## Minority Identities: Rights and Representation

A One-Day Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference

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9.30-10.00: **Registration** (Old Whiteknights House Common Room)

10.00-11.10: **Keynote Lecture** (Henley Business School Lecture Theatre)
Vesna Goldsworthy (Kingston University London), ‘Life with Subtitles: Minority, Identity, Individuality’, introduced by Alison Donnell (Reading)

11.10-11.30: **Break** (Old Whiteknights House Common Room)

11.30-1.00: **Panel 1**

**Panel 1A: Political minorities** (Old Whiteknights House G09)
Chair: TBC
- Luminita Ignat-Coman (Babes-Bolyai University, Romania), ‘Minority Identities in Romania during the Interwar Period’
- Tristano Volpato (University of Freiburg, Germany), ‘A Reflection on the Dynamics of Representation, Exclusion, and Recognition for the Afro-Mexican Population of the *Costa Chica* of Oaxaca: A Theoretical Approach to the Concepts of Community, Identity, and Race’
- Jennifer Goddard (Queen’s University, Belfast), ‘Disability and Participation in the Changing Arts Landscape of Northern Ireland’

**Panel 1B: Playing with minority identity** (Old Whiteknights House G08)
Chair: TBC
- Christina Olivieri and Jana Gigl (Independent Scholars), ‘Seeking Sanctuary Workshop: Presentation and “Play” of an Awareness-Raising Character-Based Board Game on Seeking Asylum in the UK’

**Panel 1C: Inhuman minorities** (Humanities and Social Sciences 86)
Chair: TBC
- Candice Allmark-Kent (Exeter), ‘Can the Animal Speak? The Ethics of Representing Nonhuman “Voice” in Literature and Criticism’
- Catherine Parry (Lincoln), ‘A Minority of One: Animal as a Critical and Ethical Aporia’
- Kathryn Bird (Leeds), “To prove you had souls at all”: “Bare Life” and the Art of Being Human in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*

1.00-2.00: **Lunch** (Old Whiteknights House Common Room)

2.00-3.30: **Panel 2**

**Panel 2A: Minority resistance through literature** (Old Whiteknights House G09)
Chair: TBC
- Silvia Pellicer-Ortín (University of Zaragoza, Spain), ‘Anglo-Jewish Women Writers: A Minority in Search of a Voice’
- Catherine Rashid (Cambridge), ‘British Novels about Islam, and the Perpetual Privatization of Muslim Identity’
- Yi-heng Chen (York), ‘Disability, Marginality, and Normality: The Body and the Nation in Albie Sachs’s *The Soft Vengeance of a Freedom Fighter*’
Panel 2B: Religious minorities (Old Whiteknights House G08)
Chair: TBC
- Mohamed Saleck Val (University of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdullah, Morocco), ‘Gender and the Genesis of Islamic Sacred Knowledge: Al-Azhar Modern Women Exegetes’
- Anna-Mari Almila (Aberdeen), ‘Clothing Expressions Reduced: Muslim Women and the Headscarf in Europe’
- Nicholas Dreyer (St Andrews), ‘Humour and the Fictional Representation of a Minority Ethno-Religion’

Panel 2C: Victimised minorities (Humanities and Social Sciences 86)
Chair: TBC
- Christine Bell (Independent Scholar), ‘Visible Women: Tales of Age, Gender and In/Visibility’
- Clare Jones (Cambridge), ‘Spoken For: Representations of Trafficked Women in Britain’
- Anne Smith (Queen Mary, University of London), ‘Rights and Representations in an Applied Drama Project for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants’

3.30-3.50: Break (Old Whiteknights House Common Room)

3.50-5.20: Panel 3

Panel 3A: Images of minorities (Old Whiteknights House G09)
Chair: TBC
- Natalia Lebedinskaia (Concordia University, Canada), ‘Doubled Sense of Resistance: Makortoff Collection of Photographs of Doukhobor Daily Life 1920-1950’
- Lilla László (Babes-Bolyai University, Romania), ‘Representation of Gender and Otherness in Hungarian and Romanian Movies in the First Decade of the 21st Century’
- Victoria Baltag (Birmingham), Faith and Flame: a short documentary film about Roma minority in Romania

Panel 3B: Minority speech and language (Old Whiteknights House G08)
Chair: TBC
- Alfred Cudjoe (Surrey), ‘The Language of Postcolonial African Literature’
- Daniele Leggio (Manchester), ‘The Romani Internet: Representation, Identities and Languages’

Panel 3C: Minority sexualities and genders (Humanities and Social Sciences 86)
Chair: TBC
- Charlotte Hammond (Royal Holloway), ‘Object Bodies, Abject Performances: filming the private rituals of Haitian Vodou’
- Tal Morse (London School of Economics), ‘The Construction of GLBT Collective Memory in Israel’
- Ming Wu (Surrey), ‘Representations of “Tongzhi” and “Ku-er” Identity in Paratextual Translations’

5.20-5.30: Concluding remarks (Old Whiteknights House Common Room)
KEYNOTE

Vesna Goldsworthy, Kingston University London

Life with Subtitles: Minority, Identity, Individuality

Growing up in a highly collectivised socialist society has left me distrustful of collective identities (including the minority ones). Whether they are willingly embraced or externally imposed, I tend to see groupings as limiting rather than empowering. I do, of course, recognise the political need for individuals to “speak as one” in order to change the status quo. I also realise that, whatever my personal preferences, as a writer in English who happens to be an immigrant both in the land and in the language, I am likely to be seen not as a “one-off” but as a “one of”. “Who am I?”, I write. A reader looks at my question on the printed page and sees: “Where does she belong?”

Drawing on examples from my academic, journalistic and literary work, this address will examine the interplay of belonging – and in particular belonging to a minority – and the sense of self. I will focus particularly on the contrast between individualism as constructed in the 1960s, and the collective identities which have emerged – or resurfaced – in post-1989 Europe, hoping to throw some modest light on what I believe to be a major shift in the perception of individuality which has begun around the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Vesna Goldsworthy is Professor in English Literature and Creative Writing at Kingston University, London. Her books, including Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of the Imagination (Yale, 1998), a seminal study of cultural representations of the Balkans, and Chernobyl Strawberries (Atlantic, 2005), a bestselling memoir about growing up in Yugoslavia, have been translated into many languages. Chernobyl Strawberries was serialized in The Times and on the BBC. Her forthcoming poetry collection, The Angel of Salonika, has been shortlisted for Crashaw Prize.

