

Notes on panellists

Verónica Posada Álvarez

Verónica Posada Álvarez studied Graphic Design in Medellín, Colombia. In 2017 she graduated from her MA in Arts and Visual Culture at the University of Westminster in London-England. Currently, she is studying a PhD in Cultural Studies, in which she works with the Latin American diaspora in London. The research is part of CREAM (Research Centre in Education, Arts, and Media) at the University of Westminster. Her presentation focuses on images of the former Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre, particularly the project 'My Elephant Story' carried out by Latin Elephant and the community around Elephant and Castle. She worked as a Museographer and other cultural institutions. Verónica has 6 years of experience as a lecturer; she has taught courses related to Design and Sociocultural Theories. Verónica has a massive interest in contemporary artistic practices that aimed to raise political concerns to improve the life of communities at risk within cities, throughout visual culture. Additionally, Verónica believes in Collage and Photography, as a means of expression from which is possible to expose concerns as a woman within society.

Monia Channoufi

Monia is Lecturer in migration studies at the *Institut Supérieur des Sciences Humaines de Tunis* (ISSHT)–the Department of English & International Relations–and a Doctoral Researcher at the University of Westminster. Drawing on qualitative research carried out on Tunisians in London, her paper offers an understanding of *home* as flexible and diasporic identities as (re)negotiated in relation to multiple transnational connections. Through a thematic analysis of data, the research shows four categories underlying the participants' identities and demonstrate how they negotiate their affiliation to two nations within different frames of reference – the country of origin and the host society. The paper demonstrates that participants maintain cultural repertoires and selectively deploy them while they skip from one sphere of belonging to another. It is argued that the multiplicity of *here* and *there* is a prerequisite for maintaining an *identity balance* for Tunisians in London, *bridging* emotional ties and *bonding* with the homeland. From a transnational perspective, the study offers an understanding of the dialectic of *here* and *there* as a creative form of transnational identities and challenges the perception of *home* and *identity* as fixed. In line with studies on diasporic identities, this paper shows that transnationalism shifts migrants' sense of belonging and fosters a 'third space' for self-recognition and belonging.

María José González Domínguez

María teaches Spanish Language and Literature at the University of Westminster and at the Cervantes Institute in London. She is studying PhD at the University of Alcalá, in Spain. As a researcher, she is interested in literature, digital humanities and cross-cultural studies from a decolonised perspective. Her presentation will be on literature in Spanish written by authors on diaspora, discussed through the representation of space and migration in the novels 'The Gurugu Pledge', by Equatoguinean writer Juan Tomás Ávila Laurel, 'Mayimbo' by Equatoguinean writer Ángela Nzambi and 'An Abandoned Plot', by the Moroccan writer Mohamed El Morabet, followed by brief screening of a documentary. It argues that decolonising the teaching of Spanish language and culture is a necessary step towards creating a more inclusive and equitable educational system that requires a multi-faceted approach. One way to accomplish this goal is by incorporating African literature into the curriculum and analysing the impact of literary text and arts to (re)create new realities from a decolonised gaze. By decolonising the teaching of languages and its culture, educators can empower students to become more culturally aware and empathetic global citizens.

Reasat Faisal

Reasat is a Doctoral Researcher in Economics at the University of Westminster. Prior to starting his PhD in September 2020, he received a MA in International Planning and Sustainable Development and a BSc in Electrical and Electrical Engineering. He was also a seasoned development professional and Commonwealth Scholar with 9 years of national and international work experience in international development. His PhD research is aimed at identifying different migration paths and the multifaceted transition process that migrant experiences due to climate change and environmental degradation in the context of Bangladesh and its RMG sector. His paper focuses on the lives of the climate-induced migrants of Bangladesh who are migrating to Dhaka city, not by choice but rather due to the natural calamities that they and their families have to go through and the weak and unplanned political infrastructure in their localities. It asks the question of *'What are the transitions that climate-induced migrants experience from the point of displacement from their hometown to the urban centre followed by the impact of national-level transition towards low carbon development initiatives?'* A qualitative research method is used to interview climate-induced migrants working in the RMG sector and living in Dhaka city to understand their life transitions and migration history, their own perceptions regarding their vulnerabilities and what aspires them in their decision-making process.

Maren Hahnfeld

Maren is a filmmaker, doctoral researcher at CREAM, University of Westminster, and senior lecturer at Kingston University. In her presentation, Maren will first screen the 12 min film *A Grave on the Border* (2023), a personal account of war, flight, and refuge by Syrian artist Rose Alkhaled. Filmed in a small town in Germany, this short immerses the viewer in the world of Rose's memories that surface at night. Rose tells her story through emotive sculptures made out of newspaper and performance of her poetry. After the screening, Maren is going to discuss their first encounter and subsequent relationship, fundamental to the production of this intimate film. How did they collaborate, make creative decisions and work with Rose's request to avoid showing her face? While Rose wishes to share her work with a wider audience and use this film to communicate her experiences, her daily life is marked by trauma which was brought to life through the making of this film. Maren will address the question of how to join these conflicting intentions as a researcher while placing utmost importance on the welfare of the participant.

