Literature

Hapsatou Wane, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign

Regendering Brazilian literature in diaspora

Else Vieira, Queen Mary University of London

Invisible Memories: Diaspora and Self-making in Black Women's Literature of the Americas

Jamie Rogers, University of California, Irvine

Longing for Exile: The Case of Iranian Female Writers in France

Farzad Salamifar, The University of Iowa

“Out-of-Home”: Figures of the Transfuge in Contemporary French Autofiction

Aubrey Korneta, New York University

Day 3 – SUNDAY, March 20: *Diaspora Narratives*

Russian Roots, American Novelists: How Nabokov & Ayn Rand Brought Russian Issues into Their Narrative Thought & Practice

Gene H. Bell-Villada, Williams College

De-territorializing the Diaspora: Displacement and Regional Exile in Contemporary Yemeni Literature

Ammar Naji, Colorado College

The Bedouin: Theories of Diasporic Restlessness in Middle Eastern Literature

Jason Mohaghegh, Babson College

Displaced Narrative of Tomás Eloy Martínez: Exile As a Leitmotif and As a Formal Innovation

Mariya Dzhyoyeva, University of Toronto

Resonances and Dissonances in Vietnamese Diasporic Literature

Lise-Helene Smith, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

ABSTRACTS & BIOS

Making Absence Present: Writing the Impossible in Mahmoud Darwish's Memory for Forgetfulness

Evren Akaltun, Stony Brook University

My paper will focus on the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish's prose poem, *Memory for Forgetfulness: August Beirut, 1982*, which narrates one day in the life of the poet during Israel's siege of Beirut. *Memory for Forgetfulness* is a book about different kinds of challenges, where writing the temporal present, the notions of homeland, and the diaspora are continuously interrogated, as the narrative oscillates between remembrance and forgetting, representation and erasure. Darwish's experience of being an exile in Beirut from an already exiled land is to introduce exile as perpetual. However, I will argue that it also opens up an aesthetic possibility of border writing, which generates pluralities as it disorients, absents, while also instigating new forms of expression and representation. Drawing on Said's 'exilic consciousness,' Freud's use of 'anamnesis,' and Blanchot's discussion of 'making absence present,' this paper will focus on the methods the author employs to seek shelter within the text, even though he recognizes the impossibility of writing during the traumatic 'now'. It will further raise the following questions: Does a re-positioning take place in response to the experience of dislocation, which can be interpreted as a mechanism for the creation of a world

literature? How can one recuperate the notion of homeland or even diaspora in the aesthetic realm when the remembrance is damaged and incomplete?

Evren Akaltun is a PhD candidate in Comparative Literature at SUNY Stony Brook University. She is currently working on her dissertation, which is titled "The Aesthetics of Literary Crisis and Its Management: A.H. Tanpinar, Mahmoud Darwish, and Virginia Woolf.". Her main research interests are 20th Century Turkish literature, postcolonial and transnational studies, World Literature, psychoanalysis, and film theory.

Russian Roots, American Novelists: How Nabokov & Ayn Rand Brought Russian Issues into Their Narrative Thought & Practice

Gene H. Bell-Villada, Williams College

As Russian émigrés, Nabokov and Rand share certain commonalities: a hatred of "the social" in politics and literature; a dogmatism of their own in reaction to Soviet state dogmas; an anti-deterministic streak; and a specific, narrow aesthetic. Moreover, though Nabokov was the absolute aesthete who scorned "publicist fiction" (by contrast with Rand the engagée political ideologue, propagandist moralist), in certain earlier works (THE GIFT, THE REAL LIFE OF SEBASTIAN KNIGHT) Nabokov himself marshals his narrative gifts to advocate and defend the ideal of aestheticism as opposed to "social" art. In this regard, both Nabokov and Rand belong within a Russian tradition of the Novel of Ideas, familiar to us from Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. Much of my paper will focus on the two authors' respective relationship to Chernyshevsky. Nabokov on one hand singles out the latter's utilitarian aesthetic for lengthy attack and dismissal in his last Russian work, THE GIFT. Rand, on the other hand, deliberately sets out to become a kind of Chernyshevsky of American capitalism. Much of her thick, preachy (if hugely influential) novel ATLAS SHRUGGED is an adaptation of Chernyshevsky's project to American folk notions and familiar trends regarding the proper role of government and the place of the individual. There are between ATLAS and WHAT IS TO BE DONE? numerous parallels that have hitherto gone unnoticed--and that I shall examine in my talk.