A former BBC journalist, Vesna continues to script and present programmes for British and European radio and television, and acts as a consultant for a range of international media. Her most recent full-length feature programme, ‘Something Understood: Finding a Voice in a Foreign Country’, was broadcast on BBC Radio Four in October 2010.
‘Can The Animal Speak? The Ethics of Representing Nonhuman “Voice” in Literature and Criticism’

This conference poses the question, what are the ethics implicated in any representation of the minority other? The minority other has been defined along the lines of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, age, and disability, yet what if we look beyond the human? What are the ethics implicated in any representation of the majority nonhuman other? How do we represent, ethically, the absolute otherness of the animal?

Interrogating representations of the other has preoccupied literary criticism for decades, but only recently has the factor of species started to be acknowledged in the relationship between self and other. Dismissed as scenery, symbols, or allegories for humanity, the nonhuman has received little scholarly attention until now. Those engaged in this emergent area of literary studies have begun the work of returning to those fictional animals we once overlook and bringing them under the spotlight of analysis. So far, however, the ethics of representing nonhumans in literature is an issue that has remained untouched. This paper will propose extending discussions of epistemic violence and the problematic nature of attempts to speak for others to include nonhuman animals. Whilst these concerns might seem esoteric or abstract, it is clearly worth noting that epistemic violence legitimizes physical violence (exploitation, genocide and enslavement) which in the case of nonhumans is committed against thousands of beings throughout the world on a daily basis. Since this silent group cannot speak out against their treatment or the claims made on their behalf, my discussion will also broach the topic of the appropriation of nonhuman voice.

To apply the term “voice” to animals might seem inappropriate, but I do not use the word in a literal sense. It is the expression of agency and subjectivity, closer to the idea of “political voice” than actual speech. Inevitably even these terms are too anthropocentric, but it is the precise inappropriateness of the term animal voice that highlights our inability to find the “right words” when attempting to represent nonhumans. This paper offers animal voice as a concept for illuminating, and exploring, the ethical issues regarding the creative and critical representation of nonhumans.

Candice Allmark-Kent is studying the ethical representation of nonhumans in Canadian literature for a PhD in English at the University of Exeter. Her research interests include: zoocriticism, postcolonial studies, and Canadian, American and First Nations literatures. She is a member of the Animal Studies Group at the University of Exeter.
Anna-Mari Almila, University of Aberdeen
(annamari almila@abdn.ac.uk)

‘Clothing Expressions Reduced: Muslim Women and the Headscarf in Europe’

It is hardly possible to talk about Muslim identity in Europe without talking about Muslim identification and visual identifiers such as the headscarf. In the debates surrounding the headscarf, many different framings and meanings have been recognized: wearing the headscarf can be understood to be either a political statement or a human right. It can be interpreted on the one hand as a sign of oppression of women, backwardness or refusal to integrate, or on the other hand as a sign of personal piety and modesty, expression of ethnic identity or resistance of “Western” values. The headscarf can further function as a tool of emancipation and empowerment, or simply as a fashion object.

Many analyses of the headscarf controversies and debates concentrate on the French or some other European society and its reactions to the headscarf. Though crucial for understanding the European debates, such analyses tend to repeat the mistake of reducing Muslim women further to the scarves they wear – and many in fact do not wear them. I claim in this paper that for understanding the Muslim women’s identity and its visual expressions in Europe, it is essential firstly to understand the ways in which the scarf-wearing Muslim women’s agency is denied by different framings of the headscarf; secondly, how the interpretations of private and public space influence the meanings of the scarf; and thirdly, how the history of western liberalism, secularism and feminism define the several kinds of “othernesses” of the Muslim women. However, it is also crucial to understand that female Muslim identity is not reducible to a headscarf or a veil. Research should provide tools for interpreting Muslim appearance and identity with more accuracy and understanding than many of today’s black-and-white debates do. The clothing expressions of Muslim women are tools of agency and rich cultural representations and should be defined in the terms of their wearers rather than in the terms of the surrounding society.

Anna-Mari Almila is a PhD student in the Centre of Visual Culture and the Department of Sociology at the University of Aberdeen. Her research focuses on Muslim women’s clothing expressions in Finland and Scotland, and she is particularly interested in agency, public versus private space, and otherness in wider European context.
Adrian Furtuna is a 25 year old Roma man who lives and works in Bucharest. In the movie, Adrian tells the story of his life. In order to achieve what he has today, Adrian had to overcome many challenges. Like many Roma children, he was born in a poor family and did not have good perspectives for his life. However, he was fortunate that his mother was a wise and strong woman. She earned little money by selling canvas and clothes, but she had large ambitions for her son and was determined to help him. He attended the University of Iasi and became one of the best students in his class of Sociology. Therefore, in a way, Adrian’s success is a fulfilment of his mother’s dream. This shows that even though the woman is neglected in the Roma family, she has great power. In this case, the great influence of this power allowed her son to succeed. Everything that Adrian did in his life was inspired by his mother. She had a tremendous amount of faith in him. That is why the word ‘faith’ has been used in the title of the documentary.

Even though Adrian lives a modern lifestyle, he still adheres to some Roma traditions in his household. They have been instilled in him by his grandfather when he was young. Being the oldest man in the family, his grandfather got a lot of respect from everyone around. This respect for elders is characteristic of Roma families and it makes Adrian preserve his Roma identity. He shows that it is possible to retain that identity while living a modern lifestyle. This what the word ‘flame’ in the title of my documentary refers to. It could be said that Adrian carries the flame of his ancestors’ traditions into the future.

In this movie I have focussed on three main aspects: 1) Roma history and Holocaust; 2) Roma people attendance to school like a minority; 3) Roma culture and identity. Faith and Flame is a documentary against racism and pro equal opportunities.

Victoria Baltag is a member of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), and is currently completing her MA in “Film, History and Television” at University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. Her main research is focussed on anthropology and human behaviour. She has published articles on education and culture in countries like Romania, Iran, China and Saudi Arabia.
‘Visible Women: Tales of Age, Gender and In/Visibility’

There are positive aspects of being a frightening old woman.
Though the old woman is both feared and reviled,
she need not take the intolerance of others to heart,
for women over fifty already form one of the largest groups
in the population structure of the western world.

(Germaine Greer, 1992: 2)

Personal indignation motivated the exploration for my doctoral dissertation into the anecdotal “invisibility” of us older women. Nobody sees us any more – or so we are told. My own experience, and that of other older women I know, does not support this hypothesis – certainly not as a general rule or the only tale to tell.

My seven women co-researchers and I (all aged between 50 and 70) exchanged email letters over 18 months, mostly individually, with some group contact. We explored our lives, thoughts, beliefs, experiences, sense of visibility or invisibility.

Questions posed – and not necessarily answered – included: what is behind the stories of older women becoming invisible and disregarded? Where do they come from? What do they mean – to women and “society”? How might they be challenged? What other stories can be told?

