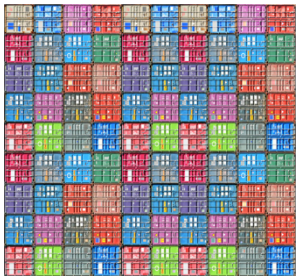


CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

October 24 – 26, 2019

# Ecotones: Encounters, Crossings and Communities



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Post/Colonial Ports  
Place and Nonplace in the Ecotone

Organized by The Departments of English And Geography, Concordia University.  
Co-Hosted by Concordia University,  
Université Paul Valéry Montpellier And Maison Française D'oxford.

# Keynotes bios & abstracts

## LISA PARAVISINI-GEBERT

Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert is a Professor of Caribbean culture and literature in the Department of Hispanic Studies and the Environmental Studies Program at Vassar College, where she holds the Sarah Tod Fitz Randolph Distinguished Professor Chair. Prof. Paravisini-Gebert is the author of a number of books, among them *Phyllis Shand Allfrey: A Caribbean Life* (1996), *Jamaica Kincaid: A Critical Companion* (1999), *Creole Religions of the Caribbean* (with Margarite Fernández Olmos, 2003; 2nd ed. 2011), *Literatures of the Caribbean* (2008) and of the forthcoming *Extinctions: The Ecological Cost of Colonization in the Caribbean* (Liverpool University Press). She co-edits *Repeating Islands*, a popular blog on Caribbean culture, with her Ivette Romero-Cesareo and is the Director of Vassar's Environmental Studies Program.

### **The Port of Santo Domingo: Tidal Debris, Metal Pollution, and the Perils of Poverty where the Caribbean Meets the Ozama**

Of all Caribbean port cities, Santo Domingo is perhaps the most vulnerable to climate change impacts. Its port, the site of the New World's first European capital, is formed by the broad mouth of the Ozama, a tidal river subject to frequent flooding and coastal erosion from storm surges growing ever stronger due to climate change. The city's poorest, most marginalized populations, about 400,000 people pushed by rapid urbanization to the most vulnerable riverside land, live in substandard housing in overcrowded neighborhoods like La Ciénaga, La Barquita, and Guachupita, precariously built just above port facilities undergoing deep transformations to allow for cruise-ship docking. Persistent flooding threatens lives and property and brings residents into dangerous contact with the rivers' highly polluted waters, bearing harmful bacteria and toxic concentrations of metals like thallium. The Dominican poor living along the Ozama are—the World Bank has concluded—among the world's most at risk of being affected by climate change. Highly threatened by rising sea levels and expected to undergo far-reaching transformations by 2050 due to climate change, the quandaries of the port of Santo Domingo can serve as a point of entry into the limits of environmental equality under current regional legislation and market forces—and can highlight the role of writers, artists and scholars in addressing climate change and environmental justice concerns that have often been ignored or neglected by government. This analysis, which builds upon Bernardo Vega's 2011 history, *Me lo contó el Ozama (As the Ozama Told Me, Santo Domingo: Fundación AES, 2011)*, uses a multidisciplinary lens that incorporates science, sociology, anthropology, political ecology, cultural geography, literature, and the arts to examine the environmental quandary of the



extremely vulnerable population of a port area confronting the impacts of climate change in the 21st century.

## PAT NOXOLO

Pat Noxolo's research brings together the study of international development, culture and in/security, and uses postcolonial, discursive and literary approaches to explore the spatialities of a range of Caribbean and British cultural practices. Recent work has focused on: re-theorising Caribbean in/securities; theorizations of space in Caribbean literature; Caribbean laughter and materialities; re-thinking the decolonial city; and African-Caribbean dance as embodied mapping. Pat Noxolo is lead researcher on the Caribbean In/securities and Creativity (CARISCC) research network, funded by the Leverhulme Trust. She is chair of the Society for Caribbean Studies, co-editor of Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, and secretary of the RACE group of the Royal Geographical Society.

## Cruise ships and containers: towards a literary geography of the Caribbean port

This paper takes concepts from two aspects of geographical work – tourism and transport geographies – and applies them to a range of Caribbean literature. The goal is not simply to appreciate whether and how concepts such as capacity and captive demand, transshipment, hubs, gateways and feeders appear in and elucidate the presence (and absence) of ports in Caribbean literary works, but also to explore how such concepts might be deployed to deepen understanding of the spatialities, openings and connections within and between Caribbean literary works. Ultimately the paper pushes towards a refreshing of the genre of the literary geography, by harnessing it to more insistently materially-focused aspects of geographical work.

## Writers Read

### DAVID CHARIANDY

David Chariandy grew up in Toronto and lives and teaches in Vancouver. His debut novel, *Soucouyant*, received stunning reviews and recognition from eleven literary awards juries. *Brother*, his second novel, received rave reviews, was named a Best Book of 2017 on no fewer than eight lists, and won the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize.

### SHAZIA HAFIZ RAMJI

Shazia Hafiz Ramji is the author of *Port of Being*, a finalist for the 2019 Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize and Gerald Lampert Memorial Award, and winner of the Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry. Her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Poetry Northwest*, *Music & Literature*, *Best Canadian Poetry 2019*, and *Canadian Literature*. CBC recently named her as a "writer to watch" and listed *Port of Being* as one of the best Canadian poetry books of 2018. Shazia is a columnist for Open Book and is currently at work on a novel.



# Conference bios & abstracts

## ANDRÉ DODEMAN

André Dodeman is currently working as an Associate Professor at the University of Grenoble Alpes in France. He wrote his PHD on Hugh MacLennan's work under the supervision of Professor Marta Dvorak (Paris III Université-Sorbonne Nouvelle). He published several articles on various English-Canadian writers such as Margaret Atwood, Alistair MacLeod and Yann Martel and he co-edited three volumes on postcolonial literature and culture. He is currently working on a fourth book on seas, oceans and passageways in the Anglophone colonial and postcolonial world in close collaboration with Memorial University of Newfoundland.

### **A Step into the Modern World: Revisiting Hugh MacLennan's *Barometer Rising* (1941)**

Hugh MacLennan's first published novel *Barometer Rising* owes much of its success to the importance given to the port city of Halifax during World War I and its strategic position that helped ensure the victory of the allied forces. A great deal of critical and academic work has already demonstrated that MacLennan chose the dramatic Halifax explosion of 1917 in his novel as a metaphor for the country's awakening to a larger, national consciousness. Even though most of the studies of his work between the 1960s and the 1980s have dealt with the representation of the city in his novel, they rarely considered its specific function as a port city during the war as a space of exchange and transformation that would question the rigid social and cultural conventions of the early twentieth century. The purpose of this paper is to revisit MacLennan's *Barometer Rising* in the light of the spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences, a turn dating back to the 1980s and initiated by philosophers like Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre in France and later developed by other social scientists like Edward Soja in the United States for whom "the organization, and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation, and experience."<sup>1</sup> This paper will pay special attention to the dynamics of the port city in MacLennan's novel as opposed to other spaces deemed less transformative.

## ANN TSO

Ann Tso began her teaching career at Lethbridge College shortly after she completed her PhD at McMaster University in 2018. Her research interests include literary urbanism, theory of aesthetics, and contemporary British literature. The monograph that she is preparing for publication (entitled *Psychogeographic Otherworlds*) concerns the "London-ness" evident in the writings of Alan Moore, Peter Ackroyd, and Iain Sinclair: "London-ness" defamiliarizes London in order to re-constitute English identity, to critique the nostalgia for empire concomitantly with Britain's burgeoning heritage industry. Her articles have appeared in *Neo-Victorian Studies* and the *Literary London Journal*.