I'm the author of general-interest books on Borges & García Márquez. My wide-ranging study, ART FOR ART'S SAKE & LITERARY LIFE, was a finalist for the 1997 National Book Critics Circle award, & was translated into Serbian & Chinese. My latest, ON NABOKOV, AYN RAND & THE LIBERTARIAN MIND: WHAT THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN ODD PAIR CAN TELL US ABOUT SOME VALUES, MYTHS & MANIAS WIDELY HELD MOST DEAR, will serve in part as basis for my talk.

Displaced Narrative of Tomás Eloy Martínez: Exile As a Leitmotif and As a Formal Innovation

Mariya Dzhoyeva, University of Toronto

Tomás Eloy Martínez develops a very unique approach to the exilic trauma and its impact on the person, the society, and the generations to come. He understands exile both as spatial displacement and mental and affective detachment. Martínez's stance on exile is present in his writings as a recurring theme that largely determines both the conceptual and the formal aspects of the narrative. At the level of form, the impact of the exilic experience manifests itself in the transgression of the genre conventions, amalgamation and fusion of several literary and non-literary genres. The author deliberately exposes the "seams" of the narrative to highlight the heterogeneous character of exilic experience. This technique, while used in many of his novels, is most evident in *Santa Evita*. In addition, the theme of exile is supported by a disjunct chronotope and a polyphony that disrupts the notion of personal integrity. At the conceptual level, Martínez understands exile as non-happening, non-existence, disappearance, and never-becoming. He goes so far as to extend the exilic condition

beyond the span of a human life. This means that exile does not end when the person dies, as seen in *Santa Evita* and *Purgatorio*. The omnitude of the impact of exile therefore suggests that it does not discriminate based on sex, race, power or even the physical condition of being dead or alive.

Mariya Dzhyoyeva is a third year PhD student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Toronto. Her research interests consist of the Latin American literature of exile with the main focus on the fiction and journalistic work of Tomás Eloy Martínez.

“Out-of-Home”: Figures of the Transfuge in Contemporary French Autofiction

Aubrey Korneta, New York University

Within the past forty years, there has been a flourishing of French autobiographical texts or autofictions centered on the *transfuge*, a figure who moves (or flees) literally and figuratively from one group to another. These texts recount the experience of individuals from socio-economically and culturally disadvantaged backgrounds who have undergone intense social promotion, often through education. In other words, they are catapulted from what could be described as working class origins to the status of the elite through their success in school. These extraordinary trajectories are often experienced as violent displacements, and the term *transfuge* implies betrayal and transgression. They have crossed over, and in so doing, crossed a line. Their narratives share common themes; chief among them are the feelings of shame towards one’s origins, the sense of duality or living between two irreconcilable worlds, the distance that develops between said worlds, and the desire, or perhaps the need, to return to the beginning through the act of writing. I propose to analyze two texts, Annie Ernaux’s *La place* (1983) and Didier Éribon’s *Retour à Reims* (2009), as emblematic of being “out-of-home”. Through my analysis of their formal and thematic elements, I will demonstrate that the narrators have been culturally, linguistically, and spatially displaced and have thus developed a new gaze, which mediates their relationship to their communities and the institutions that have shaped them.

I am a fifth year PhD Candidate in the Department of French at New York University, and my interests include the representation of education, the school, and youth in 19th- 21st century literature and film, the sociology, history and philosophy of education in France and the United States, autofiction, French Cinema and the 19th Century Novel. I am currently working on my dissertation entitled, “Écrire (à) l’école: Codes. Contraintes. Émancipation?”.

The Bedouin: Theories of Diasporic Restlessness in Middle Eastern Literature

Jason Mohaghegh, Babson College

This piece explores new theories of “global restlessness” through the conceptual personage of the Bedouin as envisioned by a unique constellation of diasporic Middle Eastern writers. By tracking of the subjective makeup of this literary figure (i.e., the compulsions, desires, ideas, images, and sensations that emerge against the backdrop of his desert paths), a singular existential prototype surfaces for which standard regimes of spatiality and movement fall to the wayside. Specifically, this piece will summon to the forefront some of the most provocative diasporic voices of contemporary Middle Eastern literature (Adonis, Mahmoud Darwish, Hassan Blasim, Ghadda Samman, and Amal al-Jubouri) in order to trace an acute profile of the Bedouin consciousness across the following five manic axes: Dromomania (the obsession with traveling); Ecdemomania (the obsession with wandering); Cartogramania (the obsession with maps); Kinetomania (the obsession with continual motion); Dinomania (the obsession with dizziness or whirlpools), and; Labyrintomania (the obsession with mazes). Through an inquiry into these various experiential conditions, showcasing the typologies of thought that manifest within each component, one can detect a certain will to frenzy, misanthropy,

