



UNIVERSITY  
OF TAMPERE

# **AfroEuropeans: Black Cultures and Identities in Europe**

**6 - 8 July 2017**

**University of Tampere**

# **Abstracts**

## ABSTRACTS

The session-based division of abstracts is found on the conference website at <http://www.uta.fi/yky/en/6thafroEuropeans/abstracts.html>

### **THE THING: AFROBEAT(S) MUSIC AS A SITE OF CONVIVIALITY AND INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE**

*Adefemi Adekunle*, Newman University

This paper will examine the musical subcultures, 'Afrobeat' and its younger more electronic descendant 'Afrobeats' as a medium for analysing multiculturalism, youth and 'convivial cultures'. I will present data from my dancefloor ethnography (Garcia, 2013) undertaken within the major venues of Afrobeat in Birmingham and London via a focus on young people's experiences, emotions and attitudes. Afrobeats hubs and my urban research sites are home to well-established multicultural populations meaning the history and cartography of the genres maps, more or less, onto the distinct artistic practices of the city embodying a commonplace convivial diversity (Gilroy, 1993).

I will then offer some perspective on Afrobeats by setting it within a wider cultural landscape of black popular music (Stratton and Zuberi, 2014; Haynes, 2012). Afrobeat, created by the Nigerian musician Fela Kuti in the late 1960s and 1970s was itself syncretic and transglobal in its unique combination of funk fused with percussion and vocal styles, popularised in Africa in the 1970s (Gendreau, 2009). Through a comparison of Afrobeat with Afrobeats contextualised through interviews with Afrobeat musicians and producers, it will become clear this debate is perfectly poised to explore themes and about ideas of multicultural belonging. 'Afrobeats' has retained some vestiges of its history and 'raves' often have a mixed age and ethnically heterogeneous audience. It is this awareness of its past and politics by its audience that lends this analysis an intergenerational resonance as well (Hancox, 2012).

Lastly, both styles demand attention as sites of routinely reproduced racialized conceptions of taste, affinity, class, 'the body' and musicality. They are a treasure trove of richly complex and often subverted signifiers of race, ethnicity and 'Africa'.

### **THE NIGERIAN-VIKING GIRL'S GUIDE TO FINDING YOUR WAY HOME OR PBS DOES THE NIGERIAN-NORDIC-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN 35 MINUTES**

*Faith Adiele*, California College of the Arts

I propose to screen film clips, read selected excerpts from my published work, and discuss researching, traveling, writing, and filming my Nordic-African heritage. The PBS short documentary *My Journey Home* is based on my life growing up with a single mother (the daughter of Finnish and Swedish immigrants to the USA), coming of age in Thailand, and then traveling to Nigeria as an adult to find my father and siblings for the first time. Family stories are supplemented by Biafran War, Civil Rights, and Vietnam War footage. The film comprises part of a multi-genre, multi-generational mixed-family memoir-in-progress called *The Nigerian-Viking Girl's Guide to Finding Your Way Home* that reworks such mythologies as the Kalevala, Nordic and Viking mythology, Igbo ogbanje and Yoruba abiku (coming-and-going children), and the Return of the Prodigal.

Press Kit attached; Trailer (2:57 min): <http://youtu.be/bWK43M9B1g0>

Film:

Chapters 1-2 (10:15 min) : [http://youtu.be/RpGx6\\_JR12A](http://youtu.be/RpGx6_JR12A)

Chapters 3-4 (10:10 min) : <http://youtu.be/SqthlSulJI>

Chapters 5-7 (15:24 min) : [http://youtu.be/ldSM5riN\\_Jg](http://youtu.be/ldSM5riN_Jg)

## **AFRO-FRENCH CONSCIOUS RAP: IDENTITY, RESISTANCE, AND SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE**

*Kamal Ahamada, Free Scholar*

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how French conscious rap, performed by Black diasporic artists manifest a politics of solidarity with Palestine in contemporary France. Through critical discourse analysis, I will attempt to respond to this question by examining conscious rap video clips and lyrics and discuss how the symbol of Palestine has become the hub of highlighting discriminative practices towards “les noirs de France”, the affirmation of political identities, resistance and solidarity.

“Can the subaltern speak?” - asks Spivak (1988). In *The Empire writes back*, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin argue that art has the power to construct identities and new forms of resistance. So yes, the subalterns speak and they speak truth to power.

For this discussion, I am interested in conscious rap, performed by Black diasporic rappers, a rap which focuses “on the social, economic, and political situation of oppressed people” (Aldridge, p. 249). French Black rap groups were the first to denounce the precarious life in the banlieues, racial injustices, imperialism and neo-colonialist practices in France.

As a global culture, hip hop and rap foster a cultural, social and even racial connections and solidarities between marginalized groups of all corners of the world.

Drawing from Quijano’s and Mignolo’s concept of coloniality of power, I attempt to demonstrate how this “new technology of domination” is challenged and contested by Afro-French rappers as well as discussing how the symbol of Palestine has become the hub of highlighting discriminative practices towards “les noirs de France” thus manifesting solidarity towards Palestinians. Overall I argue, that Afro-French rappers reinforce the idea of an imagined Afro-diasporic collective identity through a process of transcolonial identification and solidarity with Palestine. This enables the former to mark their Blackness in a colour-blind nation as well as exposing the global interconnectedness of the systems of oppression.

### **NÈGRE IN TRANSLATION**

*Kpêdétin Mariquian Ahouansou, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS)*

“The nègre says: screw you!” The myth has it that, giving tit for tat the negritude movement burst forth there and then, as Aimé Césaire retaliated to the racial slur. During the interwar years, a multiplicity of assemblages took place (Deleuze & Guattari 1980). While a small group of students from the French empire came together to protest and challenge the racism they were experiencing in hexagonal France the Fête nègre was all the rage. It was the Golden twenties: Josephine Baker was becoming a household name at the *Revue nègre* and Parisian intellectuals and artists were going wild at the *Bal nègre* rue Blomet.

The dissemination of the notion of negritude is closely imbedded in the art world and the intellectual world. The movement flourished in dialogue with the diaspora (Edwards 2003) and alongside the Avant-garde art movement. The Avant-garde aimed at challenging the status quo and the norms of the capitalist society (e.g. aestheticism, nationalism, rationality, violence). As connections were made – locally, internationally, within the arts, academia, mainstream culture and generationally, the predicament of the word nègre only increased.

The word nègre is as lauded as it is challenging to translate. Depending on the speaker/writer and the context in which it is used, it foments outrage or underline a heritage or it creates inclusiveness and/or exclusiveness. That is, the word nègre constantly actualizes encapsulated histories that nourish our collective subjectivities. Based on recent controversies – Jean-Paul Guerlain and the reopening of the *Bal nègre*, which raise the question should the re-actualized slogan “Le nègre, il t’emmerde” be translated as “The nègre says: screw you”, “The negro says:

screw you” or “The N says: screw you”, this paper will examine what is it that we translate when speaking as contemporary black Europeans.

### **THE LAST FORGOTTEN VICTIMS OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM?**

*Robbie Aitken, Sheffield Hallam University*

Over the course of the Third Reich Germany's small, resident Black community was subjected to increasing targeted policies and practices of persecution which contained at least the germs of a progressively racial annihilationism. The continued existence of this community, whose roots lay largely in the country's former African colonies, was deemed to be incompatible with the Nazi's vision of a racially exclusive Volksgemeinschaft (people's community). Particularly following the onset of World War Two an increasing number of Black Germans were victims of sterilisation and incarceration. Acknowledgement of their victimhood in post-war Germany has, however, often been denied and wider knowledge of their experiences remains extremely limited. Drawing upon just over two dozen reparations claims, this paper looks at the difficulties Black Germans, their children and their white wives faced in seeking recognition and compensation from the West German state for what they had endured. It will argue that a mixture of ignorance about the details of Nazi policy and prejudice among claims administrators as well as an onset of colonial amnesia - a collective forgetting of Germany's colonial past - impacted greatly on the ability of Black Germans to establish themselves as victims of the Holocaust. In turn this sustained their position, as well as that of future generations of Black Germans, as outsiders within wider German society.

### **LIVED AFROPOLITANISM: BEYOND THE 'SINGLE STORY'**

*Gladys Akom Ankobrey, Maastricht University*

In recent years, the concept of 'Afropolitanism' has heated up debate in both the offline as well as the online world. Although Afropolitanism is celebrated for highlighting positive depictions of Africa, it has also been criticized for its supposedly exclusive and elitist focus. Several scholars have distinguished Afropolitanism from Pan-Africanism by framing it as the latter's apolitical younger version. London provides the background to closely examine to what extent the current debate on Afropolitanism differs from earlier debates on Pan-Africanism. Thus far, the study of Afropolitanism has remained limited to the field of literary and culture studies. In order to move the discussion on this term further, this study looks at Afropolitanism and Pan-Africanism as lived realities. By using the notion of 'performance', I show that Afropolitanism and Pan-Africanism are constructed and deconstructed in both diverse and overlapping ways. The narratives emerging out of this dialogue question the centrality of the Middle Passage epistemology and the tendency to essentialize experiences in the African diaspora discourse. It offers a lens to challenge ingrained concepts of 'diaspora', 'cosmopolitanism', 'race', and 'homeland'.

### **SELF-DEFINITION, IDENTITY AND THE USE OF THE AFRO PREFIX AMONG AFRO-TURKS**

*Müge Akpınar, Ege University*

Based on the data I gathered during the one-year ethnographic study conducted within the framework of my master's thesis study, I aim to analyse how the Afro prefix has been used among the descendants of African slaves in Turkey. The identity category of Afro-Turk has recently spread thanks to the efforts of the Africans Culture, Solidarity and Cooperation Association (ACSCA). Since its foundation in 2006, ACSCA has worked to reconstruct a common identity and historical awareness by fostering the use of the term Afro-Turk. Nevertheless, the term Afro-Turk has not attained wide scale usage yet as a category of identity. Interpreting how Africans experience the Afro prefix in their daily lives and social practices, I observed that the use of the Afro prefix strengthens the sense of social inclusion by integrating Africanness into national identity.

In addition to Afro-Turk, I noticed two other categories of identity: Arab and Muslim-Turk. African-descended slaves in Turkey have long defined themselves as Arabs, a category which is commonly associated with Blackness in Turkey. On the other hand, self-identification as Muslim-Turk has related to African slaves' being converted to Islam and their not being recognised as an ethno-cultural community. While young Africans tend to define themselves as Afro-Turks, older ones prefer using the terms of Arab and Muslim-Turk.

It is controversial whether the Afro-Turk category can be regarded as part of Afro-Europeanness. However, I find it worth examining how the Afro prefix interacts with categories of national belonging on a global level. By participating in the project getting Afro-Germans and Afro-Turks together organised by the Joliba Intercultural Network and ACSCA, I have realised that sharing individual and cultural experiences of identity construction can contribute to transcending national borders in the African Diaspora.

## **MOSQUE ACTIVISM AND THE PURSUIT OF 'POSITIVE INTEGRATION' AMONG FINNISH SOMALIS**

*Mulki Al-Sharmani, University of Helsinki*

This paper presents a case study of a mosque program for Finnish Somali families. The program, which was established in 2011, works toward family wellbeing through multidimensional activities including seminars for families and the youth, training workshops for newlyweds, parenting workshops, and family dispute resolution services for married couples.

I examine how the organizers understand the two broad goals of the program: 1) the 'good' of the family, and 2) 'positive integration.' I explore how re-thinking, re-learning and embodying Islamic norms and ethical values in both the family domain and the larger society become the pathway, promoted by the program, to navigate and resist racial and religious 'othering,' and to make sense of what it means to be a Somali, a Muslim, and a Finnish national with African immigrant background. In addition, I explain how the mosque's efforts and vision are partly enabled by recent state policies that promote an active role for religious communities in the process of integrating immigrants. I shed light on the limits of both the mosque's endeavors and the state discourse that enables it.

I draw on research data collected over a period of three years and a half (2013-2017) through participant observation of program activities, interviews with program organizers and participants, and content analysis of program seminars and workshops as well as the program's printed materials.

## **THE MAGICAL AND THE REAL IN IRENOSEN OKOJIE'S FICTION**

*Asuncion Aragon, University of Cadiz*

Irenosen Okojie was born in Nigeria but moved to England when she was eight. She has worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Southbank Centre, and the Caine Prize; Okojie's texts have been published in *The Observer*, *The Guardian* or *Kwani Literary Magazine*. Her debut novel *Butterfly Fish* (2015) was awarded the Betty Trask for young authors of outstanding literary merit under the age of 35. Her second book, *Speak Gigantular* (2016), a collection of short stories, has also been shortlisted for the Jhalak prize for a book of the year by a writer of colour.

The works of Okojie include magical and realistic elements in such a combination that they could be labelled under the magical realism genre. However, the magic features of the texts could also be circumscribed just to the mental breakdown of their protagonists, and therefore the magical could give way to a rational explanation.

In this paper, I will analyse the different traces of the genre in Okojie's texts. For that purpose, I will follow, among others, Wendy B. Fare's proposal about the characteristics of magically realistic

texts, particularly the questioning of received ideas on the concepts of time, space and identity. Thus, the fragmenting of the narrative, the overlapping of the present and the past, or the main characters' hidden traumatic memories enable the experience of a subjectivity suspended in time and space.

### **“AFRICANS AND AFRO-DESCENDANTS IN CONTEMPORARY PORTUGUESE CINEMA: IMMIGRANTS, CITIZENS, HUMANS”**

*Fernando Arenas, University of Michigan*

My paper explores the politics of representation of sub-Saharan Africans and their descendants in postcolonial Portuguese cinema through *Outros bairros* [Other Neighborhoods] (1999) by Kiluanje Liberdade, Inês Gonçalves e Vasco Pimentel; *Cavalo dinheiro* [Horse Money] (2014) by Pedro Costa; and *Bobô* (2013) by Inês Oliveira. I analyze the various ethical and aesthetic choices made by directors in forging a sense of community and granting social citizenship to Cape Verdeans, Bissau-Guineans, and Afro-Portuguese in their respective filmic projects. This paper is part of my current long-term research project focusing on migratory flows in the Portuguese-speaking world and issues related to interculturality, community, and citizenship, reflected in my new book project, “Afro-Portuguese, New Portuguese: From Migration to Citizenship” (working title).

### **COLONIAL REDUX: WHEN RE-NAMING SILENCES - ANTONIO LOPEZ Y LOPEZ AND NELSON MANDELA**

*Mahdis Azarmandi, National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies*

This article challenges dominant narratives of colonial monuments and aims to problematize some local political initiatives and responses raised in the processes of renaming said monuments. We focus on a recent struggle in Barcelona, Spain, to highlight the unresolved tensions and multi-layered silences amongst groups who share the objective of revisiting their city space and its racial/colonial history. While city officials and mainstream anti-racist activists make appeals to universal human rights, Afro-Spanish communities emphasize continuities of racial/colonial injustice and contemporary implications.

The Afro-Spanish community has long petitioned to rename the Lopez y Lopez monument (a Catalan businessman invested in the trade of enslaved people) with the name of Afro-Spanish doctor and social justice activist Alphonse Arcelin, yet the city and mainstream anti-racist groups continue to dislocate conversations of racism from the local Spanish context by suggesting names such as Rana Plaza or Nelson Mandela.

Erasure of colonial violence through memorialization is made visible by acknowledging the necessity for renaming. Yet we argue a second type of erasure occurs in the process of renaming, where resistance by Afro-Spanish communities is equally neglected. Consequently, what is presented as progressive anti-racist responses and engaged commitment to diversity and tolerance rests on notions of a deferred politics of aspiration rather than a politics of action.

### **‘TAKING UP SPACE’: HOW TO BE VISIBLE IN A WORLD OF INVISIBILITY – A LESSON FROM #GENERATIONCLAPBACK**

*Siana Bangura, No Fly on the WALL / Haus of Liberated Reading*

This paper will look at how #GenerationClapback (a term coined by writer, poet, activist, and performer Siana Bangura) – marked by their DIY spirit, frustration, ‘wokeness’, creativity, search for belonging, and hunger to (un)learn and decolonise – navigate spaces hostile to their very existence, yet in which they are forced to reside. How does this millennial generation of young people take up space and use alternative media, artivism, writing, innovation, and endless streams of creativity to usurp the status quo and clapback at their respective societies? Using the

concept of 'Taking Up Space' as defined by Black British Intersectional Feminist platform No Fly on the WALL as a Segway into conversation, we will profile organisations, events, platforms, and individuals at the forefront of the movement, embodying its revolutionary spirit.

From hosiery brand Panty Hoetz to online zine Gal-Dem; the podcasting pioneers of Shout Out Network, the founders of Dream Nation – a movement of Practical Dreamers; Black Ballad, Consented UK, BBZ London, publishing houses such as Haus of Liberated Reading; Facebook groups such as Bun/ Babylon, as well as social media movements such as #BlackGirlMagic, #BlackGirlJoy, #BlackWomenDidThat, and of course #BLackLivesMatter – now a global movement offline also – we will explore questions of identity, deconstruction, reconstruction, decolonising, (un)learning, reimagining, and defining culture.

We will also look at the challenges facing this new generation of pioneers and innovators as well as how their work, experiences, triumphs and challenges are firmly rooted in traditions and movements that precede them as well as questioning what the future may look like for them. With community and the search for belonging at the heart of the movement, we will interrogate the ways in which #GenerationClapback build community using limited resources from Whatsapp group messages to sista circles and monthly gatherings in collectively run spaces such as Common House, DIY Space for London, and Mayday Rooms. Why is it revolutionary to reclaim and take up physical space in the city – a place increasingly more gentrified, hostile, and inaccessible in every sense of the word?

We will also touch upon the ways in which film culture has been used to aid clapback culture, profiling films such as Generation Revolution, 1500 & Counting and Youtube shorts such as 'Strolling', 'Ackee and Saltfish', 'Roll Safe', and the work of the Elijah Quarshie. We will also briefly touch upon the soundtrack to this generation's resistance: Grime. To conclude the discussion, we will look forward to solutions and the part we can play in the movement in Europe and beyond.

The paper will open with a short performance of poetry relating to the subject matter

## **ROSA EMILIA - CREATIVE PRACTICE AND RESEARCH IN MOTION**

*Adelaide Bannerman*, Independent Scholar

Rosa Emilia is a curator-led project spiritually led by its muse Rosa Emilia Clay Lemberg (1875 - 1959) arguably Finland's first African-Finnish citizen.

The project is borne from a space of transition where professional, political and personal intentions merge and manifest as interactions with artists, cultural producers, theorists and institutions in Finland and the UK.

My intent and approach is to create space to build and document intercultural dialogue and thought around multidisciplinary practices, migration and presence; the latter two points being highly pertinent in current debates for both nations (as elsewhere, there is no immunity) particularly in sight of Brexit becoming a reality for UK/EU citizens and migrants from other countries. Parliamentary voting in the UK is now in progress to either halt or enable the present government to activate Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty that triggers the negotiation process of withdrawing the UK from the European Union.

Finland is a young nation looking at itself and its prospects in its Centenary year, and it is hoped that part of that reflection will somehow also critically address Finland's dual identity as a post-colonial nation with a burgeoning multi-cultural population, and as a coloniser. These are the tensions underlying my movements between both countries and their drawn into alignment with 19th/early 20th century accounts of black female agency and thought.

## **THE DUAL ROLE OF RELIGION REGARDING THE RWANDAN 1994 GENOCIDE: BOTH INSTIGATOR AND HEALER**

*Jean d'Amour Banyanga, Åbo Akademi University*

In 1994, Rwanda experienced a genocide in which an estimated 800,000 people were killed during a little more than 100 days. Basically, Hutu hardliners killed Tutsis, and Tutsi sympathizers among the Hutus. This study explores the complex role of religion regarding the 1994 Rwandan genocide and its aftermath. On one hand, there is evidence to suggest that religion played a crucial role in helping to create the conditions which made the genocide possible in the first place. This argument is presented through an analysis of existing literature and documents on the matter. The churches of the colonial times, both Catholic and Protestant, favored the Tutsis and oppressed the Hutus, thereby laying ground for the future catastrophe.

On the other hand, seemingly paradoxically, religion has also played a central role in the healing process among the genocide survivors. This second argument is presented through interviews with 291 respondents (141 men and 150 women) belonging to the Rwandan diaspora in Belgium.

Even though more people died while seeking shelter inside churches than anywhere else during the 1994 genocide, religion remains an important part in the life of many Rwandans in Belgium. This study was found that religion was the most important coping mechanism used by these survivors, who felt distrust toward western psychology.

## **LIBERATING GENRE: FORMAL EXPERIMENTATION IN RECENT NEO-SLAVE NARRATIVES BY BLACK BRITISH WOMEN**

*Elisabeth Bekers, Vrije Universiteit Brussel*

Critics (Stein 2004; McLeod 2010) have duly recognised the remarkable rise in black British women writers, who even have come to dominate black British literature. No less noteworthy is their (collective) interest in the genre of the “neo-slave narrative” (Bell 1987). Half a century after the appearance of the first fictional slave narratives in the US in the 1960s and a decade or two after the first examples in British literature (Dabydeen, D'Aguiar and C. Phillips), Britain's black women writers are expanding the African American genre. They do so not only by taking a thematic interest in Britain's involvement in slavery, but also by formally experimenting with a genre reputed for “embrac[ing] a variety of styles of writing” (V. Smith 2007).

Although black British women writers subscribe to the standard tropes developed in female (fictional and/or historical) slave narratives (e.g. fragmentation of families, renaming of slaves, sexual exploitation of enslaved women), I will demonstrate how they liberate the neo-slave narrative from some of its generic constraints, whether by reversing the dramatis personae's functions (the black slave owner and white slave in Evaristo's *Blonde Roots*, 2008), through metafictional commentary and a humorous approach to their dark topic (Levy's *The Long Song*, 2010), or by fusing the genre with neo-Victorian biographical fiction (the paralleling of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's life history with the lives of two of the Barrett family's slaves in Fish's *Strange Music* (2008).

By surprising readers with their unusual formal variations on the genre, black British women writers are formulating a forceful counter-discursive attack on the bicentenary commemorations' focus on Britain's heroic role in the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and reminding Britain of its “historical amnesia” (Evaristo 2011) regarding its past involvement in slavery.

## **FROM CRÉOLITÉ TO ANTI-SEMITISM: THE CURIOUS (AND AMBIVALENT) CASE OF MARTINICAN INTELLECTUAL RAPHAËL CONFIAINT**

*Alessandra Benedicty-Kokken, City College of New York (CUNY)*

In the past decades, in the French public sphere, there have been punctual incidents of misunderstandings between Antillean and Jewish intellectuals, which have not been sufficiently analyzed. In its broadest gesture, this paper argues that to theorize Black Europe, it is essential that some attention be paid to the relationship between “Blackness” and “Jewishness” in a European (and even global) public sphere. For a limited period after the given incident, intellectuals have written or spoken publically, but most avoid engaging in any official capacity in the topic, waiting, for the issue to be, if not forgotten, at least ignored enough that it becomes eclipsed by other matters.

In this paper, I consider the written comments made by academic Raphaël Confiain in 2006 as regards the comedian Dieudonné M'bala M'bala, which constitutes one of the most well known incidents of such offense. Most alarming is Confiain's broad renown as one of the three authors of the oft-cited *In Praise of Creoleness* (1989), issued bilingually in English and French by the esteemed French publishing house Éditions Gallimard. Alongside the work of Tahar Ben Jelloun, Édouard Glissant, Julia Kristeva, and Milan Kundera, the intellectual premises of *In Praise of Creoleness* may be considered as in alignment with the various postcolonial theories of hybridity, which gained intellectual currency in the late 1980s and 1990s. In this paper, then, I seriously consider the tension between Confiain's cosmopolitanism on the one hand, and his supposed anti-Semitism on the other.

More specifically, I claim that while horrifically and offensively maladroit, Confiain's remarks offer insight into a troubled relationship between “Blacks” and “Jews” in a French intellectual public sphere that is superbly uncomfortable with identity politics. Critically, my work engages that of Sarah Casteel, Stef Craps, Deborah Eisenberg, Mayanthi Fernando, Michael Rothberg, and Christiane Taubira.

## **UNIMAGINATION: KNOWLEDGE AS ACTION**

*Chandra Bhimull, Colby College*

As an anthropologist and historian of black Europe and the Caribbean at a small predominately white private liberal arts college, I strive to teach courses that encourage students to interrogate the twin concepts of national culture and national history, and decenter whiteness. The challenge is an old one: to teach in a manner that makes it impossible for students to unimagine themselves as parts of the pasts and presents they are studying. For those of us who are committed to political education and scholarly activism, this is becoming harder and harder and more necessary than ever to do amid emergent forms of neoliberalism, classism, racism, and other ‘isms.’

In this paper, I aim to explore the extent to which transdisciplinarity can aid in our efforts to do this kind of work. In doing so, I use my archival and ethnographic fieldwork as a black anthrohistorian to examine the role that radical imagination has and can play in teaching about the future, past, and present of ordinary Black European lives.

## **AFRICAN-SOVIET AND AFRICAN-RUSSIAN HERITAGE**

*Svetlana Boltovskaya, Herder-Institute for historical research on Eastern and Central Europe*

This paper can be seen as introduction to the panel 10. The following questions are to be clarified:

- 1) How can we define as the Soviet/socialist African-Russian heritage?
- 2) What does it include as tangible (monuments, books, painting) and as intangible (traditions, and knowledge) culture?
- 3) What is the legacy of this heritage for the current Russian culture and social life?

