



# **TRANSLATION AND THE ARCHIVE**

**Performance, Practice, Negotiation**

**International Symposium**

**Düsseldorf, 31 May - 2 June 2023**



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## THEME AND FORMATS

This symposium explores the interdependency of repositories of memory (archives) and their translation. We assume that the relationship between acts of translation and the construction of archives is multidirectional, and that translation and the archive are mutually constitutive: Not only do archives require translation but acts of translation also require archives in turn. Fields in which the mutual dependency of translation and the archive come into focus are typically those in which either one or the other is felt to be deficient, in which the repositories that surround us do not match our own experience, in which available repositories contradict each other, or in which the translational process is incomplete.

Translation, as concept and as practice, obligates us to consider what is translated, who is authorised to translate, and how the status of translation determines cultural capital. Practices of translation are never ‘innocent’, they become acts of positioning, and the questions we bring to them are vital in order to understand the hegemonic situations that enable or mar the construction of, or access to, repositories. Who translates for whom, between which languages, and for what purpose? How are cultural repositories maintained, or transformed, under divergent experiences of migration and dispersion? What can take the place of the archive for communities that have been suppressed or annihilated, whose languages have never been recognized as languages just as their cultures have never been recognized as cultures and their members have never been recognized completely as human? (Trouillot)

Our understanding of the terms ‘archive’ and ‘translation’ is broad and extends to non-written, immaterial repositories and beyond linguistic acts of transfer. We do not see translation as a derivative, second-order engagement but as a fundamental process of the human condition (Bassnett). As ‘translating animals’ interacting in myriad social situations, we rely on the repositories we have access to – and when we find these lacking, we search for, or construct, such repositories through translation and while translating. The difficult, yet omnipresent, attempts at constructing archives through translation and translating ourselves into archives can have transgenerational implications for individuals and social structures.

Yet, how we negotiate this space, how we do or do not do translation, often remains invisible and abstract. Literature abounds with poignant engagements and articulations of the struggle to ‘come into translation’, to find the “Ark of the Covenant” in hidden, unlikely, impossible places (Walcott). The new understanding of biographical, autobiographical, and memoiristic writing as ‘ego documents’ testifies to the understanding of an individual as archive, an externalisation of the realisation that “the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do.” (Baldwin) This notion also manifests itself in orature and performance practices that emphasise the individual voice and body as repositories of knowledge that can be opened in specific situations of narration, declamation, and performance. We are interested in the ways in which writers and artists act as translators, and transcribers, constructors and critics of a wide range of archives.

Our symposium seeks to draw attention to the urgency of translation in light of a pluriverse of archives as well as the potential of translation in light of unearthing, constructing, and

negotiating hidden yet powerful archival forces. The ways in which acts of translation – or the absence, invisibility, or hyper-visibility of processes of translation – play themselves out have ongoing and proliferating implications for individuals and affect convivial structures within a society. We hope to shed light on some of these implications through dialogue across disciplines as well as artistic and translational practices.

The symposium is preceded by a PhD workshop which brings researchers from different disciplines and local, national, and international research contexts together in an exchange about aspects of their current work that are related to the symposium's concerns.

The academic programme is complemented by a tie-in series of readings and performances that will not only draw attention to the ways in which the contingencies and hegemonies of archives affect literary and artistic production, but also to the translational aspects inherent in writing, performance, and any artistic practice, to their limitations and affordances.

*Marc Caplan & Eva Ulrike Pirker*

***Works Cited***

James Baldwin, *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Non-Fiction 1948-1985*. New York: St. Martin's P, 1985.  
Susan Bassnett, "Prologue," in: *Tradition, Translation, Trauma*, eds. J. Parker & T. Mathews, Oxford: OUP, 2011.  
Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston: Beacon P, 1995; 2015.  
Derek Walcott, *The Star-Apple Kingdom*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1979, 25-28.

## KEYNOTE LECTURE

**Wednesday, 31 May, 19:30 hrs., Haus der Universität (HdU), Main Lecture Hall**

Ato Quayson

### **Tragedy, Disputatiousness, and Postcolonial History: From the Greeks to George Floyd**

The lecture will proffer a theory of postcolonial tragedy drawing specifically on the nature of violent disagreements in the history of tragedy and the relationship of these to different forms of historical transition. It will shed light on colonial history's relationship to the fraught individual processes of self accounting and on the ambiguation of attitudes to individual and collective pasts as well as to the problematic status of feelings and affects in relation to these. It will also be argued further that the relation between the two domains of history and affect can serve as model for understanding of postcolonial tragedies' characterological types and their sociopolitical conditions. The lecture will draw on examples from a wide range of traditions and cultures but will settle on the works of Chinua Achebe and Toni Morrison to anchor the main terms of the argument.

Ato Quayson is the Jean G. and Morris M. Doyle Professor in Interdisciplinary Studies and Professor of English at Stanford. He is the author of numerous books, among them the award-winning Oxford Street, Accra: City Life and the itineraries of Transnationalism (2014), and, recently, Tragedy and Postcolonial Literature which deploys postcolonial literature to explore the links between suffering and ethics in its examination of tragic philosophy from the Greeks through Shakespeare to the present era.



Prof. Ato Quayson's keynote lecture is realised in cooperation with, and support by, Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung Nordrhein-Westfalen.

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TRANSLATING THE ARCHIVE: TIE-IN SERIES OF READINGS AND PERFORMANCES

Wed, 31 May, 18:00 hrs., Haus der Universität, Main Lecture Hall

**Esther Dischereit**

**Flowers for Otello. On the Crimes that came out of Jena**

Writing as intervention – For *Flowers for Otello* Esther Dischereit took part in the debates and investigations on right wing extremist crimes in Germany. More specifically, she observed the work of the investigation committee set up by the German parliament in the wake of the NSU murders, a series of killings of individuals seen as immigrants at the hands of the ‘National Socialist Underground’ after previous investigations had been marred by the intelligence service and police. *Flowers for Otello* is dedicated to the victims and survivors of this series of killings, bomb attacks and robberies which went on for 13 years. It is a text of lamentations honoring the victims - and a work of prosecution.



Esther Dischereit was born in Heppenheim, Germany, and lives in Berlin. In its many different forms, her work presents a visceral pathography of post-war continuities, crises, spectres and trauma. She has published fiction, poetry, journalism and essays, and is a prolific writer for the radio, the stage and other artistic media. Between 2012 and 2017 she was Professor of Language Arts at the University of Applied Arts in

Vienna. She has been a Fellow at the Moses Mendelssohn Centre for European and Jewish Studies in Potsdam and the DAAD Chair for Contemporary Poetics at New York University, 2019. In 2009 she received Austria's prestigious Erich Fried Prize for her writing. Her latest collection of poems is *Sometimes a Single Leaf*, translated and introduced by Iain Galbraith 2020. *Blumen für Otello. Über die Verbrechen von Jena* (*Flowers for Otello. On the Crimes That Came out of Jena*, published in English translation in 2022), was nominated as a radio play for the ARD Medienpreis. In 2021 she edited *Hab keine Angst, erzähl alles. Das Attentat von Halle und die Stimmen der Überlebenden* (*Don't be afraid, tell everything. The assassination of Halle and the voices of the survivors*).



Thursday, 1 June, 18:00 hrs. Theatermuseum, Studiobühne, Jägerhofstr. 1

## **Oxana Chi & Layla Zami**

### **I Step on Air**

A piece in memory of the Ghanian-German poet, activist and scholar May Ayim. Conceived by Oxana Chi, the piece features dance, poetry, theater and live-music to celebrate and commemorate Ayim's achievements at the intersection of feminist and antiracist struggles. Chi's movements enter in dialogue with Zami's sounds, and her interpretation of May Ayim's poetry in an English translation. A timely meditation on the power of words to transform society, past and present.

The piece was originally developed by Oxana Chi as a commissioned work for Humboldt-University and toured internationally at events and venues including: Black German Heritage & Research Association-University of Toronto (Keynote Performance), Bielefeld University, City University of New York, TU Berlin, Rutgers University, Delhi International Queer Theater and Film Festival, Dixon Place, Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance, In\*Vision Festival Brandenburg, La Maison D'Art New York.



*Concept, Choreography, Dance: Oxana Chi; Music and Poetry Performance: Layla Zami (saxophone, kalimba, sounds); Text: May Ayim; English Translation: Marion Kraft*

Oxana Chi is a Nigerian-German dancer, choreographer, curator, writer, filmmaker, and educator. Her repertoire comprises 20 productions, with two commissioned works for Humboldt-University and one commissioned work for the Jewish Contemporary Arts Festival (Dagesh/LBI 2021). Her international tour history includes Volksbühne Berlin, HAU, Societätstheater Dresden, 1014 NY as well as several universities and festivals. Honors and awards include: Ambassador of Peace (DOSHIMA 2016), Abrons Arts Center AIRspace Grant (NYC 2017-2018) and being listed in The Dance Enthusiast's A to Z of People Who Power the Dance World (NYC 2018). She initiated programs such as the Moving Memory Symposium Festival (TU Berlin) and the TANZnews series (Werkstatt der Kulturen). She was a Curator for the International Human Rights Art Festival and a guest faculty in the Dance Department at New York University (2022).