This is a political and philosophical, as well as a personal, issue and raises many questions, drawing on feminist and poststructuralist ideas, around women’s perceptions (and experience) of power and positioning. The work presents a reflective, questioning, subjective, self-indulgent and often moving narrative exploration of the experiences of women growing older and not disappearing.

The major part is the poetic representation of the thoughts and lives of eight older women, told in their own words; what Laurel Richardson calls “a poem masquerading as a transcript and a transcript masquerading as a poem” (1997: 139).

Christine Bell graduated in 2010 as a Doctor of Education from the University of Bristol. She is a writer and feminist, retired psychotherapist, group facilitator, trainer and organisational development consultant. She continues to work with poetry and storytelling/storycarrying, and is engaged in collaborative writing projects and creative writing practices with colleagues connected to Bristol University. She is also involved in community activities in her home town.
“To prove you had souls at all”: “Bare Life” and the Art of Being Human in Kazuo Ishiguro’s Never Let Me Go

Kazuo Ishiguro’s Never Let Me Go (2005) concerns the lives of clones grown only so that, once adults, they will donate their organs one by one until their “completion” or death. Though many of these clones grow up in “deplorable conditions”, a select few are granted a privileged childhood at the Hailsham School. Here, they are encouraged to produce art and poetry, which, unbeknownst to them, is collected and displayed with the purpose of proving their humanity – as one of the teachers tells the narrator, “We took away your art because we thought it would reveal your souls. Or, to put it more finely, we did it to prove you had souls at all.”

What is at stake in this text is thus nothing less than the consideration of what constitutes human life, of what kind of life is considered worthy of human rights. This concern resonates strongly with Giorgio Agamben’s exploration of biopolitics in his seminal Homo Sacer, which focuses on the “bare life” of this “sacred man”, who may be killed without the commission of homicide but who may not be sacrificed. This signifies a being who has been stripped of all identity, of all human attributes, and of all ties to the community; and this is precisely the kind of “bare life” evident in Ishiguro’s text. Indeed, the clones, a minority who exist purely to sustain other lives considered more worthy of being lived, are described as being essentially only “shadowy objects in test tubes” – bare life in its most extreme form.

In this paper I want to explore the biopolitical stakes of Never Let Me Go alongside the text’s focus on the mediation of human identity through art. Hailsham’s teachers may believe that their students’ art constitutes the clones’ only proof of humanity, but I want to explore how Ishiguro’s text might trouble this assumption. I want to focus particularly on the way in which the clones’ art inhabits an ambivalent space between self-representation and systemic oppression, simultaneously allowing the students to find but also to forget themselves, and, more ominously, to forget their material situation.

Kathryn Bird completed her MA in Contemporary Literature and Culture at the University of Manchester in 2010, and will begin her PhD at the University of Leeds this October. Her thesis focuses on the concept of undeath both in and of the Gothic in contemporary culture.
The Soft Vengeance of a Freedom Fighter (1990) is an autobiography portraying Albie Sachs’s recovery from a car bomb planted by the apartheid government while the South African political activist was in exile in Maputo/Mozambique. Sachs represents his physical recovery from the attack as an allegorical triumph presaging the wounded South African nation’s emergence from racist oppression. The bomb injuries leave Sachs permanently disabled, with the loss of his right arm and an eye. His new self immerses him into an experience of otherness and the physical mark on his body forces him to experience his formerly white, male privileged life from the perspective of a socially marginalized person. Sachs draws an analogy between his bodily difference and the racial otherness ascribed to Africans in apartheid South Africa in that both experience their exclusion from the privileges of white mainstream society. In the course of the narrative, the autobiographical subject comes to terms with his disability by reconciling himself with his new bodily condition. What is more, Sachs’s disabled self can be accommodated into the new South African nation grounded on a constitution emphasizing the rights of minorities. Sachs’s forgiveness of his attackers sets the tone of reconciliation particularly predominant while the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1995-2001) was being held during South Africa’s transition to democracy.

Yi-heng Chen holds a MA from the University of Salzburg, where she completed a dissertation on South African Jewish writing. In her Master’s dissertation at the University of York she explored the novels of South African writer Richard Rive. Yi-heng is currently a PhD student at York and her thesis analyses South African autobiographies published after 1990.
The struggle for political independence by African countries in the late 1950s and early 1960s provided emerging scholars at the time the opportunity to assert the continent’s cultural emancipation. Thus while illustrious sons of the various African countries fought to liberate the continent from many years of colonial domination by Western countries, mostly Britain, France and Portugal, enlightened scholars on their part sought to produce literary works that engaged with misconceptions and stereotyping about the people of Africa. My presentation discusses the emergence of Postcolonial African literature and the debate on the appropriateness of the language used in its production. Of importance in this debate is the call by literary experts like Ngugi wa Thiong’o for the use of African languages in the production of African literature, including genres like the novel. This opinion is based on the fact that it is difficult to express African imagination in a non-African language and that the African experience can only be expressed in African languages.

Renowned writers and postcolonial African theorists like Chinua Achebe, on the other hand, are of the view that African scholars should not in “rejecting the devil” in colonialism throw away the good with it. Colonial languages, they argue, are powerful linguistic tools which unite the many ethnic communities in former colonies. They, therefore, advocate the use of European languages in order to reach an international audience but in a way that will enable those languages conveniently express the African experience. In using the metropolitan languages, African writers use innovative writing techniques to enable them conveniently carry their postcolonial African message.

The discussion also looks at the role of translation in the representation of African experience. Given that postcolonial African literature is, in many cases, a product of literary translation from oral culture resulting in the creation of a hybrid language, the translation postcolonial literature between two European languages poses an interesting challenge worth discussing.

Alfred Cudjoe is a professional translator (English, French, Spanish) currently pursuing a PhD on the translation of postcolonial West African literature with the title “Representing West African Culture: Achebe and Oyono through the Prism of Translation”, at the University of Surrey, Guildford.
‘Humour and the Fictional Representation of a Minority Ethno-Religion’

This paper aims at discussing Aleksandr Khurgin’s fictional and humorous treatment of belonging to a Jewish minority in the Soviet Union at the time of the end of communism and during the subsequently emerging Jewish emigration. Aleksandr Khurgin is a late Soviet and post-Soviet Ukrainian-Russian-Jewish writer who now resides in Germany. A key thematic thread in his short fiction concerns Soviet and post-Soviet Jewish existence and identity and Jewish emigration. This paper will illustrate how the complex issues of post-communist Jewish identity in the former Soviet Union and in emigration are treated by Khurgin, suggesting that his works imply that post-Soviet Jewish identity is a cultural and to a lesser degree national identity, rather than a religious one. Khurgin’s fiction thereby engages with the dynamics of an ethno-religious minority in an officially supra-national atheist state, and of becoming a minority group of another kind in the country of emigration, where Jews and the non-Jewish majority often see the newcomers as Russians. For many such emigrants, this means that, in effect, they belong to a minority within a minority. On a more theoretical level this paper will offer suggestions about the function of self-reflective humour in the fictional representation of such concepts as minority, ethnicity and religion.