### **Peter Ackroyd's Sensuous Detective Methods in Hawksmoor (1985)**

Despite having been doused in flames thrice, the London Custom House remains, in the eyes of Peter Ackroyd, a token of the city's "thousand-year" status as "a city of commerce and trade" (Ackroyd qtd. in Link 518). If the "water city" (Ward 119) once enabled Britain to dominate the world in trade and later through imperial rule, the Thames and the Docklands may well be the originating points from which its colonizing culture had spread. Is Ackroyd truly a "Tory postmodernist" who imagines London— London-ness—to be "the axle around which time turns" (Trimm 206), as though London's very contours, its docks and waters, had outlined for us a quintessential identity? Is "London-ness" a conception that threatens the postcolonial imperative to "displace the literature of England" (Smith 3)? In *Hawksmoor*, Ackroyd writes London to detect its shadows, which emerge from the margins to encroach upon the center of the Empire. In the figures of local vagrants and wandering children (all migrants in a manner of speaking), these shadows wander about the city to assert their presences beyond the space-times allotted them. These silhouettes constitute the metaphorical coast of London—the sort of marginality that hints at the unforeseen encounters and radical enlightenment of the future. London's non-spaces are made of shadows whose movements generate friction and thereby heat, the sensing of which would foreground what was originally marginal. I will argue that *Hawksmoor* traces the point at which all times, all deaths, all movements converge to form a sutured London, ultimately to displace "England."

### **ANNIKA AIRAS**

Annika Airas is currently a postdoctoral fellow in the Urban Studies program at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada. Her comparative PhD research that she completed at the University of Helsinki, Finland (2016) focused on the historical distinctiveness of urban waterfront redevelopments in Finland and Canada. Her continuing research examines the urban waterfronts, planning, and policy, particularly in relation to rapidly changing built environments and social activities.

### **Towards residential real estate zones on the contested waterfronts of the Vancouver region**

The port-city interface in the Vancouver region is evolving rapidly. The transformation of industrial waterfront for recreational and residential purposes began in downtown Vancouver in the late 20th century, but more recently, suburban industrial waterfronts have also been subjected to transformation. But this waterfront "rediscovery" is a recent phenomenon, especially considering the thousands of years of Indigenous occupation on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, which became desirable for settlers in the colonial establishment of waterfront cities and associated industries. Waterfront



negotiations are taking place within a contentious environment, where multiple actors are eager to transform the waterfront into primarily residential real estate at the same time as there is a growing demand and shrinking supply of industrial waterfront land. Planning and policy documents, along with the language that proponents use, frame these often-controversial transformations as positive and uncomplicated. What gets ignored in these selective discourses are the “discontinuities” – which include a myriad of waterfront actors, uses, and legacies. This research analyzes government/consultancy publications and interviews in relation to archival materials, local histories, and more, to uncover discourses that have stimulated the expansion of residential real estate. It looks at potential connections to topical regional concerns around sustainability and affordability among others. In short, suburban waterfronts offer an interesting lens on a zone of transition where colonial histories, industrial activities, and new waterfront real estate imaginaries and cultures meet.

## **BETH E. NOTAR**

**Beth E. Notar** is Co-Director of the Trinity Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies and Associate Professor of Anthropology at Trinity College. She is the author of *Displacing Desire: Travel and Popular Culture in China*.

### **The Post/Colonial Port of Yangon, Myanmar (Rangoon, Burma): Global Flows, Vehicular Modernity, and Im/mobile Bodies**

This paper focuses on the colonial city of Rangoon, Burma (later called Yangon, Myanmar). It traces how successive global flows of transportation technology from the British colonial era to the present have displaced earlier forms of transportation technology as well as the persons associated with those forms of vehicular modernity. In the 1920s, under British colonial rule, imported automobiles displaced rickshaws and the imported Indian laborers that pulled them. In the 1960s, under a new “caretaker” government, imported Mazdas from Japan served as new taxis, and displaced horsecarts and bicycle pedicabs (“sidecars”) worked by rural-to-urban migrants. In 2017, under a new democratic government, Uber started to operate in the city (a year later merging with Malaysian-based Grab), and now digital ride sharing is in the process of replacing taxis and taxi drivers. This paper uses this case study to investigate how new technologies can “enhance the mobility of some peoples and places even as they also heighten the immobility of others” (Hannam, Sheller, Urry 2006).



## CÉCILE MARTIN

Cécile Martin holds a Master in Architecture (M. Arch.) and is currently a student at Concordia University's Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture (CISSC) Humanities PhD in Montreal with advisors Chris Salter, Orit Halpern and Alessandra Ponte. She has been an Executive Member of the Hexagram International Network Dedicated to Research-Creation in Media Arts, Design, Technology & Digital Culture, has managed the Media Art Histories Re-Create 2015 Emerging Researchers' Symposium and has been a Research Assistant to Orit Halpern in the Speculative Life Lab, of the Milieux Institute for Arts, Culture & Technology at Concordia University. She teaches at the School of Design of the Université du Québec in Montreal. Cécile Martin's PhD is dedicated to architecture-environment relations in the perspective of regenerative principles applied to technological theories of Cybernetics, Symbiosis and Correalism. Her case studies include Salvador de Bahia (Brazil) and the architectural contribution to space exploration.

### **Ontologies in ecotone: Comércio, port of Salvador de Bahia**

Traces of a colonial past remain in the port of Salvador de Bahia. Comércio was the first harbor and business district of Brazil, as well as the main point of entry for slaves. It is currently a touristic, historically preserved neighborhood. After the economic stagnation of the 1980s, the vicinity empties. Under the pressure of a tropical climate, rapid real estate deterioration occurs. The Prefeitura of Salvador presently engages in a major restoration plan. As an architect, I question the city's consideration of both natural and cultural ecotones. Beyond an encounter of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, two decisively different ontologies cohabit. European settlers capitalize on naturalism. Meanwhile an animist perspective permeates the metropolis, which has in excess of 2000 Candomblé terreiros or African voodoo places of worship. The municipality of Salvador considers environments as functional systems. It injects foreign money to enable the growth of the "human" of the collective and the empowering of managing institutions - benefiting the consumer participant to the globalization game. This future solely expands the naturalist perspective. Favelas are blamed for slowing down the city growth. The animist ontology simply differs from the naturalist, which sustains the mirage of wealth and of a global economy. Using the ontologies of Philippe Descola, perspectivism of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, and globalization-territorialization of Milton Santos, I will contemplate ecosystems and ontologies as ecotones in the port of Salvador. How can architecture implement a hybridity to shift the growth narrative towards a regenerative tension between natural and human ecotones?



## CRISTIANO GIANOLLA

**Cristiano Gianolla** research at the intersection between cosmopolitan, democratic and postcolonial and critical intercultural theories. He worked in the ICT field as well as for NGO, International Institutions and in Academia and since 2011 he is researcher at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal where he integrated the ALICE Project (ERC). He currently integrates the ECHOES project (Horizon 2020). He authored two books and a number of scientific articles.