Dr. Layla Zami is an interdisciplinary academic and artist. She is Postdoctoral Researcher in Performance Studies at Freie Universität Berlin (SFB 1512 / Institut für Theaterwissenschaft) and Adj. Associate Professor of Humanities and Media Studies at Pratt Institute. Zami is the author of *Contemporary PerforMemory* (2020), and her work orbits around the nexus of cultural memory, performance, diaspora, language, and spacetime. She obtained her PhD at Humboldt-University, where she also earned a Teaching Award, and was a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University. As an Interdisciplinary Resident Artist with Oxana Chi Dance & Art, Zami creates and performs music, sounds, spoken words and theater. Born in Paris in 1985, she is rooted in a Jewish-German-Caribbean heritage.

**Monday, 19 June, 18:00 hrs. Heine Haus Literaturhaus Düsseldorf**

Caryl Phillips

### **A House is not a Home**

The American author, James Baldwin (1924-1987) lived in Paris between 1948 and 1957. Thereafter, he divided his time between the United States, France and Turkey, before returning to France (this time to Provence) in 1971, where he lived until he died in 1987. Caryl Phillips interviewed him for the BBC, in St Paul de Vence, in 1983. For the next four years they remained friends, frequently seeing each other in France, Britain and the United States. During that first interview, he asked Baldwin about the ‘price’ of exile. Now, nearly forty years after Baldwin’s death, he reflects on Baldwin’s answer to that question, what it means to be a man of African origin in Europe, and how artists are always in danger of losing sight of themselves and their purpose.

Caryl Phillips is a multiple award-winning novelist, playwright and nonfiction author. Born in St. Kitts, he grew up in the north of England and now lives in the USA. He is presently Professor of English at Yale University and an Honorary Fellow of The Queen’s College, Oxford University. Among his numerous works are such plays as *Strange Fruit* (1980), *Where There is Darkness* (1982) and



*The Shelter* (1983), the radio play *The Wasted Years* (1984), adaptations for the large and small

screen, and the novels: *The Final Passage* (1985), *A State of Independence* (1986), *Higher Ground* (1989), *Cambridge* (1991), *Crossing the River* (1993), *The Nature of Blood* (1997), *A Distant Shore* (2003), *Dancing in the Dark* (2005), *Foreigners* (2007), *In the Falling Snow* (2009), *The Lost Child* (2015), and *A View of the Empire at Sunset* (2018). His works of non-fiction include *The European Tribe* (1987), *The Atlantic Sound* (2000), *A New World Order* (2001), and *Colour Me English* (2011). He is the editor of two anthologies: *Extravagant Strangers: A Literature of Belonging* (1997) and *The Right Set: An Anthology of Writing on Tennis* (1999). He is the recipient of prestigious fellowships and the Martin Luther King Memorial Prize, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, Commonwealth Writers Prize, the PEN/Open Book Award and the Anthony N. Sabga Caribbean Award for Excellence (selection). His work has been translated into over a dozen languages.

The series of literary events and performances is realised with generous support from Kunststiftung Nordrhein-Westfalen.

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## PROGRAMME

### Wednesday, 31 May

**12:00-16:00 hrs. HdU, BSR 2**  
PhD Workshop with Ato Quayson

*Reading and Performance*  
Chair: Iain Galbraith

**17:00 hrs. Lobby**  
*Registration, refreshments*

Esther Dischereit  
**Flowers for Otello. On the Crimes that came out of Jena**

**17:30 hrs. HdU, Main Lecture Hall**  
*Conference Opening*  
Marc Caplan & Eva Ulrike Pirker

*Keynote Lecture*  
Chair: Marc Caplan

Ato Quayson  
**Tragedy, Disputatiousness, and Postcolonial History: From the Greeks to George Floyd**

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### Thursday, 1 June

**9:15 hrs. HdU, Main Lecture Hall**  
*Welcome, housekeeping*

**11:30 hrs.**  
*Panel 2*  
Chair: Eva-Maria Troelenberg

**9:30 hrs.**  
*Panel 1*  
Chair: Martina Nicklaus

Jessica Kirzane  
**Not Written on Water: Preserving the Literary Recovery of Yiddish Women's Writings**

Irina Dumitrescu  
**Binders Full of Women: Chaucer and the Failures of the Archive**

Sophie Duvernoy  
**Historical Memory and the Task of Translation in Gabriele Tergit's *Effingers***

Andrée-Anne Kekeh-Dika  
**Reshuffling the Archive: Organic and Portable Repositories in Caribbean Literature**

**12:30 hrs.**  
*Lunch break (on location)*

**10:30 hrs.**  
*Coffee Break*

**13:30 hrs.**  
*Plenary 2*  
Chair: Eva-Maria Troelenberg

**11:00 hrs.**  
*Plenary 1*  
Chair: Martina Nicklaus

## Thursday, 1 June (continued)

**14:00 hrs.**

*Panel 3*

Chair: Marion Aptroot

Anita Norich

**Writing in Tongues: Yiddish  
Translation Matters**

Rolf Kailuweit

**Translational Identities – The Spanish  
Archives of the Catalan Bourgeoisie in  
the 19th Century**

**15:00 hrs.**

*Coffee Break*

**15:30 hrs.**

*Plenary 3*

Chair: Marion Aptroot

**16:00 hrs.**

*Panel 4*

Chair: Eva Ulrike Pirker

Suzanne Scafe

**Category Failure: Beryl Gilroy and the  
Shadow of the Archives**

Birgit Neumann

**Spectral Multilingualism - Ghostly  
Presences in the Anglophone Archive**

**17:00 hrs.**

*Break*

**18:00 hrs. Theatermuseum,  
Studiobühne, Jägerhofstr. 1**

*Performance*

Oxana Chi & Layla Zami

**I Step on Air**

**20:00 hrs. Hüttenstr. 30**

*Conference Dinner at Cuccini's*

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## Friday, 2 June

**9:00 hrs.**

*Plenary 4*

Chair: Eva Ulrike Pirker

**9:30 hrs.**

*Panel 5*

Chair: Volker Dörr

Layla Zami

**Afro-German Im/Possibilities:  
Negotiating Power Through Literary  
and Performative Interventions**

Sarah Phillips Casteel

**From Image to Text: Translating the  
Photographic Archive of Black  
Experience under Nazism**

**10:30 hrs.**

*Coffee Break*

**11:00 hrs.**

*Plenary 5*

Chair: Volker Dörr

**11:30 hrs.**

*Panel 6*

Chair: Marc Caplan

Ana Délia Rogobete

**Thinking History, War, and Trauma  
Through Fictional Archive: Walid Raad  
and The Atlas Group**

Christine Richter-Nilsson

**Reconstructing the Archive of a Polish  
Shtetl**

**12:30 hrs.**

*Lunch break (on location)*

**Friday, 2 June (continued)**

**13:30 hrs.**

*Plenary 6*

Chair: Marc Caplan

**14:00 hrs.**

*Panel 7*

Chair: Vera Elisabeth Gerling

Belén Santana and Cris Travieso

**Lost in Paperwork. Literary  
Translators in Spanish State Archives  
(PARES)**

Adriana X. Jacobs

**Translation as Avoda: Hebrew  
Literature and the Work of Translation**

**15:00 hrs.**

*Coffee Break*

**15:30 hrs.**

*Plenary 7*

Chair: Vera Elisabeth Gerling

**16:00 hrs.**

*Closing Plenary*

Chairs: Marc Caplan & Eva Ulrike Pirker

**Producing and Exchanging ‘Kinds’ of  
Knowledge: Reflections and Discussion**

Vera Elisabeth Gerling, Andrée-Anne  
Kekeh-Dika, Christina Slopek, Katrijn van  
den Bossche

**17:00 hrs.**

**Symposium ends**

*Note on the format: The breaks (lunch, coffee, evenings) will be used as space for debate, discussion and feedback. Debates on each panel will ensue in the plenary following the break after the panel. Speakers will be asked to comment on the questions and feedback they received during the breaks at the beginning of the ensuing plenary sessions.*

## ABSTRACTS

Sarah Phillips Casteel

### **From Image to Text: Translating the Photographic Archive of Black Experience under Nazism**

In a little known chapter of World War II, Black people living in Germany and occupied Europe found themselves caught up in the Nazis' genocidal campaign. In the absence of public commemoration, starting in the late 1980s African diaspora writers began to produce fictional works that imaginatively recover the stories of this neglected victim group. Strikingly, a number of these works were sparked by their authors' discovery of archival photographs of Black people in interwar and wartime Europe, including images of Black concentration camp prisoners. These photographs sharply reveal the unintelligibility—or to put it in Michel-Rolph Trouillot's terms, the *unthinkability*—of Black wartime history.