The Soviet literature and cinema used black African images and characters to demonstrate the universal values of the Russian revolution and the Soviet socialism to the world. These paintings, books and films, determined by a clear paternalism and exotism, remain popular in Russia until today.

The first nameable African Soviet cultural encounter was the international student and youth festival 1957. It was the most visited and most successful event in the entire festival movement. 34,000 foreigners, including up to 6,000 Black Africans, came to Moscow.

The higher education for Africa became an important field in the competition between the East and the West during the time of the Cold War. The Soviet Union placed third in the international educational sector. USSR awarded scholarships for thousands of young Africans, who studied at 700 universities in 120 Soviet cities. As result, an African Diaspora arose in the Soviet Union in the second half of the last century. Ca. 100,000 Afro-Russians and Africans live in Russia today.

The collapse of the USSR led to a collapse of the educational sector for Africa and of the African-Soviet cultural and economic cooperation in general. Since 1995, Russia tries to establish new educational programs for Africa and new economic Russian-African cooperations again. So, legacy of the African-Soviet heritage remains important for Russia as well for African Diaspora there, and can be seen as part of the Afro-European history.

### **“TEACHING : GERMANY AND THE BLACK DIASPORA”**

*Jeff Bowersox, University College London*

In this talk I would like to introduce a collaborative teaching project on the history of Germany and the Black Diaspora from the Middle Ages to the present. We start from the premise that attention to shifting ideas and experiences of blackness in German history will shed new light on the way we teach German history more generally. But this is not merely an academic point. Challenging prevailing narratives and assumptions of German history, and in particular those organized around an ethnic and implicitly “white” vision of the “nation” gives us a tool to challenge universities to liberate the curriculum from longstanding structures that marginalize people of colour.

The talk will address of three sections. First, I will address the logic of the class, explaining why a broad chronological focus starting with the Middle Ages opens the way to challenging prevailing assumptions about race and nation. Second, I will address the international component of the class. Introducing collaborations between students in different countries has been a valuable tool for helping them understand how race means different things in different places. Third, I will suggest that these experiences illustrate the value of this course and its materials outside the ivory tower as well, in particular through digital media and face-to-face encounters. Engaging with the broader public brings challenges but also important opportunities to re-shape classroom teaching to suit the needs of black and minority ethnic communities.

### **THE FEMALE BRITISH BLACK CARIBBEAN NURSE: POST-COLONIALISM, RACE, GENDER AND POWER**

*Beverley Brathwaite, Birmingham City University / University of Hertfordshire*

‘A post-colonial perspective challenges ideas of there being a universal standpoint on knowledge development. It provides a window for understanding how concepts of ‘race’, notions of racialized ‘Other’ constructed within a particular historical and colonial context’ (Anderson & McCann 2002). The colonised existed as a primary means of defining the coloniser and of creating a sense of omnipotent unity. However this relationship is not simply a binary them (white colonisers) and us the black colonised. There are divergent power relations between white women and men and

for discussion here, Black women who identify themselves based on skin colour, ethnicity, culture, nation and country of birth.

The ongoing narrative from post-colonial feminists (Anderson, 2002, Anderson et al 2003, McGibbon et al 2013) seek to use post-colonial theory to highlight 'white privilege and racism in the nursing profession'. Encapsulating the complexities of the colonial relationships. This addresses the lack of attention to 'marginalised' groups such as the female British born Caribbean nurses (BBCN). The present location of the BBCN is still one based on colonial, gendered and radicalised beliefs. A powerful nexus of white dominance, supremacy and modern constructs of race that subsists in the female dominated nursing profession and its most important employer the British National Health service. There is a less powerful 'Other' assumption of Caribbean (and British born) women's gender and racialized identity, within society and as a nurse.

My paper will exam how the intersection of gender, race and class are inexplicably linked to colonial history and power structures that engendered the female black 'Other'. How does it resonates today in the differing forms of gendered, racial discrimination, stereotyping and institutional racism that exists for female BBCNs and how this impacts on navigation through their careers.

### **AFROPEAN CHOREOGRAPHIES: THE ECONOMY OF WEST AFRICAN DANCE IN ITALY**

*Claudia Brazzale*, University of East London

Over the past twenty years so-called African dance has become increasingly popular in Italy growing in tandem with local West African diasporic communities and the corresponding national concern over immigration. Although the circulation of African dance provides West African migrants with an important form of self-identification and supplemental income, it often revolves around problematic discourses rooted on the myth and romance with the primitive. Constructing and capitalizing on the fetishization of the 'black body,' the diffusion of African dance in Italy mobilizes a complex economy of desire that trades on the objectification and exoticization of the Other.

Based on my on-going participant observation and fieldwork conducted in northern and central Italy, this presentation unpacks the interplay of primitivism, exoticism, authenticity and desire that sustains the economy of African dance in Italy. Situating the research in my own personal experience of training in West African dance in North America and Europe, I examine this interplay in relation to Europe's colonial past and its continuing legacies as well as to the specificities of the Italian context: the country's unique internal and external diaspora and its history of racialisation of internal and external Others. Finally, I discuss how the circulation of African dance in Italy helps forge hybrid spaces, communities, and bodies that force us to think through concepts such as orientalism, interracial desire, fetishism, and pleasure. This, in turn, leads me to explore whether, in a context of increasing and alarming xeno- and afro-phobia, African dance has the potential to choreograph new diasporic identities and practices that decenter Italian concepts of nationhood and citizenship.

### **SPACE WAS NOT THE PLACE? AFRICAN PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNIST ERA POLISH SCIENCE FICTION**

*Dariusz Brzostek*, Nicolaus Copernicus University

Science fiction played an important part in the cultural landscape of socialist Poland, being integral to the popular culture as well as to communist propaganda. The one and only communist future as a major motif of the early Socialist Era science fiction narratives was also the impressive political image of the final triumph of the Communist Party. The „Communist International” of the united world in the more or less near future was also the shape of society to come in the science fiction stories about the space exploration (including the international crews of the spacecrafts).

Some interesting examples of Afropean future and African people in the communist world of Polish science fiction were: the Black communist and astronaut, Hannibal Smith, as the main character of *The Astronauts* (*Astronauci*, 1951) by Stanisław Lem; the African astronauts in *The Magellanic Cloud* (*Obłok Magellana*, 1955) by Stanisław Lem and the story of the African slaves' rebellion against the capitalists on the space station „Celestia” in the novel by Krzysztof Boruń & Andrzej Trepka *The Lost Future* (*Zagubiona przyszłość*, 1953). Lem's novels were also adapted into films: *The Magellanic Cloud* as *The Voyage to the End of the Universe* (*Ikaria XB-1*, 1963, directed by Jindřich Polák), *The Astronauts* as *First Spaceship on Venus* (*Der schweigende Stern*, 1960, directed by Kurt Maetzig) – in which the Nigerian actor, Julius Ongewe, appeared as an very first African astronaut in the history of cinema.

## **CHURCH, ACTIVISM, AND THE SHAPING OF AFRO-GREEKNESS: TRANSMITTING MULTICULTURALISM THROUGH PERFORMANCE**

*Natasa Chanta-Martin*, Anasa Cultural Centre

Klafthmonos Square, Athens, April 2013: an African-arts NGO and Nigerian Pentecostal churches invite Christians from a range of backgrounds to perform together in a gospel festival open to the Greek public. The organizers, as well as the majority of the participants, are youth of Nigerian descent. In a socio-politically turbulent environment of 'recession Greece', nationalism and xenophobia have been developing towards extreme racism and anti-black violence. The NGO co-organizing the festival, works in human rights through the arts for African descent youth, and serves as a mean of empowering, representing, and exposing African descent youth culture. Even though the public sphere can be a dangerous realm for individuals of colour, the Klathmonos Gospel Festival creates a safe space for cultural expression.

In this presentation, I reveal this public performance as a milestone event for the exposure of African youth artistic activity during the Greek 'crisis'. To what extent do such experiences shape and reflect ways in which Afroeuropean identity is perceived in a country with no colonial or slavery-related past? Embracing theoretical frameworks from dance anthropology, I employ key concepts of agency, kinaesthesia, participatory performance, and multiculturalism, while exploring further activities of the NGO mentioned above.

## **LINGUISTIC TRENDS AND PREMISES IN THE POLITICAL WRITINGS OF FRANCOPHONE, HISPANOPHONE, AND ANGLOPHONE EXISTENTIALISTS**

*Rosetta Codling*, Herzing University

Content: Francophone (Negritude), Hispanophone (Negritude and Black Activism), and Anglophone (Black Activists) Existentialists indicate the extent and impact of colonialism in their treatises. The universal medium illustrated in the works of Aimee Cesaire, Donato Ndongo, and Ralph Ellison, in accordance with research, is the placement and displacement of the pronoun “You” in English/Anglophone political writings. However, the placement and displacement of space is relative within those who utilize the African “I” in Existential, political literature.

My paper, as well, attempts to explore inherent tendencies of psychological dissonance as in Anglophone, Francophone, and Hispanophone literature. Consideration will be focused upon the absence of cognitive dissonance in the political writings of Africans employing the African “I.” Evidence of such distinctions are to be explored through the writings of Mark Nwagwu.

## **ABSTRACT**

*Nancy Comorau*, Ohio Wesleyan University

Zadie Smith's 2003 novel *On Beauty* marks, as its title suggests, questions of aesthetics central to its concerns. The novel features two rival art historians who offer fundamentally opposed ideologies about the nature of art and artists. And the novel takes its title from Elaine Scarry's *On*

Beauty and Being Just, which argues that analyses of beauty and social justice need not be positioned as antithetical to one another. This integration of the aesthetic and the political is not merely a thematic concern of the novel. *On Beauty* is a rewriting of E.M. Forster's *Howards End*, a "Condition of England" novel. Forster's novel questioned how England would adjust its understanding of value as the connections between family, wealth, and land became more tenuous at the turn of the 20th century. Its central question is who shall inherit England, symbolized by the text's titular country house. *On Beauty* replaces the contested inheritance with a painting by Haitian folk artist Jean Hippolyte. Asking, through that switch, who shall inherit art? Who will make, who will appreciate, who will canonize?

It is through a relentless concern about aesthetic value and appreciation, both in content and form, that Smith stakes a claim for the canonical inclusion of Black writers on both grounds. In fact, I would argue that even taking up the *Condition of England* form is a bold one for a Black British writer, inserting herself into a conversation that never imagined her a part of it. By rewriting Forster's novel, working in this genre, and centering questions of art and aesthetics in the text's narrative of uncertain inheritance, Smith subtly—yet firmly—argues for the position of Black British women writers in the canon of the English novel, and insists that these works are equally as much about creating new kinds of aesthetics as they are about introducing new storylines.

### **THE COUNCIL OF OVERSEAS MAROONS: A NODAL DIASPORIC NETWORK IN A TIME OF CRISIS**

*Robert Connell, University of California*

In the 1950s and 1960s, thousands of Jamaicans emigrated to England to find prosperity and better economic horizons in the colonial metropole. Represented in this wave of labor migration were the Maroons of Accompong, a distinct ethnic and political community in Jamaica. The Maroons are the direct descendants of enslaved Africans who, in the 17th and 18th centuries, liberated themselves from captivity forming their own autonomous polities. In so doing, the Maroons underwent a process of ethnogenesis, forging a socio-cultural system distinct from the creole Afro-Jamaicans who constitute the majority of the country. To this day, Maroon society exercises limited and contested self-rule with separate governance structures and political practices. However, the Maroon community of Accompong is now facing conflict with the Jamaican state over the extent of their autonomy and territorial integrity in the face of resource extraction.

The Maroons who settled in England and their descendants continue to take an active and influential role in the politics of Accompong as they navigate a form of triple citizenship between their ancestral polity, the United Kingdom, and Jamaica. This paper explores the contours of Maroon Afro-European diasporic assistance and intervention in the governance of Accompong in a time of political crisis. Drawing from the sociological theories of diaspora, diaspora is articulated as a transnational intercommunal nodal network interconnected on the basis of sustained intergenerational flows, of varying natures, marked by its instability and hibernetic nature. For the Maroons of England, their impact on Accompong is both financial and ideological as the diasporic flow is kept alive through remittances, development aid, and business interests while carrying British ideals of parliamentarianism, constitutionalism, and secularism, formally advanced through the Council of Overseas Maroons. This paper contributes empirical knowledge to the interplay between humanitarianism and power relations within the functional processes of diasporic communities.

### **EXPERIMENT OR ERROR? IS MR FOX ONLY A LITERARY GAME?**

*Helen Cousins, Newman University*

Several newspaper reviews of Helen Oyeyemi's *Mr Fox* (2011) criticised the inclusion of the section entitled 'my daughter the racist'. This 'socio-political' (Jordan 2011) tale appears to the reviewers not to fit with the other retellings of the folk/fairy tale 'Bluebeard' that make up the rest

of the book. After all, the 'playfully metafictional to the impressionistic and obscure' (Jordan 2011) that are the staples of revisionist mythmaking, are what we have come to expect of Oyeyemi. Such judgements imply an unwillingness to engage with experimental writing outside of specific genre boundaries and instead assume that the author has made a mistake. Yet as another reviewer noted, 'Mr Fox also becomes a meditation on the writing process itself' (Sethi 2012). This paper seeks to explore how far we might consider the inclusion of 'my daughter the racist' not as an error but as an effort to push generic boundaries through using theories around experimental writing. It seems fitting that Oyeyemi might experiment with this tale in particular as Marie Tatar notes that, in its essence, *Bluebeard* is about a woman's transgressive curiosity, how she is 'fascinated by the prospect of the forbidden' despite experiencing a 'dread and the fear of reprisal' as she pursues knowledge beyond the boundaries set for her (2006, 5). The analysis will pursue the idea that far from being merely a literary game (regardless of its success or failure (as suggested by Daniel in *The Telegraph*)), Oyeyemi's 'error' marks her intention to subvert the boundaries set around her work by literary convention.

### **WHY A PRESENTATION ON 'URBAN MUSIC'**

*João Craveirinha, African Diaspora Consortium*

The focus of this presentation is to emphasize the importance of modern Urban Music and its origin as a way of deconstructing bias as it is often depicted in communication and culture. We will concentrate on contributions from African Diasporic cultures for deconstructing Afro-pessimistic<sup>2</sup> thinking as it concerns African heritages in Europe. We deal with century's old attitudes of collective thinking full of prejudice, which have resulted in many European historians misleading and imposing Afro-pessimistic stereotypes on people of African descent. The consequence of such bias is the result of the broad ignorance of African contributions to Western civilization and historiography<sup>3</sup>. Across 21st Century Europe, specifically in Portugal, radio, television and news media tend to ignore or negatively depict the historical importance of the cultural values and genetic contributions of African Diasporic populations. I choose to contribute to this subject by describing the development of modern Urban Music, which as scholar Paul Gilroy (1995) states in his study, "The Black Atlantic", leads to understanding all modern urban music has its origin in the African Diaspora. African cultures have melded across oceans with the process of a historically forced African Diaspora, and some aspects of old African civilization and culture survive through Urban Music all over the world. The main point remains – the systematic cultural 'appropriation' of the African Diaspora that has occurred in Western Culture hides the great contributions to European History and cultural globalization. Urban Music as a part of that African heritage is the source of modern music and dance. This is an opportunity for further dynamic processes to involve mass media such as television, cinema, theater, schools and universities to deal with matters of ethnic prejudice with the intent of minimizing the Afro-Pessimism that resounds with crescendo in our contemporary societies.

### **#HAIRIS(NOT)JUSTHAIR: NATURAL HAIR ART AND SOCIAL NETWORK'S (R)EVOLUTION**

*Cristina Cruz-Gutiérrez, University of the Balearic Islands*

Black natural hair has historically had a fundamental role in Black women's politics of self-perception and self-definition due to its powerful ethnic symbolism. Discrimination against kinky hair exerts a negative impact upon processes of identity formation linked to a sense of European (un)belongingness. This bears witness to the intersection of gender and race when dealing with the Black female body. Seeking to bring to the forefront the socio-political nature of kinky hair, the first hair movement took place in the late 1960s. After a short revival in the 1990s, the movement saw the rise of its third wave in the mid-2000s, a transnational wave emerging in, but not limited to, diasporic contexts. The third movement is characterized by the significant role of social networks in visibilizing the main interests of hair politics, serving as platforms of dialog and self-empowerment for those engaging in the phenomenon of "participatory culture". As alternative media, social networks become safe spaces to interrogate social constructs and hegemonic

discourses of natural hair perpetuated by mainstream media. In this paper, I examine the role of social networks conferring an unprecedented visibility to natural hair artists. I will analyze YouTube's contribution to the development of the socio-educational side of the movement in relation to the diffusion of HAIRitage, a Short Film Exploring Black Hair in Britain (2014). I shall also explore YouTube as a platform of diffusion for Selina Thompson's performance *Dark and Lovely*. Concurrently, British photographer Emily Stein will be introduced in relation to Instagram as a tool to visibilize her photo series *Misrepresentation of Representation*. Debunking stereotypical portrayals of kinky hair as "bad" hair, this series shall be discussed as artistic counter-discursive narratives seeking to destabilize the European beauty canon.

### **"CONGO STARS" NA LISABONNE: BAKONGO'S MUSIC, LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY IN PORTUGAL**

*Ana Stela de Almeida Cunha, CEI/ISCTE - Lisbon / UFMA, Brazil*

The African Diaspora and more specifically, the Bakongo's contemporary diaspora, targeted not only its colonial metropolis Belgium but also other Francophone countries, like France in Europe and Canada in the Americas. The geographic division implemented by the Berlin Conference (1884 -1885) assigned to the Bakongo a nationality that goes beyond the boundaries of a single country. The Bakongo hails as a nation, technically and practically to Congo (DRC) and Angola. In this paper I will analyse the presence of immigrants in Lisbon from an unusual perspective: music, language (Lingala) and the possibilities for grouping/identity at the collective level. For over five years, I followed the "Congo Stars de Vibration": a group of musicians (rumba, soukous and others) that include among others, nationals from the lower Congo. My goal is to show the dissonant forms of discourse regarding identity/multiculturalism practiced in Europe, or more specifically, in Portugal. I also intend to show the reality of the immigrants excluded from the host society but who manage somehow, through music and language, to recreate an identity that fits the European consumer taste, or in the words of Mudimbe (1988) "the invention of Africa through European discourses".

### **LOCAL ANTI-RACISM MEDIA ACTIVISM IN THE GLOBAL DIGITAL AGE: COMPARING TACTICS TO RAISE MARGINALIZED VOICES IN BRAZIL AND FINLAND**

*Leonardo Custódio, University of Tampere / Federal University of Rio de Janeiro*

What does comparing efforts to raise marginalized voices in different societies tell about citizens' uses of digital media for political participation in the global digital age? In this presentation, I describe the plan for my post-doctoral research. This is a plan for a multi-sited ethnographic research that compares how black people in Brazil and Finland engage in media activism to speak up and participate in local public debates. From a citizen-centered approach, the main objective of this study is to analyze the conflicting dynamics between established public spheres and the formation of counterpublics in distinct sociopolitical, economic and cultural contexts. This research also aims at demonstrating how in-depth approaches to local uses of digital media against racism can make fundamental contributions to a more nuanced understanding of the potential and limitations of digital media for the promotion of citizens' political participation in different societies around the world. This presentation is an effort to engage in expert discussions about the theoretical, methodological and empirical feasibility of the plan while developing it for post-doctoral applications in Finland and abroad.

### **ARTICULATING DIFFERENT KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION LOCATIONS : BELGIAN-CONGOLESE VOICES AND DISSIDENCES**

*Sarah Demart, CEDEM, University of Liège*

The aim of this paper is to discuss the difficulties of addressing the Congolese/Black presence in Belgium and the resulting racialization of the Belgian academic field, as white. Starting from a

recent collaboration between academics, artists and activists around a collective book intitled « Creating in postcolony-2010-15. Belgian-Congolese voices and dissidences » (Créer en postcolonie. 2010-15. Voix et dissidences belo-congolaises), I want to explore the possible alternative to the marginalisation of the Congolese/Black voices from the legitimate field of the knowledge production. This paper examines first the challenge of this hybrid collection in terms of academic excellence, political activism and artistic exigence. Secondly, it questions how the pluralization of the knowledge production locations can provide a 'decolonial methodology' to paraphrase Françoise Verges. Finally, it argues that the epistemological foundations of mainstream knowledge on ethnic/migration/citizenship studies in Belgium are linked to a national anxiety and protectionism.

### **“WHITE AS A LILY” – THE SILENCING OF BLACK WOMEN’S HISTORY IN SWITZERLAND**

*Jovita dos Santos Pinto*, Interdisciplinary Center for Gender Studies (ICFG), University of Bern

Women’s suffrage in Switzerland was introduced in 1971. Subsequently, eleven women were elected as national councilors for the first time. Amongst them, Tilo Frey, of Cameroonian-Swiss origin. As sole nonwhite woman, her candidacy drew a particular media attention at the time. However, by 2007, she seemed widely forgotten: a newly elect Ricardo Lumengo was celebrated in national and international press as “first Black” member of the Swiss parliament and as antiracist counter symbol to the new representational record of the right-wing party. Based on the media coverage of these elections, the contribution inquires into the public forgetting of Tilo Frey. Starting from a close-reading of a rare interview she gave, it will be outlined how her speaking position was not intelligible within the existing public discourse. It will be argued that Frey’s assertion “to remain white as a lily”, reflected a racial discourse of the 1970’s, namely the meritocratic promise of national belonging and erasure of race through the adoption of ‘swiss cultural norms’. While this assertion can be read as indicative of how she moved through a specifically gendered and racialized public space during her political career, the portrayal of Ricardo Lumengo shows that there was a significant discursive shift thirty years later. In this context, her interview was reduced to a fleeting – yet undecipherable – intervention within a new hegemonic discourse on racism. Tracking different moments of a gendered and racialized silencing of Tilo Frey, this contribution engages with the entangled discourses of meritocracy, racelessness and engendered politics and the challenges this poses for a Black historiography of Switzerland.

### **OTAR IOSSELIANI’S PROTO-SOCIALIST AFRICAN PARADISE AND ITS (ANTI)SOVIET CONTEXTS: „ET LA LUMIÈRE FUT“ (1989)**

*Gesine Drews-Sylla*, University of Tübingen

In 1984, the Georgian film-maker Otar Iosseliani emigrated from the Soviet Union to France. His films had often been met with disapproval by Soviet authorities, because they established a poignant counternarrative to the Soviet vision of modernity. To this purpose, Iosseliani established his own master narrative from his very first films on (e.g. *April*, 1961). His second film in emigration *Et la lumière fut*, which won the Special Jury Prize at the 46th Venice International Film Festival, transposed this master narrative to Africa and expanded it into a generalizing critique of modernity. The film was shot on location in the Casamance region (Senegal) where a fictional proto-socialist African society exists as the lost paradise. This paradise is destroyed by an “Enlightenment” alluded to by the film’s title. As a consequence, monotheistic religions and socialism become surrogates in the search for a lost harmony that will never be regained. The film has an all-African setting without an apparent black-white dichotomy and does not openly comment on colonialism in the narrative. The narrative is, however, structured by stereotypical occidental representations of Africa. The specific way they are instrumentalized depends on a Soviet countercultural tradition that constructs Africa as an anti-Soviet realm of freedom, thus reaffirming these stereotypes in the countercultural context. The film also establishes a visual

superimposition of Africa and Georgia, which allows for a reflection of the Georgian situation in the Soviet empire.

## **AFRICAN AMERICAN ARTIST ELISABETH WELCH ON THE INTERWAR BRITISH SCREEN**

*Hannah Durkin, Newcastle University*

Recalling her appearance on a 1937 BBC television programme, African American singer-actress Elisabeth Welch noted that early broadcasting lacked the technical capabilities to capture skin tone: "Everybody was white, white, white. You only had eyes and black lips" (Pines 1992: 23). Welch's debut on the BBC predated the appearance of a Black artist on US television by nineteen months and she was already well known to British viewers for her regular work on the radio, where her racial identity had passed largely unremarked. As she recalled, "I became a name up and down the country without people ever knowing what I looked like" (Pines 1992: 22). While such visual inclusivity was partly unintentional and ultimately limited as she was confined mainly to musical performances, it highlights the path-breaking opportunities that interwar Britain afforded to African American artists as well as Welch's own effort to resist racial typecasting.

This paper explores Welch's construction and self-construction in British cinema and television. I show how 1930s Britain afforded her a level of cultural visibility – even stardom – not possible in the US and how Welch in turn sought to develop a demure and urbane screen personality to resist exoticising depictions of Black womanhood. The artist styled herself as an interpreter of "popular" songs rather than a jazz artist and her onscreen musical performances show that she deliberately adopted European stylistic techniques to circumvent racist representations. Welch's contribution to British screen history has so far been overshadowed by the career of artist-activist Paul Robeson, with whom she co-starred in two films, yet reviewers were unanimous in their praise of her work. Moreover, her decision to remain in Britain during and after World War II means that her mid-century career is even more illustrative than is Robeson's of mid-century British racial politics.