farness, and non-belonging in modernity that surpasses prior concepts of alienation and exile. The Bedouin is thus a diasporic passcode for new trajectories of estrangement, disturbance, and in the Middle East and far beyond.

Jason Bahbak Mohaghegh is an Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at Babson College. He has published four books to date: *The Chaotic Imagination: New Literature and Philosophy of the Middle East* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), *Inflictions: The Writing of Violence in the Middle East* (Continuum, 2012), *The Radical Unspoken: Silence in Middle Eastern and Western Thought* (Routledge, 2013), and *Insurgent, Poet, Mystic, Sectarian: The Four Masks of an Eastern Postmodernism* (SUNY Press, 2015).

Ricardo Sternberg and the Reinvention of the self

Hudson Moura, University of Toronto

The poet Ricardo Sternberg was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1948 and moved to California with his family when he was fifteen. Since 1976, he is living in Toronto, where he got a professor position in Lusophone literatures and Brazilian culture and where he is also considered by critics one of the best poets of Canada. His "Brazilian poems", as Ricardo himself identifies them, are a recollection of his childhood memories. The "essence of *Brazilianness*" genuinely reveals itself in these poems. Beyond the unquestionably recurring theme of family, which is consistent in these poems with references specifically to elder members (great-uncle, great-grandfather, grandmother, aunt), other recurring themes to be present in Sternberg's work are blindness, smells, birds, nature, among other themes. Can we categorize Sternberg as a diasporic writer? Aside from the undeniable "essence of *Brazilianness*" in some of his poems, his style of writing and content can hardly be linked to a diasporic feeling, or even to the most recurring theme in diasporic writing: *saudade*. According to Carlos Ascenso André, the Portuguese word *saudade* means "a longing for something so indefinite as to be indefinable." Although Sternberg openly draws from his personal life experience as inspiration for his writing, his work is indeed, a "deep immersion" in the English language. Also, he constantly employs the other's voice to describe imagined identities and enchanted kingdoms and empires.

Hudson Moura is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Spanish & Portuguese at the University of Toronto. He teaches Luso-Brazilian literature, film and culture as well as Hispanic diaspora literature and cinema. His current research focuses on film, adaptation and media translation.

De-territorializing the Diaspora: Displacement and Regional Exile in Contemporary Yemeni Literature

Ammar Naji, Colorado College

Ethnic writing from Yemen posits a revolutionized form of "diaspora" that is no longer defined by geographic mobility and border-crossing to the West. Enduring conditions of diasporic consciousness inside the homeland, Black Yemenis use deterritorialization as an interventionist discourse against racial discrimination, border control in the Arab Gulf and exclusive national affiliations. In his novel, *طعم أسود... رائحة سوداء* / *Black Taste... Black Smell*, Ali Al-Muqri depicts the culture of racialization and migratory dwelling experienced by Yemen's black others forcibly displaced between political prisons and miserable slums in their country. The racial attitudes of government officials, the persecution of Arabs of African descent and the enclosed ownership of natural resources in the Arab Gulf turns the homeland to a fractured and fluid site of belonging. By employing the trope of "dwelling-in-displacement" as a political aesthetic in their writings, Black Yemeni writers traverse the strictures of Arab nation-states by forging a stateless form of citizenship informed by the rerouting of roots and the formation of diasporic intermediaries across national borders. The emergence of Yemeni ethnic writing challenges diaspora critics to rethink the intersectionality

between race and the formation of deterritorialized diasporic communities inside the homeland, and further illustrates how regional displacement has become a significant aspect of the Middle East's contemporary literary revolutions.

Ammar Naji is Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at Colorado College. He received a PhD in English and Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Ammar specializes in Arab Diaspora, Arabic and Anglophone-Arab Literature, Postcolonial Cultural Theory and Middle Eastern Studies. His publications have appeared in *Islamism and Cultural Expression in the Arab World*, the *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies*, *Ariel*, *Interventions* and the *Newsletter of Postcolonial Studies Association*.