### **Intercultural dynamics in post-colonial European ecotones, Lisbon and Copenhagen**

This interdisciplinary paper emerges within ECHOES project, *European Colonial Heritage Modalities in Entangled Cities*, (H2020, No. 770248). ECHOES aim to analyse the forms of handling and managing the European colonial heritage and narratives in order to understand how to create more inclusive societies. This paper focuses on Lisbon and Copenhagen, port cities, ecotones that were very important trans-oceanic gateway of colonial Europe. Historically, the two cities allowed the traffic of goods as well as the traffic of people that were considered as inferior, i.e. Afro-descendants in Lisbon and Greenlanders in Copenhagen. In the mainstream narrative, Lisbon and Copenhagen are non-places for discriminated people, as they are excluded or differently (partially) included in societies. However, the non-place becomes a new-place with the dynamism of Afro-descendant and Greenlanders that are engaged with the struggle against their own exclusion and oppression. They do it memorializing the city, facing the national narrative of erasure of a past and highlighting the actuality of it. We compare how colonial capitals re-elaborate the narrative about the troubled past and its implications in the present, through forms of heritage management. Focusing on, and questioning, the non-place, the paper elaborates on data collected in the new-place, with racialized social activists, artists and institutions thereby providing a bottom-up alternative intercultural narrative in the ecotones of port city. Furthermore, the paper engages with the research work itself, a work carried on by two outsiders (white scholars) with respect to the struggles studied, a different non-place (or new-place?).

## CHARLOTTE HAMMOND

Charlotte Hammond is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at Cardiff School of Modern Languages (2016-20). Her current project examines modes of solidarity and resistance between women garment workers, and the formation of sustainable fashion communities, in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. She is the author of *Entangled Otherness: Cross-Gender Fabrications in the Francophone Caribbean*, published with Liverpool University Press in 2018.





## ***Depo Pèpè: Networks of Labour and Resistance in Cap-Haïtien's Secondhand Clothing Trade***

*Pèpè* is the Kreyòl term for used clothing in Haiti that has been arriving in tightly-bound bales from the United States since the 1960s, under President John F. Kennedy's *Alliance for Progress Latin American* assistance programme. On reaching Haitian ports, it is then transported and traded throughout the country as well as across the border into the Dominican Republic. This paper will examine the vertical transnational trade in secondhand clothing in northern Haiti, focusing on the networks of labour that enable its transit across highly permeable national economic borders and through the port city of Cap-Haïtien. Drawing on conversations with women workers in the secondhand clothing trade – earning a living either as traders or sewers - it will question how Haitian women workers, and their circuits of labour via the *pèpè* depots of the port, disrupt the linearity of this material traffic. How do these Haitian women entrepreneurs engage in alternative practices of sustainability and a 'circular economy' as they navigate what the late Aníbal Quijano called the coloniality of power and a 'racial distribution of work' that continue to characterise today's global arrangement.

### **DEVON MCKELLAR**

Devon McKellar is the MTL2050 Fellow and a Research Assistant with the Milieux Institute, currently finishing his BA Honours in the Department of Geography, Planning, & Environment here at Concordia.

## **The Settler-Colonial Construction of Sud-Ouest Montréal**

This talk (inspired by critical infrastructure studies and unsettling praxis) examines the Lachine Canal and the Turcot Yards as settler-colonial landscape superstructures. These transport corridors embedded morality concerning race, class, & gender throughout the SudOuest, creating numerous sites of tension. With future & ongoing "revitalization" plans underway in both spaces, this presentation explores how European settler-colonial ideology continues to shape them even into the future. The talk begins by briefly describing the larger role Montreal had in the settlement of North America beyond the Great Lakes. Waterways in the immediate area are then explored as sites of racialization relating to "good" and "bad" land-uses and citizenships in the 17th & 18th centuries. In the 19th century, the Lachine Canal and adjacent railways created highly-gendered and classed spaces of industrial activity. In the 20th Century, Drapeau's highways helped to construct the Quebecois identity as an embedded within both colonial and class hierarchies, both internationally and at home. Current brownfield revitalization along the Canal and fast approaching plans for a parkway in the Yards (Dalle Park) are both connected to settler conceptions of heritage and restoration, still predicated on fossil fuel use and white supremacy.



## ELIE JALBERT

Elie Jalbert is a PhD student in Anthropology at Concordia University. Her previous research explored oil pipeline development as a key point of articulation of contemporary politics of determinacy, where competing collectives are differentially construed, enacted, and contested. Her Master's thesis recounts the controversy surrounding the now defunct Energy East Pipeline Project as a heterogeneously constituted matter of concern on three different jurisdictional "levels" — federal, provincial, and municipal. Her current research investigates the shifting relation to, with, and through water in and around Montreal, as modernist forms of urbanization are destabilized by growing environmental concerns.

### **The Infrastructure of Emplacement: The Re-formation of Urban Living in the Cradle of Canada's Industrial Revolution**

This paper explores the contemporary quest for urban becoming in Montreal's Lachine-East sector, efforts caught between speculative utopian dreams of "green" living and the hauntings of an industrial past. The Lachine borough is key to the settler story of Montreal. By some accounts, what are today called the Lachine rapids were instrumental in spawning Montreal as a thriving city, by making it an obligatory passage route for merchandise moving up and downstream the St. Lawrence river. The Lachine canal, launched in 1825, consolidated the passage between the Lachine parish and the Port of Montreal, its fate becoming immediately tied to the aspirations of business developers. The history of the canal is also the shifting history of urbanization. From commercial hub to cradle of the Canadian industrial revolution, the Lachine canal — and the new municipality of Saint-Michel-de-Lachine with it — became the site of multiple, and sometimes competing, modes of emplacement. Agriculture, rural resort, industrial labor community, suburban residence — with each infrastructural development came new possibilities for Lachine and the territories west of it along the St. Louis Lake shoreline. After the St. Lawrence seaway was built, industrial activity gradually faded until the canal was closed in 1970. In the following decades, all levels of government became involved in reimagining the city's relation to water and land, both of which had been profoundly altered by industrial activity and urban densification. Parks Canada's rehabilitation of the Canal as a public park in 2002 was part of this effort to conjure non-industrial forms of urban prosperity. But while boroughs to the east saw spectacular growth of new real estate development, and while boroughs to the west along the shores of Lake St. Louis maintained their post-war suburban character, the old industrial sector of Lachine-East, despite having been designated as "sector to be transformed" by the 2004



urbanization plan, has struggled to conciliate urban imagination with the infrastructural and chemical challenges of its industrial heritage.

## IAN PEMBERTON

Ian Pemberton is a first year PhD student, studying at the University of Manchester. His PhD thesis is entitled *Arab Malaise: How America's Oil Empire Transformed the Middle East*. In this project I am exploring contemporary Arabic fiction in translation such as Abdel Rahman Munif's *Cities of Salt* and Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* in order to highlight the ways in which the asymmetrical development of the global market and the unequal exchange enabled by fossil fuels has created an imperialist relationship between America and the Middle East, creating an atmosphere of 'ressentiment'. He is interested in how this malaise has affected a cultural 'double movement' through the rise of an alternative Islamic modernity and a clash within civilizations against corrupt government and the imperialistic thrust of capitalism.

### **Life and Death in the Port: The Literary Representation of Globalization in Abdel Rahman Munif's *Cities of Salt*.**

The literary representation of the port city in Abdel Rahman Munif's *Cities of Salt* is a site of death and rebirth. The development of the port signals the destruction of traditional life in the Arabian Peninsula and the imposition of a capitalist modernity as its replacement through the connection of the fictional city of Harran to the productive currents of the global market. Based upon the interactions between the native population of Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province and the Americans who arrive to search for oil, Munif's novel captures a moment of cultural upheaval through the intrusion of globalization to one of the most isolated regions of the world. Eyes turn away from the roads leading into the interior of the country and instead focus on the port as 'Harran trembled with the arrival of every ship and filled with anxiety' (Munif, 1989, 338), as Harran became 'no one's city' (375). Underpinning the work will be Rob Nixon's concept of 'slow violence' and Karl Polanyi's proposal of the inevitability of cultural degradation in the contact between two unequal economic actors. It will be proposed that the influx of technology, commodities and Westernization symbolized by the 'satanic' ship casts a state of death on the community of Harran as they struggle to withstand the shattering impact of modernity. However, it will also be argued that Munif's ending leaves open the possibility of renewal and societal cohesion through the solidarity of the worker's industrial action in the face of inequality and corrupt government.



