



ABSTRACTS AND NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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Food, Technology and Translocal Transformations of Taste Industrial and Processed Food in Yucatán

Translocality as originally used by Arjun Appadurai was an evocative concept that appealed immediately to anthropologists and others who study global-local connections. Its use has been widely adopted in religious studies, music studies, migration studies and food studies, but it has continued to be rather undefined, which makes it difficult to apply to local data. Here, from the study of local food and gastronomy in the Mexican state of Yucatán, I investigate how translocality can help us look at the global in the local and the local in the global. I propose that when it comes to studying food and gastronomy in the Yucatán, translocality can help us understand the ways in which industrialization, which became both a production model and a way of life in the United States and Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, rapidly extended to food everywhere, and Yucatecans fondly took to the consumption of industrially produced and processed foods, incorporating them into the local gastronomy. The results, in terms of taste, have been extensive but are not particular to the Yucatán, since food and gastronomy everywhere have been impacted in similar ways. However, when we analyze the changes in local dishes and preparations, we can see how ubiquitous industrialized food has become and how it has affected the particular configurations of ingredients in Yucatecan cuisine.

Keywords: food, technology, translocality, taste, processed food

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RIAS vol. 13,
Fall–Winter,
Nº 2/2020*

at the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán. He has conducted research in Sardinia, Italy, and in Chiapas, Mexico. Since 2000, he has been conducting research on food, identity, regionalism, and taste in Yucatán, and, since 2016, in Seville, Spain. His current project focuses on innovation among restaurateurs and chefs in Yucatán and Seville. He is a member of the National System of Researchers in Mexico, Level II, and was a Fellow of the Society for the Humanities at Cornell University 2006–2007. Among other texts, Ayora-Díaz authored two monographs. The first one, dedicated to healers in Chiapas, came out in 2002; the second one, *Foodscapes, Foodfields and Identities in Yucatán* was published by Berghahn in 2012. He has edited seven collections, the most recent of which are *Cooking Technology: Transformations in Culinary Practice in Mexico and Latin America* (2016), and *Taste, Politics and Identities in Mexican Food* (2019), both published by Bloomsbury Academic. Currently, he is editing a new volume, *The Cultural Politics of Food, Taste, and Identity: A Global Perspective*, also for Bloomsbury Academic. Ayora-Díaz is also a co-author of the Spanish language volume, *Cuisine, Music and Communication: Aesthetics and Technology in Contemporary Yucatán* (UADY 2016).

ALBENA BAKRATCHEVA

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**‘Higher Laws’ and ‘Divine Madness’
Transnational and Translocal Configurations of Quixotic In/Sanity
in the American Renaissance**

The New England Transcendentalists deliberately chose a position which by definition did not belong to what was to them the common “prosaic mood” (Thoreau) of their time. Their choice was the result of representatively romantic discontent with their contemporary reality and, at the same time, through the vigorous drive of the Puritan spiritual leadership, it was essentially anachronistic. The sophisticated delight of identifying with such a doubly anomalous nonconformist ideal only intensified the need for counterbalancing the prosaic sanity of the real world with a wished-for poetic insanity, or “madness from the gods” (Emerson). Such “madness by romantic identification” whose “features have been fixed once and for all by Cervantes” (Foucault), naturally caused “Quixotic confusion” between reality and imagination and the substitution of the true with the fabulous. Though peculiarly intensified in the former Puritan context and in the context of ‘Americanness’ in which the nineteenth century New England intellectuals placed it, the problem was far from being merely a local, New England-centered, phenomenon. This paper argues that in their ‘in/sane’ Quixotic quest for perfection, which caused a series of personal failures, the New England Transcendentalists were remarkably faithful saunters in a blessed place that, to them, was both America and, at the same time, the all-encompassing perennial–translocal and transnational–

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world, inviting them to establish what Emerson called “an original relation to the universe.”