In this paper, I will examine how creative writers have translated archival photographs into texts, thereby constructing a literary repository of Black wartime memory. These fictional works and the photographs that inspired them are mutually constitutive. Just as the literary narratives are catalyzed by the photographs, so the photographs are dependent on the literary narratives for their contextualization. Imaginatively reconstructing historical and biographical details that fall outside the photographs' frames, the texts supply the testimonies of Black victims that are largely missing from the archive. At the same time, some such works also call into question the recuperative capacity of art. Through acts of intermedial translation, African diaspora writers disrupt the exclusionary logic of the archive and decolonize wartime memory.

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Irina Dumitrescu

### **Binders Full of Women: Chaucer and the Failures of the Archive**

At the beginning of the Legend of Good Women, Geoffrey Chaucer's bumbling alter-ego "Geoffrey" is accosted by the furious God of Love. Geoffrey stands accused of hurting lovers, and especially women, by translating works that put them in a bad light, like the story of unfaithful Criseyde. A merciful queen defends Geoffrey: his crime was less because he was only translating the hateful words of others. His punishment: to write a collection of stories about good women who were wronged by men.

To do so, "Geoffrey" translates from several archives available to him: Ovid's *Heroides*, a series of female-voiced laments, the *Metamorphoses*, with its stories of violated women, and Boccaccio's *On Famous Women*, a collection of short biographies. To fulfill his penance, he often changes his sources, ultimately making a deliberate failure of his project. By highlighting his own mistranslations, he draws attention to the flattening effect of the genre he imitates. Collections of women's lives he seems to suggest, invariably make an argument about female nature, one in which women are reduced to stereotypes. Merely inscribing them into an archive denies women full personhood in a way not true for men. The work is an implicit defense of his novelistic *Troilus and Criseyde*, with its nuanced portrayal of a single, complex woman.



Sophie Duvernoy

### **Historical Memory and the Task of Translation in Gabriele Tergit's *Effingers***

My contribution will discuss translation from a practical perspective, focusing on the task of translating *Zeitgeschichte* in Gabriele Tergit's 1951 novel *Effingers*. This novel, which follows four generations of a German-Jewish family from German unification under Bismarck until the Holocaust, is written from Tergit's unique vantage point as a member of the German-Jewish bourgeoisie in Berlin. *Effingers* sought to capture a world that had been lost with the rise of fascism, but one that was intimately familiar to Tergit. Because of her training as a reporter and staff writer at the *Berliner Tageblatt* in the 1920s and '30s, Tergit's writing practice is highly journalistic and often draws on newspaper articles she had previously written. She often made only minimal modifications to her articles before incorporating them into a larger narrative. Indeed, a glimpse into Tergit's *Nachlass* in the DLA Marbach shows that she frequently collaged, cut, and moved about texts that she had already written and incorporated them into her fiction; her typescripts attest to this almost montage-like practice. Her fiction thus becomes an archival repository of historical observations, embedded within an overarching plot, and functions as a 'lost archive' of German Jewish bourgeois life in its full complexity. In my contribution, I will discuss these writing practices in more detail, before asking what it means, in 2023, to engage with this repository of highly specific historical information, and what my task as a translator is in making it accessible to an anglophone readership.

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Adriana X. Jacobs

### **Translation as *Avoda*: Hebrew Literature and the Work of Translation**

The cultural value of translation notwithstanding, translators across centuries have struggled to make a living as translators. My talk will interweave the letters of the German philosopher Walter Benjamin and the Hebrew writer Yosef Haim Brenner, highlighting their perceptions of and experiences with the challenges (material, physical, emotional) of translation. This presentation will consider as well the relation between *'avoda*—the modern Hebrew word meaning labor, employment, job—and translation. But in Hebrew, the word also applies to spiritual labor: service, sacrifice, worship. These spiritual meanings shape the understanding of *'avoda* that was central to the Zionist ethos of nation building, and further shaped the status and value of translation in the Hebrew literary economy of the early twentieth century.

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Rolf Kailuweit

### **Translational Identities - The Spanish Archives of the Catalan Bourgeoisie in the 19th Century**

In the second third of the 19th century, Catalonia underwent an ideological change. A dominantly integrist position, which defines Catalonia as a Spanish province that nevertheless claims leadership within Spain, gives way to an autonomist position that demarcates Catalan identity from Spain. Curiously, this change in discourse comes at a time when Catalan is losing



its function as the written language of everyday life. Schooling, at least in Barcelona, is now in Spanish, and the literacy in the traditional Catalan written language that existed until the early 19th century is lost for several generations. The awareness of a crisis emerges, which is only gradually overcome during the second third of the 19th century, when Catalan re-establishes itself as the language of poetry and later also of historicist prose. Only towards the end of the century, Catalan was finally reformed in its norm and taught again as a written language. In this respect, the emergence of an autonomist discourse is tied to the use of Spanish and its (later) translation into Catalan.

Using archival materials, this contribution examines the emergence of an autonomist Catalan identity by means of translation.

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Andrée-Anne Kekeh-Dika

### **Reshuffling the Archive: Organic and Portable Repositories in Caribbean Literature**

My contribution will focus on some of the ways in which Caribbean contemporary writings “reshuffle” the notion of the archive. One of my points of departure stems from John Agard’s “How Aunty Nansi Reshuffled Prospero’s Books” (*Come Down Nansi*, 2000). I have also been inspired by scholar Carole Boyce Davies’ essay, *Caribbean Spaces: Escape Routes from Twilight Zone* (2013). In their different ways, both poet Agard, and scholar Boyce Davies bring useful insight to help rethink the creative and theoretical ways of preserving self and memory safe and “portable” (Boyce Davies, 2013).

Drawing mainly on the short form and concrete poetry as figurative sites of performance and memory containers, this contribution will try to ponder the forms and ways of keeping self and raw memory alive, concrete and lasting. I will try to demonstrate how organic matter, mundane objects, intangible material make their surreptitious traces and forays into text as they symbolically coalesce and compress themselves into portable, archival repositories.

#### **Corpus:**

J. Agard, J.S. Alexis, F. D’Aguiar, D. Dabydeen, J. Kincaid, A. McKenzie, O. Senior.

#### **Works Cited**

Agard, John. *Come Down Nansi in Weblines*, 2000.

Boyce Davies, Carole. *Caribbean Spaces: Escape Routes from Twilight Zones*, 2013.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Corpus*, 2008.

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Jessica Kirzane

### **Not Written on Water: Preserving the Literary Recovery of Yiddish Women's Writings**

In her keynote remarks at the 1995 conference in New York on “*Di froyen: Women and Yiddish: Tribute to the Past, Directions for the Future*,” Yiddishist and poet Irena Klepfisz remarked that “women’s history is too often written on water.” She explains, thinking both about feminist activism and about feminist literary recovery work, that “I know that no matter how excited we all are about our current work, much of what we are trying to do today already existed for an earlier generation.” With a sense of urgency and also anger at all that had been

lost, she points to the way that the archive of women's writing is unstable, knowledge about women easily falls out of favor and out of print, and new generations must work first to recognize that it exists before they can perform the essential acts that give literature vibrancy such as reading, appreciating, translating, and teaching. A recent conference in fall 2022, organized by *In geveb* and the Yiddish Book Center, commemorated the 25+ years since the "Di Froyen" conference in New York, which was one of several projects in the early 90s that set out an agenda for literary recovery of writing in Yiddish by women. This project went hand in hand with the digitization and therefore further dissemination of the 1995 conference proceedings, in an effort to cement the event and those that surrounded it as a watershed moment in Yiddish literary history so they, too, won't in turn be washed away.

This presentation takes stock of this history of feminist literary recovery of Yiddish writing and the present explosion of translations of writing by women, a direct outcome of the digitization of Yiddish literature that made such texts broadly accessible. To what extent did these earlier efforts create an archive that lay the groundwork for later translation efforts? Is this new wave a continuation of these efforts in the 90s, or is it a recovery, even a revival, of them? And, perhaps most importantly, how have recent changes in what is available in English impacted what scholars and students alike can understand about the world of Yiddish literary expression?