## JOHN C. HAWLEY

John C. Hawley is Professor of English at Santa Clara University. He has published a good deal on postcolonial topics, and was a speaker at the Ecotones conference in Montpellier. His recent publications are on terrorist literature.

### **Calais: Doorway or Wall?**

Wikipedia's introduction to its history of the port city of Calais is instructive on a number of levels. The town, it says, "came to be called the 'brightest jewel in the English crown' owing to its great importance as the gateway for the tin, lead, lace and wool trades (or "staples"). Calais was a territorial possession of England until its capture by France in 1558. The town was virtually razed to the ground during World War II." Of immediate relevance to this conference is its description as this jewel in the crown, since that title was later passed on to India, as the brightest jewel in the crown of "Empress" Victoria, suggesting the vast expansion of the British Empire over those centuries. The second point of interest is the razing of Calais during the second "world" war, since that provides something of a mirror image of the shrinking of that same empire (and France's) signified in the decision by England to forbid migrants to use it as a safe passage to the UK, and France's decision to raze to the ground the migrant enclave known as "The Jungle" on October 26, 2016. My paper will be a comparison of two recent plays: "The Jungle," by Joe Murphy and Joe Robertson, and "Home," by Geoff Sobelle. Both plays depend upon the literal destruction and reconstruction of place, and the consequent resignification of the places in question. "The Jungle" demands that producers remove most of the seats of the theatre and the construction of a large faux café in its place, a café divided into ethnic banlieues of migrants with theatre-goers sitting in their midst. "Home" consists of the actual construction of a building onstage, a home, that is then taken apart—just as the jungle in Calais is razed in an attempt to disperse the multinational migrants and erase their significance for the colonizers on both sides of the Channel. The hermeneutics of place will be central to my discussion, and the concept to which Tim Cresswell has attached his neologism—anachorism: meaning "things in the wrong place." As the CFP for this conference notes, "ports are often referred to as nonplaces," as "liminal locations," as "locations that crush the sense of individual empowerment." Imagining these two plays together also highlights the notion of class disempowerment among the migrant classes, and artistic freedom and empowerment among the wealthy. The cultural encounters and conflicts are obvious in these contested places, but is there a "renewal" possible in a space called Calais, or in a particular theatre in London, New York, or San Francisco? Is Aleppo in Calais in 2019? Is Brexit the deconstruction of the jungle known as the EU?



## JIANG YANPENG

Jiang Yanpeng is a research professor, currently based at East China Normal University China, he gained his PhD from the University of Leeds, shortly after, he worked in ANU and HKU as a research fellow and fellow. His main research interests are Urbanization, gentrification and mega urban projects. He has published a series of papers in EPA, Urban Studies, Cities, Land Use Policy, and the Journal of contemporary China.

### **Whose city? Shanghai between a global and worlding city**

Shanghai, as the largest Chinese port city and site of the Opium Wars, has been attempting to reclaim its colonial past to attract global capital. This paper examines the marketing of colonial buildings, in the former European (French, British and international) concession areas in the city centre, specifically the central role played by municipal government and state-owned institutions, in the financing and maintenance and repurposing of those colonial buildings for public. This colonial/postcolonial image is fundamental to the city's image and have become major tourist attractions both locally and internationally, with implications that potentially destabilize national narratives of China's entry into the global market. The paper examines in detail how the concept of a worlding city might apply to Shanghai through an examination of the preservation of colonial buildings to demonstrate history in west in contrast to the skyscrapers in Pudong (the city's financial centre) to demonstrate global power. I argue that postcolonial culture is still relevant for attracting global capital flows in Shanghai, despite the narrative of humiliation during the Opium Wars, In essence worlding (through the colonial past) and globalization co-exist in this port city, in mutually reinforcing ways.

## KAI WOOD MAH

Co-founder of the design research practice Afield ([www.afield.ca](http://www.afield.ca)), Mah is a design historian, licensed architect with l'Ordre des architectes du Québec (OAQ), and Associate Professor of Architecture at the McEwen School of Architecture, Laurentian University. Max's architectural practice is interdisciplinary and grounded in site-specific investigations employing archives, fieldwork, social science methodologies, and research-creation. His work includes designing and building community centers and institutional spaces with Cree and Inuit communities in Northern Québec. Writings by Mah have appeared in Visual Studies, Children, Youth and Environments, Space and Culture, and Interventions among other peer-reviewed journals as well as edited volumes.

### **Re-Enchanting the Post-Industrial**

Besides being the oldest brewery in North America, the Old Molson Brewery in Montréal is massive.



Covering 12-hectare along the banks of the St. Lawrence River, the site, a fenced-in property (private), approximates twenty-four football fields. The property was sold in early 2019; its future has not been publicized by authorities. Former industrial sites have two fates: abandoned and left to deteriorate, or salvaged for other uses. Little or no consideration is given to them as urban artifacts; nor will there such consideration unless urban and landscape transformations are folded into re-understanding the outsized sites. The Old Molson Brewery is but one fragment of the urban and landscape morphology of Montréal as a port city, from colonization of the unceded indigenous lands of Kanien'kehá:ka Nation to industrialization to post-industrial site along the St. Lawrence River. The proposed panel – consisting of the research-creation work produced in a graduate architectural design studio at the McEwen School of Architecture, Laurentian University – aims to direct “ecotone” as a generative space for reconceiving the commons. Employing methodologies of micro and urban morphology, architectural design and fieldwork in Montréal and Marseille, the proposed panel addresses the following prompts: How to re-conceptualize the Old Molson Brewery site as architectural commons – a place that grants access to land, water and air for all species; how may the site be “re-enchanted”, borrowing Silvia Federici’s term, as a focal point of sociality and reciprocity; what might architecture as a practice of communing look like.

## KELLY THOMPSON

Kelly Thompson is an artist, educator, weaver and curator, interested in the circulation of ideas, people and goods in the world, historically and in the global present. A nomadic childhood and adult life informs her research as an artist, in which themes of location, identity, environment, surface and structure are explored through intersections of digital and material engagement. Active as a researcher at Concordia University’s Milieux Institute, in the Textiles and Materiality Research Cluster, she is an Associate Professor in the Fibres and Material Practices programs and Graduate Program Director for the MFA Studio Arts, Concordia University. Recent artwork questions digitally implicit ‘big data’ through materially expressive means in jacquard woven cloth. Her artwork is in various collections and has been exhibited internationally in exhibitions, festivals and biennials.

### **Artist at Sea: cargo and codes, place and non-place**

In January 2015, I arrived in New Zealand as a passenger aboard the MV Spirit of Singapore container ship, 25 days after departing from Charleston, South Carolina. Drawing on this experience of labour, hierarchies, and navigation systems, I make connections with my studio research into digital jacquard weaving, and material translations of data, positionality, and representations of time and place. This paper draws on work from Jefferies, Behar, Steyerl and others, on networks, big data and spatial and temporal orientations.