Space and Diaspora. Mexican Women Writers living in the United States: Cristina Rivera Garza and Valeria Luiselli

Adriana Pacheco, Universidad de las Américas Puebla, Mexico

In the midst of globalization, American universities have turned into global hubs for academic training, knowledge meccas, asylums of sorts for foreign students and scholars. This important group of temporal or permanent migrants are generally trans-border critics of the political and social situations of their countries, which they see through the lens of their merged cultural backgrounds and enriched diasporic identities. This is the case of some Mexican scholars and graduate students working at renowned universities and who also publish as writers. In their works they blend their cultural displacement with the theoretical and critical frameworks they are exposed to. Some of them have conquered an important reader's market with their stories. In many cases, their adoptive or native cities play a major role in their narratives, conforming heterotopic spaces that reveal a dialogue between social and political matters and the construction of a contemporary subjectivity. The purpose of this paper is to analyze in Cristina Rivera Garza's book *Lo anterior* (2004), and in Valeria Luiselli's *Sidewalks* (2010) and *Papeles Falsos* (2010), how a "diasporic narrative" leads to a more vivid consciousness of identity, in constant dialogue with signs of memory and trauma of cultural displacement, and how physical spaces are meant to reduce the dispersion embedded in the meaning of diaspora and to remark "the borderland", as Gloria Anzaldúa says, "between cultures and homelands".

Adriana Pacheco Roldán has a PhD in Literature at the University of Texas at Austin. She works at Universidad de las Américas Puebla in the School of Liberal Arts. She is co-chair and founding member of the XIX Century Section at LASA. Her topics are: Narrative, poetry and newspapers in 19th-21st Century Mexican Literature, and Gender, Cultural and Religious studies. Her current project is "Gender representations in the literature written by women in Mexico and the diaspora in the 21st century".

Invisible Memories: Diaspora and Self-making in Black Women's Literature of the Americas

Jamie Rogers, University of California, Irvine

In the face of a history of erasure of Black women's cultural and political lives from official discourses and dominant literary traditions, Black feminist writers have long (re)created images of the self through literary invention. "Postmodern" writers in the Americas often write of the embodied experiences of "rememory" (Toni Morrison's *Beloved*), "unforgetting" (Dionne Brand's *At the Full Change of the Moon*, as described by Erica Johnson), and fragile memory (Merle Collins' *The Color of Forgetting*) as particular to Black women's lives. Such tropes reflect a "deep diasporic" experience; that is, diaspora for Black women in the Americas can be understood in both an immediate sense (such as for Trinidadian-Canadian Dionne Brand), and in a historical sense (as is the case for Black descendants of the Atlantic slave trade such as Morrison and Collins, as well as Brand). This second understanding resonates with the theories of

“post-memory” described by holocaust scholar Marianne Hirsch. That is, “memories” of the trauma of slavery exist in affective circuits, but ones that do not derive from immediate experiences of the trauma. Rather, they circulate in the ghostly living-on of stories, images, attitudes and behaviors produced through slavery and its afterlife. This paper examines Black diasporic women writers’ attention to such circuits, with their narratives working through post-memorial traumas as an act of creative self-making.

Jamie Rogers is a Ph.D candidate in Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine, with Departmental Emphases in Visual Studies and Feminist Studies. Her work focuses on representations of race, gender, and sexuality in cinema and literature of revolution, resistance and rebellion.

Longing for Exile: The Case of Iranian Female Writers in France

Farzad Salamifar, The University of Iowa

Exile often connotes a traumatic experience in regards with individuals in general, and a catastrophic incident in the career of a writer in particular. There is seldom mention of Milan Kundera and Samuel Beckett, whose exiles—in space and in language—have turned out to be the most fruitful. My paper focuses upon this particular aspect of the relationship between exile and the literary creation. It puts into perspective the works of two Iranian writers who currently write in France and in French. Sourour Kasmaï has written in both her native Persian and in French. She started writing her most acclaimed novel in Iran and in Persian prior to her exile, which she subsequently completed and “re-wrote” in French and published in France. Chahdokht Djavanne taught herself French after her exile and began to write in French thereafter. She launches fierce attacks on the Islamic fundamentalism and oppression against women through her own life stories. In my paper I analyze how these writers are representative of an uncategorized group of Iranian female writers exiled in France. From a biographical approach, I study how for them the act of writing is immediately articulated into the question of gender; writing itself becomes an act of revolt against the limitations imposed on them as women in Iran. Writing provides them also with the locus to discover and expose themselves. Significantly, writing in a new language translates for these writers the very act of defining the new self.