## **QUEEN MARY – A MEMORIAL STATUE BY JEANNETTE EHLERS IN COLLABORATION WITH LA VAUGHN BELLE**

*Jeannette Ehlers*

Artist Jeannette Ehlers (DK/Trinidad) will discuss her latest project "Queen Mary" that marks the 2017 centennial of the sale of the Danish Virgin islands to the United States, named 'Transfer Day'. Ehlers is producing the first Danish memorial statue on Danish soil of Mary 'Queen Mary' Thomas, one of three prominent female leaders of the Labor Riots of St. Croix, 1878 - also known as the Fireburn.

The centennial of "Transfer Day" is an ideal opportunity to highlight Denmark's colonial project that has been hidden for too long. That Denmark was a slave trade nation for more than 200 years is a repressed and neglected chapter in (Danish) History. The Caribbean islands St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John – today's US Virgin Islands - were under Danish flag until 1917, where they were sold to the United States of America.

The making of "Queen Mary" will commemorate enslaved Africans during The Transatlantic slave trade as well as pay tribute to their freedom struggle and manifest that we, their descendants, are here and to this day still fight for justice. The 7 meters tall Queen Mary statue will be placed in front of the former West Indian Warehouse, today The Royal Cast Collection, located on the Copenhagen harbor front. Today the place houses more than 2000 plaster casts copies of iconic sculptures from the Western canon of art. A huge bronze sculpture of Michelangelo's "David" adorns in front of the building. In 2017 "David" will be accompanied by "Queen Mary" .

## **TIME TRAVEL AS A RECONCEPTUALIZATION STRATEGY IN ANTHONY JOSEPH'S THE AFRICAN ORIGINS OF UFOS**

*Adriano Elia, University of Rome "Roma Tre"*

Anthony Joseph's groundbreaking novel *The African Origins of UFOs* (2006) is a challenging example of Afrofuturist speculative fiction. Divided into three interweaving sections set in space in the future, on land in the present and in water in the past, this eccentric novel draws on time travel as a means to reconsider notions of race, identity, exile and collective memory. Charged with innumerable allusions, Joseph's experimental style, blending poetry and prose, is an ideal counterpart to the richness and variety of content, whereby the conflation of past, present and future brings about a reconceptualisation of hegemonic discourses on the black diaspora.

## **THE BLACK ARCHIVES: RE-DISCOVERING UNTOLD STORIES OF BLACK REVOLUTIONARIES OTTO & HERMIE HUISWOUD IN AMSTERDAM**

*Mitchell Esajas & Jessica de Abreu, New Urban Collective (the Black Archives)*

Over the past years an "innocent children's holiday", Sinterklaas and in particular the figure Black Pete, have become the center of an increasingly controversial public debate in the Netherlands. The debate has exposed the pervasiveness of racism in Dutch society. At the same time the debate has galvanized an arising movement against racism. Essed (2014) called it a the second wave of anti-racism in the Netherlands. In this paper the authors argue this current movement could be seen as a third wave of anti-racism because there has been a wave of anti-colonial resistance which has been erased from history but rediscovered in 'the Black Archives' in Amsterdam.

One of the organizations involved in the movement, New Urban Collective, is currently developing an archive consisting of more than 4000 books, articles, documents and artefacts mainly about and produced by Surinamese organizations in the Netherlands. It contains the stories of several Surinamese and black organizations who have been organizing since the 1920 in the Netherlands and resisted imperialism, colonialism and racism. One of the stories found in the archive is the story of Otto and Hermine Huiswoud. The Huiswouds were part of an international network of black radical thinkers and organizers but their story has been 'actively erased' from Dutch history. The Black Archives in Amsterdam show that parts of the African diaspora in Europe are erased and how building archives can be part of decolonizing knowledge.

## **BEYOND BELLE? THE ABSENT BLACK FEMALE IN NEO-VICTORIAN FILM AND TV**

*Felipe Espinoza Garrido, University of Muenster*

Although Mina Sagay and Amma Asante's period drama *Belle* (2013) has drawn academic attention to the portrayal of a Black female experience in neo-Victorian visual culture, the film constitutes a stark exception in a genre dominated by a conspicuous absence of Black female representations. This is especially troubling as the Black female Victorian experience is deeply intertwined with questions of intersectionality with regard to British imperialism in Africa and its gendered epistemologies.

Drawing on research in the fields of neo-Victorian, postcolonial, and media studies, our contribution will explore the intersectional oppression of Black female Victorians in the ever-developing neo-Victorian cultural empire. We will not only focus on neo-Victorian production itself but also examine the involvement of cultural institutions and producers in these processes of marginalization, particularly in light of their self-proclaimed standards of 'literary fidelity' and 'quality'. As we will argue, the gendered absence does not only recur on an inherited invisibility from the heritage film era but reveals a historically continuous blind spot for Black female Victorian experiences. While classic country house fictions through their inter-generic logic and genre history typically do not represent Black presences at all, neo-Victorian fictions increasingly feature

Black characters, which are, however, almost exclusively male. Paradoxically, the fascination with the Black male Victorian manservant trope – all too often re-fashioned as a companion to white haunted selves – hinders the incorporation of Black female characters. Against this background, we will explore how neo-Victorianism’s revisionist potential of past and present ideologies can expose the ongoing intersectional repression of Black female experiences in cultural productions.

## **SPORT AND BELONGING IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF BLACK BODIES**

*Susan Alice Fischer, Medgar Evers College of The City University of New York*

At the close of WWII, George Orwell (1945) registered “amazement” at the widely held belief “that sport creates goodwill between the nations.” In his view, rather than obviating the “inclination to meet on the battlefield [...] international sporting contests lead to orgies of hatred.” In *Beyond a Boundary*, CLR James (1963) reminded us of the politically charged nature of the sporting world, particularly with regard to colonialism and its racial and class hierarchies.

In the cultural arena, the sport field has long been used as a metaphorical representation of the battleground for nationhood, belonging and exclusion. Examples of this embattled turf abound. The 1987 film *Playing Away* (screenplay by Caryl Philips) set Black athletic bodies – specifically a team from Brixton – upon a cricket field in the all-white British countryside as a way of looking at a racialized notion of nation as contested space. While this film focused specifically on Black male bodies, the popular film *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002) encompassed not only a racialized view of national belonging, but further complicated the question by placing the female body at the centre of the competing demands of tradition and acculturation.

This paper will look not only at these films, but also at other recent cultural representations where ideas about national identity and belonging in Britain and Europe are explored through sport. While perhaps providing an apt metaphor for embattled space, setting these conflicts on the cricket field or the football pitch may inadvertently reinforce stereotypical notions of Black male athletic prowess and physical superiority, on the one hand, and of subjugated Black and Brown female bodies on the other.

## **“BLACK IS BLACK/BLACK IS BLACK IS BLACK IS BLACK IS BLACK/BLACK IS BLACK”: UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFROEUROPE THROUGH THE VISUAL ARTS**

*Renée Gadsden, University of Applied Arts Vienna*

As an art and cultural historian, I am investigating ways to explain, eliminate and prevent discrimination on any level. By looking at the visual arts, and using art and culture as tools for effective social change, one can empower not only those who already understand themselves to be artists, but actively encourage those who might be hesitant to express their creativity to “come out of the closet”. The recipient of their endeavors (the viewer, hearer or participant) is equally empowered to consider that individualization and the expression of individual understanding and choice is the quickest, best and most efficient way to achieve social justice and human rights in AfroEurope, and in the whole world.

## **IN SEARCH OF THE ‘SENEGALESE’: AFRICAN ‘COLONIAL SOLDIERS’ IN GREECE AND THE BALKANS DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR**

*Foteini Gazi, University of the Peloponnese*

The First World War in the Eastern Mediterranean involved the presence of the Army of the Orient [Armée d’ Orient], the French – led allied taskforce which arrived in the Greek lands in 1915. The Army included large numbers of ‘colonial soldiers’, that is African men from French colonies,

mainly in West Africa. Africans became known in Greece as 'Senegalese', most probably after the French term 'tirailleurs sénégalais' although they came from a variety of African regions and communities. This paper examines the history of African 'colonial soldiers' in Greek lands in the years of the First World War. Its purpose is twofold: a. to discuss the various itineraries and trajectories of Africans in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean through the 'looking glass' of historical evidence about the Great War. Main emphasis is given to responses and reactions of locals towards Africans who served in the Entente army. In this vein, images, photographs and narratives about the African soldiers are examined in an attempt to identify perceptions of Africa and its peoples at the time, and b. to explore the heritage and legacies of Africans in European armies during WWI and of their presence in European lands in the context of contemporary debates in various European countries – including Greece – about migrants and refugees from Africa (and Asia). The paper defines African participation in the European armies during WWI as a phenomenon of major importance. It provided the frame for the encounter of 'Africans' and 'Europeans' in a critical historical period and contributed to the formation of a variety of historical legacies both in the Mediterranean and in the wider European context.

### **THE PAN AFRICANIST 'SELF' WITHIN BLACK BRITISH PUBLISHING ARCHIVES**

*Kadija George, University of Brighton*

The documentation of Black British Publishers in Black British history and in the history of the book is very limited. Most of the documentation of the 'story' of the publisher is found in books and research material that they have published and recorded themselves. Yet their archives offer intriguing and bold stories of Black life in Britain.

The significant impact on Black British life that their publishing archives can inform us is within

- the history of the book (in relation to Black sense of self, this history recounts the radicalism of Black publishing; which also explores and explains the radicalism and existence of campaigns that they were involved in).
- the social history of Black life in how it was portrayed. (It identifies the nature and form of Black British culture as represented in the content of the books and magazines that they published).
- the foregrounding of Pan Africanism in the existence of campaigns they supported; the writers they published; the content of the stories, (thereby informing the Black British population that they were more than Diasporans, they were Pan Africanists, too).

An exploration of Black British publishing archives allows us to recognise a subtle shift and change; from the migrating publishers of the Caribbean to their Black British lifestyle that is encountered and embraced within the context of a profound relationship with Pan Africanism.

The impact on the self – of individuals and as community – encompasses the relationships of a double consciousness as theorised by Dubois and expounded on by Gilroy in *The Black Atlantic*. This presentation will look at the impact on Black communities' sense of self in the 60s and 70s within the publishing archives of Bogle L'Ouverture Press in the Huntley Collection at London Metropolitan Archives, New Beacon Books in The George Padmore Institute and the periodical, *African Red Family* in the Dadzie Collection at the Black Cultural Archives.

### **SOCIOLOGY OF POSTCOLONIAL MIGRANTS IN THEIR FORMER METROPOLES: THE CASE OF POSTCOLONIAL HABITUS AND CONGOLESE WOMEN IN BELGIUM**

*Olivia Fifi Gieskes, Catholic University of Leuven*

Few sociological studies on migration consider how postcolonial relations between origin and destination countries condition socio-economic participation and cultural integration processes of African Diasporas. This paper proposes postcolonial habitus (a reconceptualization of Pierre Bourdieu's cardinal notion habitus) as an analytic framework to better understand the particular positions of Congolese women as postcolonial migrants in Belgium, their former metropole. In

Belgium, a country that suffers from postcolonial melancholia, Congolese citizens deal with racism, institutional discrimination and cultural denigration that are distinctively geared towards them. Drawing on ethnographic data and in-depth interviews, the paper ponders Congolese women's postcoloniality and examines how it affects self-perceptions, intersubjectivities and social participation. Postcolonial habitus hereby excavates why Congolese women invariably wield types of habitus that are embedded in the colonial history to reciprocate postcolonial configurations. It also elucidates how different forms of (social, cultural and symbolic) capital are used to negotiate, counterbalance or acquiesce in historic power relations in Belgian social fields. In this respect, postcolonial habitus contributes to problematise migratory contexts through which African migrants have to navigate, and challenges sociological rationales that fail to consider how postcolonial relations can render socio-economic and cultural factors less significant for successful integration than racism, historic subaltern status of groups, and cultural remnants of colonialism in destination countries.

### **AFRICAIN, SUBSAHARIEN, AFRO-DESCENDANT, NOIR. UNDERSTANDING SELF-DEFINITIONS OF BLACKNESS AND AFRICANNESS IN THE BELGIAN FRENCH-SPEAKING PUBLIC SPHERE**

*Nicole Gregoire, Universite Libre De Bruxelles*

As immigration from Africa south of the Sahara started to expand in Belgium from the 1960s onwards, so did a rich associational milieu oriented towards homeland politics and/or immigrant politics. These migrants' organizations were based and remain mainly based on national, regional or ethnic identifications. However, from the 1990s onwards, more and more organizations have been putting forward wider "(Pan-)African identifications, thereby responding to the wider society's generic ethno-racial categorizations and to the development of integration policies. The paper will explore how these wider identifications have now developed into a rich array of self-definitions in the French-speaking activist world, along with the rise of a new generation of activists and the growing public debate about race in Belgium.

### **EMBODYING BLACK ATHLETIC MASCULINITY AT WORK**

*Michele Gregory, York College of The City University of New York*

The objective of this presentation is to present primary and secondary research findings to illustrate the ways in which black athletic bodies are constructed in spaces of employment, such as financial institutions, government and health care. Sports, athletic performance and issues of race are not limited to the institution of sport. They are very much part of informal and formal spaces, such as the institution of work.

Black athletic masculine embodiment, in particular, takes on an important role when examined in the context of middle-class, highly-skilled, white-collar professionals who work in private and public organizations. For example, what are the ways in which the black athletic body enters the discourse among employees in white-dominated spaces? How are black employees who are also athletic, constructed in ways which diminish and enhance their professional reputations? Whether on the field or in the office, the black body in sports has long been a site for debates ranging from acceptance, resistance and racism. Additionally, bodies, be they ones of minorities or the dominant culture, muscular or unfit, carry messages and are sites for conflict and resistance. In this presentation I will address some of the ways in which black athletic bodies in the workplace are simultaneously symbolic of power and weakness, expertise and risk, and fear and safety.

## **HABESHA CULTURAL DIFFERENCE? ITALIANS OF ETHIOPIAN AND ERITREAN ORIGINS WORKING THE BLACK MEDITERRANEAN**

*Giuseppe Grimaldi, University of Milano Bicocca*

The paper offers an ethnographic perspective to site the emerging forms of ethnic identification among racialized European citizens of African descent as a way to perform a Black Mediterranean condition. Particularly, I focus on the mobilization of the ethnonym Habesha among young Italians of Ethiopian and Eritrean origins as a source of identification to enter the everyday life of the neighborhood of Milano Porta Venezia, the reference space of the Ethiopian and Eritrean diaspora since the 70's. I argue that their choice to access a superdiverse space (Vertovec, 2007) discursively framed through the opposition between citizens and immigrants (Merrill, 2015), rather than illuminating on the structural continuities with their ancestral belonging, open the analysis to their structural condition of black racialized Italians. By approaching the analysis with an inversion of the theoretical paradigm sustaining the production of cultural difference as a politic of recognition within the larger society (Taylor, 1994), I consider the ways they legitimate their presence in the Habesha neighborhood by strategically performing their Italianness. Rather than assimilating to the diasporic setting, they contribute to reproduce an Habesha social world under new forms: from one side, they become proper stakeholders of Italianness among the transnational migrants and refugees; on the other hand, they reproduce their condition of black Italians as a self-valuable attribution within the diasporic space. Under this perspective, they make sense of the field of possibilities and constraints lying at the intersection of transnational flows, hegemonic classifications, and historicized processes of marginalization reproducing their black Mediterranean condition. Among its multifaced conjugations, the emergence of the Black Mediterranean as both a descriptive and a theoretical framework can shed light on the ways to make sense of cultural difference in the contemporary Afro-European social space.

## **RACE, IDENTITY, AND THE EMERGENCE OF POLISH-AFRICAN COMMUNITIES IN CONTEMPORARY POLAND**

*Sarah Grunberg, Ithaca College*

Poland is a racially homogeneous white country that has recently begun to build extensive social barriers constructed of racism and systemic discrimination toward people of color, partners of people of color, and multi-racial children. In this paper I explore the contested terrain of race, identity, and inequality traversed by members of the Polish-African community in Poland and how racial identity and definitions of racism are negotiated within it. Over four years (2011 - 2014), I conducted a qualitative study of the Polish-African community in Poland featuring participant observation methods and oral history interviews of over 30 individuals to explore the identity strategies of Black African men, White Polish partners and mothers, and multi-racial children. Despite facing public and private acts of racial discrimination, Black African men and white Polish mothers subscribed to a cosmopolitan, antiracist identity. Meanwhile, their multi-racial children built a strong Polish identity, distanced themselves from viewing their situation through race, and sought connections with their African ethnic and cultural roots. Communities – both physical and on-line – composed of racial minority groups also emerged within this environment. I explore how these communities, as an emergent phenomenon, influence minority identity strategies, as well as how they function to support people of color in Poland, as well as to build bridges between Poles and Africans. Some communities are formed virtually as this sensitive population is small and dispersed throughout Poland. With globalization and the subsequent increase in migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, white Poles perceive racial heterogeneity in their racially homogeneous environment. As they begin to see people of color through the prism of race, racial inequality in Poland becomes a rapidly developing institution with multi-racial families caught between past and future.

## **WHITE FRAGILITY AND BLACK SOCIAL DEATH IN CONTEMPORARY SWEDISH MEDIA DEBATES**

*Ylva Habel, Uppsala University*

Despite its corrosion, the Swedish welfare state still provides a solid basis for exceptionalist discourses on equality. Enabling a continued hold on the public imaginary – and by extension, orchestrating and setting the limits of the thinkable and speakable in contemporary media debates – these discourses both serve to re-formulate, salvage and update purportedly collective imaginings of inclusion and democratic values as watchwords for dialogue. In this context, antiracism – institutional as well as non-institutional – has become a “fungible object” in the hands of mainly white profiles. In recent years, an exponentially growing number of columnists and media profiles feel called upon to participate in “debating racism and anti-racism,” often muting the voices of people of color, and those of Black people in particular, in the process. Recurrently, our presence is not required, or even desired. Rather, it is feared as a potential disturbance to conversations on race.

Increasingly, keeping the particularity of anti-Black racism at bay at all cost has become the prerequisite for making the terms of these debates acceptable “to all”. As Egbert Alejandro Martina argues in a Dutch context, “Dialogue, compromise and consensus-seeking strategies” employed for the alleged sake of democracy and inclusive dialogue “regulates the range of critiques” (Martina, 2015). Drawing on the intellectual work of Afro-pessimist scholars, I want to elucidate the ways in which Blackness and Black life has become a contested, unfathomable “object” in recent Swedish media debates. Moreover, I will examine the interwoven media discourses of white fragility, and the collective imaginings reproduced about the inherent, already arrived-at “fairness” and benevolence of welfare state values.

## **THE SPOKEN WORD AND THE MUSICAL WORD AS AFROEUROPEAN CULTURAL EXPRESSION**

*Iain Halliday, University of Catania*

The spoken word with musical accompaniment, the spoken word that may become song, is and has been an important feature in the cultural expression of the African diaspora. From Gil Scott Heron’s *Reflections* (1981) and *I’m New Here* (2010) to Lynton Kwesi Johnson’s *Dread Beat an’ Blood* (1978) and *Live in Paris* (2004), to Kate Tempest’s *Let Them Eat Chaos* (2016), in this paper I seek to show how this form of expression is in the forefront of artistic expression and social commentary in all places touched by the African diaspora.

While no one of these artists has ever directed energy in creating utopian (or dystopian) visions of a science-fiction future, each of them in his or her own way has through their work and their energy created acute, profound and compelling visions of their present time.

In this paper I would like to suggest that such clarity of vision is so rare as to be already a form of “futurism” and that these artists, Kate Tempest in particular, continue to contribute towards the development of a form the roots of which are firmly planted in the African diaspora and the future of which is wherever that diaspora manages to flourish, often in forms that are inevitably hybrid.

I would also like in this paper to question our use of the word “diaspora” – surely there comes a time, a moment, when the diaspora is history. Not that history is unimportant – far from it, but history is not the future.

## **‘ARTICULATIONS’ OF DIASPORA: LONDON’S CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL SCENE AND THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF SPACE, PLACE, AND VALUE**

*Deonte Harris, University of California*

This research paper investigates how carnival art, music, and festival performances in London have been mobilized as a form of celebration and activism to claim and make space/place for

black people, culture, and politics in post-WWII Britain, as well as facilitate cross-border socio-cultural interconnections between various communities of the black/Caribbean diasporas. Through ethnographic fieldwork in London's carnival scene, I illustrate how London-based carnival productions, performances, and arts practices can be understood as "articulations" of diaspora, following the work of cultural theorist Stuart Hall and literary scholar Brent Hayes Edwards, that not only give expression to the cultural politics of modern blackness and forge links between black diasporic communities, but also produce distinct kinds of economic, social, cultural, symbolic, and political value, domestically and internationally.

Considering both the local and global implications of London's Caribbean carnival scene has led to the development of the following research questions: What is the cultural, political, and economic significance of the Notting Hill Carnival to London, the UK, Europe, and the black/Caribbean diaspora(s)? How have the artistic practices of black British carnivalists, which draw inspiration from the local British context, as well as from African, Caribbean, and African American sources, been used as a means to imagine a "new Britain" devoid of ethnocentric boundaries of belonging? How can centralizing the perspectives, activities, and experiences of black British carnivalists illuminate new patterns of cross-border connections, cultural flows, and the globality of the postwar black diaspora-in-the-making? Drawing upon the literature on diaspora and space /place, as well as anthropological theories of value, this paper interrogates the historical, spatial, musical, and ethnographic contexts of London's carnival scene as an articulation of diaspora predicated on global-local connections, cultural productions, and black diaspora politics.

## **PRACTICES OF ISLAMIC FAMILY LAW IN THE NORDIC STATES: FAMILY LIFE, LAW AND POLITICS – A REVIEW**

*Linda Hart, University of Helsinki*

Research on practices of Islamic family law in the Nordic countries has been carried out to some extent in recent years in the fields of law, social science and cultural studies. For example, studies on the prevalence and implications of unregistered Islamic marriages have been carried out, and here is research on Islamic divorce and understandings of mahr in the Nordic context. This presentation provides a review of recent research in this field and reflects on current legal and political concerns relating to practices of Islamic family law in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, affecting Muslim Afro-European minorities in the Nordic countries. A further point of reflection is taken from current political debates in Britain concerning two public inquiries into Sharia councils providing arbitration services in matters relating to marriage and divorce. On the basis of existing research on the Nordic context and the ongoing debates in the UK, it is argued that what many sides to the debate tend to have in common is that the State is called to act in order to protect the interests of women and children in faith communities. This translates to policy recommendations such as requiring civil marriage before religious marriage and to offer services in facilitating access to divorce. Debates from further afield such as from continental Europe and North America offer questions and conclusions in which several complex themes are discussed, such as the (lack of) accountability of religious communities vis-à-vis women's rights, as well as formal equality before the law, regardless of its liberal and male-centered connotations, as a key democratic right also in the context of 'private' matters such as marriage and family life.

## **TRAUMA AND TOURISM IN POST-WAR CROATIA: AMINATTA FORNA'S THE HIRED MAN**

*Janine Hauthal, Vrije Universiteit Brussel*

Contemporary imaginations of European cityscapes in African diasporic writing often evoke or reflect on the metropolis as a cosmopolitan space (cf. McLeod 2004, Ball 2004). This observation even applies to literary representations of the past, as Bernardine Evaristo's depiction of Roman 'Londinium' in *The Emperor's Babe* demonstrates. Literary voices of the African diaspora have also turned to more peripheral European spaces. By drawing attention to the forgotten or

deliberately ignored black presences in Europe and writing them back into European cultural memory, they hybridize monolithic notions of the continent. Examples of such an engagement with ‘postcolonial Europe’ are Caryl Phillips’s account of his year-long travels through Europe in *The European Tribe*, Jamal Mahjoub’s portrayal of 17th-century and present-day rural Denmark in *The Carrier* as well as Evaristo’s fictional travelogue *Soul Tourists*, in which historical figures of colour appear to the novel’s protagonist as ghosts on his journey across Europe. As these examples show, African diasporic writers tend to link their explorations of non-urban European spaces to notions of trauma and, strikingly, to different forms of traveling and/or tourism.

The proposed paper will focus on Aminatta Forna’s *The Hired Man* (2013) as a way to further explore the representation of non-urban spaces in African diasporic writing. Set in the imaginary and remote Croatian mountain village of Gost, Forna’s novel explores the atrocities committed by (and mass complicity of) this village community during the civil war that accompanied the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. Told from the perspective of Duro, the village’s handyman and – as it turns out – both victim and perpetrator in the religious and ethnically based conflict, Forna’s exploration of the European periphery is clearly marked by trauma. The novel, however, also features a British family who has bought a house in Gost and seeks to make a holiday home of it with the help of Duro. Despite its critical acclaim, only one scholarly article on the novel’s intersection with human rights concerns has been published to date (cf. Norridge 2014). Complementing existing research, this paper will have a threefold focus: Firstly, the novel’s conceptualisation of space will be explored. Secondly, the novel’s recourse to national stereotypes, and to Balkanist discourses in particular, will be analysed in more detail. Thirdly, the peculiar nexus of trauma and tourism in the depiction of provincial European spaces in *The Hired Man* will be scrutinized. The conclusion will relate these findings and the novel’s traction of reader complicity to its imagination of Europe as a space of entanglement.