Nicolas Dreyer holds an MA (Hons) in International Relations and Russian (St Andrews, 2004). After a period of work for the municipality of his native Nuremberg, Germany, he returned to St Andrews to pursue a PhD and expects to submit his dissertation on post-Soviet Russian fiction by January 2011.
The Disability Studies pioneer Lennard Davis has suggested that, in every sphere of their existence, people with physical and learning impairments experience a level of oppression and repression which far exceeds “that experienced by any other marginalized group.” This grouping has historically been virtually excluded from involvement in mainstream arts activity. Since the formation of The Arts and Disability Forum for Northern Ireland in 1993 the inclusion of disabled people has slowly crept up the arts agenda. However, two factors make this a pressing issue in the context of Northern Ireland. First, one in five people in Northern Ireland has a disability which is double that of the rest of the UK. Second, the Disability Rights movement (out of which Disability Arts has grown in Britain) has not materialised in the same way in Northern Ireland and there are therefore many questions that are currently being asked as to how disabled people participate in the arts. Drawing on critical ethnographic concepts of power, politics, community and participation from multiple perspectives which consciously seek an alternative to the grand narrative (Lyotard 1984), this paper will refer to the work of the physical theatre company Kids in Control, Northern Ireland’s only physical youth theatre company, and its work with learning disabled young people and adults as co-creators.

This paper suggests that the need for “participation” (which tends most often to be applied to the marginalized group) implies a tension resulting from oppression. Using Foucault’s deconstruction of power and in particular of “biopower” (1978), it is possible to interrogate the power, humanization and participation which lead to marginalization in the first place. Tremain uses these ideas of power in relation to the disabled body, power and politics, and provides a useful framework for deconstructing “impairment” (2005), and by Kuppers in relation to the performative body (2003).

Deconstructing power dynamics in this way seeks to destabilise the notion that the disabled person should be participating within existing models at all. With the current changes within Arts and Disability in Northern Ireland, there is a chance to approach participation from a different perspective: as a social web of inter-dependent agents. This paper will consider how the facilitators, funders, carers, friends and family can participate in a way which is ethically moral, based and based on a human rights model which recognises that we are ALL participants, and not just the disabled person, and what this may mean for the changing arts landscape of Northern Ireland.
In the “performance” of everyday life, processes of disguise and impersonation can be an effective strategy, enabling us to “blend” to our surroundings and “pass” unnoticed. As Peggy Phelan suggests, “the binary between the power of visibility and the impotency of invisibility is falsifying. There is real power in remaining unmarked” (1993:6). Underpinned by an analysis of the historical control of performance and gender in pre- and post-revolutionary Haïti, this paper will examine themes of visibility, performative power and spectatorship in two contemporary visual texts that depict male-to-female transvestism within the practice of Haitian Vodou and within the dominant gender norms that circulate in Haitian society: of French and Haitian origin, Anne Lescot’s and Laurence Magloire’s documentary, Des Hommes et des Dieux (2002) and British artist Leah Gordon’s, Bounda par Bounda: A Drag Zaka (2010). Through an analysis of the style in which the filmmaker frames sacred spaces of inside and outside in these works I will consider the bodies, costumes and guises that yield authenticity and value in this culture. How do the subjects of these films manoeuvre within the hegemonic conditions imposed upon them, yet simultaneously resist those same conditions?

Colonial power sought to maintain subjects visible in order to facilitate surveillance and control. Fanon described colonisation as a sexual moment in which an implied homosexual violence occurs between white patriarchal rule and the feminised, racialised “Little Brown Brothers”. Drawing on Fanon’s theories of visibility in relation to racial politics, this paper will question to what extent the bodies represented are filmed as “feminine” or “deviant”, both in style and theme, taking into account the historicity of such representation, embedded in the colonial imagination. Finally, the aforementioned contemporary expressions seem to fit within the definition of “performance ethnography” put forward by Myron Beasley (2010) as, “a critical stance in which the ethnographer works alongside the ‘co-participants’ to create a performance”, which alludes to our participation as spectator of the film. This paper will therefore address questions of cultural voyeurism in the narration of Otherness pertaining to these works.

Charlotte Hammond is a PhD candidate in the departments of Drama and French at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her AHRC-funded interdisciplinary research project is on cross-gender performances in contemporary Francophone Afro-Caribbean visual culture, focusing on the islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe and Haïti and their diaspora in metropolitan France.
‘Minority Identities in Romania during the Interwar Period’

Despite the vast research about the Romanians from Transylvania, little is known about a status metamorphosis before and after the World War I. Before 1918, the Romanians from Transylvania represented a minority in the framework of a multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire, being dominated by Hungarians. When Transylvania joined the Old Kingdom of Romania, and became part of the newly created national unitary state, the status of the Romanians from Transylvania changed. From now on they represented a majority. This paper examines the relationship between majorities and minorities in Romania (focusing on Transylvania as a part of the state) during the interwar period. The paper investigates the way in which the concepts of identity and alterity were redefined, the self perception of minorities (especially Hungarians), the manner in which these minorities were representing themselves in a newly created state that wanted to be homogenous. I also analyze the minorities’ rights, established by fundamental laws, laws regarding education, health and political power. I pay a special attention to identitary elements such as: language, culture, religion, symbols, common memories that individualize minorities giving their specific. The research is also analyzing if the changes of status of the ethnic groups from Transylvania-Romanians and Hungarians is followed by an increasing in hostilities among those two ethnicities. The paper concludes with a discussion about disadvantages of being a minority during the interwar period in Romania. My analysed data is collected from archives, political literature, newspapers, published reports and laws. This research represents a case study that can clarify us upon the historical relationship between minorities and majorities, having in view the fact that even today the relationship between the Hungarians and the Romanians from Transylvania is still tense. The theme that circulates in public spheres is that the national essence could be altered and territorial integrity should be changed so, it is about historical study of a contemporary phenomenon.