Farzad Salamifar is a PhD candidate in French and Francophone World Studies at the University of Iowa. He also holds a Masters degree in French and Comparative Literature from the University of Tehran. He is currently working on his doctoral dissertation entitled "The Re-Emergence of Subject in the post '68 French fiction", in which he studies the different modes of subjectivity in contemporary French fiction.

Resonances and Dissonances in Vietnamese Diasporic Literature

Lise-Helene Smith, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

Because Vietnamese culture is intrinsically tied to conceptions of its nation as land and water—an old land-bound ethos which permeates its language—the experience of migration and relocation for Vietnamese individuals has been particularly traumatic, especially for the many who were exiled after the fall of Sài Gòn in 1975. Within this context, I am interested in defining the emergence of Vietnamese diasporic literature through an analysis of the transnational literary contacts that obtain between France, Canada, the United States, and Việt Nam. Vietnamese diasporic literature evokes transnational identities that defy boundaries while negotiating a singular origin that fosters continuity as well as rupture and estrangement. As writers move away from retelling war and trauma, they show a clearer desire to claim the U.S., Canada or France as their adoptive home even while they refuse to be assimilated or marginalized. Although a profound sense of homelessness used to dominate in the Vietnamese diasporic community, this very homelessness has been counteracted by writers in this community for whom the function of writing issues in the creation of literary space as an

alternative home. Whether it be one of celebration or contention, the space of writing becomes the site of expression of a racial, cultural or literary *métissage* that serves to explore intercultural identity and negotiate a position vis-à-vis both homeland and host culture.

Lise-Hélène Smith received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of California, Davis and is currently Associate Professor of World Literature at Cal Poly Pomona. Her research interests include exile, hybridity and migration as linked to race and gender in the Southeast Asian diaspora as well as in Francophone, and colonial/postcolonial literatures. She is currently working on a book project on *métissage* and metafiction in Vietnamese diasporic literature.

The Diasporic Musings of Arturo Alfonso Schomburg

Vanessa Valdés, The City College of New York

Arturo Alfonso Schomburg is an innovative and pioneering figure of early twentieth century New York City, as a book collector and archivist; well-known for those activities, he was also an autodidact, a prominent Freemason, a writer, and an institution-builder. While many are aware that there is a library named after him, they often have no idea about the man himself. They pause when learning that he was a Black man, born and reared primarily in the Spanish Caribbean, with some time during his adolescence spent in the Dutch West Indies. Like many Black Caribbean subjects, Arturo Schomburg is a diasporic being, carrying within him not only narratives of his own migration but also that of his family. A discussion about diaspora is therefore not only apropos given his passion as a collector in the global Black experience but also in light of his own multiplicities. Using the theorization of diaspora of Richard Iton, Brent Hayes Edwards and Stuart Hall, this paper examines Schomburg's writings; while Schomburg never explicitly used the word "diaspora" in his work, his organizing principle of bringing together artifacts that testify to the achievements and successes of men and women of African descent around the world, and of writing about those accomplishments, has the explicit goal of combatting the white supremacist thought that Africans and their descendants are primitive beings without a history.

Vanessa K. Valdés is an Associate Professor of Spanish and Portuguese at The City College of New York – CUNY. Her research interests include comparative studies of the literatures of the Americas with a focus on race, gender, and class. She is the editor of *The Future Is Now: A New Look at African Diaspora Studies* (2012) and *Let Spirit Speak! Cultural Journeys through the African Diaspora* (2012). She is the author of *Oshun's Daughters: The Search for Womanhood in the Americas* (2014).