#### **“DIFFERENT WATERS, SAME SEA”: CONTESTING RACIALIZED CITIZENSHIP IN THE BLACK MEDITERRANEAN**

*Camilla Hawthorne*, U.C. Berkeley

While there exists extensive research on first-generation immigrants from Africa to Italy, there is a significant lacuna in the literature with regard to the experiences of Black youth who were born and raised in Italy. However, the Italian-born children of immigrants—who make up approximately ten percent of Italy’s youth population, and include many Afrodescendants—are currently engaged in a range of mobilizations against racialized citizenship, the violence of Fortress Europe, and the “unspoken whiteness” of Italian identity. By focusing on the experiences of the children of African immigrants who were born in Italy, we can begin to understand how a multigenerational Black community forms, survives, and even thrives when the exclusionary and deadly logics of Fortress Europe would have one believe that it should not exist in the first place.

Based on 15 months of ethnographic and archival fieldwork conducted over four years with young Black antiracism activists across Italy, this paper will discuss the possibilities and limitations of the “Black Mediterranean” (which emphasizes the power-laden relations of cultural exchange and racial violence linking Europe and Africa) as a framework for understanding the historical and contemporary forms of racial criminalization and racialized citizenship in Italy and southern Europe more broadly. My paper specifically explores how, over the last three years, young Black Italians have begun to articulate a distinct Black Mediterranean subjectivity, using electronic media, literature, and film and mobilizing resources from across the Black diaspora to discuss questions of identity, citizenship, and racism in Italy. It also considers the possibilities of the “Black Mediterranean” in terms of praxis and activism—specifically, how it may help to bridge Black liberation politics in Europe with refugee rights mobilizations. This study represents the first in-depth, qualitative study of Black youth political mobilizations in Italy.

## **THE FIRSTS - PORTRAITURE SERIES IN PROGRESS RESEARCHING HISTORICAL AND SYSTEMIC RACISM**

*Sasha Huber Saarikko, Aalto University*

Multidisciplinary visual artist and doctoral candidate at Aalto University's Art Department Sasha Huber (CH/FI) will present her portraiture series *The Firsts*. The steel metal-stapled portraits are shot onto scorched larch wood; a technique Huber developed for herself aware of its symbolic significance as a weapon. Portraiture has been Huber's artistic starting point and has since made numerous portraits such as the *Shooting Stars Series* (2014) comprised of historical and present day figures that became victims of assassinations and killings for political, ethnical or economic reasons.

The new series in progress *The Firsts*, researches historical and systematic racism and its debilitating effects on members of the contemporary African Diaspora, with a focus on women being moreover underrepresented throughout history. The suppression put upon this community has hindered equitable societal and economic developments, which are linked directly to White supremacist thought and action. *The Firsts* suggest that this hindrance is the reason why today it can still be possible to be the 'first black person' to achieve specific goals across many fields of practice and countries. Some individuals have courageously paved the way for future civil right actions still to come, and institutionalised racism and prejudice in its execution within the western paradigm has been successful in holding people back, or their achievements have not received the deserved recognition and acknowledgement.

*The Firsts* is also dedicated to persons from the African Diaspora that have migrated to various European countries in the 19th and 20th century, and includes author and activist James Baldwin's visits and interactions during the 1950s in Leukerbad, a small mountain village in the Swiss Alps and teacher Rosa Emilia Clay who was one of the first known African woman to arrive in Finland in the late 19th Century.

## **TRANSNATIONAL ADOPTION AS A CONTACT ZONE BETWEEN AFRICA AND EUROPE**

*Riitta Högbäck, University of Helsinki*

As global numbers for transnational adoptions have declined, Africa has become the 'new frontier', from which young children can still be obtained. My paper investigates the connected nature of this frontier, and how it simultaneously creates the 'receiving' and the 'sending' nations. The precondition for the making of the adoptive family is the unmaking of the family of origin. Drawing on in-depth interviews with Finnish adopters and South African birthmothers, I investigate the encounters and contacts between them. I situate the two families firmly in the context of the Global North-South divide and the differing family structures and notions. How do these various parents see the role of each other? Where do the children belong? What kind of a contact zone emerges?

Results show that the adoption system and the adopters perceived adoption as a linear process in which the child was permanently transferred from one family to another: the new family completely replaced the old one. The sought-after result of linear adoption is the 'forever child'. The birthmothers, instead, thought of a circular process in which the links between the child and its original kin would endure. The end result of circular adoption is the 'returning child'. It also seemed as if many of the birthmothers were trying to reshape the system and to retain some of their rights. The birthmothers who did remain in touch with the adopters and received information about the child were overwhelmingly happy about it. Instead of regretting the adoption, they found pleasure in the idea of future reunions. It is a cause for concern that, despite such fundamentally differing views, the adoption system only applies the linear model. The linear model creates a highly unequal contact zone and recreates the Global North-South divide.

## THE TRANSNATIONAL PRACTICES OF THE FINNISH-SOMALIS AND THE BEHAVIOR OF THE MAJORITY SOCIETY

*Abdirashid Ismail, University of Helsinki*

Somalis in Finland are highly discriminated and receive predominantly negative perceptions from the mainstream society. Somalis reported that discrimination and the negative attitude from the mainstream society towards them affect main spheres of their life in Finland, such as education, employment and belonging. In addition, Finnish-Somalis are transnational and are engaged in various forms of across border activities. Some of these transnational practices connect them to the family members, kin-groups and the society of origin in general around the globe.

Research findings show that immigrants who are discriminated in their country of resettlement may, as a response, may engage into a (reactive) transnational practices (Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo 2002). Research also indicate that being 'an issue all the time' or 'being treated as a second-class citizen in Finland' might be a main factor that would drive Some Finnish-Somali to decide to leave for another country (Hautaniemi 2011).

This presentation intends to investigate if and how perceived discrimination and negative attitudes by the mainstream society towards the Finnish-Somalis influences the latter's prevalent engagement on transnational activities?

This article draws on two different projects. First, is a four-year study, 'Transnational Somali Families in Finland: Discourses and Lived Realities of Marriage', which is the main sub-study of a larger Academy of Finland-funded project (2013-2017) titled: 'Transnational Muslim Marriages in Finland: Wellbeing, Law, and Gender'. Second, is a data set collected for a research project funded by the Open Society Foundations (OSF). The data of OSF data was collected in the second half of 2012 and the first half of 2013.

### **"ALWAYS WORK IN PROGRESS"**

*Valda Jackson, [www.valdajackson.com](http://www.valdajackson.com)*

My practice includes: commissioned Public Art, and an ongoing studio practice involving two-dimensional and three-dimensional imagery, written narratives and performance.

I am wary of adding to the overwhelming weight of imagery that feeds the world's insatiable greed for destructive stereotypes of Black men and women – persistent imagery that shame us all, at times masquerading as news or art. But if art requires authenticity; how can artists keep faith, when our truths contain triggers; nuggets for further oppression. This is part of my struggle as an artist.

My work explores a history shared by migrants and dislocated people worldwide, but specifically it tells the story of my Caribbean/African British heritage.

I call upon my experience as a Jamaican in England who grew up in a culture that sits, uncomfortably, within another that is larger, dominant, and imperial. Recurring are images of the child at play, and Seated Women. My work is about our existence. It's about survival, individual entitlement and privilege, and dignity above all. I'm both intrigued and mortified by neurological studies showing that human brain develops, according to early experience. Babies separated too early/or whose emotional needs go un-met, form different neural pathways in their brains from those babies whose needs are fulfilled. We're born not only 'underdeveloped'; but we are more vulnerable still, because we are incomplete. As a migrant child having experienced separation/loss while young, I permit my practice to be informed and influenced by this, and also I explore our capacity for growth and completion.

I propose to present a 15-minute artist video comprising narrative prose/short stories narrated over a series of images of my studio art created over thirty years.

It's an emotional journey made up of historical realities, fancies, desires, sometimes dreams and wishes

but not untruths.

And never lies.

### **IN THE BREAKS NO.3 - ON VIOLENCE**

*Janine Jembere, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna*

In this joint lecture performance we explore the sonic aspects of violence in relation to Blackness from Black European perspectives. Which sounds are haunting the Black experience? How can we listen to the so called silenced, those often assumed as being without a voice, through a past and present shaped by the shared histories of colonial encounters? What sounds did emerge from these specific settings? Who was/is sounding and listening and how? How can "double listening" (Moten 2003) become a liberatory practice?

From the unrecorded moaning of the enslaved in the hold of the slave ship, the rallying cries of African freedom fighters resisting European colonial rule, to the adjutory pull of Nkrumah's 1957 proclamation "Ghana is free" and the "Stop deportation" of recent Refugee Protests, the sonic dimension of violence in relation to Black life has often been a point of entry for Black scholars, artists and activists (f.e. Douglass 1845, Hartmann 1997, Weheliye 2005). Sound is a form of knowledge production, a memory store that troubles past, present and future, and "a site of wake work" (Sharpe 2016).

This lecture performance traces different sonic strategies across Black European histories. It is approaching sound as a sphere of empowering, collectively analyzing and voicing brokenness, breaking, at the same time mobilizing individually and collectively. In the Breaks here is the space and time that will be shared and dedicated to listening, discussing and adding to the sounds of sorrow, rage, courage, and joy. Structured through sound, both imaginary and heard we use the form of dialogue to relate our respective research in connection to our sonic experiences. Informed by Black European sonic traditions after/during colonialism we will call on and listen to the violence that is haunting and shaping us.

### **LISBON AT NIGHT: THE MAKING OF AFRICANNESS ON THE DANCEFLOOR**

*Livia Jimenez, Instituto de Etnomusicologia-UNL*

The purpose of this paper is to explore the diversity of ways in which people produce Africanness through bodily discourses in a concrete field of practices: the so-called African discos of Lisbon. The research methodology is an ethnography that combined participant observation in clubs, dance schools and dance congresses with interviews of dance teachers, dance aficionados, DJs, club owners and public relations. We propose to analyse these every night gatherings at the dance floor as contemporary rituals in which participants negotiate their belongings and their position in a postcolonial scenario. From a historical perspective, we analyse how the constructions of Africanness and the way they relate to changing conceptions of Portugueseness, Whiteness and Blackness have been evolving in contexts of social dance in Lisbon since the seventies until today. The despised and feared Africanness most citizens produced in the seventies contrasted with the attractive and inspiring Africanness that artists and intellectuals were searching for in nightclubs. During the nineties, the "dances of the world" events made Africanness look brighter, exotic and spiritual from a new light of cosmopolitanism. Later on, the success of the couple dance kizomba in dance schools gave way to the cool and fashionable Africanness that many students wished to embody, but not to share it with flesh-and-blood labelled Africans, whose only-for-Blacks clubs were still avoided. The new Africanness produced by youngsters in Angola through kuduro music and dance in the 2000s reverberated in the way children of immigrants constructed themselves in Lisbon as distinct from White Portuguese. A few years later, a new afrohouse culture, created in South Africa and recreated in Angola, fused notions of Africanness and Europeaness in mainstream dancefloors of Lisbon mostly visited by people in their twenties.

### **THE NECESSITY OF POETRY IN THE FACE OF 21ST-CENTURY RACIALISED VIOLENCE: AN ENQUIRY**

*Leila Kamali, King's College London*

This paper will examine the poetry of Warsan Shire and Patience Agbabi, and the work of Danez Smith and Claudia Rankine, in order to think through diverse ways in which poetic speech can be established as ‘necessary’ in the face of racial violence. Drawing on Stuart Hall’s “politics of articulation”, an aesthetic in which a struggle for words is itself signified in language, I will address contemporary conditions of ‘racial violence’ – a term I am using to cover everything from violent racist murder, to everyday microaggressions, to racially-charged narratives of national borders and exclusion. I will show the ways in which poetry speaks to a contemporary sensibility in which anti-racist movements are read as international and transnational movements for equality, and poetic form usefully articulates the limits of language itself in addressing the unspeakable aspects of the contemporary.

I will read Warsan Shire, ‘My Foreign Wife is Dying and Does Not Want to Be Touched’, Smith’s ‘alternate names for black boys’, and excerpts from Rankine’s *Citizen* and Agbabi’s ‘The Refugee’s Tale’, to address how in this moment of global racial crisis, poetry can get at the difficult – and necessary – work of articulating the effects of racial violence in contemporary experience. In this view, ‘African diaspora’ itself takes on new cross-generational resonances, in which the Middle Passage is no longer a singularly formative history but is integrated into a multi-directional reach across borders (see Kamari Clarke), in which specific historical conditions of place, nation and region nevertheless still operate.

### **“THIRD WORLD STUDENTS IN THE USSR: SOVIET POPULAR OPINION AND REACTIONS”**

*Constantin Katsakioris*, University of Bayreuth

The paper will be based on my PhD thesis, entitled “Soviet Lessons: The Education of African and Arab Students in the USSR during the Cold War” and on my ongoing postdoctoral research. At the first part I will focus on the life of Third World students, on their relationships with the Soviet citizens, and I will draw a picture of what the Soviet officials used to call the “undesirable incidents” against the foreigners. In fact, according to the Soviet sources, three African students were found dead between 1962 and 1965 and three more, at least, in the early 1970s, both according to the sources and to students’ memoirs. Following those and other non-deadly incidents, their peers reacted, denounced racism, boycotted classes, and demonstrated in Kiev (1962, 1970, 1975), Moscow (1963), Baku (1965) and elsewhere.

At the second part of the paper, I will draw on a wide range of documents (Komsomol reports, letters, petitions, and memoirs of students) in order to shed light on the causes of the violent incidents. Although the sources demonstrate that racial racism was a major cause behind the verbal or physical aggressions, evidence also suggests other causes. An analysis of the Soviet popular opinion registered in the documents shows thus that many citizens considered the “bourgeois” foreigners, not as friends who deserved internationalist solidarity, but as spoiled kids who were living at the expense of the Soviet people, “eating its bread and salt”. I will furthermore argue that their inimical reactions vis-à-vis the Third World guests were also evidencing the pervasive Soviet popular frustration against the CP’s internationalist policies and against the spending of Soviet resources in the Third World countries. The darker students in the USSR were precisely embodying the aid their government was offering to the “dubious” friends of the Third World.

At the conclusion I will examine the outburst of xenophobia during the perestroika and after the collapse of the USSR and I will argue that many of its causes existed or had their roots in the Soviet era, although their effects (the incidents of verbal and physical violence) had in most cases been successfully prevented or suppressed by the Soviet authorities.

## **THE POLITICS OF DE\_PERCEPTION: FROM “MISCHLING” TO “MENSCH MIT MIGRATIONSINTERGRUND**

*Natascha A. Kelly, Independent Scholar*

In comparison to other Black European communities Black Germans are one of the smallest minorities in the country. Although their presence dates back to the 18th century, Blacks are seldom accepted as German by the white majority society and media. As Lockward (2010) shows in her analysis of the German newspaper “Tagesspiegel” journalists are more than creative when it comes to describing members of the Black community in Germany. Modernized labels such as “migrant” or “person with migration background” locate Black Germans as “other from without” (Wright 2004), visible in German streets, yet invisible in politics and society. Self-definitions such as “Afro-German” or “Black German” which were coined in the course of the German women’s movement in the 1980s (Oguntoye et al. 1986) are ignored and so to the existence of Black German history and identity. Moreover, German national identity is interconnected with racial identity (El-Tayeb 2001) imagining ‘the real German’ to be white and at the same time locating whiteness at the centre of society. This (white) norm, however, remains invisible, silenced in self-evidence as if it had always existed. Focusing on the role language plays (and always has played) in the construction of German national identity this paper will trace the image of the white German back to German colonialism and depict the politics of de\_perception on a linguistic, visual and cognitive level. At the same time it will highlight the process of community building and self-naming and show which Afro-cultural meanings get lost in translation.

## **STRATEGIES OF SEPARATISM AND INCLUSION IN POSTETHNIC ACTIVISM**

*Suvi Keskinen, University of Turku*

During the last decade, retreat from multiculturalism and othering narratives of Muslims and non-western minorities have characterized media and political discussions in many European countries. Racialized minorities have been framed as problematic outsiders claimed to separate themselves in ‘parallel societies’ and enhance illiberal cultures. Simultaneously, profound changes have occurred in conditions for political action. Neoliberal political rationality implies an emphasis on individualization and entrepreneurialism, but has also brought fore a call for civil society actors, such as NGOs and political subjects seen to embody diversity, in the public sphere.

This presentation examines postethnic activism in which people mobilize on basis of racialized minority position in the society rather than on ethnic group membership. Based on interview, observation and media data gathered in Sweden and Denmark, the presentation explores the different choices that activist groups have made regarding organization and participation, as well as the motivations and effects of different strategies. Several newly established networks and social media platforms especially in Sweden have adopted separatist strategies, restricting participation and commenting on the platforms only for women and transpersons and/or racialized minorities. These sites have become extremely popular among the younger generation of racialized minority persons. However, in the white dominated public sphere, these groups have been harshly criticized and perceived as a threat. Simultaneously, other minority activist groups promote inclusionary strategies that provide space for differently racialized minorities and majority members, and seek for ways to deal with the rising tensions and power relations.

## **WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE TALK ABOUT RACE? METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF RACE IN IMPERIAL RUSSIA**

*Nathaniel Knight, Seton Hall University*

Over the past decade and a half, scholars of Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union have become increasingly cognizant of the factor of race both as a potential tool of analysis and as an object of investigation. Stimulated in part by the rise of racially motivated xenophobia in contemporary Russia as well as the continuing prominence of racial studies in scholarship on Europe and North

America, scholars have begun to seek out discourses and practices of race in Russia to which previous researchers had paid little heed. Such efforts to “find race in Russia,” however, have a tendency to become entangled in complexities arising from the particular features of the Russian context. Modern racial concepts, arising out of the experiences of the Atlantic slave trade, European overseas imperialism and the American struggle to come to terms with the legacy of slavery, are very difficult to cleanse of their historical specificity. Merely by using the language of race in the Russian context, one runs the risk of projecting ideas, assumptions and values onto encounters far removed from those in which they took shape. Yet, to deny that racial perceptions have any relevance in the Russian context is not a viable approach either.

This paper attempts to address this dilemma by stepping away from the aggregate concept of race and looking instead at its composite elements—specific ideas, dispositions and practices associated with Western racial thinking that may provide a more neutral and objective platform for the elaboration of communalities as well as a gauge for assessing the depth to which racial ideas may have penetrated at various points in Russia’s development.

### **AFROPEAN FAMILY MATTERS: CHILDREN, PATERNITY, AND RECOGNITION IN FRANCOPHONE AFROPEAN LITERATURE**

*Katelyn Knox, University of Central Arkansas*

In an interview with Anne Bocandé, Achille Mbembe asserts that Afropeans are “not on a quest for recognition from an unknown father. The [Afropean] project is not to be admitted into Europe as an illegitimate son or daughter of the aforementioned. [...] Our point of departure is that we constitute our own lineage” (*Africultures* 99-100, p. 105, my translation). Mbembe’s attractive proposition, however, does not bear itself out in Francophone Afropean novels, where one finds an abundance of both abandoned children—particularly daughters—and paternities in question. In this paper, I analyze the relationship between paternity, recognition, and gender in Francophone Afropean fiction, arguing that these problematic genealogies and absent father figures emerge as a working through of Afropea’s complex figurative genealogical entanglement between Europe, Africa, and its diaspora. Alain Mabanckou’s *Black Bazar* (2009), for instance, comes at these questions from the perspective of the father whose paternity is in question: Fessologue and his compatriots debate his responsibility to be a “good” father to a daughter who is probably not his own. Léonora Miano’s *Blues pour Élise* (2010), by contrast, investigates abandoned daughter figures: Shale, likely conceived when her mother was raped by her father’s cousin, spends most of her life trying to “see her father’s face,” which I read as a quest for paternal recognition. Another female protagonist, Akasha, is haunted by the legacy of her father’s abandonment early in life. The cases I examine in this paper complicate Mbembe’s attractive, yet far too simplistic proposition that Afropeans can simply position themselves as their own lineage and instead reveal that, despite their best efforts, these abandoned Afropean daughters compulsively return to the figure of their father for recognition.

### **AFRICAN PRESENCE IN SOCIALIST CZECHOSLOVAKIA: AN ANALYSIS OF TOMAS ZMESKAL’S NOVEL THE BIOGRAPHY OF A BLACK-AND-WHITE LAMB**

*Karla Kovalova, University of Ostrava*

Although the Czech Republic is not readily associated with African presence and the number of Africans living in the country is considered rather insignificant, a number of Czech literary works feature African characters. This paper attempts to analyze *The Biography of a Black-and-White Lamb* (2009), a novel written by Tomas Zmeskal, a contemporary Czech author of Congolese origins, whose protagonists are Czech citizens of African heritage. Set in communist Czechoslovakia, Zmeskal’s novel explores what it means for racially mixed individuals to be growing up in the 1970s and 1980s in a white men’s country under the communist regime. The paper argues that the novel offers a deft commentary on the country’s politics (heavily influenced by the Soviet authorities), exposing a discrepancy between the communist official rhetoric of

abstract, colorblind racial equality and its exclusionary practice of solely embracing countries and individuals willing to follow the communist path. Moreover, the paper highlights the fact that the novel provides a unique (albeit fictional) glimpse into the lives of AfroEuropeans in former Czechoslovakia, a topic rarely discussed and still under-developed in the study of African Diaspora.

### **CULTURAL AMBASSADORS? AFRICAN STUDENTS AND THEIR CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN SOCIALIST YUGOSLAVIA**

*Nedžad Kuc, Universität Wien*

During the Cold War, socialist Yugoslavia's commitment to the Non-Aligned Movement resulted in intensified political, economic and cultural cooperation with former European colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Higher education scholarships were granted by the Yugoslav government to students from the Global South in order to strengthen diplomatic ties and promote Yugoslav ideals to a foreign public, in the hope of gaining international support for the country's foreign policy. This cooperation brought about an important student mobility from African countries (e.g. Sudan, Togo, Ethiopia, and Ghana) to Yugoslav universities. While the main intention of the authorities was to influence the foreigners by creating a positive image of Yugoslav political, social and cultural values, African students were not mere 'recipients'. Supported by their respective embassies or out of their own initiative, the visiting students actively engaged in exhibiting their own cultures through events featuring, among others, performing and visual arts. This paper explores African students' cultural activities which were displaying their home cultures to both their fellow students and the host society, thereby promoting mutual understanding between their countries and Yugoslavia. Moreover, this paper examines African students as 'culture carriers' (Eide 1970) and their potential role as unofficial cultural ambassadors of their home countries to their host country. Based on archival material consulted in former constituent republics of the socialist state, I shed further light on the largely overlooked history of African students in Yugoslavia and the cultural life of this temporary African diaspora in the Balkans in the second half of the 20th century.

### **WHICH ACCESS TO ASYLUM IN EUROPE? INQUIRING TIGHTENING AND INCREASINGLY RACIALIZED PRACTICES**

*Anitta Kynsilehto, University of Tampere*

This presentation draws on my on-going, long-term multi-sited ethnographic research at different migration 'hubs' including but not limited to concrete borders to the territory of the European Union (EU). Building on these insights, I argue that border control mechanisms are racialized, and they contribute to impeding effective access to the asylum process for those defined already a priori as not qualifying for any international protection status. This includes initial assessments done on the basis of nationality and country of origin, racial profiling, and the notions of 'safe countries' and 'safe third countries' that are evoked increasingly in the policy discourse both nationally and supranationally. Moreover, coupled with enhanced outsourcing of border control, so-called 'migration management' and asylum further and further away from the EU territory, readmission agreements and policies and practices of forced return, these mechanisms and ensuing practices undermine international human rights commitments that EU member-states should comply with.

### **LOVING THIS TOWN: AFROEUROPEAN IDENTITY FORMATIONS IN BRITISH GRIME AND RAP MUSIC FROM LONDON**

*Anne Loeber, Goethe-University Frankfurt*

The British vote to leave the EU appears to be the preliminary peak of nationalist movements within the EU as indicated by the persistent high polls for parties such as the Front National, Die Alternative für Deutschland or the Partij voor de Vrijheid. At the same time, this political trend

seems to represent an increasing unease with lived multiculturalism among parts of the European population that affect Afro-European communities as well as people from other migratory backgrounds. With regard to the UK, the momentous British referendum for the Brexit and its aftermath not only revealed underlying patterns of xenophobia and racism, but also structural inequality in a society that used to be proud of its diversity and celebrated that on occasions like the opening event of the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

British rap and grime artists have long ago turned these underlying patterns of xenophobia, racism and structural inequalities into major tropes of their music. They question, among other things, western discourses on power and nationality and allow identity formations beyond national scopes through the narrations of belonging provided in their music.

Accordingly, this paper looks at British grime and rap music as a postindustrial signifying practice that has “significant cultural, linguistic, philosophical and educational implications” (Pennycook 2007: 9). It will show how British grime and rap artists negotiate their Afro-European identities and British multiculturalism by approaching conviviality as “the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculturalism an ordinary feature of social life in Britain’s urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere” (Gilroy 2004: XV). The paper will take lyrics, music videos and media performances from artists such as Dizzee Rascal, Lethal Bizzle and Speech Debelle into account.

## **CALYPSO IN THE CLASSROOM – PRIMARY**

*Alexander Loewenthal, Free scholar*

Calypso is one of the oral traditions of the African diaspora, originating in West Africa and developed in the Caribbean during the slavery era.

This presentation describes my teaching practice in primary schools.

The genre is part of the national heritage of the region and during the carnival season many schools run calypso competitions where a few “lucky” pupils with calypso connections (relative, family friend or calypso performer) are helped in their endeavours, while other students simply watch, yearning for the chance to participate.