Trades routes, and the movement of people and goods through ports, notions of flow and circulation resonates with worlds of contemporary digital visualization worlds. Invisible codes surround us, at sea and on land, in the tools we depend on and like to use. Screen cultures and data visualization has shifted our sense of place and materiality. My weaving considers the technological transfer of information from one medium to another, from codes into the tactility of cloth, or data as a material. How do we develop a critical awareness of what it means to live in a data-driven world? My work continues to question the vastness of data and the scale of our global shipping economy, valuing the opportunities for movement of goods and people, yet conscious of increasingly destructive impacts. Digital jacquard weaving involves information traveling through multiple systems and screens to become physical, continuing the traditions of textiles as one of the earliest coded languages, items of desire, trade and communication.

### KERRY-JANE WALLART

Kerry-Jane Wallart is a Black Atlantic scholar interested in how both the transnational and the decolonial turns are reshaping this field of study through further expanding, but also through fragmenting and diffracting, the "Black Atlantic". I have taught at the Sorbonne as a Senior Lecturer for over 10 years, published a number of peer-reviewed articles and book chapters about Caribbean, Canadian, Nigerian, South African, Irish and "Black British" authors. I have recently completed a monograph on the criss-crossings of genre, performance studies, the "speakerly" and the "writerly", in Caribbean literature (currently assessed by Brill). I have co-edited a volume on the work of Jamaica Kincaid (Wagadu 2018) and a journal issue on "value" in the Caribbean (*Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 2017) as well as two issues of *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* (in 2012 and 2015). [kjwallart@yahoo.fr](mailto:kjwallart@yahoo.fr)

### Literary Opportunities: The Australian Black Atlantic

This paper will connect two critical approaches in order to discuss the work of Australian poet and performer Maxine Beneba Clarke. I intend to recast the analyses of Christina Sharpe in *In the Wake* (2016) about how the black body is 'opportune' and an 'opportunity' in terms of representation, and her assertion that "the suffering of Black people cannot be analogized" (29); Sharpe centers the "dysgraphia of the wake" (33) around an imagery of crossing oceans which fails to grasp the experience of never finding an opportunity to overcome the trauma of deportation. These reflections around the traps and tropes of "ports" (/opportunity/deportation) in terms of existential promise and representational stability will be scrutinized in the light of Mignolo's own distrust of representation, which are replaced in decolonial thought by various modes of enunciation. The work of Maxine Beneba Clarke, a poet of spoken word, a slam poet and a performer, can illustrate such "deportation" of the Black Atlantic towards unfixity,



including geographically so. The harbours of Melbourne and Sydney become sites of sonic reverberation for migrations over all three oceans, but also for the re-memory of the Aborigines's lost connection to the sea. Her poetry can be read as a point of entry into what Mignolo, influenced by "border thinking", posits as "decoloniality in its planetary diversity of local histories that have been disrupted by North Atlantic global expansions" (151).

## KRIS SINGH

Kris Singh is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Culture, and Communication at the Royal Military College of Canada. He completed his PhD at Queen's University. His research explores the literary relationships that exceed national boundaries. More specifically, he examines the legacy of East Indian indentureship and the transnational relationships among writers of the Caribbean diaspora.

### **The World in Sydney: Disruptive Repetition and Gail Jones' Five Bells**

In *Five Bells* (2011), Gail Jones focuses on individual experiences of Port Jackson, specifically Circular Quay and the Sydney Opera House: while one of the characters grapples with her experience of the Cultural Revolution, another remembers *The Troubles*, all within a nation still coming to terms with *The Stolen Generations*. Emphasizing elaborate intertextual relationships with Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, Jones considers the literary forms necessary to make sense of past traumas, intercultural intersections, and the world's current "horrors" that have become "generic and familiar" (20). *Five Bells* depicts Sydney as defined by prepackaged tourist consumption, but in a 2011 interview with Catherine Keenan, Jones explains, "Our life in cities isn't just this apprehension of spectacles and the moment of consumption. It's intersected by a lot of aesthetic moments." In this paper, I will argue that *Five Bells*' aesthetic apprehension of Sydney is based in repetition. Relentless repetition can be the result of the mass production of experience and gives rise to the loss of meaning. Personal loss often means being repeatedly haunted by the same figures and feelings. But repetition in itself does not mean loss. Jones' aesthetic apprehension of Sydney draws on the disruptive impetus of the Situationist International, specifically their practices of psychogeography and the *dérive*. Readers repeatedly experience Sydney through each major character's unsettling movements and meetings, and the novel reproduces lines from its intertextual counterparts in its new terrain. Such repetition, the novel suggests, aims not at disorientation, but reorientation.





## LINDY STIEBEL

Lindy Stiebel is Professor Emerita of English Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and Visiting Professor at CISA (Centre for the Study of India in Africa), University of the Witwatersrand. Her research interests are linked by a profound interest in the relationship between writers and place: these include the South African colonial and post-colonial novel; Indian Ocean studies particularly literary interconnections between South Africa, India and Mauritius; and literary tourism. For nearly 20 years she has led the research project KZN Literary Tourism (see [www.literarytourism.co.za](http://www.literarytourism.co.za)) which has developed a website hosting over 170 author entries, various documentary films on selected writers, eight trails, and book reviews/news of books linked to KZN. Stiebel's latest books are *Writing Home: Lewis Nkosi on South African Literature* (with Michael Chapman, UKZNPress 2016), *Cities in Flux: metropolitan spaces in South African literary and visual texts. Swiss South African Joint Research Programme.* (with Alan Muller, Olivier Moreillon. Zurich: LITVerlag 2017) and *A Literary Guide to KwaZulu-Natal* (with Niall McNulty, UKZNPress 2017).

### **Lewis Nkosi's Durban: a port city in flux**

Durban, on the eastern seaboard of KwaZulu–Natal is traditionally, within South Africa, given third position in terms of national importance. Johannesburg is the economic powerhouse; Cape Town is the geographically beautiful tourist destination; Durban is the Cinderella city – subtropical, slower. However, like Cinderella, Durban holds surprises. One of them is the life story of one of its most famous literary sons, Lewis Nkosi. In this paper, Nkosi's fictional reconstruction of Durban as an Indian Ocean port city in flux will be examined through two of his works – his award winning novel *Mating Birds* (1983) and a newspaper article which appeared in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* as 'The freedom of the disillusioned' (2002). Durban, it emerges, through both the apartheid and post-apartheid eras, acted as a gateway to the outside world for Nkosi. Indian Ocean region research has seen the Indian Ocean portrayed variously as 'a corridor, a link, a unifier of scattered littoral areas and port cities' (Pearson, 2010), and Durban, given its population mix of African, Indian and European descendants, as 'immensely cosmopolitan ... diasporic ... and linked to the oceans of the world through its bustling port' (Soske, 2010). This busy passage of peoples and ideas through Durban, which makes notions of transnationalism, relationality and comparative 'ocean studies' complex and full of cross-currents, is evident in writers such as Lewis Nkosi, who looked to the Black Atlantic for inspiration, but also to the Indian Ocean for dreams of escape and yet return. This is so particularly because of Nkosi's exile status and his attachment, despite living most of his life away, to Durban and its waters, as will be shown in this paper.



## LI-RU LU

Li-Ru Lu is professor of English at National Sun Yat-sen University in Taiwan. She is the author of two books, *Writing the Wilderness Environment: The Discourse of Wilderness Preservation in the Texts of American Environmental Writers* and *Uncovering New Ground for American Nature Writing: Discourses of Natural History from John Bartram to Wilson Flagg*. Many of her papers have been published by academic journals in Taiwan and the United States. She is also the author of a book chapter in *Writing the Environment in Nineteenth-Century American Literature: The Ecological Awareness of Early Scribes of Nature* and a book chapter in *South East Asian Ecocriticism: Theories, Practices, Prospects*.