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Birgit Neumann

### **Spectral Multilingualism - Ghostly Presences in the Anglophone Archive**

We are currently witnessing a shift in many postcolonial anglophone novels: Rather than appropriate the English language for acts of 'writing back', a range of novels – e.g., by Karina Lickorish Quinn, Yvonne Owuor, Ocean Vuong, and Arundhati Roy – stage the interdependencies of English with other languages and turn English into a language of encounter. Their writings render concrete Amir Mufti's claim that English "is never written or spoken out of hearing range of a number of its linguistic others" (2016, 160), questioning where one language ends and another one begins. If these novels can be defined in terms of a 'counter', then only in so far as they oppose the eurocentric idea of a unitary, monolithic and countable language and related concepts of language possession. More specifically, the novels by Lickorish Quinn, Owuor, Vuong, Roy and their peers use the imaginative space provided by fiction to stage the interdependencies of English with other languages and to show that even the global lingua franca, the hyper-central language of our globalized modernity, owns up to the condition of relationality, connectivity and co-existence (Neumann 2023).

Intriguingly, the 'other' languages that are evoked in anglophone novels – Quechua in Lickorish Quinn's *The Dust Never Settles*, Vietnamese in Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*, Kiswahili in Owuor's *Dust* – repeatedly appear in the company of ghosts. They are literally ghostly presences that haunt the novels, reminding readers of some of the marginalized histories and repressed stories in the anglophone archive. My talk engages with the link between English, other languages and ghosts, seeking to illustrate how this link becomes a highly normative epistemological project of remembering histories of (violent) contact that are frequently ignored or written out of the anglophone archive. Necessarily

oriented towards the past and open to the future, ‘spectral multilingualism’, as I suggest calling this configuration, seeks ways to counteract erasure, silencing and forgetting and to provide alternatives to the unifying gestures of the global English. It attunes us to the voices and stories of those who are “no-longer-not-yet-there” (Derrida 2006) and challenges us to reckon with unheard language. Spectral multilingualism, I argue in my readings of *The Dust Never Settles* and *Dust*, creates a shared zone of semiotic and material possibilities at the edges of languages. Hovering between presence and absence, translatability and untranslatability, it calls for reading practices that accept unintelligibility, uncertainty and opacity of un-ownable languages and lost voices as an integral part of engaging with literary texts.

#### **Works Cited**

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Mufti, A. (2016). *Forget English! Orientalisms and world literatures*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Neumann, B. (2023). “The Post-Monolingual Novel”. In: *Journal of Literary Multilingualism* (2023, 1).

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Anita Norich

#### **Yiddish Translation Matters**

The project of finding and translating Yiddish prose by women has greatly benefited from recent scholarship and, at the same time, become increasingly urgent. The belief that women who wrote Yiddish novels were rare or exceptional is not merely historically inaccurate. It also points, in disturbing ways, to the gender politics that have long dominated Jewish culture and Jewish cultural studies. Such beliefs have been effectively disputed by archival and bibliographic evidence. This paper will consider such research as well as recent translation projects (including my own). It asks such questions as: what does archival "discovery" mean? What do we mean when we use such terms as "classical literature" or "modern"? How does archival work change our understanding of Yiddish literary history? What, if any, are the connections between genre and gender?

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Christine Richter-Nilsson

#### **Reconstructing the Archive of a Polish Shtetl**

The memoir *Three Minutes in Poland: Discovering a Lost World in a 1938 Family Film* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014) tells the story of Glenn Kurtz’s four-year search to identify the individuals who appear in a 1938 home movie, taken by his grandfather, David Kurtz, during a return visit to his birthplace, Nasielsk, Poland. By 1938, Nasielsk had a total population of approximately 7,000 people, of whom 3,000 were Jewish. Fewer than one hundred of Nasielsk’s Jewish citizens survived the Holocaust. David Kurtz’s three-minute family film contains the only known moving images of this community prior to its destruction. The memoir traces the author’s journey to preserve and decipher these haunting images and chronicles the evolution of David Kurtz’s brief home movie into a medium of discovery, or as I would claim, a medium of translation. Kurtz’s process of piecing together artefacts, photographs, documents, archival materials as well as the survivor’s memories could be

described as a translation process because it traces back to a genuine sign system of a once complete archive. In my presentation, I would like to show how Kurtz reconstructs the lost archive by translating the various documented, recorded, recollected and imagined fragmentary texts, pictures and visions into the most complete meaningful transgenerational narrative possible about the Polish Shtetl of Nasielsk.

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Ana Délia Rogobete

### **Thinking History, War, and Trauma Through Fictional Archive: Walid Raad and The Atlas Group**

The Atlas Group was an artistic project developed by the Lebanese artist Walid Raad between 1989 and 2004. Intended as a collective composed of photographers, historians, and former members of the Lebanese army, its goal was to document and archive pieces of the contemporary history of Lebanon, with a focus on the civil war of 1975–1990.

The collective, as well as most of the documents shown are, to some extent, fictional. They are either found and recontextualized by Raad or created by him in order to “investigate the possibilities and limits of writing the history of wars, not chronologically or psychobiographically,” but by questioning the very function of historiography, archives, and photography, all three of which understood as factual recordings of events.

The aim of this presentation is therefore to discuss the mediated nature of these recordings, understood as translations of one’s traumatic experience, blurring the frontier between fact and fiction, between real and imaginary. How are the facts to be described in order to sanction one mode of explaining them rather than another? (Hayden White). If, as Jacques Derrida puts it, there is no archive without violence (institutional control and selection as acts of violence), what is the political and aesthetic meaning of a fictional archive? And finally, what role does photography as *trace* (Derrida, Roland Barthes) play in creating, validating, and deconstructing an *effect of reality* (Barthes)?

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Belén Santana & Cris Travieso

### **Lost in Paperwork. Literary Translators in Spanish State Archives (PARES)**

Drawing on previous work about the interdependence between Translator Studies and Library and Information Science (Santana & Travieso 2021), this presentation aims at analysing the translator’s visibility in state archives as repositories of collective memory. In the context of public institutions, information about translators can be found in various forms and formats, for instance as a list of published works retrieved from Online Public Access Catalogs, as private correspondence donated by translators to a library, but also as official records. The latter generate automatically in every modern society and illustrate the function and status of translation not only as a political practice, but also the translators’ engagement as agents of knowledge generation and dissemination. Bearing this in mind, we shall present the results of a case-study about the presence of literary translators in the Spanish Archives Portal (PARES),

which is the main platform used to disseminate Spain's Historical Document Heritage. It contains information sheets and digitised images of the historical documents held in National Archives. In contrast to individual archives and repositories consisting of translator records only, we will have a look at official records of regular citizens starting from their condition as translators, not from specific prestigious names. This search will reveal the identity of lesser-known translators who were considered suspicious under Franco's regime because of their work. Our case-study complements previous work by the TRACE Research Group focusing on censorship archives (Lobejón Santos et al 2021). Addressing questions like who is collected, how, why and by whom will help to understand the present through the past.

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Suzanne Scafe

### **Category Failure: Beryl Gilroy and the Shadow of the Archives**

In a recent work entitled *Black British Intellectuals and Education: Multiculturalism's Hidden History* (2014), its author, Paul Warmington argues that his aim is to recover the hidden voices and histories of Britain's black public intellectuals, figures concerned with education but also with the relationship between education, achievement and wider social structures. A notable omission from his extensive range of figures and texts is Beryl Gilroy (1924-2001), one of Britain's first black headteachers, the author of several novels and of a popular and well-received series of children's books. Her autobiography *Black Teacher*, first written in 1976, was republished by Faber in 2021, in part, it would seem, because of the efforts of critics such as Sandra Courtman, to situate this text and her early fiction alongside the work of her more celebrated colleagues such as Sam Selvon, Andrew Salkey and George Lamming, whose work comfortably bestrides the literary and identity categories 'black British' and Caribbean. The rehabilitative work of feminist literary critics has, inevitably, been selective, focusing on one or two texts and on Gilroy's identity as a literary 'writer' (Courtman 2012), while Gilroy's work as a black feminist activist, and founder of one of London's black women's centres, and as a well-regarded and published educational psychologist has been routinely overlooked.

My presentation reads the work of literary critics and sociologists such as Warmington as acts of translation that reinterpret the lives and works of black British figures in order to bring them into public consciousness. Their work also serves to categorise identities and work, providing a route into this material that prepares readers for its translation. In this paper, I read Gilroy's literary texts in conjunction with archival material held by the British library, and argue that the very nature of categories, one perpetuated by the structure of archives, has resulted in Gilroy's continued marginalisation as a public intellectual. Her life and work are subject to partial, shadowy acts of translation.