Luminita Ignat-Coman is a postdoctoral researcher at the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca with a research project entitled Transylvania between Regionalism and Integration: Identity Discourses in the Interwar Period. She obtained her PhD degree in 2009 with a thesis about identity of Transylvanian Romanians. She is the author of the book: The Self-Image of Transylvanian Romanians in the Dualist Period.
‘Spoken For: Representations of Trafficked Women in Britain’

Trafficking of women for sexual services is an international problem, and the United Kingdom has long been a destination country. Although the United Nations, European Union and the British Government have policies in place, it remains an enormous problem today. In order to achieve real, wide-ranging change, it is necessary to understand how attitudes and values are shaped.

This paper will explore how trafficked women in Britain are represented, and how these representations can help or hinder the abolitionist cause. It will consider how the rhetoric of victimhood is used - and how it can create attitudes that can be particularly harmful for women who have been trafficked into sexual slavery. The paper will also investigate concepts of speaking and being spoken for, considering how different types of texts and media encourage these women to speak or be silent. It will question whether it is possible to speak about this vulnerable group without speaking for them, and whether it is necessary to speak for, about or alongside people whose voices are not often heard.

The analysis will investigate these issues through close readings of the different media produced in relation to trafficking over the last few years, and will engage in the debates where theorists such as Jo Doezeema and Laura Agustin argue that there is a “myth” of trafficking that has been created in the West. It will examine the ways in which representations of trafficked women can seem formulaic, ignoring factors such as race, class, age and sexuality.

Different forms of representation will be discussed, exploring which genres and media allow the voices of these women to be heard instead of silenced. Through this, the paper will examine how power creates and maintains harmful views of women who have been trafficked, and the impact this has upon them.

Clare Jones is studying for an MPhil in Multi-Disciplinary Gender Studies at the University of Cambridge. Her research centres on the representations of trafficked women, considering the need to intervene in society's creation of harmful representations of these vulnerable women. Her previous work with refugees, particularly unaccompanied minors (who are at great risk from traffickers), led her towards these issues, where theory and activism meet to provoke real, lasting change.
As ex-communist countries, Hungary and Romania have much in common in the development of their film industries. During communism most of the movies showed a simplified and idealized picture of women and men; cinema was a way to strengthen the communist virtues. Women appeared working in agriculture or factories, helping men, and building together the socialist future. As it was forbidden, alternative sexualities were not shown in these movies. Non-whiteness, non-heterosexuality was excluded from the movies during communism.

After the fall of the communism East-Central European cinema had to develop a new look, new strategies, had to find new characteristics. This has been done by either imitating Western models, or by going back to traditions prior to communism.

The aim of my research is to point out the specific characteristics of Hungarian and Romanian cinema in the first decade of the 21st Century, analyzing the way white and non-white identity, female and male body are represented, and pointing out the way alternative sexualities are shown in these films.

Some of the films that are in my focus are: Fresh Air (Friss Levegő, 2006), Girls (Lányok, 2007), 4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days (4 Luni, 3 Saptamani si 2 Zile, 2007), Weekend with my Mother (Weekend cu Mama, 2009).

My paper is a comparative analysis: I am comparing the movies of the new millennium to the movies that were made during the communism, but I am also comparing the movies of the two countries in the first millennium: Hungary and Romania. This analysis covers a multidisciplinary area, as it uses the angles of sociology, film theory, gender studies and literary theory.

In the conclusions my paper is focusing at the Hungarian-Romanian-British film Katalin Varga (directed by Peter Strickland, 2009), and tries to answer the questions of how the film combines Eastern views on gender with old Transylvanian archetypes.

Lilla László graduated from Babes-Bolyai University, Faculty of Humanities. In 2008 she received a Masters degree in Strategies of Canonization. Since October 2009, she has been a PhD student at Babes-Bolyai University. Her major field of studies is literary theory, East European cinema and gender studies.
‘Doubled Sense of Resistance: Makortoff Collection of Photographs of Doukhobor Daily Life 1920-1950’

In this paper, I propose to discuss the Makortoff Collection of photographs that depict Doukhobor daily life in British Columbia, Canada in the 1930s-1950s, housed at the Simon Fraser University Archives in Vancouver. By engaging with these snapshots of everyday life and their current status in a public collection, I bring to the fore the role of personal agency in negotiating between assimilation and resistance of immigrant groups in Canada. This reading contributes to the history of the Doukhobors, a Russian Christian group that originally relocated to Canada in the 1890s, and its role in the development of Canadian multiculturalism. The family snapshots in the Makortoff Collection represent a state of transition from the traditional Doukhobor way of life, showing aspects of modernity adopted by the community; they are thus speaking to a doubled sense of resistance, simultaneously to the Canadian mainstream culture and to the Doukhobor traditions brought from Russia. Locating history in the present through direct involvement with the Makortoff family history through the photographs, this interpretation blurs the boundary between personal memories and collective histories. Family photographs, with their openness to projection, and allowance for missing identities, open up a space in which such a reading is possible.

Vernacular photographs occupy a powerful position in public archives in relation to minority representation, as they reinsert traces of everyday personal experience into global narratives, constituting potential acts of opposition to its hegemonic structure. Photographs’ location of memory within the present of looking, combined with their indexical traces of the past, resonates strongly with the ideals of Doukhobor oral histories that conceive of remembering as a constantly active process. In depicting the ordinariness of daily life in a time of drastic changes, the Makortoff photographs point to overlapping moments of resistance, conformity, individual and collective desires, autobiographical identities, and contradictions. By insisting that their subjects continue to maintain agency, I choose to view these snapshots not only as historical documentation, but as active participants in the acts of reading and writing both of their own histories, as well as their implications for the contemporary negotiations of cultural difference.

Natalia Lebedinskaia is a second-year MA student in Art History at Concordia University. Her research focuses on vernacular photographs, and their shifting meaning in public collections. In her thesis, in which she discusses the Makortoff Family collection from the Doukhobor community in British Columbia, she hopes to bring forth the role of personal agency in negotiating between tradition and assimilation. Natalia’s wider interests include ethics of display and curatorial responsibility, as they relate to nostalgia, memory, and representation of personal experience. Her academic research is funded by the SSHRC Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship and the Fonds de recherche sur la société et la culture.
‘The Romani Internet: Representation, Identities and Languages’

This paper illustrates the ways in which Roma (Gypsies) are representing themselves on the Internet and how creativity plays a central role in the development of a standardized form of their language, Romani. As a potentially open medium, the Internet offers the marginalized a chance to voice their opinions and challenging dominant discourses about them (Mitra 2001). However, due to the English language dominance that characterizes the Internet (Wright 2004) questions arise on how minorities can effectively access and use it to support their claims for rights and representation. More, what about minorities such as the Roma whose languages had never been written and thus lack a standardized form? Through an ethnographic investigation of selected Roma websites and the networks of which they are part I show how Roma are appropriating the Internet and using Romani and various other languages on it. Qualitative data illustrates how Roma are representing their identity in virtual spaces and the strategies employed in claiming for their rights. Furthermore, a quantitative analysis of the Romani spelling spontaneously developing demonstrates how users are creatively overcoming the obstacles posed by using a non-standard language on the Internet. The case study shows how a diasporic cosmopolitan approach and the chances offered by the Internet are shaping the way Roma represent themselves. As such, the paper contributes to our understanding of how cultural representations can contest the way global power structures produce and maintain minority status. The paper also highlights the impact of these processes on the standardization of Romani. Such findings call for a rethinking of our current theories on language standardization and linguistic human rights, pointing at the feasibility of a policy of linguistic pluralism and showing how academic pursuits can work toward social inclusion.