### **Travel, Ports, and Imperialism: Delineations of Formosan Ports in Nineteenth-Century Western Travelers' Port Texts**

For most nineteenth-century Europeans and Americans, Formosa (now Taiwan, located in East Asia) was little-known. Ilha Formosa, meaning the “evergreen, resplendent, and beautiful isle,” was named by passing Portuguese navigators in the sixteenth century. The Island of Formosa was colonized by the Dutch in the seventeenth century; the Spanish built a settlement in northern Formosa for a very brief period but were driven out by the Dutch in 1642. In 1662, Zheng Cheng-gong, a loyal soldier of China’s Ming dynasty, defeated the Dutch and established a base of operations in Formosa, but his forces were defeated by China’s Qing dynasty in 1683. From 1683 to 1895, the Qing empire ruled Formosa and in 1895 Taiwan was ceded to Japan. Qing rule gradually collapsed during the second half of the nineteenth century; in the Opium Wars of 1839–42 and 1856–60, the British army easily defeated the Qing army and navy. Following Qing China's defeat, Britain imposed unequal treaties on the defeated Chinese and forced the Qing to open up many ports for foreign trade, including ports in Formosa. In 1860, the Qing government’s ratification of the Treaty of Tientsin allowed the opening of Formosa’s ports — Ta-kau Port, Taiwanfoo Port, Tamsuy Port, and Keelung Port. Before 1860, Formosa was largely unknown and unexplored by foreigners. After the opening of Formosa’s Ta-kau Port, Tamsuy Port, and Keelung Port for trade in 1860, plenty of Westerners (including first diplomats, imperialist business adventurers, natural history scientists, proselytizing missionaries, and legitimate traders) visited Formosa. These travelers made observations, collected specimens, and documented the virtually unknown landscapes, species, and natural resources in Formosa, particularly in Formosa’s port regions. This paper focuses on the “port texts” of three nineteenth-century Western travelers who visited Formosa between 1860 and 1895 — Robert Swinhoe (1836–77), Joseph Beal Steere (1842–1940), and Cuthbert Collingwood (1826–1908). It explores the historical and cultural underpinnings of treaty ports (and their neighboring regions) in the island’s eco-geopolitical history and is interested to examine the ways these travel writings represented Formosa’s harbors, ports, and port regions. It addresses the following questions: How might the texts about Formosan ports relate to environmental writings or traveling natural histories? What are the intricate links between nineteenth-century Western travelers’ imperial motivations and their representations of Formosa’s ports? How did Swinhoe, Collingwood, and Steere report their observations of Formosa’s treaty ports and their adjacent areas? How were these writers’ works about Formosan ports circulated globally? Do nineteenth-century Western travelers’ “port texts” describe the broader environment in where the Formosan ports were located? Do any of the “port texts” express a slightly environmentalist tone? How might these “port



narratives” reveal an environmental consciousness embedded in the history of imperial exploitation? What might be the links between nineteenth-century imperial motivations and representations of Formosan ports and their surroundings?

## MIKE LEHMAN

Mike Lehman is a PhD Candidate at Emory University. His current project, “Border Agency,” explores alternative conceptions of citizenships and human rights by exploring literature that focuses on the border. He suggests that reading the border involves not only the thematics but also the formal and aesthetic troping of movements as integral to an implicit argument about rendering an imagining of the border as generative and creative rather than the limit space of nations. His research interests include refugee studies, mobilities studies, critical border studies, postcolonial theory, migration studies, and aesthetics.

### **Borders and Ecotones: Alternative Social Configurations in *Leaving Tangier***

In the novel *Leaving Tangier*, the writer and exile Tahar Ben Jelloun gives voice to what he claims the global north has defined as the migrant: an “interchangeable . . . object” and political “abstraction” (Ben Jelloun 1999, 120). The novel depicts characters departing the port city of Tangier, a city historically in flux, via means of irregular migration across the Mediterranean Sea. In this context, the port or transport hub can no longer only be thought of as a city of commerce or primary transportation hub, but also as a place of non-vectored departure outside traditional lines of mobility. I propose that we must realign our thought to consider nonlinear routes of the migrant at sea as a foundational form of mobility, whereby the *pirogue*, fishing boat, or inflatable raft are the primary mode of transportation and formulations of communities outside what have long been considered “non-places.” Thus, a shift from the nation and city to the border as the quintessential space in which new possibilities and cultures emerge aligns with ecotonic spaces, or the “margins” in which innovation emerges at the “edge of ideas, beginnings, contestations, potentialities” (Hubbell & Ryan 2016, 6-7). Here, ecotonic thought within literary production suggests that literature provides a perspective of the border as a space of new social configurations. By exploring the border and mobility through the lens of the ecotone, I suggest that the border/sea can be seen as the repository of future communities, communities in which the so-called “wretched of the sea” acquire agency through aesthetic production that displays the contestations of the ecotonic border.

## NADINE ATTEWELL

Nadine Attewell is an Associate Professor of English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University. My first book, *\*Better Britons: Reproduction, National Identity, and the Afterlife of Empire\**, was



published in 2014; and I am currently at work on a second, SSHRC-funded book project entitled \*Archives of Intimacy: Racial Mixing and Asian Lives in the Colonial Port City\*.

## **A dangerously promiscuous medley”: Sex, Race, Labour, and Community in a Working-Class**

### **Port City**

In this paper, I reflect on Liverpool’s history as a globally notorious “zone of intercultural contact” (Belchem xviii) in order to think about how port cities have been (re)made by working-class and diasporic projects of encounter, relation, and inhabitation. During the first decades of the twentieth century, British port cities like Liverpool came to be known as incubators of disease, crime, riot, prostitution, and miscegenation, pathologies which the presence of Black and Asian colonial seamen was believed to foster. Today, no account of pre-*Windrush* Black and Asian settlement in Britain would be complete without a discussion of Liverpool and the mixed-race diasporic communities whose emergence there so panicked early-twentieth-century commentators. But the depathologizing imperative of much of this work has made it difficult to reckon with the placemaking potential of the non-normative forms of (sexual) intimacy and sociality through which working-class migrants and locals pursued survival, community, and self-realization, sometimes in tandem, sometimes in tension, with one another. Following the lead of scholars like Nayan Shah and Saidiya Hartman, I ask how we might make use of the archive of pathology to complement (rather than undercut) community history projects by attending to the fraught place of sex work, sexual violence, and non-normative intimate arrangements in working-class port city life. What changes, moreover, when we think of the port city as a site of *social* reproduction, where the intimate labour of differently embodied and citizenized subjects at once sustains, and eludes capture by the infrastructures of empire and capitalist modernity.

### **RACHEL MATTEAU MATSHA**

**Rachel Matteau Matsha** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Media, Language and Communication at the Durban University of Technology. Her research interests are multidisciplinary and include the fields of book history, literary studies, cultural studies, postcolonial studies and urban studies. She holds a PhD and an MA in African Literature from the University of the Witwatersrand, and a BA in Literary Studies from the University of Québec in Montréal. She is the author of *Real and Imagined Readers. Censorship, Publishing and Reading under Apartheid* (UKZN Press).