In 2003 Goldsmith’s College lecturer Celia Burgess-Macey and I devised a method whereby all children in a class could participate in the composition and performance of a group calypso, ensuring that all could enjoy the experience. The method is as follows.

Children work in small groups of four or five to create a verse on an agreed subject. Parameters often consist of:

- a) Four beats to a line.
- b) A two or four line response (chorus)
- c) A two, four or eight line verse.
- d) A melody suggested by participants.
- e) These are combined to form a complete song.
- f) The structure of the song may vary in complexity depending on the group’s choice of rhyme scheme, number of lines and whether the melody differs between verse and chorus.

Learning outcomes include:

- 1) Use of vocabulary, rhyme, metre and scan.
- 2) Co-operation and democratic decision-making, ensuring collective ownership of the song.
- 3) Rhythmic and vocal performance skills.
- 4) Increased confidence and willingness to take risks in creative thinking.

This presentation will highlight the benefits of group work in providing successful creative writing experiences and will conclude with an audience participatory exercise to be enjoyed by all.

## **AFROEUROPE@NS. A REFLECTION ON SERENDIPITY AND THE POLITICS OF LOCATION**

*Marta Sofia López Rodríguez, University of Leon*

The purpose of my paper is to reflect on the history of the research group “Afroeuropa@ns: Black Cultures and Identities in Europe,” born in 2004 under the auspices of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Education. After thirteen years, and despite our many setbacks, we have become a referent in the field of Afro-European or Black European Studies, partly thanks to our close collaboration with other groups, individuals or institutions working on the same field, partly to the profound personal commitment of the members of the core team and partly to our decided will to trespass academic, disciplinary or any other epistemic borders. We have taken advantage of our common dissatisfaction with the present condition of both the academy and society in order to try and contribute our best to a change in the structures that promote or silently support division, confrontation and rivalry. Our final aim has always been to redefine the conditions under which a different Europe, and indeed a different world, can be imagined. Black and white and mixed-race, men or women, gay and straight and queer, academics and activists, artists or policy makers have worked, thought, debated, had lunch and danced together in Leon, Cadiz, London or Münster... Half-way between serendipity and a privileged location at certain nodal points where (counter)knowledges can acquire a certain degree of social and institutional backup, we have tried to be a source of empowerment and an alternative meeting point for under-represented but enormously dynamic and creative Afro-European communities.

## **CHANGING THE COLOR OF EUROPEAN HISTORY: THE NEED FOR MULTICULTURALISM IN STUDYING THE EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE**

### **CASE STUDY: THE AFRICAN PRESENCE IN EUROPE WITHIN THE AFRICAN DIASPORA**

*Lydia Lindsey, North Carolina Central University*

There is a common and erroneous perception of Europe as a “white” continent populated exclusively by white people. However, this is not so. That perception can change with the rise of our understanding of the African Diaspora as a transnational approach to studying and teaching European History. An African Diaspora paradigm will challenge the monochromatic versions of national, European history's narratives and their conventional underpinnings on racialization. This article sets out pedagogical theory, instructional strategies, and a constructive narrative for designing a course in African European history. The objective is: (1) To provide suggestions on conceptualizing a course on African European history. (2) To place the course within the African Diaspora paradigm. (3) To offer suggestions for developing an outline for a course in the African presence in Europe within the African Diaspora. (4) To bolster the benefits that may accrue from students taking a course in African European history.

## **ANTIRACISM EDUCATION, ETHICS, AESTHETICS AND POLITICS: HOW DO WE LEARN WHAT WE DON'T THAT WE DON'T KNOW**

*Boby Mafi, University of Oulu*

Drawing mainly upon Spivak, Butler and Fanon the paper explores the complex dynamics of antiracism pedagogy. It focuses on discourses of denial of racism on Finnish social media as its starting point to demonstrate that teaching antiracism involves a prior step of learning to learn how to teach from everyday life experiences the various ways in which our social and ethical bonds come to be disavowed. The paper argues for an antiracism pedagogy that recognizes that any claims for social justice and political change are based on a recognition and affirmation of the radical equality of all human beings understood variably as ‘our substitutability’ or ‘the embodied subject’ or our ‘human vulnerability’. Such pedagogical practices make use of aesthetic education that works to expand learners’ imagination in ways that transform how they construct themselves and others as objects of knowledge. I argue for the use of literary reading and other cultural formations like music that allow students to put themselves in the positions of others and experience how we are lodged in one another from the very beginning of our lives. While the

teaching of antiracism education complements social and normative regulations in curtailing racism I argue that antiracism teaching should not operate through the threat of sanctions but through an uncoercive re-arrangement of desires enabled by an expansion of learners' imagination a zone where both aesthetics and ethical relationality can flourish. The teaching of antiracism should equip learners with epistemological resources that enable them to appreciate that we can be equal though not the same and that democracy is not just personal freedom but also equality.

## **BETWEEN HOPE AND DESPAIR: REIMAGINING EUROPE IN CONTEMPORARY ZIMBABWEAN SHORT STORY**

*Ethel Maqeda*

*Between Hope and Despair: Reimagining Europe in Contemporary Zimbabwean Short Story.* The central focus of Zimbabwean writing since the publication of the first novel by a black writer, *On Trial for my Country* (Stanlake Samkange, 1966) has largely been bifocal that is, concerned with decolonisation or appraising postcolonial experiences. These post/colonial experiences are fraught with pervasive violence, dispossession, displacement, diaspora and forced migrations. Unsurprisingly, due to the colonial connections, Great Britain and London feature prominently in Zimbabwean writing of the colonial period and the period immediately after independence. The representation has thus been mostly inspired by the conventional post/colonial imaginings based on the relationship of metropole and colony. However, recent developments such as the current political and economic crisis have seen an increase in the numbers of Zimbabweans migrating to Europe and elsewhere. Furthermore, global trends in migration largely influenced by globalisation and advances in communication and transportation have opened up other destinations as possibilities for Zimbabwean migrants.

This paper will analyse the representation of European cities in contemporary Zimbabwean short stories. My main interest in the short story form is its ability to provide a multiplicity of voices and experience. The short stories, particularly by writers in the diaspora invert the idealist myth of wealth, social progress and rationality usually associated with Europe. The multiplicity of voices also helps not only to capture the experiences of Zimbabweans in different parts of Europe but also subverts the traditional narrative by pointing to the realities of racial segregation, poverty and marginalisation that characterise immigrant experience. The stories do not only bring the reader's attention to those spaces that are not traditionally associated with African diasporas but also highlight the different ways in which Zimbabwean people engage with new challenges of negotiating their place and identity within a globalised reality.

## **“AFRIKA E AFRIKA, KABU VERD E KABU VERD”: CAPE VERDEAN IMMIGRANTS DENYING NOTIONS OF AFRICANNESS**

*Noémie Marcus, LAMC*

Through an analysis of identity narratives collected among Cape Verdean immigrants in Luxembourg, this paper explores the place of Africa in the construction of the black diasporic self. Focusing more specifically on migrants from northern Barlavento islands (São Vicente and Santo Antão), we explore how diasporic narratives describe Cape Verdean Creoleness as integrative and tension-free fusion between the two poles of its social composition (Portugal and Africa) while simultaneously rejecting African heritage and disclaiming notions of shared Africanity. Based on ethnographic research conducted in Luxembourg and Cape Verde, we argue that this disclaim of Africanity is closely tied to colonial labor policies and resulting inter-island hierarchies within the experience of Cape Verdeanness. In point of fact, the northern Barlavento elite, recruited as allies of the Portuguese in other parts of the colonial empire, has historically prided itself on the close relationship with the metropole. They've hence benefitted from magnifying their differences from both continental Africa as well as from the southern Sotavento islands, historically considered as fixed upon their African slave heritage. By illustrating how northern Cape Verdean

immigrants' conceptions of Creoleness are based upon a disclaim of Africanness, this paper seeks more generally to demonstrate the semantic heterogeneity, or the "polyphonic qualities" (Gilroy, 1993: 32), of blackness as disentangled from an African essence.

## **OUR AFRICA: AN EXPERIENCE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET FILM LANGUAGE BETWEEN 1955-1992**

*Alexander Markov*, St. Petersburg State University of Film & TV

I will assemble OUR AFRICA piece by piece, like a puzzle. The Soviet-African relations and the development of Soviet film language between 1955 and 1992 can both roughly be divided in three periods. I will build the structure of the lecture along the lines of those 3 periods, thus creating a "3-act structure".

First, there was a period of optimism and utopian ideas for Africa's future between 1955 and 1969. The films from this decade are very propagandistic - parades followed by meetings with Soviet leaders, flags and happy African pioneers. The Africans are depicted as "heroes" who managed to get rid of the shackles of imperialism.

The second period (ca. 1970-1979) was one of consolidation - the Soviet presence in Africa became 'normal' and people concentrated more on concrete projects. Back in the Soviet Union the economy stagnated, but in Africa progress was still being made. In the films from this period we see Soviet engineers building infrastructure, schools or hospitals. Also the first African-Soviet film co-productions are being made.

In the third period (ca. 1980-1992) the Soviet Union starts crumbling. On African soil the Soviets become involved in bloody civil wars and military conflicts. This of course is reflected in the films from the eighties, most of which were shot in war zones under difficult conditions. The obvious propaganda tone has mainly disappeared. Films from this period will look almost familiar for western audiences.

## **RENDERED VISIBLE: AN ARTIST RESPONSE TO MUSEUM SPACES IN BRISTOL (UK)**

*Rosalind Martin*, Our History, Our Heritage/ Olawale arts

This 15-minute talk includes film clips and images of two performances by Ros Martin. 'I am a Bristol-based poet, playwright, artist & cultural activist of African descent. With my practice, I aim to counter the obscuration, marginalisation & invisibility of African peoples' lives, history & culture. In plays, poems, and performances I resurrect African ancestors' histories & creatively recontextualise these into the Bristol's landscape, in museum spaces, and on digital platforms.'

This talk highlights performance pieces, informed by archive research and located in Bristol's museums and natural landscape in 2007, 2016 and throughout 2017.

I WITNESS (2007 British Empire and Commonwealth museum). A multi art-form artist collaboration in response to the Bristol consortium of black groups' veto on the bicentenary commemorations of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. I WITNESS charts the life & activism of Caribbean historian, the late Richard Hart (1917-2013) in the struggle for decolonisation in Jamaica in song, dance, poetry & monologue. (RICHARD HART @ 90: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ck0XIBMvZs>. BEING RENDERED VISIBLE (2016/2017, Georgian House museum, Bristol). A spoken word & music performance installation dedicated to the invisible 'free mulatto woman' maidservant, Fanny Coker (1767-1820) of the Georgian House. This piece deconstructs the myth of her freed status.

BEING RENDERED VISIBLE:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Axam3sgLdc&feature=youtu.be>

Collaborating with writers: Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo in Nigeria & Vida Rawlins in St Kitts, an integrated projection installation (in three voices) will remember Fanny, her mother and grandmother, August 2017 at Greenbank cemetery, Bristol, where Fanny's final remains lie & in 'the Bear Pit', Bristol, October 2017. This installation supported by Bristol Museums, marks 250 years of Fanny's birth.

## **SUCCEEDING AGAINST THE ODDS: AFRO-PORTUGUESE YOUTH IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

*Sandra Mateus*, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, ISCTE-IUL, CIES

The significant presence of children of immigrants, in particular, with African origin, in schools in major Portuguese urban areas has made an important impact in sociological research in recent years, contributing to reinterpret old and new social inequalities. Little is known, however, about the educational paths of these students and their inclusion in higher education. There is a growing number of students with immigrant background in European Higher Education, showing the generational advancement and extension of the residence time of young people in the host or birth countries. Their access to higher education represents an important indicator of social inclusion and of impact of public policies. This emerging reality is the research focus of the project "Educational Paths of young Africans (PALOP) that access higher education". In this project we developed an exhaustive analysis of data from several official sources of statistical information, followed by a qualitative component that we address in this presentation - 17 biographical interviews conducted in 2015 to young Afro-Portuguese that did enrol in higher education, despite adverse socio-economic conditions. The analysis demonstrates and explores the institutional contexts, the social conditions of possibility, but also the individual experiences and strategies that shape counter-tendency educational paths. The presentation addresses the individual narratives and the specific challenges faced both in the life course and latter, in a social and ethnic reconfigured higher-education context. It aims to contribute to a better understanding of equity in access to higher education.

## **ACHIEVING BLACKNESS AND SOCIAL MOBILITY IN DIRAN ADEBAYO'S SOME KIND OF BLACK**

*Joseph McLaren*, Hofstra University

Diran Adebayo, author of *Some Kind of Black* (1997), demonstrates an innovative literary style and the achievement of blackness as it relates to identity and larger racial contexts that impact the possibilities of social mobility. Of Yoruba-Nigerian descent, Adebayo represents the contemporary Black British or, more precisely, the Afro-British author. His initial novel shows the origins of his language usage, the creation of narrative styles and dialogue that are not based on conventional vernacular usage, but on the author's own imaginative word stylings. Furthermore, this novel shows the mining of the autobiographical self, evoking experiences of a Nigerian descended university student, whose familial relationships and contact with British educational institutions help define a particular variety of Black British experience. The main character and his sister are in pursuit of social mobility. Although their actions could result in certain achievements, police authority hinders their mobility and the assumed benefits of an allegedly meritocratic system.

Because Black British perspectives of the mid-twentieth century have traditionally been linked to Caribbean cultural and historical realities, the work of Adebayo is informative because it shows the unique elements of African, especially Nigerian, ancestry in its association with British social conditions in the 1990s. The main character's relationship to his parents and particularly the expectations of his father push him toward achieving status especially through the pursuit of higher education. In this regard, the assumptions of social ascendancy are also intra-racial, where distinctions between Caribbean and African descended groups are sometimes reinforced by characters within these cultural demarcations. For the main character, achieving within the

context of Eurocentric expectations could require a decentering of racial identity and defining oneself within the parameters of blackness. The pursuit of university education appears as the mode that will merit entrance into British social hierarchies. However, this pursuit becomes secondary to addressing the immediate necessities engendered by violent police actions.

### **SPATIO-TEMPORAL ENTANGLEMENTS WITHIN AFRO-DIASPORIC ANTIRACISM**

*Noémi Michel*, Institute of citizenship studies (Incite), University of Geneva

“Africa has contributed a lot to World history”; “Saint-Maurice, the Nubian general, made the choice to die with his men instead of following Roma’s order to exterminate the Helvetians”. These two claims were part of a public letter against racism, written in 2007 by several associations regrouped under the name of the “African diaspora of Switzerland”. Why did the authors need to denounce local and contemporary occurrences of racism by evoking the past and by qualifying the contribution of Africa to the world? Why did they need to insist upon the entanglement of African and Swiss spaces and bodies in order to denounce racism? By putting into dialogue Frantz Fanon’s and Fatima El-Tayeb’s analyses of racialized injurious subjection with the example of the Swiss African diaspora’s claims, this paper suggests that such claims seek to reconfigure racist spatio-temporal borders. They assert “African” presence in the past in order to block racism’s power to freeze blackness as being outside of history. They situate local racist conditions within the global history of slavery and colonialism in order to disrupt racism’s power to externalize blackness outside of “Europe”. By linking together bodies, times and spaces that racialization has put apart, such claims exemplify Afro-diasporic antiracist practices of resistance and subjection. These practices of entanglement do not only trouble Western hegemonic understanding of time as linear and of space as homogeneous and self-contained. They also enable materializations of audible and memorable Afro-European subjects.

### **“OR DOES IT EXPLODE?”: EN DRUVA I SOLEN, VIKINGS AND CONGO DRUMS**

*Monica Miller*, Barnard College, Columbia University

This paper analyzes an historic event (and its afterlives) in contemporary Swedish public and performance culture: the Riksteatern’s/Swedish National Theater’s Spring 2016 production of *A Raisin in the Sun/En druva i solen*—the first time an African American play, performed by an all black Swedish cast, directed by a black British woman resident in Sweden, was staged and toured both Sweden and Finland.

This production is historic not only because of its unprecedented nature, but also because of the many black diasporic identities it navigated and reached, and the culturo-political context in which it was staged and in which its actors and director are still participating. *En druva i solen* was produced not only in response to increasing anti-black racism and discrimination in Sweden, but more importantly in the service of an emerging black Swedish cultural identity within the realm of theater, performance, and public culture. This production grows out of a number of black Swedish organized efforts to analyze the nature of “race” and blackness in Sweden from the perspective of both antiracism (questioning of everyday, structural, and system racism) and the potential of creating a black Swedish collective consciousness.

Organized around interviews with the director and cast before and after the production, as well as participant observation of their journey to World Theater Day in Washington, DC in March of 2017, where they will meet American and South African actors involved in productions of *Raisin* worldwide, this paper considers this production of *En druva i solen* as a signal, but complicated event in an emerging black identity/civil rights discourse in Sweden. At issue are the influence of US-based black cultural forms in the Afro-Scandinavian diaspora—the opportunities and challenges those forms present to the development of an enduring, (Afro)Swedish-attendant cultural arena/identity.

## **THE NEGRO TEACHER AND ARTIST: IDENTITY FORMATION OF AN AFRICAN WOMAN IN FINLAND AND THE U.S**

*Faith Mkwesha, Abo Akademi University*

This paper examines the process of identity formation of an African Finnish woman in Finland and U.S. represented in the autobiography *The Rosa Lemberg Story*, written by the historian Eva Ericson (1993). Rosa Emilia Clay (1875-1959) was the first Afro-Finnish black person to be granted a Finnish passport. She came to Finland with a couple who were missionaries at a Finnish missionary school in Namibia when she was thirteen years old. Her mother was a native African Moslem woman and her father was a white British man. The aim was to learn European education. Then she would go back to work at the Finnish mission school in Namibia. However, when she finished school she decided to stay in Finland. She was deployed to teach in a rural school in Finland. The parents rejected her, calling her a Negro and some spat on her. She left and went to a bigger city Tampere where she was an active singer and teacher. Struggling with racism she emigrated to the United States of America. She did not go to black communities, but, she went to live in a white Finnish immigrant community. Employing decolonial of the mind (DTM) theory, the paper problematises colonial structure and western theory of identity formation, and explores the social relations in Finnish communities represented in the autobiography. I argue that the West, specifically, Finland in this case, conceptualises citizenship and identity through the lens of individuality and race. The paper seeks to theorise identity formation theory of a decolonial model. Finland had no colonies. The question is: how racist ideas penetrated the Finnish society! How the story of the black African woman did come about! How does the African woman view herself identity!

## **LA PIROGUE: BLACK -MEDITERRANEAN IN THE FRANCOPHONE AFRO-EUROPEAN IMAGINARY**

*Polo Moji, University of the Witwatersrand*

This paper explores the framing of the Mediterranean as a porous (liquid) border, its global entanglements with Afro-diasporic dispersal and the popularised discourse of the migrant “crisis” through visuals of shipwrecked migrants in fishing boats [pirogues]. I specifically consider the ways in which Francophone Afro-European literature and popular cultural forms re-imagine the trans-Mediterranean passage as a response to the rise in French anti-immigration (nationalist) discourse after the 2005 riots in Parisian banlieues. Through Fatou Diome’s *La Ventre de l’Atlantique* (2007), a novel whose title symbolically links the trans-Mediterranean crossing to the trans-Atlantic slave passage (Glissant & Gilroy), I analyse spatial and temporal liminality of this passage as entangled with the histories of Afro-diasporic dispersal. I also explore the novel’s double narrative (France and Senegal) and depiction of European football as a modern form of slavery using Lauren Berlant’s *Cruel Optimism*, 2011. I argue that this border location can be read through the entanglement of loss /desire or fear / hope. This affective liminality is further developed through comparing Diome’s literary representation to the imaginary of the trans-Mediterranean crossing in popular cultural forms – namely, Abd al Malik’s hip-hop track *Gibraltar* (2006). French-born Malik narrates the thoughts of young migrant who, having crossed the Mediterranean is on the cusp of entering Europe. Similarly, to Diome, the philosophical lyrics of his song foreground the racialized lived experience of the migrant as an Afro-diasporic subject. I conclude that Diome and Malik illustrate Afro-European agency, symbolically returning to the affective tension of the trans-Mediterranean passage to subvert its conception as a “porous” border by re-imagining it a racialized frontier – the Black Mediterranean.

## **LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN AFRICAN REFUGEE COMMUNITIES IN THE NETHERLANDS**

*Simanique Moody, Leiden University*

This paper examines language, race, nationality, and identity construction in two African refugee communities (Sierra Leone and Somalia) in the Netherlands. For these communities, much of the

migration experience is about time and space—moving from one place to another and waiting for prolonged periods in detention centers, refugee camps, or elsewhere, and being permanently “temporary” without any guarantee that their legal status will ever be regularized. These asylum seekers, connected by a shared sense of disconnectedness, find themselves in ever-changing linguistic and cultural contact zones (cf. Mary Louise Pratt). In this permanent temporariness, language plays an essential role in the process of identifying oneself to others and articulating and renegotiating one’s identity at different points along the migration journey. In the Netherlands, as in several other European countries, language analysis is used to determine the country of origin of asylum seekers who lack identity documents or whose identity claims are believed to be false, and thus language functions as one of the most important markers of identity for refugees in Europe. Using in-depth ethnographic and sociolinguistic observation, this paper 1) analyzes how certain African refugees articulate and negotiate various aspects of their identity in relationship to others both within and outside of their community and 2) reveals what language and linguistic interactions can reveal about the relationship of members of these communities to one another and to the broader structure of the societies in which they live. Examining the linguistic and cultural interactions of members of these communities will contribute to the growing body of research on how African migrants adapt culturally and linguistically in the face of ongoing societal changes, while providing insight into the practices, beliefs, and individual and collective identities of African diasporic communities across global contexts.

### **AFRO-BRITISH IDENTITY, BLACK ATLANTIC TRANSNATIONALISM, AND PROTEST IN THE AGE OF EMPIRE: SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR’S TWENTY-FOUR NEGRO MELODIES**

*Gayle Murchison, College of William and Mary*

During both his lifetime and posthumously, Afro-British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912), was best known for his choral work, *Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast* (1898), which became a staple of English choral music shortly after its premiere. Coleridge-Taylor negotiated not only an individual biracial identity (a Sierra-Leonean —Egbo-Krio—father and white British mother), but also a public aesthetic and subject position that engaged legacies of slavery and colonialism, diaspora, and transnationalism. His characteristic piece for piano, *Twenty-four Negro Melodies*, Op. 59 (1905), consists of settings of African, Caribbean, and African American folksong, reflecting a long-standing European classical music practice. This work, however, stands as more than quaint Romantic folklorism or exoticism.

This paper situates Coleridge-Taylor and *Twenty-four Negro Melodies* in the multiple contexts of: British imperialism and the African slave trade; African and African American transnational cultural and political determinism; and, Pan-Africanism. Coleridge-Taylor’s ideas about and explorations of diaspora were shaped in part by his London interactions with prominent Sierra Leoneans and African Americans (including Paul Laurence Dunbar, W.E.B Du Bois, and Booker T. Washington). These were joined to his own subject formation. It reflects the aesthetic and political ideas of a young Victorian who began to develop political consciousness about race and nation. In the context of Victorian British history, *Twenty-four Negro Melodies* can be understood as Coleridge-Taylor’s anti-war and anti-imperialist stance directed at British incursion into sub-Saharan Africa. I argue that in the various movements of this work, Coleridge-Taylor: 1) pays homage to his father; 2) explores the African diaspora as he traces the trans-Atlantic slave trade; and, 3) makes an outright critique of British colonialism and imperialism, and of Britain’s involvement in wars on African soil.

### **CONSTRUCTING AN ‘ETHICAL SELF’ THROUGH MARRIAGE AND FAMILY NORMS AS A PRACTICE OF RESISTING RACISM**

*Sanna Mustasaari, University of Helsinki*

This paper studies the narrative of one person, a young black Muslim woman who lives in Helsinki, and her experiences of racism as a socially acceptable form of violence. The paper highlights

how, in her story, marriage and family formation become sites of resisting racism. The paper aims to discuss a research idea, on which a full research article, including further interviews, could draw on at a later point.

Previous research has shed light on how the concept of 'race' qualifies citizenship. One mechanism of racism is that 'race' is made to operate as a distinction, which marks an exclusion of some individuals from the membership in the community of nation state, and consequently, the liberal regime of state family law. This process, in which the colonized other is produced as a moral threat to the national community, establishes a positive relation between violence towards those considered non-belonging and the protection of life. Thus, instead of being about the bodily characteristic (e.g. skin color) per se, 'race' plays a role in signaling those who are considered morally unworthy, as not having the proper ethic of how to live, and who thus pose an internal threat to the national community.

In her narrative, the interviewee describes her choices regarding marriage and family formation as a way of claiming a subjectivity that is distinctively ethical in nature. Through engaging with family norms she was able to establish a firm link between her ethnic, cultural and religious identity, on the one hand, and her ethical subjectivity, on the other hand. This allowed her to contest the dominant logic of ethical subjectivity and thus resist the racialized exclusion she has experienced as a young black Muslim woman living in a majority white, secular Christian country.