Daniele Leggio completed the MA in Linguistics at the University of Manchester documenting the dialect of the Mitrovica Roma. His PhD investigates the relationship between language and identity among diasporic communities in virtual spaces and the impact of computer-mediated communication on processes of language standardization.
Collective memory is an important component in constructing and affirming social identity. A basic principle in collective memory studies is that a community holds a shared perception of its past and that perception, which bonds the individuals together as an imagined community, is produced through symbolic means across space and time. But what happens when the members of the community form a minority group, scattered in space so that their collective conciseness contests or is oppositional to that of the dominant culture?

Unlike other minority groups, the GLBT community has exceptional means of forming their identities as individuals and as groups. Usually, GLBT people are not born into GLBT families; as children, they do not share the same space with other members of their community in ways that other minorities do; they seldom read about people like themselves in books; and until recently they could only rarely watch GLBT people in the media. Although they have a shared history, they do not learn about their history at schools or at home. Unlike other minority groups that perform social rituals to perpetuate their history and to transmit it to future generations, GLBT people grow up isolated from their peers and in a culture that is sometimes hostile to their very identity. Therefore, communication media play first and foremost an important role in informing GLBT people and accounting for their education on their common history.

In my study, I examine the means of production and construction of "GLBT History" in Israeli media from 1993 to 2007. By looking at "general" and "designated GLBT" media, I explore the construction of GLBT historical narrative(s) and the formation of its collective memory.

The analysis identifies two main parallel GLBT narratives in the Israeli media: first, a Local Narrative that seeks to merge the GLBT history into the mainstream collective memory of the Jewish-Israeli society, and second, a Global Narrative that detaches the GLBT community from the Israeli sphere and interweaves the Israeli GLBT community into a larger global community of GLBT people that share a common history.

Tal Morse is a PhD candidate at The Department of Media and Communications at The London School of Economics and Political Science. Her main interests are media and culture, including media rituals, visual communication and collective memory — all intertwined with identity politics, with particular emphasis on nationalism, media portrayals of minorities, and GLBT studies.
‘Seeking Sanctuary Workshop: Presentation and “Play” of an Awareness-Raising Character-Based Board Game on Seeking Asylum in the UK’

This workshop is an opportunity for conference participants to discover and play Seeking Sanctuary, an innovative educational and awareness-raising board game that shines light on the day-to-day realities of persons progressing through the UK asylum system in the London context. The workshop will also serve as a forum in which participants will consider and discuss the potential for games-based learning, or “serious games”, in exploring issues and tackling injustices of citizenship and governance, community development and cohesion, human rights and identity politics.

Seeking Sanctuary was developed by Jana Gigl in 2009-2010 as a practice-based research project for her dissertation in MA Refugee Studies at the University of East London. The board game has been designed as a character-based interactive tool aimed at engaging broader segments of the public in an opportunity for learning, reflection and dialogue. Based on the concept of experiential learning, each player is invited to “put on” one of six very different refugee identities (e.g. unaccompanied minor from Afghanistan, single mother from Eritrea, gay man from Iran) and “experience for themselves” the testing and protracted process of claiming and gaining protected status in the UK. Each refugee character follows an individualised narrative trajectory through the game, played out more through elements of chance than of choice. With dominant discourses on asylum in the UK saturated in misinformation, politicisation and stereotypes, Seeking Sanctuary aims to be a counterbalance, enabling critical thinking, generating discussion, and encouraging players to cultivate realistic, holistic and humane perspectives on the experiences of persons seeking asylum. Seeking Sanctuary is not a digital educational resource nor is it played in an online learning environment—it is a an actual board game that players must sit down at, together, face to face, to negotiate contentious issues, and to collaboratively generate new knowledge and experiences to take away with them and continue sharing with others.

Jana Gigl and Christina Olivieri are currently working in partnership to launch G.E.T. Game – Global Education Toolbox, an organisation dedicated to developing innovative educational and awareness-raising ‘tools’ on global human rights issues for local contexts. Jana and Christina met on the MA Refugee Studies programme at the University of East London, and have the combined experience of living in six countries across four continents, working in areas of social research, community development, minority rights advocacy and campaigning, education and skills training, and arts- and media-based practice.
Animal, of Indra Sinha’s 2007 Man Booker prize shortlisted *Animal’s People*, insists that he is an animal and the only one of his species, although he was once human. Poisons released in a factory explosion (his home town, Khaufpur, is a fictionalised version of Bhopal) have entered his body in the air he breathes, the food he eats, the water he drinks and from every substance he touches in his enviroring world, to become part of his body’s chemical construction at the cellular level. This hybridisation of body and environment has caused his spine to twist so that he is forced to walk “a quatre pied” like an animal. Animal actively conflates his animalised physical form and the subjective identity produced by his economic and political status, and functions as both a spatially defined, embodied individual and a representation of troubled boundaries. His deformity (a Platonically inspired failure to qualify as a human) and adoption of animal status, his poverty, and his invisibility in the purview of immense corporate power occupy an aporetic, ambiguous zone between human animal and non-human animal, between self-motivated organism and environment, and between those organisms and contexts which the human world accepts responsibility to and those to which it does not.

This paper will discuss the critical and ethical conflicts and ambiguities which Animal’s transgressive form embodies because, from a critical perspective, Animal inhabits what should be an overlap between three literary critical approaches – Ecocriticism, Postcolonialism and Zoocriticism – but is instead an aporia. The links between environmental degradation and racially motivated oppression, and between racism and speciesism are critically acknowledged, as is the need to bring these two separate collaborations together to create a methodology which incorporates the competing interests and connecting problems of ecology, human poverty and abuse of animals. As Zygmunt Bauman suggests, morality is not universalisable, but a literary text and its critical study can act as a form of reasoning through which to re-imagine ethical practices and critical methodologies which integrate both individual responsibility to the other, and global responsibility to the minority of one which Animal represents.