Layla Zami

**Afro-German Im/Possibilities: Negotiating Power Through Literary and Performative Interventions**

May Ayim (1960-1996) was a poet, performer, linguist, scholar, and activist of Ghanaian and German descent who strongly impacted both the feminist and the antiracist movements in Germany, while also being active internationally. In this presentation, Dr. Zami contextualizes Ayim's biography and the performance *I Step On Air*, conceived by Oxana Chi and interpreted by Chi and Zami to commemorate and celebrate Ayim.

The paper discusses the process of translating May Ayim's German poems into English and adapting them for stage performances. Drawing upon her insights to May Ayim's personal and official archival materials, as well as into the 2023 translation of Ayim's poems into French, Zami asks how Ayim used her poetry to intervene into German societal structures, and suggests that her negotiation of the intersection between feminism and antiracism is still relevant today. Some of the concepts and theories referred to are *perforMemory* (Zami), *sonic fingerprints* (Gentric), *Liner Notes for the Revolution* (Brooks) and *The Sovereignty of Quiet* (Quashie). The presentation also explores how sonic and choreographic strategies interact with the literary realm to translate and perform Afro-German identities and memories.



## PANELISTS AND PANEL CHAIRS

**Marion Aptroot** is Professor of Yiddish Studies at HHU Düsseldorf and a member of the Centre for Translation Studies. She studies early modern translations and adaptations into Yiddish. She uses approaches from translation theory with a special focus on translation within tradition, e.g., translations of the Bible by translators familiar with existing versions. She is also a translator of Yiddish texts for scholarly editions.

**Sarah Phillips Casteel** is Professor of English at Carleton University, where she is cross-appointed to the Institute of African Studies and the Institute for Comparative Studies in Literature, Art and Culture. Her most recent books are *Calypso Jews: Jewishness in the Caribbean Literary Imagination*, which won a Canadian Jewish Literary Award, and the co-edited volume *Caribbean Jewish Crossings: Literary History and Creative Practice*. Last spring she was a visiting fellow at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and in 2021 she held the Potsdam Postcolonial Chair in Global Modernities at the University of Potsdam. Her book *Making History Visible: Black Lives Under Nazism in Literature and Art* is under contract with Columbia University Press.

**Marc Caplan** is a native of Louisiana and a graduate of Yale University. Since earning his PhD in comparative literature from New York University he has held appointments at Indiana University, the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, the University of Michigan, Yale, Tel Aviv University, Wrocław University (Poland), and Dartmouth College (New Hampshire). His research focuses primarily on modern Yiddish literature in comparison with African literatures in English and French (the subject of his first book), German literature (the subject of his second book), as well as modern film, television, theatre, and music.

**Volker Dörr** is Professor of German Literature at HHU Düsseldorf and a member of the Centre for Translation Studies. His research interests in the context of translation studies involve translation processes ‘between’ and within cultures as well as dynamic, process-oriented concepts of culture and transculturality on the one hand. On the other hand, he is also specifically interested in traces of translation in literary texts, e.g. in contemporary German-Turkish literature.

**Irina Dumitrescu** is a writer and the professor for medieval English literature at the University of Bonn. Her monograph, *The Experience of Education in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2018. Recent editorial projects include a special issue of *Medieval Feminist Forum* on “Everyday Arts: Craft, Voice, Performance” with Emma O’Laughlin Berat and an issue of *New Literary History* entitled “In Brief,” with Bruce Holsinger. She is a columnist at the *Times Literary Supplement*, co-hosts a podcast at the *London Review of Books* with Mary Wellesley, and contributes essays, criticism, and memoir to a wide variety of outlets.

**Sophie Duvernoy** is a translator and writer specializing in the literature of the Weimar Republic. She is a recipient of the 2015 Gutekunst Prize for Young Translators awarded by the Goethe Institut, NY. She has recently submitted a dissertation in German at Yale University entitled *The Shape of Things: Reading Culture through Form in the Weimar Republic*, which shows how form became an important philosophical and aesthetic category in late nineteenth-

century Germany and birthed a genre of cultural criticism among the Weimar Republic avant-garde. In her translation work, she focuses on recuperating the work of forgotten female writers, such as Gabriele Tergit and Emmy Hennings, and is interested in their involvement in the journalism and poetry scenes of their time. She also writes about architecture and art.

**Iain Galbraith**'s recent work includes a volume of poems, *The True Height of the Ear* (2018), as well as translations into English of Esther Kinsky's *River* (2018), Reinhard Jirgl's *The Unfinished* (2020), Esther Dischereit's *Sometimes a Single Leaf* (2020) as well as *Flowers for Otello* (2022) and Ulrike Draesner's *this porous fabric* (2022), and translations into German of Alice Oswald's *46 Minuten im Leben der Dämmerung* (together with Melanie Walz, 2018) and John Burnside's *Im Namen der Biene* (2022). He has received several prizes, including the Popescu Prize for European Poetry Translation, the Stephen Spender Prize and the Schlegel-Tieck Prize.

**Vera Elisabeth Gerling** is an adjunct Professor of Romance Studies and Literary Translation at HHU Düsseldorf and a member of the Centre for Translation Studies. In her research and teaching, Vera Elisabeth Gerling focuses on the connection between the theory and practice of literary translation. Furthermore, she explores phenomena of reception in the cultural exchange between Europe on the one hand and Latin-America and Africa on the other, especially in German-speaking areas. Broadening the concept of translation, she also explores phenomenological questions pertaining to the translation of lived experience into texts. Both concepts of translation are linked within her research on memory as a process of transcultural entanglements. She is a graduate of the HHU's study programme in Literary Translation. At HHU, she teaches Romance Literary Studies and Literary Translation.

**Adriana X. Jacobs** is Associate Professor of Modern Hebrew Literature in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and a Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. She has published widely on contemporary Hebrew and Israeli poetry and translation and is the author of *Strange Cocktail: Translation and the Making of Modern Hebrew Poetry* (University of Michigan Press, 2018), which was a finalist for the 2019 Jordan Schnitzer Book Award, and co-editor, with Claire Williams, of *After Clarice: Reading Lispector's Legacy in the Twenty-First Century* (Legenda, 2022).

**Rolf Kailuweit** has been Professor of Romance Linguistics (Spanish and French) at HHU Düsseldorf since 2017. Previously, he held the chair of Romance Linguistics and Media Studies at the University of Freiburg (Germany). After studying Romance languages and literatures, philosophy, and law at FU Berlin and the University of Barcelona, he received his PhD from FU Berlin in 1996 with a thesis on the linguistic conflict between Castilian and Catalan in the 18th and 19th centuries. He obtained his habilitation in Heidelberg in 2003 with a study on syntax and semantics of French and Italian verbs of emotion. His research focuses, among other topics, on the linguistic contact between different Romance languages and varieties, and on pluricentric Spanish. In particular, he deals with the history of language, culture, and media in Argentina. Since 2009, he has been a corresponding member of the Academia Porteña del Lunfardo (Buenos Aires). Since May 2023, he has been the spokesperson of the Düsseldorf Working Package within the EU Horizon project Analysis of and Responses to Extremist Narratives (ARENAS).



**Andrée-Anne Kekeh-Dika** is a Full Professor at the University of Paris 8 and a member of TransCrit Research Group there. She teaches US literature, Caribbean literature, and translation. Her most recent research has focused on contemporary Caribbean literatures in English and how their intersections with plant studies, science (botany, geometry, geography) and the seemingly ordinary pave the way for innovative forms or patterns to re-enter Caribbean corpuses. She is the author of *L'imaginaire de Jamaica Kincaid, variations autour d'une île caraïbe* (2016) and has co-edited several other studies of Caribbean and African American literature. Her recent published articles include "Writing Away from the Main: The Traveling Ways of Jamaica Kincaid's Unruly Prose" in *Mobility and Corporeality in Nineteenth-To Twenty-First-Century Anglophone Literature. Bodies in Motion*, eds. J. Chemmachery & B. Jain (2021) and "Autobiographical Performance, or what Happens to Lines Deviated" in *Writing the Self as Other*, eds. Nelly Mok & Claudine Raynaud (2019).

**Jessica Kirzane** is the assistant instructional professor of Yiddish at the University of Chicago and the editor-in-chief of *In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies*. Her research interests include representations of race, gender and regionalism in American Yiddish fiction, as well as curricular development of Yiddish language pedagogy for specifically academic purposes. She has translated three works by popular Yiddish author Miriam Karpilove: *Diary of a Lonely Girl, or the Battle Against Free Love* (Syracuse UP, 2020), *Judith* (Farlag, 2022) and *A Provincial Newspaper and Other HerStories* (Syracuse UP, 2023).