## **INTERSECTIONALITY AND DIASPORIC BLACKNESS: AMPLIFYING CONNECTEDNESS OF AFROEUROPEAN EXPERIENCES IN YOUTUBE DOCUMENTARY-SERIES**

*Mariam Muwanga, University of Wuppertal*

The 21st century has witnessed a steady increase in Youtube channels by people of colour in the African diaspora that are actively engaged in making diasporic blackness in Europe visible. Among other things, black filmmakers are using the Youtube platform to release film projects that are rarely seen on national TV stations across Europe. With a focus on two Youtube documentary series, "Strolling" (by Cecile Emeke) and "What is Pretty?" (by Antonia Opiah), this paper will use examine how web-based documentary series are positioning diasporic blackness in relation to dominant discourses in Europe. These discourses are mainly tied around social categories such as race, gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, nation, to mention but a few.

The activist potential of these documentary series, it will be argued, lies in amplifying connectedness of black experiences. One way this is achieved is by representing diasporic blackness primarily as lived experiences of marginalisation based on the category of race. The narrators, who self-identify as black and have been born and/or raised in Europe, are represented as complex individuals, whose racial identity intersects with other identities (such as gender, sex, nation, class etc.) to evoke double and/or multiple forms of oppression and marginalisation. The Youtube platform therefore functions as a space for making diasporic blackness a politically relevant topos. Additionally, the paper will show that interactive commentary and digital sharing afforded by Youtube fosters the creation of an online community that continuously affirms and/or contests these representations of blackness.

## **I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT MY CULTURE. IDENTITY DISCOURSES OF 'AFROEUROPEAN' MUSLIM YOUNG WOMEN**

*Laila Narciso Pedro, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*

Although migrations from West Africa in Spain have maintained their presence over three decades and have gone from being a masculinized migration to becoming mainly en famille, we have almost no information about black African children and youth in key issues such as their academic trajectories and transitions to adulthood, and even less about their identity construction as individual citizens in their families' transnational spaces and the conditions for the social mobility they are faced with.

Drawing on data from the ethnographic work carried out for the doctoral thesis "Young black Africans in Catalonia. From Immigration to Emancipation," this paper explores the narratives of six young women, born in Spain, daughters of immigrants from West Africa in the 1980s, of the flow defined by Jabardo (2006) as "ethnic communities." From an intersectional perspective, the discourses on their school and life trajectories and their transitions on their paths towards adulthood are analysed. The analysis examines the identifiers they select for self-definition and for defining the "others", the role models they name and how they are defined, their future plans and finally, how they explain experiences of everyday racism and feelings of (non-)belonging. All this, makes it possible to highlight the way in which they negotiate the ideal model of age-gender within the community while at the same time responding to the hegemonic discourses in southern Europe about colour, foreignness, gender and religion, and the contradictions that are produced.

## **FRENCH BLACK MIRRORS : ON FRENCH BLACK WOMEN'S ART AS AN ACT OF RESILIENCE**

*Laura Nsafou, Mrs Roots*

Since 2013, Afrofeminism built a new network for French black women. Being isolated as a black woman impelled new ways of communication. Afrofeminism helped to meet and to create new spaces of survival. In this impulsion, being excluded from institutions led them to create new form of art and to invest French culture. Movies, podcasts, comedy show, books... Creating media that reflects Afro-descendant women community allowed us to see each other on different supports. This is what I call French Black Mirrors. These mirrors became political tools against silence and invisibility : these women fight to see themselves, to observe different bodies and stories of French black women, especially on their terms.

From their emancipation from Whiteness discourse, to the transmission of new afrofeminist heritage, my presentation will focus on the building process of these mirrors in France.

I. French Black Women : a tradition to be told by Whiteness

- a. « Mayotte Capécia » ; a black woman body with a white man's voice.
- b. « Girlhood » : why a global female voice isn't enough.

II. Black Independent creations : how afrofeminism invested art spaces.

- a. « Speak up/Make your way » : faces and voices
- b. Black Women on stage : an embodied performance.

III. Transmission : a productive momentum for the next generation through social networks and new technologies.

- a. Diversity and kids. DIVEKA

Mrs Roots is an afrofeminist blogger and author. She reviews books from black authors and writes articles about afrofeminism in France. Her projects challenge antiblackness and seek for a fair representation of black women's in French culture. After participating to Amandine Gay's « Speak Up/Make your way », co-creating the workshop « Black Women and Workspace », she'll publish a novel and a children book on Spring 2017.

## **PERFORMATIVE STRATEGIES - DIMENSIONS OF EMANCIPATION"**

*Ellen Nyman, Malmo Theatre Academy / Lunds University*

Artistic research and comparative study of black artists working with performative interpretation in performing and visual arts.

"Our lives have no meaning, no depth without the white gaze. And I have spent my entire writing life trying to make sure that the white gaze was not the dominant one in any of my books."

“This was brand-new space, and once I got there, it was like the whole world opened up, and I was never going to give that up... You know that feeling – that if you don’t write it, it will never be written? You think, Eudora Welty can’t do it, only you.” Toni Morrison, author and Nobel Prize winner.

In the project "Performative strategies - dimensions of emancipations," the assumption is that the structure of this white perspective affects one's identity building and thereby also one's artistic and aesthetic practice. This research is based on how black artists handle performativity. The aim is to shed light on the interplay between the conscious work with the body as a symbolic tool and the site-specific influence on how race / ethnicity are constructed, this through spatial and comparative context analysis.

The question that the project poses is: how do black artists in Scandinavia create methods to navigate within the white gaze, a perspective that surrounds cultural institutions, aesthetic norms and the audience in a historical and national context?

The starting point is considerations made in preparation or rehearsal before a work is performed, considerations that reflect the relationship between the sender and the receiver. An important aspect of this is what these different institutions and artistic spaces represent and the artistic concessions made concerning self-censorship, internalization, identification, separatism and resistance. Studying these various strategies will hopefully reveal complexities of aesthetic factors and belonging as well as analysis of representation and expectations.

The research is based on my artistic practice, as a comparative study together with other artists' practice. The aim is to collect experiences of mediation, perception and identification, to examine and highlight the conscious methods and strategies that are being made to build up aesthetic expression beyond the normative requirements and expectations.

"Performative strategies - dimensions of emancipations" is an artistic and interdisciplinary research project based on the performative practices that are primarily in the performing arts and visual arts, such as performance art, happenings and political action. The project also has the ambition to build bridges to other fields of humanities and other disciplines within the same field of knowledge.

## **CHILDHOOD AND IDENTITY POLITICS: TRANSNATIONAL COMPLEXES?**

*Tony Laban Oduor, Universität Potsdam*

It is a fact of contemporary realities that there is a lot of transnational spaces. They influence each other when they are in contact. The effects and mode of influence are varied and have not been fully and critically analyzed. The interaction takes place in an encounter of two or more uneven grounds and in unmatched criteria. Sometimes it takes place in a majority setting or in a minority mode, for a particular individual or community or any other category, for instance African childhood in Europe. It is a given that the African childhood has been portrayed in Eurocentric space. This depiction uses a template, especially when it is aimed at the global and European audience: poverty, famine, war-ravaged, and disease-infected become the *modus operandi*.

However, a lot still needs to be done to ask why there is persistence in a monodirectional [re]presentation of African childhood, and the disabling of the said childhood's agency. Thus we will ask how African childhood is constructed in a European space, the consequences of this construction and explore possible resolutions of the stalemate in childhood politics.

The concepts of identity, culture and modernity, in this case, begs the need for a psychoanalytic and postcolonial studies approach to address this lacuna in childhood within a transnational European world.

The paper aims to raise further debates on the space of childhood. Towards this end I will bring into conversation, childhood, Postcolonial Studies in selected visual representation/advertisement and selected works of fiction. The works of fiction are purposively

selected to encourage a widened location of the African transnational childhood motif in a Eurocentric mode.

### **MAKING OF AN EXHIBITION AS PART OF A PARTICIPATORY STUDY**

*Helena Oikarinen-Jabai; Wisam Elfadl & Adam Adam, University of Helsinki*

This presentation is based on an ongoing research project “Young Muslims and Resilience – A Participatory Study” (2016-2018), funded by the KONE foundation, where we study the resilience of Muslim youth with immigrant background in Finland by participatory, in particular visual and performative methods. As co-researchers participants explore their sense of resilience and belonging by using photography, video, writing, painting and other artistic methods. The methods used in this study position participants as authorities on their own lives. Participatory approaches are especially useful when dealing with transnational and diasporic experiences because they involve praxis as purposeful knowledge, which tells us, in a relational and phenomenological sense, something about what it is to feel “at home” and have a sense of belonging. Furthermore, visual methodologies support participants to recognize and strengthen their resilience factors.

The research team – including several male and female participants who are young adults – will create an exhibition based on material produced by the young participants. In this presentation we will discuss the experiences of the participatory research process and artistic methods used in the project, in particular from the point of view of those participants who identify themselves as both Afro-Europeans and Muslims. We will also share some of the visual material produced by the participants. In addition, we will address the challenges and benefits of this type of participatory methodology for producing new knowledge on the lives of young Muslims of African descent in Europe.

### **AFROSVENSKA AKADEMIN: A CASE STUDY**

*Nana Osei-Kofi, Oregon State University*

*To create social change requires engagement and the courage to make one's voice heard. We think it is important that young Afro-Swedes learn to speak for themselves and avoid becoming victims of a negative spiral whereby they assume that the current social order is set in stone. Social change only happens when individuals stand up for their civil rights and refuse to be silenced by the belief that giving voice to demands for justice will exacerbate the current state of inequity.*

*-Afrosvenska Akademin, 2014*

*Afrosvenska Akademin* [The Afro-Swedish Academy] is a grant-funded leadership program for Afro-Swedish teenagers, administered by *Afrosvenskarnas Riksförbund* [The Afro-Swedish National Association]. As a program that focuses on education, identity development, and social engagement, the curriculum for the *Academy* aims to address a lack of attention in schools and society at large to the history of Afro-diasporic communities and to contemporary conditions faced by Afro-Swedes. In an effort to foster Black/Afro-diasporic pride and agency, participants learn about key historical and present-day Black liberation struggles, and utilize what they learn to critically scrutinize their own lived experiences and to develop collective strategies for social change.

In this case study of *Afrosvenska Akademin*, I draw on participant observation, interviews with project facilitators and participants, and media content developed by *Academy* graduates, in an effort to grapple with the ways in which the *Academy* advances a transnational awareness of Black liberation struggles, cultivates a sense of community among participants, and promotes collective action. In triangulating my own observations, with interview data, and content produced by *Academy* graduates, I seek to determine what types of social change tools the project relies

on to realize its vision, how these tools are utilized, and ultimately, what impact they have at the individual, institutional, and structural level.

## **HABESHA AND OROMO HUMANITARIANISMS ALONG THE MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE**

*Elisa Pascucci, University of Tampere*

The paper examines community networks of refugee reception and assistance among Habesha and Oromo migrants in Milan and Cairo as multifaceted forms of what recent literature has labeled as “migrant-to-migrant” humanitarianism (see Fiddian Qasmiyeh, 2016). We focus in particular on two elements: the mobilization of ethnic and national identifications, and the institutionalization of community through the encounter with humanitarian discourses and practices. The analysis is based on a comparative ethnographic engagement. For the second-generation youths active in the network of “Habesha reception” in Milan, pro-refugee activism and volunteering enact a ‘politics of difference’ through which the exclusionary character of formal citizenship is bypassed or openly contested, and humanitarian practices are re-politicized. In the case of the Oromo groups that work as “operational partners” for international humanitarian organizations in Cairo, ethnic identifications are institutionalized through the now pervasive policy category of “community-based organizations” (CBOs). Far from being reduced to a technocratic governance tool, however, Oromo ethnic identifications are central not only to diasporic political mobilization – for instance, against state repression and land grabbing in Ethiopia – but also in the protest actions organized locally to contest the ineffectuality of humanitarian protection and assistance. The encounter between refugee aid and advocacy and identity politics in diaspora, we conclude, opens up new fields of possibility and constraint, such as those experienced through community self-organization and transnational connections and mobilities.

## **POLITICAL MINDSCAPES IN THE WORK OF DEBBIE TUCKER GREEN**

*Izabella Penier, University of Central Lancashire*

My paper will explore the work of debbie tucker green, a Black British playwright and filmmaker, who debuted in 2003. Her plays have been produced by Soho Theatre, the National Theatre, Hampstead Theatre, and the Royal Shakespeare Company. The play *born bad* won the 2004 Laurence Olivier most promising playwright award, and her 2014 film *Second Coming* was nominated for BAFTA Award for Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer. The paper will situate green’s work against the background of white mainstream European theatrical tradition, in-yer-face theatre, post 9/11 theatre scholarship and black feminism. It will also discuss tucker green commitment to addressing current issues the affect black populations, and particularly black women, in the UK and elsewhere.

## **THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN SHAPING THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK FEMALE UNDERGRADUATES**

*April-Louise Pennant, University of Birmingham*

This paper is based on qualitative research into the educational experiences and journeys of 17 Black females studying at a predominantly white, elite university in England. The purpose of the study is to explore how they make sense of their raced, gendered and classed identities, as well as the ways they strategise and navigate there. The racialisation and othering of Black children and youth are well-established, familiar features within educational institutions. This is illustrated in the UK within annual statistics which show the low academic attainment of black students, compared to the national average and their white peers. Moreover, the intersection of gender and social class highlights further issues for consideration which leave Black females even more marginalised. Both Critical Race Theorists and Black feminists advocate the importance of intersectional approaches to understand the multiple, interlinking identities of Black females in research focused on them. By way of semi-structured interviews, framed by Critical Race theory and a Bourdieusian understanding of social capital, participants reveal how they carve out a space

to mediate encounters of cultural shock, exclusionary curriculums and invisibility. A picture slowly emerges about the significant role of social capital via certain student affinity groups in the participants' educational experiences and journeys. The research concludes by highlighting how these student affinity groups provide 'people like me', safe spaces and affirmation which are vital resources for these Black females. It is hoped that this paper will demonstrate that even though children of the African Diaspora reside in Europe in substantial numbers, to talk about a collective Afro-European youth culture is premature. This is because oftentimes, children of the African Diaspora are still seeking equality in their respective countries within spheres like the education system.

### **TRESPASSING THE COLOUR LINE IN POPULAR ROMANTIC FICTION: THE POLITICS OF GENERIC INNOVATION IN MALORIE BLACKMAN'S YOUNG ADULT NOVELS**

*Irene Pérez-Fernández, University of Oviedo*

Contemporary Black British writer of children literature and young adult fiction Malorie Blackman has openly criticized the tendency to categorize and pigeonhole black writers: "people love to stick you in boxes and put labels on you, and I didn't want that" (The Guardian, 5 June 2013; n. p.). Clearly committed to deep social and racial issues, her literary works have aesthetically interrogated dominant cultural forms through generic innovation. This paper examines her trilogy *Noughts & Crosses* (2001), *Knife Edge* (2004) and *Checkmate* (2005) as an exploration of the popular genre of romance. I shall argue that Blackman's novels align with a progressive view of the genre of romance fiction which emphasises its heterogeneity, malleability and potential for innovation (Tapper, 2014) and questions a view of it as conventionally archaic and formulaic (de Geest and Goris, 2010). Indeed, Blackman's trilogy presents a teenage romance against the backdrop of a dystopian world where black people, or 'Crosses', are the ruling elite and white people, or 'noughts', are confined to minority status. Through her narrative Blackman questions traditional discourses on romantic love that perceive it as a universal human feeling rather than a socially-specific construction of Euro-American culture (Jankowiak and Fischer, 1992) at the same time that it overtly addresses racial concerns and revisits history. Thus, I shall argue that her trilogy is a narrative of formal innovation that renegotiates the genre of romance fiction at the same time that it destabilises Eurocentric discourses on race and romantic love.

### **CITIZENSHIP, RACISM AND BELONGING: LEGACIES OF PHENOTYPE AND BIOLOGY IN CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE**

*Angelica Pesarini, University of Leeds*

This paper addresses the connections between contemporary Italian political discourse on race, citizenship and belonging and the history of Italian colonialism in East Africa. Particularly, it shows how the idea of 'blood' is still located at the core of national identity and why Italy today can be defined as a 'racial nation'. To do so, I illustrate the continuity between a series of political actions articulated around an idea of racialised citizenship, going from the colonial fascist period in the former Italian colonies in East Africa (1890-1941), till contemporary time.

The paper focuses on the citizenship/race/belong nexus, further complicated by the use of categories such as 'mixed race' and gender. It will start by analysing a series of laws, including the law 999 of 1933 introduced in order to regulate the identity and citizenship of unrecognised 'mixed race' children born in the colonies from African mothers and unknown White Italian fathers. This will be followed by the discussion of the Race Manifesto (1938) and the fascist racial laws (1937-1941) enacted in the colonies against Africans, and in Italy against Jews. Lastly, the examination of the current law for Italian citizenship (law 91/1992) will show the continuity between past and present, through a renewed idea of blood.

The paper reveals how dynamics of race and migration in Italy cannot be fully understood without reference to the historical nexus of citizenship/race/belonging and how today ideas of citizenship based on blood lineage affect the everyday life of a growing proportion of non-white Italians.

## **LAMPEDUSA: THE NEXUS OF THE BLACK MEDITERRANEAN**

*Angelica Pesarini, University of Leeds*

Lives seem expendable, or at least, in the case of certain bodies, lives become consumable. Therefore, it is crucial to analyse what exactly the human is. Who is human? Who is sub-human or non-human? To do so, this paper is made of two sections. In the first part we will discuss the idea of the Black Mediterranean by highlighting the destabilisation of European, hegemonic and (post)colonial discourse on race, Nation and identity triggered by the presence of Black African migrant bodies crossing the symbolic nexus of the Mediterranean. The paper will have a specific focus on Lampedusa which, we argue, is a double powerful signifier encompassing both the threshold of Fortress Europe and the threshold of humanity itself for those, EU & non-EU, who live in the periphery. The impact of the colonial heritage is here particularly important. If Africa was one of the major geopolitical sites of colonisation then Africans themselves were the body of colonisation – their commodification scarred upon their bodies. The repercussions of colonial discourse constructing the body of the slave are visible today in the construction of the migrant body who is attributed almost no legal recognition and who simply disappear into ‘spaces of nonexistence’ (Coutin, 2003). The illegal immigrant left to drown in the Mediterranean becomes more than a missing or dead person, but rather a ‘social figure’ as stated by Gordon (2008). Black migrants crossing the Mediterranean become intrinsically tied to their past through their exclusion from the present; an exclusion both spatial as well as temporal.

Using the tragedy that occurred on the 3rd of October 2013 when a vessel carrying more than 500 migrants capsized and sank a few hundred metres from the shore of Lampedusa, the paper will highlight the biopolitical field in which the dead and the living body of the migrant are inscribed with (post)colonial hierarchies of power. Nonetheless it is important to bear in mind that the body is also a symbolic locus where power and resistance to it, are exerted (Mills, 2003).

## **« WHEN THE OTHER LAUGHS BACK IN THE POSTCOLONY ». POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION AND SELF-DEFINITION IN BLACK STAND-UP PERFORMANCES IN SWITZERLAND**

*Mélanie-Evely Pétrémont, University of Geneva*

Despite the transnational nature of identities and diasporas (Gilroy: 1993), nationality still informs the politics of exclusion of “internal Others” (Guénif-Souilamas: 2006, Balibar: 2007) within national borders. Although in Switzerland - as elsewhere in Europe - Black people cannot be pegged to a territory, the experience of being Black and Swiss is an oxymoron regarding “swiss identity” that leads to being constantly referred to an imagined African space.

My paper focuses on humor as a space of domination and resistance involving the Afro-european diaspora in the postcolony. More particularly, it addresses the practices of self-definition of auto-proclaimed “Afro-swiss” and/or “Black” stand-up performers. It is based on videos and direct observation of stand-up performances of Black artists performing in Switzerland. Leaning on a performative approach in geopolitics (Glass & Rose-Redwood: 2014) it will describe and analyze how comic performers use their identity to tackle the politics of representation (Hall: 2013) forged in colonial times in order to regain control of the representation and definition of themselves.

By interrogating humor as a weapon of resistance and a “tool” of deconstructing and decolonize oneself, this paper aims to open a discussion of possible alternative and moving spaces and places of identity of Black people in Europe.

## **RESILIENCE AS RESISTANCE: THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY AND SELF-DEFINITION AT AN AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE**

*Kwame Phillips*, John Cabot University

Mirza (1997) states, being 'Black' in Britain is about a state of 'becoming'; a process of consciousness, where Blackness as a physical difference, "living submerged in whiteness... becomes a defining issue, a signifier, a mark of whether or not you belong." In the British context, this perpetual othering of Blackness and foreignness, and the questions of community and identity that arise, result in "a specific and distinct doubling of identity and community" (Murdoch, 2012). At the margins of these marginalized are African Caribbean mental health service users. For them, this doubling is a constant dance between performances of illness behavior and language in medical contexts, and performances of a Caribbean communal identity outside of these medical contexts. This performance of collective Caribbean identity formation, in opposition to prescribed medicalized identities, operates as a form of political resistance.

Through my research at African Caribbean mental health centres in London, this presentation addresses how the establishment of Third Spaces – physical and virtual spaces of engendered resilience – and the employment of self-definition, act as a means of empowerment. In these spaces, cultural socialization and group identification instill "meaning, purpose, pride, and commitment to the goal of self-development" (Keyes 2009). Resilience for these service users is manifested through an access to shared memory and a connection to a created community, such that they, despite the threat of lowered quality of life because of their mental health experiences, are able to survive and to provide their own protective factor, as a community. In this presentation, I argue that this process of resilient identity formation is an active form of self-preservation and protest, one that can more broadly inform movements of racialized minorities and social justice movements as a whole.

## **AFRICAN TRAVEL PHOTOJOURNALISM IN EUROPE: PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS. INSIGHTS INTO THE WORK OF LOLA AKINMADE AKERSTROM**

*Eva Ulrike Pirker*, University of Duesseldorf

"I will reach the North Pole" I said to my teenage self. [...] Travelling with my Nigerian Passport has never weakened my resolve, but I can't help wondering. How many talents lay hidden forever because people were never given the opportunity to explore [...]? How easy it could have been for me to become demoralised after [...] feeling the emotional weight of never-ending restrictions simply because I was born in a certain country. (Akerstrom, *Due North* 18, 19)

Lola Akinmade Akerstrom is a Nigerian-born, Stockholm-based travel writer and photographer and a top performer in her field, receiving commissions from major media corporations. But what does success and being a top performer mean in this particular work field, and for someone with Akinmade Akerstrom's background? It appears that African professionals writing about Europe still have to explain themselves, are seen as exceptional. "The world of travel writing is still predominantly white and male and [...] writers of color [...] are often boxed up, marginalized, or made to fit a certain theme or demographic," she writes. Clearly, non-white travel journalists cannot simply hide behind their photographs and texts, are less encouraged to let their art speak for itself. Access to travel and to travel photojournalism is all but a level playing field, and the question of how to find, define and defend one's voice as African travel writer against all odds and ascriptions is not one that Akinmade Akerstrom is alone in raising. In my paper, which draws from some of her published works and interviews, I want to contextualise her position in a larger discourse about attempts to revert a Western/Eurocentric gaze. How does Akinmade Akerstrom conceptualise her travelling self, how does it become part of her narrative about others?

## **BEING BLACK AND GERMAN: THEODOR MICHAEL'S STORY OF SURVIVAL**

*Aija Poikane-Daumke, University of Economics and Culture*

In his autobiography *Deutsch Sein und Schwarz Dazu* (2013), Afro-German actor and journalist Theodor Michael describes what it feels like to be German and Black at the same time. Born in 1925, to a white German mother and a Cameroonian father, Michael is constantly reminded of his "exotic" complexion by many of his White German compatriots. As a young child, he senses that there is something "wrong" about him. When Hitler seizes power in 1933, Michael realizes that he is in danger because of his "non-Aryan" looks. About 400 Afro-German children are sterilized; others are forced to work in labor camps or are deported to concentration camps.

Through close reading of Michael's narrative, I trace the development of his identity. I argue that he attempts to connect his German and Black identities in a meaningful way. Yet the diverse forms of racism that he is forced to confront lead him to a powerful identity conflict. Under the National Socialism, Michael resorts to a strategy of "invisibility", which, to my mind, serves here as a means of survival. At the same time, I question how this "deliberate" choice of "invisibility" affects the development of his identity. Does it urge him to deny his African heritage? Has he internalized negative stereotypes about Africans and begins to view himself as "inferior" to his White German compatriots?

In his thoughts, he openly challenges racism; he understands that being German and Black simply does not make any sense in the eyes of White German society. I demonstrate that despite the hardships that Michael has been forced to face, he sees his dual cultural heritage as a means of self-empowerment.