Catherine Parry is a postgraduate student at the University of Lincoln. In her doctoral research she is exploring constructions of the human-animal divide in late twentieth and early twenty-first century fiction. She is ASLE UKI Postgraduate Secretary, and is currently organising, with colleagues, the ASLE UKI 2011 Postgraduate Conference.
As the critic Patricia Waugh put it, cultural pluralism invaded the British literary realm in the late 1970s when “the Englishness of English literature” came into question (1995: 152) and a diasporic plurality of subcultures started to fight for a voice in society (210). Various minority groups that had been victims of different forms of abuse realised that literature was an appropriate tool to claim for their rights and negotiate their identities. Among these groups, Anglo-Jewish writers have attempted to narrativise their traumatic experiences and their identity conflicts during and after the Holocaust in their fictional and autobiographical creations since the 1970s (Cheyette, 1998: xliii-liv; Brauner, 2001: 35; Stahler, 2007: 3). Recent research has been done on Anglo-Jewish literature, but the number of these critical works is still much reduced, mainly in the case of female writers. Only a few critics have focused on the double marginalisation these women have been submitted to due to their Jewish background and the patriarchal oppression that has been traditionally practised upon women in the socio-cultural life (Tylee, 2006; Behlau and Reitz, 2004).

The main aims of my paper will be, firstly, to understand the nature of Jewish identity throughout history and in special relation to the Holocaust by having recourse to the theories of Jean-Francois Lyotard, Sander L. Gilman, Jonathan Webber, Efraim Sicher and Marlena Schmool among others. Secondly, the special status of Anglo-Jewish women writers will be examined (Baker, 1993). And then, these theories will be illustrated with examples from the works of Elaine Feinstein, Anita Brookner, Bernice Rubens, Linda Grant and Eva Figes. I will try to unveil the specific narrative techniques and literary genres used by these writers in order to represent their identity conflicts and to become visible in present society. All these writers have returned to their past in order to re-angle Anglo-Jewish history, drawing on the relation between the individual and history and turning to the family as the centre of their identities. Further, this study will attempt to demonstrate that literature is not detached from the problems endured by minorities; on the contrary, it will show the power of literary language to construct identities and deconstruct some socio-ideological assumptions deeply rooted in society. Finally, Anglo-Jewish literature will emerge as an important field of study for researchers interested in the representation of minorities through the arts.

Silvia Pellicer-Ortín (BA and M. A. Zaragoza, Spain) is Research Fellow at the University of Zaragoza and member of the excellence research group ‘Contemporary Narrative in English’. She is enrolled in the doctoral programme on English Studies and is writing her PhD thesis on the work of the British writer Eva Figes. Silvia’s main research interests are: contemporary British fiction, Anglo-Jewish literature, the ethical and traumatic component in the writings of sexual and ethnic minorities, the Holocaust and the question of Jewishness and feminism.
Catherine Rashid, University of Cambridge
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‘British Novels about Islam, and the Perpetual Privatization of Muslim Identity’

My paper will investigate how Islam as a minority identity is represented in two contemporary British novels: Nadeem Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2005) and Robin Yassin-Kassab’s *The Road from Damascus* (2008).

As Edward Said has argued in *Culture and Imperialism*, “every novelist and every critic or theorist of the European novel notes its institutional character.” Postcolonial novels in particular, I will argue, perform a regulatory function in contemporary culture, normalizing our ideas about ourselves and others. If novels seem a ‘trivial’ cultural form, compared with discourses “whose practical orientation is immediately consequential”, for D.A. Miller and Fredric Jameson it is in the private and domestic space of the novel where we find a “highly active space for the production and circulation of a complex power”.

My paper attempts to uncover some of the ideological workings of British novelistic representations of Islam, especially their concern for the privatized religious experience, the spiritualized retreat, and the value of individualism over communitarianism. It is obvious that novels about Islam do not automatically retreat into the private sphere; instead, they actively engage with current debates about Islam, and thus attempt to intervene in the political landscape. This is particularly true of novels written after *The Satanic Verses* (1988). Indeed they often do make tangible interventions: notably, Hanif Kurieshi’s *The Black Album* (1995), Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* (2003) and Sebastian Faulks’s *A Week in December* (2009) have all sparked fresh debate about the cultural integration of Muslims in Britain.

There is an understandable celebration of these novels, which aim to counter the de-humanising effects of other media by painting Muslims as rounded characters. Nonetheless, these novels very often sustain certain stereotypes about Islam through moulding themselves on the structures and discourses of secularism. I thus want to interrogate the function of the British novel as a literary institution which contributes to a cultural dominant – which I will term “secular self-realisation” – through the fictional representation of Islam. This is a mandated secularism which restricts the level of engagement with Islamic difference. I will argue that the persistent construction of an individualistic protagonist within these novels, whose self-development and subsequent ‘transgression’ are opposed to Islamic stricture or to a ‘politicised’ and ‘public’ Muslim identity, inhibits dialogue with a diversity of Islamic experiences which might challenge the public/private, political/spiritual distinctions that are dominant discourses in Britain today.

Catherine Rashid is a second-year PhD student at the University of Cambridge, researching British novels which represent Islam, especially those published after the ‘*Satanic Verses* affair’ (1988-9).
Anne Smith, Queen Mary, University of London  
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‘Rights and Representations in an Applied Drama Project for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants’

Theatre focussing on refugee characters frequently uses the real life experiences of asylum seekers and refugees as source material. Much theatre of this type aims to raise awareness about the issues and thus sees the contributions of refugees and asylum seekers (through verbatim accounts of their experiences, video testimony or even performance of their own stories on stage), as a means of ensuring the authenticity of the representation. However, much performance of this type unintentionally represents refugees and asylum seekers as passive victims to be pitied rather than as multi-faceted human beings. Applied theatre projects can share this tendency to define refugees and asylum seekers solely by their flight from their country or, alternatively, can provide a more positive context for integration and empowerment.

This paper draws on an applied theatre practice-based research project in Goodmayes, outer London, for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. This project was participant led. When participants had control over devising the developing performance, it became a context where representations of evolving bi-cultural identity could be explored and expressed. A secure bi-cultural identity is considered integral to achieving a sense of belonging in the UK. Participants who had a low level of English language ability and little confidence in interacting in society were far more interested in using the arts as a method of increasing their understanding of and ability to take up their rights in society, in line with Maslow’s hierarchy of need. In this case, it resulted in a health literacy project, empowering participants to engage with their NHS entitlements. The ability of participants to achieve their rights was significantly enhanced by partnership with a third sector organisation, where specialised expertise and support could assist participants in accessing relevant services. For the third sector organisation, however, the arts project provided a valuable, non-threatening opportunity for participants to share concerns informally, which may not otherwise have been recognised. Thus, it created an opportunity to empower participants through appropriate support to improve the circumstances of their day-to-day living.