Xiao Ma

Xiao is a Doctoral Researcher in the School of Humanities, University of Westminster. She is also the Cultural Projects Manager and Researcher of China Exchange, a UK registered charity based in London's Chinatown. Her research examines the cultural complexities of London's Chinatown and challenges the homogenising portrait of Chinatown as a bounded urban space essentially containing an 'ethnically other' Chinese community. Her paper investigates London's Chinatown as a 'lived everyday heritage space' for London inhabitants beyond the simplistic dichotomies between 'Chinese' and 'non-Chinese', 'sameness' and 'difference', 'authenticity' and 'inauthenticity'. Through ethnographically researching how business operators and visitors of diverse backgrounds use and symbolically experience London's Chinatown, it shows that Chinatown is associated with diverse experiences, contested meanings, and conflicting views that cannot be contained within the imagined ethnic and cultural confines. People actively create everyday heritage and authenticate their lived experiences through ongoing sensory, emotional, and bodily interactions with the material surface of Chinatown. This paper argues that anti-essentialist, decentred, plural, and multi-layered narratives would make it possible to acknowledge the cultural complexities of this contested central London neighbourhood.

Linda Mannheim

Linda is in the second year of her PhD in English Literature. She is the author of three books of fiction: *This Way to Departures*, *Above Sugar Hill*, and *Risk*. Much of my work (both fiction and non-fiction) explores memory, identity, and the concept of belonging to a particular place or community. Her paper asks the question of 'How does Britain remember its treatment of Second World War refugees? And what impact does that have on how people argue for the rights of refugees and migrants now?' As the Second World War began, 70,000 German and Austrian nationals -- the majority of them refugees -- were labelled 'enemy aliens' and sent before tribunals to determine whether or not they posed a security risk to Britain. By 1940, approximately 28,000 of them had been sent to internment camps on the Isle of Man, Canada, and Australia. Yet, there is very little popular memory of this in Britain today. By identifying and analysing the few history broadcasts and media accounts of the British interment of Second World War refugees, this paper explores how the mythology of Britain as a place that 'once welcomed refugees' affects the lives of people with a migrant background in Britain today. The identification of World War Two refugees as suspected foreign agents is echoed in today's detention of asylum seekers as well as the [UK's Prevent Strategy](#), which monitors people, mainly from minority ethnic and religious communities, "for potential signs of radicalization".

Mary Martins

Mary is a British-Nigerian artist animator and filmmaker based in London and a Doctoral Researcher at CREAM, University of Westminster. Her doctoral research explores the oral tradition and cultural landscape between Nigeria and Brazil, experimenting with animation as an interdisciplinary tool to explore the rich history of where these two countries converge. In the presentation, Mary introduces *Made in Thamesmead* (2023), a commissioned visual arts research project and film funded by Peabody and the Black Culture Collective. It explores the migration and settlement of the black African and Caribbean community in Thamesmead, Southeast London, from the late 1970s to present day. With a focus on migration and belonging, the animated documentary explores the evolving cultural landscapes and architectural history in Thamesmead, combining animation with moving image and archive material. To achieve the goal, She has drawn on collaborative experimental working methods from her own practice to allow for new forms of interactions between artists, local residents and the intended audience. The documentary also addresses issues around racial tensions and resistance in the 1980s and 1990s, in relation to movement and presence of the African and Caribbean community and in particular, the social movements that formed as a result of the death of Stephen Lawrence and Rolan Adams. This practice-led research project incorporates multiform artworks reflecting on the voices of the local residents to promote the learning of Black British history and culture.

Giulia Pepe

Giulia is a researcher and a teacher of Italian as foreign language and as heritage language. She was awarded her PhD by the University of Westminster in 2019. Her doctoral research is published in *New Migrations, New Multilingual Practices, New Identities: The Case of Post-2008 Italian Migrants in London* (Palgrave Macmillan 2022), in which she investigated the multilingual practices of post-2008 Italian migrant in London. She is currently working on two research projects: one aims at exploring linguistic practices and linguistic challenges of Italian migrants working in Italian hospitality in London in the post-Brexit and post-Covid era; the second one explores migratory trajectories and use of language of onward Italian-Brazilian migrants living in London.

Khaoula Zitouni

Khaoula is Professeur Agrégé of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Letters (Tunis). Since 2020, she has been taking part in the Erasmus+Migrants Project, and through which, obtained a scholarship to pursue Doctoral Studies at the University of Westminster. In the presentation, Khaoula shares her PhD dissertation that engages with the (counter) narratives produced around the phenomenon of boat migration across the Pacific Ocean in the past decade. It particularly examines Kurdish Iranian writer-journalist-activist and film maker Behrooz Boochani's prize-winning refugee memoir, *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison* (2018), against the backdrop of Australia's mainstream news media's de-humanising constructions of 'boat migrants', in the aftermath of the Rudd government's implementation of its 'zero-tolerance' policy towards what it has termed 'illegal maritime arrivals'. Behrooz Boochani, one of the asylum seekers who had been denied entry into Australian territory and subsequently detained in Papua New Guinea, wrote a powerful personal, poetic and political narrative wherein he challenges the different manifestations of the Border concept, his condition of 'involuntary immobility' and forced displacement. Combining tools from Discourse and Narrative analysis, this paper demonstrates the extent to which Boochani's autobiographical account could be read as a form of 'writing back' to Australia's (neo) colonial border practices and hegemonic discourses around unauthorised 'boat migrants' and as an experimental subversion of its fabricated 'deterrence spectacle'.

Chairs and discussants

Dr. Saskia Huc-Hepher (Reader in Diasporic & Digital French Studies, Humanities)

Prof. Terry Lamb (Professor of Languages and Interdisciplinary Pedagogy, Humanities and CETI)

Dr. Federica Mazzara (Reader in Cultural Studies, Humanities)

Dr. Lilian Miles (Readers in Sustainability and Social Enterprise, Organisations, Economy and Society)

Dr. Margherita Sprio (Reader, Westminster School of Arts and Acting Director of the Graduate School)

Dr. Cangbai Wang (Reader in Chinese Studies, Humanities)