Keywords: transnationalism, Transcendentalism, Quixotism

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Fall–Winter,
№ 2/2020*

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**Bharatanatyam as a Transnational and Translocal Connection
A Study of Selected Indian and American Texts**

Bharatanatyam is a classical dance form derived from ancient dance styles, which is now seen as representative of Indian culture. In India, it is the most popular classical dance form exerting a great impact not only on the field of dance itself, but also on other art forms, like sculpture or painting. The Indian-American diaspora practices it both in an attempt to preserve its culture and as an assertion of its cultural identity. Dance is an art form that relates to sequences of body movements that are simultaneously aesthetic and symbolic, and rooted in specific cultures. It often tells a story. Different cultures observe different norms and standards by which dances should be performed (as well as by whom

they should be performed and on what occasions). At the same time, dance and dancers influence (and are influenced by) different cultures as a result of transcultural interactions. Priya Srinivasan's *Sweating Saris: Indian Dance as Transnational Labor* is a particularly valuable source wherein its author critically examines a variety of Indian dance forms, especially Bharatanatyam, tracing the history of dance as well as the lived experience of dancers across time, class, gender, and culture. With the help of this text, selected journal articles, and interviews with Bharatanatyam dancers in India and the US, I explore larger issues of gender, identity, culture, race, region, nation, and power dynamics inherent in the practice of Bharatanatyam, focusing on how these practices influence and, in turn, are influenced by transnational and translocal connections.

Keywords: Bharatanatyam, transnationalism, dance, Indian American studies,

Professor Manpreet Kaur Kang holds a PhD in English from Panjab University. She has been teaching at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University since 2005. She has four books and fourteen research papers to her credit; she also serves as the Editor of *MEJO: The Melow Journal of World Literature*. She has presented papers at national and international conferences and is mentoring PhD and MPhil candidates. She is the current President of IASA (International American Studies Association) and the Secretary of MELOW (Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the World Association).

MENA MITRANO

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**Between Suspicion and Love
Reality, Postcritique, and Euro-American Modernization
(An Introduction to the Debate)**

The essay introduces major tenets in the current debate on postcritique, focusing especially on the widespread rejection of symptomatic reading in literary studies and on the rejection of rupture as both a modernist and theoretical model for the conception of the *new*. Further, it presents theory as a phase of Euro-American modernization. Finally, it outlines a wider, more dynamic concept of critique, understood as a movement of intellectual—and geographical—displacements.

Keywords: critique and postcritique, Italian Theory, modernism, modernity, European-American relations

Mena Mitrano conducts research in the field of Anglo-American Languages and Literatures [Lingue e Letterature Anglo-Americane] at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. She is the author of *In the Archive of Longing: Susan Sontag's Critical Modernism* (Edinburgh University

Press 2016; paperback 2017), *Gertrude Stein: Woman Without Qualities* (Ashgate 2005), *Language and Public Culture* (Edizioni Q 2009), and the co-editor of *The Hand of the Interpreter: Essays on Meaning After Theory* (Peter Lang 2009). Her core interest is the intimate link between modernism and theory. She has written on modernism, American literature, literary theory/critical theory, psychoanalysis, visuality, and great women intellectuals. Currently, she is completing her new book on critique.

NATHANIEL R. RACINE

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Mapping Miguel Covarrubias across Cultures and Disciplines

In this paper, I explore the *Pageant of the Pacific*, a sequence of mural-maps painted by the Mexican artist and illustrator, Miguel Covarrubias, for the San Francisco International Exposition of 1939-1940. By placing these mural-maps within the larger context of cultural geography and Covarrubias's own theories of comparative anthropology, they offer an artistic and poetic explanation of the relationships found among the cultures of the Pacific Rim, drawing connections across historical epoch and geographical region. Within Covarrubias's own historical context, these maps provide an important visual link that crosses disciplinary boundaries, providing insight into the intellectual conversation of his era and, perhaps, providing a model for interdisciplinarity in the present age as well.