Anne Smith is a fourth year PhD student from Queen Mary’s, University of London. Her thesis focuses on the possibilities and limitations of using drama to create a sense of belonging for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. She has worked in this sector for the past six years, running applied theatre projects for young people, adults and families, following an MA in Theatre Education from Goldsmiths.
This paper addresses the work of four modern Muslim women exegetes from Egypt. It was mainly intrigued by the fact that Muslim women have always been excluded from the sacred domain. Raised as a Sunni Muslim, I have always been exposed to the work of male exegetes and scholars to the extent that I used to think that it was Haram (forbidden) for women to get involved with the sacred texts. Searching back into the Islamic traditions, I came across various women at the time of the prophet Muhammad whose scholarship and erudition have been at the centre of Islamic learning. Women like Umm Salama, Ayesha, Hafsa, and various others have not only been exegetes and transmitters of the sacred knowledge, but also astute inquirers who have even changed the trajectory of revelation. I have also learned of Mauritanian women who have taught Islamic sciences such as exegesis, Arabic grammar and Hadith to their sons who eventually became famous male exegetes.

The intelligence and scholarship of modern women exegetes like Aisha Abd Rahaman (Bint Shati), Zainab Al-Ghazali, Kariman Hamzah and Fawkiyah Sherbini, have their roots in the challenging presence of the Mothers of Believers whose understanding of Islam has shown the vitality of the women’s perspectives on religion.

The chasm in the history of Muslim women’s involvement with the sacred and the sudden emergence of these modern female exegetes that revealed the need for a further investigation to these women’s exegetical legacy. This paper reads into the history of women’s involvement with the exegesis of the Qur’an. It is an attempt not only to unearth or bring to surface some of the lost legacy of women in relation to Islamic sacred knowledge (Qur’an, Hadith and Islamic Jurisdiction or Fiqh), but also to argue that unless women take a thorough, critical and Ijtihadist view toward this knowledge, they will often be its passive objects, rather than its conscious, believing and active subjects.

Reading the “canonical” (approved by Al-azhar) works of Aisha Abd Rahaman, Zineb Al-Ghazali, Kariman Hamzah, and Fawkiya Sherbini against other interpretations of women such as Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, Nimat Hafez Barazangi will help the modern researcher clarify the extent to which these Muslim women have come to approach the sacred text of Islam. Though the views of these women may differ depending on how they have contextually and culturally perceived the Qur’anic revelation, sill the paper argues that women’s firsthand agency and direct contact with the empowering word of God is already an eminent triumph per se.
Tristano Volpato, University of Freiburg, Germany  
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Mexican communities of African descent currently exist in a state of practical non-recognition on the part of both Mexican society and governmental institutions. The causes of this lack of recognition are twofold: first there is a lack of sufficient academic research dealing with the current reality of Afro-Mexican communities, and second, Mexican Government institutions have in no way formally or informally recognized the existence of Afro-Mexican communities within Mexico. As a result of this cultural and official invisibility, Afro-Mexican communities are frequently denied access to healthcare, education, work and larger integration within Mexican civil society. These communities are also losing their socio-cultural identity as lack of access to the above mentioned social services creates a process of out migration to both Mexican and international destinations, which disrupts both communal life and cultural cohesion among Afro-Mexicans. In the Costa Chica of Oaxaca, the largest area of Afro-Mexican inhabitation within Mexico (South-west coast of the country), there is a particular high rate of ethnic exclusion and lack of cultural recognition existing despite attempts at both bettering the economic conditions of community members in the region and official recognition of Afro-Mexicans as a unique national minority. This exclusion has cut off Afro-Mexicans in the Costa Chica from benefiting from government programs recognizing specific cultural rights. In light of this reality, the paper focuses on two key elements of Afro-Mexican issue: first, the need to research and better document the existence of Afro-Mexican communities in the Costa Chica region within Mexico, taking into account the traditional cultural elements which characterize the socio-cultural identities of these communities. Second, the paper would focus the ways in which Afro Mexican identity and existence can be formally and informally recognized on a national level, highlighting the importance of the unique socio-cultural reality of Afro-Mexicans in the Costa Chica. Finally we will analyze the concept of community, identity and race, and generate a concrete proposal about negotiation identity process for the minority above-mentioned.

Tristano Volpato has studied sociology at the Trento University in Italy. He has worked in the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, Ecuador; studied for a Masters degree in Social Sciences in Mexico – where he has also worked as researcher in UNAM – and is currently studying a PhD program in Germany.
Since the late 1980s Taiwan has experienced a series of social changes, one of the most significant being the development of 同志 [tongzhi] and 酷兒 [ku-er] movement. The two Chinese terms, “tongzhi” and “ku-er”, represent an unprecedented, political formation of East Asian homosexual identity. The tongzhi and ku-er movement in Taiwan takes inspirations from local subcultures and global identity politic movements, most notably Western gay, lesbian and queer movements. The terms “tongzhi” and “ku-er” originate from Chinese translations of “gay”, “lesbian” and “queer”. The nature of tongzhi and ku-er movement can be described as “hybrid” or more appropriately, “metissage”, in which multiple cultural heritages and identities co-exist.

While much has been written on the phenomenon of tongzhi/ku-er culture, little attention has been paid to the viewpoint of translation. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to discuss how tongzhi and ku-er identity is represented in paratextual translations. The term “paratext” refers what Genette (1997) considers to be the “thresholds of interpretations”. This can encompass the title, cover image, footnotes, epigraph and basically any external elements of the text barring the actual text itself. Looking at two existing tongzhi and ku-er literary translations: Notes of a Desolate Man (1999) and Angelwings: Contemporary Queer Fiction from Taiwan (2003), the paratext reveals a “globalised” interpretation of tongzhi/ku-er identity. If tongzhi and ku-er culture is already a translation of the Western identities of “gay”, “lesbian” and “queer”, then their translation into English can be seen as a further appropriation of an already translated identity, which in turn questions the origins of its predecessors. The translated paratext, in this respect, can be a medium for the translator to address the cultural ambiguity of tongzhi and ku-er identity. The study concludes that the paratextual translations are inspired by interactions between the source and target culture, where sexual identities, ideology and cultural references manifest as a collective image of metissage.

Ming Wu’s research is in the translation of Taiwanese tongzhi and ku-er literature from the Chinese to the English language. She is primarily interested in topics such as Taiwanese tongzhi and ku-er culture/literature, globalisation, frame and framing, hybrid and metis identities and the roles literature and translation play in facilitating cultural and social changes.