**Birgit Neumann** is Chair of Anglophone Literatures and Translation Studies at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf. She is founder and director of the Centre for Translation Studies. Recent publications include *Verbal-Visual Configurations in Postcolonial Literatures* (2020, with Gabriele Rippl) as well as the edited and co-edited volumes *Anglophone World Literatures* (2017), *Global Literary Histories* (2018), *New Approaches to the 21<sup>st</sup>-century Anglophone Novel* (2021), *Handbook of Anglophone World Literatures* (2021) and *Temporalities of Crises in Anglophone Literatures* (2023). She is currently completing a monograph on post-monolingual Anglophone novels.

**Martina Nicklaus** is a Senior Lecturer in Romance Linguistics and a member of the Centre for Translation studies. She teaches, among other things, literary translation from French and Italian into German in the MA programme Literary Translation. Her aim is to draw on linguistic findings for an informed selection of solutions in the target language. One of her main areas of research is contrastive linguistics with a special focus on options of linearisation, which are not only to be grasped in terms of their systematic functions, but also have to be explored in terms of their rhythmic potential.

**Anita Norich** is Collegiate Professor Emerita at the University of Michigan. She is a scholar and translator of Yiddish literature who has written and taught about American Jewish and Yiddish literature and literature of the Holocaust. Her books include: *The Homeless Imagination in the Fiction of Israel Joshua Singer*; *Discovering Exile: Yiddish and Jewish Culture in America During the Holocaust*; *Writing in Tongues: Translating Yiddish in the 20th Century*; and a translation of Kadya Molodovsky's *A Jewish Refugee in America*. She is also co-editor of *Gender and Text in Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literature*; *Jewish Literatures*

*and Cultures: Context and Intertext; Languages of Modern Jewish Cultures: Comparative Perspectives.*

**Eva Ulrike Pirker** teaches Anglophone Literature and Literary Translation and curates the programme of the Centre for Translation Studies at HHU Düsseldorf. She obtained a Doctorate in English Philology at Freiburg University after studying English and American Literatures and Philosophy in Tübingen and San Diego. While interested in the examination of transcultural as well as intermedial processes in literature and other art forms more generally, her main research and teaching foci are in the fields of Anglophone, Postcolonial Literatures and Cultures.

**Christine Richter-Nilsson** (PhD) is a lecturer, dramaturg, and professional literary translator. She has taught theater and translation at Vanderbilt University, Syracuse University, and at HHU. She has recently translated works by Teju Cole, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, and Toni Morrison. She was awarded the *Internationaler Literaturpreis Haus der Kulturen der Welt* in 2013 for the German translation of Cole's *Open City* (Suhrkamp, 2012). In 2022 and 2023, she was awarded a Gastdozentur by Deutscher Übersetzerfonds (DÜF) to teach translation at the University of Stuttgart. She has published in *German Studies Review* (2018) and co-edited the anthology *Voices from Undergroundzero, New Plays from NYC* (*Theater der Zeit*, 2008).

**Ana Delia Rogobete** holds a PhD in contemporary French literature and theory of photography from Johns Hopkins University. Her research interests include the construction of the notion of the author, conceptual art and authorship, and feminist and gender studies.

**Belén Santana** holds a PhD in Translation Studies and has been teaching Translation (from German and English into Spanish) at the University of Salamanca since 2003. She is also a professional literary translator from German into Spanish. Her research interests are Humour Translation, Literary Translation Teaching (especially under the impact of technologies), the cooperation between Translation and Library and Information Science and bridging the gap between Translation Theory and Practice.

**Suzanne Scafe** is a Visiting Professor at the University of Brighton. Her work on African-diasporic writing includes several articles and essays on Caribbean fiction and poetry, the most recent of which is an essay on the fiction of Kei Miller and Marlon James in the anthology, *Narrating Violence in the Postcolonial World* (2021). She has also written extensively on Black British literature and culture. Her monograph, *Reading to Resist: Critical Approaches to Black British Women's Fiction* will be published in 2024.

**Críspulo Travieso** holds a PhD in Library and Information Science (2005) from the University of Salamanca, where he is currently an Associate Professor. His research projects and publications belong to the fields of scientific information evaluation, digital content organization and intercultural communication.

**Eva-Maria Troelenberg** is Professor of Transcultural Studies at HHU Düsseldorf and a member of the Centre for Translation Studies. She looks at visual and material encounters in contact zones. The epistemic lens is transcultural and transregional visual history, seizing the agency of objects, images, collections, and archives. She focuses on the period after ca. 1800, always connected to larger historical constellations: How do art, visual and material culture

activate or reflect cultural encounter, conflict, and historical change? How are biographies of artefacts shaped across time and space by the interactions of various actors and forms of perception, from individual art appreciation to shifting political frameworks? Eva-Maria Troelenberg's main fields of interest include cultural exchange and the larger modern Mediterranean, canon and canon critique, museum theory and the history of collecting and exhibitions in a cross-cultural context, the historiography and reception of Islamic art and Islamicate aesthetics in the colonial and postcolonial age, migrations, object-biographies and cross-cultural heritage.

**Layla Zami** is an interdisciplinary academic and artist. She is Postdoctoral Researcher in Performance Studies at Freie Universität Berlin (SFB 1512 / Institut für Theaterwissenschaft) and Adj. Associate Professor of Humanities and Media Studies at Pratt Institute. Zami is the author of *Contemporary PerforMemory* (2020), and her work orbits around the nexus of cultural memory, performance, diaspora, language, and spacetime. She obtained her PhD at Humboldt-University, where she also earned a Teaching Award, and was a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University. As an Interdisciplinary Resident Artist with Oxana Chi Dance & Art, Zami creates and performs music, sounds, spoken words and theater. Born in Paris in 1985, she is rooted in a Jewish-German-Caribbean heritage. [www.laylazami.net](http://www.laylazami.net)



PHD-WORKSHOP: PRESENTERS AND THEIR PROJECTS

## **Leyla Sophie Gleissner**

ENS Paris / U Vienna

Leyla Sophie Gleissner is a doctoral candidate in philosophy at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris, and an Austrian Science Fund funded PraeDoc researcher at the University of Vienna. Previously, she was a visiting scholar at The New School for Social Research, New York City. Other research stays include the University of Heidelberg as well as the Institute for Diaspora and Genocide Research in Bochum. In her research, she is interested in the creative possibilities as well as the limits of language and memory in the context of trauma, testimony and survival. Her research fields include Critical Phenomenology, Deconstruction, Intersectional Feminist Thought, Social Philosophy and Trauma Studies. In addition to her academic work she writes as guest author for “10nach8” on Zeit Online and as a freelance author for Philosophie Magazin.

### *Untranslatable Silences. Shifting Perspectives on Trauma Testimony*

The term trauma is often understood as an experience that cannot be put into words. At the same time, the linguistic articulation of this very experience is mostly perceived as the condition for reducing suffering. In my research, I want to suggest a shift in perspectives with regard to traumatic experiences: instead of conceiving of the limits of what can be expressed about one’s painful past as what needs to be fully overcome, I assume that parts of our past are necessarily embedded in silences. However, rather than conceiving those omissions as lack, I am interested in their ethical and inventive potential in relation with language: if past experiences cannot be immediately accessed, they might be transformed by linguistic articulation in a way that fosters survival. In this talk, I will investigate ways in which the notion of (un)translatability can critically inform the above-mentioned shift in trauma research. With this aim in mind, I will draw on, firstly, Janine Altounian’s research on transgenerational trauma as the untranslatable (l’intraduisible); and secondly, on Jacques Derrida’s deconstructivist ethics, in which translation is understood to be both an impossible and a necessary task. By taking these two accounts on translation in relation to trauma and ethics together, I hope to track down a transformative account of the past, in which language always already translates the original experience.

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## **Miriam Hinz**

HHU Düsseldorf

Miriam Hinz is a PhD student and research assistant at Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf in the department of Anglophone Literatures/Literary Translation. She has specialised in the field of postcolonial literatures and her main research interests lie in postcolonial, gender and spatial studies, and the intersections of these. Her PhD project focuses on intersectional configurations of cosmopolitanisms and pays particular attention to female Black British protagonists. She teaches literary seminars for B.A.-students on the topics of postcolonial

theory, gender studies, and space. An article on Bernardine Evaristo's Mr Loverman as a queer subversion of the European Bildungsroman appeared in the January 2022-issue of *Postcolonial Interventions*.