## **DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE AS REPRODUCED IN MIGRANT MEDIA: AN ASSESSMENT OF KENYAN MIGRANT MEDIA IN GERMANY**

*Lydia Radoli Ouma, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main-Graduate School for Social Sciences (GRASOC)*

The paper uses discourse analysis to examine a news excerpt "on ideas of development in Africa" retrieved from Mkenya Ujerumani - a Germany-based Kenyan migrant online publication. The thesis of this paper is that increasingly, migrant media has become a platform where concepts and thoughts are shaped and shared among migrants. This is because access to Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) has enhanced networking of societies in a global framework. Kenyans in Germany turn to Mkenya Ujerumani for information on migrants and the general German society. Mkenya Ujerumani is a viable example of the creative use of ICTs and other social media tools. The so-called web 2.0 applications, mobile phones, online news, short broadcasts and videos that enable migrants to connect with non-migrants. The transnational connection offers a cultural diffusion, co-dependence, and commodification of ideas. As migrant media engages a globalized community, development in Africa in general and Kenya-specific as an economic narrative of "dependency through aid", begins to receive alternative viewpoints. I integrate textual analysis, postcolonial theory and interviews with migrant media producers to expose underlying development concepts. In this paper, I highlight aspects of representations of development in migrant media as a construed form of Eurocentric thought. Authors have suggested that post-coloniality examines how thinkers with a colonial experience forge perspectives on social, economic, and political affairs. Producers of migrant media bear a colonial experience and attempt to negate the European burden - "to save the African person from an underdeveloped state", by using alternative and conventional development approaches. The paper uses Norman Fairclough's approach to discourse analysis as influenced by Michel Foucault, and employs qualitative analysis of media and interview texts. The goal is to examine how migrant media produces a heterogeneous narrative of development by providing hegemonic ideas, as well as migrants alternative voices.

## **EXPLORING (BLACK) BRITISHNESS BETWEEN URBAN PERIPHERY AND RURAL CENTRALITY**

*Judith Rahn*, Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf

Diasporic literature in general and Black British fiction in particular utilizes the conflicting realities of colonial past and postcolonial present in an attempt to rewrite Britain from an African perspective. As mobility increases, Afro-European literature explores liminal spatial perspectives within the diasporic experience. The multiple axes of power are characterized by their intersectionality which is constituted of not only theories of (post-)coloniality and imperialism, but also include a point of confluence for politics of race and gay/lesbian life. This paper will explore how the aesthetics of cosmopolitanism and provincialism are reflected in Black British fiction's engagement with traditional fictional tropes of spatial dichotomy, which are replicated in racial and sexual dichotomies.

On the one hand, Jacky Kay's much acclaimed novel *Trumpet* (1998) oscillates between the urban, would-be cosmopolitan centre of Edinburgh and the romantic escapism of the family cottage by the sea, thereby inverting notions of wholeness into assemblages of fragmentation. On the other hand, Caryl Phillips' recent novel *The Lost Child* (2015) reengages with the English North in an attempt to reconcile diasporic narratives with Emily Brontë's landmark novel *Wuthering Heights* (1847). Phillips' narrative not only pulsates between Liverpool, London and the English country, it also engages in the depiction of Julius Wilson's diasporic belonging in contrast to the ultimate dislocation of his wife Monica Johnson within an urban landscape of loss and dislocation. This intricately layered narrative calls into question notions of Englishness, as it offhandedly resolves the problematic origin of Emily Brontë's Heathcliff, while simultaneously problematizing the intertextuality in conflicting notions of urban provinciality of Monica's home town.

The stasis of spatial binaries is mirrored in the representation of European perspectives of race, gender and sexuality, calling for a radical rewriting of the complexities of diasporic Afro-British life.

## **WRITING AFRICAN CARIBBEAN MUSICIANS BACK INTO EUROPEAN CANONS**

*Tina Karina Ramnarine*, Royal Holloway University of London

This paper will discuss two case-studies in order to further this session's objectives, namely to revisit African diasporic practices by asking questions about African diasporic musicians' participation in Europe's mainstream musical practices (classical, folk, jazz and popular) and by offering critical re-assessments of music history, creative economy and canon formation. The first case study will concern the representation of calypso (a song genre most often associated with Trinidad and Tobago) as folk music in contemporary Britain (Ramnarine 2007). The second case study will draw on Banat's (2006) biographical study of the composer, Joseph Bologne (1745-99) to discuss historical recuperation and potential revision to the European classical canon with reference to a figure renowned in his time but almost forgotten in ours. These case studies are historically removed from each other but they are connected in terms of both transnational musical geographies (Africa, the Caribbean and Europe) and identity politics in canon formation. The case studies explore scholarly recuperations in revisionist historiography and critical ethnography. Both of them raise issues around inclusion and exclusion. By posing questions around historiography and identity politics, this paper will argue that writing African Caribbean musicians back into European canons is part of the cultures of decolonization.

## **RACISM, SEGREGATION AND POLICE VIOLENCE IN THE BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS OF LISBON**

*Otávio Raposo*, Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology - University Institute of Lisbon (CIES-IUL)

The episodes of police violence are not uncommon on black majority neighborhoods in the outskirts of Lisbon. This violence affects particularly the daily life of the youth from these places, and affects not only their world view, as also expresses in their artistic manifestations: rap music, graffiti works, etc. In February 2015, a group of youth from Cova da Moura suffered police brutality. This incidence was highlighted in the national and international press and led to Cova da Moura inhabitants to organize a demonstration against police violence and racism, which had the solidarity of other neighborhoods and other sectors of civil society. In my ethnographic field work I followed this episode, from the detentions to the demonstrations of solidarity for their release. I also conducted interviews and took part in meetings and discussions. From the perspective of this police violence episode, I intend to analyze the phenomena of racism and criminalization of poverty, in order to feed the sociological debate on segregation and marginalized people management. According to it, I will discuss the stigmatization processes and social control practices which the afro-european's youth from the outskirts neighborhoods are object of by the state institutions and the media.

## **VAGRANT PRESENCES AND FORGOTTEN HISTORIES: THE BLACK ATLANTIC AND NORTHERN BRITAIN**

*Alan Rice*, University of Central Lancashire

This paper will discuss a range of African Atlantic figures whose vagrant and vagabond lifestyles help to broaden Paul Gilroy's conception of the Black Atlantic and remould traditional historiography about Black presence creating new and dynamic narratives that construct alternate historical realities. Geographically, Rice moves away from metropolitan concerns to discuss the rural and the provincial as key areas to discover hidden truths about African Atlantic peoples. The paper investigates North British historical concerns from slavery and its aftermath in the North of England and Scotland to the Cotton Famine in Lancashire. He uses a range of case studies to investigate the way traditional black historiography with its echoing of majoritarian and metropolitan histories elide radical black pasts. He discusses the radical Scots-descended Robert Wedderburn, the North of England based, circus performer Pablo Fanque and the fugitive slave and wanderer James Johnson whose biographies promote a wider and less unidimensional Black history nationally and whose presence allows for performative reparative history for activists in the present. Rice uses his theory of guerrilla memorialisation to discuss this needful activism. He also discusses contemporary literary and artistic responses to black presence in North Britain by Caryl Phillips, Ingrid Pollard and Jade Montserrat to show how these historical presences are being remembered and reimagined. He uses the theoretical model developed by Michael Rothberg of "multi-dimensional memory" to investigate the way these historical characters and events are key to the fullest understanding of the Black Atlantic in Britain and beyond and how contemporary artists and writers by creating reparative historical models reinsert the presence of a full range of black humanity beyond the usual suspects and including themselves.

## **A NEW CARTOGRAPHY FOR EUROPEAN MEMORY: AFROEUROPEAN YOUTH IN CONTEMPORARY PORTUGAL**

*Sílvia Roque & Mónica Silva*, University of Coimbra

The paper will be built on findings of a larger research project – MEMOIRS children of Empires and European Postmemories (ERC Grant/ CES University of Coimbra) – that aims to show how the decolonization process affected and continues to affect Europe as a conglomerate of former colonial powers through memories transferred to subsequent generations by both the former

colonized and the former colonizer. On interrogating the concepts of transgenerational memory and postmemory —MEMOIRS will be adapting them to postcolonial studies and contexts. This paper will address the circulation, and intersection, of categories of Blackness, Africanness and Europeanness in contemporary Portuguese society. Our focus lays on the analysis of private discourses and artistic representations of young Afro-Europeans born and/ or raised in Portugal after the twilight of Portuguese empire in Africa (1961-1974). Through them we intend to analyze the role of “intergenerational transferred memories” on hyphenated identifications and “senses of belonging”, showing postmemories as an active legacy.

The increasing of public representation of these legacies, in arts (literature, music, cinema, plastic and performative arts), in public and social events, in activist’s movements and their connection to the web of global circulation, is a public statement of inherited relational spaces. Writers, plastic artists, performers among others afro-european artists, confronts Portugal with its legacy and demands postcolonial responses for the contemporary.

### **TRANSNATIONAL REVISIONS IN/OF BRITISH THEATRE(S) OF RACE**

*Theresa Saxon, University of Central Lancashire & Lisa Merrill, Hofstra*

This paper explores contemporary revisionings of nineteenth century performers and playwrights who were specifically engaged with theatre as a space for the investigation of race and racialisation. We focus specially on Black American actor, Ira Aldridge (1807-1867) and Brandon-Jacobs-Jenkins’ 2014 Obie award winning play, *An Octoroon*, an adaption of Anglo-Irish playwright, Dion Boucicault’s infamous melodrama of race, *The Octoroon* (1859).

From New York, Ira Aldridge, travelled to England in 1824, specifically to become an actor. He arrived at a time the country was engaged in debates on race, racialisation, slavery and abolition, in politics and in media platforms and his legacy has been, most recently explored in Lolita Chakrabarti’s 2012 play, *Red Velvet*, which has been performed, to acclaim, across the Transatlantic. The play focuses on Aldridge’s appearance in the role of Othello at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden. Aldridge is a pivotal figure for discussions of attitudes globally that continue to inform and redefine contemporary critical approaches to race and representation.

*An Octoroon* also stands as an important attempt to complicate the representation and performance of antebellum black lives in the contemporary theatre, which plays on Dion Boucicault’s original inflammatory melodrama, which was staged in 1859, shortly after the execution of John Brown and featured a mixed-race white-appearing heroine in love with her white Anglo-American cousin. The play opens in London in Spring 2017, giving us the chance to explore audience reception of messages in a British as well as an American context.

Thus, in this paper, we explore the legacy work of theatre and how subsequent dramatic events have harnessed performative interventions in transnational arenas of political activism.

### **AFRO-GERMANIC FIGURES: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

*Marilyn Sephockle, The Women Ambassadors Foundation*

From Saint Moritz to Anton Wilhelm Amo and Angelo Soliman, major figures of African descent have contributed to the history, the philosophical thought and the political life of German speaking countries. Their contributions to their respective society are diverse, multifaceted and eclectic. They range from Saint Moritz defiance of the Roman Emperor to save the German people to Anton Wilhelm Amo’s Treaty on “The Rights of a Moor in 18th century” or to Angelo Soliman’s precious advice to Emperor Joseph II. In addition to highlighting the afore-mentioned figures, the present paper also examines the importance of including the study of Afro-German figures in curricula, from elementary to higher education. The paper further establishes that such an inclusion is and integral part of current discussions on race and identity in Europe.

In respect to Anton Wilhelm Amo specifically, the paper restores the African-German philosopher in his rightful place, namely at the center of the major enlightenment debates of 18th century Germany and at the epicenter of racial discourses in the humanities.

## **AFRICAN MUSICIANS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO FINNISH MUSIC HISTORY**

*Elina Seye, Global Music Centre & Menard Mponda, Fest Afrika Festival*

This presentation deals with the work of immigrant musicians that have moved to Finland from different African countries. Although the African diaspora communities in Finland are relatively small until today, there have been several professional African musicians living in Finland from the late 1980s and early 1990s onwards, with the number increasing after the turn of the century. Despite their collaborations with well-known Finnish musicians and their activities as teachers and event organizers, the names of these African musicians are often not mentioned in writings on the history of Finnish music. Thus, despite the wide range of musical scenes and genres they have been working in, their contributions remain largely unrecognized.

We will first present some examples of the ways in which African musicians have influenced other musicians and the development of certain musical genres in Finland. Then, we will discuss the questions why the work of these musicians remains in the shadows and what could be done to make their contributions visible also to people not involved in the marginal "afro" and "world music" scenes. Ultimately, the question is whose work is included in representations of Finnish music history. The presentation is based on a research project dealing with the history of African musicians in Finland (Seye), the practical experiences of working as an African musician in Finland (Mponda) and of organizing the Fest Afrika festival as well as other events.

## **"BRITISH-YEMENIS: LIVING IN ENGLAND AND PARTICIPATING IN YEMENI POLITICS"**

*Mohammed Sharqawi, IRIS - EHESS*

Although settled in the United Kingdom since the 1950s, British-Yemeni charity workers have built a specific discourse on the lack of recognition and thus the invisibility of the Yemenis in the British public space as a group, unlike recognised national, ethnic and religious minorities.

To invert the sense of not belonging to their host country, these individuals use the British multiculturalism in order to develop their own assets by creating and participating within institutions that offer spaces in which they can circulate in parallel to the national and local British institutions. These institutions are characterised by the ties that British-Yemenis maintain with Yemen. In such spaces, they can get acquainted with and soon affected by the political developments taking place in their country of origin. Additionally, after the revolution that erupted in Yemen in 2011, the civil war increased charity workers and users' interest in the Yemeni political and social situation which also drove them to participate in their country of origin's political changes. Furthermore, the political polarisation taking place in Yemen offers a context in which British-Yemenis' involvement has an impact within the group they belong to in their host country. If their institutions can be apprehended as spaces to participate in Yemen's national politics, they also constitute spaces in which they can face their withdrawal from the British political field. Consequently, these spaces may accentuate the isolation of their group from its social environment.

Our case study recalls Elias's categories of the established and the outsiders just as the "us and them" dyadic approach when a group's belonging to the host country is questioned. When that group's "difference" is noted, the reaction of its members consists in juggling with and redefining their sense of belonging to their social environment.

## **A NEW FRONTIER OF ANTI-COLONIAL STRUGGLES: INVISIBLE SPACES, MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS, AND "DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS" IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

*Asil Sidahmed, Medecins Sans Frontieres / Doctors Without Borders*

Du Bois' term, "double consciousness" provided a definition of the black experience in the 20th century, highlighting the psychological impact of subjugation through describing the experience of carrying the burden of perspectives of both oppressor and oppressed. Whereas double consciousness in Du Bois' context referred specifically to the genesis of master-servant

relationships in the United States, this paper will look, over a century later, at the theories on race that can emerge from the experience of double consciousness when being Black, British, Muslim and a humanitarian aid worker in the Middle East.

Firstly, the paper explores how critical race studies' theories can be applied in predominantly Arab settings where a language of racism is absent in public discourse. Using the case study of a pilot project in Beirut, 2016 that used design tools to create interactive spaces in Beirut, the paper argues for the creation of black spaces as a mode of resistance to the invisibilisation of migrant domestic workers' skills.

Secondly, the paper provides an exposition on the broader race politics in the Middle East which remains a significant gap in the literature, in order to position Black Europeans within a broader context of and history on narratives on blackness. This exposition ranges from the kafala system, a system of modern slavery common in the Middle East, to popular terminology in Arabic for blackness. The exposition demonstrates the need to expand the theorizing on African diaspora beyond the Black Atlantic.

Finally, the paper examines the "positionality" of Black Europeans vis a vie African migrant workers, arguing that a deconstruction of white privilege as the basis of European citizenship and identity is needed to challenge the existing narratives that criminalise migrants.

### **SOCIALIST BROTHERS (AND SISTERS) – ON THE PERFORMATIVITY OF STATE VISITS BETWEEN SOCIALIST AFRICAN AND EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES**

*Nadine Siegert, Iwalewahaus, University of Bayreuth*

Highly publicised photographs show African socialist state leaders such as Samora Machel (Mozambique), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania) or Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana) meeting politicians of the former Eastern Bloc such as Nicolae Ceaușescu (Romania) or Erich Honecker (GDR) during official state visits. These visits took place both on the African continent and the socialist European countries from the 1960s until the 1980s. The visits followed a strict political protocol that included similar events such as visits to important venues, greetings of the masses, wreath laying, official dinners and parades. But they also left space for smaller and bigger mistakes in the protocol, unexpected moments in between all the greeting, embracing and brother-kissing. This paper presents an iconographical interpretation of these political performances through a deep analysis of photographic and filmic material. The images will be contrasted with the political ideology that framed these visits, asking if the iconography was able to support ideological motivations or if it rather destabilized it. Special attention is given to the dimension of relation that was created through the political performance. How is a certain political masculinity performed here that creates a desire of the masses? What does the dynamic and formal composition of the images unveil about the dominant visual codes that worked as epistemological frames for visual culture of that time. Where does the (self-)representation of the African statesmen differ from their European counterparts?

### **A DROP OF MIDNIGHT IN THE MIDSUMMER LIGHT: ON BEING BLACK AND SWEDISH, IN DIALOGUE WITH JASON "TIMBUKTU" DIAKITÉ**

*Ryan Skinner, The Ohio State University*

In Sweden today, it is difficult to speak of "black" culture and identity. In part, this is because a predominant discourse of colorblindness precludes such racialized qualifications of the cultural and personal, dismissing them as "politically correct" sentiments of an exogenous (American) identity politics, or, more disturbingly, as reifying discredited notions of biological and genetic racialism. Reticence around "race" in the arts is also the result of a historical process, through which modes of black vernacular expression have been re-signified as simply "popular" and, thus, part of a broader field of Swedish culture. In this way, musical genres such as jazz, soul, and hip hop have been largely (though not completely) incorporated into the Swedish cultural mainstream. In recent years, however, an emergent "Afro-Swedish public culture" has coalesced around artists who have drawn explicit attention to the anti-black racism and Afro-diasporic cultural heritage that

inform their lives and work, troubling taboos surrounding specifically black experiences and expressions in contemporary Swedish society. In this paper, I will address the public culture of one such artist, Jason “Timbuktu” Diakit . Broadly, I will reflect on the way Jason Diakit  writes, speaks, sings, and raps at the vanguard of what he calls a “cultural awakening” of a non-white, but no less Swedish political society—a doubly, or, more accurately, multiply conscious community of Swedes with non-Europeans roots, “born and raised,” as Jason puts it, “in the in-between.” More specifically, I will consider Jason’s complex and public embrace of black popular culture and his own black identity, and why that matters in a nominally colorblind and increasingly xenophobic country on the northern fringes of Europe.

### **“BECOMING AN “AFRO-RUSSIAN”: IN PURSUIT OF OTHERNESS”**

*Tatiana Smirnova*, CESSMA (Paris-Diderot-INALCO-IRD)

This paper examines how Africans, settled down in Russia just after the collapse of the Soviet Union were brought to survive in the turmoil of the profound transformations of the early 1990th while progressively conquering recognition in the socio-economic cultural and even political arena. Drawing from biographical interviews and semi-participant observation, the contribution focuses on experiences, hopes, dreams and struggles of Africans from Mali, Benin, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Rwanda, Nigeria and Cameroun that nourished the being of “Afro-Russian”. Some of them have become artists, journalists, university professors, musicians and businessmen; they are noticeable persons in social, media, intellectual and economic space in Russia, establishing different connections with Europe and their respective countries of origin through commerce, organization of musical festivals (Afro-Fest, Afrika-Moskva, Gatingo) painting exhibitions, etc. How did they manage to attain these positions in a former land of the declared “people’s friendship” but with growing racism after the collapse of the Soviet Union? The paper will examine this question by showing how Africans are subverting and bring into play their “otherness”. It will also demonstrate conflicts and divergencies that progressively emerge among different personalities out of different practices and beliefs of “otherness”. These tensions are implicitly nourished by a relatively new narrative of “Afropolitanism” as well as by a specific political configuration and geopolitical claims of Russia.

### **MULTILINGUAL PRACTICES OF SENEGALESE IMMIGRANTS IN ROME: CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITIES AND NEGOTIATION OF BOUNDARIES**

*Maya Smith*, University of Washington

While African immigrants and Italians of African descent have become more visible in Italian society since the 1980s, Italian culture and identity are still largely understood by majority white Italians in terms of race, nationhood, and family history. Overwhelmingly absent from these national discussions concerning the inclusion of immigrants, foreign residents, and so-called “non-Italian” citizens in society are the very people at the center of these debates. To give voice to some of these individuals, this paper explores through a sociolinguistic lens how a specific group, the Senegalese community in Rome, conceptualizes and understands identity formation as foreigners and as linguistic, racial and ethnic minorities.

Through analysis of code-switching in qualitative ethnographic data collected in the spring of 2010, this presentation shows how multilingual practices illustrate these immigrants’ understandings of inclusion/exclusion and how these notions intersect with ideas about blackness. For instance, in marking blackness through various languages with the words *noir*, *nero*, and *black*, some interviewees code-switch to emphasize feelings of exclusion. Meanwhile, other interviewees switch between languages in creative and humorous ways to challenge notions of national identity, arguing for a dynamic understanding of nationality that exists through sites of negotiation. This presentation therefore calls into question the static, exclusionary narrative of national identity and shows the ways in which the Senegalese community in Rome inserts formulations of blackness in the conversation. By comprehending how immigrants

perceive their identities and the sites in which these identities are constructed, one gains a more multifaceted perspective on what it means to be Italian and engage with an Italian space.

### **METICCIATO: MAPPING THE BLACK MEDITERRANEAN**

*SA Smythe, University of California*

The notion of Italian postcolonial literature has remained firmly outside of the margins of the Italian canon since its initial circulation in 1990. Postcolonial and Black Italian literature increasingly include works from writers of mixed ethnoracial and religious backgrounds who challenge the hetero-national framework of migration and citizenship. These writers destabilize the Italian literary canon and write themselves into the transcultural exchange undergirding a significant part of the Mediterranean borderscape. Defining this literature as “postcolonial” and extending the term to a condition of contemporary Italy that historicizes and interrupts colonial histories of erasure is integral to cultural, literary, and sociopolitical analysis. Cedric Robinson, political scientist and philosopher of the Black Radical Tradition, notes that the historical consciousness of a people in crisis “provided the possibility of more virtuous action, more informed and rational choices.” Invoking Robinson’s scholarship, this paper discusses the configuration of the Black Mediterranean as one such site of possibility in the face of Europe’s perceived “crisis of migration” and the literary responses to that phenomenon.

In my reading of Italo-Ethiopian writer Carla Macoggi’s novel, *Kkeywa: storia di una bimba meticcica* [*Kkeywa: Story of a Mixed Girl*] (2011), I propose a theory of *meticcio*, or “mixedness” as one analytic that can help us to consider gendered and racialized accounts of belonging in the novel’s form and content. Macoggi writes in a style that can be described as part memoir, part theatrical script, and part self-reflexive manifesto. The title is often used as a pejorative term in Amharic meaning “half-breed,” or “clear skin.” These are epithets that the young protagonist Fiorella must struggle against throughout a series of linguistic trauma and sociocultural upheavals between Italy and Ethiopia. I read the Black Mediterranean through the mixed and diasporic spheres Fiorella operates within during the forced process of Italianization she undergoes, as both her gender identity and “*kkeywa*” racial identity mark her as “Other” in each space she inhabits. Macoggi’s writing poses powerful resistance against Italy’s colonial fantasies of whiteness, patriarchy, and other normative regimes. Further, the histories and possibilities narrated by the growing corpus of Black Italian postcolonial writers help us to rethink global Blackness and Mediterranean identity as means of transformative collective liberation.

### **THE ICONS OF INTERNATIONALISM: RUSSIAN-AFRICANS IN THE LATE SOVIET UNION**

*Natalia Starostina, Young Harris College*

One of the most important ideological pillars of the Soviet Union was the emphasis on internationalism and equality among nations. The Soviet civilizing project was supposed to deliver unprecedented national brotherhood where all nations were represented as the members of one big family. At the same time, there was certain ambiguity as far as the category of race was concerned. In Soviet propaganda, there was a great emphasis on unresolved racial tensions in the USA. While stressing ideological differences between the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union, Soviet leaders always emphasized that the African-Americans felt solidarity with the U.S.R.R. Soviet pioneers were asked to write postcards and to send letters to express their solidarity with the African-Americans. Moreover, in 1960, the Soviet Union opened the doors of the University of the Friendship of Peoples named in the honor of Patricia Lulumba, and each year approximately three thousand new students from Africa came to enter their education in the University. Several Russians of African descent enjoyed the status of cultural icons such as, for instance, James Lloydovich Patterson (born in 1933), whose fame began with the cult film *Circus*. James became the officer on a Soviet submarine and later published several collections of verses. Soviet propaganda tirelessly contrasted the privileged position of Russo-Africans and African emigres in comparison with African-Americans. At the same time, there was certain hypocrisy in this rosy

portrayal of racial relations in the U.S. because in the popular imagination, there was a great deal of racism towards various ethnic groups and, especially, peoples from Asian republics of the U.S.R.R. My presentation will, therefore, analyze the representations of the Black people in the Soviet Union and will incorporate individual stories of African-Russians in the U.S.S.R.

### **'WE CARRY IT WITHIN US'**

*Helle Stenum*, House of Memory Production / Roskilde University

*'The great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it.....'*

*History is literally present in all that we do.'*

James Baldwin

The paper discuss and displays (sections of) a new documentary directed and produced by the presenter. The documentary, 'We Carry it Within US' deals with the mutual colonial past between Denmark and the US Virgin Islands in the Caribbean. The documentary investigates collective memory and juxtaposes the colonizer's lense with that of the colonized in order to question what and who are commemorated and how is the story about the past told in different contexts.

Through a journey between US Virgin Islands, Denmark and New York City, Afro Caribbean Virgin Islanders and New Yorkers tell other versions of the colonial history than the official national Danish version. Versions that emphasize rebellion, liberation, human trafficking and enslavement, pain, resistance etc..