## **Going against the flow. Transnational circulation of books in times of censorship**

Words, just like ideas, know no borders. Well before the advent of modern information technologies, travellers facilitated transnational flows of ideas across the oceans. Imagined as sites of circulation and communication, oceans carried and ferried books and their readers, in the process mapping out transnational systems of dissemination of ideas, knowledge and translation. Ports, as nodes where human-made flows converge with the littoral, have the power to facilitate or hinder the free circulation of ideas from one ecosystem to another. Ports are politicised spaces of encounter, contestation and mediation. As spaces of regulation, ports also play a major role in the circulation of ideas and the technology that carries them: books. Institutionalised censorship in South Africa operated at the political level throughout the successive Dutch and British colonial and imperialist rules, and later during apartheid. Port authorities played a major role in controlling the flow of books and literature in and out of the country. This paper will discuss the roles played by port authorities and customs officials in the application of publication control, and by extension their impact on South Africa's literary imaginary and book history. Drawing from the fields of Indian Ocean Studies and Book History, as well as historical archives, the paper will examine the complicity with which customs officials exercised control over the circulation and availability of books in twentieth century South Africa. It will further discuss how some readers circumvented censorship and port authorities to facilitate the entry of books judged 'undesirable' in an alternative, progressive book ecosystem. The ways in which readers, authors and publishers built these bridges shows the mobility of books and ideas on the global level, sometimes against the odds.

### **SHELLEY MILLER**

Shelley Miller is a Montreal-based visual artist whose specialty is working in public spaces as well as working with the public, creating permanent public artworks as well as street art and community-engagement projects. Miller has been working with sugar as a medium for nearly 18 years, using it to address ideas of taste, desire, consumer culture, excess and greed. Her work with sugar evolved to include murals that address the not-so-sweet history of sugar and its' roots in slavery and colonization. She continues to use sugar as a material for its richness in cultural meaning, using sugar to address systems of power and corruption. Miller completed her bachelor's degree of Fine Arts from the Alberta College of Art and Design and a master's degree of Fine Arts from Concordia University (Montreal, Canada). She has received numerous grants and fellowships including a Commonwealth Arts and Crafts Award. She has attended residencies and created works in Brazil, India, Australia, The United States and Canada.



## **The Azulejo as Colonial Symbol of Power: A Deconstruction through Sugar and Art**

My presentation will focus on a series of ephemeral art murals that I have made over the past 10 years. These murals look like azulejos (painted blue tiles), depicting caravels and many decorative features seen in traditional ceramic azulejos, but my murals are made entirely of sugar. I make the sugar tiles by hand and painted them with edible inks. I am interested in the azulejo, specifically with imagery of ships, as a symbol of colonial power and of national pride (the Nation of Portugal), but only for the means to subvert this pride. I developed this work in Brazil, addressing the country's history of colonization and the slave trade that supported Portugal's sugar empire. I continue to use the blue tile reference, even outside the context of Brazil, because I want to reference the general construct of colonization and slavery, showing how oppression has found new forms. I install my ephemeral murals on city walls, where they wash away, fade, crumble and decay, animating a more realistic version of history.

### **SHAUNA JANSSEN**

Shauna Janssen, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Theatre at Concordia University where she also holds a Concordia University Research Chair in Performative Urbanism and directs the Institute for [Urban Futures](#).

## **Fantasy in the Hold: The Queer Logistics of Critical Mobilities and Container Architecture**

The theme of Ecotone is timely in terms of addressing diverse forms of spatial agency and the critical mobilities which interrupt the taken-for-granted world of flows of commerce, asking us to question how people and things move, the meanings given to those movements, and the kinds of (excess) spaces these movements and their overflows produce. Our key interlocutor for this paper is the shipping container, which we approach as a critical architectural interior, performative, and possible queer site for engaging with the ethics of their reuse, and the contemporary continuum of the 'shipped' and shipping. The enormity and spread of this trend to reuse or upcycle the shipping container for cultural (and other) purposes raises questions about why their reuse is proliferating, what it might have to do with architecture in a time of depleting resources (ie. sustainability), and what their reuse says about contemporary performing art practices, design and so-called engaged urbanism, as well as the cultural production of space. Our observation of the ubiquitous reuse and aestheticization of shipping containers for cultural performances and events is driven by a shared desire to bring a socio-political critique to the production of these kinds of spaces. In this essay we draw on Stefano Harney and Fred Moten's book *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (2013) and, more particularly, their chapter 'Fantasy in



the Hold.’<sup>1</sup> Our paper is a response to and engagement with the poetics and position that they share on the ‘hold,’ the hapticality, and logistics of the shipped. Our inquiry into the logistics of container architecture brings attention to the surplus of abandoned, and empty shipping containers, which has led to the ubiquity of their transformation into something ‘useful’ again. Shipping has a historical, critical and political context that precedes the emergence of the standardised shipping container, but is largely overlooked in the design rhetoric of reuse and upcycling. Following Moten and Harney’s ‘Fantasy in the Hold’ – we take the ‘hold’ of the shipping container as a space of fugitivity, hapticality, fantasy, political love, and we ask what might be the ethical implications of reappropriating and commodifying a site designed for shipping? How is the contemporary ‘hold’ being shaped by performative, urban, design, and architectural practices? For this paper we explore and contest the logistics of container architecture through case-studies drawing from architectural, urban and performance practices in Maboneng, Johannesburg, South Africa, Wellington, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Village au Pied-du-Courant, Montreal, Canada by La Pépinière | Espace collectifs.

## SUNJAY MATHURIA

Sunjay Mathuria is a city planner living in Tkaranto/Toronto. He is interested in spatial theory and exploring the intersections of race, class, space and equitable planning practice. Sunjay has a Master of Planning from Ryerson University, and a Bachelor of Journalism and English from the University of King's College.

### **Ports, Privatization & Precious Water in Ondjaki’s *Transparent City* and Jamaica Kincaid’s *A***

#### ***Small Place***

This paper will seek to explore the changing role of water in Global South spaces as depicted in Ondjaki’s portrayal of Luanda, Angola in *Transparent City* and Jamaica Kincaid’s portrayal of Antigua in *A Small Place*. Water is a precious resource and commodity that introduces troubling power dynamics in Global South cities. Waterfront views are lauded, treasured sites in port cities, and are also some of the most expensive real estate in the world. To have access to the water connotes wealth and status. Literary representations of postcolonial places can help us understand the changing role of water in Global South cities and how the tension of capitalist systems enable the exploitation of such resources. This paper will explore the images of water in Luanda, Angola, as depicted in Ondjaki’s novel *Transparent City*. In particular, I will explore how Ondjaki employs magical realism to respond to spatial marginalization triggered by neoliberal power structures, and how concepts of precious and private water are trivialized and challenged. I will then link Ondjaki’s critique of neoliberal water in Luanda to the commodification and colonization of water in





Antigua in Jamaica Kincaid's text, *A Small Place*. Colonial controls of Global South cities have been replicated by power structures that enact spatial violence and marginalization on citizens. Global South port cities in particular are often subjected to the whim of global capital -- the movement of goods, the valuation and extraction of resources, the inequitable distribution of those resources. Who benefits and how?

## TRICIA TOSO

The main presenter for this paper is **Tricia Toso**, Ph.D. Candidate in the Communication Studies program at Concordia University, representing the Saint-Pierre mapping project collective. Begun in 2017, the Saint-Pierre mapping project came out of the waterways working group at Concordia's Ethnography Lab. We are currently a team of 6 collective members from anthropology, sociology, communication studies, and geography, with diverse expertise. Our research interests range from temporalities, historiography, decolonization, education, infrastructure, sustainability and post-development, urban landscape ecology, and anarchist praxis.