*No Archives or Other Archives? Translating Intersectional Cosmopolitanisms in Anglophone Literatures*

The PhD project aims to establish a theoretical framework for the conception of intersectional cosmopolitanisms in Black British literatures from a diachronic perspective. The PhD project seeks to dissolve heteronormative, homogenising, and male implications and connotations that the concept of cosmopolitanism has been imbued with since its emergence in 18th-century Europe and to analyse how cosmopolitan ideals connect strangers, foster conviviality, and ultimately dissolve national borders and model a shared understanding of humanity by means of small-scale relationalities such as family ties, female friendships, or love relationships. A focus on local particularities and intersectional conceptions of cosmopolitanisms pluralises the concept on the level of content and form and helps establish an understanding of the (violent) histories that underlie intersectional experiences, pointing to blind spots in the conceptualisation of cosmopolitanisms that have not been acknowledged by contemporary research so far. Originating from diverse contexts and various time periods, my corpus includes, among others, Andrea Levy's Windrush novel *Small Island* (2004), Zadie Smith's *Swing Time* (2016), or Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019). These literatures, as I will show, employ a variety of stylistic and formal devices, such as experimentations with genre, multi-perspectivity and polyphony, or non-linear temporalities, to probe world-imaginings from below and to model alternative forms of cosmopolitanisms, paying particular attention to the importance of their characters' intersectionality.

**Keywords**

Cosmopolitanism, Intersectionality, Feminism, Conviviality, Relationality

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**Yagmur Karakis**

HHU Düsseldorf

Yagmur Karakis is a global historian from Düsseldorf and a member of the collective of (female) historians RheinlandGlobal. From 2020 to 2022 she completed a research traineeship on the colonial provenances of the collections of the Rautenstrauch- Joest-Museum in Cologne. Currently she is pursuing a PhD in Global History at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf as part of a project funded by the German Lost Art Foundation (DZK): *Research Trips as Colonial Context' – Biography of a Journey Cameroon in 1911–13.* Zeichensetzung?

### *How to Deal with Varied Sources of a 'Research Trip' in 1911-1913*

In my contribution, I mainly want to raise and discuss some questions that have arisen from my practical work in various archives and related translation activities. My research project aims to consider the diversity of sources that have emerged from a well-documented research trip to Cameroon in 1911-13. These sources include various correspondences of the travelers from Germany with various German institutions, their publications, their estates, but also more than 1,300 cultural objects, several hundred earth and rock samples, as many insects or small animals, about 800 photographs, about 400 paintings, various sketches, about 50 audio recordings, and skeletons or parts of skeletons of six individuals. The mentioned sources or human remains are currently located in Germany and have been partially made accessible by me (cf., e.g., Karakis 2019).

In addition, I want to discuss which sources also belong to a research trip in the colonial context: oral sources. Ann Laura Stoler criticized the way archives were constructed during the colonial era and how this influenced the production of knowledge and the perception of identity (Stoler 2009). Therefore, the diversity of experiences and perspectives that are not represented in European archives could be found in archives in Cameroon, whether they have been passed down orally or other forms. This leads to further challenges, such as translation. In the field I am considering, more than 100 languages are spoken in addition to French, which must frequently be translated. What does Stoler's critique, as well as that of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, mean for oral sources and their translation? Is there a postcolonial practice of translation? Isn't source criticism always a translation?

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### **Alice Lacoue-Labarthe**

U Amiens / VUB Brusseld

Alice Lacoue-Labarthe studied literature in Paris, Berlin and at Harvard. After receiving her master's degree in German studies and a diploma with a minor in Arabic studies from the Université Paris-Sorbonne and the École Normale Supérieure, she started a PhD under the supervision of Christine Meyer (Université de Picardie Jules Verne) and Arvi Sepp (Vrije Universiteit Brussel). Her dissertation focuses on the "Aesthetic, ethical and political challenges of contemporary German-language exile writings in the context of the 'refugee crisis'". She also works as a translator from German into French – among other things, she translated an essay by Esther Dischereit and an essay on contemporary art by Alexander García Düttmann.

*Translating trauma: exile narratives and postmemory in contemporary German-language literature*



In Abbas Khider's novel *Ohrfeige* (2016), the protagonist, fleeing Iraq, starts his life as an asylum seeker in Dachau, Germany – which turns out to be an ominous sign for his future in Germany. With this explicit reference to the Holocaust, the novel highlights several layers of trauma: the violence of contemporary exile for those coming to Europe from the global South, and the violence of concentration camps. Contemporary exile narratives are often written by what Marianne Hirsch calls the “generation of postmemory” (Hirsch, 2012), e.g. by authors who deal with “the personal, collective, and cultural trauma” of former exile experiences. Sometimes referred to as “Flüchtlingsliteratur”, these narratives exhibit an archive of trauma and refer to an already existing tradition of depicting violence in German-language literature, thus translating trauma in the context of the “refugee crisis”. By looking at the ways in which the authors of these texts create transnational and transgenerational genealogies of trauma and trauma depiction, I wish to highlight the dynamics at work in current German-language literature. Contemporary exile writings are more than a literature by and for the “concerned”, as I argue: they are key to understanding transnational reconfigurations of German-language literature and the ethical questions raised by the representation of the pain of others.

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### **Rita Maricocchi**

U Münster

Rita Maricocchi is a researcher and lecturer at the Chair of English, Postcolonial and Media Studies at University of Münster, where she is completing a PhD thesis on reading and translating the postcolonial in contemporary anglophone and germanophone texts and spaces. Her research is broadly interested in disciplinary formations and exchanges across postcolonial studies, anglophone studies, German studies, and memory studies. She holds an M.A. in National and Transnational Studies from the University of Münster and a B.A. in German, French, and Political Science from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. She recently co-organized the seven-part lecture series “Black German Studies: Transatlantic Perspectives” at the University of Münster, which offered space for exchange and reflection on the research field of Black German Studies. In particular, the project drew attention to scholarship from across the Atlantic that invigorates the study of Black German texts while also recognizing the work that is being done in this area particularly by Black scholars, artists, and activists located in Germany. She is currently co-editing an online blog with short articles documenting and reflecting on the project.

### *Reading and Translating the Postcolonial in Sharon Dodua Otoo's Adas Raum*

Sharon Dodua Otoo's 2021-published novel *Adas Raum* poses an interesting challenge to German cultural memory of colonialism. It contains narrative strands from 1459 Ghana, 1848 England, 1945 Germany, and 2019 Germany, thereby entangling histories of colonialism, sexism, antisemitism, and racism and refusing a neat separation of memory and memorializing processes. The relationships created between contemporary Germany and historical moments

in Ghana, England, and Germany illustrate how memories of colonialism and the Holocaust are continually being negotiated alongside lived experiences of racialization and othering. My reading of the novel is attuned in particular to how the text traces colonial histories into the German space and constructs an archive of (post)colonial memory and knowledge that goes beyond Germany's geographic and discursive borders. I read for the ways in which the text mediates the concept of "postcolonial" between anglophone and germanophone discursive spaces. Particularly interesting is how this happens on a linguistic level. In the novel, Otoo explicitly plays with the borders of the German language, supplementing it with anglicisms and subverting the conservative adherence to language purity and perfection. This slippage between languages transgresses notions of the monolingual paradigm (Yildiz 2012) and is accompanied by the translation of history, memory, and meaning between anglophone and germanophone contexts, both complicating the surety of national frameworks for remembering colonialism and for generating postcolonial knowledge. With my reading, I intend to discuss how the novel contributes to the production of a postcolonial framework which is emerging in the contemporary German context.

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### **Katharina Menschick**

Ruhr U Bochum

Katharina Menschick is a PhD candidate in the DFG post-graduate program "The Documentary. Excess and Withdrawal" at Ruhr University of Bochum. Her current research focuses on archival silences and the ethical aspects of engaging with documents created within contexts of violence. She previously worked as an archival assistant at the Leo Baeck Institute for the Study of German-Jewish History and Culture in New York and as a research associate at the Arolsen Archives – International Center on Nazi Persecution. She studied International Development, Language Arts and Political Science in Vienna/Austria and received an MA in Liberal Studies from the City University of New York Graduate Center as a Fulbright Scholar.

#### *Recorded Silences – On Reading Absences in Documents of Persecution*

My current work focuses on absences in archival documents created within the context of National Socialist violence. Researching four photographs taken during the deportation of 86 people persecuted as Roma and Sinti from the German town of Remscheid in March 1943 led me to an amateur film shot during the three years before. It seems likely that the individuals shown in one section of the film were among those later deported. Studying these images raises questions about the multifold silences within the record of the Nazi period. The official archival legacy is dominated by documents created during processes of persecution while the voices and perspectives of those who were recorded and persecuted are mostly absent. Inspired by the works of Tina M. Campt, Michelle Caswell, Saidiya Hartman and Georges Didi-Huberman, I seek to develop a perspective on these documents in solidarity with those whose lives and whose pain are recorded within them. Understanding their silences as inscribed in these

records, I argue that they can be listened to and activated as counterpoints to the intention with which the documents were created. By close reading some of the details within these sources and by juxtaposing them with other documents and perspectives, I hope to establish a reading that does “more than recount the violence that deposited these traces in the archives” (Hartman 2008).