Chenoa Lee, a young Virgin Island student, travels to Denmark to see how she and her history is represented in Danish national museums and archives. She finds the 1787 drawing of the of enslaved people in ships from Africa to the Caribbean, and discovers with disbelief a current Danish educational video game on the transatlantic slave trade representing enslaved people as blocks in a tetris game.

The Documentary also follows the Virgin Islander artist La Vaughn in the USVI and Denmark, working and reflecting on the concept of a fragmented history, split and assembled through the powers of colonial and postcolonial times, and transatlantic connections.

Through out the documentary Dr. Temi Odumosu, Dr. Khalil G. Mohammad and other scholars are interviewed in order to explain colonial history and power relations, and how inequality, racialisation, terminology of domination etc. has a continuity into the present days.

### **EXPERIENCES OF RACISM AMONG SOMALI FAMILIES IN FINLAND AND CANADA**

*Marja Tiilikainen*, University of Helsinki

This presentation will explore and compare experiences of racism among Somali families living in Finland and in Canada. 'Somali families' refers to families where parents came to a country of resettlement as migrants from Somalia.

In this presentation, I will examine how Canadian Somali and Finnish Somali interlocutors speak about, experience and navigate discrimination and racism that they have encountered due to their ethnic or religious background. I analyze the experiences of both first and second generation Canadian and Finnish Somalis, and also make some tentative comparative conclusions about the experiences of the Somali communities in the two countries.

The presentation is based on thematic interviews with Somali parents and their children (young adults). In addition, it draws on focus group discussions with mothers, fathers, young men and young women as well as some additional interviews. The data was collected in greater Toronto and Helsinki areas in an Academy of Finland funded project "Islam and security revisited: Transnational Somali families in Finland, Canada and Somalia" (2012–2017).

## **CLANDESTINE TOURS OF EUROPE: FABIENNE KANOR'S FAIRE L'AVENTURE (2014) AND PAP KHOUMA'S I WAS AN ELEPHANT SALESMAN (1990)**

*Anna-Leena Toivanen, University of Liège*

Mobility is a recurrent theme in contemporary African literatures. Because of the entangled histories and presents of the two continents, mobilities between the Africa and Europe continue to inspire African authors in their works. With their representations of Afro-European mobilities, contemporary African and African diasporic authors not only contribute to the re-writing of Europe from an African perspective, but also draw attention to the diversity of forms that Afro-European mobilities currently take.

In this paper, I focus on two African diasporic literary texts addressing the question of Afro-European mobilities from a popular/grass root perspective of cosmopolitanism to which I will refer as "débrouillardise cosmopolitanism" in order to highlight its resourceful, unorthodoxly creative character. The works in question are Fabienne Kanor's novel *Faire l'aventure* (2014) and Pap Kouma's fictionalised autobiographical account *I Was an Elephant Salesman* (first published in Italian in 1990). Both texts represent the clandestine travels of their Senegalese protagonists from Africa to different destinations in and across Europe, including locations that seem somewhat marginal from the continental perspective such as the Canary Islands, or such currently widely mediated "gateways" to continental Europe as the isle of Lampedusa. Kanor's and Kouma's protagonists are represented as resourceful clandestine African adventurers, trying to gain their livelihood in the shadows of globalisation as sellers of diverse "African" knick-knacks or working on Southern European vegetable plantations. In my reading, I am particularly interested in the texts' ways of constructing certain locations as marginal and outside "real" Europe, and others as destinations "worth" pursuing. Another focus is on how the texts redefine and revise the concept of cosmopolitanism in the context of clandestine Afro-European mobility.

## **HIDDEN IN PLANE SITE**

*Jennifer Tosch, Black Heritage Tours*

Black Heritage Tours, founded by Jennifer Tosch in Amsterdam (2013) and in New York State (2016) is a fully-immersive, experiential cultural heritage tour situated within the context of de-colonial /De-colonizing the Mind (DTM) framework (Hira and Small, 2014). In my presentation I will explore the ways in which the tour and its narrative developed intersecting the DTM framework with the concepts of 'cultural archives' (Said, 1993 and Wekker, 2016).

The tour and subsequent co-authored Mapping Slavery Project publications: *Amsterdam Slavery Heritage Guide* (2014) and *Mapping Dutch New York: Including the History of Slavery, African and Native American Heritage* (published, Aug 2017) leverages an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach to exploring its main themes: Black presence (history in the metropole from the 16th Century forward) that includes 'sites of memory' related to: race/institutional racism, slavery, resistance, emancipation and abolition; trade/profit (colonial products and Africans treated as commodities); museums and archives. The cityscape and museums hold the 'cultural archives' of Dutch colonial history. Through the de-colonial/DTM lens, I'll explore how these themes 'hidden in plane site' reveal the layered and complex inter-relations between the Netherlands and its former colonies.

## **ON SOME "DOCUMENTS OF EURO-AFRICAN CONTACT" (MACGREGOR)**

*Mischa Twitchin, Queen Mary, University of London*

There are, no doubt, many good reasons why Afro-European histories tend to ignore museums formerly known as ethnographic and now re-invented as museums of "world culture(s)". But it is perhaps curious, nonetheless, that the long-established presence of African art and artists at the heart of the European metropolis is so readily overlooked outside of critical museology. With respect to the display of artefacts that Neil MacGregor has called "documents of Euro-African contact", how does the organisation of the British Museum's African Galleries offer what Tylor (in

1881) called “object lessons” for considering the potentials and limitations of a (so-called) “post-colonial” re-visioning of such museums? How does the distribution (or segregation) of what are separately identified as ethnographic, historical, and contemporary objects simultaneously express and repress an Afro-European presence? Addressing what Paul Gilroy calls “Britain’s racial conscience”, how might we view the “evidence” of the ethnographic legacy here in terms of decolonisation? How might transversal approaches to material claims of “British” possession fracture the supposed universalism of the Museum, as founded upon others’ cultural dispossession? And how does dialogue with diaspora communities become manifest through changed conceptions of these objects’ agency? Finally, what might be the implications of the British Museum African Galleries’ dedication to Henry Moore for a possible re-conceiving of the relations between ethnography and art, in which the “contemporary” is not necessarily as cosmopolitan as the curators clearly wish? How might these galleries offer object lessons, furthermore, for understanding European citizenship in the future?

### **WRITING LONDON LIFE: ZADIE SMITH, FRAGMENTED SUBJECTIVITY AND THE POSTCOLONIAL BILDUNGSROMAN**

*Jesse van Amelsvoort, University of Groningen*

The Bildungsroman, or novel of formation, is often regarded as a literary form too connected with Western liberalism to be able to represent stories of postcolonial development. One problematic aspect concerns the way in which a Bildungsroman moves towards closure, thereby obscuring other possible developments; however, as Stella Bolaki (2011) has argued, it is possible to unsettle such closure and thus come to a theory of the postcolonial Bildungsroman. Zadie Smith’s work has been characterized by some (e.g. Stein 2004) as novels of formation. In this paper, I consider how Smith’s novels represent fragmented subjectivity in the contemporary postcolonial metropolis, specifically London.

Especially in *NW* (2012), Smith experiments with modernist styles to depict the lives of young multiracial Londoners growing up, referencing structures and elements from James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*. This approach has been termed “metamodernism” by some critics (e.g. James and Seshagiri 2014), referring to a continued appreciation of modernist aesthetics of nonlinearity and disruption. Such an aesthetic mode stands in stark contrast to the narrative flow of traditional Bildungsromane, which emphasize the individual’s route from youth into maturity and, ultimately, subjecthood. Moreover, a postcolonial individual’s socialization into European society is hindered by racialized obstacles not encountered by the genre’s traditional protagonists.

The postcolonial Bildungsroman suspends the story’s telos, instead exposing the concept of Bildung itself as historically contingent. In *NW*, linearity and progress are done away with in favour of circularity and suspended time. Socialization happens not into a society that reverberates with notions of postcolonial melancholia (Gilroy 2004) and sets people off against each other, but on a smaller scale, connected by amity and affiliation. Only then can they become what Mikhail Bakhtin refers to as “a new, unprecedented type of human being” (1986, 23).

### **“IF A BOOK IS LOCKED THERE’S PROBABLY A GOOD REASON FOR THAT”: METAREFERENCE IN OYEYEMI’S WHAT IS NOT YOURS IS NOT YOURS (2016)**

*Carolien Van Nerom, Vrije Universiteit Brussel*

Although black authors of Britain including Bernardine Evaristo, Helen Oyeyemi and Caryl Phillips are increasingly subscribing to metareference (i.e. a mode of writing that offers a reflection on fiction within a fictional work), until recently black British literary criticism has prioritised socio-political issues and considered form mainly as a means to a content-oriented end. This paper answers the rising call for more aesthetic readings of black British literature (Arana 2007; Boehmer 2010) by exploring Helen Oyeyemi’s use of metareference in her 2016 short story

collection *What Is Not Yours Is Not Yours*. Werner Wolf's metareferential model (2009) will be used to demonstrate how Oyeyemi's short stories reference both themselves (direct metareference) and fiction in general (indirect metareference). Stories explicitly reference one another, with characters and spatial settings recurring throughout the volume in different temporal contexts. Additionally, such aspects as genre, narration, focalization and the reader's active cooperation are thematised by means of structural devices, ranging from a conspicuous second-person narrator and parody to stories within stories (i.e. *mise-en-abyme*). In a field predominantly read for its socio-political considerations, unlocking the aesthetics of this book, in which the key is a telling motif, will leave no doubt about the literariness of Oyeyemi's volume.

## **WEST INDIAN, AFRICAN/AFRO-CARIBBEAN, ETHNIC MINORITY, BLACK BRITISH: MEDIA AND LABEL IDENTITY IN BRITAIN**

*Olive Vassell*, University of the District of Columbia

We walk around with media-generated images of the world, using them to construct meaning about political and social issues

(Gamson, et al, 1992)

West Indian, African/Afro-Caribbean, Ethnic Minority, Black British. All these nomenclatures have been used and some continue to be used to describe multi-generational African diaspora communities in Britain. These terms refer to a myriad of ethnicities from disparate geographical locations. While most of these terms have been placed on these communities negatively by the dominant, majority population (Sigelman et al. 2005), some minority groups have embraced a hyphenated label to represent their political, social and cultural realities of being British, and something else.

The British media has played a pivotal role in this process. It has not only reflected political and social driven naming – proposing, imposing and accepting names (Martin 1991), but it has struggled to create and justify its own labeling criteria. Its role is especially important since like most media, it is responsible in part I would argue, for the social construction of reality by helping to create the “pictures in our heads.” (Giles, 1996). Media consumption does after all frame our communication about identity and group and community formation. [Morley and Robins, 1995; Dayan, 1998, Morley, 2000]

Focusing on practices at three newspapers– the liberal Guardian, the conservative Daily Telegraph and the black-owned Voice – this paper compares and contrasts how media outlets label blacks in Britain.

## **WOMEN CROSSING THE EURO-AFRICAN BORDER OF MELILLA**

*Maya Vinuesa*, Universidad de Alcalá

Women's experiences before and after crossing the Melilla, one of the two Spanish enclaves in Africa, have not received much attention in the media or within our own academic work. My decolonial practice here has been to listen to some of these women, collecting a body of narratives about journeys told by African women, and narratives of living in both sides of the border told by Moroccan and Spanish women. Their focus was on experiences of extreme violence (including rape and racism), and also on certain webs of solidarity.

Although African women (from the Maghreb and South of the Sahara) and European women tend to lead segregated lives in this frontier colony, some of them interact with each other at particular spaces which seem to allow negotiations of Africanness and Europeanness to take place. Otherwise the women from these diverse groups have little interaction other than commercial or administrative transactions, mainly due to deep social inequalities and their different needs and interests. A considerable number of Spanish women posted to Melilla (like their Spanish male colleagues) generally devote their efforts to personal advancement and economic progress in the state administration —as civil servants and staff of the army, the police and the Guardia Civil, or as teachers and health professionals—, i.e., as part of the gatekeeping system of the European

frontier in the African continent. Another set is composed of Amazigh and Arabic Moroccan women who remain within their family circles and differ greatly in economic status and professional situation —ranging from owners of businesses to other jobs such traders, beauticians, shop assistants or house servants. Finally, the African women who have arrived in Melilla from countries South of the Sahara after overcoming illnesses, face survival at the the CETIs (Centres for Temporal Stay of Immigrants), deportation or further exploitation.

After examining these women's concerns and claims, I focus on their interaction, and the quality of these encounters and networks of solidarity —including NGOs— among these women. Are these initiatives capable to alter their position in their rather fixed roles -gatekeepers, servants, victims- within the current capitalist system? Are there any joint efforts to overcome the violence they all -African and European women- experience? Do these networks and initiatives open up any spaces for these women to escape from Achille Mbembe's prediction about the erasure of the distinction between humans and things?

### **BLACK ITALIANS AND THE MYTH OF 'ITALIANESS'**

*Anita Virga, University of the Witwatersrand*

In this paper I analyze how the presence of migrant intellectuals within the Italian dominant discourse during the last decades has shaped the discussion around the Italian identity, and what it means to be Italian.

Recently, migrant writers and directors have challenged the notion of Italianess showing mixed race characters who claim to be Italian despite their racial and religious difference. Texts by Amara Lakhous, Cristina Ali Farah, Gabriella Ghermandi and Igiaba Scego helped Italy to reconsider its own history and looking at its geographical position as being in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea and the border between Europe and Africa. Today mixed characters help to reflect on the hybrid identity that has always characterized the Italian identity.

However, these writers are also still kept in the space of the difference by being labeled as 'migrant' writers instead of Italian writers. A similar process is denounced by Fred Kuwornu, the director of *Blaxploitalian*, in the cinema field, where black people – even the ones born in Italy – are confined to the role of the immigrant in films and television shows. Kuwornu revindicates a representation of the black body as someone within the Italian society and not an Other.

In my conclusion I point out how the myth of Italianess is a constructed one and the Italian identity has always been a liminal one within the European space, something of which the black body has always been part.

### **RE-IMAGINING BLACKNESS: CHALLENGING THE INVISIBILITY OF BLACK WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES WITH RACISM IN EUROPEAN POST-COLONIAL SOCIETIES**

*Sophie Withaekx, Vrije Universiteit Brussel*

In European post-colonial societies, renewed processes of nation-state building increasingly centralize the values of secularity, gender equality and freedom of expression as the core of European identity. Processes of oppositional identity-building have therefore increasingly focused upon Muslims as the essential and unassimilable 'other'. Muslim women's bodies in particular have become the ideological battleground for asserting Western moral superiority and 'proving' the backwardness of the religious, unfree and gender oppressive Muslim 'other'. This focus has led to the hypervisibility of Muslims in racist discourse, and the relative invisibility of black minorities and in particular black women in political and academic debates. Nevertheless, racism specifically targeted at black people – Afrophobia – is on the rise and gendered and sexualized notions of blackness continue to feed into self-conceptions of the Western self. Drawing on interviews with black women in Belgium, this paper explores how black women's experiences with racism are shaped by current configurations of race, gender and otherness. How is 'blackness' differentially perceived and experienced, in relation to the current hypervisibility of Muslim (and supposedly non-black) women? How does the focus on certain religious and racial identities translate into the intersectional invisibility of black women's experiences with racism?

How can black women challenge the “racial contract” that assigns them a subordinate place in a racial hierarchy and legitimizes the various forms of oppression they face? How do different forms of racism (dis)allow the development of solidarity across ethnic, religious and gendered boundaries? I argue that enhanced insight into the interplay of different forms of racism and into their impact on the everyday lives of minoritized communities, is of crucial importance for addressing the challenges posed by rising nationalism and racism in post-colonial European nation-states.

## **BECOMING BLACK GERMAN – IMAGINING NEW WAYS OF BEING THROUGH TRAVEL AND TOURISM**

*Silvia Wojczewski, Université de Lausanne*

Travel and the encounter with the unfamiliar can incite a person to rethink, reaffirm or readjust her or his own position in the world and one’s relationships with others. In this paper, I frame tourism as a space to practice and reflect upon one’s own identities on an intersubjective and relational level; tourism can be a way to challenge what you think about yourself or others, to experience yourself differently and it can also be a way to reaffirm a sense of self through specific practices and encounters. How are identities practiced during travel? Does tourism open a space to re-negotiate identities? Through an ethnographic study of people who identify as Black German or Afro-German, and focusing on the role that travel and tourism has for their lives, I am exploring the relation between travel and identity. Since the development of Afro-German or Black German political movements in the 1980s a lot of new ways of practicing and representing Black identities in Germany have emerged. Presenters of TV or internet shows like Afro.Deutschland or Schwarzrotgold.tv travel around the country to document Black lives in a German national context. In many accounts and organisations of Black identities in Germany there is also a strong emphasis on transnational influences such as the poet Audre Lorde and her impact on the ADEFRA network. This work explores how the experiences a person makes while travelling inform and challenge her sense of self. How are experiences of travel and tourism involved in the construction of Black identity? How is “Black” or “German” practiced, challenged and negotiated during travel? In order to capture and understand personal travel experiences within the context of a particular life, the ethnographic approach includes biographic interviews and participation in touristic travels.

## **BEING, BELONGING, BECOMING: INTERGENERATIONAL AFROPEAN IDENTITY MAKING**

*Rob Worrall, University of Sunderland; Louise Worrall, Free Artist & Elliot Worrall, Free Scholar*

**Purpose:** The construction and meaning of identity is in a constant state of flux and open to evolving, often contradictory, political and positional interpretations in relation to time, history and personal experience. This intimate study surfaces the added complexity involved in the construction of mixed-race self-identities through the intersection of race, gender and close familial intergenerational relationships. Grounded in the lived experience of a mixed-race father, son and daughter, this exploratory research aims to improve our understanding of the process and purpose (for self) of mixed-race self-identity construction.

**Research Design:** A social constructionist and interpretivist methodology was adopted for this study. In an innovative approach, each of the authors participated as both researcher and researched. Using intersectionality as a heuristic device, the three semi-structured interviews were built around four simple but provocative questions enabling the exploration of thoughts and feelings about self, identity and belonging.

**Research Findings:** The research identified inter-generational tensions within self – and between self and others - as the extent to which one embraces or rejects an ascribed position as the ‘other’. These tensions are exacerbated by an individual’s sense and depth of belonging which is often predicated on positive or negative human interactions within place. ‘African-ness’ becomes

more significant as the differentiation of day to day lived experience where the common denominator is colour or another physical attribute. .

Contribution to knowledge: Surfacing, exploring, and dealing with the contradictions of accepting and embracing being 'different' and at the same time yearning to belong in relation to others is an inherent condition of the mixed-race lived experience. Beyond an intellectual and physiological perspective, despite the inherent ambiguities involved, the identity work involved in constructing a mixed-race self identity serves not only as a rite of passage, but also as necessary coping mechanism.

## **RACISM IN FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS: A CRITICAL ACCOUNT**

*Nikolay Zakharov, Södertörn University*

In assuming that racism is solely a part of the West's histories and horizons Soviet and post-Soviet polities have largely been ignored. This presentation discusses a set of case studies drawing on a wide range of new evidence and a new theoretical framework which inserts the post-Soviet experience into our global understanding of racialisation. The self-contradiction within colonialism - to civilize its others while also securing their otherness - has been transformed within the communist experience into an internal civilizing mission intended to secure the privileged otherness on the global stage. The repercussions of this program continues to provide national specificity to the engagement with the concept of race and racism in post-socialist societies. Investing in 'whiteness' after the Berlin Wall-era has represented a western, modernist approach for guaranteeing that post-Soviet states will find their own proper place in the dominant discourses of the developed and civilized First World. Thus, racialization in post-Soviet states operates in a peculiar fashion. On the one hand, it serves in moulding the new nations and is the constitutive process of modernity. On the other hand, racialization processes maintain the idea of exceptionality, that is they became firmly established during many decades of communist power, that the socialist nations are nations created as part of an 'alternative modernity'. The strategies described above aim at the transformation of the western system of knowledge in the post-socialist space, and they imitate, to differing degrees, the master discourses of the 'colonizer'. This nevertheless leads to a creative, interactive processing of the original discourse that activates the strategies of racialization. In this context self-racialization can be understood as an attempt to rediscover the authenticity that has been lost - or stolen by communists.

## **AFROPEAN MOVES: BLACK EUROPEAN LANGUAGES OF RESISTDANCE**

*Layla Zami, Humboldt-University of Berlin & Oxana Chi, Oxana Chi Company*

In this presentation, we invite you to explore the complexity and diversity of Black European languages of expression. Focusing on the body as a site and source of power, it examines strategies of memory, identity and diaspora in dance productions of the 21st century. The paper includes a live performance by Oxana Chi.

How can dance translate subjectivity into movement? How can Afro-Europeans use the stage to confront and transcend markers of race and gender? How does corporeality connect past, present and future in ways that differ from other forms of language?

Dance can be used as an innovative tool to re-tell stories that challenge dominant historical narratives. With people, and especially women of color's history of erasure, their mere bodily presence on stage is already subversive and enacts resistance to marginalization in hegemonic Western timespaces. Transcultural diasporic subjectivity on stage allows otherwise excluded bodies, stories and positionings to become visible and alive. What moves this quest is the will to question the moving body as a counterhegemonic site of embodied knowledge, and a dynamic medium of intervention into the linearity and stiffness of dominant constructs of time, space and identity.

The paper moves along lines of meaning in the solo work of Afro-German dancer-choreographer Oxana Chi. Arguing that her current repertoire performs "a presence that is history, a history that is present" (Natasha Tinsley Omise'eke 2008), it shows how Chi fills crucial gaps in European historiography, and re-presents the past in relation to present power relations and Afrofuturist

imaginings. Connecting the work of Oxana Chi to other examples such as the Afro-French dancer-choreographer Chantal Loïal, and to recent theoretical investigations of Blackness (Kelly 2016; Wright 2015), we ask what happens when the Afro-European body moves center stage and translates discrimination, trauma and empowerment into movement.

## **I'M NOT A FOREIGNER, I'M JUST EXTRA-BLACK! - AFROITALIAN HIP-HOP AS A MEANS OF STIRRING PEOPLE'S CONSCIENCES**

*Enrico Zammarchi*

In recent years, the consolidation in the presence of second and third generations of AfroEuropeans has fostered a change in the perception of ethnicity. Looking at post-national Europe, scholar Fatima El-Tayeb describes the “ethnic” as both hyper-visible and substantially invisible. It is hyper-visible when second and third generations are associated with discourses on migration flows, and with news that portray migration as a catastrophe of inhumane proportions. In turn, it is rather invisible when those same subjects are “positioned beyond the horizon of national politics, culture, and history, frozen in the state of migration through the permanent designation of another, foreign national identity that allows their definition as not Danish, Spanish, Hungarian, etc.” Through these forms of silencing, post-national ethnic minorities are relegated to the condition of everlasting outsiders.

Interestingly enough, El-Tayeb mentions hip-hop as a youth-led culture that often aims at contrasting this condition. Focusing on Italian rap, my essay explores how Afroitalian artists have been discussing the issue of invisibility, and the sentiment of “foreignness in their own nation” that they increasingly perceive as a result of generalized institutional indifference. Starting with an overview of the old school in Afroitalian hip-hop, I discuss the contemporary example of all-Afroitalian record label called Mancamelanina Records—literally Lack-of-Melanine Records—whose members’ sarcastic motto is “Non sono straniero, sono solo stra-nero!” (“I’m not a foreigner, I’m just extra-black!”). In this context, hip-hop becomes fundamental in offering spaces for contesting the type of Italianness portrayed by mainstream media, allowing Afroitalians to voice their social distress while providing new, ethnically hybrid versions of Italianness.

### **#REWRITETHEINSTITUTE AND #DECOLONIZETHEMUSEUM - BARREL OF A HASHTAG**

*Simone Zeefuik, #RewriteTheInstitute & #DecolonizeTheMuseum*

In October 2016, 800 posters were spread across Amsterdam. Each of them pictured one of the 180 people who represent the 180 different roots whose fruits sweeten this city. The Netherlands is high on carefully constructed myths of diversity, inclusivity, tolerance and gezelligheid, Dutch cosiness. Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the country’s largest and Blackest cities, simultaneously amplify and wreck these illusions. Both are home to various Black communities that seldom, if at all, see themselves reflected in the national institutes that produce knowledge, define art, “uphold traditions” and dictate norms. Our presence within the walls of these institutes is not to be mistaken for proper representation.

Black people? For Dutch museums we might be part of a promotional campaign or a project but never of the profile. White curators often speak about us, seldom with us. Our (hi)stories are structured and constructed in a way that pleases Dutch people’s colonial analyses of Blackness. These assumptions limit Blackness to the narrowness of white imagination. For example: When the Amsterdam based ethnographic Tropenmuseum (Museum of the Tropics) put together their Africa wing, the museum chose five topics: status, religion, masks, shapes and contact. They could have chosen:

1. People, cultures and migration,
2. Languages and language families,
3. Pre-colonial empires and post-colonial politics,
4. Resistance movements and political icons plus
5. Literature and oral traditions.

The information that's (re)produced with regards to Black histories, contemporary realities, our futures and how these three connect, is subject to the comfort and fragility of mainstream white people. They are The Expected Visitor, the one whose gaze is considered neutral and whose frames of reference aren't to be rattled... let alone shook. To fight the institutionalized anti-Blackness that allows Dutch institutes to ignore, ridicule and otherwise dehumanize Black people, I co-initiated #DecolonizeTheMuseum (2014) and started #RewriteTheInstitute (2016).