Regendering Brazilian literature in diaspora

Else Vieira, Queen Mary University of London

This paper will be looking into ways the literature produced by Brazilians abroad unsettles established gender patterns in the country's literature not least by reversing the 73% predominance of masculine writers on the national territory (Dalcastagné, 2013) as opposed to 71% female writers based abroad (Vieira, 2013). Arguing that the recent and unprecedented phenomenon of Brazilian migration, which started in the 1990s, has transformed Brazilian diaspora writing into a major analytical tool, it will focus on Italy, where Brazilian women by far outnumber Brazilian men. It will compare and contrast the impact of displacement on the award-winning poetry of Vera Lúcia de Oliveira (both in Brazil and Italy for over two decades) and on the best seller *O Manuscrito de Sônia* (2003), by Mariana Brasil, whose confessional writing inspired *Onze Minutos* by Paulo Coelho who also prefaced her. It will also look into border crossing and expressions of gender fluidity in Fernanda Farias de Albuquerque's autobiography *A Princesa* (1995) Have these gendered subjects found a room of their own in Italy? What impels them to write abroad? Can it be said that the recent

experience of migration is modernizing Brazilian literature gender-wise? These are some of the issues raised by this literary phenomenon in the making.

Chair of Brazilian and Comparative Latin American Studies, Queen Mary University of London. Coordinator of Lusophone Studies. Convener of the international project *In-Between Spaces of Brazilian Diaspora Writing*, funded by CAPES/Ministry of Education (Brazil). Previous career as Coordinator of Post-Graduate Studies at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (Brazil). Former Visiting Professor at the Universities of Oxford and Nottingham. Several books published.

Diasporic Entanglements in Brazilian and South African Literature

Hapsatou Wane, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign

This paper investigates the ways in which African postcolonial diasporic identities negotiate discourses of belonging in a context of displacement and exile. I propose to examine comparatively the diasporic entanglements knotted in national and regional narratives of migration in Bessie Head's *A Question of Power* and Marilene Felinto's *As Mulheres de Tijucoapapo*. I argue that African diasporicity as a form of identity in Brazilian and South African literature not only transcends the simplistic binary of the local and the global, it also shapes the "transglobal" as an alternative rubric of identity analysis. I will show how diasporic subjectivities reformulate metaphorical and physical migratory routes by mapping points of entanglement where personal, mythical, and historical trajectories intersect and overlap. I analyze both novels in conjunction with Martinican thinker Edouard Glissant's work on the discourse of Relation as a theoretical platform for the conceptualization of different models of diasporization beyond the Caribbean context. The goal of this paper is to demonstrate how a cross-cultural comparison between Brazilian and South African literature sets up a South-South theoretical platform of literary exchanges reconfiguring the concept of diaspora within African postcolonial diasporic contexts.

Hapsatou Wane's research centers on African diaspora, Anglophone and Francophone African literature, and Afro-Brazilian literature. She is a PhD Candidate in Comparative World Literature at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She holds an M.A. in English Studies / African Civilization and Literature from the University Gaston Berger in Senegal and an M.A. in African Studies from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

The Three-lives Diasporic Nobel Laureates: Gao Xingjian vis-à-vis Pearl S. Buck

Meiling Wu, California State University, East Bay

"I've Had Three Lives" Gao Xingjian responded to an interview by BBC on Nov. 22, 2013. Gao's 'three-lives,' like all diasporic writers' experiences, associates with a life prior to the departure from the birth land, the silenced life in their native land and then foreign land, and the alter-native life in the new arena that the literary representation has resumed. The 'three-lives' thus corresponds to the three-selves, i.e. a self, an other, and an alter-native; in other words, an alternative self/other. This presentation will compare the diasporic literary careers between the two laureates, Pearl S. Buck, the 1938 Nobel laureate known for writing stories about China for Americans, and Gao Xingjian, the 2000 Nobel laureate known for his Chinese stories won the Nobel Prize for France. Their post-Nobel-laurel careers provide not only the great examples on reinventing the alternative selves but also on the impossibility of returning to 'a self.' The failure of Buck's assumed new male identity in writing American stories raised the issues on the dislocated writing. Yet Gao's new form of expressions in ink, "the Awakening of Consciousness" debuted in The Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium on February 2015, broke the boundaries of conventional diasporic literary representation and transformed the space, time, and the gaze. The theory of alter-native, the other native and /or the native other, will also be re-discussed in this presentation.

Dr. Wu is Professor and Coordinator of Chinese and Japanese Programs of Department of Modern Languages and Literature. Growing up multilingual, and receiving higher education from the United States, she is a scholar of East Asian languages, cultures, cinema, and literature. She received her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from SUNY-Binghamton and researches on "Women, Her-story and Taiwanese Cinema," "Other, Native, and/or alter-native: Nobel Writings on Chinese Women" and etc.