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## **Christina Slopek**

HHU Düsseldorf

Christina Slopek is a doctoral student at Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf, where she also works as lecturer and research assistant in the section of Anglophone Literatures and Literary Translation. Her principal research interests are postcolonial studies, medical humanities and queer and gender studies. Together with Miriam Hinz, Christina organized the postgraduate conference “Participation in Postcolonial Wor(l)ds” in 2022. Together, Miriam and Christina are now in the process of editing a volume based on the conference. In her PhD project, Christina Slopek is working on psychology in African and African-diasporic fiction. So far, she has published an article on queer masculinities in Ocean Vuong in *Anglia* and an article on Aboriginal speculations and dis-/ability in *Gender Forum*.

### *Translating Models of Illness and Health? A Contemporary Archive of Plural Minds*

Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, an important figure in the context of African literatures and the global literary market, has famously spoken of “the archive of the future in the present” (n. pag.). Rather than gravitating toward the past in her search for an archive, Bakare-Yusuf understands the archive “simultaneously as past, present and future” (n. pag.), thus highlighting the importance of contemporary African literatures. This PhD project works with contemporary African literatures which, it argues, represent and configure a plurality of minds. Plural minds, to use a decidedly non-ableist term, have preoccupied literature for a long time. Medical humanities and madness studies take up the abundance of plural minds in literature, Gilbert and Gubar’s *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) being an oft-cited milestone in the field. Some recent publications also engage with non-normative minds in postcolonial literatures (see Ledent et al.; Pickens; Zinato and Pes, among others).

This study continues the exchange between postcolonial studies and medical humanities, focusing on contemporary Anglophone African literatures and their representations and configurations of plural minds. To do so means, on the one hand, to engage with a vast repository of recent Anglophone African literatures as a contemporary archive of a plurality of minds and, on the other hand, to navigate translatory territory. Models of illness and health are culture-specific (Fernando 70) and names or diagnoses for plural minds vary accordingly. Bringing into dialog medical humanities, disability studies, postcolonial studies, psychology, translation studies and literary analysis, this paper offers insights into questions of translation subtending analyses of the contemporary archive of plural minds.

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## **Tasun Tidorchibe**

HHU Düsseldorf

Tasun Tidorchibe is a third-year PhD student of Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf. His PhD research examines the workings of form from a situated West African context using folktales of the Konkomba people of Ghana. Among other things, the research interrogates the forms at work in these folktales and the Konkomba cultural milieu.

Apart from his PhD research, he is also currently engaged at his university of study as a research assistant in a project titled “Demarginalising Orature: Translating Minor Forms into the Digital Age.” The project seeks to promote and preserve indigenous knowledge (IK) through the documentation, translation, and digitization of indigenous orature such as Konkomba folktales.

His current research interests include literary theory and criticism (with a special focus on formalism), folklore studies, creative writing, the documentation, translation and archiving of indigenous oral forms, and Anglophone literatures of the Renaissance and Romantic periods.

Tasun Tidorchibe is a KAAD scholarship holder.

*Translating indigenous orature: an act of mediation between the traditional theater, secondary audience, and the archive*

“So long as men can breathe or eyes can see/So long lives this, and this gives life to thee” (Shakespeare, “Sonnet 18”). Nothing better sums up the mediating role translation plays in visibilizing, making accessible, and eternalizing indigenous orature than this Shakespearean couplet. In this presentation, I draw on Konkomba folktales to explore the mediating role translations of indigenous orature play as bridges between the traditional theater, its secondary audience, and the archival world. Among other things I argue that though transporting the textual, oral, and performance domains of indigenous orature to foreign audience(s) is challenging, translators can employ ‘oragraphic’ translation to accomplish this easily. I opine that once a translator succeeds at this, the translation then serves as an invaluable window into the textual, oral, and performance domains of the said indigenous orature and its culture – especially for target text audience(s) who would have otherwise never had access to such oral materials. In this regard, such a translation bridges the gap between its audience(s) and the traditional theater where indigenous art forms such as Konkomba folktales are often fleshed out via oral performances featuring performers and their active audiences. Additionally, I argue that translations of indigenous orature are ‘archives in the margins’ as they can – and should – serve as indispensable archival sources for preserving and accessing verbal arts emanating from indigenous oral contexts such as the Konkomba one. Drawing on the foregoing, I ultimately

conclude that translations of indigenous orature mediate between foreign audience(s) and indigenous oral performances, and between the traditional theater and the archive.

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## **Katrijn Van den Bossche**

VUB Brussel

Katrijn Van den Bossche started as a doctoral researcher at Vrije Universiteit Brussel in June 2022, as part of the FWO-funded research project “Self-Reflexivity and Generic Change in 21st-Century Black British Women’s Literature” (under the supervision of Janine Hauthal and Elisabeth Bekers). Recently, she completed a research stay at the Centre for Narrative Research, where she presented on her methodological framework (Bergische Universität Wuppertal; 2023). Prior to this, she obtained an MA in Literature and Linguistics (German and English) from the University of Ghent in 2021, with a thesis on the intersection of ecocriticism and memory studies in *Die Kinder der Toten* (1995) by the Austrian Nobel Prize winner Elfriede Jelinek. She was an Erasmus exchange scholar at University of Sheffield (2020) and participated in the University of Gent Summer School on climate change (2021). Currently, she is also completing an additional MA in Teaching (2021-2022).

*“An Untethering of Self from Experience”*: *Self-Reflexive Narration and Genre as Infrastructure in Natasha Brown’s Assembly (2021)*

In *Assembly* (2021) by Natasha Brown, the challenges Black women face in the corporate and social infrastructures of British society are transformed by the literary narrative. The novel thematizes the erosion of identity under the oppressive meritocratic system and its token policies for gender and race. In accordance with the theme of identity (de)construction, *Assembly* reflects on genres as looming infrastructures with the potential to constrain representations of self and other: the narrator’s own sense of identity is torn between her narrating “rationalizing” self, that operates at a distance from the daily discrimination, and her physical “experiencing” self (Brown 41). Understanding genres as “repositories of cultural memory” (Rupp) and as a “means of constructing what we perceive as reality” under the current system of capitalism (Wolf), this paper will explore the aesthetic and political functions of self-reflexive devices that refer to novelistic genre conventions in *Assembly*. Taking into account the novels’ coupled representation of the ‘social form’ of meritocracy and the ‘literary form’ of novelistic conventions, I will explore how metanarrative comments of disnarration double as a refusal to participate in meritocracy and thus may further develop the metafictional genre of “the anti-novel” and its political functions (McHale). Through self-reflexive techniques, the narrator gains narrative agency and is enabled to take charge of her own modes of expression (e.g. recognition of (internalized) meritocratic patterns through essayistic passages, tweets, poetry...). Thus, this study complements previous studies of metafiction that have historically excluded BIPOC authors and have dissociated self-reflexivity from political engagement (Fenstermaker).

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WE THANK

**...the following individuals:**

Prof. Dr. Marion Aptroot, Mia Balk, Daria Berka, Lisa Brandt, Beth Caplan, Özlem Dagdelen, Theresa Dieckmann, Katja Felsing, Friederike Felbeck, Dagmar Fretter, Prof. Dr. Vera Elisabeth Gerling, Lisa Glöckner, Dr. Michael Heinze, Miriam Hinz, Prof. Dr. Andreas Kost, Laura Lerotić, Prof. Dr. Birgit Neumann, David Ovsievitch, Anna Prickarz, Teona Sandu, Prof. Dr. Ulli Seegers, Christina Slopek, Lennart Sprenger, Andrea Wolff, Karolina Wolters as well as all participants in our seminar “Literature and the Archive” (HHU, summer 2023).

**...and institutions:**

The Faculty of Philosophy, the Department of Anglophone Studies and Literary Translation and the Department of Yiddish at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf and

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leben.



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für politische Bildung  
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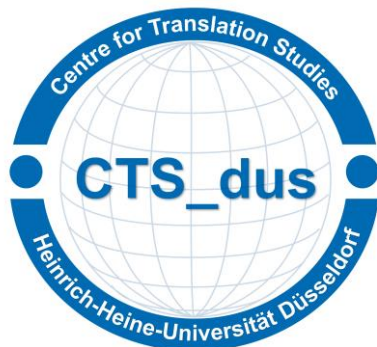


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**LITERATURHAUS DÜSSELDORF**



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# TRANSLATING THE ARCHIVE

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18:00



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Esther Dischereit

FLOWERS FOR OTELLO

Haus der Universität

Oxana Chi & Layla Zami

I STEP ON AIR

Studiobühne Theatermuseum



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01/06

18:00

19/06  
18:00



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