Keywords: Miguel Covarrubias, Mexican muralism, San Francisco International Exposition, cultural geography

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J.D. SCHNEPF

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Collaborative Futures: Arts Funding and Speculative Fictions

According to scholars of literary sociology, US arts institutions—from the federal government to the writers' colony to the creative writing program—have been central to the shaping of US literature for the better part of a century. This paper offers a preliminary investigation

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Fall–Winter,
Nº 2/2020*

of the global crowdfunding platform Kickstarter as an emerging arts institution. Drawing on Kim Stanley Robinson and Marina Abramović's artistic collaboration as a case study, the paper argues that the appearance of the Marina Abramović Institute (MAI) in Robinson's novel *New York 2140* troubles the author's stated generic commitments to "realist speculative fiction"—fiction that bases its vision of the future on the state of things in our present. In addition to furnishing uncertain conditions of production for the novel, Kickstarter's funding model solicits short-form speculative fiction organized around neoliberal selfhood from its artists. With the assistance of Kickstarter's networked platform, the MAI's capital campaign reimagined private funding as public performance art, as dutiful civic engagement, and as reward for artists willing to narrate entrepreneurial optimism.

Keywords: arts funding, arts institutions, Kickstarter, privatization, speculative fiction

J.D. Schnepf is Assistant Professor of American Studies in Political Culture and Theory the University of Groningen. Her research focuses on the literatures and cultures of the US security state, surveillance technologies, extractive infrastructures, labor, and domesticity. Her writing has appeared in *Feminist Media Studies*, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, *Media + Environment*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *Museum Anthropology*, *Public Books*, *Surveillance & Society*, and other venues. In 2019 she was awarded the Emory Elliott Prize by the International American Studies Association (IASA), the Amy J. Elias Founder's Award by the Association for the Study of Arts of the Present (ASAP), and the Fellowship for Distinguished Non-Geographers by the American Association of Geographers (AAG). For 2019–2020, she was named Postdoctoral Associate for the Project on Gender in the Global Community (GGC) on the topic of "Gender and Security" at Princeton University. She is at work on a book that traces the circuit between military technologies that maintain US imperialism overseas and cultural representations of surveillance technologies at home. She holds a PhD in English from Brown University.

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A Mexican Conquest of Space Cosmopolitanism, Cosmopolitics, and Cosmopoetics in the Mexican Space Industry

Mexico cannot be considered a "spacefaring nation," as it does not have the capability to build or launch space crafts into orbit. However, for many engineers, scientists, students, and entrepreneurs, outer space represents an important opportunity for economic development and job creation, as well as the resolution of earthly social problems, and a means to globally position the Mexican technology sector. Although they rely on international agreements for scientific, technical, and logistical collaboration, many of these space enthusiasts allude

to a “Mexican Conquest of Space,” a discursively potent term given Mexico’s colonial history. In this paper, I examine how Mexican imaginaries of outer space, tied to perceptions of past knowledge, present social issues and future projections, are limited by geopolitical realities, even as they are informed by cosmic imaginaries at various scales. I focus on the recently created Mexican Space Agency, its programs, practices, discourses and alliances, as a starting point for a Mexican astroaesthetics, a term coined by the philosopher Hans Blumenberg during the Space Race in an attempt to balance the centripetal and centrifugal forces exerted by outer space. From this perspective, I reflect on the ways in which being tethered to Mexico influences the possibility of being untethered to Earth.

Keywords: Mexico, outer space, cosmopolitics, cosmopolitanism, social imaginary, astroaesthetics

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GABRIELA VARGAS-CETINA

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India and the Translocal Modern Dance Scene, 1890s–1950s

At the end of the nineteenth century and during the first half of the twentieth, lead dancers from different countries became famous and toured internationally. These dancers—and the companies they created—transformed various dance forms into performances fit for the larger world of art music, ballet, and opera circuits. They adapted ballet to the variety-show formats and its audiences. Drawing on shared philosophical ideas—such as those manifest in the works of the Transcendentalists or in the writings of Nietzsche and Wagner—and from movement techniques, such as ballet codes, the Delsarte method, and, later on, Eurythmics (in fashion at the time), these lead dancers created new dance formats, choreographies, and styles, from which many of today’s classical, folk, and ballet schools emerged. In this essay, I look at how Rabindranath Tagore, Isadora Duncan, Anna Pavlova, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, Uday Shankar, Leila Roy Sokhey and Rumini Devi Arundale contributed to this translocal dance scene. Indian dance and spirituality, as well as famous Indian dancers, were an integral part of what at the time

was known as the international modern dance scene. This transnational scene eventually coalesced into several separate schools, including what today is known as classical and modern Indian dance styles.

Keywords: dance, modern dance, India, America, translocality

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