### **Unsettling *place* through a ghost river**

This paper presents a ghost river mapping project that pieces together of the spatial, temporal, material and intangible traces of a river that has configured the geography and landscape of Montreal. The Saint-Pierre River, once a significant waterway on the island, is still present in the city's nomenclature, its stories of industrial heritage and historical floodings, infrastructure, green spaces, and the Island's wastewater management system. Canalized, forced underground, and integrated into the city's sewer system throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the Saint-Pierre now exists as a buried waterway, out of sight, but everywhere shaping the social and material landscape of its trajectory through space and time. In this way, the river is deeply embedded in the modern and colonial histories and imaginaries of the city. By mapping and walking along the bones of the river, we were able to engage with a different mode of being-human in what many have termed the Anthropocene; thinking about living through a more expansive and speculative way, and unsettling our relationship to *place*. The project is a starting point for critical inquiry, exploring open-ended possibilities rather than pursuing modern/colonial certainties. We ask what are the messages of the animating spirits, ecologies, and geographies of times past and how do they unsettle the established regulation, control, and spatial division of a colonial city?

## URMI SENGUPTA

**Urmi Sengupta** is a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India. For her doctoral research, she is working on the short stories of Alice





Munro and Nirmal Verma. Her articles on Comparative Literature and Canadian Studies have been published in journals like *Sahitya: The Journal of Comparative Literature Association of India*, *Litcrit: An Indian Response to Literature* and *Calcutta Journal of Global Affairs*. She has contributed to peer-reviewed volumes on *Ecocriticism and Environment: Rethinking Literature and Culture* (Primus Books, 2018) edited by D. Dattaray and S. Sharma and *Education Culture and Nation: Comparative Perspectives from India and Canada* (Springer Nature, forthcoming) edited by K. Gayithri, B. Hariharan and S. Chattopadhyay. Her areas of interest include Ecocriticism, Indigenous Studies, Canadian Studies, Gender and Translation Studies.

### **“A Ship Caught In-between”: Interrogating the Ecotonal Dynamics of the Port of Vancouver in the light of the Komagata Maru Incident of 1914**

Since the late nineteenth century, the port city of Vancouver located at the western (Pacific) coast of Canada has been one of the major gateways for the immigrants of South Asian origin to enter the so called ‘Land of Promise’ in search of ‘better’ educational and professional opportunities. The port itself bears testimony to the ramifications of the introduction of racially discriminatory regulations, into Canada’s immigration policies towards the aspiring ‘non-white’ immigrants. One of the most significant of such events has been the Komagata Maru Incident of 1914. It is with a ship full of potential immigrants from Punjab, India - 340 Sikhs, 24 Muslims and 12 Hindus - that the Sikh entrepreneur Gurdit Singh had arrived at the Burrard Inlet of Coal Harbour, Vancouver on 23 May, 1914 only to be deemed unsuitable to enter Canada for not abiding by the Continuous Journey Regulation (1908) and not fulfilling the exorbitant landing money requirements imposed upon the ‘East Indians’. Over the two months the passengers were forced to stay couped up within the ship, during which the port emerged as an ecotonal ‘nonplace’ where the systemic and systematic racist machinations of the government, the court of law, the immigration officials, the port authorities and the erstwhile mass media and the diasporic interests of the racially marginalized ‘non-white’ immigrants from India intersected and creolized. With reference to the theatrical representation of the incident in *Komagata Maru* (1983) by the Indo-Canadian author Ajmer Rode and the celluloid representation of the same in *Continuous Journey* (2004) by the Indo-Canadian scholar and filmmaker Ali Kazimi, this paper aims to interrogate this ecotonal dynamics, in the light of the politics of exclusion that has historically informed the so-called ‘multicultural mosaic’ of Canada. It would also strive to look into the repercussions of such ecotonicity upon the bilateral relationship between Canada and India in the colonial and postcolonial times.



## WAYNE BODLE

Wayne Bodle is a Senior Research Associate at the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.

### **French Atlantic Ports and American Commerce During the French Revolution**

Accounts of French-American relations from 1789 to 1815 are often framed around the paradoxes of “neutrality,” the surge into the United States of Gallic “*contagions of liberty*” and the “*emigres*” who brought them, the blustering diplomacy of “*Citizen Genet*,” the volcanic eruption of Haitian violence and its threat to America’s slavery compact, debates over Jay’s Treaty, the problems of “Louisiana,” French “*spoliations*,” and the “*Quasi-War*” of 1798-99.

Some of the most dramatic and diagnostic events in these years came in port towns from Calais, Dieppe, and Havre on the English Channel, to Brest, Lorient and Rochelle on the north Atlantic coast, to Bordeaux and Bayonne in the Bay of Biscay. Thomas Paine charged into France in 1787 through Havre as if smelling his next revolution. Thomas Jefferson lingered there wistfully in 1789 on his way home to become Secretary of State. A British, would-be American citizen languished in Brest while Parisian friends negotiated his release from privateers. Samuel du Pont came to America in 1799 via Rochelle, after extricating an American captain from limbo in its local courts. Joseph Fenwick, the American consul at Bordeaux, accused of “covering French property” with his diplomatic passport, survived a presidential order to suspend him from office. Mary Wollstonecraft and Gilbert Imlay nurtured their fragile relationship, became parents, and trafficked in “soap and alum” (but also silver bullion) in Havre at the height of the Terror. These episodes intersected with the experiences of American captains, struggling sailors, and lowly speculators drawn to Revolutionary France by opportunities to make livings or seek fortunes. Actors arriving with cargoes for which markets had collapsed; or those unable to obtain goods legal to export; those carrying protested bills of exchange; caught by embargoes issued in Paris; or provoking local Jacobin regimes operating autonomously from national authority, envied the “predicaments” that elites later recalled with horror. The papers of Americans like Gouverneur Morris, Fulwar Skipwith, Joel Barlow or James Monroe, and those of lowlier adventurers, show the significance of Atlantic coastal fringes for America’s stake in the French Revolution. My paper will consider ports from Hamburg to Lisbon, but draw most of its evidence, narrative, and analysis from Havre, where surviving records are full and fraught with ambiguous implication.

Atlanticists have long understood that the ocean itself was a *place* with tangible characteristics, and scholars in Philadelphia are now recovering its materiality in concrete and actionable ways. American historians of the French Revolution are often drawn toward Paris or interior provincial places, where the volume, or at least the continuity, of the documentary record promotes better interpretive clarity. But Americans learned more about the French Revolution, both its truths and misperceptions, from the reported experiences of their countrymen in Continental ports from Hamburg to Toulon and occasionally Livorno or Tangier. My paper will attempt to explain why.



# Conference Organizers bios

## JILL DIDUR

Dr. Jill Didur is Associate Dean and Professor in English, Faculty of Arts and Science, Concordia University, Montreal. She is the author of *Unsettling Partition: Literature, Gender, Memory* (UTP 2006), and co-editor of *Global Ecologies and the Environmental Humanities: Postcolonial Approaches* (Routledge 2015). She currently holds a SSHRC Insight Grant, *Greening Narrative* <<https://greeningnarrative.wordpress.com>> (2014-2021), that explores how locative and mobile media applications can enhance our understanding of the relationship between the discourses of natural history, globalization, and contemporary perceptions of the environment and sustainability. She is also completing a book about imperialism, gardening, and the environment in postcolonial literature and travel writing.

## THOMAS LACROIX

Thomas Lacroix is CNRS researcher at the Maison Française of Oxford. His works focuses on immigrant transnationalism and the transformation of contemporary states, with a specific focus on India and North Africa. He published in 2016 "Hometown Transnationalism. Long Distance Villageness among Indian Punjabis and North African Berbers" (Palgrave), and "Migrants: l'impasse européenne" (Armand Colin) and "International Migration and Local Governance" (with A Desille, Palgrave) in 2018. Thomas Lacroix is associate researcher at Migrinter (University of Poitiers), CERI (Science Po Paris) and Compas (University of Oxford), fellow at Oxford Kellogg College and at the Institut Convergence Migrations (Paris).

## JUDITH MISRAHI-BARAK

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